

**Sixteenth-century dialogic
discourse: an exploration of
Protestant selfhood in the
writings of Edmund Spenser and
his contemporaries**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between the work of the sixteenth-century poet Edmund Spenser and Protestant polemical writers of the 1580s. Previous scholarship has tended to prioritise Spenser's indebtedness to classical epic and pastoral, underestimating the importance of classical dialogue as a source for his writings. Reading prose dialogues by George Gifford, Gervase Babington, and John Udall alongside Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* and *The Faerie Queene* Books I and II, this thesis reveals how the dialogue form was uniquely equipped to address spiritual tensions at the heart of late sixteenth-century Protestant culture. These issues relate especially to the assurance of faith, the problem of temptation, and the struggle to express one's spirituality. The above writers used the dialogue form to explore Protestant interiority and self-scrutiny – and did so, paradoxically, by opening this self-scrutiny up to their readers. Classical dialogue transforms in the late sixteenth century into a form able to engage meaningfully in spiritual debates, blurring distinctions between public and private selfhood, fiction and non-fiction, pedagogy and open debate.

This thesis therefore illuminates a relatively neglected strand of Spenser's historical and cultural context, but also suggests more generally the centrality of religious dialogue to early modern English culture.

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Table of Contents

Preface	1
Chapter I – Sixteenth-century dialogue: Sources and innovation	7
Chapter II – Dialogue and plainness: Edmund Spenser’s ‘Maye’ (1579) and George Gifford’s <i>A Dialogue betweene a Papist and a Protestant applied to the Capacitie of the Vnlearned</i> (1582)	43
Chapter III – Dialogue and confession: Edmund Spenser’s ‘September’ (1579), Gervase Babington’s <i>Briefe Conference</i> (1584), and John Udall’s <i>The State of the Church of England</i> (1588)	76
Chapter IV – Dialogue of accord and discord: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> Book I	111
Chapter V - Dialogue and chivalry: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> Book II	142
Conclusion	179
Bibliography	183
Primary texts	183
Secondary sources	188

Preface

Why was dialogue so popular in early modern England? Two hundred and thirty 'Tudor prose dialogues' were published in England in the course of the sixteenth century.¹ This upsurge of dialogic discourse ranged from the simple form used for religious teaching, the catechism, to complex, discursive dialogues written by Puritan ministers – such as George Gifford, Gervase Babington, and John Udall – to advocate spiritual reform. These writers found the dialogue form useful as a platform to explore and communicate complex responses to urgent and topical spiritual problems. In the last decades of the sixteenth century, dialogues became an increasingly useful resource for Protestant writers to examine their faith. The 1580s witnessed a series of intense Catholic threats including the Campion affair and the infiltration into England of Jesuit missionaries. Tension with Spain culminated in the Spanish Armada of 1588; and, closer to home, the threat to Queen Elizabeth's succession from Mary, Queen of Scots.² Through dialogue, the writers mentioned above were testing the still-forming early modern Protestant self by seeking confidence in the assurance of faith, exploring new ways to resist temptation, and finding new kinds of spiritual self-expression. My dissertation focuses on dialogue as an innovative and flexible form capable of articulating particular versions of Protestant selfhood in the 1580s/90s. Sixteenth-century dialogue is ripe for rediscovery, and this thesis attempts to recover the form from its undervalued status.

The following discussion reads several English prose polemical dialogues alongside English poetry, showing how both are drawing on the rich resources of dialogic thought alongside figurative language from scriptural sources. One particular aim of the thesis is to consider the works of a canonical writer, Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), alongside those by non-canonical, Puritan polemicists George Gifford (1548-1600), Gervase Babington (1550-1610), and John Udall (1560-1593) – and to show how the dialogue form allowed these writers, in their very different ways, to explore problems of faith, doubt, confession, and temptation. These four writers were connected through their shared background at Cambridge University, and through the Leicester/Sidney circle. To varying degrees, they were also in conflict with the dominant Anglican Church. The strength of their reformist convictions caused both Gifford and Udall to be deprived of their livings; and Udall was eventually sentenced to death. The aim of this thesis is to

¹ Roger Deakins, 'The Tudor Prose Dialogue: Genre and Anti-Genre', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 20.1 (Winter 1980), 5-23 (p. 16 and p. 18).

² See Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations, Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) p. 263, and Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480-1642* (London: Arnold, 2003), p. 130.

demonstrate how this group of writers deployed dialogue, in different ways and for different reasons, to explore the integrity of the soul, the assurance of faith, and the heart's openness to the true Word of God.

This thesis begins with an account of the rise of the dialogue form during the sixteenth century. Chapter I outlines some important features of early modern dialogic discourse, starting with the following working definition: 'dialogue is any speech, formal or colloquial, directly addressed by a character to a listener, who may or may not reply'.³ We begin with an exploration of why and how the dialogue form became popular during the sixteenth century, considering its particular usefulness for writers interested in representing and reforming Protestant selfhood. To appreciate the sixteenth-century inheritance I will briefly sketch out some important aspects of Greek and Roman dialogue, such as those written by Plato and Cicero, and will suggest how these were received in the very different context of early modern Christianity. We will consider how early modern poetry and dialogic discourse emerge, together, as specifically English Protestant forms. As we will see, the fascination of early modern dialogue lies partly in its fusion of classical tradition with a rapidly changing ecclesiastical and spiritual context.⁴ Chapter I concludes with a review of current scholarship in order to understand why sixteenth-century dialogues have been generally overlooked as a literary form. For although some dialogues, such as Thomas More's *Utopia*, have been incorporated into the sixteenth-century literary canon, polemical dialogues of the 1580s have not.

Chapter II considers how Edmund Spenser and George Gifford used dialogic discourse to explore and express the emerging English Protestant self. Reading Gifford's *Dialogue betweene a Papist and a Protestant applied to the Capacitie of the Vnlearned* (1582) alongside the 'Maye' eclogue, from Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), allows us to see clearly some of the difficulties involved in achieving, and articulating, a stable and settled Protestant identity in the latter decades of the sixteenth century. Both texts have two speakers (although the role of E. K. as third interlocutor will also be considered). The speakers represent either side of the religious divide in Elizabethan England, suggesting self-identity only emerges when one measures oneself against an 'other'. As we will see, however, dialogue is a nuanced and sophisticated Renaissance form – perhaps especially so when it takes on

³ Florence M. Jobson, 'Dialogue in the Major Poetry of Edmund Spenser' (Unpublished PhD diss. St Louis University, Kentucky, USA, 1967), p.15.

⁴ K. J. Wilson, *Incomplete Fictions: The Formation of English Renaissance Dialogue* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1985), p. 53.

apparently clear, 'binary' forms. Spenser and Gifford both used homely, familiar, and plain language – but did so in different ways, and for different reasons. Gifford was keen to retain the more didactic elements of dialogue and evoked the clarity of scriptural language to this end. His dialogue establishes an authentic and therefore authoritative voice for his version of Protestantism, focussing on the familiar language of scripture. Spenser, on the other hand, questioned the seeming transparency, clarity, and simplicity of dialogue through his assertion (and qualification) of the plainness associated with linguistic archaism in *The Shepheardes Calender*. Reading Gifford and Spenser side-by-side, this chapter examines what happens when dialogue stalls, or remains inconclusive; and explores the broader consequences for early modern Protestant selfhood. It aims in particular to build on recent scholarship on Spenser's religious non-conformity by revealing his radical experimentation with dialogue's established aims and form.

The consideration of prose dialogue alongside poetry continues in Chapter III, which examines the correlation between dialogue and confession. Reading Gervase Babington's *Briefe Conference betwixt mans frailtie and faith wherein is declared the true vse, and comfort of those blessings pronounced by Christ in the fifth of Matthew* (1584) and John Udall's *The State of the Church of Englande laide open in a Conference between Diotrephes A Bishop, Tertullus a Papist, Demetrius an vsurer, Pandocheus an in-keeper, and Paule a preacher of the word of God* (1588) alongside Spenser's 'September' eclogue allows us to see how Protestant spirituality remained bound to the need to confess in the latter decades of the sixteenth century. These texts allow us to examine a variety of confessional practices, which were closely linked with the notion of 'conference', a word that appears in the titles of both prose dialogues considered here. The words 'confess' and 'confer' are etymologically linked (through the Latin words 'conferre' and 'confiteri', to bring together), and this chapter explores how they are conceptually linked, too, in writings dealing with spiritual transformation.

The act of confessing allows one to gain relief and absolution; and these texts demonstrate that entering into dialogic confession requires an active listener who can provide assurance. Babington's character of Faith provides assurance to the weaker Frailtie so that he may develop a more robust spiritual self, and here, as we will see, active listener correlates with active reader. Udall's text offers a different perspective, presenting a polyvocal dialogue that explores the effect on the listener of encountering several opinions at once. Here one particular interlocutor, Demetrius, is spiritually transformed through careful acts of listening, which allow him to form his own opinion.

This chapter explores how both those who make and those who receive confessions are engaged in complex acts of listening, although such acts do not necessarily lead to comfort or absolution. Comparing Babington and Udall's texts with Spenser's 'September' eclogue allows us to examine what happens when the 'responsive interlocutor' stalls in the search for self-knowledge, and to explore more generally the consequences for Protestant inwardness.

The final two chapters explore Spenser's use of dialogue in *The Faerie Queene*, focussing especially on several important aspects of early modern Protestant spirituality: confidence in the assurance of faith, the ability to fend off despair, and the maintenance of temperance in body, mind and soul. Through dialogue, Spenser explores how the virtues of faith and temperance may falter, and whether entering into dialogue can restore or redeem such losses. Chapter IV builds on Chapter III to explore the role of dialogic confession in the transformation of the spiritual self, focusing in particular on the tension between faith and despair in Book I. The aim is to consider why the dialogue of 'accord', which is nourishing to the soul, sometimes turns abruptly into the dialogue of 'discord'. Exploring links between conversation and conversion, I argue that dialogue can either convert listeners to the 'true faith' – or turn them away. Both words share the Latin root 'vertere', to turn. In conversation, the 'turning' takes place between individuals as they pass the conversation to each other and back again. With religious conversion, the individual is 'turned' towards a different faith. I argue that conversion takes place in *The Faerie Queene* through complex acts of conversation. Spenser's readers are implicated, too, and perhaps even converted – sometimes through words that equivocate, and sometimes through words frankly 'laide open in conference'.⁵ I argue that the relationship Spenser sketches between conversation and conversion highlights, in turn, the importance of dialogue to the formation of the spiritual self.

Entering into dialogue in Faerie Land seems often to pose particular threats to the integrity of the soul. This chapter considers various attempts to convert RedCrosse through dialogue, focusing in particular on three episodes from Book I: the conversations between RedCrosse and Duessa (canto i), Una and Arthur (canto vii), and RedCrosse and Despaire (canto ix). His exchanges with Duessa and Despaire present RedCrosse with a number of different challenges to the robustness of his

⁵ This phrase is included in the long title of Babington's *Briefe Conference* and Udall's *State of the Church of England*. James Shapiro explains that 'equivocation was a rare and scholarly term, one that appeared in only a few dozen books in sixteenth-century England, mostly polemics [...]. With the exception of theologians in whose work had begun to take on a pejorative and fiercely anti-Catholic associations, English writers who knew the word thought it another way of saying 'ambiguous'. See *1606: Shakespeare and the Year of Lear* (London: Faber and Faber, 2016), p. 178.

spiritual self. The episode between Una and Arthur, on the other hand, demonstrates the kind of dialogue RedCrosse struggles to achieve. This particular conversation also helps to strengthen Una's own faith so she can later turn RedCrosse away from Despaire. Taken together, these three episodes illuminate the tensions that develop, through dialogue, between spiritual accord and spiritual discord; and show how RedCrosse must protect his heart, and his faith, in order to turn away from temptation. As we will see, Spenser's use of dialogue in *The Faerie Queene* expands on the ideas he had explored earlier in *The Shepheardes Calender* – including the problem of whether dialogue can ever offer true spiritual comfort. Spenser's knights are searching for self-knowledge and spiritual understanding – and dialogue emerges, here, as a means of settling their faith but also its most formidable test.

Chapter V continues to explore dialogue in *The Faerie Queene* but this time considers what happens when dialogue stalls and is replaced instead by physical confrontation. Critics have considered the place of dialogue in chivalric romance including in two of Spenser's sources, Ramon Llull's *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* (1276) and Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485).⁶ This chapter explores how Spenser, like Llull and Malory, focuses on the effects of engaging, or failing to engage, in dialogic discourse.⁷ We have seen how self-knowledge gained through dialogic exchange could enable spiritual transformation, but this chapter explores the effects on the self when chivalric dialogue disintegrates and turns into violence. Are the consequences of failed dialogue severe enough to put the Protestant spiritual self at risk? The trials and temptations of Guyon, the knight of Temperance, are the key focus of this chapter, and we will consider his verbal and physical actions in contrast to those of other knights: RedCrosse, Arthur and the 'paynim knights' – Pyrochles and Cymochles. The chosen episodes illustrate the tension between physical behaviour (violence) and verbal behaviour (dialogue) that animates Book II as the knights struggle to maintain chivalric temperance. The chapter concludes with a consideration of how the tension between dialogue and violence is finally reconciled through the exchanges between Guyon and the Palmer in canto xii. These travelling companions share limited dialogue throughout Book II; most of the exchanges are one-sided with the Palmer providing counsel and advice. Book II is, however, the only book that ends in dialogue – and this proves a suitable conclusion to the Book of Temperance.

⁶ Paul R. Rovang, *Refashioning 'Knights and Ladies Gentle deeds': The Intertextuality of Spenser's Faerie Queen and Malory's Morte D'arthur* (London: Associated University Press, 1996).

⁷ Thomas Malory: *Complete Works*, ed. by Eugène Vinaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) and Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, trans. and ed. by Noel Fallows (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013).

This thesis therefore aims to address the critical tendency to undervalue the early modern dialogue form. Although the texts considered here form only a small sample of the very large number of early modern printed dialogues, together they show how the form was uniquely equipped to debate issues of faith during the spiritual and political crises of the last two decades of the sixteenth century. The form proved particularly useful for disguising the source of controversial opinion, not least in opposition to the established Church; or, as in the case of Spenser, for criticising the treatment of 'godly' ministers, such as Edmund Grindal, in *The Shepheardes Calender*. Like the Protestant polemicists whose works were circulating at this time, Spenser was drawing on the rich resources of classical dialogue and biblical poetics. Reading Spenser alongside contemporary polemical writers reveals in new ways the importance of self-scrutiny to the newly formed Protestant self. Gifford, Babington, Udall, and Spenser all recognise the didactic function of the dialogue form; and each deploys this function in different ways to affect, persuade, transform, or move their readers. Spenser's aim to 'fashion a gentleman,' and the polemicists' aim to push for further reform, are both fulfilled through dialogue. However, as we will see, Spenser questions the usefulness of formal dialogue to resolve spiritual complexity, seizing every opportunity to radically revise the familiar aspirations of dialogic discourse.

Chapter I – Sixteenth-century dialogue: Sources and innovation

The sheer volume of didactic dialogues suggests that early modern writers saw the form as particularly suited for teaching complex subjects.¹ These publications included Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), originally written in Latin, Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528, translated into English in 1561), Erasmus' *Colloquies* (1518), which presented many different topics such as war, religion, and travel, and Roger Ascham's *Toxophilus* (1545), the first book on archery. Roger Deakins suggests that dialogue is 'discussion that is 'philosophical' but which nonetheless rejects the technical language of professional academic philosophy in favour of language that is (in some sense) 'ordinary' or 'natural'.² He elaborates by describing dialogue as a form of conversational, 'familiar talk'.³ Many of the two hundred and thirty dialogic works that survive from the sixteenth century indeed have 'familiar talk' in their title.⁴ Deakins suggests the ultimate authority for 'familiar talk' is Rudolf Agricola's *De Inventione Dialectica* (1515), although he admits that the 'immediate source must surely have been the textbook from which every Tudor schoolboy learned his Latin: Erasmus's *Colloquies*'.⁵ Deakins explains that 'the *Colloquies* began (in 1518) simply as a Latin phrase book, and only began to have a dialectical element after 1522', which increased with each edition. This indicates 'a connection between 'orderly analysis' and decorous conversational form that is a characteristic of the humanist dialogue tradition'.⁶ The use of words such as 'strife', 'contention' or 'conference' all denote the use of the dialogue form. Thus 'conference' was a term adopted by Protestant and Puritan writers, during the Reformation, to describe a wide variety of public and private discussions on doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues.⁷

What was the impetus for the upsurge in the use of the dialogue form during the sixteenth century? The primary role of dialogue in this period was to provide a way of discussing contested religious and theoretical ideas. As John N. Wall has written, 'writers who sought to further the reforming goals of the Church of England had available a wide range of verbal resources to make claims, to bring pressure on

¹ Jesse Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 36. Roger Deakins, 'The Tudor Prose Dialogue: Genre and Anti-Genre', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 20.1 (Winter 1980), 5-23 (p.9). Deakins estimated there were as many as two hundred and thirty Tudor dialogues.

² Deakins, p. 5.

³ Deakins, p. 6.

⁴ Deakins, p. 9.

⁵ Deakins, p. 19.

⁶ Deakins, p. 19.

⁷ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), pp. 111, 134, and 177.

readers to choose among those claims'.⁸ One of their most important resources was the dialogue form, which, as mentioned above, was circulating widely for a variety of purposes.⁹

The chosen writers explored in this thesis - Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), George Gifford (1548-1600), Gervase Babington (1550-1610), and John Udall (1560-1593), are a select group who can shed light on a complex spiritual landscape through dialogue, in prose and poetry, which only 'looked' like a form concerned with truth-telling through debate between two clearly separate viewpoints. There was a common tendency in this period to view the structure of the world in terms of binary opposition.¹⁰ However, religious belief was more complex than that – and dialogue emerged as the ideal form to explore the period's spiritual complexity and dynamism. The ostensible aim of these writers may often have been to reform or convert the reader or listener. But, as we will see, this aim itself raised a variety of creative and cultural possibilities. All these writers chose to use the dialogue form in one way or another to explore their shared interest in emerging Protestant selfhood. I use this term to refer to their religious self-knowledge, their articulation of spiritual identity, and their understanding of how subjectivity emerged through a relationship with God. In the discussion that follows we will discover that this begins to develop when one identifies oneself against an 'other'.¹¹ Interestingly, however, this private self-scrutiny tends quickly to turn outwards, into the public world, through published dialogues that were designed to be read.

Our writers were responding, in different ways, to the spiritual upheavals of the mid-to-late sixteenth century. Unlike other Protestant countries, the Elizabethan Protestant Church had not broken completely from Rome – particularly in structure and administration. The Elizabethan Protestant Church retained many features of the Catholic Church including the vestments worn, surplices, and distinctive outdoor dress which set priests apart from the laity. The sign of the cross in baptism, the ring in marriage, crucifixes, candles, and other 'popish' remnants were permitted. Many thought these would be temporary, not realising that Queen Elizabeth saw the 1559 settlement as final.¹² As Elizabeth's reign continued, certain members of the clergy

⁸ John N. Wall, *Transformation of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, and Vaughan* (Athens, Georgia, and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), p. 64.

⁹ Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., 'George Gifford, Puritan Propaganda and Popular Religion in Elizabethan England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 9.1 (April 1978), 27-49 (38-9). See also Joshua Rodda, *Public Religious Disputation in England 1558-1626* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p. 31.

¹⁰ Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480 – 1642* (London: Arnold, 2003), p. 131.

¹¹ David Brett, *The Plain Style: The Reformation, Culture, and the Crisis in Protestant Identity* (Belfast: Black Square Books, 1999), p. 52.

¹² Susan Doran and Christopher Durston, *Princes, Pastors, and People: The Church and Religion in England 1529-1689* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 23.

sought for further reform or a more 'pure' Church. After the 1570s religious positions became polarised, Calvinism became more widespread and integral. Puritanism became a political movement campaigning for liturgical reform, and ecclesiastical reconstruction on Presbyterian lines. The word Puritan was in use by the 1560s and meant 'innovation' and 'subversion'. It was also however used to mean 'slandorous' and 'odious', and the term therefore became increasingly schismatic in application.¹³ The Papal Bull of 1570 and the threat of invasion it precipitated were critical in shaping the course of the subsequent statutory onslaught against Roman Catholics.¹⁴ These were among the complex and wide-reaching events that our writers experienced, shaped and re-created. Together they addressed the complex cultural and societal issues surrounding religious change by deploying, and re-deploying, the rich and varied resources of dialogue.

The working definition of dialogue, outlined in the above Preface, highlights the role of the listener – 'who may or may not reply' – suggesting that their role is to listen actively as they are directly addressed with a particular purpose in mind.¹⁵ As we will see, the listener, 'who may or may not reply', also sometimes represents the reader. The reader cannot reply per se, but the words can affect their mind, emotionally or intellectually. Our writers often make explicit that their aim was to make it easy for the 'simpler sort' to listen (or read) and therefore to learn. George Gifford expressly admits, at the beginning of *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraftes* (1593), that he chose the dialogue form for didactic purposes: 'I have done it in waye of a Dialogue, to make the fitter for the capacity of the simpler sort'.¹⁶ The didactic function is fundamental to this particular group of writers who believed that dialogue helped the 'simpler sort' understand complex theological messages. One traditional method of religious instruction was through catechisms – a basic question and answer format that taught the fundamentals of faith. As Felicity Heal makes clear, 'catechisms were popular and an effective way of disseminating the Word' and were used by Protestants, Catholics, and Puritans alike.¹⁷ In the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559), the ministry of confirmation contains a catechism, or, 'an instruction to be learned of every childe,

¹³ H.C. Porter, ed., *Puritanism in Tudor England* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholic Conformity and Confessional Polemic in England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), p. 20.

¹⁵ Florence M. Jobson, 'Dialogue in the Major Poetry of Edmund Spenser' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, St Louis University, Kentucky, USA, 1967), - 'dialogue is any speech, formal or colloquial, directly addressed by a character to a listener, who may or may not reply', p.15.

¹⁶ George Gifford, *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcraftes in which is laid open how craftily the Diuell deceiueth not onely the witches but many other and so leadeth them awrie into many great errors* (1593), A3r. Referred to as *Witches and Witchcraftes* throughout and all quotations are taken from this edition.

¹⁷ Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 295.

before he be brought to be confirmed of the Bishoppe'.¹⁸ Children from an early age learned Christian behaviour through this simple question and answer format.¹⁹ From 1552, indeed, all children in England and Wales were supposed to receive regular instruction in the basic catechism of the Prayer Book, which took place every Sunday and holy day in the parish Church.²⁰ The service began by confirming the child's name and the role of their godparents, who were responsible for the early religious teaching of a child. The godparents promised at the christening three things: to protect the child from the devil, keep the articles of the faith, and live by the commandments and God's holy will. Then the minister turns to the child:

Question: Doest not thynke that thou art bounde to beleve
and to do, as they have promised for thee?

Answer: Yes verily, and by Goddes helpe so I wil. And I
hartely thanke our heavenly Father, that he hath
called me to his state of salvation, through Jesus
Christe our saviour. And I pray God to geve me
his grace, that I may continue in the same unto
my lyves ende.

Question: Reherse the Articles of thy belefe.²¹

The confirmation demonstrated the child's ability to become responsible for his or her own faith. The questions are straightforward and elicited longer answers, although children probably learned the answers by rote.²² The aim was to provide the child with the necessary information so that, when they were ready for confirmation, they might 'with their owne mouthe, and with their owne consent, openly before the church ratifie and confyrme the same'.²³ By speaking out loud in a dialogic exchange, in front of witnesses, the child made a commitment to the Church and demonstrated an understanding of basic doctrinal elements: the Articles of the Faith, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. The aim was to help the child develop into a law-abiding and god-fearing subject who appreciated his duty to God and to his neighbour. Every person was confirmed so everyone would have been familiar with the question and answer format as a fundamental aspect of English religious culture.

¹⁸ *The Book of Common Prayer, The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), all references to this text will be from this edition, p. 151.

¹⁹ Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England 1530–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 4.

²⁰ Heal, p. 297.

²¹ *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 151.

²² Green, *The Christian's ABC*, p. 8.

²³ *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 150.

Christian dialogue anchored itself in catechisms that had fixed answers for all admissible questions and asserted itself in a profession of faith.²⁴ Catechisms would have been particularly familiar to the writers discussed in this dissertation who were either Puritan ministers or followers of the reformed faith.

The dialogue as a literary form was however useful across the religious landscape for Catholics, Protestants, and Puritans alike, perhaps because writing in dialogue was one way to disguise the source of controversial opinion. Authors could deflect direct responsibility and place self-condemning speeches into the mouths of opponents, thereby disguising their source.²⁵ The employment of probable rather than certain arguments helped to open up debate on particular topics, such as religious reform. Antoinina Zlatar argues that 'polemical dialogues were rhetorical constructs produced by particular men at particular moments in the Elizabethan Reformation'.²⁶ She refers to these polemical dialogues as 'topical fictions', since the dialogues are not transcriptions of actual conversations or events but, instead, records of imagined exchanges which reveal points of particular concern in contemporary society.²⁷ Their main aim was to educate the laity in the principles of the English Reformed Church in a form that was easily accessible, and that reflected the verbal exchanges which took place in church and of course during everyday life. Earlier we saw that Gifford stated that he deployed the dialogue form to make the content 'fitter for the capacity of the simpler sort'.²⁸ Gervase Babington likewise made clear his didactic purpose on the contents page of his *A Briefe Conference betwixt mans Frailltie and Faith* (1584) – although a table of contents is uncommon in dialogic texts of this kind. Babington listed the temptations of faith, and countered these with passages offering 'Strength and comfort out of the worde of God'. The reader is therefore invited to select from a list of temptations, such as 'Pouertie and want', 'Vncheerfulnesse', 'Want of lustice', and 'Vnmercifulnesse'.²⁹ Additionally, Babington used dialogic discourse to explain specific scriptural passages through an extended exchange between Faith and Frailltie. This

²⁴ Hans Robert Jauss, *Question and Answer: Forms of Dialogic Understanding*, ed. and trans. by Michael Hays (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 210.

²⁵ Joseph Puterbaugh, 'Truth Hath the Victory: Dialogue and Disputation in John Foxe's Actes and Monuments', in *Printed Voices: The Renaissance Culture of Dialogue*, ed. by Dorothea Heitsch and Jean-François Vallée (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 137-156 (p. 137).

²⁶ Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions: Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 6.

²⁷ Zlatar, p. 26.

²⁸ *Witches and Witchcraftes*, A3r.

²⁹ Gervase Babington *A Briefe Conference betwixt mans frailltie and faith wherein is declared the true vse, and comfort of those blessings pronounced by Christ in the fifth of Matthew* (1584), the contents page could have been inserted by the publisher. Referred to as *Briefe Conference* throughout and all quotations are taken from this edition.

chosen passage was Matthew 5, the sermon given by Jesus on the Mount, which follows the Temptation of Jesus related in Matthew 4.³⁰

This didactic aim developed in a variety of ways in the sixteenth century, from simple catechisms to long prose dialogues. Their authors were responding, in particular, to wide-ranging changes in how people worshipped, including the denial of the doctrine of transubstantiation.³¹ Protestant reformers sought to abolish all forms of ritual in Catholic worship as they considered these to be in conflict with scripture and therefore against the 'true' religion.³² Sixteenth-century England witnessed the breakdown of other traditional certainties, not least a failure of confidence in the concept of certainty itself.³³ Ethan Shagan succinctly summarises this conflict: 'English Protestants and Catholics defined their identities and political positions in response to their ideological opponents, allowing for a remarkable degree of cross-pollination of ideas, imagery, and texts across confessional divides'.³⁴ Christopher Haigh agrees and observes that the 'Reformation was made by Catholics and Protestants, because it developed from the clashes between them. The religious change was not made by Thomas Cromwell, Thomas Cranmer, and Queen Elizabeth but by Cromwell and the Duke of Norfolk, Cranmer and Stephen Gardiner, and Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots'.³⁵ Importantly, the conflict that arose between opposing sides created further differences, even as they entered into dialogue with each other. Until the 1580s, Protestant propaganda had used illustrations to convey messages – such as those used successfully by John Foxe in his *Actes and Monuments of matters most speciall and memorable, happenyng in the Church*, best remembered by the popular title – *Book of Martyrs* (1563).³⁶ After the 1580s, most reformist writers refused to use illustrations – since Protestantism was, after all, the religion of the literate.³⁷ Protestants began to direct the eye inward, rejecting realistic religious pictures even as Catholics continued to use religious pictures in devotion and worship.³⁸ Tudor culture was deeply fractured between emerging Protestant and Catholic identities, and was further divided by the

³⁰ These scriptural passages are also represented in Spenser, for example, the temptation of Christ is a source for the temptation of Guyon by Mammon in Book II.

³¹ Susan Doran and Christopher Durston, *Princes, Pastors, and People: The Church and Religion in England 1529-1689* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 78, and Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 323.

³² Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 25.

³³ Puterbaugh, p. 137.

³⁴ Ethan Shagan, 'Introduction' in *Catholics and the Protestant Nation: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 2.

³⁵ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 16.

³⁶ *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives*, ed. by John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. xi.

³⁷ Doran and Durston, pp. 82-83.

³⁸ Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England*, pp. 117-118.

conflict between those who embraced the process of Confessionalisation and those who rejected it.³⁹

Reformers continued to push for further change to convert the Church away from popish practices – and this was reflected, in various ways, through their development of dialogic discourse.⁴⁰ We can turn, as an example, to George Gifford who highlights the consequences on the laity of poorly effected reform in ‘The Epistle Dedicatory’ to *Countrie Divinitie* (1582):

But to come to that particular which I handle in this treatise:
there are the most in number, who hauing Poperie taken
from them and not taught thoroughly and sufficiently in the
Gospel, doe stand as men indifferent, so that they may
quietly inioye the world, they care not what religion come:
they are like naked men fitte and readie for any coate almost
that may bee put vpon them.⁴¹

Gifford’s main concern is that more teaching of the gospel is required in order to provide man with the proper spiritual ‘coate’. He worries that indifference will make it easy to re-convert men to Catholicism as ‘they care not what religion come’. Joseph Puterbaugh has described how religious identity often ‘emerges in the process of debate, dialogue, and self-definition’.⁴² The one-to-one interlocutors presented in polemical dialogues often featured a godly character who instructs a disbeliever in accordance with the Socratic tradition of a master teaching his apprentice. Gifford presents this relationship in *Countrie Divinitie* with two fictional interlocutors: the less godly, Atheos, who learns about the reformed religion from the more godly Zelotes. The dialogue begins with Zelotes asking questions to ascertain the extent of Atheos’ religious understanding – but, in the second half, Atheos begins to ask questions and Zelotes provides detailed answers.

³⁹ Tom Betteridge, *Literature and Politics in the English Reformation* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 1. Confessionalisation is the process of creating and sustaining religious confessions as organised public churches both Roman Catholic and Protestant religions shared confessional basis.

⁴⁰ Alexandra Walsham observed that ‘underlying much anti-Catholic polemic was a practical, pastoral concern about the Reformation’s poor psychological progress and precarious hold at the parochial level’. She illustrates this with reference to Gifford’s *Dialogue Betweene a Papist and Protestant*, in *Church Papists: Catholic Conformity and Confessional Polemic in England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), p. 101.

⁴¹ *A Briefe Discourse of certaine pointes of the religion which is among the common sort of Christians, which may bee termed the Countrie Divinitie with a manifest confutation of the same, after the order of a dialogue* (1582), ‘The Epistle Dedicatory’, q3v. Referred to as *Countrie Divinitie* throughout and all quotations are taken from this edition.

⁴² Puterbaugh, p. 137.

Given this dissertation's concern with the newly emerging Protestant self, Gifford's term 'Poperie' perhaps needs some further brief consideration. Protestantism did not happen in isolation, but drew instead on Catholic piety and principles, defined its doctrine using Catholic terms, and formed its identity against Catholic opposition.⁴³ The very term 'Catholic' came to signify theological contention and controversy, while 'Papist', 'Protestant', and 'Puritan' were all terms which could mean different things in different contexts to different people. 'Papist' could mean something other than Catholic – to a radical reformer it could refer to anyone that was not a reformer or, rather, a supporter of the Anglican establishment. Polemicists on both sides argued, during most of Elizabeth's reign, over whose faith should be rightly accorded these terms.⁴⁴ The late 1540s began to see English reformers described as 'Protestant', and the term became fully current during the reign of Mary I. In earlier decades Reformers spoke of themselves as 'brethren', 'gospellers', 'evangelists', or simply 'true Christians'. They were unwilling to let go of the term 'Catholic', just as their opponents were unwilling to relinquish their right to be considered evangelicals or gospellers. Opponents labelled them as heretics, new men, Lollards, Lutherans, Zwinglians, sacramentarians, and Anabaptists. Both sides were using similar vocabulary.⁴⁵

The complexity of religious identity evolved around church attendance and it became 'difficult to erect clear boundaries between Conforming Catholics and the purist reformers, and those that were indifferent spiritually, although socially and politically compliant'.⁴⁶ Church-going was the cornerstone of Elizabethan religious policy, but how could the authorities detect the faith of a person? Penal laws were designed to detect and discipline recusants who were not 'church papists', a term registered in written English during the early 1580s.⁴⁷ Puritans were also considered schismatic, which infers partial (albeit not full) alienation from the ecclesiastical establishment. Recusants were not necessarily Roman Catholic but may also have been Puritan. In the parishes, Puritan ministers were prone to label opponents as 'papists' irrespective of whether they displayed sympathy with Rome. 'Papist' was as protean and pliable a term as historians have come to consider the name 'puritan' – since it varied according to biases and beliefs of those who were using it.⁴⁸ Leading Elizabethan clergy considered themselves Protestant, and regarded their Church as part of the 'Reformed'

⁴³ Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, 'Introduction', in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. by Marshall and Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-13 (p. 9).

⁴⁴ Walsham, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Marshall and Ryrie, 'Introduction', p. 5.

⁴⁶ Walsham, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Walsham, p. 9 and p. 11. Catholics were not persecuted as heretics but as enemies of the state – traitors – civil loyalty was paramount.

⁴⁸ Walsham, p. 115.

family of European Protestant Churches. Puritanism as a 'phenomenon is best seen as largely concerned with the Protestant mainstream and sharing the same concerns'.⁴⁹ These shared concerns were promoting further Church reform and teaching new doctrines, in order to establish new forms of faith. The writers considered below entered into dialogue in order to scrutinise these new forms, focussing especially on their search for integrity, cleanness of heart, and temperance. Although these new forms of Protestant selfhood were calibrated against older forms, their emergence was complicated since both worshipped the same god, in the same churches. Dialogue however proved a uniquely flexible and resourceful form to deliberate these complexities – not least because it works, at least ostensibly, towards the reconciliation of opposing sides.

Biography and patronage

Before we turn to the classical sources for sixteenth-century dialogue, this section considers the connections between our writers. Many writers of Protestant polemical dialogues were ministers such as George Gifford, Gervase Babington, and John Udall, with the majority being Puritan.⁵⁰ These prose dialogues have been unjustly neglected by scholars interested in early modern literary culture. The following discussion reads a selection of prose dialogues alongside English poetry in order to show how both are drawing, in different ways, on the rich resources of dialogic thought. Placing the works of Edmund Spenser alongside those by Puritan polemicists reveals that the dialogue form allowed a variety of writers, for a variety of reasons, to address topical themes of faith, doubt, confession, and temptation. I will argue that these writers were similarly capable of sophisticated literary achievement, partly because they were drawing from the same scriptural source material. One important shared source, as we will see, is the book of Matthew. Spenser dramatizes, through dialogue, the conflict between money and God in *The Faerie Queene* Book II through the temptation of Guyon by Mammon, the god of worldly wealth.⁵¹ The biblical source is the exchange between Christ and Satan in Matthew 4, the story of the three temptations of Christ by the devil in the wilderness. Babington draws on Matthew 5 in *Briefe Conference*, making clear his didactic aim to explain this scriptural passage. Gifford's 'Epistle' to *A Dialogue between a Papist and a Protestant applied to the capacitie of the unlearned* (1583) also references Matthew when he reflects on the conflict between worldly treasure and the divinity of God outlined in Matthew 6:24: 'no one can serve two masters, for either he

⁴⁹ Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480-1642* (London: Arnold, 2003), p. 114.

⁵⁰ Zlatar, p. 17.

⁵¹ *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by Thomas, P. Roche and Patrick C. O'Donnell (London: Penguin Books, 1987), all quotations are taken from this edition.

will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and destroy the other.⁵² You cannot serve God and money'. As we will see later, Spenser, Gifford, Babington and Udall all made extensive use, within their dialogues, of complex literary resources such as metaphor and figurative language. This thesis reads these writers together, as a group, with the particular aim of revealing new ways of reading the prose dialogues nuanced through poetry, and vice versa. Each elucidates and enriches our understanding of the other. Until recently, prose and poetry tended to be considered separately – and this tendency remains in current criticism. The consideration of these writers' works, side-by-side, allows us to see the versatility of dialogue as a way of negotiating through different theological positions. It also allows us to reflect, more generally, on the way in which textual didacticism increasingly engaged the imagination. These important aspects can be overlooked if we read these various dialogic texts as though they were discrete and separate from one another in early modern culture.

The prose writers are usually considered as hard line Presbyterians, and have sometimes been labelled as Puritan. Patrick Collinson refers to 'the hotter sort of Protestants' – those who pushed for further reform and promoted a more Presbyterian style of Church as depicted in the Bible.⁵³ And scholars have described Spenser as England's foremost 'Protestant Poet', suggesting that his didactic aim in *The Faerie Queene* fulfils the purpose of poetry for Protestants who were generally suspicious of artifice of any sort.⁵⁴ Critics have, however, continued to debate whether Spenser's work presents a consistently radical Puritan doctrine. Spenser's religious identity was not fixed and determined; but must instead, be read within various contexts (ecclesiastical, cultural, political, and biographical). Further, it was not fixed throughout his writing career; but, rather, seems to have shifted according to circumstance. Critical responses have recently shifted from the determination to see Spenser as either radical or conservative towards a more eclectic understanding of his spirituality. Claire McEachern admits, for example, that the religious dimensions of Spenser's poetry are informed by, and reflect, the 'contention-ridden landscape of Elizabethan

⁵² George Gifford, *A Dialogue between a Papist and a Protestant applied to the capacitie of the unlearned* (1583). Referred to as *Dialogue* throughout and all quotations are taken from this edition.

⁵³ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), p. 29. He includes George Gifford and John Udall (amongst others) in his study.

⁵⁴ Gary Waller, *Edmund Spenser: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 72-73. For further discussion of Spenser as 'Protestant Poet' see also: Linda Gregerson, *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser and Milton and the English Protestant Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Anthea Hume, *Edmund Spenser: The Protestant Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), John N. King, *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), and Virgil K. Whitaker, *The Religious Basis of Spenser's Thought* (*Language and Literature*, VII.3) (Stanford CA, USA, Stanford University Press, 1950).

religious identities'.⁵⁵ These religious aspects are conditioned by a combination of Spenser's hallmark syncreticism, the middle way of Elizabeth's religious settlement, and the nature of the Elizabethan Church in its inaugural decades.⁵⁶ I will draw on this point of view in order to show how Spenser was part of a broader cultural milieu which was using dialogue to explore emerging versions of Protestant selfhood, and to explore how the self could be defined against an imagined 'other'. These writers may, at times, have had seemingly different spiritual inclinations and at times were in conflict with the established Church; but all chose to examine that emerging self in similar ways through dialogue.

Bearing this in mind, we turn now to some important links between our select group of writers. All were writing and publishing dialogues during the latter decades of the sixteenth century, but they have seldom before been carefully considered together as a group. They shared many biographical and geographical connections, including their education at Cambridge University. During the 1570s Spenser attended Pembroke Hall; Gifford was educated at Christ's College, and Babington at Trinity. They would have been exposed to Thomas Cartwright, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in 1570, a Presbyterian reformer who preached and argued for equality of all ministers and the establishment of Presbyterian Church order.⁵⁷ Udall went to Cambridge in the early 1580s and graduated from Trinity College in 1584. On leaving university three of these writers served as ministers and Spenser was employed as secretary to the newly consecrated bishop of Rochester, John Young, in 1578.⁵⁸ During Spenser's time at Pembroke John Young replaced John Whitgift as the master of Pembroke College – and the college 'had a particular reputation for its commitment to the reformed faith'.⁵⁹ The Archbishop of Canterbury from 1575, Edmund Grindal, was an alumnus of Pembroke Hall, and was considered a 'moderate Puritan'.⁶⁰ In addition, he was backed by William Cecil, Lord Burghley and the lay champion of the 'godly' reformation, the

⁵⁵ Claire McEachern, 'Spenser and Religion' in *The Oxford Handbook to Spenser*, ed. by Richard A. McCabe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 30-47, p. 30.

⁵⁶ See also Andrew Hadfield, Spenser And Religion-Yet Again *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 51.1 (Winter 2011), 21-46, p. 46, n.64, Anne Lake Prescott, 'Complicating the Allegory: Spenser and Religion in Recent Scholarship', *Renaissance and Reformation*, XXXV.4 (2001), 9-23, and, Harold L. Weatherby *Mirrors of Celestial Grace: Patristic Theology in Spenser's Allegory* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

⁵⁷ Marshal, *Reformation England 1480-1642*, p. 121. The Presbyterian system was based on Calvinist Geneva and seen to be advocated by the New Testament. Cartwright was forced into exile to Geneva during the early 70s.

⁵⁸ Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 67.

⁵⁹ Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, p. 54-5. Timothy Scott McGinnis, *George Gifford and the Reformation of the Common Sort: Puritan Priorities in Elizabethan Religious Life* (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2004), p. 25. John S. Macauley 'Babington, Gervase', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online edition) Oxford University Press, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/973 <<http://www.oup.com/oxforddnb/info/freeodnb/libraries/>> [Accessed: 24/08/2017].

⁶⁰ Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal (1519 -1583): The Struggle for the Reformed Church 1519- 1583* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), p. 221.

Earl of Leicester'.⁶¹ We will return to Grindal in the next chapter and Spenser's representation of his fall from grace, depicted in *The Shepheardes Calender*.⁶² Gifford was ordained in 1578 at Maldon, Essex. He left his parish of Maldon following a suspension when he refused to subscribe to a set of articles declared by the new Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, in 1584.⁶³ Babington gained his MA in Oxford in 1578 and then returned to Cambridge, became a fellow, and was known as a 'hard student' of theology.⁶⁴ Babington was appointed as one of the Earl of Pembroke's family chaplains in 1582 at Wilton House.⁶⁵ He later served as the Bishop of Llandaff (1591–1594), the Bishop of Exeter (1594–1597), and the Bishop of Worcester (1597–1610). Udall graduated in 1584 and was ordained deacon and appointed to the living of Kingston upon Thames from 1584–88. These three reformers may have met whilst preaching at St Paul's Cross or at a London assembly convened in 1584, which was attended by representatives from Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, and London.⁶⁶ This brief overview of their immediate post-university careers suggests their shared religious stance (hard-line Presbyterian tendencies) but what has not so far been considered is their shared use of dialogue to explore their beliefs and concerns over the lack of further reform in the Church of England. Their common educational and cultural experiences are reflected in their desire to explore, from a variety of angles, the challenges facing the early modern Protestant faithful. All these writers consciously scrutinised their faith, and represented this self-scrutiny in dialogue, in order to inform (and reform) the reader's own practices of faith.

The patronage system was a central social system of the period and writers could attract patrons only if and when their skills were highly regarded by the ruling class.⁶⁷ The position taken by the governing class, which included the earls of Leicester, Warwick, Pembroke, Bedford, and Huntingdon, as well as Sir Francis Walsingham, were marked by their vehement opposition to Spain and Catholicism. These nobles, who tended to provide patronage for moderate Puritans and extreme Presbyterians, were all part of the Leicester-Sidney circle.⁶⁸ Sir Nicholas Bacon managed most of the Crown's ecclesiastical patronage and supported Protestants where possible. For

⁶¹ Marshall, p. 122.

⁶² *The Shorter Poems*, ed. by Richard A. McCabe (London: Penguin Books, 1999), all quotations are taken from this edition.

⁶³ McGinnis, p. 37. Whitgift set out to show his support of the episcopacy and declared that all ministers needed to subscribe to a set of articles, which had the purpose of preventing the practices associated with Puritans.

⁶⁴ Macauley.

⁶⁵ Michael Brennan, *Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance: The Pembroke Family* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 89.

⁶⁶ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), p. 275.

⁶⁷ Donna B. Hamilton, 'Introduction', in *A Concise Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Donna B. Hamilton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 1–31, (p. 4).

⁶⁸ Hume, p. 6, and Haigh, p. 271.

example the influence of Babington's patron, the Earl of Pembroke, enabled his appointment as treasurer of Llandaff where he was later elected bishop.⁶⁹ What becomes clear when examining the relationship between patrons and our group of writers is the predominance and influence of the Leicester and Sidney circle, which we will now further explore.

We will begin with Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, who, by the 1570s, had become a leading domestic patron in artistic, literary, economic and political contexts.⁷⁰ In 1579 Spenser entered Leicester's service, the same year he published *The Shepheardes Calender*.⁷¹ A more controversial aspect of the earl's patronage was his encouragement of Puritan preachers. He had a major influence on the Church as both a councillor and as Chancellor of Oxford University.⁷² Leicester was also a patron of the Presbyterian reformer Thomas Cartwright and when he founded a hospital in Warwick in 1571 Cartwright was appointed as its second master.⁷³ The names of twenty-seven of Leicester's household chaplains are known; nine of them became bishops, and at least twelve were heads of colleges at Oxford or Cambridge. He took a Presbyterian group to the Netherlands in 1586, and this included John Knewstubbess, Dudley Fenner, Humphrey Fenn, and George Gifford.⁷⁴ Gifford was present when Sir Philip Sidney died and received a codicil in his will of £20.⁷⁵ When Gifford was suspended from Maldon in 1584, his patrons (possibly including William Cecil and the Earl of Leicester) helped him to regain his licence to preach.⁷⁶ His replacement was unpopular, however, and his parishioners petitioned the authorities for Gifford's return.⁷⁷

The Sidney circle also exerted an important influence over Spenser's life and works. Leicester's brother was Ambrose Dudley, the Earl of Warwick. Both were uncles to Philip Sidney and his sister Mary Sidney, who was married to Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. Mary was herself a great patron of poets, and her intellectual circle and

⁶⁹ Among other subsidiary offices held by him was that of Queen's Counsel for the Marches of Wales. Early in 1600 Babington was believed to favour Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex; and it was said that Queen Elizabeth had called him to account while he was preaching a sermon before her, because of the hints he made on behalf of the Earl.

⁷⁰ Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 142.

⁷¹ Hume, pp. 7-8. Richard Bambuss, 'Spenser's Life and Career', in *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) ed. by Andrew Hadfield, pp. 13-36, (p. 25).

⁷² Adams, p. 143.

⁷³ Andrew D. Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), p. 5. Adams, pp. 225-6.

⁷⁴ Adams, p. 230.

⁷⁵ McGinnis, p. 47.

⁷⁶ McGinnis, p. 44.

⁷⁷ McGinnis, p. 52.

extended family were closely associated with radical Protestantism.⁷⁸ The circle included Sir Francis Walsingham, Philip Sidney's father-in-law. Arthur Lord Grey de Wilton was a firm Protestant and a close friend of the Sidneys. Spenser went to Ireland with Grey as his secretary during his appointment as the Lord Deputy of Ireland (1580-2).⁷⁹ Spenser admired Grey, defending him in *A View of the State of Ireland* and representing him as Arthegall in *The Faerie Queene*.⁸⁰

Udall was helped by the very same circle of aristocratic patrons. He had been appointed to the living of Kingston-Upon-Thames in 1584, but the authorities noticed his Presbyterianism and, in 1586, he appeared before the court of the high commission to answer for his efforts on behalf of Presbyterian reform. He was restored to his ministry through the efforts of the Earl and Countess of Warwick. However, despite this protection, he was deprived of his living in 1588. His arrest followed and he was tried and sentenced to death in 1591. Appeals to his sentence followed, including an intervention from James VI, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the Earl of Essex (step-son of Leicester), which eventually resulted in a pardon – but he died in prison in 1593.⁸¹

All of our writers were, therefore, not only protected by patrons but were also linked closely together through the support they garnered from this particular faction. Their shared indebtedness is suggested by their dedications to their patrons within the Leicester-Sidney circle. To begin with Spenser: *Virgil's Gnat*, published in *Complaints* (1591), was 'dedicated to the most noble and excellent Lord, the Earle of Leicester, late deceased'.⁸² Spenser dedicated poems to other members of Leicester's family, notably his niece and nephew, Mary and Philip Sidney. A dedicatory sonnet of *The Faerie Queene* is addressed 'To the Right Honourable and Most Vertuous Lady, The Countesse of Pembroke', while *The Ruins of Time* is also dedicated to the 'right Noble and beautifull Ladie, the Ladie Marie Countesse of Pembroke'. Spenser dedicated *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579) to Philip Sidney and wrote an elegy, *Astrophel*, on the occasion of Sidney's death. This included the poem *Doleful lay of Clorinda* which narrates the grief of Mary Sidney. These were published with *Colin Clouts Come*

⁷⁸ Danielle Clarke, 'The Countess of Pembroke and the Practice of Piety', *Literature Compass*, 9.3 (2012), 252-261, (p. 254).

⁷⁹ Shaheen, p. 50.

⁸⁰ Edmund Spenser, *A View on the State of Ireland*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. xiii. This edition is based on Ware's publication and is referred to as *A View* throughout. All citations are taken from the respective editions. Critics tend to refer to Spenser's prose dialogue as *A View on the Present State of Ireland*, but Hadfield and Maley have omitted 'Present' in the title of their recent edition, and I have followed their precedent.

⁸¹ *The Martin Marprelate Tracts: A Modernised and Annotated Edition*, ed. by Joseph L. Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. xlvi, and Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), p. 407.

⁸² Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester died in 1588.

Home Again (1595) and dedicated to Sidney's widow, Frances Walsingham, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, who was by then married to Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex in 1590. Again, Babington dedicated his dialogue *Briefe Conference* (1584) to Mary Sidney; addressing the dedicatory epistle to the 'Right Honorable, and virtuous Ladie, the Ladie Marie, Countesse of Pembroke, his verie and singular *good Ladie and Mistresse*, G(ervase) B(abington) wisheth al mercy and comfort in Christ Jesus both here now and for euer'.⁸³ In addition, Gifford dedicated his first published dialogue, *Countrie Divinitie* (1582), to the Earl of Warwick.

From this summary of biographical evidence it is clear that there are strong links between these writers not only through the reformist faith but also their shared education, literary circles, and network of patrons. Their patrons supported the three ministers, either to gain advancement, or to help them out of trouble for their hard-line Calvinistic beliefs. Furthermore, all were writing dialogue – an aspect of their shared achievement, which has never before been properly explored. As a form that blurs distinctions between public and private identity, fictional and non-fictional narrative, and the conventions of pedagogy and open debate, dialogue proved the perfect vehicle for this group of sixteenth-century writers to display their respective views and opinions. Their dialogues are however usually separated from one another because of their seemingly different status as 'literary' or 'non-literary' outputs, or separately in studies of prose or poetry. Reading them together for the first time, this project explores these writers' shared interest in topical issues of personal spiritual crisis – and reveals their different methods of addressing them. Let us turn now to consider the classical dialogue tradition which all four of our writers would have encountered at school and university.

Classical tradition and sixteenth-century dialogue

The discovery of classical texts, and the recovery in particular of Greek literature and culture, occurred during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Italy.⁸⁴ The wide dissemination of newly translated Greek texts into Latin throughout Europe took place following the development of the printing process during the fifteenth century.⁸⁵ The principle source for early modern dialogic discourse lay in the works of Plato (428-

⁸³ *Briefe Conference*, A2r. There is a dedicatory sonnet to her in *The Faerie Queene*. Along with the patronage from Pembroke Babington was also favoured by the Earl of Essex.

⁸⁴ George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 198. Marsilio Ficino translated Plato's works into Latin during the 1460s, Petrarch discovered a manuscript of Cicero's letters in the fourteenth century, and the bishop of Lodi found a complete manuscript of Cicero's *De oratore*, *Orator*, and *Brutus* in 1421.

⁸⁵ Vickers, p. 255.

348BC).⁸⁶ His magnum opus was *Republic*, but other important works included *Apology of Socrates*, *Symposium*, *Theaetetus*, and *Phaedrus*. Plato's dialogues were an expression of philosophical thought and inquiry featuring Socrates (c469-399BC) along with other interlocutors. An associate of Plato, Xenophon (430-354BC) wrote his dialogues during the 360s; these included *Memorabilia*, *Symposium*, *Oeconomicus*, and *Apology*.⁸⁷ The 'Socratic method' of examination grew from these dialogues - in which Socrates acts as an interlocutor asking questions to determine understanding.⁸⁸ The Romans went on to adopt the dialogue form as a rhetorical tool after they conquered Greece during the first century.⁸⁹ The Roman statesman Cicero (106-43BC) rewrote Greek philosophy in his dialogues in order to 'express Roman intellectual life in and against Greek models'.⁹⁰ His major dialogues included *De Oratore* (55BC), *Partitiones Oratoriae* (52BC) – written as a series of short questions and answers – and *Brutus* (44BC), written in longer speeches.⁹¹ The following brief outline considers some specific aspects of classical dialogue that our group of sixteenth-century writers incorporated within their own writing.

Foremost in the mind of sixteenth-century writers of dialogue was how to draw on the classical traditions in new ecclesiastical contexts. Classical dialogue stands for a kind of certainty and authority, but by the sixteenth century the response of the audiences – and the complexity of the questions – meant that dialogue was being used differently, for different reasons, and with different consequences. In fifth-century Athens, dialogue was central to the practice of the new democracy.⁹² A political leadership vote could only be held when all politicians had been listened to, and their different views expressed.⁹³ The ability to speak effectively was essential for the freedom and prosperity of any respectable Athenian as they were expected to defend themselves in courts of law.⁹⁴ Both Plato and Xenophon wrote in defence of Socrates who was sentenced to death in 399BC following a trial where he was found guilty of impiety and corrupting the young.⁹⁵ Socrates is a constant interlocutor in Plato's dialogues where he is presented as constantly reflecting upon and adapting arguments in order to help

⁸⁶ See *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*, ed. by Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Mary Margaret McCabe, 'Plato's Ways of Writing', pp. 88-113 in *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, ed. by Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), and Malcolm Heath, *Ancient Philosophical Poetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁸⁷ Charles H. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical use of a literary form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 30.

⁸⁸ William J. Prior, 'The Socratic problem', in *A Companion to Plato*, ed. by Hugh Benson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 25-36 (p. 30).

⁸⁹ Goldhill, p. 5.

⁹⁰ Goldhill, p. 5.

⁹¹ Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 29 and p. 36.

⁹² Goldhill, p. 3.

⁹³ Goldhill, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Vickers, p. 7.

⁹⁵ Prior, p. 29.

the 'student' learn.⁹⁶ Dialogue became a vehicle to change opinion – and Socrates is presented as the agent of such transformation in others, through his insistence on asking questions and contemplating the answers.⁹⁷ Indeed, in Plato's dialogues, the only acceptable form of philosophical reasoning is through dialectic discussion with someone who has opposing ideas to affirm theories or beliefs, particularly if one can convert the opposition.⁹⁸

Plato's *Phaedrus* presented a dialogue between Socrates and the younger Phaedrus.⁹⁹ In *Phaedrus*, dialogue is praised as the best tool for an informed philosopher's teaching practice. The dialogue proceeds sequentially, with an answer provoking another question for further illumination, in order to show that 'conversation is the way that philosophy should proceed'.¹⁰⁰ Socrates aimed to convert Phaedrus to a life of philosophy, and the philosophical approach is visible through the dialogue form itself, 'an explicit method of proceeding in philosophical inquiry'.¹⁰¹ *Phaedrus* conveyed three processes best served by dialogue: 'intellectual discoveries, teaching such discoveries to others, and converting others to the life of philosophy'.¹⁰² It is interesting to note the importance of converting others; the sixteenth-century writers explored below rewrote this process by replacing the life of philosophy with new aspects of faith and belief integral to reformed religion. If the purpose of Plato's dialogues was to investigate the truth and to demonstrate both sides of the argument, then this meant that the reader could act as external auditor. It is the reader's responsibility to consider which view is nearer to the truth. Margaret McCabe summarises the reader's role by suggesting that the 'active role of the reader is crucial to understanding why the dialogue is multiform'.¹⁰³ Plato's dialogues did not however always present a straightforward argument, or arrive at a single unambiguous conclusion. This inconclusive ending or argumentative impasse is referred to as Socratic *aporia*.¹⁰⁴ The reason why dialogues are inconclusive is that their aim is 'to provoke the reader into thinking for herself'.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, dialogic discourse can end in persuasion or conversion within the text but it can also end inconclusively, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter which considers Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* and Gifford's *Dialogue*.

⁹⁶ Wilson, p. 26.

⁹⁷ Wilson, p. 27.

⁹⁸ Alex Long, 'Plato's dialogues and a common rational for dialogue form', in *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*, ed. by Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 45-59 (p. 52).

⁹⁹ Vickers, p. 16.

¹⁰⁰ McCabe, 'Plato's Ways of Writing' p. 102

¹⁰¹ McCabe, 'Plato's Ways of Writing' p. 98.

¹⁰² Long, p. 48.

¹⁰³ McCabe, 'Plato's Ways of Writing', p. 106.

¹⁰⁴ Margaret McCabe, 'Form and the Platonic Dialogues' in *A Companion to Plato*, ed. by Hugh Benson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), pp. 39-54 (p. 44).

¹⁰⁵ McCabe, 'Form and the Platonic Dialogues', p. 45.

Let us now turn to *Theaetetus*, a dialogue between Socrates and Theaetetus, in order to consider further the idea of 'internal' dialogue: 'in several passages Plato even envisages someone forming judgments through dialogue with *himself*'.¹⁰⁶ Alex Long suggested that Plato envisaged two sorts of internal dialogue: 'the soul moves from opposed convictions to inner agreement' or sometimes from hesitancy to conviction and 'collaborative conversation'.¹⁰⁷ This is particularly useful when 'a soul investigates something about which it has not yet made a judgement or verdict'.¹⁰⁸ She considered how internal dialogue emerges as a thought process in Plato's *Theaetetus*.¹⁰⁹ Plato saw internal dialogue as a solution if interlocutors are unable to engage in dialogue because they lack the moral qualities, or have an aversion to dialectic itself. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, writers continued to widen the scope of dialogue to meet the needs of their reading public. George Gifford's 'Epistle Dedicatory' to *Countrie Divinitie*, for example, suggests that he has spent time considering the needs of his readers:

I haue therefore gathered the most common principles of their faith and religion, by which they arme themselues, against true repentance, and right vnderstanding: I haue not noted all, neither haue I meddled with those seuerall grosse absurdities, whiche eache hath proper to himself, for that should be infinite.¹¹⁰

As a minister, Gifford considers certain points commonly misunderstood by the uneducated laity, and aims to explain these fully in his dialogue. Gifford's reflection demonstrates the careful thought process that he undertook before setting down his thoughts in his dialogue. The process of the formation of religious identity is traced through interactive debate, which the reader, as external auditor, always observes. To achieve internal spiritual equilibrium, a certain amount of outward expression is required. Gifford's intention to explore the private faith and interaction of individuals in a fictional space becomes public through the printed dialogue. We will revisit these questions below through a discussion of sixteenth-century writers who explored spiritual conflict between faith and doubt through dialogue – particularly Babington's depiction, in *Briefe Conference*, of an internal dialogue between Faith and Frailtie where outward expression is needed to gain faith.

¹⁰⁶ Long, p. 51.

¹⁰⁷ Long, p. 58.

¹⁰⁸ Long, p. 57.

¹⁰⁹ Long, p. 56.

¹¹⁰ *Countrie Divinitie*, 'The Epistle Dedicatory', q4r.

Early modern writers inherited Plato's idea of dialogue with oneself in order to gain knowledge, and his commitment to teaching through dialogue. They also inherited from Plato the notion that dialogue could usefully engage the reader's imagination through fiction. Plato's associate, Xenophon, frequently incorporated fictional presentation in his works. Xenophon's Socratic writings were centred on the fictitious use of first person narrative ('I remember' and 'I was there'), but omitted any mention of his actual presence.¹¹¹ Xenophon begins his *Symposium* by saying he attended a gathering held by Callias in 422BC – which is unlikely, as he would have been only 10 years old.¹¹² His *Oeconomicus* presented Socrates referring to the death of Cyrus and events of 400BC but Xenophon did not see Socrates after 401BC.¹¹³ Modern critics such as McCabe observe that 'each dialogue (of Plato) is a work of fiction, somehow artfully composed in such a way that we notice the artistry itself'.¹¹⁴ She suggests that 'there are explanations for dialogue's elaborate fictionality and they are philosophical. Dialogues are not verbatim reports but artful presentations'.¹¹⁵ K. J. Wilson similarly describes fictional dialogues as 'incomplete fictions', mainly because they are a partial imitation, and partial reality.¹¹⁶ He argues that Plato's 'narratives were fictional and intended to be vehicles of truth or of a search for truth'.¹¹⁷ This blurring of truth and fiction is succinctly summarised by Charles Kahn: 'Socratics as a group and the literature they produced moved to that zone between truth and fiction'.¹¹⁸ The persuasive effectiveness of the dialogue form therefore lies, in part, in the ability of the words to engage the reader's imagination. The paradox of fictional truth will be explored below as we explore how sixteenth-century dialogues engaged the reader's imagination in various different ways – particularly through the use of literary figures, and complex voices.

The selected group of writers were aware of the significance of seemingly firsthand experience. 'Authoritative voice' becomes particularly important when associated with an aspect inherited from classical dialogue: the 'trial-motif'.¹¹⁹ A popular sixteenth-century text that features transcriptions of trials in dialogue form is John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Foxe's book was readily available in all churches from the 1570s, alongside

¹¹¹ Kahn, p. 32.

¹¹² Kahn, p. 32.

¹¹³ Kahn, p. 32.

¹¹⁴ McCabe, 'Plato's Ways of Writing', p. 96.

¹¹⁵ McCabe, 'Plato's Ways of Writing', p. 97.

¹¹⁶ Wilson, p. 5. He refers to the poetic theory of Aristotle with the idea that the basis of poetry is mimesis.

¹¹⁷ Heath, p. 53.

¹¹⁸ Kahn, p. 34.

¹¹⁹ Elizabeth Merrill, *The Dialogue in English Literature* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), p. 36.

the English Bible.¹²⁰ Many of the subjects depicted are lowborn men, women, and children persecuted for their beliefs during Mary I's reign. The depiction of a trial, and the examination of a witness or the accused, seemingly intends to show both sides of the argument before the jury/judge administers justice. Foxe realised that using the voice of the martyrs would have an emotional charge for the reader. One example is the 'history of ten true godly disciples, and martyrs of Christ, burnt together in one fire at Lewes' in 1557.¹²¹ The narrator highlights the reason why hearing a real voice is important:

Touching the whole discourse whereof, for so much as the matter is something strange, and will peradventure scarce find credit upon my narration, with them which deny all things, that like them not to believe, ye shall hear himself speak, and testify both of the manner of his troubles, and also his own examination by himself recorded.¹²²

The narrator admits that the stories may be unbelievable and therefore uses the voice of the martyrs to support the aim of the book. When the 'matter is something strange' that it may be unbelievable then 'ye shall hear himself speak'. In addition, he has recorded his own interrogation to provide a 'true' representation of the trial. The narrator enables one of the 'ten true godly disciples', Richard Woodman, to address the reader in a 'true certificate', to describe his arrest and trial. The 'true certificate' provides the authority, and testifies the truth of the matter, in order to create an emotional resonance thorough dialogue with the reader. Woodman's letter starts with 'Gentle reader, here you shall perceive how the scriptures be partly fulfilled on me'.¹²³ Woodman writes in the first person, engaging the reader by addressing them directly. His first-hand experience provides a true authority to his story and we will see similar, frequent use of personal pronouns ('I', 'me', 'thou', 'thee', and 'you') in the dialogues explored below.

Observational experience is necessary to add authority and our writers understood this significance. The authority of the eyewitness voice was inherited from the first-person narrative of Socratic dialogues. In his 'Preface' to *The State of the Church of Englande laide open in a conference between Diotrephes A Bishop, Tertullus a Papist, Demetrius*

¹²⁰ King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, p. xx. The second edition was published in 1570, the third in 1576, and a fourth in 1583.

¹²¹ King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, p. 212.

¹²² King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, p. 213.

¹²³ King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, p. 213.

an vsurer, Pandocheus an in-keeper, and Paule a preacher of the word of God (1588), for example, Udall makes clear that he is recording what he has 'observed by experience'. Above we saw that Gifford 'gathered the most common principles' of the laity's 'faith and religion' from his ministerial practice. This same first hand 'authoritative voice' is demonstrated by Spenser's use of a firsthand account when Irenius points out at the beginning of *A View* that the events are from his own experiences: 'as I observed them'.¹²⁴ Spenser reiterated the importance attached to the authority of personal experience at the end of his dialogue when Irenius admits: 'which in my small experience I have observed'.¹²⁵

One of the central aims of dialogue, throughout its long gestation in western culture, has always been to persuade the reader to accept the view of the authoritative voice. In Spenser's case, however, dialogue emerges as a place to question as well as to assert textual authority. We see this, for example, in the inconclusive endings to the eclogues in *The Shepheardes Calender* such as the end of 'Julye' where Morrell does not respond to Thomalin's story of the Eagle and Algrind but instead ends the conversation with a dismissal: 'farewell shepheard, sith thys hyll / thou hast such doubt to climbe'.¹²⁶ In *The Faerie Queene* Spenser's dialogue between speakers is occasionally accompanied by a narrative commentary, which provides the reader with additional information. For example, Spenser leaves clear signposts to the reader about the true nature of Archimago in Book I who 'could file his tongue as smooth as glas'.¹²⁷ The engagement of the reader in the dialogic text, through this questioning of authoritative voice, was a repeating theme in Spenser's life and career. Probing Spenser's sophisticated interrogation of the dialogue form sheds light, in turn, on those who were writing dialogue in prose. Together, as a group, the dialogues of these writers illuminate a complex spiritual landscape which only 'looks' like a form concerned to present opinions diametrically opposed to each other.

As we saw above, oratory and dialogue had a crucial role to play in the legal and civic culture of Ancient Greece. Good oratory was also crucial to the decision-making process in the Roman Senate where it dominated criminal and civil trials. James May and Jakob Wisse explain that 'political oratory played a great part in decision-making, which took place in the Senate and in assemblies. [...] Before a vote was taken, there

¹²⁴ *A View*, p. 12.

¹²⁵ *A View*, p. 161.

¹²⁶ 'Julye', ll. 231-2.

¹²⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, l.i.35.

was a debate, all senators being called upon to give their opinion'.¹²⁸ Most legislation was carried out in the 'assembly of the plebs, where the common people had more power. So-called public meetings held separately, or just before the actual voting, provided politicians with opportunities to address the people on such legislation and other matters, and thus influence their decisions'.¹²⁹ The political importance of oratory was also evident in criminal and civil trials, as Cicero's *De oratore* makes clear, and was twofold: 'On the one hand, pleading someone's case was to do him a great service, and in the Roman social system, this meant that one could expect services in return. [...] Being a pleader therefore created many opportunities for building a network of supporters and friends, an essential asset in the political power game'.¹³⁰ The concept of defence in trials brings to mind the defence of Socrates in the dialogues of Plato and Xenophon. The 'trial-motif' emphasises the drama of debate and becomes important to the sixteenth-century writers explored below when they defend their religious beliefs or depict trials of faith in their dialogues.

A further idea that our writers inherited from the classical tradition of Plato's dialogues was the 'journey trope'. Greek dialogues appear to be casual, presenting exchanges between passing strangers or acquaintances. The *Republic* is a report of when Socrates visited the Piraeus. Socrates recounts this through a first person narrative when he reports a conversation of what was discussed.¹³¹ In the dialogues considered below, the fictional setting created by the journey trope allows the number of interlocutors to vary; and the manipulation of characters can create social inversion and possibly social satire. Sometimes social and spiritual hierarchies were deliberately disrupted – such as a layperson who is enlightened, or a preacher who instructs a bishop. In John Udall's *The State of the Church of Englande*, for example, a preacher, Paul, subverts the position and authority of a bishop, Diotrephes. Udall sets his dialogue, *The State of the Church of Englande*, in an inn, deploying the journey or road trope to facilitate the meeting of interlocutors of different religious backgrounds. Likewise, Gifford uses this trope in his dialogues. In *Countrie Divinitie*, for example, the two interlocutors greet each other and observe the usual social decorum: Zelotes greets Atheos, 'Well ouertaken my friend', and Atheos replies 'I thanke you Syr'.¹³² The next few sentences clearly indicate that they are travellers. Zelotes asks how 'fare doe ye trauell this way?' and Atheos answers 'twentie myles'. Again, Gifford employs the

¹²⁸ Cicero: *On the Ideal Orator*, trans. and ed. by James M. May and Jakob Wise (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2001), 'Introduction', p. 4. The Senate was Rome's council of State composed of those who held or had held a magistracy.

¹²⁹ May and Wisse, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁰ May and Wisse, p. 5.

¹³¹ Heath, p. 10.

¹³² *Countrie Divinitie*, A1r.

same type of introduction in *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraftes* (1593) between the two main interlocutors, Samuel and Daniel.¹³³ The dialogue starts with them greeting each other:

Samuell: You are well mette olde acquaintance, I am glad
to see you looke so well, howe doe all our
good friends in your Countrey.

Daniell: I trust they be all in good health, they were when I
came from home, I am sorry to see you looke
so pale, what haue you been sicke lately?¹³⁴

The first few lines are similar to Gifford's earlier dialogues. Daniel's concern about how pale Samuel looks leads their discussion into the main subject matter of the dialogue: the problem of believing too readily in witchcraft. The use of questions by interlocutors helps to provoke a response, and provides a conversational and almost informal tone. These questions extend towards broader public issues: 'I pray you what newes?'¹³⁵ Gifford frames his dialogues with the fictional journey trope to allow the free exchange of news and views between interlocutors who may not normally meet. Entering into dialogue, these various interlocutors bring private spiritual questions into a fictional public domain.

Spenser's deployment of the resources of dialogue also frequently involves engagement with the journey trope, particularly in *The Faerie Queene*. Britomart departs from her father's castle in Book III searching for Arthegall, and her quest continues into Books IV and V. At the beginning of Book VI Arthegall hands over the titular knight's baton to Calidore who says: 'where ye ended haue, now I begin'. In true dialogue form, they meet by chance on the road and recognise the knightly prowess of each other. This fortuitous meeting and ensuing conversation provides Calidore with the information he needs to take the correct path to find the Blatant Beast:

What is that quest (quoth then Sir *Arthegall*)
That you into such perils presently doth call?

The Blatant Beast (quoth him) I doe pursew,

¹³³ The others are the wife of Samuel, M. B. Schoolemaister, and goodwife R.

¹³⁴ *Witches and Witchcraftes*, A4r.

¹³⁵ Uttered by the Papist at the beginning of *Dialogue*, 1r.

And though the world incessantly doe chase,¹³⁶

The chance meetings provide opportunities for the knights to test their virtues and to enter into dialogue with a wide range of interlocutors – as will be discussed in later chapters. Again, the argument of the ‘September’ eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender* describes how Diggon Davie ‘in hope of more gayne, droue his sheepe into a farre countrie’. On his return he meets and enters into dialogue with Hobbinol about the ‘loose liuing of Popish prelates’. Spenser develops the journey trope further in *Colin Clout Comes Home Again* (1595). Here Hobbinol asks the returning Colin, if it is ‘not too painful to repeat / The passed fortunes, which to thee befell’, when he entreats ‘at thy leisure them to vs tell’.¹³⁷ Spenser also opens his prose dialogue, *A View on the State of Ireland*, with the journey trope. Here Irenius returns to England from Ireland, as is confirmed by Eudoxus’ first line: ‘that countrey of Ireland, whence you lately came’.¹³⁸

Our chosen sixteenth-century writers therefore present their ideas and beliefs in a form inherited from antiquity, which they recast into something contemporary, discursive, and fictional. Their aim was to explore spiritual interiority through the fundamentally outward-looking form of dialogue. Classical dialogue may have provided a certain authority, but our writers sometimes used this same form to question theological, spiritual and social certainty. The next section of this chapter examines some aspects of their shared cultural context – particularly the paradox of truth-telling, which was an important aspect of the dialogue form. To open these questions up, we will briefly consider the interface between sixteenth-century theories of dialogue and poetry as articulated by Sir Philip Sidney in *The Defence of Poesy* (written 1580, published posthumously 1595) and George Puttenham in *The Art of English Poesy* (1589).¹³⁹ As we have already seen, our selected group of writers had close links with the Leicester/Sidney circle; and George Gifford was one of the chaplains on Leicester’s campaign to the Low Countries who attended Sidney at his death.¹⁴⁰ Sidney is a useful contextualising source allowing us to see what kind of ideas – specifically on the resource of dialogue – were circulating among this particular group of writers. These reveal the place of literary figures in dialogic discourse, specifically how dialogue

¹³⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, VI.i.6-7.

¹³⁷ *Colin Clout Comes Home Again*, ll. 32-35.

¹³⁸ *A View*, p. 11.

¹³⁹ Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy* (c.1580; printed 1595) in *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) and George Puttenham’s *The Art of English Poetry* (1589), *A Critical Edition*, ed. by Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007).

¹⁴⁰ Sidney also employed the dialogue form in several of his works including; ‘A dialogue between two shepherds, uttered in a pastoral show at Wilton’ (1577), *The Lady of May* (1578), and *The Old Arcadia* (1580), all published during the 1590s.

negotiates between truth and falsehood; and the role played by the imagination in dialogic 'truth-telling'. The following discussion sets out some of their broader shared literary and cultural contexts, therefore adding to the close biographical and spiritual links which this group of writers shared, as outlined above.

Dialogue and Elizabethan Poetics

In this section we will consider the common pool of resources available to our writers, focusing in particular on literary treatises which deal with the dialogue form. By examining definitions of dialogue, and exploring how the inherited classical tradition of dialogue intersected with early modern theories of poetry, we can appreciate why this form became so integral to our group of writers. Literary theorists explored how dialogue, as a form associated with the public sphere, nevertheless provided an opportunity for the exploration of the inward self. Sidney and Puttenham clearly illustrate how language can be used to stir the reader's imagination; specifically they show us how meanings of words are changed (through metaphor and other literary figures) and the affect of rhetorical devices on the imagination. First we will consider some sixteenth-century definitions of dialogue put forward by Puttenham and Sidney.

Puttenham provides a definition of dialogue: '*Dialogismus*, or the right reasoner. We are sometimes occasioned in our tale to report some fine speech from another man's mouth [...] in which report we must always give to every person his fit and natural, and that which best becometh him'.¹⁴¹ According to Puttenham, words exist for the purpose of persuasion: 'utterance also and language is given by nature to man for persuasion of others and aid of themselves'.¹⁴² This sentiment is echoed by Gifford who deployed the dialogue form to make clearer 'for the capacity of the simpler sort'.¹⁴³ Sidney, in *The Defense of Poesy*, argues that Plato was a poet because he chose to write dialogues:

And, truly, even Plato whosoever well considereth shall find that in the body of his work, though the inside and strength were philosophy, the skin, as it were, and beauty depended most of poetry. For all standeth upon dialogues, wherein he feigneth many honest burgesses of Athens to speak of such

¹⁴¹ Puttenham, p. 321.

¹⁴² Puttenham, p. 98.

¹⁴³ George Gifford, *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraftes* (1593), p A3r.

matters that, if they had been set on the rack, they would never have confessed them.¹⁴⁴

Sidney acknowledges that dialogue can be used to make people tell the truth, whether they want to or not. He considers that the 'skin' depends on the beauty of poetry, which is more significant than the 'inside and strength' of the subject. It is poetry's beauty that allows the truth to emerge. Sidney summarises his thoughts on Plato by saying 'of all philosophers he is the most poetical'.¹⁴⁵ He admits that 'Plato found fault that the poets of his time filled the world with wrong opinions of the gods, making light tales of that unspotted essence, and therefore would not have the youth depraved with such opinions'.¹⁴⁶ However, he continues to explain that 'Plato [...] in his dialogue *Ion* giveth high and rightly divine commendation unto poetry'.¹⁴⁷ Sidney argues that Plato was not essentially opposed to poets and poetry; rather, he was critical of those who presented mistaken opinions or falsehoods. Importantly, Sidney recognises dialogue as a form of poetry that is able to affect the imagination even as it sets out to present the truth. Sidney's *Defense* suggests that theories of dialogue were becoming inseparable from theories of poetry during the last two decades of the sixteenth century.

This may be surprising: the dialogue form is traditionally associated with truth-telling whereas poetry is associated more readily with pleasure and the imagination. However, Sidney describes the honesty of the poet: 'he nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth, for, as I take it, to lie is to affirm that to be true which is false'.¹⁴⁸ Sidney continues to describe the integrity of the poet:

[T]he poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes; he citeth not authorities of other histories, but even for his entry calleth the sweet Muses to inspire into him a good invention - in troth, not labouring to tell you what is or is not, but what should or should not be.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Sidney, p. 213.

¹⁴⁵ Sidney, p. 238.

¹⁴⁶ Sidney, p. 239.

¹⁴⁷ Sidney, p. 239. *Ion* is a dialogue between Socrates and Ion, a performer of poetry, to develop a theory of poetic inspiration.

¹⁴⁸ Sidney, p. 235.

¹⁴⁹ Sidney, p. 235.

Sidney suggested that the poet writes 'what should or should not be', impassioning the mind through figurative speech and affective words. Using the dialogue form, our group of writers were able to instruct and inform, even as they developed new kinds of literary sophistication. Spenser describes *The Faerie Queene* 'as being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profit of ensample'.¹⁵⁰ Spenser does not recite what actually happened but fabricates another history that may have happened. However, as we will see, tension sometimes develops between what is real and what is false. The poet may never lie as he only writes what 'should be', suggesting that the reader finally determines the truth through careful reading of both sides that dialogue seemingly presents.

Truth-telling through dialogue brings us to consider the centrality of the Bible to literary inspiration, as Sidney made clear in *The Defense*:

Since the Holy Scripture (wherein there is no uncleanness) hath whole parts in it poetical, and that even our Saviour Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it; since all his kinds are not only in their united forms but in their severed dissections fully commendable.¹⁵¹

Sidney argues that Holy Scripture has 'whole parts in it poetical' and still remains clean and pure. The poetical parts do not detract from the truth of Christ's teachings: 'Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it'. The value of cleanliness in the heart and soul, in order to receive the Word of God, signifies a virtue ideally embedded in the Protestant self. Later we will see that Babington chose to explain the 'comfort of those blessings pronounced by Christ in the fifth of Matthew', which he 'laide downe in this plaine order of Dialogue' to provide help to everybody.¹⁵² If one can follow biblical teachings, then one can live a good Christian life – and the model was, of course, David the Psalmist:¹⁵³

[David's] handling, his prophecye, which is merely poetical
[...] he maketh you, as it were, see God coming in his
Majesty, his telling of the beasts' joyfulness and hills'

¹⁵⁰ 'Letter to Raleigh', p. 15.

¹⁵¹ Sidney, p. 323.

¹⁵² Title page, *Brief Conference*.

¹⁵³ Lewalski, p. 7.

leaping, [what is it] but a heavenly poesy, wherein almost he showeth himself a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting beauty, to be seen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith?¹⁵⁴

Sidney presents David the Psalmist as a poet whose writing can affect the reader and create pictures 'to be seen by the eyes of the mind', such as 'God coming in his Majesty'. Sidney describes David as 'merely poetical' - but means 'entirely poetical', or heavenly and beautiful. He provides examples of other poetical parts of scripture: 'Solomon in his Song of Songs, in his Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, Moses and Deborah in their Hymns, and the writer of Job'.¹⁵⁵ All of these passages 'imitate the unconceivable excellencies of God'. This imitation is illustrated in Sidney's description of poetry as: 'an art of imitation for so Aristotle termeth it in the word *mimēsis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture – with this end: to teach and delight'.¹⁵⁶ The dialogue form often imitates a spoken conversation; and in this respect, too, is usefully considered within the realms of Sidney's 'poesy'.

The poet does not necessarily intend to create lies and confuse the imagination; but, as Sidney suggests, his purpose is to create pictures and stories:

the poet's persons and doings are but pictures what should be and not stories what have been, they will never give the lie to things not affirmatively but allegorically and figuratively written; and therefore, as in history, looking for truth, they may go away full fraught with falsehood, so in poesy, looking but for fiction, they shall use the narration but as an imaginative ground-plot of a profitable invention.¹⁵⁷

The reader needs to make sense of the story by building in their own mind the foundations of some useful idea or course of action. For Sidney, meaning emerges through the reader's interpretation of that story and the effect of words on the imagination. In addition, he mentions 'looking for truth' and never giving a 'lie to things'. The onus will be on the reader to determine what is true or false, irrespective

¹⁵⁴ Sidney, p. 215.

¹⁵⁵ Sidney, p. 217.

¹⁵⁶ Sidney, p. 217.

¹⁵⁷ Sidney, p. 235.

of whether the writing is allegorical and figurative, or whether it seems to speak the plain truth.¹⁵⁸ This group of writers use dialogue to express their versions of 'true' faith through placing their interlocutors in opposition in order to highlight to the reader the authoritative voice that should be heeded. In the first, early modern editions of the printed dialogues explored below, the interlocutors' names are clearly indicated in the margins. The speakers' names are also clearly labelled throughout *The Shepheardes Calender*, sometimes above the verses rather than in the margin. In Gifford's *Dialogue* and Babington's *Briefe Conference*, the authoritative voice is reinforced by the choice of font. In both of these dialogues, black letter and roman fonts are used. Black letter print would have been familiar to the general reader as it was used for more popular or less exclusive publications and was associated with old-fashioned or familiar writing and evoked nostalgia or rather a representation of the past.¹⁵⁹ The use of roman type became more widespread in books for more scholarly or cultured audiences from the 1590s. Fonts can indicate the authorial emphasis so the reader understands whose voice should be followed.¹⁶⁰ In Gifford's *Dialogue*, for example, the Protestant's voice is in black letter to signify antiquity of the Protestant tradition, whereas the Papist's words appear in roman type to signify the unknown or less familiar.¹⁶¹ Roman and black letter are also used in *The Shepheardes Calender* – the epistle, introduction, and the glosses were in roman, whilst black letter is used in all the eclogues, to signify antiquity compounded by the archaic language used by Spenser.¹⁶²

We saw earlier that Puttenham highlights the persuasiveness of language and words. He specifically defines certain aspects of figurative speech:

Now must the mind also be served with natural delight by figures sensible, such as by alteration of intendements affect the courage and give a good liking to the conceit. And first, single words have their sense and understanding

¹⁵⁸ John C. Ulreich Jr. observes that poetry makes new truths by 'manifesting an internal world of spirit' and the reader's role is to enact that truth in their imagination. 'Making Dreams Truths, and Fables Histories: Spenser and Milton on the Nature of Fiction', *Studies in Philology*, 87.3 (Summer 1990), 363-377 (p. 368 and p. 373).

¹⁵⁹ William Kuskin, *Recursive Origins: Writing at the Transition to Modernity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), p. 76.

¹⁶⁰ Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580 – 1640* (London: Athlone Press, 1983), pp. 24-25.

¹⁶¹ *Dialogue* was written in the 1580s before roman type became more widely used.

¹⁶² Andrew Hadfield notes that the 'type used is also a conspicuous reference to Chaucer, whose poetry was always produced in black-letter type until the end of the seventeenth century' in *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 124. Richard A. McCabe agrees that the 'black letter typeface enforces the archaic quality of the poetry', see 'Annotating anonymity, or putting a gloss on *The Shepheardes Calender*' in *Ma(r)king the Text: The Presentation of Meaning on the Literary Page*, ed. by Joe Bray, Miriam Handley, and Anne C. Henry (Aldershot, Burlington, Singapore, and Sidney: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 35-54, p. 37.

altered and figured many ways, to wit, by transport, abuse,
cross-naming, new-naming, change of name.¹⁶³

Puttenham describes that 'figures sensible' can alter and affect the mind by changing the sense of single words through the figure of '*metaphora* - the figure of transport. There is a kind of wresting of a single word from his own right signification to another not so natural'.¹⁶⁴ He describes those 'sensible' figures that affect the mind by altering sense or 'intendments in whole clauses and speeches', that is, '*allegoria* or the figure of false semblant'.¹⁶⁵ Additionally, 'what else is your metaphor but an inversion of sense by transport; your allegory but a duplicity of meaning or dissimulation under covert and dark intendments [...] and many other ways seeking to inveigle and appassionate the mind'.¹⁶⁶ Puttenham explored figurative speeches that are able to 'pass the ordinary limits of common utterance'.¹⁶⁷ Such rhetorical devices affect the mind; and, along with dialogue, 'the right reasoner', they are deployed together to persuade the reader: 'utterance also and language is given by nature to man for persuasion of others and aid of themselves'.¹⁶⁸ Puttenham also advocates using language that 'best becometh' the speaker to ensure the voice of authority prevails. As we will see below, our group of writers were particularly keen to explore (and sometimes to establish) an authoritative voice. Their dialogues appeal to the reader's imagination in various ways, often seeking to persuade through their deployment of a variety of explicitly literary tropes and techniques.

In this section, we have seen that both Sidney and Puttenham suggest that dialogue can present a reasoned argument in order to persuade others – 'to inform the simpler sort'. Moreover, dialogue shares with poetry an interest in (if not always a commitment to) truth-telling and authenticity. Poetry affects the imagination by using ordinary language in an extraordinary way – or, as Puttenham eloquently puts it, 'all our figures be but transgressions of our daily speech'.¹⁶⁹ 'Poetry "teaches" by engaging the reader' and the process is one of discovery, 'that persuades one to invest, feel, discern, and weigh probable and always situated or contextualised meanings'.¹⁷⁰ Perhaps dialogue loses some of its traditional stake in the 'truth' when it deploys complex figurative language, and when it brings the reader's imagination to the fore in the

¹⁶³ Puttenham, p. 262.

¹⁶⁴ Puttenham, p. 263.

¹⁶⁵ Puttenham, p. 271.

¹⁶⁶ Puttenham, p. 238.

¹⁶⁷ Puttenham, p. 238.

¹⁶⁸ Puttenham, p. 98.

¹⁶⁹ Puttenham, p. 348.

¹⁷⁰ Edward Armstrong, *A Circeonian Sunburn: A Tudor Dialogue on Humanistic Rhetoric and Civic Poetics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), p. 65.

creation of meaning. In the discussion that follows, we will see both poetry and dialogue making extensive use of metaphor and other kinds of sophisticated literary language. The literary achievements of polemical dialogues only however emerge, I argue, when we read these alongside the work of poets – such as Spenser. As we have seen, early modern theories of poetry are inseparable from theories of dialogue. The group of writers considered below draw on the cultural resources of poetry and literary language in order further to explore the late sixteenth-century religious landscape, focussing especially on emerging forms of Protestant selfhood. This chapter concludes with an overview of modern critical responses to sixteenth-century dialogue and the concept of Protestant poetics. This section will clarify why prose dialogues have been overlooked until recently and suggest some ways that they can be rehabilitated into the early modern literary canon.

Critical Traditions

In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars began to explore how dialogue, a form associated with investigative truth, nevertheless draws in important ways on the resources of the imagination in order to spread reform. Protestants needed to develop a biblically inspired substitute to distinguish their writing from the supposedly licentious, scandalous, or worldly poetry of their contemporaries. The justification of literature through didacticism was central to Protestant poetics.¹⁷¹ Barbara Lewalski describes how early modern poetry ‘affirms the poetry of the Bible to be analogous to and prior and superior to Pagan poetry’, in order ‘to defend the practice of poetry by Christians, and to propose the Bible as a model for Christian poets’.¹⁷² Debora Shuger describes the ‘Christian Grand Style’ of the Renaissance that ‘expressed a passionate seriousness about the most important issues of human life’.¹⁷³ This was a ‘bridge between the word and the world, connecting problems of style to the role of emotion and imagination in the mind’s journey to God, to the relation between thought and feeling, to the Christian concept of selfhood’.¹⁷⁴ Lewalski and Shuger developed the concept of ‘Protestant poetics’ and the following discussion will set out to explore how sixteenth-century dialogues contributed to this notion. I will also draw on more recent

¹⁷¹ Jane Grogan, *Exemplary Spenser: Visual and Poetic Pedagogy in The Faerie Queene* (Farnham, Surrey: Aldershot and Ashgate, 2009), p. 3.

¹⁷² Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetic and the Seventeenth Century Lyric* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 7. She described how religious writing was transformed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the emergence of characteristic Protestant forms reflected the new biblical emphasis, the Protestant paradigm of Christian life, and Protestant ideas regarding the use of art in the presentation of sacred truth, p.10. My argument is that dialogue is one of these forms.

¹⁷³ Debora K. Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 7. The ‘Grand Style’ of the Greeks was described as passionate and able to move the emotions.

¹⁷⁴ Shuger, p. 8.

critical trends, building on our earlier discussion of the contentious religious landscape of late Elizabethan England.¹⁷⁵ This cultural background shaped the work of all four of our writers as they sought, in their different ways, to explore Protestant inwardness through dialogue.

In the past twenty years, scholarship has – in some respects – become more interested in early modern dialogues. Scholars have, for example, traced the development of the form in other countries and surveyed the numerous dialogues written. This should not be surprising as Dorothea Heitsch and Jean-François Vallée note: ‘the dialogue genre was the most prevalent form of writing in the European Renaissance’.¹⁷⁶ However, early-mid twentieth-century scholarship had previously overlooked the form, particularly the polemical dialogues, which are conspicuously absent from C.S. Lewis’s *English Literature of the Sixteenth Century: Excluding Drama*.¹⁷⁷ Lewis dedicates one section to prose written during Elizabeth’s reign, which starts by considering, disparagingly, the pamphlet as a dominant form, ‘if it should be called a form’, as its function is purely propaganda.¹⁷⁸ Lewis is dismissive of the writing styles of the pamphleteers, illustrating his argument through Robert Greene whose best work was not contained in his pamphlets but in his prose fiction, such as *Mamillia* (1583).¹⁷⁹ Lewis dismisses the Marprelate tracts as unimportant on an aesthetic level but admits the author’s importance as a controversial theologian. He further concedes that the author of the Marprelate tracts has a place in the history of prose, as the manner of his writing was to target the ‘ordinary person’.¹⁸⁰ Lewis however virtually ignores pamphlets in dialogue form perhaps because he believes that prose writing was not to entertain but to instruct.¹⁸¹ The two theologians whom he considers deserving of attention are Cardinal William Allen (who wrote in Latin) and Richard Hooker. Lewis holds these two writers, on either side of the religious divide, in great esteem mainly because of how they express their beliefs in a carefully considered way.¹⁸² These two writers did not use the dialogue form, which suggests that Lewis was sceptical of the literary content of polemical dialogues and believed monological writing was the most literary or intellectual prose form. This thesis aims to argue against this assumption of Lewis’ by exploring, in particular, the ‘literary’ aspects of the prose dialogues, including Gifford’s

¹⁷⁵ McEachern, ‘Spenser and Religion’, p. 30.

¹⁷⁶ Dorothea Heitsch and Jean-François Vallée, eds. *Printed Voices: The Renaissance Culture of Dialogue* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. ix.

¹⁷⁷ C. S. Lewis, *English Literature of the Sixteenth Century: Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954).

¹⁷⁸ Lewis, p. 394.

¹⁷⁹ Lewis, p. 401.

¹⁸⁰ Lewis, p. 405.

¹⁸¹ Lewis, p. 435. Lewis does comment on George Gifford’s *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcraftes* (1593), which he describes as being written to instruct.

¹⁸² Lewis, p. 438. He specifically describes Allen’s writing as ‘a steady exposition of what he believes to be the truth’.

Dialogue betweene a Papist and Protestant, Udall's *The State of the Church of Englande*, and Babington's *Briefe Conference*.

The opinion of Lewis cast a long shadow over the reception of English early modern dialogues. Even recently, critics like Antoinina Zlatar argue that the critical agenda has remained unchanged ever since.¹⁸³ Her *Reformation Fictions: Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England* (2011) attempts to recuperate the dialogue form into the early modern literary canon. Zlatar accomplishes this by placing English publications alongside polemical dialogues of Lutheran Germany and Calvinist Geneva, comparing Elizabethan texts with early Tudor ones.¹⁸⁴ She suggests three aspects of polemical texts that confirm their literary interest for modern scholars. Firstly, they are works of art to be admired and critically acclaimed; secondly, they comprise vehicles of thought, or platforms for ideas to be expressed; and finally, they are acts of communication which inform the reader or respond to another writer.¹⁸⁵ I will draw on Zlatar's work to consider how our cohort of writers use the dialogue form to explore how the spiritual self emerges through debate and dialogue. In particular, as we will see, our writers they inflected their work with literary devices in order to create (or develop) a type of 'Protestant poetics' capable of promoting their reformist agenda. Moreover, we will explore how this group drew on the biblical precedent of figurative language in order to impassion the reader's mind, and to persuade them to convert to the 'true' faith.

Let us return now to our working definition of dialogue, outlined above: there is always a listener 'who may or may not reply'. This suggests that the reader's role is to listen actively as they are directly addressed for a purpose.¹⁸⁶ As we will see, the listener 'who may or may not reply' also sometimes represents the reader. The reader cannot reply per se, but the words can affect their mind, emotionally or intellectually. Tackling the question from a different angle, and drawing especially on the Platonic tradition, Roger Deakins traces the development of the dialogue form from 'genre' type to 'anti-genre'. He explains that the 'genre' form was introduced first in England; but, under the influence of Erasmus's *Colloquies*, the 'anti-genre' rose in popularity.¹⁸⁷ Deakins considered that only five of the two hundred and thirty extant Tudor dialogues come

¹⁸³ Zlatar, p. 5.

¹⁸⁴ Zlatar, p. 7. Examples include an Edwardian dialogue, Luke Shepherd's *John Bon and Mast Person* (1548), and a Marian dialogue, William Turner's *The Hunting of the Romyshe Vuolfe* (1555).

¹⁸⁵ Zlatar, p. 7.

¹⁸⁶ Florence M. Jobson, *Dialogue in the Major Poetry of Edmund Spenser* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, St Louis University, Kentucky, USA, 1967), - 'dialogue is any speech, formal or colloquial, directly addressed by a character to a listener, who may or may not reply', p.15.

¹⁸⁷ Deakins, p. 11.

close to fulfilling the requirements for dialogic decorum outlined by the Italian Carlo Sigonio in his *De Dialogo de Liber* (1562).¹⁸⁸ Sigonio's treatise details the characteristics of what Deakins terms 'genre' dialogue. Here, dialogue is 'a serious literary form, free from contamination by the satirical spirit'.¹⁸⁹ Sigonio suggested that dialogues should not represent the issues of the day but rather address general concerns.¹⁹⁰ In contrast, the 'anti-genre' type need not follow these conventions, as Deakins explains: 'there is no decorum of places, persons, and times; no reason is given for the meeting of the speakers; they are unlike in age and rank; there is no location in historical time'.¹⁹¹

A later discussion by Hans Robert Jauss describes two discrete types of dialogue, the 'magistral' and the 'Socratic'.¹⁹² The 'magistral' type emphasises the superiority of the first voice over the second but requires a third voice, an absent presence. This authoritative third party can be represented by an ancient text or by the teachings of Jesus, specifically in the New Testament. The 'Socratic' type resembles a free-flowing discussion, which produces meaning through mutual inquiry when the participants recognise their ignorance.¹⁹³ Jauss builds on the classical paradigms sketched out above by incorporating the Bible in what he refers to as 'Christian dialogue'. He suggests that 'dialogicity manifests itself as a particular trait of the Christian religion', and that this is demonstrated by 'the verbal rapport of I and Thou between God and Man'.¹⁹⁴ Entering into dialogue emerges as an important aspect of the believer's engagement with, and understanding of, scripture. Other critics also propose two 'types' of dialogue, but describe them slightly differently. K. J. Wilson, for example, describes two classes of scholarly dialogues in the Renaissance.¹⁹⁵ The first he calls 'scholastic' or 'eristic', and was written in Latin by professional philosophers in the tradition of university disputation. Such dialogues instruct the student in techniques of controversy and provide training in effective methods of disputation. Secondly, the 'humanist' or 'periastic' type can be written in Latin or the vernacular and tends to enquire more experimentally after the truth.¹⁹⁶ Wilson's first 'scholastic' type resembles the 'magistral' described by Jauss, also referred to as 'closed' or 'didactic' dialogue.

¹⁸⁸ Deakins, p. 16. These are Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), Thomas Starkey's *Dialogue betweene Pole and Lupset* (1532), Sir Thomas Elyot's *Of the knowledge that Maketh a Wise Man* (1533), Ellis Heywood's *Il More* (1556), and George Buchanan's *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos* (1579).

¹⁸⁹ Deakins, p. 11.

¹⁹⁰ Deakins, p. 13.

¹⁹¹ Deakins, p. 18.

¹⁹² Jauss, p. 210.

¹⁹³ Jauss, p. 210.

¹⁹⁴ Jauss, p. 209.

¹⁹⁵ Wilson considers the works of Thomas Elyot, Roger Ascham, and Thomas More, examples of what Deakins calls 'genre' type dialogues.

¹⁹⁶ Wilson, pp. 47-50.

Wilson's 'humanist' dialogue is similar to the 'Socratic' type, also called 'open' or 'sceptical', which allowed for a more free-flowing inquiry.

To these important studies, we may add that of Virginia Cox which focuses especially on the Italian dialogue form in the Renaissance.¹⁹⁷ Her investigation includes Baldesar Castiglione's *Cortegiano* (1528), Sigonio's *De Dialogo Liber*, and Stefano Guazzo's *Civil Conversazione* (1579). Cox helpfully outlines the difference in form between dialogues produced in Italy and those produced in other European countries, including England, distinguishing in particular between 'documentary' and 'fictional' forms of dialogue.¹⁹⁸ The documentary form, which was essentially Italian, utilises identifiable historical figures as interlocutors and purports to be a transcription of a real conversation between speakers. In other countries (including England), the 'fictional' dialogue prevailed, tending to use the Lucianic convention of fictional interlocutors to present a discussion in an undefined place and time.¹⁹⁹ Cox succinctly explains the increase in dialogic discourse: 'when an age adopts on a wide scale a form that explicitly stages the act of communication it is because that act has been perceived as problematic'.²⁰⁰ Cox describes the dialogue form as:

a representation of a communicative process, a communication itself, like any text. The oral exchange acts as a kind of fictional shadow to the literary transaction between the reader and the text. The argument in a written dialogue is part of a fictional conversation and an actual literary exchange.²⁰¹

Early modern fictional dialogues can present a wide range of circumstances; they are not bound by the restrictions of real historical events. The fictional premise of late sixteenth-century dialogues demonstrate, in interesting ways, that acts of communication were problematic in a culture where a personal avowal of faith could result in punishment.²⁰² And as we will see, exchanges could take place between the readers and texts, as well as between interlocutors on the page.

¹⁹⁷ Virginia Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in its Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 22.

¹⁹⁸ Cox, p. 10.

¹⁹⁹ Cox, pp. 9-10.

²⁰⁰ Cox, p. 7.

²⁰¹ Cox, p. 5.

²⁰² Arnold Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalty in Elizabethan England* (London: Scholar Press, 1979), pp. 8-9. Discusses the persecution of the English Catholic community and that the English government claimed Catholics were executed as traitors not heretics.

From this brief survey of scholarship on early modern dialogue we can see that Deakins and Wilson address the fictionality of dialogue, although they refrain from exploring how this particular feature affected polemical dialogues. The work of Cox, focussing on Italian dialogues, also mentions the rise of fictional dialogues in sixteenth-century England, in contrast to the 'documentary' dialogues of Italy, but does not explore English dialogues in detail. Zlatar moves scholarship forward in a different direction by exploring Elizabethan polemical dialogues alongside the polemical dialogues of Lutheran Germany and Calvinist Geneva. She set these in context alongside anti-papal campaigns, and theological debates about divine intervention following the defeat of the Spanish Armada.²⁰³ My own study builds on all of this work in order to foreground the particular achievements of 'fictional dialogue', which tends to incorporate figurative and affective language, and which works on the imagination of the reader in order to explore and sometimes reinforce the ideals of Protestant spiritual selfhood. Additionally, the following chapters will bring together the above scholarship with more recent work on affect, the role of the reader, and the early modern imagination to reveal the complex ways in which dialogue worked upon readers. We will return, too, to recent critical accounts of Spenser's life and works with the aim of exploring his spirituality in a new and under-considered cultural context. What begins to emerge is a dialogue form that demands recognition because it responds to the language of the Bible whilst also creating a platform for writers to articulate Protestant subjectivity through the resources of the imagination. In particular, I will argue that the featured polemical dialogues, written during the 1580s, incorporated literary devices to impassionate readers' minds, even as they based themselves securely on scriptural teachings. The inherently dramatic and literary aspects of the dialogue form, and their contribution to broader cultural debates of the period, are revealed in new ways, I suggest, when we read our three Puritan ministers' works alongside Spenser's.

²⁰³ Zlatar, pp. 6-7.

Chapter II – Dialogue and plainness: Edmund Spenser's 'Maye' (1579) and George Gifford's *A Dialogue betweene a Papist and a Protestant applied to the Capacitie of the Vnlearned* (1582)¹

In Chapter I we saw that Edmund Spenser and George Gifford shared many educational, literary, and personal connections, along with the other writers considered in this thesis. This chapter will focus on how Spenser and Gifford used dialogic discourse to engage their readers. Reading these two writers together, we can see how they both drew on the classical inherited dialogue tradition, with its focus on didacticism, whilst bringing to the fore topical subjects with the deployment of literary and scriptural tropes that circulated in their own particular cultural milieu. As we saw in the previous chapter, George Gifford was a minister with strong Puritan beliefs. He had strong links with the Leicester/Sidney circle and went to the Low Countries with Leicester and attended Philip Sidney on his deathbed. Following his first dialogue, *A briefe discourse of certaine pointes of the religion which is among the common sort of Christians, which may bee termed the Countrie Divinitie with a manifest confutation of the same, after the order of a dialogue* (1582), Gifford published *A Dialogue betweene a Papist and a Protestant applied to the capacitie of the unlearned* in 1582, and *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcraftes in which is laid open how craftily the Diuell deceiueth not onely the witches but many other and so leadeth them awrie into many great errorrs* in 1593.²

Gifford published *A Dialogue betweene a Papist and a Protestant* a few years after *The Shepheardes Calender* and there are thematic similarities between the two that reflect the topical events of the time – specifically the papal threat, which had become more significant during the late 1570s and early 1580s demonstrated by the threat of war with Spain, closer to home with Mary Queen of Scots, and the Jesuit mission. Gifford and Spenser however addressed questions of Protestant selfhood in different ways. Although Spenser's volume was published first, I will begin with Gifford who deployed an impression of 'plainness' in order to make an appeal to the 'simple sort'. We will then turn to Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* with a focus on the 'Maye' eclogue in order to trace broader cultural and spiritual questions that 'plainness' allowed him to

¹ Edmund Spenser: *The Shorter Poems*, ed. by Richard A. McCabe (London: Penguin Books, 1999). George Gifford, *A Dialogue betweene a Papist and a Protestant applied to the capacitie of the unlearned* (1582). Referred to as *Dialogue* throughout and all quotations are taken from this edition.

² George Gifford, *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcraftes in which is laid open how craftily the Diuell deceiueth not onely the Witches but many other and so leadeth them awrie into many great errorrs* (1593), referred to as *Witches and Witchcraftes* throughout and all quotations are taken from this edition. *A Briefe Discourse of Certaine Pointes of the Religion which is among the Common Sort of Christians, which may bee termed the Countrie Divinitie with a manifest confutation of the same, after the order of a dialogue* (1582), referred to as *Countrie Divinitie*.

articulate. Finally, we will read the conclusions of both texts together to examine how these two writers negotiated one particular formal feature from classical dialogue – ‘Socratic aporia’.

In this chapter, attention will focus on these two writers’ differing uses of the dialogue form, and the language they deploy to engage the reader. The concept of ‘familiar’ language, explored above in Chapter I, resonates with the familiarity of the dialogue form itself.³ The use of familiar language lends itself to simplicity – evoking ideas of homeliness, plainness, and a certain naiveté. As we will discover, Gifford is keen to retain the more direct didactic elements of dialogue, and this is illustrated with the questions and answers throughout his dialogues which set out to reveal the ‘truth’. Gifford published several sermons, treatises, and catechisms with the aim of educating the ‘common sort’ in religious matters and he often addressed the ‘common man’ in his published dialogues.⁴ In *Dialogue* he interprets scriptural passages to help his reader understand biblical messages and deploys certain passages allegorically, such as the battle between David and Goliath, in order to depict the battle between the uneducated man and the might of the Roman Church. As we will see, however, Spenser queries the uses and functions of dialogue and *The Shepheardes Calender* ‘is relentlessly dialectical and self reflexive’.⁵ Spenser both adopts and questions the forms of Protestant self-scrutiny outlined in the previous chapter; for, as Richard McCabe confirms, ‘at the heart of Spenserian self-assertion is self-qualification’.⁶ Although the dialogue form is polyvocal (having at least two voices) it also works towards establishing one clear version of the truth. Importantly, what is at stake is the assertion of the robust, integral spiritual self. Both texts explore – in very different ways – the possibility (or, in Spenser’s case, the impossibility) of achieving an authentic Protestant voice.

The Shepheardes Calender’s aim is articulated by Immerito in the epilogue: ‘To teach the ruder shepheard how to feede his sheepe, / And from the falsers fraud his folded flocke to keepe’.⁷ The ‘new poet’ - Immerito (the unworthy one) – speaks with seeming simplicity in order to best teach the ‘ruder’ shepherd. This chapter will explore the effect of such seeming plainness or homeliness. The dialogue form is used in

³ Roger Deakins, ‘The Tudor Prose Dialogue: Genre and Anti-Genre’, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 20.1 (Winter 1980), 5-23 (pp. 5-6). He suggested that dialogue ‘rejects the technical language of professional academic philosophy in favour of language which is (in some sense) ‘ordinary’ or ‘natural’. He elaborated on this ordinary language by describing it in terms of conversational, ‘familiar talk’.

⁴ Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., ‘George Gifford, Puritan Propaganda and Popular Religion in Elizabethan England’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 9.1 (April 1978), 27-49, (p. 38 and p. 46).

⁵ McCabe, *The Shorter Poems*, p. xiv.

⁶ McCabe, *The Shorter Poems*, p. xv.

⁷ *The Shepheardes Calender*, ‘Epilogue’, ll. 5-6.

Spenser's moral eclogues to raise questions about matters of public concern in the political landscape, informing the reader about religious issues.⁸ Spenser's adoption of the classical pastoral mode allowed him to reflect on topical events of the day, which resulted in *The Shepheardes Calender* 'being presented as a displacement and extension of pedagogical possibilities'.⁹ I argue that, in 'Maye', he comments on the exercise of prophesying and deploys a moral fable of the Fox and Kid in order to demonstrate – but also to question – the pedagogical usefulness of dialogue. At a time when writers had to be aware of censorship, they had to use strategies that offered protection but would also carry their message.¹⁰ As we will see in this chapter, writing 'homely' dialogue was one way to disguise the source of controversial opinion. Critics have commented on the controversial nature of Spenser's religious and political opinions, and I will add to this debate by exploring a different, and under-recognised, aspect of his non-conformity, namely his experimentation with the form and function of dialogue.¹¹ Roland Greene enlarges on Spenser's use of dialogue and argues that *The Shepheardes Calender* 'instigates against the monologic tendency of English poetry in its time, argues for dialogue; and its vision of dialogue involves not simply a multi-vocal form, [...] but an epistemology of composition, a politics of perspectives, and a fresh situation for the poet as an agent of collective cultural renewal'.¹² As Spenser knew, dialogue need not always reveal the 'truth'. One particular aim of this chapter will be to explore whether Spenser's satirical target is the ostensible subject of his dialogue – or, rather, the claim that dialogue itself asserted to transparency, clarity, and simplicity.

A hint of the potential controversy that Spenser evoked is illustrated in his dedicatory address. As mentioned above, Gifford went to the Low Countries in Leicester's retinue

⁸ Robert Lane, *Shepheardes Devises: Edmund Spenser's The Shepheardes Calender and the Institutions of Elizabethan Society* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), pp. 27-8.

⁹ Edward Armstrong, *A Circeronian Sunburn: A Tudor Dialogue on Humanistic Rhetoric and Civic Poetics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), p. 40.

¹⁰ Lane, p. 60.

¹¹ Critics have previously commented on whether *The Shepheardes Calender* illustrates Spenser's Puritanism – Anthea Hume *Edmund Spenser: The Protestant Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), John N. King, 'Appendix: Was Spenser A Puritan?', in *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 233-238. Hugh Singleton printed *The Shepheardes Calender* and was known for printing Puritanical texts. King argues that this may have been purely for commercial reasons not as an indication of faith. More recently critics have considered Spenser's syncretism: Andrew Hadfield, 'Spenser And Religion-Yet Again' *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 51.1 (Winter 2011), 21-46, p. 46, n.64, Jeffrey Knapp, 'Spenser the Priest', *Representations*, 81.1 (Winter 2003), 61-78, Claire McEachern, 'Spenser and Religion' in *The Oxford Handbook to Spenser* ed. by Richard A. McCabe, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), Anne Lake Prescott, 'Complicating the Allegory: Spenser and Religion in Recent Scholarship', *Renaissance and Reformation*, XXXV.4 (2001), 9-23, and Harold L. Weatherby *Mirrors of Celestial Grace: Patristic Theology in Spenser's Allegory* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1994). Some critics have considered Spenser's political views in context with his time in Ireland: Ciaran Brady, 'Spenser's Irish Crisis: Humanism and Experience in the 1590s', *Past and Present*, 111 (May 1986) 17-49, Patricia Coughlan, *Spenser and Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1989), Andrew Hadfield, 'Spenser, Ireland, and Sixteenth-Century Political Theory', *The Modern Language Review*, 89.1 (January 1994), 1-18, Willy Maley, 'Dialogue-wise: Some Notes on the Irish Context of Spenser's View', *Connotations* 6.1 (1996/97), 67-77, and Richard A. McCabe, *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹² Roland Greene, 'The Shepheardes Calender, Dialogue, and Periphrasis', *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual*, VIII (1987), 1-33 (p. 2).

but it was Spenser who dedicated *The Shepheardes Calender* to 'the Noble and vertuous Gentleman most worthy of all titles both of learning and chevalrie M. Philip Sidney'.¹³ This may have been a risky move as Sidney had withdrawn from court during 1579 following his letter to the Queen denouncing her forthcoming marriage to the duc d'Alençon.¹⁴ This dedication to a courtier who dared to criticise the marriage of the Queen, and was consequently silenced through exile, is echoed in Spenser's representation, in *The Shepheardes Calender* itself, of another critic of the Queen who was also silenced through exile. In 'Julye' Spenser depicted the reality of the threat of retaliation if one dissents against the Queen's authority in the fable concerning Algrind.¹⁵ Gifford, the radical reformer, was careful in his choice of dedicatee, perhaps because he hoped that his work would be presented to the Queen. He turned to another courtier, dedicating his *Dialogue* to 'Lord Thomas Earle of Sussex, Viscount, Fitzwater, and Lord Egremont & Burnel' who was Elizabeth's Lord Chamberlain, MP for Maldon (where Gifford was minister), and a member of the Privy Council again connected to the Leicester/Sidney circle.¹⁶

Their respective choice of dedicatees demonstrates the perceived security offered by aristocratic patrons, particularly those within the Leicester/Sidney circle. However, Spenser inverted this central idea of patronage by choosing someone central to that group who had also incurred the Queen's displeasure. This brief attention to the dedicatory addresses of these two texts reminds us that these writers were not only writing dialogues but were also in dialogue with various imagined or actual readers. The self-assertion of each writer, demonstrated by the addressees to members of the courtly elite (whether in exile or not), represents a deliberate attempt to engage in dialogue of sorts. This multi-layering of dialogic discourse we will term 'meta-dialogue' – meaning dialogue between the interlocutors, dialogue between writer and reader, and between writer and the text itself. This chapter will examine how these two writers layered their dialogues to explore the emerging Protestant self in differing ways; specifically by using 'homely' language to explore the nature of authentic Protestant selfhood.

As mentioned above, Spenser and Gifford published these specific texts within a few years of each other and perhaps it is an alliterative coincidence that the names of the

¹³ To recall from Chapter I – Gifford attended at Sidney's death.

¹⁴ Lane, p. 60.

¹⁵ Lane, p. 62.

¹⁶ Thomas Radcliffe was the third Earl of Sussex. His second wife was Frances – the daughter of Sir William Sidney of Penshurst – and the sister of Henry Sidney therefore Philip Sidney's aunt. His mother was Elizabeth Howard (daughter of Thomas Howard, the second Duke of Norfolk) and his aunt was Elizabeth Boleyn – the mother of Anne Boleyn. Sussex was also a close friend of William Cecil. Wallace T. MacCaffrey, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22993>, accessed 18th January 2018.

interlocutors in 'Maye' and *Dialogue* all begin with 'P' – Piers and Palinode, Papist and Protestant. These speakers represent either side of the religious divide in late sixteenth-century England. I will return to explore these counterparts later in this chapter, but first I want to focus on Gifford's *Dialogue* to explore how he engages the reader through 'plain language' and how he establishes an authoritative voice through dialogue. We will examine how successful this may be throughout this chapter and in subsequent chapters. First, however, let us turn to *Dialogue* to consider the introductory epistle and the opening sections of the discussion between the Protestant and the Papist. We will begin by examining how Gifford deploys familiar language to represent a clean and authentic Protestant voice, which only emerges when identified against an 'other'.

George Gifford's *A Dialogue betweene a Papist and a Protestant applied to the Capacitie of the Vnlearned* (1582)

Papist: I pray you what newes? Were yee at London lately? What is become of the Catholiks: I heare there hath bin great disputations in the Tower.

Protestant: There hath beene disputation indeede, by reason of a proude challenge which was made.¹⁷

George Gifford frames *Dialogue* with a request for the latest news of a topical event.¹⁸ He opens his dialogue with the two interlocutors greeting each other as old acquaintances – or, probably more likely, as old adversaries. From the start Gifford draws attention to the familiar language of greeting someone in plain and everyday speech. The Protestant is returning from London with news of the recent trial of Edmund Campion, one of the Jesuit missionaries who entered England after 1580. Catholics and Protestants alike used the occasion of Campion's trial and execution, in 1581, as an opportunity to argue and debate their religious differences. Both sides imagined new versions of disputations in the tower, his trial, and his death.¹⁹ I outlined above that the 1580s witnessed an intense Catholic threat, which included the Campion

¹⁷ *Dialogue*, 1r.

¹⁸ Timothy Scott Mc Ginnis, *George Gifford and the Reformation of the Common Sort: Puritan Priorities in Elizabethan Religious Life* (Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2004), p. 63. We saw that Spenser drew on topical events earlier in this chapter.

¹⁹ Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere" in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context', *The Journal of Modern History*, 72.3 (September 2000), 587-627 (p. 624). See also Arthur F. Marotti, 'Alienating Catholics in Early Modern England: Recusant Women, Jesuits, and Ideological Fantasies', in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. by Marotti (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), pp. 1-34, and Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Anti-Christ's Lewd Hat, Protestants, Papists, Players in Post Reformation England* (New Haven and Yale University Press, 2002).

affair and the infiltration of Jesuit missionaries into England. Gifford uses this topical occasion to raise several themes that concerned radical reformers, such as the continual presence of 'lordly bishops, churches designed for popish worship not gospel sermons, popish vestiges in service, and popish opinions in the pews'.²⁰ The repetition of the word 'disputation' highlights the significance attached to discussion by both sides of the religious divide, and Gifford follows the traditional structure of dialogue by presenting a series of questions and answers. But Gifford also made subtle and complex use of the dialogue form in order to fulfil his particular aim to 'enlighten with proper religious understanding the ordinary folk of Elizabethan England'.²¹ As we will see he accomplishes this with careful use of plain and familiar scriptural language.

Gifford imagines a debate between two fictionalised interlocutors, the Papist and the Protestant, in order to represent both sides of the religious divide and the conflict between them over the 'truth of God'. Although the dialogue takes place between two imagined speakers, Gifford's primary focus is the self's quest for integrity and unity – which is itself a paradox, given the structure of the dialogue form. Through dialogue, Gifford brings to the fore the Protestant interlocutor who – unsurprisingly – appears far more fully and imaginatively realised than the Papist. The consequence is to emphasise the authoritative voice of the Protestant – not only through the use of familiar black letter font, but also with the length and depth of his speeches which are heavily weighted with biblical references and marginal notes.²² Gifford also uses the journey trope to bring questions of private spirituality into the public domain:

Papist: I am gladd to see you well Syr, for olde acquaintance
sake, which I would be content to renew agayne.

Protestant: I am glad also that you are in health, I sawe
yee not a great while before now.²³

The trope of a journey allows the speakers to meet by chance although the Papist suggests that he is pleased to see his opponent for 'olde acquaintance sake' in order to 'renew agayne'. From the start Gifford's interlocutors are speaking plainly and with familiarity. Although social courtesies are observed initially, a debate concerning

²⁰ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 294.

²¹ Wallace, p. 28.

²² In the one hundred and fifteen pages of Gifford's *Dialogue* the Protestant has some one-hundred and twenty-four biblical references quoted from the Old and New Testament whilst the Papist has six – from Luke, Matthew, Peter and 1 Timothy.

²³ *Dialogue*, 1r.

religious identity quickly ensues. Gifford's Protestant accuses his opponent of being a 'Church Papist':

Protestant: I perceiue yee are a Papist, or at least a fauourer
of Papistes [...]

Papist: Wherefore should yee call me papist, I am obedient
to the lawes, and doe not refuse to goe to the
Church.

Protestant: Then it seemeth you are a Church Papist:

Papist: A Church Papist, what meane you by that?

The Protestant answers the Papist's question: 'Papists that can keepe their conscience to themselues, and yet goe to Church'. The most frustrating group of people to the reformers were those who attended church services but retained their Catholic beliefs.²⁴ The Protestant describes the 'simple sort [...] which speake of the merry worlde when there was lesse preaching', including those who attend church but fail to understand the word that is preached. The Protestant then criticises another sort that 'neuer name Papists but Catholikes, and if yee reason with them, they doe it for arguments sake, not that they say so, but the Catholikes say so'.²⁵ This sort is able to argue – that is, to enter into dialogue – but do so without a personal conviction of faith, relying on what they are told rather than what they believe. The Papist, within the enclosed confines of the dialogue, can admit his faith with the response: 'I thinke plaine dealing is best, in very deede I take ye to be heretikes, I am a Catholike'.²⁶ Gifford's interlocutors discuss the conflict between internal spirituality and communal worship, with the Papist defending his faith by accusing the Protestant of not appreciating how 'deuowte the mynde of the Catholike is'.²⁷ Here we can see that Gifford's concerns focus on the problems surrounding the conversion of his indifferent parishioners. This threat was compounded by English Church still being entrenched with the remnants of Catholicism both materially and liturgically.²⁸ As a minister, Gifford was keen to locate the 'the pastor's authority over his flock in the flock's perception that it is being lovingly

²⁴ *Dialogue*, 1v. See Susan Doran and Christopher Durston, *Princes, Pastors, and People: The Church and Religion in England 1529-1689* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), who discuss what reformers found offensive, p. 78. Alexandra Walsham, observed that 'Church Papist was a stinging insult', *Church Papists: Catholic Conformity and Confessional Polemic in England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), p. 2. She also observes that the continued existence of 'popery' was a great disappointment for the 'godly', p. 102.

²⁵ *Dialogue*, 2r.

²⁶ *Dialogue*, 2v.

²⁷ *Dialogue*, 45r.

²⁸ McGinnis, p. 143.

accommodated'.²⁹ Dialogue provided him with a way to confront these questions and 'to turn' the faithful back to the fold.

Gifford needed however to ensure that the reader could imagine this discussion. He accomplishes this with repeated references to the importance of scriptural truth, frequently drawing on scriptural references. He was particularly interested in the clarity of scripture since, as he puts it, 'the Spirit of God worked to lead the godly to the truth'.³⁰ Using the dialogue form, and placing the right words in the mouth of the right interlocutor, Gifford aims to persuade his reader to follow the right path – and, to this end, he 'resorted to the simplest of weapons, the Word of God'.³¹ This is what secures the authenticity of the Protestant speaker's voice, in addition to the familiarity of the black letter typeface and the plainness of his speech. From the start of their interaction, the two interlocutors demonstrate a formal paradox of dialogue through their discussion about whose faith is the 'true one':

Papist: It is like you will aunswere trueth, when you charge
vs with so great and manifest a lye, where can yee
shewe that euer anye of our side hath spoken or
written, that when the scripture speaketh of one
thing it meaneth another.

Protestant: Is that such a lye, I pray you what is the cause
why yee tel us the scriptures are hard, when they
speake so fully, so plainely, and plentifully, and with
such content & agreement in those things which
are the principles of our faith.³²

The importance of uncovering the truth and exposing the 'lye' is a recurring theme. Later in the dialogue, the Protestant says 'Seeyng ye must needs lye'; and the Papist retorts with 'Nay heretikes be liers, we say the truth'.³³ To the Protestant, scriptural truth is easy to identify as the words 'speake so fully, so plainely, and plentifully'.³⁴ The importance of distinguishing between lies and truth forms the basis of their spiritual disagreement, and the Protestant summarises their conflict when he says 'we may be

²⁹ Gregory Kneidel, "'Mightie Simplesse': Protestant Pastoral Rhetoric and Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*", *Studies in Philology*, 96.3 (Summer 1999), 275-312 (p. 292).

³⁰ McGinnis, p. 72.

³¹ McGinnis, p. 83.

³² *Dialogue*, 6r.

³³ *Dialogue*, 22v.

³⁴ Patricia Canning, *Style in the Renaissance: Language and Ideology in Early Modern England* (New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), Canning describes the reformed Protestant's aim – 'to re-establish a return to the purity of the unadorned scriptural word', p. 3.

ashamed to speak truth of you'.³⁵ Gifford's imagined reader, the 'simpler sort', is at the heart of his dialogue.³⁶ Using a range of strategies (including typography, a fully developed speaker, and the formal features of dialogue) Gifford empowered his reader to recognise the 'true nature of the Gospel of God's grace'.³⁷ Here dialogue is working with a true didactic intent – to teach the simpler sort.

The argument about truth continues between the Protestant and the Papist, evidencing their respective desires to substantiate their claims, or rather 'prove' their points:

Protestant: [...] Yee are as able to prove these things which
ye affirme as I am to move mountaines.

Papist: You affirm much and prove little. I am able for to
make good al that which I haue spoken.³⁸

Both interlocutors use the words 'prove' and 'affirm' to each other in their quest for the truth. This paraphrasing highlights to the reader that this point needs attention – both sides make the same argument that their religion is the 'true' one. The Protestant injects his doubt with his comment about not being able to 'move mountains', but the Papist is confident that he can 'make good al that which I haue spoken'. Both speakers are aware that this is a battle of words 'spoken' to prove to one another the truth of their faith.³⁹ Later in the dialogue, the Papist asks the Protestant several times to prove his claims: 'Prove this whiche yee have saide, it is an easie matter to affirme, and you are reddie to doe that, but your proofes come slowly', and 'Prove those things which you sayd out of the word'.⁴⁰ The Protestant again accuses the Papist of lying: 'Yee haue hearde more lyes then that', 'is that such a lye', and 'seeing ye must needes lye'.⁴¹ At this point the interlocutors appear to be on equal terms (although on opposite theological sides) and the paraphrasing and repetition of certain words mean that they mirror each other during their exchanges. This mirroring reminds us that self-identity emerges when one identifies oneself against an 'other'. The impasse in their discussion as they reflect their opposite views is a recurring theme until the end of their dialogue, which we will examine at the end of this chapter.

³⁵ *Dialogue*, 39v. Jennifer Summit describes a 'post-Reformation reading practice that aimed to separate (Protestant) 'plain truth' from (Catholic) 'feigned fable'', *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press: 2008), p. 122.

³⁶ McGinnis, p. 143.

³⁷ Wallace, p. 43.

³⁸ *Dialogue*, 3r-v.

³⁹ For Protestants the truth was 'plain' truth, sufficiently contained in the Bible and 'non-scriptural art amounted to lies, false religion'. Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Ltd, 1988), p. 97.

⁴⁰ *Dialogue*, 17v and 46r.

⁴¹ *Dialogue*, 1v, 6r, and 22v.

Gifford's aim is always to stress the significance of the Word and the clarity of scripture, which is always presented as plain and pure with 'homely phrases' in order to convince his reader.⁴² We have seen how Gifford projects an authentic voice onto the Protestant with the choice of font and his seemingly superior scriptural knowledge (indicated by marginalia references), but he also needed to engage the reader's imagination. Gifford's readers are directed by his carefully positioned introductory epistles, such as the one to *Dialogue* detailing the perceived threat from 'church papists'. He also provides a general picture of the religious tension in Elizabethan England. In the 'Epistle' (to Lord Thomas, Earl of Sussex), Gifford describes the unlearned man who does not have the tools of the 'auncient Doctors, Counsels, Hystoriographers and others' to argue with the papists.⁴³ He echoes the same sentiment that he had put forward in the 'Epistle' to *Countrie Divinitie*, where he argues that their lack of knowledge of doctrine and theology, and lack of faith and belief in God, puts the unlearned in danger from the predatory Papist. We will now consider how he accomplished this in *Dialogue's* 'Epistle', in order to illustrate Gifford's effective use of literary devices such as analogy, simile, and metaphor. David Brett explains that such devices were, paradoxically, an important aspect of 'plain' style, since they served the understanding (of the unschooled) not by drawing attention to themselves but rather to the matter under discussion: 'images and analogies were permissible' but they had to be appropriate.⁴⁴ These devices engaged the reader's imagination, embellishing 'plain' or familiar scriptural language in careful, allowable ways.

In the 'Epistle' to *Dialogue*, Gifford outlines that the armoury of the unlearned should be faith in God, presented through the figure of David in his fight with Goliath. Gifford saw his ministry as one to 'profit the simpler sort, for whose sakes, & in respect of whom I haue taken this trauel'.⁴⁵ Other writers have set 'forth in their books to confute the Papists, ful of learning', but, he explains, these do not serve 'the vnlearned man, neyther can he defende himself therewith, because it is beyond his reache'.⁴⁶ Gifford advocates the use of simple or plain language to speak to the 'vnlearned man'.⁴⁷ The dialogue form can explore issues that trouble the ordinary person, and can explain an argument in simple terms to help spread the 'light of his glorious gospel'. Gifford wrote

⁴² Kneidel, p. 293. Canning comments that reformers 'white-washed walls and replaced with text to draw the eye and mind to the Word and away from images', p. 15.

⁴³ *Dialogue*, 'The Epistle', q2v.

⁴⁴ Brett, p. 51.

⁴⁵ *Dialogue*, 'The Epistle', q2v-3r.

⁴⁶ *Dialogue*, q2v. Dewey D. Wallace describes how Gifford was animated by his purpose as a 'preacher and educator seeking to enlighten with proper religious understanding the ordinary folk of Elizabethan England'. 'George Gifford, Puritan Propaganda and Popular Religion in Elizabethan England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 9.1 (April 1978), 27-49 (p. 28).

⁴⁷ David Brett explains that plainness of language aided understanding, 'particularly of the unschooled', *The Plain Style: The Reformation, Culture, and the Crisis in Protestant Identity* (Belfast: Black Square Books, 1999), p. 51.

his dialogue with a didactic intent to inform the unlearned laity, or 'little David', to help protect them from the perceived Papal threat which he termed the 'great Goliath'.⁴⁸ In the 'Epistle', for example, Gifford employs an analogy of extinguishing a house that is on fire:

For like as when an house is on fire, the weak which is not able to throw a bucket of water to the top of the rooffe may yet by no meanes bee excused, if he stand & look on: because he may do somewhat in the lower part of the walles.⁴⁹

By using simile, 'like as when', Gifford suggests that the weak should not be passive – perhaps proposing that the reader must actively engage with the text to interpret its meaning. Gifford makes clear his didactic intention through his account of why he chooses to write on these matters: 'applying myselfe to the capacitie of the vnlearned, dealing onely out of the worde of GOD, which lyeth open vnto them as their Armorye. This also hath caused mee to deale in those poyntes which doe most commonly trouble them'.⁵⁰ Gifford positions himself as a teacher to explain the true religion to the 'vnlearned', and he will focus those points that most 'commonly trouble them' by engaging closely with God's word. Gifford and his fellow godly ministers were constantly demanding more preaching ministers.⁵¹ Their argument that the 'failure in the church's preaching ministry [...] had resulted in generations of spiritually ignorant laity, and the spiritually ignorant were the devil's playground'.⁵² Despite his commitment to the letter of scripture, Gifford again employs simile when the Protestant defends his reformed faith against the Papist's: 'The breath of your mouth is very strong, when as with one blaste yee are able to ouerthrow whatsoeuer a man can bring out of the worde of God'.⁵³ The Protestant consistently argues for the simplicity of his religious truth, and his religious language, against the elaborate rituals of the Catholic Church.⁵⁴ Despite his interest in scriptural clarity, Gifford seems particularly drawn to the more 'literary' aspects of biblical language. His message however remains clear

⁴⁸ *Dialogue*, 'The Epistle', q2r.

⁴⁹ *Dialogue*, 'The Epistle', q2v.

⁵⁰ *Dialogue*, 'The Epistle', q2v.

⁵¹ Susan Doran and Christopher Durston, *Princes, Pastors, and People: The Church and Religion in England 1529-1689* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 82.

⁵² McGinnis, p. 136.

⁵³ *Dialogue*, 20r.

⁵⁴ Patrick Collinson, 'Truth, lies, and fiction in Sixteenth-Century Protestant historiography', in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric, and Fiction 1500-1800*, ed. by Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) pp.37-68 (p. 47).

and simple: careful and judicious use of such literary figures fosters spiritual improvement.

Gifford further investigates the importance of ordinary words that are best capable of affecting men's minds and hearts:

A man heareth the word of God preached, it striketh his hart and converteth him: whereas before he was as blind as a beetle, now he seeth the light: wheras before he had no love to the holy word of god, now his hart is inflamed with zeal and delight in it: whereas before his care was of this world, and couetousnes did cause him, greedily to seke unlawful gaine, nowe his mind is bent upon heauenly things, and after them he seeketh, wheras before he was full of adulteries, riot, wantonnes, vanity, now his wicked affections are tamed and altered.⁵⁵

The importance of the believer assimilating the word of God, which 'strieth his hart and converteth him,' is here illustrated. Scripture impassions the mind and consequently the heart 'is inflamed with zeal'. We recall Sidney's description of the cleanness of the Bible that has 'whole parts in it poetical', so that 'even our Saviour Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it'.⁵⁶ Earlier we saw that the Protestant self required cleanness of conscience in order to embrace the Word of God. Gifford begins with a simile – 'blind as a beetle' – and then turns to a series of ways that man can spiritually improve because he hears the word of God. This example is from a section in *Dialogue* where the interlocutors debate whether scripture needs to be interpreted by the Church rather than by man alone.⁵⁷ Gifford, through the Protestant, extols the virtue of hearing the Word of God with 'his mind bent upon heauenly things'.

In order to affect the emotions and imagination Gifford employs words such as 'strieth', 'inflamed', and 'delight'. In addition, he uses words that suggest an excess of passion: 'adulteries, riot, wantonnes, vanity', and 'couetousnes'. However, all these inflamed passions are tempered when man hears the 'word of God preached' and he becomes 'tamed and altered', and therefore able to transform into a more robust

⁵⁵ *Dialogue*, 30r.

⁵⁶ Sidney, p. 232.

⁵⁷ Brett observes that: 'the central issue of the Reformation lay in the location of authority: did it reside in the accumulated teachings of the church, or scripture only?', p. 11. Gifford explored this authority through his dialogues relying on the Protestant doctrine of *sola scripture* for his argument.

spiritual self. Gifford believes that offering a simple task for the weak to perform will help them but this also reflects the simplicity of scriptural truth. His frequent use of monosyllabic words represents ordinary, everyday language. Familiar language that reflects biblical simplicity can have a profoundly transformative effect on the mind of the reader.⁵⁸ We will see later in this chapter, however, that Spenser achieves something different through his dialogue's 'simplicity', particularly through the role of E. K. Even when it appears most homely and familiar, the dialogue form sometimes complicates rather than simply secures spiritual tranquillity.

We will now turn to a final example of the language Gifford employs in the 'Epistle', in order further to demonstrate his striking use of metaphorical devices to ignite the reader's imagination:

Some do wonder how it should come to pass that among vs
there shold be so many, which being borne since the Gospel
was restored in this land, are so zealously addicted vnto
popery, which they never did know: & so vtter enemies vnto
the Gospel, which they heare. [...] For how can it be, so
long as there be so many abuses in the ministry, but that
many shal stumble and loath the Gospell. For from thence,
as it is manifest, the chiefe cause of this evil doeth spring.
True it is, that our ministry doth fight against them, but yet in
such sort that it doth greatly increase them. Seeming &
pretending to tread upon those coccatrise eggs, for to break
them, & so to destroy vtterly the viperous generation: when
as in deede, they sit vpon them, & so hatche the browdes of
this evil kind, & bring them forth in great plentie. For behold
a number cry out against popery, & proclaime vtter defiance
in speech: but their doings are such, that for euery one which
they conuert to the gospel, they cause an hundredth to
reuolt, to be hardened in their errors, or to fall into flat
Atheism.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Canning suggests that Protestantism relied on 'plausible stories mediated through biblical exegesis, doctrinal teachings, and literary works as a means of making their particular world-view make sense', p. 19.

⁵⁹ *Dialogue*, 'The Epistle', q3v-4r.

Gifford expounds on the reasons for the rising number of Papists in England. He claims that the gentle approach used by the establishment does not eradicate popery within in the Church. He uses the analogy of ‘coccatrise eggs’ that are carefully nurtured to increase the numbers of ‘the viperous generation’. It is clear that he believes the problem lay with the duplicitous behaviour of some ministers who say one thing when they ‘cry out against popery’, but mean another. This idea recurs among Spenser’s godly shepherds in *The Shepheardes Calender* who personify or admire godly churchmen like Grindal (Algrind) who despised duplicity and ambition in their fellow ministers.⁶⁰ The concern with duplicity and the difficulty of converting parishioners is central to Gifford’s work, too, and this will be further examined in the dialogues of Gervase Babington and John Udall in the next chapter.⁶¹ As the above passage suggests, one person may be converted to the true gospel but a hundred will revolt against their actions. Gifford’s startling use of imagery suggests the idea of nourishing through one’s attempts to destroy. This is compounded by the idea of unstoppable regeneration and multiplication that seems endless. Gifford conveys his belief that ‘so long as there be so many abuses in the ministry’ then ‘many shal stumble and loath the Gospell’. He believed that due to the abuses in the ministry, the laity are faltering in their faith; they do not care who shall ‘feede the flocke, so they may come by the fleese’.⁶² Ambitious ministers are only concerned about their ‘desire of honour’, wealth and privileges. Gifford’s dramatic tirade demonstrates that metaphor is essential to inflame the imagination of the reader. Even as a Puritan minister, Gifford was writing fiction of sorts – not only because of his didactic aim, but also because he was imitating the figurative language of Scripture itself. On one hand, he writes in a plain language to engage the unlearned reader; on the other, he paradoxically employs carefully placed literary sophistication, using the devices and strategies of fiction (and, of course, scripture) to affect the imagination. Perhaps all of this suggests – at this particularly vexed moment in England’s spiritual history/development – that dialogue was a complex and shifting form for straightforwardly pedagogical ends and the dialectical process required embellishment to engage the careful reader.

We will return to Gifford’s dialogue in the final section of this chapter to consider the endings of *Dialogue* and ‘Maye’ side by side in order to explore how these two writers,

⁶⁰ Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, The Struggle for the Reformed Church 1519- 1583* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), p. 96. Grindal believed that if he did not accept bishopric then the church would be abandoned to the leadership of ‘semi-papists’, Lutherans, and time-servers. He saw it as a duty to accept Episcopal office to prevent the church falling into wrong hands – some of his fellow churchmen declined offers of office.

⁶¹ Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 261. She describes how important preaching was for the reformers and scripture was ‘the sole authority for the Word spoken’. See also Haigh, *English Reformations*, pp. 281-83.

⁶² *Dialogue*, ‘The Epistle’, q4r.

in different ways, negotiated one particular formal feature from classical dialogue – ‘Socratic aporia’. For now I want to turn to *The Shepheardes Calender* in order to explore how Spenser, like Gifford, drew on the inheritance of pedagogical dialogue – but, unlike Gifford, pushed the literary resources of dialogue to their logical limits. Spenser seems especially interested in exploring what happens when literary complexity embellishes dialogue’s seemingly straightforward language and form. Here I refer not only to the kinds of literary figures used so carefully and judiciously by Gifford, but also to Spenser’s other explicitly literary strategies – such as E. K.’s glosses and commentaries which engage the reader in complex new forms of dialogue. Gifford’s *Dialogue* provides an example of how plain language and scriptural clarity – even and especially when embellished with literary features – can work towards spiritual instruction. Spenser’s dialogue develops these strategies in more radical directions, exploring further the multi-layered effect of ‘meta-dialogue’, with E. K.’s additional glosses, prefatory epistle, and notes. The relationship between Piers and Palinode in Spenser’s ‘Maye’ eclogue emerges as an interesting counterpart to the relationship between Gifford’s Protestant and Papist.

Edmund Spenser’s *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579)

And firste of the wordes to speake, I graunt they
be something hard, and of most men vnused, yet
both English, and also vsed of most excellent
Authors and most famous Poetes.⁶³

E. K., in the ‘Epistle’ to Gabriel Harvey, writes about the language used by the new poet in his poem. The words may seem strange and ‘vnused’ but have all been used by preeminent writers. He clearly ‘identifies the strangeness of Spenser’s language with its most native and homely virtues’.⁶⁴ This positions the new poet within an existing literary circle and tradition; and Spenser therefore ‘presents himself to the readers as the latest to walk a hollowed and well-trod path to literary glory’. Moreover E. K. reminds us that ‘pastoral is the time-honoured birthplace of poetic excellence’.⁶⁵ Readers are assured by E. K. that the New Poet begins here with pastoral, following Virgil’s career model as a young poet by writing pastoral first and ending with epic.⁶⁶

⁶³ *The Shepheardes Calender*, ‘Epistle’, ll. 27-30.

⁶⁴ Catherine Nicholson, *Uncommon Tongues: Eloquence and Eccentricity in the English Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), p. 110.

⁶⁵ Nicholson, p. 100.

⁶⁶ Richard Helgerson, *Self-crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, and Milton and the Literary System* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 68. William A. Oram, *Edmund Spenser* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), p. 25. Mike Rodman Jones explores radical pastoral writing of the late sixteenth century and found it effective as the ‘foundation of satirical and polemical writing and as a way to shape religious identities and controversies

The humble language and subject matter of the pastoral mode could however announce great aspiration.⁶⁷ As we will see, Spenser's pastoral evokes an air of familiarity, partly through its affinities to parallel Christian traditions. Pastoral also, however, allows Spenser to embrace a high degree of literary complexity and sophistication; for, as William Oram notes, by his 'time the allegorical dimension of pastoral had become commonplace'.⁶⁸ We will consider the role of E. K. below to discover whether his 'authoritative' voice helps to guide the reader, and how successfully Spenser complicates the assumption of dialogic simplicity.

Written or spoken dialogue always requires a reader or a listener: 'only by reading with care can one appropriate the coherence of Spenser's work and earn the right to join the poet's band of godly shepherds'.⁶⁹ Francis Malpezzi highlights the important role of the reader/speaker: 'Spenser reminds us not only of the complexity and difficulty of human communication but also of the fact that listeners as well as speakers have responsibilities'.⁷⁰ We have seen that classical dialogue had, at heart, a didactic aim to inform the reader – but as we will see the reader needs to be alert to fully understand the written words on the page. This is summed up by Malpezzi:

While *The Shepheardes Calender* is about many subjects, it is ultimately about the word – the mouth that utters it, the hand that pens it, the ear that hears it, the eye that reads it, the mind that comprehends or fails to comprehend its full import, and the will that acts or fails to act upon that import.⁷¹

The above quotation is useful for my purpose as it highlights the interaction between the interlocutors on the page and the interaction between the page and the reader. Moreover the main significance is the 'word' and therefore the language chosen to represent a subject framed within a dialogue. Malpezzi emphasises the importance of

in the Reformation period'. Mike Rodman Jones, *Radical Pastoral 1381 – 1594: Appropriation and the Writing of Religious Controversy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 4.

⁶⁷ Oram, *Edmund Spenser*, p. 28. Paul Alpers notes that the reader, in the prefaces/prologues to Renaissance pastoral works, 'is introduced to a 'simple' work and is asked to take its humility seriously'. *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 10. Alpers also adds that 'pastoral writings are notoriously conventional', p. 79.

⁶⁸ Oram, *Edmund Spenser*, pp. 30-1.

⁶⁹ Tom Betteridge, *Literature and Politics in the English Reformation* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 226.

⁷⁰ Frances M. Malpezzi, 'E.K., A Spenserian Lesson in Reading', *Connotations*, 4.3 (1994/95), 181-191 (p. 184)

⁷¹ Malpezzi, p. 189.

actively reading to make sense of the writing. Not only is there a relationship between the interlocutors but also between the page and the reader, directed through E. K.⁷²

At the beginning of the 'Epistle', E. K. defends the use of archaic words by the new poet by linking him to 'the olde famous Poete', Chaucer, and other medieval poets such as John Lydgate in order to recover an original English.⁷³ Spenser deploys some of the received ideas about Chaucer and uses them at key points in his career, writing him 'into the fabric of his own poetry in the process of forging a poetic identity'.⁷⁴ E. K. also evokes other ancients with reference to the 'worthy Oratour', Cicero, whom he describes as saying 'ofttimes an auncient worde maketh the style seeme graue'.⁷⁵ E. K.'s promotion of the new writer includes an overview of his life experience:

our Poet hath bene much traueiled and thoroughly redd,
howe could it be, (as that worthy Oratour sayde) but that
walking in the sonne although for other cause he walked, yet
needes he mought be sunburnt; and hauing the sound of
those auncient Poetes still ringing in his eares, he mought
needes in singing hit out some of theyr tunes.⁷⁶

E. K. alludes to Cicero's dialogue *De oratore* in the epistle with a reference to sunburn as the colour of learning – just as the body takes on colour in the sunshine, so the writer is transformed by exposure to books.⁷⁷ The promotion of the new poet through his past experiences helps to position him as worthy of attention and confers an authority in his learning.⁷⁸ E. K. also looks towards the authority inferred by a link to a classical writer – one who wrote on the importance of reading within a dialogue. The source is one of Antonius's speeches:

Antonius: It is just as when I take a walk in the sunshine:
even if I do so for another reason, it is only natural that
I get tanned. In the same way, when I have devoted a

⁷² Lynn Staley Johnson, *The Shepheardes Calender: An Introduction* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 7.

⁷³ Paula Blank, 'The Dialect of *The Shepheardes Calender*', *Spenser Studies*, X (1992), 71-94, (p. 72). Misha Teramua observes that 'Spenser's engagement with Chaucer was predicated on an assumption of cultural authority and original canonicity', 'The Anxiety of Auctoritas', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 63.4 (Winter 2012), 544-576 (p. 555).

⁷⁴ Craig A. Berry, 'Chaucer' in *Edmund Spenser in Context*, ed. by Andrew Escobedo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 246-253 (p. 246-7).

⁷⁵ *The Shepheardes Calender* 'Epistle', ll. 54-55.

⁷⁶ *The Shepheardes Calender*, 'Epistle', ll. 30-36.

⁷⁷ Armstrong, p. 53.

⁷⁸ Judith Owens, *Enabling Engagements: Edmund Spenser and the Poetics of Patronage* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 47.

fair amount of attention to reading such books at my villa in Misenum, I am aware that my speech, through its exposure to them, takes on a different colour, so to speak.⁷⁹

Cicero's two main characters are the great Roman orators, Lucius Licinius Crassus and Marcus Antonius.⁸⁰ The other members of the group are Gaius Aurelius Cotta and Publius Sulpicius Rufus who, as younger orators, are learning their craft by listening and engaging in dialogue.⁸¹ Cicero used the differences in the speakers' experiences in order to reinforce the arguments of his main characters.⁸² Cotta or Rufus often therefore ask Antonius or Crassus for further clarification in order to aid understanding. Cicero's dialogue is evoked as an authority by E. K., suggesting how the reader of *The Shepheardes Calender* might themselves move 'towards a fuller understanding' through engaging with 'a historical and intellectual context for conversations'.⁸³ The 'new poet' draws on his predecessors' works and emphasises, in particular, that he is well-versed in classical dialogue. As we will see, Spenser's deliberate archaisms in *The Shepheardes Calender* allow him to reflect upon, and to transform, the conventions of dialogic 'plainness'. Unlike Gifford, Spenser regarded these conventions as endlessly malleable and flexible – thus presenting, in his dialogue, a different and less settled version of Protestant interiority.

The paradox of new poet and old language needs to be further explored, especially E. K.'s defence of why the new poet uses old words:

thinking them fittest for such rustically rudenesse of Shepheardes, eyther for that theyr rough sounde would make his rymes more ragged and rustical, or els because such olde and obsolete wordes are most vsed of country folke, sure I think, and think I think not amisse, that they bring great grace and, as one would say, auctoritie to the verse.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ *Cicero: On the Ideal Orator*, trans. and ed. by James M. May and Jakob Wisse (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2001), Book 2: 60 (p. 139).

⁸⁰ May and Wisse, p. 3.

⁸¹ May and Wisse, p. 13.

⁸² May and Wisse, p. 16.

⁸³ Armstrong, p. 12.

⁸⁴ *The Shepheardes Calender*, 'Epistle', ll. 38-43.

It seems that rustic words are in keeping with the pastoral setting of shepherds – they would not be expected to speak with courtly wit – but importantly these words bring ‘auctoritie to the verse’. Here we recall George Puttenham who advocates that in dialogue ‘we must always give to every person his fit and natural [speech], and that which best becometh him’.⁸⁵ E. K.’s assertion of the new poet’s poetic and dialogic merits reflects his own self-assertion within the text – he hopes his own words provide enough authority and learning to the reader. Catherine Nicholson notes that ‘E. K.’s epistle does more than simply characterise Immerito’s peculiar poetic voice; [...] it also reflects upon the peculiar position of the English language at the end of the sixteenth century’.⁸⁶ This period saw ‘a generational project of national self-fashioning in which the effort to found an art of English poetry had a significant, but by no means isolated, place’.⁸⁷ Spenser was centrally involved in this cultural project, and was interested in the ‘general development of English poetry and English national self-consciousness’.⁸⁸ As Roland Greene has written, Spenser was ‘an agent of collective cultural renewal’ and one main achievement of *The Shepheardes Calender*, in this respect, is that it assertively ‘argues for dialogue’.⁸⁹

The experimental nature of Spenser’s project is underscored by E. K.’s praise of the new poet’s paradoxical reliance on archaic language. Andrew Zurcher notes that ‘Spenser was studied, deliberate, and consistently engaged throughout his career in the choice of archaic diction’.⁹⁰ Some of the reasons behind this choice are explained by Lucy Munro: ‘Encountering an archaic form might provoke distancing emotions of surprise, derision, or awe in readers, but it might equally incite more intimate feelings of comfort, grief, or longing’.⁹¹ E. K.’s strategy to defend the new poet’s use of potentially outmoded words is borne out in the preface which marks such archaisms as ‘decorous, aesthetically valid, and truly English’.⁹² At the same time, however, archaism works, in this text, to destabilise any clear sense of belonging. As Andrew Wadoski has written, *The Shepheardes Calender* ‘sets out to recuperate that sense of strangeness in the English language [...] finding in the vernacular a means of accessing, and an image of, the strange self’.⁹³ Spenser returns to the idea of national language and self-identity in

⁸⁵ Puttenham, p. 321.

⁸⁶ Nicholson, p. 109.

⁸⁷ Richard Helgerson, ‘Barbarous Tongues: The Ideology of Poetic Form in Renaissance England’, in *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Culture*, ed. by Heather Dubrow and Richard Strier (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 273-292 (p. 277).

⁸⁸ Helgerson, ‘Barbarous Tongues’, p. 278.

⁸⁹ Greene, p. 2.

⁹⁰ Andrew Zurcher, ‘Spenser’s Studied Archaism: The Case of “Mote”’, *Spenser Studies*, XX1 (2006), 231-240 (p. 231).

⁹¹ Lucy Munro, *Archaic Style in English Literature, 1590-1674* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 28.

⁹² Munro, p. 23.

⁹³ Andrew Wadoski, ‘Spenser, Harvey, and the Strange Poetics of *The Shepheardes Calender*’, *College Literature: A Journal of Critical Literary Studies*, 42.3 (Summer 2015), 420-441, (p. 437).

A View on the State of Ireland when Eudoxus contrasts the ‘sweet civility’ of an Englishman with the ‘barbarous rudeness’ of the Irish.⁹⁴ Later in this dialogue, Irenius finds fault with ‘the speaking of Irish among the English, which is unnaturall that any people should love another’s language more than their owne, so it is very inconvenient, and the cause of many other evils’.⁹⁵ Here language is revealed as integral to both individual and national self-identity; but, as *The Shepheardes Calender* also demonstrates, such identity is often fugitive, elusive or compromised. Even ascertaining the origins of language is difficult, as the reader negotiates between the internal fiction within the eclogues and E.K.’s external dialogue with Immerito’s poem and with the reader.⁹⁶ Spenser’s use of homely language, the pastoral setting, and familiar dialogue form are further compromised by E. K.’s glosses, which are radically de-familiarising in formal terms.

Spenser’s vernacular is in fact a mix of different languages, including archaic ones – although E. K. insists that the new poet’s work remains truly English for this very reason. He further expands on the poet’s use of this language through his ‘dewe obseruing of Decorum euerye where’ even when the words seem most unfamiliar:

the which of many thinges which in him be straunge, I know
will seeme the straungest, the words them selues being so
auncient, the knitting of them so short and intricate, and the
whole Periode and compasse of speache so delightsome for
the roundnesse, and so graue for the straungenesse.⁹⁷

Despite the words being ancient and strange they are still delightful, lending ‘decorousness’ to the speeches of the interlocutors. Hannah Crawforth observes that ‘what is most striking about the notes that accompany *The Shepheardes Calender* and about E. K.’s remarks, is the vivid sense they create of English as a language that both is and is not familiar to those who consider it their native tongue’.⁹⁸ Speaking in strange tongues does not necessarily mean adopting a foreign language but rather rehabilitating the vernacular and foregrounding an ‘English’ language.⁹⁹ The scriptural source for this argument is 1 Corinthians 14:2: ‘For he that speaketh a strange tongue,

⁹⁴ Edmund Spenser, *A View on the State of Ireland*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 54.

⁹⁵ *A View*, p. 70.

⁹⁶ Malpezzi, p. 187.

⁹⁷ *The Shepheardes Calender*, ‘Epistle’, ll. 22-27.

⁹⁸ Hannah Crawforth, *Etymology and the Invention of English in Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 25.

⁹⁹ Wadoski, pp. 421-2.

speaketh not vnto men, but vnto God: for no man heareth him: howbeit in the spirit he speaketh secret things'.¹⁰⁰ Spenser (as Immerito – the new poet) accomplishes something similar in *The Shepheardes Calender*, initiating a new phase in English poetry through his radical innovation of familiar artistic forms.¹⁰¹ These include, as we have seen, archaic language, woodcuts that look back to an earlier literary tradition, black letter font, and dialogue.¹⁰² Steven Galbraith notes that black letter type was called 'English' type during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and he argues that the use of this type supported *The Shepheardes Calender's* 'promotion of English language and literature'.¹⁰³ The epistle, introduction, and the glosses to the eclogues were in roman, which may coincide with the introduction of the 'new poet' and the 'topicality of the gloss'.¹⁰⁴ The choice of font, and indeed the choice of interlocutor names, helps to establish the familiar voice that can be trusted as an authority to guide the reader. And, as E. K. reminds us, the very title of *The Shepheardes Calender* applies 'an olde name to a new worke'.¹⁰⁵

E. K. follows in the footsteps of the new poet by adding a 'certain Glosse or scholion for the exposition of old wordes and harder phrases'.¹⁰⁶ His glosses attempt to elucidate the dialogue through a kind of 'meta dialogue' which the reader cannot ignore. In Oram's introduction to his edition of Spenser's shorter poems, he sets out how E. K.'s glosses 'force the reader to adapt and maintain a vigilantly defensive querying posture toward the text'.¹⁰⁷ The dialogue, and the woodcut, together imply a kind of lucidity; but the reader has to navigate the text with E. K.'s comments. Nicholson suggests that

¹⁰⁰ Kneidel, pp. 306-7. He suggests that 'E. K. may be directing his readers to contemplate Spenser's writing in connection with current debates over the 1560 Geneva translation of 1 Corinthians 14, where 'straunge' speech signifies much more than foreign, unknown, or obsolete words'. This scriptural passage demonstrates Paul's distinction between prophesying (providing edification to man) and speaking a 'tongue' (speaks to God). The discussion returns to this point below.

¹⁰¹ Richard Chamberlain, *Radical Spenser: Pastoral, Politics, and the New Aestheticism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p. 3.

¹⁰² 'Januarye' and 'December' are monologues spoken by Colin Clout. As we saw in Chapter I, the black letter font used in all the eclogues signified antiquity compounded the archaic language used by Spenser.

¹⁰³ Steven K. Galbraith, "'English' Black-Letter Type and Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*", *Spenser Studies*, XXIII (2008), 13-40 (p. 14). He continues to assert that 'black-letter or 'English' type signified the English language', p. 16. He also admits that the differing typefaces could just be representative of the common practice for English printers to use different typefaces to differentiate between the sections of text, p. 23. Cathy Shrank also suggests that the 'choice of typeface had national connotations' and Spenser wanted to create an English style, *Writing the Nation in Reformation England, 1530 – 1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 226-7.

¹⁰⁴ Richard A. McCabe observes that the 'black letter typeface enforces the archaic quality of the poetry by making the verse look, as well as sound, Chaucerian', whilst the 'modernity of the roman type face enforces the topicality of the gloss'. 'Annotating anonymity, or putting a gloss on *The Shepheardes Calender*' in *Ma(r)king the Text: The Presentation of Meaning on the Literary Page* ed. by Joe Bray, Miriam Handley, and Anne C. Henry (Aldershot, Burlington, Singapore, and Sidney: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 35-54 (p. 37).

¹⁰⁵ *The Shepheardes Calender*, 'Epistle', l. 168. A large number of residual calendars, primers, and missals remained in university, personal, and ecclesiastical libraries. *The Shepheardes Calender* meant to recall the old *Kalendrier & Compost des Bergers*, (translated into English in 1506) alluded to in E.K.'s argument. See also Anne Lake Prescott, 'Refusing Translation: The Gregorian Calendar and Early Modern English Writers', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1, Translation (2006), 1-11, and Katherine Little, *Transforming Work: Early Modern Pastoral and Late Medieval Poetry* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2013), pp. 143-4.

¹⁰⁶ *The Shepheardes Calender*, 'Epistle', l. 169-70.

¹⁰⁷ *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. by William A. Oram and others (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 9.

'Protestantism also provides a matrix for understanding the poem's language and the way that language is represented and mediated by E. K.'. She continues to describe that among the translators of scripture, 'we find an approach to the vernacular that, like that of E. K., is precariously poised between the values of simplicity and strangeness – and here, as in *The Shepheardes Calender*, the practice most likely to disturb this equilibrium is glossing'.¹⁰⁸ E. K. is as integral to the fiction of *The Shepheardes Calender* as any of the other speakers, partly because he is in dialogue with the reader.¹⁰⁹ He emphasises the reader's role by appearing to guide us – all we have to do is decide whether his comments inform or mislead. Spenser also deploys the narrator as an authoritative voice in *The Faerie Queene* in order to guide the reader – but this same clarity is notably missing from E. K.'s glosses in *The Shepheardes Calender*. The reader has to proceed carefully to negotiate the complex and unclear signs from E. K. and this 'parallels the knightly quests in *The Faerie Queene* where the questers, illuminated by the virtues of Gloriana, must find their way through a tricky milieu of temptations and perplexing signs'.¹¹⁰ We will, of course, consider how dialogue is deployed in *The Faerie Queene* in the last two chapters where we will explore in more detail the risks posed to the Protestant self when faced with temptation.

E. K. keeps the 'old' language and words of the poem familiar through his 'helpful' glosses which are suggestive of a scholarly edition – perhaps, even, reminiscent of the Geneva Bible.¹¹¹ Munro notes that religious writing 'also brought archaism into direct contact with contemporary controversy, as writers and translators sought to connect themselves with earlier traditions of their native language and thereby to root the Church of England as authentically English'.¹¹² Producing the Bible in the vernacular was important to English Protestantism due to the inherent focus on *sola scripture*. In the 'Epistle', E. K. informs the reader that 'our Mother tongue' was 'ful enough for prose and stately enough for verse', even though it had been discounted for a long time.¹¹³ All the additions of French, Italian, and Latin have made the 'English tongue, a gallimaufrey or hodgepodge of al other speches'.¹¹⁴ This has resulted in a lack of understanding of the native language and when an old word is used the speaker is accused of speaking 'no English, but gibberish'.¹¹⁵ This is crucial to Spenser's work where 'the poem's

¹⁰⁸ Nicholson, pp. 106-7.

¹⁰⁹ Rebeca Helfer, "'The Death of the 'New Poete': Virgilian Ruin and Ciceronian Recollection in Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 56.3 (Autumn 2003), 723-756 (p. 734).

¹¹⁰ Oram. *The Yale Edition*, p. 9.

¹¹¹ Kearney, p. 114.

¹¹² Munro, p. 107.

¹¹³ *The Shepheardes Calender*, 'Epistle', ll. 82-4.

¹¹⁴ *The Shepheardes Calender*, 'Epistle', ll. 90-1.

¹¹⁵ *The Shepheardes Calender*, 'Epistle', ll. 94.

language reveals the allegorical power inherent within words themselves'.¹¹⁶ As we will see 'the distinction between meaning and saying is an important one in *The Shepheardes Calender*' where the major clerical failing satirised by Spenser is the inability to grasp the true meaning of words.¹¹⁷ The text is filled with conflicting voices and, as we will discover, when listeners do not listen accurately they fail to be converted by their opposition.¹¹⁸ This inability to engage fully in dialogue will be addressed below when we consider the unanswered questions between Piers and Palinode in 'Maye'.

'Maye' eclogue

'Of craft, coloured with simplicitie'.¹¹⁹

We have seen how Spenser qualifies his use of dialogue in *The Shepheardes Calender* with a multi-layered 'meta-dialogue', particularly through the riddling glosses of E. K. Spenser understood that the seeming simplicity of the dialogue form masked the fact that it was actually 'craft, coloured with simplicitie'.¹²⁰ James Kearney suggests that Spenser stages a dialogue 'between text and commentary that is incomplete and imperfect in order to emphasise the need for interpretation to continue over and against the certainty of all glossers, godly and otherwise'.¹²¹ This contrasts with Gifford's straightforward didactic dialogue to inform the 'simpler sort'. The dialogue between Gifford's Protestant and Papist represents a debate where they are fully engaged with each other in order to uncover the truth of their respective beliefs. Gifford's scriptural references in the margins work to reiterate the plain simplicity and clarity of the Bible. Reading Gifford's *Dialogue* alongside *The Shepheardes Calender* illuminates the very different ways in which these two writers utilise the dialogue form – Gifford with his trust in the scriptural-based plainness of language, and Spenser with his awareness of the 'limitations of language, the imperfect tool of imperfect humanity in the postlapsarian world'.¹²² For Gifford simplicity meant scriptural clarity, and for Spenser simplicity meant imperfection, both writers however were exploring the impact of dialogue on the restored Protestant self.

'In 'Maye' Spenser depicts a dialogue between two shepherds, Piers and Palinode, 'men of elder witt', who are drawn together during May Day festivities whilst watching

¹¹⁶ Crawford, p. 19.

¹¹⁷ Crawford, p. 21.

¹¹⁸ Shrank, p. 239.

¹¹⁹ 'Maye', l. 303.

¹²⁰ James Kearney 'Reformed Ventriloquism: *The Shepheardes Calender* and the Craft of Commentary', *Spenser Studies*, XXVI (2011), 111-151 (p. 135).

¹²¹ Kearney, p. 137.

¹²² Malpezzi, p. 184.

the young people enjoying themselves.¹²³ E. K.'s argument at the top of the eclogue describes that these two shepherds represent two types of ministers – 'the protestant and Catholique' and their discussion 'standeth in reasoning'. This suggests that what follows will be a reasoned debate between opposing sides (as we saw in Gifford's *Dialogue*). The interlocutors' names are deliberate constructs - the name Piers is associated with a satirical tradition stemming from Langland's *The Plowman's Tale*.¹²⁴ Piers' name would also suggest his affinity to the reformists denouncing the corrupting influence of the old Church.¹²⁵ E. K. identifies Palinode as 'Catholique' but he is more like a conforming cleric who complacently champions tradition.¹²⁶ His name, which means 'retraction', was already associated with Andrew Perne, the master of Peterhouse, Cambridge. Perne was scorned by students for his political pliancy, and his name's proximity to the Latin word 'pernere' (to turn) soon became a byword for a religious turncoat.¹²⁷ He is mentioned in *The Marprelate Tracts* in various forms: 'old father Palinode', 'Fox', 'old Turner', 'Andrew Ambo', and 'old Andrew Turncoat'.¹²⁸ Spenser uses his own Palinode not as a direct attack on Perne, but rather to criticise the state of mind that sees compromise and accommodation as the answer to every problem.¹²⁹ He may have chosen the name through his acquaintance with Gabriel Harvey, who described Perne as a wily fox. It is surely no coincidence that a wily fox features in the moral fable narrated by Piers in the latter half of the eclogue.¹³⁰

Piers and Palinode do not discuss scripture or the truth of one's faith as we saw between Gifford's Protestant and Papist. Instead the crux of their debate concerns clerical marriages and how clerics should conduct themselves.¹³¹ Piers brings to the fore the vocation and responsibility of the godly minister: 'But shepherds (As Algrind used to say) / Mought not liue ylike, as men of the laye'.¹³² E. K. glosses 'Algrind' as 'the name of a shepherd', cleverly disguising whether he means a sheep-herder or a

¹²³ 'Maye', I. 18.

¹²⁴ Oram, *The Yale Edition*, p. 85.

¹²⁵ Crawford, pp. 310-2.

¹²⁶ Kearney, p. 126.

¹²⁷ Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethans* (London and New York: Hambledon, 2003), p. 179.

¹²⁸ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, p. 215. See Joseph L. Black, ed., *The Martin Marprelate Tracts: A Modernised and Annotated Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 'turncoat', p. 13, 'the fox Doctor Perne', p. 16, 'Doctor Turncoat', p. 18 'old father Palinode Doctor Perne' p. 36, 'Doctor Perne the old turner', p. 38, 'Andrew Ambo', p. 85, and 'old Andrew Turncoat', p. 204.

¹²⁹ O'Connell, pp. 8-9.

¹³⁰ Collinson, *Elizabethans*, pp. 210-14. Harvey's vendetta against Perne (included being overlooked for Master of Trinity Hall in 1585) began when Perne preached at Sir Thomas Smith's funeral in 1577. Gabriel Harvey was related to Smith and had persuaded Smith's widow to give him some manuscripts that should have been donated to the University library. Perne was unimpressed and called Harvey a fox. Harvey replied saying he was too young and was only a cub. In 1578 the Queen's progress went to Audley End where Harvey disputed like a scholar – the Queen allowed him to kiss her hand. Harvey abused Perne in an open letter to Spenser.

¹³¹ Crawford, p. 36.

¹³² 'Maye', II. 75-76.

clergyman.¹³³ He does not mention that Algrind is an anagram of the surname of the Archbishop of Canterbury – Edmund Grindal.¹³⁴ Grindal was admired for finding an honourable way to live despite the glitter and temptation of the Elizabethan Church and court.¹³⁵ He was always clear in the differentiation between lay and clerical duties and this is echoed by Piers. They follow Calvin who warned against those who were parasites of princes' natural ambitions, specifically those who were not guided by the Spirit of God but impelled by their own ambition.¹³⁶ In 'Maye' there is no criticism of clerical marriage per se, but rather of the wealth that 'shepherds' have relied upon. Lay people have to provide for their heirs but the 'shepherd' must trust in God and 'walke another way' to provide for his offspring. As Piers explains: 'They must provide for meanes of maintenaunce, / And to continue their wont countenaunce'.¹³⁷ These lines are recalled in 'September' by Diggon Davy: 'For all their craft is in their countenaunce, / They bene so graue and full of mayntenaunce'.¹³⁸ Here we are reminded of the 'craft' that suggests false practice, recalling the fable in 'Maye' regarding the wily fox who uses 'craft, coloured with simplicitie'.¹³⁹ These links between the eclogues help to create cohesiveness within the work and add another layer to the 'meta dialogue' as different speakers echo each other's words.

'Maye' begins with a typical pastoral scene as the two elders watch the young enjoying the festivities whilst they converse. Spenser gives the impression of familiarity and homeliness through the resources of pastoral and dialogue. However, as Bart Van Es observes, 'Spenserian pastoral, in many ways, is conventional, but it is in the exploiting, mocking, or twisting of (often contradictory) conventions that the fascination of the form lies'.¹⁴⁰ We have already seen that E. K.'s glosses mislead the reader, defamiliarising the homely aspects of dialogic form. Let us now consider the nature of the dialogue itself; and, in particular, whether Piers and Palinode are truly engaged in committed act of listening. Palinode's longest speech contains several questions that remain unanswered:

¹³³ Evelyn B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: the Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p. 82.

¹³⁴ Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal*, p. 96. Grindal became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1576. He was a reformer who believed that if he did not accept the offered bishopric then the church would be abandoned to the leadership of 'semi-papists', Lutherans, and time-servers. He saw it as a duty to accept Episcopal office to prevent the church falling into wrong hands – some declined offers of office.

¹³⁵ Nancy Jo Hoffman, *Spenser's Pastorals: The Shepherdes Calender and Colin Clout* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1970), p. 108.

¹³⁶ Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal*, p. 90. Grindal belonged to the group of returning exiles on Elizabeth's ascension who felt insecure and those with wives were afraid – the first Elizabethan parliament did not recognise or legitimise clerical marital status.

¹³⁷ 'Maye', ll. 77-84

¹³⁸ 'September', ll. 168-9.

¹³⁹ 'Maye', l. 303.

¹⁴⁰ Bart van Es, 'Spenserian Pastoral' in *Early Modern English Poetry: A Critical Companion*, ed. by Patrick Cheney, Andrew Hadfield, and Garrett A. Sullivan Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.79-89, (p. 80).

Palinode: With patience to forbear the offred bowl?

[...]

How shouldest Shepherdes liue, if not so?

What? Should they pynen in payne and woe?¹⁴¹

Palinode does not elaborate on how shepherds should live but refers to what he would do: 'I may rest, I nill liue in sorrowe'.¹⁴² Curiously, although these questions appear unanswered, this section of the eclogue is about coming to an agreement. Palinode ends his speech with a reference to concord which leads Piers to respond, in turn, with a further two questions:

Palinode: Let none mislike of that may not be mended;

So conteck soone by concord mought be ended.

Piers: Shepherd, I list none accordance make

With shepheard, that does the right way forsake.

And of the twaine, if choice were to me,

Had leuer my foe, then my freend he be.

For what concord han light and darke sam?

Or what peace had the Lion with the Lambe?¹⁴³

This debate in 'Maye' seems to end in stalemate before Piers begins his tale of the Fox and the Kid.¹⁴⁴ Interestingly there is no gloss from E. K. (except for occasional words) on this middle section where Piers and Palinode seem to be agreeing to disagree – or, rather, agreeing that it is only possible to achieve accord with those who share one's own beliefs.¹⁴⁵ The process of the debate may even suggest the exercises of 'prophesying', the bible study sessions which were designed to produce an informed clergy.¹⁴⁶ Spenser's use of unanswered questions therefore reflects the wider cultural practice of scriptural exegesis. Grindal set out to prove the necessity of prophesying, which he refused to suppress, citing 1 Corinthians 14:3-4: 'he that prophecieth, speaketh vnto men to edifying, and to exhortacion, and to comfort. He that speaketh strange language, edifieth himself; but he that prophecieth, edifieth the Church'. Calvin had also advocated this exercise: 'people who prophesy are not scourges of God but

¹⁴¹ 'Maye', I .139, ll. 148-9. This speech of Palinode is thirty-two lines long his others are between two lines and eighteen, compared with the length of Piers' speeches, which are between two and one-hundred-and thirty-two. Piers speaks just over two-thirds of the lines with Palinode having under one-third.

¹⁴² 'Maye', I. 151.

¹⁴³ 'Maye', ll. 162-9.

¹⁴⁴ Evan Gurney, 'Spenser's "May" Eclogue and Charitable Admonition', *Spenser Studies* XXVII (2012), 193-219 (p. 212).

¹⁴⁵ Oram, *The Yale Edition*, p. 86.

¹⁴⁶ Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal*, pp. 235-8.

are endowed with a gift of interpreting scripture and applying it wisely'.¹⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 14 was indeed particularly 'crucial to Protestant notions of the working of language since it was concerned both with the problem of translation ('speaking in tongues') and the problem of communal interpretation ('edification' and 'prophesying')'.¹⁴⁸

The two speakers in Gifford's *Dialogue* were clearly opposed in their understanding of language and the meaning of scripture. In 'Maye', however, Spenser's two interlocutors debate how clerics should live, but do not come to any clear conclusion. As Malpezzi writes, 'when language fails in *The Shepheardes Calender* it is often because one of those involved in the exchange has failed to move beyond the limits of self'.¹⁴⁹ The failure to engage fully in dialogue means that the self cannot be converted or changed, and this leads to a kind of stalemate.¹⁵⁰ The effect, in *The Shepheardes Calender*, is to foreground the dialogue form itself – and we become newly aware of the possibility that it may not uncover the truth or lead to a clean and pure self. In 'Maye' this impasse leads to the 'fellowship' of the tale, the second half of the eclogue which contains Piers' retelling of the moral fable.¹⁵¹ Palinode asks Piers to tell him the story of the Fox and the Kid, assuring him that the 'Ladde can keepe both our flocks from straying'.¹⁵² Here Palinode seems quick to defer his responsibility for his flock to someone younger and less experienced, which reflects more generally on his lack of attention throughout the dialogue.

The fable itself deals with the consequences of failing to take due note 'of craft, coloured with simplicitie'.¹⁵³ This is central to our focus on dialogue, in this chapter, as a sophisticated form that only appears to have a veneer of simplicity. Spenser is warning the reader that dialogue is not as plain or straightforward as one thinks and one should read carefully as 'deceitfull meaning is double eyed'.¹⁵⁴ The 'false Foxe' dressed as a pedlar represents the popish priest who uses dialogue to seduce the Kid and steal him away. The Kid cannot keep faith or keep the door closed as advised by his mother. E. K., in his gloss to line 174, describes the Kid as 'the *simple sorte* of the faythfull and true Christians'. We saw earlier that Gifford's aim was to educate the 'simple sort' and provide an armoury to protect them from temptation. Spenser's Kid is seduced, however, by the Fox's claim to be 'a pore Sheepe' who wishes to rest to

¹⁴⁷ Kneidel, pp. 306-7.

¹⁴⁸ Kearney, p. 122.

¹⁴⁹ Malpezzi, p. 185.

¹⁵⁰ Gurney, p. 211.

¹⁵¹ 'Maye', l. 172.

¹⁵² 'Maye' l. 173.

¹⁵³ 'Maye', l. 303.

¹⁵⁴ 'Maye', l. 254.

prevent his 'neere decay'.¹⁵⁵ This is compounded by the temptations of the pedlar's basket, particularly the mirror:

Tho out of his packe a glasse he tooke:
Wherein while kiddie vnwares did looke,
He was so enamoured with the newel,
That nought he deemed deare for the jewell.

[...]

All for the loue of the glasse he did see.¹⁵⁶

The Kid is fascinated with the mirror which allows him to see himself – without really recognising the image, or thinking about what he should see.¹⁵⁷ We have already considered how the Protestant self emerges through relationship with some 'other', or by recognising what one is, or what one is not.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, we saw that Gifford's Protestant and Papist mirrored each other in their speeches. The Kid can see himself but has not fully formed his own identity in this respect. The first time he is left alone he forgets all that he has been taught and his little faith is quickly eroded by the lure of the jewel.¹⁵⁹ The reader has already been alerted by E. K to the fact that the Fox is disguised: 'The Catholiques comen othe, and onely speache, to haue charity alwayes in their mouth, and sometime in their outward Actions, but neuer inwardly in fayth and godly zeale'.¹⁶⁰ This gloss stresses the importance of internal faith and godliness as one way of recognising a godly, introspective Protestant self as opposed to outwardly showy 'Catholiques'. But the Kid, enamoured by his own outward reflection, allows the old Sheep into the house. When he tries to pick a bell out of the basket, the Fox 'popt him in, and his basket did latch'.¹⁶¹ Spenser's false Fox looks forward to Spenser's other memorably false, duplicitous character: Archimago in *The Faerie Queene*, Books I and II, with his 'faire filed tong'. We will consider the nature of Archimago's dialogue in the last two chapters.

¹⁵⁵ 'Maye', I. 266 and I. 273.

¹⁵⁶ 'Maye', II. 274-7 and I. 283.

¹⁵⁷ Oram, *Edmund Spenser*, p. 54. He notes that 'the mirror, which fascinates the kid, suggests a narcissistic concern with self.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: the Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), notes that 'self-definition comes from the not-self, from the alien other', p. 22.

¹⁵⁹ Little, p. 155. She observes that the Kid does not recognise the Fox his greed for the jewel, he lacks knowledge and therefore his faith diminishes.

¹⁶⁰ 'Maye', I. 247. Tribble notes that this 'critique of the Catholics is a conventionally worded statement of allegiance to a moderate Anglicanism', p. 83.

¹⁶¹ 'Maye', II. 288-292.

The Goat returns to find on the floor the merchandise of which the Kid 'had sette to dere a prise'.¹⁶² The Kid has succumbed to the lure of material goods over faith; and Piers ends his tale with a warning of false friendships: 'such end perdie does all hem remayne, / That of such falsers friendship bene fayne'.¹⁶³ E. K.'s gloss to these lines highlights the moral of the tale to the reader, whilst referring to a real-life event: 'the morall of the whole tale, whose purpose is to warne the protestaunt beware, howe he geueth credit to the vnfaythfull Catholique: whereof we haue dayly proofes sufficient, but one moste famous of all, practised of Late yeares in Fraunce by Charles the nyynth'. The allusion is to the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, when thousands of Protestants were slaughtered in Paris by Catholics.¹⁶⁴ This gloss from E. K., along with the previous one, reflects contemporary anti-papal propaganda found in the latter half of the sixteenth century. He draws on an actual event as evidence to support the argument for the false dealings by Catholics, a display of knowledge that intends to assert his authority. As the 'Argument' to 'Maye' had made clear, this dialogue takes place between two shepherds who represent opposing sides of the religious debate: 'the protestant and Catholique'. Bearing this in mind, the sixteenth-century English Protestant reader might expect to find anti-Catholic sentiment. However, as mentioned earlier, Piers and Palinode do not in fact enter into the same kind of polarised theological debate which we witnessed between Gifford's Protestant and Papist. Spenser subverts the reader's expectations, offering instead a 'meta-dialogue' between E. K., the 'new' poet Immerito, the reader, and the interlocutors. The fable, in addition, warns against the very simplicity and homeliness which was such often a hallmark of early modern dialogic discourse.¹⁶⁵

When Piers finishes the moral tale, Palinode does not comment on its meaning but seems more interested in its mode of representation. He recognises it as a good teaching aid for moral instruction, commends Piers on his wit, and wants to borrow the tale for 'our sir Iohn, to say to morrowe / At the Kerke'.¹⁶⁶ E. K.'s gloss to this line explains that 'our sir Iohn is a Popishe priest. A saying fit for the grosenesse of a

¹⁶² 'Maye' I. 299.

¹⁶³ 'Maye', II. 304-5.

¹⁶⁴ Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480 – 1642* (London: Arnold, 2003), suggests that the massacre was 'a wakeup call' for English Protestants, p. 122. The massacre was popularly believed to be instigated by Charles IX, (the brother of the Duc d'Alençon - (suitor to the Queen), McCabe, 'Annotating Anonymity', p. 50.

¹⁶⁵ In Chapter I we considered the didactic aim of dialogue – to recall George Gifford's reason for writing a dialogue: 'to make the fitter for the capacity of the simpler sort'. Sixteenth-century dialogue encompassed the features of the inherited classical tradition and Mary Margaret McCabe explains that Plato's dialogue proceeded sequentially with an answer provoking another question for further illumination to show that 'conversation is the way that philosophy should proceed', 'Plato's Ways of Writing', pp. 88-113 in *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, ed. by Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 88-113, (p. 102). Norbrook describes Piers resorting to telling the fable as 'a low level of argument according to rhetorical theory', p. 65.

¹⁶⁶ 'Maye', i. 309. Armstrong, p. 82.

Shepherd, but spoken to taunte vnlearned Priests'.¹⁶⁷ There is no suggestion that Palinode has been persuaded by this tale to look towards protecting his own flock (and he has, in fact, already given away that responsibility to 'the Ladde'). Peter Herman suggests that poetry here 'fails in its mission to instruct, not because Palinode rejects his companion's fable but because Palinode completely misses the tale's point'.¹⁶⁸ To this we may add the more precise conclusion that it is dialogue which fails to instruct. Palinode misreads the tale and then passes it on to 'our sir Iohn' – suggesting the possibility of further future misreadings, and the continuing difficulty of discerning 'craft coloured with simplicitie'.¹⁶⁹ He adds 'but and if Foxes bene so crafty, as so, / Much needeth all shepherds hem to knowe'.¹⁷⁰ The use of 'but and if' implies that Palinode does not fully recognise the craftiness of the Fox, requiring further evidence to convince, or rather to convert, him.¹⁷¹ Piers replies that of 'their falsehode more could I recount' but night is drawing near so he thinks 'it best for vs, home to hye'.¹⁷² The dialogue ends because they have run out of time not because they have concluded their debate and uncovered the truth.

The theme of mistrust and falseness is echoed in Palinode's emblem: 'everyone without faith is suspicious'. E. K.'s gloss explains that he 'who doth most mistrust is most false' and 'falsehood breedeth mistrust in the mind'. Piers emblem, 'what faith then is in the faithless?', is glossed by E. K. as 'if faith be the ground of religion, which faith they dayly false, what hold then is there of thyr religion'. Both emblems open up questions of faith. If one lives without faith, how can one be sure of faith in others? E. K.'s glosses do not however clarify the emblems and indeed only add further complexity. E.K. ends his own dialogue with the reader with the last line: 'And thys is all that they saye'. But what they have said is not clear – for although Piers and Palinode have agreed with each other about clerical marriage, the fable seems radically unfinished and unfinishable. Dialogue's appeal to simplicity, naivety and homeliness – including and particularly when this appeal is made through archaic typography and language – only 'adds to Spenser's elusiveness' in *The Shepheardes Calender*.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁷ Norbrook adds 'Sir Iohn clearly belongs to the tradition of dull-witted conservatives who inhabited so much Protestant satire', p. 66.

¹⁶⁸ Peter C. Herman, 'The Shepheardes Calender and Renaissance Antipoetic Sentiment', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 32.1 (Winter 1992) 15-33, (p. 19).

¹⁶⁹ Kearney, p. 135, echoed by Herman, p. 20 and Gurney, p. 214.

¹⁷⁰ Maye, ll. 312-133

¹⁷¹ Norbrook, p. 66.

¹⁷² 'Maye' ll. 314 and 317.

¹⁷³ Shrank, p. 239.

We have seen that Spenser subverts the familiar dialectical process of dialogue as Palinode fails to understand plain and homely language. Ecclesiastical pastoral writing was often a mode of anti-clerical complaint with discussions between shepherds revealing, finally, 'what priests should be doing but are not: watching their flocks'.¹⁷⁴ Palinode indeed leaves his sheep behind in order to listen to the fable; but his greater failure is his inability fully to engage in dialogue.¹⁷⁵ Although Piers and Palinode appear to be speaking the same language, they do not derive the same meanings from the same words. 'Maye' explores the value of seeing oneself in opposition to an 'other'; but Spenser's dialogue is far from straightforwardly didactic. Instead the burden of further interpretation is loaded onto the reader through E. K.'s elusive comments. Here Protestant interiority, in so far as it emerges through dialogue, never seems whole or fully formed. There will be always one more step (or dialogue) to take before assurance and absolution is obtainable.

Let us turn, in conclusion, to the ending of Gifford's *Dialogue*. Here Gifford, like Spenser, borrows one particular formal feature from classical dialogue: the 'Socratic aporia':

Papist: I see that I cannot remooue you, nor you shall not
remooue me. I must leaue yee as I founde you. I
am sorie that ye are so farre spent.

Protestant: I may not be remoued from that which I knowe
most certainly to be the truth, unto that which is
most cursed lies.¹⁷⁶

Gifford's Papist and Protestant go their separate ways without being 'remooued' from their contrasting beliefs and faith. They continue to believe that their respective religion is the 'truth', and can only agree to disagree on this matter. There is a topical slant on the classical 'Socratic aporia', allowing Gifford to explore the paradox of using dialogue to investigate the truth. Despite this, Gifford firmly directs his reader, here and throughout the dialogue, towards favouring the Protestant. He allocates the Protestant the longest speeches, which include over one hundred scriptural references. The Papist has shorter speeches and only six biblical references. Additionally, the Protestant has the last word: 'I pray God disclose all your traitorous practices, and

¹⁷⁴ Little, p. 146.

¹⁷⁵ Little, p. 151.

¹⁷⁶ *Dialogue*, 114r.

represe your crueltie, and otherwise prouide what ye can'.¹⁷⁷ This last line brings us back to where we started - the opening remarks relating to the trial and execution of Edmund Campion. The reference to 'traitorous practices' reminds the reader that following the Catholic faith is a treasonous offence. Despite the fact that there is no formal conclusion to the debate, Gifford nevertheless draws his reader's attention clearly towards the risks involved in practising Catholicism.

As we saw above, Spenser also left his dialogue in 'Maye' open-ended. The conversation finishes because night is falling, not because the speakers have arrived at a conclusion. Piers represents the reformed religion and, like Gifford's Protestant, has the largest number of lines (over two-thirds of the total). Gifford's *Dialogue* had begun with the interlocutors greeting each other as old acquaintances before they entered into spiritual debate. They remain steadfast to their respective faiths, illustrating a straightforward exchange of ideas through their dialogue. Piers and Palinode come together during May Day festivities and seem to be companionable – but, at the same time, the reader is warned in the Argument not to 'give too much credit to their colourable and feyned goodwill'. Spenser warns his reader to treat plain, homely, and familiar language with scepticism; and, further, to be aware of duplicitous 'double dealings'. Throughout the eclogue, as we have seen, questions remain unanswered – not least the meaning of the fable. The 'meta-dialogue' creates several further, interacting layers; and E. K.'s misleading glosses further complicate Spenser's seeming plainness.

Gifford's aim to establish his version of spiritual truth, and his appeal to the reader's imagination, both contribute to his work in important ways. His *Dialogue* is committed to the clarity of scriptural language, and the potential of this language to foster the integrity of the Protestant self. He uses familiar language to speak to the unlearned, whereas Spenser deploys archaic language in order to assert a qualified, fragile and shifting version of English Protestant identity which straddles the past and the present. By reading Gifford and Spenser together we can see that the Gifford clearly directs the attention and spiritual focus of his readers; whereas Spenser rigorously tests the limitations of dialogue, demonstrating that it does not always lead to transparency, clarity, or simplicity. Gifford's assertive positioning of his readers becomes clear, in the above discussion, in the light of Spenser's interrogation of dialogue's ability to search out the truth. Likewise we can better appreciate Spenser's warnings against 'craft,

¹⁷⁷ *Dialogue*, 115r.

coloured with simplicitie' in the light of Gifford's simple and plain dialogue imbued with the clarity of scripture. Sidney had suggested that the poet never lies; instead, he tells 'what should or should not be'. As we will discover in the next and subsequent chapters, our group of writers were all committed to exploring 'what should or should not be' within the Protestant self. Each wrote dialogues with a keen awareness of the tension between telling the truth, and appealing to the reader's imagination.

Chapter III – Dialogue and confession: Edmund Spenser’s ‘September’ (1579), Gervase Babington’s *Briefe Conference* (1584), and John Udall’s *The State of the Church of England* (1588)¹

Frailtie: I must needes confesse vnto you.²

In the previous chapter, we considered how Gifford and Spenser explored the emerging Protestant self through dialogue by considering the language used and the importance of careful reading to interpret the ‘meta-dialogue’. Spenser in particular structured a complex dialogue in *The Shepheardes Calender* which was illuminated in new ways when considered alongside Gifford’s *Dialogue*. We saw, too, that Gifford used dialogue with a definite didactic aim in order to foreground the simplicity and clarity of scripture. This chapter will build on this discussion with an examination of the correlation between confession and dialogue. As the above epigram demonstrates, the need to confess is clearly stated at the beginning of Gervase Babington’s *Briefe Conference betwixt mans frailtie and faith wherein is declared the true vse, and comfort of those blessings pronounced by Christ in the fifth of Matthew* (1584) and, as we will see, is a phrase often repeated by *Frailtie* throughout this dialogic text. The act of confession involves an admission of wrongdoing or guilt, but also an open acknowledgement of feeling. The biblical source for this sharing of wrongdoings is James V:16 - ‘Acknowledge your faultes one to another, and praye one for another, that ye may be healed’.³

Reading Gervase Babington’s *Briefe Conference* and John Udall’s *The State of the Church of Englande laide open in a Conference between Diotrephes A Bishop, Tertullus a Papist, Demetrius an vsurer, Pandocheus an in-keeper, and Paule a preacher of the word of God* (1588) alongside Spenser’s ‘September’ eclogue allows us to see how Protestant spirituality remained bound to the need to confess in the latter decades of the sixteenth century. Together, these texts allow us to examine a variety of confessional practices bound up with the notion of ‘conference’, a word that appears in the titles of both prose dialogues under consideration here. Puritan reformers used this term to denote public discussion on doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues.⁴ The words

¹ Edmund Spenser: *The Shorter Poems*, ed. by Richard A. McCabe (London: Penguin Books, 1999). Gervase Babington *A Briefe Conference betwixt mans frailtie and faith wherein is declared the true vse, and comfort of those blessings pronounced by Christ in the fifth of Matthew* (1584). Referred to as *Briefe Conference* throughout, all citations are taken from this edition. John Udall *The State of the Church of Englande laide open in a Conference between Diotrephes A Bishop, Tertullus a Papist, Demetrius an vsurer, Pandocheus an in-keeper, and Paule a preacher of the word of God* (1588). Referred to as *The State of the Church of Englande* throughout, all citations are taken from this edition.

² *Briefe Conference*, p. 4.

³ *The Geneva Bible*, 1560 edition, James V.16. All biblical references are taken from this edition.

⁴ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), pp. 111, 134, and 177. Collinson also observed that ‘there was an urge in the 1570s to *confer* and to organise in all reformed churches’, p. 106.

'confess' and 'confer' are etymologically linked (through the Latin words 'conferre' and 'conferi', to bring together), and this chapter explores how they are conceptually linked, too, in writings dealing with spiritual transformation.

These three texts were published within a decade of each other and together they allow us to explore – through dialogue – the importance of confession during the late sixteenth century. Each demonstrates how Protestant spirituality remained bound in important ways to the need to confess in the 1580s and, perhaps more importantly, to the need to listen. Moreover, these dialogic exchanges bring into the open the idea that confession involves listening actively: the confessor needs to listen to the confession in order to provide consolation or assurance, and the confessant needs to listen to the absolution provided by the confessor.⁵ The urge to confess is reciprocated by an urge to listen, which is why dialogue is an ideal form to explore these cultural questions, plainly laid open in 'conference'.⁶ To mirror the previous chapter, I will turn to *The Shepheardes Calender* at the end of the following discussion in order to explore how Spenser inverted the process of confessional absolution in order to question dialogue's usefulness for the emergence of a healthy robust Protestant self. This will in turn act as a bridge to the next chapter, which will study the 'dialogue of accord' and 'discord' in *The Faerie Queene*, Book I.

Both Gervase Babington and John Udall were Puritan ministers and, like Gifford, viewed the dialogue form as an ideal medium to push for further reform. We saw in Chapter I that, along with Spenser, they had close links with the Leicester/Sidney circle and Cambridge University. Furthermore, these writers all deployed the dialogue form to explore their faith. In Babington's *Briefe Conference*, Frailtie's plea, 'I must needs confesse vnto you', is significant because confession had been abolished as a sacrament in 1548 and was no longer regarded as a necessary rite for salvation.⁷ However, as Paul Stegner highlights in *Confession and Memory in Early Modern English Literature*, there remained a 'common early modern belief that a guilty

See also Joseph Puterbaugh who demonstrates the importance of 'conference' in the formation of Protestant identity in "'Your Selfe Be Judge and Answer Your Selfe": Formation of Protestant Identity in *A Conference Betwixt a Mother a Devout Recusant and Her Sonne a Zealous Protestant*', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 31.2 (Summer, 2000), 419-431 (p. 419). He considers Francis Savage's dialogue, written 1599, published 1600, which foregrounds a Catholic Mother's confession of her ignorance and her new understanding of her Protestant self. Savage dedicated his dialogue to Gervase Babington, p. 420.

⁵ Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 23. Ryrie explains that assurance 'is the well-grounded conviction that you are amongst the elect, and through grace, a child of God'.

⁶ Puterbaugh, p. 427.

⁷ Paul D. Stegner, *Confession and Memory in Early Modern English Literature: Penitential Remains* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 3. The writers he considers are Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Robert Southwell. Stegner explains that this rejection of sacramental status 'redirected penitence into the private sphere (unmediated, private confession) and the public sphere (general confession as prescribed in the liturgical rituals in the Book of Common Prayer)', p. 3.

conscience will compel confession'.⁸ Confession could take place in a private context but, as the religious landscape changed, confession also began to move into more public spheres.⁹ Babington and Udall, as reformed ministers, both understood the importance of private confession and this 'would become a defining feature of evangelical Protestantism'.¹⁰ Their varying treatments of the confessional impulse will be explored in this chapter, with a particular focus on the extent to which absolution can be achieved.

The English Church was not as 'confessional' in aspect as many of its European counterparts and neither was the English state adept in enforcing a unilateral English Church.¹¹ The persistence of the old religion implied that confession might have some spiritual benefit.¹² Stegner suggests that 'private, auricular confession retained its appeal for early modern authors because of its vital engagements with private and social memory'.¹³ The reformed religion needed to take a stance in order to alleviate the uncertainty of how to confess. This was accomplished partly by re-locating confession in the private and public sphere, a movement spearheaded by reformers like Calvin 'who minimised the importance of private confession arguing that consolation could be found in the general confession and absolution in a liturgical setting and in private penitential prayer'.¹⁴ This is demonstrated in the following passage from the Morning Prayer in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1559):

Dearly beloved Brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sondry places, to acknowledge and confesse our manifold sinnes and wickednes, and that we should not dissemble, nor cloke them before the face of almighty God our heavenly father, but confesse them wyth an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient hart: to the ende that we maye obtaine forgiveness of the same by his infinite goodnesse and mercie.¹⁵

⁸ Stegner, p. 1.

⁹ Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 428.

¹⁰ Stegner, p. 14.

¹¹ Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton, *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of Professor W. J. Shiels* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 19-29 and Peter Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', *The Journal of British Studies*, 48.3 (July 2009) 564-586 (pp. 584-5).

¹² John Kerrigan, 'Introduction', in *Motives of Woe: Shakespeare and 'Female Complaint': A Critical Anthology*, ed. by John Kerrigan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 1-54 (p. 41). Stegner comments that early modern authors valued the 'spiritual and affective benefits for individuals and the community' of confession, p. 10.

¹³ Stegner, p. 4.

¹⁴ Stegner, p. 15.

¹⁵ *The Book of Common Prayer, The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 103.

Ministers encouraged communicants to confess their sins to God. The prayer reminds the congregation that scripture can affect man 'to acknowledge and confesse our manifold sinnes and wickednes'. Repeating the word 'confesse' reiterates the necessity to relieve oneself of those 'sinnes' and to do so 'wyth an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient hart'. Although the effect of absolution was based only on the old religion, as mentioned earlier, Calvin believed that consolation could be obtained from general public confession through the congregational conference. Without the sacrament of confession, the Elizabethan Church still acknowledged the ability of confession to console.¹⁶ As will be discussed later, Babington echoed in *Briefe Conference* this same instruction to open up to God; and we will also see, in 'September', that Diggon Davie is encouraged by Hobbinol to share his woes. Even as Protestant reformers sought to establish for the faithful an intense and personal relationship between the individual and God, this 'externalisation' of confession remained important for the Elizabethan Church, which was still seeking to distance itself from the Roman Church.¹⁷ This chapter will consider how the impulse to seek absolution, through confession, is legible through spiritual dialogues of the 1580s. It seems clear that absolution is necessary to achieve a more robust spiritual self – but this chapter will consider also whether it is possible to confess without the expectation of such absolution. The focus will be on the importance of listening (or reading); the role of the responsive interlocutor; and the forms of assurance such interlocutors can provide to those in spiritual distress.

To absolve perceived sins, a listener is required. Peter Brooks describes confession of wrongdoing as 'fundamental to morality because it constitutes a verbal act of self-recognition as a wrongdoer and provides basis for rehabilitation'.¹⁸ In addition he adds that to 'refuse confession is to be resistant to amendment', to be unable to atone or to receive grace and salvation, and therefore unable to transform into a stronger spiritual self. Brookes expands further on the practice: 'confession originates in an oral culture, a private verbal exchange that possesses mystery and power. Saint Bonaventure claimed that confession must be oral because the shame is greater'.¹⁹ This supports the idea that the notion of confession implies a listener to whom the discourse is proffered, and by whom judgement is passed. The expression of the inner self needs a responsive listener, and, in the case of a written dialogue, it needs a reader. Brooks considers that prayer and confession are similar, since 'the form of an address to a

¹⁶ Stegner, p. 19.

¹⁷ Alan Sinfield, *Literature of Protestant England* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 7 and Stegner, p. 3.

¹⁸ Peter Brooks, *Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law and Literature* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 2.

¹⁹ Brooks, p. 95.

listener found in confession is similar to prayer, which addresses itself to God'.²⁰ The listener's presence and response remain important:

In the performative quality of confession and absolution, we grasp the continuing power, and problematic, of confession: it depends entirely on the confessant's verbal act, which issues from his or her lips, in an interlocutory situation, in which a response is expected from the confessor, a response which acknowledges that the confession has taken place, and judges it to be efficacious.²¹

As Brookes makes clear, 'the expression of inwardness cannot, it appears, proceed without a responsive interlocutor in the search for self-knowledge'.²² This is the crux of dialogue's importance in expressing spiritual faith. The act of confession is revealed as an important step towards achieving self-knowledge and therefore self-improvement.²³ Brooks describes this dialogic relation by pointing out that "I" implies a responsive "you", and in this dialogic, trans-referential relation, consolation and self-definition are to be found'.²⁴ The relational dialogue is between the interlocutors, one of whom attempts to improve their self-understanding. Confession's interactive, reciprocal, relational aspects bring to mind the idea of open 'conference' where thoughts and beliefs are shared in order to foster further understanding. We will see these connections, between 'confession' and 'conference', developing further in the dialogic exchanges considered below – although the efficacy of the resulting transformation will vary considerably. The present chapter builds on this discussion, and considers how the early modern Protestant self emerges through 'confessional dialogue'. The importance of dialogue and confession to the Protestant faithful is again summarised by Elizabeth Heale: 'subjectivity itself, the possibility of speaking with the authority of first person, is produced from within discourse itself'.²⁵ I will reframe Heale's comment by considering 'dialogue' as one very specific kind of 'discourse', and will trace how our writers explored that first-person authority in the 1580s.

²⁰ Brooks, p. 95.

²¹ Brooks, p. 95.

²² Brooks, pp. 95-6.

²³ Puterbaugh observes that to open oneself to opposing views and arguments is to reposition one's Christian identity, p.423.

²⁴ Brooks, p. 95. Furthermore, as we discovered in the previous chapter this dialogue is also between the page and the reader.

²⁵ Elizabeth Heale, *Autobiography and Authorship in Renaissance Verse: Chronicles of the Self* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), p. 3.

The first text we will explore is Gervase Babington's *A Briefe Conference betwixt mans frailtie and faith wherein is declared the true vse, and comfort of those blessings pronounced by Christ in the fifth of Matthew* (1584). This dialogue between personified interlocutors, Faith and Frailtie, presents on the surface a doctrinal debate based on a particular scriptural passage (Matthew 5). Beyond the didactic aim of explaining scripture, however, is Babington's exploration of individual spirituality that emerges as the dialogue progresses. Frailtie, as demonstrated in the epigram to this chapter, uses the exchanges with Faith as a form of confession: 'I must needes confesse vnto you.' As we will see, Babington's dialogue seems like a private auricular confession, which he represents as an internal debate. We saw earlier that prayer and confession are similar in that both allow an expression of doubt in order to achieve some sort of assurance. We will discover that Babington imagines the solution emerging through Frailtie's engagement with dialogic confession, thus raising important questions about the abolition of the sacrament of confession and the believer's residual need to receive absolution through conversational exchange.

The second text explored in this chapter has been attributed, at differing times, to both John Udall and Job Throckmorton: *The State of the Church of Englande laide open in a Conference between Diotrephes A Bishop, Tertullus a Papist, Demetrius an vsurer, Pandocheus an in-keeper, and Paule a preacher of the word of God* (1588). This dialogue features several interlocutors, as the title indicates, in 'conference' with each other. The polyvocality allows the exploration of how different opinions and beliefs contribute – in different contexts – to a process of change among listeners. The dialogue is set in an inn and demonstrates how one person in particular (Demetrius) is affected by the spiritually nourishing words of an honest godly preacher (Paul) and the duplicitous words of the corrupt bishop (Diotrephes). The role of the active listener (Demetrius) is affiliated with the reader's, as both witness the same discussions between Diotrephes, Tertullus, and Paul. The main premise of the dialogue is to criticise Church government, but underlying this subject is another (very different) discussion about how the Protestant self emerges through dialogic confession. Like Babington's *Brief Conference*, this text illustrates how dialogic discourse can influence those who are able to listen actively.

Finally I will turn to Spenser's 'September' eclogue to consider the dialogue between Diggon Davie and Hobbinol, which on one hand echoes the private, introspective conference between Faith and Frailtie, whilst on the other draws on the same broader cultural issues concerning the confession of faith that we will see in *The State of the*

Church of Englande. Like 'Maye', explored in the previous chapter, 'September' was written in the pastoral ecclesiastical mode.²⁶ Critics have highlighted the medieval sources of Piers in 'Maye' in the *Piers Plowman* tradition; and of Diggon in 'September' in Thomas Churchyard's *Davy Dycar's Dreame* (1560), based on a character from William Langland's poem.²⁷ Spenser also drew on the work of Mantuan, the 'most famous writer of Christian pastoral', in order to dramatise the 'conflict between right and wrong'.²⁸ Mantuan's eclogues were 'a familiar and standard textbook in sixteenth-century schools'.²⁹ His pastorals were 'all fully dramatised dialogues'; the first nine had two interlocutors and the tenth was poly-vocal with four speakers.³⁰ A further source for Diggon Davie is Richard Davies (Bishop of St David's), one of the most active and vocal champions of the Reformation in Wales. Davies criticised the clergy's inadequacies and failure to preach regularly, their slowness to reform, their reluctance to give up pilgrimages to wells or chapels.³¹ This reflects Spenser's own reflections on clerical abuses of power that often focussed on ecclesiastical corruption.³² Both Edmund Grindal (in 'Maye' and 'Julye') and Richard Davies (in 'September') saw their role as a calling from God and pitted themselves against those who were ambitious for wealth rather than the glory of God.³³ Grindal and Davies, in 'Maye' and 'Julye' respectively, are at the centre of Spenser's reflections on the state of the Church. These two eclogues are linked also by a sense of despair. E. K.'s final gloss in 'Maye' ('this is all that they saye') is reinforced, as we will see, by Diggon's lament in 'September'.³⁴

Through reading Babington, Udall, and Spenser's texts together, we will explore the role of confessional dialogue in early modern Protestant spirituality, and uncover particular cultural questions surrounding the necessity to listen and take heed. The

²⁶ Katherine C. Little, *Transforming Work: Early Modern Pastoral and Late Medieval Poetry* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2013), p. 147. Little notes that the anti-clerical complaint was a discussion of what priests should be doing but are not: watching their flocks'.

²⁷ Little, pp. 144 and 156, Cathy Shrank, *Writing the Nation in Reformation England, 1530 – 1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 230, and see Scott Lucas 'Diggon Davie and Davy Dicar: Edmund Spenser, Thomas Churchyard, and the Poetics of Public Protest', *Spenser Studies*, XVI (2002), 151-165.

²⁸ William A. Oram, *Edmund Spenser* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), p. 31. Mantuan's eclogues were printed in 1498 and translated into English by George Turberville in 1567, Little, p. 147.

²⁹ Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 175.

³⁰ *Adulescentia: The Eclogues of Mantuan Baptista (Spagnuoli) Mantuanus*, trans. and ed. by Lee Piepho (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1989), p. xxxi.

³¹ Glanmoor Williams, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7255>, accessed 24th August 2017. His *Epistol at y Cembru*, a comprehensive diocesan report (1570), and the 'Funeral Sermon' (1577) on the Earl of Essex who he praised warmly, are some of the most forthright statements in favour of Protestant reform issued by any Welshman. Davies maintained contacts with a scholarly circle – corresponded with William Cecil and Matthew Parker on topics of mutual interest and retained his links with humanist circle around Edmund Grindal and the poet Spenser. Davies recognised the pressing need to raise the level of education among the clergy.

³² Naseeb Shaheen, *Biblical References in The Faerie Queene* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1976), p. 48.

³³ Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, The Struggle for the Reformed Church 1519- 1583* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), p. 96.

³⁴ Little, pp. 156-7.

need to confess emerges through a desire for change or transformation – which, in turn, may spring from a transgression or sense of guilt. The confessant seeks to confess in order to ease their heart and to gain faith in God with a clean conscience. The words ‘ease’ and ‘comfort’ indeed often recur in our chosen texts. To recall Brooks – entering into dialogue (whether through ‘conference’ or ‘confession’) may improve one’s understanding of one’s own private spirituality. But this becomes more difficult when the ‘responsive interlocutor’ stalls in his own search for self-knowledge.

A Briefe Conference betwixt mans frailtie and faith (1584)

Wherein is declared the true vse, and comfort of those blessings pronounced by Christ in the fifth of Matthew, that euery Christian man and woman ought to make and take hold of in their severall temptations and conflicts: Laide downe in this plaine order of Dialogue, to helpe, if it please God, the conceit and feeling of the simplest.³⁵

On the title page of *Briefe Conference*, Gervase Babington highlights his target audience: ‘euery Christian man and woman’. His aim – clearly identified in the dialogue’s title – was to explain the ‘comfort of those blessings’ and he chose to do this in a confessional dialogue.³⁶ Matthew 5 relates the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus, which he gave following his temptation by the devil in the wilderness. The sermon teaches the disciples the beatitudes and details the eight groups of people who will receive God’s blessing in heaven.³⁷ This is followed by a reiteration to follow the commandments in order to be ‘called great in the kingdom of heaven’.³⁸ The aim of the sermon is to help people overcome temptations in life and remain faithful to God. For advice on how to accomplish this, the reader can turn to the marginalia of the second beatitude, ‘Blessed are they that mourne: for they shall be comforted’, which explains that those who ‘feelee their owne miserie’ should ‘seke their comfort in God’. For Babington this ‘mourning’ and ‘misery’ was tied up with the weight of the ‘sin committed against your God’.³⁹ To gain comfort one needed to ‘recognise and condemn the full horror of your sins’ and therefore ‘achieve some sort of comfort through confession’.⁴⁰ This all suggests that the verbalisation of feelings can work towards gaining some sort

³⁵ Title page, *Brief Conference*.

³⁶ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 282. Reformers pleaded for more preaching to inform the laity.

³⁷ These are - the poor in spirit, those that mourn, the meek, the hungry, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted.

³⁸ *The Geneva Bible*, Matthew 5.19.

³⁹ *Brief Conference*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ Ryrie, pp. 54-5.

of comfort in order to ‘repent and to amende’.⁴¹ Babington echoes that the comfort gained from those ‘blessings pronounced by Christ’ will help his readers ‘in their severall temptations and conflicts’. In *Briefe Conference*, Frailtie seeks comfort – whether absolution, or a feeling of ease. He has far fewer lines than Faith – just over three hundred in eleven speeches, compared to over three thousand in twelve speeches. In half of his short speeches, Frailtie mentions his need to confess five times.⁴²

Babington recognises that people would inevitably have difficulties overcoming temptations in their daily life – and we will explore this idea further in Chapter V below in relation to Spenser’s knight of temperance in *The Faerie Queene* Book II. On the title page of *Briefe Conference*, the line from Psalm 119, ‘O howe sweete are thy words vnto my taste, yea far sweeter than honie vnto my mouth’, indicates the importance of the nourishing word of God.⁴³ This is indeed the whole premise of the dialogue between Frailtie and Faith: to demonstrate that, through confession, faith can grow to be strong enough to override despair and provide comfort.⁴⁴ Underpinning the importance of ‘those blessings pronounced by Christ [...] that euery Christian man and woman ought to make and take hold of’ is the fact that Babington has chosen to write in the ‘plaine order of Dialogue’ in order to inform ‘the conceit and feeling of the simplest’. Like Gifford, Babington is keen to draw upon the clarity of scripture in order to achieve his didactic aim. This is compounded by his exegesis of a specific biblical passage to gain strength and comfort – and such comfort can only be achieved through confession as part of what Babington calls a ‘briefe conference’.

Babington further explains why and how he wants to help those who have difficulties in understanding and therefore believing:

I haue often secretly in my selfe, to ioyne vnto prayer some further indeuor, and according to that measure of mercie, which the Lorde should voutsafe me, to make some plaine applications of such portions of scripture, as I shoulde iudge in vse & practise fittest for them. That seeing in them by example the true vse of the worde of God, and howe to

⁴¹ *Brief Conference*, p. 23.

⁴² Frailtie says ‘I confesse vnto you’, p. 3, ‘I must needes confess vnto you’, pp. 4 and 7, and ‘I confesse’ twice in his longest speech, p. 62.

⁴³ Psalm 119, l103 (Mem).

⁴⁴ Later in Chapter IV, this idea of a spiritually fulfilling dialogue that leads to a strong faith and is restorative is explored with episodes from *The Faerie Queene*, Book I.

sucke out strength in their seuerall needes from it, they might from one place to manie and from many euen to all, without any further guide, than the guide of guides, Gods mercifull spirit, passe with feeling, comfort, and true concept of the good therein contained, & intended to vs all.⁴⁵

Babington has thought carefully about which 'portions of scripture' would be useful for his exposition. He has considered this 'secretly in my selfe', demonstrating his own internal dialogue, before deciding on the most appropriate 'portion of scripture' that will meet his readers' 'seuerall needes'. He agrees with Gifford's sentiment about educating the uninformed – or rather, what Gifford termed the 'common sort of Christians'.⁴⁶ As a trained minister, he was in the position to be able to 'iudge in vse & practise fittest for them'. He also believes that the needs of the 'common sort', to use Gifford's words, would be best met by offering an example that can be read at leisure. Babington remains true to the Protestant doctrine of *sola scripture* by referring to the Bible as 'the guide of guides', which will serve the 'seuerall needes' of his parishioners.⁴⁷ In particular, he chooses 'that notable Chapter the 5 of Matthew' to provide 'further meditation vpon those blessings therin contained, such wisdom taught, such faultes reprooued, such comfort ministred, and such matter handled'.⁴⁸ Here he suggests that comfort can only be provided once misdemeanours ('faultes') have been confessed. Despite Babington's intense focus on the interiority of the believer, he nevertheless employs the dialogue form to explore the private feelings experienced by many. In particular, Babington seeks to draw the reader into the text with the repeated use of the first person singular. The reader is effectively positioned as a third interlocutor, observing the private exchange between Faith and Frailtie. Babington further explains that 'I resolved with my selfe euen there to beginne to put in practise my named purpose, and to provide a tryall'.⁴⁹ The trial is by dialogue, which will test whether believers have the ability to endure temptation and retain faith.⁵⁰ Additionally the trial tests whether the brief conference – or 'interlocutionary situation' (to recall

⁴⁵ *Briefe Conference*, 'The Epistle Dedicatorie', A4r.

⁴⁶ Appears in the title of Gifford's dialogue - *A briefe discourse of certain pointes of the religion which is among the common sort of Christians, which may be termed countrie diuinitie with a manifest confutation of the same, after the order of a dialogue* (1583).

⁴⁷ Felicity Heal describes 'scripture as the sole authority for the Word spoken', p. 261, and explains that translating the Bible into the vernacular was necessary to spread the word, p. 270.

⁴⁸ *Briefe Conference*, 'The Epistle Dedicatorie', A4r.

⁴⁹ *Briefe Conference*, 'The Epistle Dedicatorie', A4v.

⁵⁰ The trial theme was inherited from classical tradition, following Cicero who attached great importance to acquiring knowledge of civil law to be a successful orator, who had to persuade the jury of the innocence of the accused. The 'trial-motif' emphasises the drama of debate and its use widened the function of the dialogue form. *Cicero: On the Ideal Orator*, trans. and ed. by James M. May and Jakob Wise (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 5.

Brooks' term) – provides the right setting to confess and achieve absolution in the late sixteenth-century landscape.

Babington's dialogue provides an exposition of a scriptural passage, but underlying this seeming clarity is Frailtie's emergent self. At first Frailtie seems hesitant to enter into dialogue and therefore to confess, but later develops a more assured voice.⁵¹ Babington presents this transformation through an internal dialogue as the self debates with itself, demonstrating a conflicted and fractured subjectivity.⁵² Cynthia Marshall comments that although 'texts affording self-shattering served as counter forces to the development of modern subjectivity, in the long term they enabled its continual growth by offering temporary respite from the accumulating pressures of individual selfhood'.⁵³ It seems that for a self to emerge, it needs first to be broken – and the texts considered in this thesis do indeed consistently begin with a self that seems uncertain or lacking in faith. In Babington's case, the confession that arises through conference between involves both an admission of guilt and a need to strengthen one's faith. The act of confession promises comfort and therefore assurance of God's grace – although, as we will see, absolution may remain elusive.

Babington's dialogue opens with Frailtie's admission of being unable to enter into effective dialogue:

Frailtie: O wicked worlde, wretched state I stand in, O
heauy hart & sorrowing soule how shoulde I
comfort you? I haue it not, I see it not, I feele it
not, what any way might ioie mee, and howe then
can I giue it you? [...] woe is mee I liue, woe is
mee I doe not die, and wo I feare much more,
when ended is my course.

Faith: Why Frailtie, what in the name of God meaneth
this fearful impatiencie, or what case can there
be in the life of man and woman, so
uncomfortable, as that in regard thereof, they
should thus crie out? Open your selfe, and

⁵¹ To recall earlier Brooks' argument that one needs to confess to rehabilitate, p. 95.

⁵² Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetic and the Seventeenth Century Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 20.

⁵³ Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 4.

conceale not your grieve, for the verie speaking of
it shall giue some measure of ease.

Frailtie: Alas I knowe not almost howe to doe it.⁵⁴

The opening speech is a tirade against the 'wicked worlde'. There is a despairing note to the lines: 'O heauy hart & sorrowing soule' and 'woe is mee I liue, woe is mee I doe not die', which suggests a lack of faith. This is reiterated at the end with 'I feare much more, when ended is my course'. A doctrine central to Protestantism was *sola fide*, so that good works no longer paved the way to heaven.⁵⁵ Faith offers comprehensive explanations of the scriptural text in order to increase Frailtie's knowledge and belief, acting as a spiritual advisor and offering comfort. Their exchanges represent the daily conflict that individuals may experience internally with their faith. This is reflected when Faith describes Frailtie as his 'daylie companion in the world'.⁵⁶ Frailtie makes clear that he does not feel the assurance of faith, which the godly consider a potential sign of the elect, nor does he quite believe that his own faith is justification enough: 'I haue it not, I see it not, I feele it not'. The personal pronoun is repeatedly used, demonstrating a preoccupied interiority. This admission of despair is repetitive and recursive and answers a rhetorical question that Frailtie addresses to his 'heauy hart': 'how should I comfort you?'. Frailtie desires the comfort and assurance that a robust and strong faith would provide. According to Brooks, a confession depends on a 'confessant's verbal act' and in this example, this same act represents an acknowledgement of the need to change.⁵⁷

Babington presents the development of Frailtie's uncertainty in the face of an interlocutor's stronger belief. Spiritual uncertainty correlates, here, with 'the uncertainty about how one should confess'.⁵⁸ Faith's first speech invites Frailtie towards absolution: 'Open your selfe, and conceale not your grieve, for the verie speaking of it shall giue some measure of ease'.⁵⁹ Faith represents a confessor-figure for Frailtie, a listener that also encourages engagement in dialogue to gain comfort. Frailtie cannot gain comfort through prayer alone and needs assurance from a responsive other.⁶⁰ Babington clearly advocated the importance of being open and speaking aloud – in conference. We find in the *Book of Common Prayer* the importance of hearing words

⁵⁴ *Briefe Conference*, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁵ Susan Doran and Christopher Durston, *Princes, Pastors, and People: The Church and Religion in England 1529-1689* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 14.

⁵⁶ *Briefe Conference*, p. 39.

⁵⁷ Brooks, p. 95.

⁵⁸ Stegner, p. 2.

⁵⁹ We will return to this sentiment in Chapter IV with the exploration of the 'dialogue of accord' epitomised when Prince Arthur counsels Una.

⁶⁰ Rylie, p. 55.

of comfort: 'Heare what comfortable words our saviour Christ saithe to all them that truly turne to him'.⁶¹ These words of comfort may have been difficult to hear if one prayed with weak faith, and perhaps a listener (confessor) became necessary for this reason.⁶² However, absolution seems to be inaccessible to Frailtie with the admission: 'Alas I knowe not almost howe to doe it'. Perhaps from this admission a regenerated self can now begin to emerge, one that is able to confess and gain comfort through dialogue.

Frailtie continues by admitting that he does not know how either to open himself to God or to admit his problems:

Frailtie: For my conceites doe so oppresse me, and euer as I think of one miserie, still the remembrance of another thrusteth it selfe into my minde, and at last the heape appeares so huge, as all amazed I faint under the beholding of them. [...] I consider then, that I am created here in this worlde a reasonable creature conflicting of bodie and soule, both subiect to dreadfull and endless woe, if I finde not mercie with the Lorde, which I confesse vnto you I comfortable cannot assure my self of as yet, because the hand of God me think more heauily presseth me diuers waies, than I imagin it would do if he loued me.

Faith: And wherein I praie you, doe you thinke you are pressed so heauily?⁶³

Frailtie's speeches contain repeated uses of the words 'confess', and 'assure/assurance', as well as references to gaining God's mercy. Frailtie is overwhelmed with the 'heape' of miserie' and cannot find mercy with 'the Lorde' in order to help absolve sin. Frailtie continues to list his grievances, ending by saying 'this is but one thing that troubleth me, besides which I haue manie moe, but helpe me if you can ere I go anie further'.⁶⁴ Faith continues to question Frailtie to share his

⁶¹ *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 134.

⁶² Ryrie, p. 58.

⁶³ *Briefe Conference*, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁴ *Briefe Conference*, p. 6.

'griefe fullie' so that his mind 'wilbe the fitter to beare a great deale' – he will be able to listen properly when Faith speaks to him for his 'ease'.⁶⁵

Frailtie feels the need to confess his own weaknesses, particularly those he sees reflected in other men behaving sinfully:

Frailtie: An other verie daungerous torment then I must needes confesse is that continuall vncomfortableness, which is still in me by reason of diuerse thinges, as by a weightie and stinging sense of mine owne sinnes, by sight of other mens loose course, and grievous dishonouring of God in euerie place, giuing themselves to flatterie, dissembling, and all manner of holowe dealing with God and man, by mediation of the fierce wrath of God, and most dreadful iudgementes, which assuredly hang ouer vs for these things, &c. [...] I stande in feare that he will punish me for such intemperancie, and yet I cannot amende it.⁶⁶

Frailtie again repeats 'I must needes confesse' in this example. Frailtie's emergent self is determined in relation to others with his concerns raised in connection to the sins of other men with their 'flatterie, dissembling, and all manner of holowe dealing with God'. To understand relational aspects of dialogue in relation to the emergence of the spiritual self we can perhaps turn to Debora Shuger's model of early modern subjectivity:

The contrast between those who regard sins as debts that God is obliged to call in and those who trust that God in his mercy will forgive them is a contrast between Catholic and Protestant theologies of grace but also models of, for want of a better word, *selfhood*.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Briefe Conference*, p.6 .

⁶⁶ *Briefe Conference*, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁷ Debora Shuger, 'The Reformation of Penance', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71.4 (December 2008), 557-571 (p. 565).

For Shuger, Protestantism is dialogic in the sense that it is relational and open to the intercession of God, perhaps through the conference of prayer. This model of selfhood is based on whether one is able to be open to an exchange of words, such as making a confession and accepting absolution, and whether one is therefore able to achieve grace. Identity emerges once the relation to, and faith in God has been established. Shuger also describes the self's relationship to others: 'The self that struggles to cast itself away exists in tension with the social self that must perform its role in relation to others. The spiritual and social are seen as equally obligatory but also essentially separate realms'.⁶⁸ We saw in the previous chapter how one's self is defined against an 'other' and the sometimes difficult process of seeing one's self without that mirror of opposition.

Frailtie identifies his self reflected in the 'other' – and, like the Kid in the moral fable in 'Maye', cannot see himself because he lacks faith. We will see later that Diggon Davie in 'September' suffers the same insecurity in the view of his fellow men. Frailtie fears punishment and yet he 'cannot amende' his sins. We mentioned earlier that confession often expresses a desire to transform – and, indeed, Frailtie here wishes he could make a difference. His self-knowledge will need to develop in this brief conference before he can properly realise his robust self. He believes that God will punish him for turning a blind eye; however the biblical advice regarding judging one's fellow man is found in Matthew 5: 'whosoever is angrie with his brother, vnaduisely, shal be culpable of iudgement' and one should 'agre with thine aduersarie quickly, whilst that art in the way with him'.⁶⁹ In the 'Epistle', Babington had explained that one important reason for writing this dialogue was to meet the 'severall needes' of the 'simple sort'. One of these needs is how to deal with 'other mens loose course, and grievous dishonouring of God in euerie place'. This does not mean confronting one's fellow man but rather internally addressing the concerns about how others act, as the final judgement belongs to God. Faith's careful listening to Frailtie's woes allows him to respond appropriately, through Babington's explication of Matthew 5 to 'gain strength and comfort out of the word of God'.

As the dialogue progresses the majority of the speeches continue to belong to Faith. However, in one of Frailtie's longest speeches, a more clearly defined sense of self begins to emerge:

⁶⁸ Debora Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley and Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), p. 95.

⁶⁹ Matthew 5: 22 and 25.

Frailtie: Yet Frailtie I am, and by reason of the monstrous ingratitude that the worlde aboundeth with, perforce I confesse it [...] Whereby I am often (I confesse my corruption) driuen even to the point of this worldly and wicked conclusion with my selfe. [...] I am Frailtie by name, and I feare mee by nature I shall be no lesse [...] but that you are Faith, a friend where you take strong and comfortable and gaue me libertie to be thus bolde with you before.

Faith: In deede Frailtie you are, when these things thus flowe upon you, yet Frailtie may you cease to be, by the grace of God, if you wil diligently wey what strength in the scripture is ministred against them.⁷⁰

At the beginning of this dialogue, Frailtie felt unable to receive comfort and absolution – even as he expressed the desire to transform.⁷¹ Now he is able to voice a variety of confessions and, more importantly, is able to gain comfort from listening to the responses from Faith. Frailtie's voice becomes clear ('I am' and 'my selfe') as 'the possibility of speaking with the authority of first person' emerges through the comfort provided by F(f)aith through dialogue.⁷² Although Frailtie is now able to 'confesse it' he does not yet however see himself as a robust self, like Faith, although he expresses the hope that one day he will be 'strong and comfortable'. The self is coming to the foreground, now, as summarised by the line: 'I am Frailtie by name, and I feare mee by nature I shall be no lesse'. Frailtie's admission of his true self is one step closer to his redemption.⁷³ He represents the broken self that needs to strive for salvation. Wherever there is faith, there will always be the risk of a lack of faith, a loss of hope, a sense of despair. Faith predicts that one day Frailtie will however 'cease to be, by the grace of God' but only if he gains strength from scripture – or, to be more precise, if he continues in dialogue with scripture.

The title of Babington's dialogue suggests that this 'brief conference' captures an open discussion between one man's faith and frailty. At first, it appears that Faith and

⁷⁰ *Briefe Conference*, pp. 62-64.

⁷¹ Ryrie observes that a purpose all Protestants shared was an 'awakening the conscience' – to recognise and condemn one's sins, p. 55.

⁷² Heale, p. 3.

⁷³ Brooks, p. 95.

Frailtie exist in binary opposition to each other, but their relationship emerges as more symbiotic. They are 'daylie companion[s] in the worlde' and therefore are expected to share thoughts and ideas through verbal exchanges.⁷⁴ Frailtie is able within the dialogue to confess his worst fears – especially his own lack of faith that could endanger his life, as he fears for his 'nature if persecution shoulde arise for religion'.⁷⁵ Dialogue is necessary for understanding, as 'the expression of inwardness cannot, it appears, proceed without a responsive interlocutor in the search for self-knowledge'.⁷⁶ Faith continually repeats the importance of listening to God's word and being clean in conscience and heart, which will in turn provide the comfort required. The dialogue form is ideal for this 'expression of inwardness' as there is a responsive other who listens and replies. In this dialogue it is (F)faith who is the responsive other to guide Frailtie in the search for self-knowledge. Throughout *Briefe Conference*, Frailtie pleads with Faith to provide him with comfort. Frailtie starts with a request for comfort from Faith: 'I pray you let me goe no further without some comfort, if you know any for so wretched and wofull a case'.⁷⁷ Later in the text, Frailtie is grateful that Faith has been strong, provided comfort, and allowed him 'libertie to be thus boulded with you before'.⁷⁸

Towards the end, Frailtie asks for one last piece of advice: 'once more I would trouble you Faith, if I might before we end, & it is in this, I feare my nature if persecution shoulde arise for religion. And what should I doe to obtaine strength'.⁷⁹ This final exchange contrasts powerfully to the first one discussed – when Frailtie's speech was a tirade against the 'wicked worlde'. Now Frailtie speaks in an altogether more confident voice:

Frailtie: The Lorde chaunge me and I shall be chaunged,
and greatly both ought I, and doe I thanke you
Faith for this conference, beseeching you still to
praie for me, as for one whose name and nature
you knowe but too well. I can promise nothing,
but seeing what I would doe I leaue my selfe to
his mercie that is able to make me doe what I
ought, and would doe. And so the Lorde keepe
vs both.

⁷⁴ *Briefe Conference*, p. 39.

⁷⁵ *Briefe Conference*, p. 113.

⁷⁶ Brooks, p. 95

⁷⁷ *Briefe Conference*, p. 8.

⁷⁸ *Briefe Conference*, pp. 63-64.

⁷⁹ *Briefe Conference*, p. 113.

Faith: Amen Frailtie, Amen. And the Lord giue us eies
to see what it is to haue a true heart to God, and
to imbrace true religion. [...] the Lorde I saie giue
us eies to see it, and harts to thinke of it.⁸⁰

Frailtie is now able to confirm his faith in the Lord's ability to 'chaunge me'. This is reiterated with 'I shall be chaunged' – a promise to remain changed once assured of salvation. Importantly, this transformation has been achieved through conference. Frailtie's emerged self continues however to be uncertain, and he can 'promise nothing'. The response by Faith is interesting as he quotes selectively from Paul in Acts 28.27, referring to 'eies to see it, and harts to thinke of it'. Eyes see the true religion, which includes reading words in the Bible, and the heart holds the thought of God. The heart was considered the holding place for religious faith and the conscience in the early modern period.⁸¹ However, the biblical Paul says that 'they shulde se with their eyes, & heare with their eares, & vnderstand with their hearts'.⁸² Faith does not mention ears but this may reflect the importance of *sola scripture* and reading God's word. Perhaps Faith's eyes are able, first and foremost, to 'see what it is to haue a true heart to God, and to imbrace true religion'. Such enlightenment emerges from a careful reading of both the Bible and Babington's own dialogue.

Dialogue emerges an ideal form for exploring issues of confession. Through observing the 'conference' between Faith and Frailtie, the reader is able to draw conclusions about how and when to confess. In addition, Babington's dialogue acknowledges that confession through prayer is sometimes not enough because there can be no immediate response.⁸³ Therefore, for those lacking in faith, there needs to be something else if prayer fails – namely 'dialogic confession' which might provide absolution and a reaffirmation of spiritual wholeness. There are signs in Frailtie's speeches that a Protestant self is beginning to emerge – but this self remains frail and subject to the direction of God's 'mercie that is able to make me doe what I ought, and would doe'. Babington's 'Epistle' outlines the didactic aim of his dialogue: 'to helpe, if it please God, the conceit and feeling of the simplest', an audience of unlettered men and women. The intention of the dialogue, in short, is to urge the reader to enter into

⁸⁰ *Briefe Conference*, pp. 129-130.

⁸¹ William, W. E. Slights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 12. This balance of faith and lack of faith, or despair, will be explored in a later chapter with a consideration of the dialogue between RedCrosse and Despaire in *The Faerie Queene*, Book I.

⁸² Acts 28.27.

⁸³ Rylie, p. 121.

dialogic confession in order to achieve absolution and grace.⁸⁴ Later we will consider the dialogue between Diggon and Hobbinol to see whether they are similarly able to find, through confession, a confident and robust self.

Before we turn to Spenser's 'September', however, the next section considers another version of dialogic confession which foregrounds the importance of the mind's openness to different ideas. Through being involved in 'conference' – that is, through listening actively – self-transformation can occur. Reading *The State of the Church of Englande* alongside *Brief Conference*, and indeed 'September', we discover how self-expression develops through listening carefully, and being responsive, to an authentic voice – in a forum for reciprocal, transactional exchange which Babington called 'conference'.

The State of the Church of Englande laide open in a Conference between Diotrephes A Bishop, Tertullus a Papist, Demetrius an vsurer, Pandocheus an in-keeper, and Paule a preacher of the word of God (1588)

Consider well of the speeches vttered by
euerie partie, [...] looke into the answers that
Diotrephes maketh to Paul and the councell
that Tertullus giueth to Diotrephes [...].⁸⁵

'The Preface' to *The State of the Church of Englande* addresses the 'gentle reader' with advice on how to read this dialogue. The reader is urged to consider both the 'speeches' and the 'answers', specifically those involving the bishop Diotrephes, which highlights the importance of listening. Additionally, the author advises those who do not understand his intent 'to confer at large of it with some godly learned for his further instruction'.⁸⁶ This is central to this dialogic text – sharing information with others, part of which, as we will see, includes a confession of faith, and an open conference on spiritual matters.⁸⁷ The issues discussed are Church government, the close relationship between bishops and Papists, and the perceived threat of Puritan preachers to the existing English Church. This dialogue explores the connection between spiritual selfhood and acts of speaking and listening here described as 'conferring'. This conference, unlike Babington's depiction, occurs however out in the open rather than through introspective self-reflection. There are several exchanges

⁸⁴ Ryrie, p. 56.

⁸⁵ *The State of the Church of Englande*, 'The Preface', A2v.

⁸⁶ *The State of the Church of Englande*, 'The Preface', A3v.

⁸⁷ Joshua Rodda, *Public Religious Disputation in England, 1558 – 1626* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p. 29. Reason was necessary in the defence of truth and disputation was a given for reformers – their 'conference'.

between the varying interlocutors in *The State of the Church of Englande*, and we will focus on Demetrius who contrasts interestingly with both Babington's Frailtie and Spenser's Diggon, mainly because he has one strong opinion at the beginning which is changed by the end of the dialogue. We will see that Demetrius regrets his original opinion of Paul, which results in his admission of guilt for misrepresentation. Demetrius has the smallest speaking part compared with the other interlocutors; and as such, I suggest, he represents the active listener or reader.⁸⁸ As will be demonstrated, his change of heart towards the preacher Paul takes place when he listens carefully to the various discussions, and when his thoughts are brought out into the open through a confession to Pandocheus.

We mentioned earlier that the title of this dialogue, like Babington's, contains the word 'conference'; and that Puritan reformers used this term to denote public discussion on doctrine and ecclesiastical issues.⁸⁹ This dialogue was originally attributed to John Udall, who supported the idea that, following a church service, people should come together to confer about the sermon in order to further their understanding.⁹⁰ The aim of this post-service 'conference' was to enable spiritual enlightenment, in the wake of a confession, or admission, about a misunderstanding or lack of faith. 'Conference' also facilitated the move from private devotion and prayer to public worship and confession of faith. *The State of the Church of Englande* first appeared anonymously from John Waldegrave's press in 1588.⁹¹ Copies were seized when Waldegrave's shop was raided, and his press was destroyed.⁹² However, he continued to subvert the authorities and printed the first four Marprelate tracts later that year.⁹³ Further impressions of *The State of the Church of Englande* were found when the authorities raided the house of Elizabeth Crane, where the printer and his press were sheltered.⁹⁴ One of the servants testified that the work belonged to John Udall. Waldegrave had printed other pamphlets by Udall in the early 1580s. One of these, *A Dialogue Concerning the Strife of Our Church* (1584), is set in an inn, with a cast of four interlocutors: Philedonas, the innkeeper, Orthodoxos, a cleric, Philodoxos, a lawyer, and Philochematos, a bishop's chaplain.⁹⁵ Udall was responding to the disputation

⁸⁸ Demetrius has ninety-eight lines, the nearest to his total is Pandocheus with one-hundred-and-nine. Diotrephe has just over five-hundred, Paul four-hundred-and-eighty-nine, and Tertullus three-hundred-and-twenty-one.

⁸⁹ Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 111, 134, and 177.

⁹⁰ Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 377-8.

⁹¹ Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions: Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) p. 161.

⁹² Black, p. I. Black discusses the importance of open discussion to validate reading of scripture, p. xxii.

⁹³ Black, p. I. Waldegrave's career did continue under the patronage of James VI of Scotland and he was named the King's printer.

⁹⁴ Zlatar, p. 161.

⁹⁵ Zlatar, p. 156.

called for by Puritans who refused to submit to the bishops and were demanding a fair say.⁹⁶

The inn setting of the earlier text may have been one of the reasons that *The State of the Church of Englande* was attributed to Udall. However, in the 1980s, Leland H. Carson, during his search for the author of the Marprelate Tracts, identified the author of *The State of the Church of Englande* as Job Throckmorton.⁹⁷ The question of authorship is perhaps not relevant to the present discussion; after all, the Marprelate project was a communal one, which involved writers, printers, and binders from all over the country.⁹⁸ These contributors were likeminded reformers joining together – themselves in ‘conference’ – to create printed texts to urge readers towards further reform.⁹⁹ The action is set in a public place but presents several exchanges, all absorbed by Demetrius, between Diotrephes and Paul, and Diotrephes and Tertullus. These ‘private’ conversations are overheard or ‘laide open’ in conference, which involves the sharing of opinions and ideas with others. The interlocutors in *The State of the Church of Englande* are not social equals and do not share the same religious faith. This becomes apparent through the dialogue – and we will observe later that it is Demetrius who highlights these differences.

Unlike the dialogues discussed previously, which involved only two interlocutors, *The State of the Church of Englande* contains several. The ‘Preface’ describes the importance of the names of the speakers as stock characters; they ‘containe in them for the moste parte, the matter that they defend, and the affection that they are of’.¹⁰⁰ Demetrius in the ‘Preface’ to *The State of the Church of Englande* is described as a usurer, ‘because he liued by an vnlawful trade’.¹⁰¹ Demetrius features in Acts 19:24 as a silversmith making silver shrines of Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt, forests, and hills.¹⁰² In Acts, he meets with other workers concerned that business will be lost because a preacher, Paul, has persuaded people that images of gods made with hands are not gods.¹⁰³ Pandocheus is Greek for innkeeper and represents a ‘receiuer of all, a

⁹⁶ Zlatar, pp. 159-160. In *A Dialogue Concerning the Strife of Our Church*, Udall portrays the strife within the church and the frustration felt by Presbyterian ministers, like himself.

⁹⁷ Leland H. Carson, *Martin Marprelate, Gentleman: Master Job Throckmorton Laid Open in His Colours* (San Marino: The Henry E. Huntington Library, 1981).

⁹⁸ Black, p. lv.

⁹⁹ Black, p. xviii.

¹⁰⁰ *The State of the Church of Englande*, A2r.

¹⁰¹ *The State of the Church of Englande*, A2v.

¹⁰² When the Biblical Tertullus predicts that the Goddess and her temple will be destroyed because of Jesus, the crowd cry out ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians, Acts 19:28 and 34. The King James Bible names the goddess Artemis, the Greek equivalent, rather than Diana. The conversion to Christianity meant that the ancient gods and goddesses like Diana would be no longer worshipped and any mementoes made for sale at the shrines of the gods will no longer be needed.

¹⁰³ Acts 19:26.

soother of euerie man for his gaine'.¹⁰⁴ He seems suited as a confessor of sorts and we will see that he overhears the same conversations as Demetrius, but responds differently, which enables Demetrius to realise the truth of what has been discussed. The innkeeper acts as the facilitator, introducing the characters to each other. The biblical source for Diotrephes, the 'bishoplie prelate', is the third epistle of John 9-10: 'Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority [...], he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church'. In *The State of the Church of Englande*, his travel companion is Tertullus, described in the 'Preface' as representing 'the Papists, that maintaine their trash, to the rooting out of true religion'.¹⁰⁵ Tertullus is sourced from Acts 24:1 where he is described as 'a certaine oratore, which appeared before the Gouvernour against Paul'. In the Bible, Tertullus accuses Paul in public disputation, laying out the charges against him to Felix the Governor.¹⁰⁶ Paul replies with a confession: 'I confesse unto thee [...] I endeouour my self to haue alway a cleare conscience towarde God, & towarde men'.¹⁰⁷ Paul's responses are expressions of faith intended to counteract the accusations of Tertullus and to persuade his auditors of his innocence. This brief summary of the biblical sources is useful to remind us of the importance of scripture to these reformist writers as the only true form of divinity.¹⁰⁸

The scene from Acts demonstrates the importance associated with the spoken word, and confirms the advice provided in the 'Preface' to 'consider well of the speeches vttered by euerie partie'. Their namesakes in *The State of the Church of Englande* are similar: Paul is the godly preacher, and all the other interlocutors have a preconceived idea of him until he is allowed to speak openly to the bishop, an exchange overheard by Demetrius and Pandocheus. All are bound together within this dialogue in order to openly confer with each other. Earlier in this chapter, we saw that Babington suggested that the achievement of absolution through confessional dialogue enabled the emergence of a fully realised Protestant self; and, as we will discover later, Spenser demonstrated the difficulties of achieving such absolution through confession. In the following discussion, I will demonstrate how the authors of *The State of the Church of Englande* focus on one particular aspect of dialogue, the presence of active listeners, in order to envisage in new ways the development of a Protestant self – this time through the transformation of Demetrius.

¹⁰⁴ *The State of the Church of Englande*, A2r.

¹⁰⁵ *The State of the Church of Englande*, A2r.

¹⁰⁶ Acts 24:2-7.

¹⁰⁷ Acts 24:14-16.

¹⁰⁸ Patricia Canning, *Style in the Renaissance: Language and Ideology in Early Modern England* (New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), p. 2.

The State of the Church of Englande begins with a demand for news drawing on the commonplace of framing the dialogue with a topical issue:

Diotrephes: I pray you tell me some newes for I hauing
beene in Scotland [...] haue not heard much of
the state of England.

Demetrius: My Lord, I heare no newes, but that our
Bishoppes [...] say pretie wel, by one and by one
to these precise and hot Preachers. [...] I hope to
see them one day all put downe for they trouble
the whole land [...] neyther yet will suffer vs to
live as our fore-fathers haue done before vs.¹⁰⁹

Using the trope of a journey, or staying at an inn, facilitates interaction between different types of people who would not normally meet.¹¹⁰ Demetrius is introduced into the discussion by offering news to Diotrephes of the number of ‘precise and hot preachers’ in London that have been ‘putte to silence, some of them [...] close prisoners in the Gate-house’. This first speech of Demetrius, like his Biblical namesake’s, demonstrates that he is against these godly preachers who ‘trouble the whole land’ and ‘neyther yet will suffer vs to live as our fore-fathers haue done before vs’. He is concerned that his livelihood will be threatened by the Preacher’s activity of spreading the Word of God.¹¹¹ He adds that he hopes ‘to see them one day all put downe’. Demetrius confesses that ‘mine onely studie is in my counting house, to see my money, and when each parcel is due vnto me’.¹¹² He then reveals that on his journey from London he met with one such ‘goode fellow’ who ‘is just of their opinion’.¹¹³ At the start of the dialogue, Demetrius’ spiritual self appears to be unformed: he admits to being ‘vnlearned’ and complains that Paul told him ‘plainely, that he that robbed in Stran-gate hole, was an honestest man than I’.¹¹⁴ Demetrius’ religious self-identity begins to emerge, however, as he listens to the dialogic exchanges between Diotrephes and Tertullus, and between Diotrephes and Paul. Demetrius’ transformed opinion towards Paul, culminating in a confession of his own guilt, leads later in the dialogue to his self-realisation and self-knowledge.

¹⁰⁹ *The State of the Church of Englande*, A4r-v. With reference back to Gifford’s *Dialogue*, the Papist greets the Protestant with a request for news from London, and Spenser’s shepherds greet each other in varying ways in order to enter into dialogue.

¹¹⁰ Zlatar, p. 22.

¹¹¹ As is Pandocheus who comments that since the arrival of his town’s Preacher he ‘not gained halfe so much as heretofore I did’, A4v.

¹¹² *The State of the Church of Englande*, B2v.

¹¹³ *The State of the Church of Englande*, A4v.

¹¹⁴ *The State of the Church of Englande*, C2v.

One exchange between Diotrephes and Paul, which Demetrius witnesses, is about Church government – with Paul referring to ‘Antichristian prelates’ who prefer ‘vainglorye and gaine’.¹¹⁵ The subject matter of their discussions is not as significant for our purpose as how those interactions inform and affect Demetrius. When the exchange between Diotrephes and Paul ends, Demetrius enters into dialogue with Diotrephes. Firstly, he criticises Paul as ‘a bolde fellow’ and is not surprised that he ‘stand[s] stiffly against vs that be vnlearned seeing they bee so bolde with you’.¹¹⁶ Demetrius at this point wants the bishop to cause Paul’s downfall and asks Diotrephes to ‘course him tomorrow’. He continues to confer with Diotrephes, raising questions about the bishop’s travelling companion. Diotrephes admits that Tertullus ‘is a Papist’, experienced at confuting the Puritans, and ‘was thought a fit man aboute all other of his religion’.¹¹⁷ Demetrius is surprised and declares: ‘Papists are enemies to the Queenes religion and lawes’, and is amazed that ‘he should be put in trust by the Bishops’.¹¹⁸ Demetrius further asks ‘why did you not rather take some doctor of the Arches, to go with you?’ This leads to a discussion about whether a Papist can be an appropriate assistant to a bishop. However, Diotrephes makes his viewpoint quite clear: ‘I percieue it is better to haue a Papist, than a Puritaine in an house’.¹¹⁹ Demetrius perhaps shares this view at this moment, although he significantly raises concerns about the bishop’s close affiliation with a Papist. He voices the concern of reformers regarding the threat that Papists will gain control and ‘erect the Pope’s kingdom in England’.¹²⁰ Perhaps this is the first sign that Demetrius is beginning to change his opinion – but Diotrephes swiftly points out that he is like ‘none of them that favour the Puritans’.¹²¹ At this point, his Protestant self is not fully (re)formed. Not until later, after further dialogue and further acts of listening, can this be seen truly to emerge.

At breakfast the next morning, Pandocheus offers a simple meal, as it is a ‘fasting-day’, to Diotrephes, Tertullus, and Demetrius. Diotrephes makes an excuse for Tertullus, who ‘wil eat no egges today’, but Demetrius announces that he will partake in breakfast: ‘I am a Protestant’ he declares ‘for I loue to eate flesh on the friday’.¹²² Although Demetrius may have publically confessed himself Protestant, and identifies

¹¹⁵ *The State of the Church of Englande*, B4v.

¹¹⁶ *The State of the Church of Englande*, C2r.

¹¹⁷ *The State of the Church of Englande*, C2v-C3r.

¹¹⁸ *The State of the Church of Englande*, C2v.

¹¹⁹ *The State of the Church of Englande*, B1v. Contemporaries used the word Puritan as an insult and considered them to be interfering, disobedient, and subversive. Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480 – 1642* (London: Arnold, 2003), p. 136.

¹²⁰ *The State of the Church of Englande*, C3v. English Protestants saw popery as foreign with allegiance to a foreign ruler. Peter Lake, ‘Anti-popery: the structure of a Prejudice’, in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642* ed. by Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London and New York: Longman, 1989), pp. 72-106 (p. 79).

¹²¹ *The State of the Church of Englande*, C4r.

¹²² *The State of the Church of Englande*, C4v.

himself against Tertullus, he still has doubts about Paul whom he wants to see 'taunted thorowlie' by Diotrephes.¹²³ Demetrius is eager for the judgement of Paul, perceiving the bishop as a just and honest prelate. Paul and Diotrephes enter into a long discussion, which is heard by the other three interlocutors including Demetrius. Their discussion includes predestination, free will of man, Church government, and the corruption of bishops. Paul offers 'without disgrace' to teach the bishop about Christ and the true word of God:

Paule: I condemne none, I wishe that not a few, but all
(if it were possible) did truely feare God, but I
would haue you learne of Christ with me, who
may without disgrace be your teacher to trie the
tree by the fruit, and seek me out that man which
maketh a conscience of sinne, and haue a care
to liue as a Christian. [...]

Diotrephes: Well then you confesse yet, that the generall
sway goeth on our side, and so long as it is so,
we care not.

Paule: I wil easily grant it, and so haue they from the
beginning, and shall to the ending of the world
(against all goodnes) but I will tel you one thing of
them, that few of them like you indeed.¹²⁴

Diotrephes and Paul discuss religious differences, especially why Puritans are in dispute with the episcopacy. Paul describes how to 'liue as a Christian', which ultimately means not supporting the bishops and structuring the Church as depicted in the Bible.¹²⁵ Diotrephes tries to manipulate Paul by saying 'well then you confesse yet, that the generall sway goeth on our side'. Paul's response does not however mention the word 'confess' at all, as he believes himself innocent of any sin or lack of faith. He admits that the bishops remain in control but insists that this is 'against all goodnes'. Throughout their conference, Paul is adept at arguing his point and controls the exchange. He ends the discussion by asserting himself against the ambition of the bishop: 'you measure me by your selfe, who indeede care neither for Queen, Countrey, nor your owne soule, but for a Bishoppricke, but I thanke God in Christ, my conscience

¹²³ *The State of the Church of Englande*, C4v.

¹²⁴ *The State of the Church of Englande*, E3r. They discuss how the bishops protect the Papists.

¹²⁵ Puritans saw no scriptural justification for episcopacy and they regarded ecclesiastical hierarchy as part of England's Roman legacy. David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell, eds., *Religion & Society in Early Modern England: A Sourcebook* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 6.

beareth me witnesse, that they be all verie deare unto me'.¹²⁶ Paul defines himself against Diotrephes in dialogue by repeatedly using 'conscience' to reaffirm his spiritual certainty. The primary significance of this exchange for our purposes, however, is that it is witnessed by Demetrius. He is the active listener who absorbs the information supplied firstly by Paul and Diotrephes, and then later by Tertullus and Diotrephes. But we have to wait until the end of the dialogue before Demetrius can develop a clear identification with Paul. For it is only at this late point, when Demetrius has listened intently to the full 'conference', that he expresses the desire – through confession – to enter into further conversation himself.

One last 'conference' witnessed by Demetrius, between Diotrephes and Tertullus, is perhaps the tipping point for Demetrius' conversion. He was expecting the bishop to taunt Paul and to prove Paul to be in the wrong – but this does not happen. Furthermore, Diotrephes and Tertullus engage in 'conference', which reiterates to Demetrius (and to the reader) the importance of the relationship between Diotrephes and Tertullus indicated by the bishop's words: 'you must be my counsellor when all is done, what way you thinke best to be taken'.¹²⁷ Before Tertullus agrees to be the bishop's counsellor, he requests that Diotrephes intercede to review the 'rigour' of the 'hard lawes made by the last parliament against the Catholikes'.¹²⁸ Diotrephes is 'verie well contented to do so' but has to rely on Tertullus to advise him. Demetrius has listened to these conferences, which have focused in particular on the contrast between faith and worldliness. He now reflects on these with his fellow listener – Pandocheus.

When Diotrephes and Tertullus depart, Demetrius turns to the innkeeper and asks: 'what say you to these iollie fellows, had not they notable talk?'.¹²⁹ This opens a dialogue between the two interlocutors who were most concerned about losing their livelihoods due to the preaching of Puritans like Paul. They discuss what they have learnt from listening to the exchange between the bishop and his Papist friend:

Pandocheus: Yes sir, I haue learned of them, that will doo
me good I hope.

¹²⁶ *The State of the Church of Englande*, F1v. This echoes the speech made by the biblical Paul in Actes 24:24-26.

¹²⁷ *The State of the Church of Englande*, F2v. Radical reformers were also concerned with the close association between the episcopacy and Papists. This relationship is represented in *The State of the Church of Englande*, with Diotrephes relying on Tertullus. See Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 16.

¹²⁸ *The State of the Church of Englande*, F2v. This is the basis of the exchange between them: Tertullus provides advice to Diotrephes and promotes Catholics over Puritan reformers.

¹²⁹ *The State of the Church of Englande*, H2v.

Demetrius: What is that?

Pandocheus: I haue learned howe to course our Preacher,
and hee shall be sure of it, and though it cost
mee the price of a tunne of wine

Demetrius: Why, what dooth he that deserveth coursing?

Pandocheus: What? Hee setteth men together by the eares,
the towne was neuer as quiet since he came, he
teacheth such doctrine as some doo like, and
some not, and so they fall at variance.

Demetrius: I pray you tell me some particulars of the worst of
all.

Pandocheus: This for one: our towne standeth on vittelling,
because it is a thoroughfare, and he preacheth
against good fellowship (which he calleth
drunkenness) and against playing cardes and
tables [...] I haue had ten shillings of one man in
a weeke for drinke only, that will nowe scarce
spend three, but I will looke vnto him.

Demetrius: Well mine hoste, deceyue not your selfe, I
percieue that you and I are in a wrong boxe, you
are an emimy to the Preacher, because he
speaketh against your unlawfull gaine, and so
was I yesterday with him that tooke the same
course to amend me: and I thought he had
spoken falsly, because he was a Puritan: and
when I came to heare my matter debated, the
bishop disallowed my course, and yet tooke my
part. And why: Because I might defend him in
his vnlawfull calling: But I see their iugling wel
inough, if the man with whome I was so offended
be not gone, I will talke further with him, for I
percieue that hee meant better vnto mee than
they did.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ *The State of the Church of Englande*, H2v-H3v.

This exchange demonstrates the difference between two listeners who have heard the same 'conferences'. Their responsiveness to the confessions differs, and only one of them is spiritually transformed. Both Pandocheus and Demetrius were against Paul at the beginning of *The State of the Church of Englande* and at the end Pandocheus remains the same, still concerned about his financial gain: 'I haue had ten shillings of one man in a weeke for drinke only, that will nowe scarce spend three'. He believes he has learnt how to 'course our preacher' – but Diotrephes was not successful in the debate so. Furthermore, Pandocheus confirms the significance of the physical act of listening to the preacher when he says: 'Hee setteth men together by the eares'. The preacher can gather men together to listen and 'some doo like, and some not'. In this case, it is Pandocheus who does not like, and Demetrius who does. The conference has led Demetrius to a private certainty; and, more specifically, to a Protestant interiority that confirms his faith. Demetrius finally offers a confession, of sorts, relating to his previous opinion of the preacher: 'I thought he had spoken falsly, because he was a Puritan'. As demonstrated in this section, Demetrius was against Paul at the beginning of the dialogue because of his faith. Now he has heard evidence that it is the bishop who is duplicitous: 'the bishop disallowed my course, and yet tooke my part'. Demetrius had believed all the pejorative comments against the Puritan preacher; but, by listening to Paul's honesty and truthfulness, he realises that Paul is the one to follow, not the bishop and 'his unlawful calling'. Demetrius has furthermore been able to see the true selves of Diotrephes and Tertullus: 'I see their iugling wel enough'. The word 'iugling' suggests being managed or used in some way, and now Demetrius realises this: 'I percieue that hee [Paul] meant better vnto mee than they did'. At the end of *The State of the Church of Englande*, Demetrius is interested to speak further with Paul the preacher as his reasoned argument has comforted him. To recall the advice in the 'Preface' – if one wanted further instruction then one would need to confer with 'some godly learned', such as Paul. The open 'conference' has wrought a transformation in Demetrius' opinion and he wishes to speak further with Paul – and, as he puts it, to move out of the 'wrong boxe'. Demetrius had confessed his faith earlier in the dialogue; he now confesses that he thought Paul was an enemy because 'he had spoken falsely'. Ready now to 'talke further with him', he will perhaps at last be able to enter into (confessional) dialogue with Paul in order to receive grace.

The aim of Udall's dialogue was to provide evidence for the alleged close relationship between the episcopacy and Papists, thus reflecting the close affinity that the Church of England retained with the old Catholic Church even as it continued its long process of reformation. The author utilises the dialogue form to present truths that he has

‘observed by experience’, or rather, encountered through the voice of authority.¹³¹ This continuing affinity emerges, in the course of the dialogue, as damaging to the godly community. Underlying this is the gradual transformation of Demetrius – which suggests that the truth, or a form of the truth, can be confessed through dialogue. The polyvocality of this dialogue moreover enables different opinions, and confessions, to be shared in ‘conference’. The careful listener can reflect, like Demetrius, on what he hears and this newly acquired self-knowledge enables the reader’s own transformation towards a more godly self.

We have seen that both *Briefe Conference* and *The State of the Church of Englande* emphasise the importance of listening actively in order to gain comfort. The writers of these two texts describe such acts of listening in different ways, adapting the dialogue form to fulfil their aims. Both however invite the ‘gentle reader’ to pay close attention to what is being said, demonstrating once again the pedagogical function of the dialogue form. Babington’s *Brief Conference* imagines an internal dialogue between Faith and Frailtie, the two halves of the inner self, whereby Frailtie is transformed at the end. *The State of the Church of Englande*, on the other hand, explores how opinions shared openly, and carefully listened to, can change even secure beliefs leading to conversion through confession. Demetrius listens, and the knowledge he gains allows him to see at last the corruption and duplicity of the worldly prelate against the honest open spirituality of Paul. Let us turn now to the ‘September’ eclogue to consider how Spenser explored the possibility of achieving absolution through confession.

The Shepheardes Calender (1579), ‘September’

Diggon areede, who has thee so dight?¹³²

As E. K. informs us in the ‘Argument’ to ‘September’, the dialogue between Diggon Davie and Hobbinol is about ‘loose liuing Popish prelates’. Diggon’s ‘farre countrye’, alluded to in the ‘Argument’, is never expressly identified; and the term ‘Popish’ is also richly ambiguous (as it is in ‘Maye’). Diggon Davie returns from a foreign place and tells of the human vice (sophistication) he has seen there, which contrasts with the eclogue’s native, homely shepherd setting.¹³³ E. K. is framing ‘September’ with a travel trope (familiar from the classical dialogue tradition), which allows the two interlocutors to engage in dialogue to share their experiences.¹³⁴ ‘September’ begins with them

¹³¹ *The State of the Church of Englande*, ‘The Preface’, A2r.

¹³² September, l.7

¹³³ Roland Greene, ‘The Shepheardes Calendar, Dialogue, and Periphrasis’, *Spenser Studies*, VIII (1987), 1-33 (p. 21).

¹³⁴ McCabe, *The Shorter Poems*, p. 554. Diggon has been away this reflects the career of Richard Davies who was transferred as Bishop of St David’s 1561, he was in exile during Mary’s reign and held ministerial posts in England.

greeting each other and Hobbinol immediately exclaims that he has never seen Diggon in such 'poor plight'. Hobbinol begins the dialogue by asking a series of questions, starting with the above epigram, initially to discover where Diggon's flock had gone. This, in turn, allows Diggon to voice his woes:

Diggon: Hobbinol, I pray thee gall not my old grieve:
Sike questions ripeth vp cause of newe woe,
For one opened mote vnfolde many moe.
Hobbinol: Nay, but sorrow close shrouded in hart
I know, to kepe, is a burdenous smart.
Eche thing imparted is more eath to beare:
When the rayne is faln, the cloudes waxen cleare.¹³⁵

At this point Diggon does not want to venture into talking, hoping instead to put his woes out of mind. Hobbinol disagrees, as he believes verbalising 'sorrow' will make it easier to bear.¹³⁶ We discovered above in the conference between Faith and Frailtie that confessing one's woes can empty a heavy heart and bring the believer closer to God. Spenser further developed this idea of easing the 'smart' through dialogue in *The Faerie Queene*, as we will see in the next chapter. The interest of 'September' for this chapter, however, is that Hobbinol encourages Diggon to share his worries thus acting as confessor.¹³⁷ Later in the eclogue, Hobbinol will repeat this encouragement: 'Say it out Diggon, what euer it hight'.¹³⁸ But is Hobbinol able to listen carefully to provide comfort when Diggon opens up in 'conference', even if Diggon is no longer that 'iolly shepheard that was of yore'?¹³⁹

Hobbinol is keen for them to confer and suggests continuing the discussion in a sheltered place: 'Sitte we downe here vnder the hill: / Tho may we talke, and tellen our fill, / [...] Now say on Diggon'.¹⁴⁰ Diggon begins his tale but Hobbinol cannot understand him:

Hobbinol: Diggon, I praye thee speake not so dirke.
Such myster saying me seemeth to mirke.

¹³⁵ 'September', ll. 12-18.

¹³⁶ To recall the Morning Prayer in *The Book of Common Prayer*, to confess sins 'wyth an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient hart'.

¹³⁷ Sherri Geller comments that Hobbinol is a listener with 'an unsympathetic ear' even though he encourages Diggon to relieve his worries. 'You Can't Tell a Book by its Contents: (Mis)Interpretation in/of Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*', *Spenser Studies*, XIII (1999), 23-64 (p. 43).

¹³⁸ 'September', l. 172.

¹³⁹ 'September', l. 26.

¹⁴⁰ 'September', ll. 53-55.

Diggon: Then playnely to speake of Shepheardes most what,
Badde is the best (this english is flatt.)
Their ill hauiour garres men missay,
Both of their doctrine, and of their faye.¹⁴¹

Diggon seems caught, here, between speaking too 'dirke' or too 'plaine'. Diggon believes he is speaking plainly with unadorned language: 'this english is flatt'. However, he sprinkles his speeches with 'Welsh dialect words, and at times it is not clear whether he is obscure out of self-protectiveness or incompetence. This clumsiness suggests the inadequacy of these shepherds to the tasks at hand'.¹⁴² This is illustrated with the unsatisfactory conclusion that we will examine later, which echoes the inconclusive ending we saw in 'Maye'. Speaking plainly is a recurring theme in 'September' and the problem facing Diggon is how adequately to recount the woes he has accumulated on his travels. These woes concern the inability of 'shepherds' to provide for their flock in terms of doctrine and faith; but, as we will see, Diggon also describes how the flock proves unable to listen. In order for Hobbinol as responsive interlocutor to provide comfort and assurance, he must of course first understand what is being confessed.

Diggon finds it difficult to relate his tale of woe in a morally comprehensible fashion.¹⁴³ He responds by speaking more plainly but Hobbinol is alarmed and changes his mind: 'Now Diggon, I see thou speakest to plaine: / Better it were, a little to feyne, / And cleanly couer, that cannot be cured'.¹⁴⁴ This difficult balancing act echoes 'Spenser's own negotiation between effective satire and dangerous transparency in the poem's apparent allegorical comments upon the state of the Elizabethan clergy'.¹⁴⁵ At this moment in 'September', at least, Hobbinol wants satire to be safely and blandly general. Hobbinol's concern about finding 'language that is both sufficiently clear and sufficiently obscure is one also that permeates the entire *The Shepheardes Calender*'.¹⁴⁶ If we read 'September' as a contribution to the ongoing debate about the place of confession in early modern Protestant spirituality, Hobbinol's difficulty in

¹⁴¹ 'September', ll. 102-7.

¹⁴² Oram, *Edmund Spenser*, p. 62. McCabe, *The Shorter Poems*, p. 554. An instance of Welsh dialect words in the first lines 'her' – Welsh usage meaning 'him'.

¹⁴³ Greene, p. 22.

¹⁴⁴ 'September', ll. 136-38.

¹⁴⁵ Hannah Cawforth, *Etymology and the Invention of English in Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 43.

¹⁴⁶ Cawforth, p. 43.

understanding Diggon seems important – and his failure results in him being unable to provide spiritual assurance.¹⁴⁷

Impoverished acts of listening do indeed lead to various forms of misunderstanding in the eclogue that follows. Diggon's main complaint is that his sheep (rather than Hobbinol) are incapable of listening properly:

Sike as the shepheardes, sike bene her sheepe,
For they nill listen to the shepherds voice,
But if he will call hem at thyr good choyce,
They wander at wil, and stray at pleasure,
And to theyr foldes yead at their owne leasure.
But they had be better come at their cal:
For many han into mischief fall,
And bene of reuenous Wolues yretn,
All for they nould be buxome and bent.¹⁴⁸

We saw in the previous chapter that *The Shepheardes Calender* is, in part, a lesson in how to read with care, and how to avoid rushing towards hasty judgement. Diggon tells of his travels abroad where he confronted the reality of popish corruption, and he refers to the Jesuit mission in England.¹⁴⁹ The serious menace presented by Roman Catholic missionaries in 'September' is made more significant with the reference to the duties of the true pastor.¹⁵⁰ The laity are at risk from 'reuenous Wolues' because they have not listened to their pastor and therefore have a weakened faith. The wolves are in 'sheepes clothing' and they 'walk not widely as they were wont'.¹⁵¹ The Fox of 'Maye' has become the Romish wolf. The biblical source is Matthew 7:15 – 'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves'. As with the dialogues above, Spenser adds a topical allusion to the Jesuit mission. We saw in *The State of the Church of Englande* that Demetrius, through his careful listening to the open conference of the other interlocutors, changed his mind about the preacher Paul. Earlier in Spenser's dialogue, too, Diggon criticises the 'ill haviour' of some pastors. Here the laity do not listen because their pastors are not

¹⁴⁷ Greene, p.22.

¹⁴⁸ 'September', ll. 141-49.

¹⁴⁹ Tom Betteridge, *Literature and Politics in the English Reformation* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 225.

¹⁵⁰ Anthea Hume, *Edmund Spenser: The Protestant Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 39-40.

¹⁵¹ 'September', ll. 157-58.

capable of speaking well, and fail to give good advice because they lack awareness of their audience.¹⁵²

Diggon returns to the lack of pastoral care provided by ministers, or by shepherds to care for their flock, recounting a moralised tale about a clergyman finding a wolf in sheep's clothing:¹⁵³

How, but with heede and watchfulnesse,
Forstallen hem of the wilinesse?
For thy shepheard sittes not playe,
Or sleepe, as some doen, all the day long:
But euer liggen in watch and ward,
From soddein force thyr flocks for to gard.¹⁵⁴

Diggon is concerned not only with sheep that do not listen to their shepherd, but also with shepherds who do not pay attention to their sheep. By now Diggon has lost his own pastoral, authoritative voice; for he is represented, here, as a 'figure of loss who points toward the past, and not a figure who outlines what could be'.¹⁵⁵ One questions whether he is strong enough for self-scrutiny, or indeed to articulate his sins in confession.

Throughout the eclogue, neither speaker nor listener seems mutually reciprocal. Although they are in 'conference', they are at odds with each other. As Hannah Crawforth has argued, 'September' is a dialogue 'about different kinds of language and [...] how to say what one means (and mean what one says) preoccupies the two interlocutors'.¹⁵⁶ This misunderstanding, or mis-conferring, results in Diggon still feeling at a loss after sharing his woes:

Nought easeth the care, that doth me forhaile.
What shall I doe? What way shall I wend,
My piteous plight and losse to amend?
Ah good Hobbinol, mought I thee praye,

¹⁵² Oram, *Edmund Spenser*, p. 39.

¹⁵³ Shrank observes that 'throughout *The Shepheardes Calender*', the impact of neglectful shepherds on their flocks is made consistently apparent', p.234.

¹⁵⁴ 'September', ll. 230-35.

¹⁵⁵ Little, 160.

¹⁵⁶ Crawforth, p. 42.

Of ayde or counsell in my decaye.¹⁵⁷

This outpouring sounds like Frailtie at the beginning of *Brief Conference*: ‘woe is mee’. Diggon’s questions remain unanswered, and Hobbinol has not fulfilled his perceived role as confessor. Diggon has admitted his concerns (a confession of sorts) and fears that even prayer will be not enough – recalling Peter Brooks’ point that prayer and confession are similar: ‘the form of an address to a listener found in confession is similar to prayer, which addresses itself to God’.¹⁵⁸

At the end of the eclogue, Hobbinol offers the desperate Diggon the comfort of his cottage, reiterating the pastoral virtues of friendship and hospitality, but his kindness overlooks the threats of the larger world that the dialogue has presented.¹⁵⁹ In ‘September’, we see a ‘frustrated dialogue of a divided self’ in Diggon who cannot reconcile himself to losing his sheep and the corruption of his fellow men.¹⁶⁰ Like Frailtie, Diggon sees his identity mirrored through his ill-behaved fellow men, and ‘the corruption of the “other” is found within the divided self’.¹⁶¹ His concerns remain unresolved through dialogue, and Diggon remains broken. We remember that ‘the expression of inwardness cannot proceed without a responsive interlocutor in the search for self-knowledge’.¹⁶² One has to have a responsive ‘other’ – rather like a mirror – in order to establish a robust, renewed self. For confessional dialogue to ‘work’, engagement and commitment from all sides, either listening and/or speaking, is necessary. Hobbinol misunderstands Diggon and can only offer physical succour. At the same time Diggon, although able to confess, is not ready to be counselled and misunderstands why his flock do not listen to him. There is no assurance for Diggon and the dialogue finishes without any clear solution.

September’s ‘repeated emphasis on whether and how to speak draws attention to and problematises the text’s own participation – and the participation of poetry more generally – in public debate’.¹⁶³ Of course, the problem is not just how to speak, but also how to listen through the kinds of ‘conference’ explored in this chapter. Whilst the dialogues considered above establish the importance of listening, they also highlight the importance of self-expression. Vocal authority emerges through dialogue in the

¹⁵⁷ ‘September’, ll. 243–47.

¹⁵⁸ Brooks, p. 95.

¹⁵⁹ Oram, *Edmund Spenser*, p. 62.

¹⁶⁰ McCabe, *The Shorter Poems*, pp. xiv–xv. McCabe makes this observation in relation to Colin’s monologues in *The Shepheardes Calender*.

¹⁶¹ McCabe, *The Shorter Poems*, p. 553.

¹⁶² Brooks, p. 95.

¹⁶³ Robert Lane, *Shepherds Devises: Edmund Spenser’s The Shepheardes Calender and the Institutions of Elizabethan Society* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), p. 12.

form of confession; and the first step towards absolution is the impulse to articulate oneself clearly and truthfully. Babington demonstrates this in *Briefe Conference* as Frailltie's voice becomes more confident, assertive, and willing to confess. Demetrius in *The State of the Church of Englande* confesses that he has misunderstood Paul, and in fact the bishop, and is able finally to enter into dialogue with the preacher in order to seek forgiveness. In both these texts, the relational aspect of Protestant selfhood is laid open in 'conference'. But whereas *Briefe Conference* presents this aspect as a private, internal relation to God, a more open exchange of ideas with others helps to determine faith in *The State of the Church of Englande*. Babington and Udall show us that, if one's listener is attentive enough, confession can lead to absolution and self-transformation. However, such absolution remains elusive in *The Shepheardes Calender*. If the prose dialogues make clear the struggle required to develop, through confessional dialogue, a stronger, more assured faith, Spenser illustrates that this struggle cannot and does not always uncover the truth. In the next two chapters, we will turn to Spenser's use of dialogue in *The Faerie Queene* Books I and II. Here he explores the dialogue form in a variety of different ways in order to further explore its possibilities for the articulation, and transformation, of Protestant inwardness.

Chapter IV – Dialogue of accord and discord: *The Faerie Queene Book I*¹

The last two chapters of this thesis will explore the varied use of dialogue by the titular knights of *The Faerie Queene* Books I and II, RedCrosse and Guyon. We will see that Spenser subverts the didactic conventions of formal dialogue, creating tension between temptation and virtues (such as faithfulness and temperance) and examining the risks posed by despair. Readers may find themselves tempted, too, through these persuasive conversations; for the reader, like Spenser's knights, is searching for self-knowledge and spiritual understanding. These two chapters build on the previous chapters' consideration of the transformation of the spiritual self, but concentrate this time on the link between conversation and conversion. Both words share the Latin root *vertere*, to turn. In conversation, the 'turning' takes place between individuals as they pass the conversation to each other and back again. In religious conversion, too, the individual is 'turned' towards a different faith.² Conversion takes place through acts of listening; and dialogue again emerges as an ideal way to inform and influence the reader in this respect.³ The connection between conversation and conversion allows us further to explore the importance of dialogue to the formation of the spiritual self.

We saw in the previous chapters how George Gifford, Gervase Babington, and John Udall illustrate the usefulness of dialogue to express, and confess, a lack of faith in order to obtain forgiveness and absolution. *Dialogue, Briefe Conference* and *The State of the Church of England* all demonstrate the didactic aims of dialogue, as Gifford makes clear: 'I have done it in waye of a Dialogue, to make the fitter for the capacity of the simpler sort'. These prose dialogues, as we have seen, present truths 'observed by experience', and make clear to the reader which voice represents the authorised faith.⁴ Each nevertheless makes clear the effort required to develop spiritual certainty – as demonstrated by Frailtie's long conversation with Faith, and Demetrius' careful assimilation of many opinions. Each text explores dialogue's resourcefulness to persuade the reader to accept the authoritative voice; but, as we have seen, Spenser questions this resourcefulness in *The Shepheardes Calender*, especially through E.

¹ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by Thomas P. Roche and Patrick C. O'Donnell (London: Penguin Books, 1987).

² In Chapter III, we saw how the conversion of Demetrius, in *The State of the Church of England*, occurred through his action of listening carefully to the conferences between the others until he became more interested to hear the gentle preacher Paul.

³ As discussed in Chapter III, this word is included in the titles of *Briefe Conference* and *The State of the Church of England*. James Shapiro, *1606: Shakespeare and the Year of Lear*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2016), p. 178. Shapiro explains that 'equivocation was a rare and scholarly term, one that appeared in only a few dozen books in sixteenth-century England, mostly polemics [...]. With the exception of theologians in whose work had begun to take on a pejorative and fiercely anti-Catholic associations, English writers who knew the word thought it another way of saying ambiguous'.

⁴ George Gifford, *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraftes* (1593), A3r. John Udall's *The State of the Church of Englande*, 'The Preface', A2r.

K.'s misleading glosses. Here Spenser complicates dialogue's ability to uncover the truth, freighting his texts instead with warnings to his readers to read carefully. We will see in the following chapters that dialogue continued to provide Spenser with opportunities to explore faith, truth, and temperance, as well as the struggle involved in turning from, and towards, such virtues.⁵ Spenser's use of dialogue in *The Faerie Queene* is complex and multi-layered, capable of exploring the various tensions posed by temptation. The present chapter builds therefore on the previous discussion of the role of dialogic confession in the transformation of the self, and begins with a discussion of the 'turn' between faith and despair in Book I. We will consider why the 'dialogue of accord', which seems nourishing and restorative to the soul, sometimes turns into the 'dialogue of discord'. This phrase describes dialogue that is not conciliatory and restorative, resulting instead in the listener turning away from the path of truth and losing faith in God. In the final chapter, Chapter V, we will explore the 'turn' between verbal dialogue and physical violence in *The Faerie Queene* Book II. The aim of both chapters is therefore to consider, from two different perspectives, how Spenser utilises the dialogue form to explore the tension between 'accord' and 'discord'.

There has been some critical interest in Spenser's use of the dialogue form in *The Faerie Queene*, although critics have tended to explore dialogue mainly through intertextual readings with preceding writers and their texts.⁶ Jennifer Vaught, for example, examines Spenser's dialogic voice in Book I. She argues that Spenser creates a unique dialogic voice by adding nuances to phrases taken from Ovid, Virgil, Lucan, Giovanni Boccaccio, and Chaucer, retaining authorial ownership of his own text whilst building on his predecessors' ideas.⁷ Vaught suggests that 'the topic of dialogue between voices demands further exploration'.⁸ Taking up this challenge, the present chapter explores certain episodes where dialogue 'turns' listeners, both within and outside the text. Jennifer Richards has also considered Spenser's intertextual dialogue with other writers, specifically the dialogic courtesy books which explore a new mode of

⁵ To recall from Chapter II - Roland Greene explores Spenser's use of dialogue in *The Shepheardes Calender*, which 'argues for dialogue; and its vision of dialogue involves not simply a multi-vocal form, [...] but an epistemology of composition, a politics of perspectives, and a fresh situation for the poet as an agent of collective cultural renewal'. 'The Shepheardes Calender, Dialogue, and Periphrasis', *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual*, VIII (1987), 1-33 (p. 2).

⁶ Florence M. Jobson, 'Dialogue in the Major Poetry of Edmund Spenser' (Unpublished PhD diss. St Louis University, Kentucky, USA, 1967), Samuel Kessler, 'An Analogue for Spenser's Despair Episode: Perkins *'Dialogue...Betweene Sathan and the Christian'*, *Notes and Queries*, (March 2000), 31-34, Raphael Lyne, 'Grille's Moral Dialogue: Spenser and Plutarch', *Spenser Studies*, XIX (2004), 159-176, Jennifer C. Vaught, 'Spenser's Dialogic Voice in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 41.1 (Winter, 2001), 71-89, she includes Orpheus, Virgil, and Ovid.

⁷ Vaught, p. 71. Vaught also proposes that Spenser engages in intertextual dialogue with his own works. The example she cites is the shepherds looking after their flocks in *The Shepheardes Calender*, which is reflected in RedCrosse's gaze at Error's monstrous offspring, p. 77.

⁸ Vaught, p. 84, n. 2. This echoes a comment in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia* ed. by A. C. Hamilton (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 'little notice has been taken of dialogue in Spenser's works', Beverley Sherry, 'Dialogue - Poetic', pp. 216-7.

speech – civil conversation.⁹ She considers how writers (John Cheke, Thomas Smith, and Richard Ascham in the 1530s, and Gabriel Harvey and Edmund Spenser in the 1570s) engaged in a process of dialogue and negotiation with their own aspirations and the interests of others. This group of humanists experimented with the dialogue form to express their political aspirations, self-consciously departing from the so-called cultural revolution of mid-Tudor Protestant reformers.¹⁰ More recently, Judith Anderson has identified the significant influence of Cicero's *De Oratore* on *The Faerie Queene* and has examined three episodes from Books I, II, and VI in conjunction with *De Oratore*.¹¹ However, what is missing from all of these critical responses, and others such as those by Samuel Kessler and Raphael Lyne, is a full and nuanced account of Spenser's radical rewriting of dialogic convention in *The Faerie Queene*, particularly its didactic purpose.¹² Spenser's complex use of the dialogue form becomes legible in new ways in the light of the pedagogically committed dialogues by George Gifford, Gervase Babington, and John Udall considered in the first half of this dissertation.

This chapter explores two occasions in which RedCrosse engages in dialogue, each of which offers him the opportunity (or poses to him the threat) of spiritual conversion. Each conversation confronts RedCrosse with a different challenge to the robustness of his spiritual self. Many critics have previously commented on the fall and salvation of RedCrosse in the Book of Holiness.¹³ My aim is to build on this work, focussing on the place of conversation in those episodes which deal with spiritual conversion. Spenser explores how the 'dialogue of discord' poses particular challenges to the frail mind (and heart). As we will see, one needs spiritual and physical integrity in order to engage in dialogue in the first place. This chapter therefore examines three conversations – between RedCrosse and Duessa (canto i), Una and Arthur (canto vii), and RedCrosse and Despaire (canto ix). The exchange between RedCrosse and Duessa demonstrates a dialogue of 'false accord' whereby the comfort gained is misleading. The second episode between Una and Arthur, on the other hand, demonstrates the

⁹ Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric and Courtliness in Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 2.

¹⁰ Richards, p. 3. She focuses on the epistolary exchanges between Gabriel Harvey and Spenser in *Three Proper Letters*, commenting that the 'familiar letters' are a 'natural extension of civil conversation', p. 123.

¹¹ Judith H. Anderson, 'Spenser's *Faerie Queen* and Cicero's *De Oratore*', *Spenser Studies*, XXV (2010), 365-370. Anderson outlines the connections between Cicero's dialogue and episodes in *The Faerie Queene* but not specifically dialogic connections.

¹² We will return to Kessler during the Despaire episode and to Lyne in the next chapter.

¹³ This body of work includes: Judith Anderson, 'RedCrosse and the Descent into Hell', *ELH*, 36.3 (September 1969), 470-492, James W. Broadbuss, 'Spenser's RedCrosse Knight and the Order of Salvation', *Studies in Philology*, 108.4 (Fall 2011) 572-604, Patrick Cullen, *The Infernal Triad: The Flesh, The World, and the Devil in Spenser and Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), Thomas A. Dughi, 'RedCrosse's "Springing Well" of Scriptural Faith', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 37.1 (Winter 1997), 21-38, Richard A. McCabe, *The Pillars of Eternity: Time and Providence in The Faerie Queene* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), Richard Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*', *Spenser Studies*, VII (1986) 3-25, and Paul D. Stegner, *Confession and Memory in Early Modern English Literature: Penitential Remains* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

‘dialogue of accord’ that RedCrosse struggles to achieve. This conversation helps to strengthen Una’s own faith so that she can later turn RedCrosse away from despair.¹⁴ Finally, we will consider the ‘dialogue of discord’ between RedCrosse and Despaire. Each of these three exchanges shares an impulse to turn the listener, too, towards the speakers’ view. We will see the powerful influence of words to influence, and so to transform, RedCrosse’s faith. The ‘dialogue of accord’ aims to restore faith and replenish the soul; but, as we will discover, always threatens to slip into the ‘dialogue of discord’.

All three of the above episodes in Book I, the Legend of Holiness, focus on the place of the spoken word in faith. One important biblical starting point is Romans 10.17: ‘Then faith is by hearing, and hearing by the worde of God’. It is important, however, to practise ‘correct hearing’. One acquires faith through listening, with the heart, to the Word of God.¹⁵ Over the past twenty years, there has been a resurgence of scholarly interest in the reception and effect of words on the heart.¹⁶ William W. E. Sights, for example, observes that ‘all levels of Protestant agreed that the heart was the unique residence of the conscience, the voice of God within each person’.¹⁷ He continues to describe the ‘reformed heart’, which ‘became the most powerful possible means of representing graphically, poetically, and theologically the individual’s relationship to God’.¹⁸ The heart formed a dialogical link to God through prayer and contemplation; however, ‘communication failed when men’s hearts were hardened by sin and deafened to the word of God’.¹⁹ Man has to have a clear conscience to be open to God, but this openness may create discord if the words affecting the heart are not in fact those of God. A person’s heart, body, and soul have to be strong and well-protected before entering into dialogic discourse to prevent such ‘turning’ towards temptation. Robert Erickson sheds further light on the effect of words on the heart. He observes that there is a long history of the human heart being connected to other important organs, particularly the eye and ear.²⁰ Richard Mallette differentiates on the other hand between physical hearing with the ear and spiritual hearing with the heart,

¹⁴ Kathryn Walls, *God’s Only Daughter: Una as the Invisible Church* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), suggests that Una’s initial frailty has not been recognised, p. 21.

¹⁵ Robert A. Erickson, *The Language of the Heart, 1600-1750* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p. 17.

¹⁶ Katharine Eisamann Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the Renaissance* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Robert A. Erickson, *The Language of the Heart*, Katharine A. Craik, *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), and William W. E. Sights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁷ Sights, p. 12.

¹⁸ Sights, p. 12.

¹⁹ Sights, p. 7.

²⁰ Erickson, p. 13.

commenting that RedCrosse 'is spiritually illiterate and hard of hearing'.²¹ He places the episodes of Despaire and House of Holiness in the context of early modern sermonising, and draws a contrast between 'unprofitable hearing' and 'effectual preaching and hearing'.²² My work aims to act as a bridge between the recent work on dialogic form, including Spenser's use of dialogue, and the recent upsurge of critical attention to affect. A new reading of *The Faerie Queene* emerges, offering a more comprehensive picture of both Spenser's contribution to both early modern dialogic culture and the affective usefulness of words for Christian self-improvement.

We have seen in the preceding chapters how dialogue creates a relationship between interlocutors, and how this relationship sometimes makes clear the risk of failing to listen properly. One important way to facilitate words working on the heart and mind is to foster 'dialogic attachment'. This term describes the process of interaction between interlocutors as they engage in dialogue.²³ This is often manifested through personal pronouns such as 'you' or 'thou', with the speaker being included as 'us' and 'we'.²⁴ Peter Brooks describes how the dialogic "'I" implies a responsive "you", and in this dialogic, trans-referential relation, consolation and self-definition are to be found'.²⁵ In Book I, Spenser presents such interactions in different ways including through Duessa's hidden 'bayted hooke' which draws RedCrosse into dialogue.²⁶ Later in Book I, the attachment is represented by a 'goodly golden chaine' which links RedCrosse and Arthur's 'vertues' as they talk.²⁷ Spenser illustrates the tension between the 'goodly golden chain' and the 'bayted hooke' through his dialogue of 'accord' and 'discord', exploring the risks involved in turning from the former to the latter. Dialogic attachment can be restorative and comforting, but can also create misunderstanding and damage the soul. The present chapter pursues how this tension emerges, in Book I, through complex layers of dialogue. We will now turn to examine the first example of dialogue, which I have called 'false accord' to differentiate it from the spiritually nourishing dialogue of 'true accord'.

²¹ Richard Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 9. He explores the importance of sermons in relation to Spenser's works.

²² Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 14.

²³ Adrian J. Wallbank, *Dialogue, Didacticism, and the Genres of Dispute: Literary Dialogues in an Age of Revolution* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), p. 10. He describes that dialogue can present the truth or falsehood of a particular idea through interaction.

²⁴ Wallbank suggests that the use of 'you' addresses the reader and therefore excludes no one, p. 11.

²⁵ Peter Brooks, *Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law and Literature* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 95.

²⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.49.

²⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.1. Other instances of the 'golden chaine' are in opposition: Britomart and Guyon are reconciled 'with that golden chaine of concord tyde. / So goodly all agreed,' III.i.12, and this contrasts with Ate's aim to create discord and break the chain of accord: 'that great golden chaine quite to divide / With which it blessed Concord hath together tyde', IV.i.30.

Dialogue of 'false accord': *The Faerie Queene* Book I

The first dialogue we will consider, between RedCrosse and the false Una, occurs at the end of the first canto. RedCrosse and Una have previously wandered off their path, defeating Error before they meet Archimago disguised as an 'aged sire' and take shelter in his hermitage.²⁸ The reader is aware that Archimago has created an image of Una to seduce and turn RedCrosse away from his true path.²⁹ Although this false image is not named in this passage, she is identified with Duessa who makes her first named appearance in canto ii. For ease of reference, I will refer to this false Una as Duessa during the following discussion. In stanzas 49-50 RedCrosse awakens from his lustful dream and seems 'to mistrust' what he has found in his bed, wondering if it is 'some secret ill, or hidden foe of his'. The narrator explains that he 'gan himself advise / To proue his sense, and tempt her feigned truth'.³⁰ He decides to test whether his dream has become reality, as he believes that he sees 'his Lady [...] wringing her hands in womens piteous wise':

Duessa: [...] Ah Sir, my liege Lord and my loue,
Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
And mightie causes wrought in heauen aboue,
Or the blind God, that doth me thus amate,
For hoped loue to winne me certaine hate?
Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
Die is my dew, yet rew my wretched state
You, whom my hard auenging destinie
Hath made iudge of my life or death indifferently.

Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leaue
My Father's kingdome, There she stopt with teares;
Her swollen hart her speech seemd to bereaue,
And then againe begun, My weaker yeares
Captiu'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
Fly to your faith for succour and sure ayde:
Let me not dye in languor and long teares.

RedCrosse: Why Dame (quoth him) what hath ye thus dismayed?

²⁸ *The Faerie Queen*, I.i.29.

²⁹ Walls observes that Una is not mentioned by name until I.i.45 - in the description of Archimago creating the false Una, which serves to establish Una in opposition to the false Una, p. 40.

³⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.50.

What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort me affrayed?³¹

Duessa begins by addressing RedCrosse, forming a dialogic attachment with her 'bayted hooke'. She addresses RedCrosse as 'my liege Lord, my love', adding 'you' and 'your' a few lines later.³² Seeing the confusion on his face, Duessa puts forward three reasons for her predicament: 'cruell fate', 'the mightie causes wrought in heauen aboute' (providential design), and 'the blind God' (Cupid). She appears overcome with sorrow: her 'swollen hart her speech seemd to bereaue'. Her grieving heart prevents her from speaking, and she waits briefly before she 'then againe begun'. The strong link between the heart and speech is of particular significance in relation to Duessa's ability to turn men away from virtue.

We can turn to Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Mind in Generall* (1598) to help us understand the affective impact of written and spoken words.³³ Wright illustrates how to live a good life by moderating extreme emotions, including those aroused through the assimilation of both 'sacred and secular words'.³⁴ We saw above how figurative language in dialogue aims to impassion the mind; and Wright's text offers the 'fullest treatment of the passions in general', including how the heart is affected by language.³⁵ Wright's treatise follows a familiar early modern motto of *Nosce teipsum*, 'know thyself', and he suggests that man can understand himself better if he is aware of his inherent passions and how they affect the humours of the body.³⁶ Later in the treatise Wright expands on the influence of the 'passions' over man's faculties of reason: 'Wise men confess, and ignorant men prove, that Passions blind their judgements and reason; for as Saint Basil said, "As when the eyes are troubled we cannot perceive exactly the objects of our sight, even so when the heart is troubled no man can come by the knowledge of the truth"'.³⁷ From this, we can discern that the heart and truth, that is the Word of God, are interrelated; and the heart needs to be pure to see or hear the truth. Significantly, the quotation from Saint Basil points out the fundamental connection between seeing (and reading) clearly, and striving for the truth. Wright makes clear that readers, or listeners, may or may not respond with words, but will inevitably have an internal response, straight from the heart: 'the very seat of all

³¹ *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.51-52

³² To recall Brookes and Wallbank from earlier who suggest that relational dialogue needs to include 'I' and 'you' and that this also addresses the reader.

³³ Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in Generall*, ed. by William Webster Newbold (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986).

³⁴ Craik, p. 13.

³⁵ Newbold, p. 24.

³⁶ Newbold, p. 17.

³⁷ *The Passions of the Mind*, p. 126.

Passions is the heart, both of men and beasts'.³⁸ This echoes our working definition of dialogue: 'dialogue is any speech, formal or colloquial, directly addressed by a character to a listener, who may or may not reply'.³⁹ Reading therefore resembles an internal dialogue in which the reader searches for the truth, aided by persuasive language which impassionates the mind towards a more capacious and fulfilled version of spiritual inwardness.

In this episode between RedCrosse and Duessa, the affect of words on the heart is vividly apparent – but offers only a false veneer of comfort and assurance.⁴⁰ In canto ii, RedCrosse meets Fradubio, who describes the author of all his smarts as 'Duessa a false sorceresse, / That many errant knights hath brought to wretchednesse'.⁴¹ He continues to explain how he was duped by the 'euer false Duessa' who 'seemde as faire as' Fræliissa, his own lady-love.⁴² Fradubio concludes that Duessa used 'charmes and magicke might' to entrap him as a tree.⁴³ RedCrosse remains ignorant that he is escorting the 'false sorceresse' of Fradubio's hurts and he does not realise that Fradubio's situation resembles his own.⁴⁴ When Duessa faints, seemingly in response to Fradubio's story, RedCrosse picks her up. As the narrator remarks, RedCrosse is 'too simple and too trew'.⁴⁵

Duessa is often described as 'seeming' to be something else: 'false Duessa seeming Lady faire',⁴⁶ and to 'seeme like Truth, whose shape she well can faine'.⁴⁷ Night does not recognise Duessa dressed in 'garments gilt' and 'gorgeous gold' until Duessa introduces herself with 'I that do seeme not I, Duessa am, [...] the daughter of Deceit and Shame'.⁴⁸ Sheila Cavanagh succinctly observes that if Night does not recognise her then we should not be surprised that the virtuous knights are likewise unable to do so. Later in canto vii, the narrator describes the duplicity of Duessa's speech: 'fowle words tempting faire, soure gall with hony sweet'.⁴⁹ Her aim is to corrupt the innocent, particularly if they do not have adequate protection or faith. In the same canto, Una correctly depicts Duessa as her 'onely foe' and 'onely deadly dread', and describes her

³⁸ *The Passions of the Mind*, p. 114.

³⁹ Florence M. Jobson, 'Dialogue in the Major Poetry of Edmund Spenser' (Unpublished PhD diss. St Louis University, Kentucky, USA, 1967), p.15.

⁴⁰ Sheila T. Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes & Chaste Desires; Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 45.

⁴¹ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ii.34.

⁴² *The Faerie Queene*, I.ii.37.

⁴³ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ii.42.

⁴⁴ Mallette considers this episode as a 'medieval homiletic *exemplum*' that becomes an *exemplum* for the reader because RedCrosse has ignored the warning, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 12. See also Vaught, p. 80.

⁴⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ii.45.

⁴⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, I.iv.13.

⁴⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, I.vii.1.

⁴⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, I.v.26. Cavanagh, p. 58.

⁴⁹ *The Faerie Queene*, I.vii.3.

corruption of RedCrosse 'with her witchcraft and misseeming sweete, / Inueigled him to follow her desires vnmeete. // At last by subtile sleights she him betraid'.⁵⁰ Much later in Book IV canto i, the argument records that 'Duessa discord breedes / Twixt Scudamour and Blandamour'; but in Book I, canto i, neither RedCrosse nor the reader are aware of the extent of Duessa's duplicity.⁵¹ The signs are however visible for active readers: after all, it is Archimago, 'with his mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy mindes', who has created the false Una.⁵²

In the passage above, Duessa returns to RedCrosse once she has control over her tears and is able to continue their dialogue. She brings to the fore the question of fear and faith: 'frayle worldly feares, / Fly to your faith for succour and sure ayde'. Duessa is suggesting that RedCrosse needs faith to help him, which of course he does, but he is unable to see that his faith is being tested through dialogue. RedCrosse responds with a question: 'What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort me affrayed?' Here he turns into Duessa's comforter (or confessor), which as we will see pre-empts a later scene between Arthur and Una. By asking Duessa questions, RedCrosse ensures that the dialogue continues:

Duessa: Loue of your selfe, she said, and deare constraint
 Lets me not sleepe, but wast the waerie night
 In secret anguish, and vnpittied plaint,
 Whiles you in careless sleepe, are drowned quight.

Narrator: Her doubtfull words made that redoubted knight
 Suspect her truth: yet since no'vntruth he knew,
 Her fawning loue with foule disdaine full spight

RedCrosse: He would not shend, but said, Deare dame I rew,
 That for my sake vnknowne such grieffe vnto you grew
 Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
 For all so deare as life is to my hart,
 I deeme your loue, and hold me to you bound;
 Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse smart,
 Where cause is none, but to your rest depart.

⁵⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, I.vii.50-51. Stegner observes that Una 'shifts the guilt entirely onto Duessa' during the episode at the Court of Eden, I.xii.33, p 68.

⁵¹ Duessa along with Ate create discord in Book IV, from canto i: 'Ate, mother of debate, / And all dissention, which doth dayly grow / Amongst frail men', and Duessa 'to be most fit to trouble noble knights'. At Satyrane's tournament Ate 'stird, new discord to maintaine. / [...] full many other Knights / She through her wicked working did incense', Book IV.v.22-3. Later 'through lewd vpbraide' they create discord between four knights – 'Cause of their discord, and so fell debate, / Was for the loue of that same snowy maid', Book IV.ix.24. Stirrers of discord, such as Archimago, Duessa, Ate, and Occasion all use words to stir up strife in the weak hearted.

⁵² *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.36.

Narrator: Not all content, yet seemd she to appease
Her mournfull complaints, beguiled of her art,
And fed with words, that could not chuse but please,
So sliding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease.⁵³

Duessa responds to the questions, continuing to persuade RedCrosse to reassure her of his feelings. The duplicity of this act is beyond RedCrosse's imagination as he cannot see that she is false. The narrator interjects with a comment that RedCrosse is suspicious, but 'since no vntruth he knew' is unable to discern between what is true or false – and therefore betrays Una.⁵⁴ He cannot determine the difference between 'fawning loue with foule disdainfull spight' and the true love that Una would not need to put into words. RedCrosse does not recognise untruth, as he believes everything he hears; he does not read the signs properly or listen with his heart.⁵⁵ As Jason Crawford observes, when Spenser's titular knights make choices, their 'selfhood is persistently under threat from the forces of moral bondage'.⁵⁶ These last two chapters will investigate how Spenser explores the threat to their virtues by holding in tension 'accord' and 'discord' through dialogue.

The two stanzas above run into each other, as there is no end stop at the alexandrine line of stanza 53. The discussion brings to the fore the effect of grief ('secret anguish') on the heart, and therefore on speech.⁵⁷ RedCrosse then refers to the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith when he advises Duessa 'assure your selfe'. RedCrosse attempts to become her spiritual advisor to comfort her so that she can rest, assuring her of his faithfulness even as she complains that he is not true. The narrator comments that Duessa is satisfied with his words 'that could not chuse but please, / So sliding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease'. This is a reminder of the act of conversation as a form of 'turning', through speech, between two or more people. Duessa here turns to 'her ease', and falls asleep. (Later, we will discover that ease and sleep are again evoked during the dialogue between RedCrosse and Despaire.) We saw in the previous chapter the difficulty of gaining ease and comfort through confession, which we discovered took place within 'conference'. Duessa has

⁵³ *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.53-54.

⁵⁴ Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 11.

⁵⁵ The narrator comments on RedCrosse's inability to listen properly in canto ii when he meets Fidessa: 'He in great passion all this while did dwell / More busying his quick eyes, her face to view, / Then his dull eares to heare what she did tell'. In his fallen state, he has lost the ability to listen properly. He uses his eyes to 'read' her face rather than his ears to listen to her words, *The Faerie Queene*, I.ii.26.

⁵⁶ Jason Crawford, *Allegory and Enchantment: An Early Modern Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 152-3.

⁵⁷ Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), comments that grief for one's sins was significant and to gain comfort one needed to 'recognise and condemn the full horror of your sins' and therefore 'achieve some sort of comfort through confession', pp. 54-5.

successfully turned RedCrosse and persuaded him – through the resourcefulness of dialogue – to believe her ‘truth’; she has misled him into believing that she needs his protection, and falsely appropriates his assurances of faith.⁵⁸ This dialogue of ‘false accord’ pre-empt the later ‘dialogue of discord’ which we will trace, below, between RedCrosse and Despaire. RedCrosse has not been able to recognise Duessa’s false words, and her ‘bayted hooke’ continues to weaken his heart and turn him away from faith.

‘Dialogue of accord’: canto vii

We turn now to Arthur and Una who demonstrate the ‘dialogue of accord’ that RedCrosse and Duessa can never achieve. Throughout these episodes, we will see that Spenser challenges the reader to discern the difference between the ‘dialogue of accord’ and ‘discord’. To complicate matters Spenser holds in tension the possibility that ‘discord’ can tip back into ‘accord’, and vice versa. His radical use of dialogue differs from our prose writers who, as we have seen, made clear the pedagogic benefits of dialogic discourse. In canto vii, Arthur meets Una on the road and they engage in an introductory conversation.⁵⁹ The narrator explains that Arthur immediately realises that some ‘secret sorrow did her heart distraine’. To allay Una’s sorrow he has to ‘calme her storming paine’; and so with ‘faire feeling words he wisely gan display’.⁶⁰ The fact that Arthur offers well-chosen words indicates his rhetorical expertise; he can persuade anybody with powerfully affective words.⁶¹ Una answers Arthur’s gentle questioning with ‘bleeding words’:

Una: What worlds delight, or ioy of liuing speach
 Can heart, so plung’d in sea of sorrowes deepe,
 And heaped with so huge misfortunes, reach?
 The carefull cold beginneth for to creepe,
 And in my heart his yron arrow steepe,
 Soone as I thinke vpon my bitter bale:
 Such helpless harmes yts better hidden keepe,
 Then rip vp grieffe, where it may not auaille,

⁵⁸ Stegner, ‘RedCrosse’s flight from Una represents his severance from Christian truth and grace’, p. 51.

⁵⁹ The journey trope inherited from classical dialogue facilitates interaction between different types of people who would not normally meet, Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions: Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 22.

⁶⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, I.vii.38.

⁶¹ Mallette, ‘The Protestant Art of Preaching’, p. 4. Also to recall Thomas Wright’s view on an effective speaker: ‘if once they can stir a Passion or Affection in their Hearers, then they have almost half persuaded them, for that the forces of strong Passions marvellously allure and draw the wit and will to judge and consent unto that they are moved’, *The Passions of the Mind*, p. 90.

My last comfort is, my woes to weepe and waile.

Arthur: Ah Ladie deare, quoth then the gentle knight,
Well may I weane, your griefe is wondrous great;
For wondrous great grief groneth in my spright,
Whiles thus I heare you of your sorrowes treat.
But wofull Ladie let me you intrete,
For to vnfold the anguish of your hart:
Mishaps are maistred by aduice discrete
And counsell mittigates the greatest smart;
Found neuer helpe, who neuer would his hurts impart.⁶²

These two stanzas present Una's complaint and Arthur's response. Una is in a state of despair – words cannot help her grief and her only comfort is 'to weepe and waile'. She cannot verbalise her woes and would rather leave her grief hidden: 'such helpless harmes yts better hidden keepe'. We saw in Chapter III, above, that Frailtie's faith (in Babington's *Briefe Conference*) grows strong enough through confession to override despair: 'the Lorde chaunge me and I shall be chaunged, and greatly both ought I, and doe I thanke you *Faith* for this conference'.⁶³ In the dialogic exchange between Diggon Davie and Hobbinol in *The Shepheardes Calender*, however, Spenser dramatized the difficulty of verbalising grief in order to gain comfort.⁶⁴ Here again, in *The Faerie Queene*, dialogue will seldom lead in any straightforward way towards absolution.

Una's hidden 'helpless harmes' recall to the reader the 'secret anguish' described by Duessa. This time the 'yron arrow steepe' threatens her heart, alluding to the influence of Cupid's arrows of love. We recall Duessa's earlier speech, which refers to Cupid as the 'blind God'. Paintings of Cupid during the early modern period depicted him blindfolded and his arrows pierce the eye to reflect love's blindness.⁶⁵ Since Cupid represents both love and lust, he is a suitable emblem for both Una and Duessa. Una recognises that her damaged heart weakens her and that entering into dialogue is difficult, as she may not have the strength to protect herself. She cannot understand

⁶² *The Faerie Queene*, I.vii.39–40.

⁶³ *Briefe Conference*, pp. 129–130.

⁶⁴ To recall the argument of Chapter III and the need to confess – dialogue is an ideal form for confession of guilt, sin, or despair in order to gain assurance of salvation. In Book V.vii.19, Britomart is encouraged to confess by a priest in the Temple of Isis: 'Say on the secret of your hart: / For by the holy vow, which me doth bind, / I am adiur'd, best counsel to impart / To all, that shall require my comfort in their smart'.

⁶⁵ Jane Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 2–3. Kingsley-Smith describes that Cupid became established in England due to patrons such as the Earl of Leicester who had three Cupid paintings. She argues that the significance of this collection is the way in which it influenced Cupid as he appears in the *Arcadia* and *The Faerie Queene*. Sidney was Leicester's nephew and Spenser his secretary, p. 15.

'What worlds delight, or ioy of liuing speach' can reach the heart so 'plung'd in sea of sorrowes deepe'.⁶⁶ Una believes she has not only lost her champion but also her beloved. Both women offer love complaints; but whereas Duessa easily persuaded RedCrosse, and turned him to her will, Una needs first to be persuaded by Arthur's 'faire feeling words' before she will engage in dialogue and heal her heart.⁶⁷ Her meeting with Arthur and the subsequent exchange, as we will discover, aims to (re)turn her back to faith and oneness.

Spenser demonstrates Arthur's eloquence by giving him alliterative phrases: 'great grief groneth', 'Mishaps are maistred'. Arthur makes it clear that he has listened to Una ('I heare you of your sorrowes'), and he advises her to 'vnfold the anguish of your hart'. In his role as confessor, Arthur wants Una to share her grief with him so he can offer his 'aduice discrete'. He reaches out to form a dialogic attachment by addressing Una as 'Ladie deare', whereas Una's speech is at first littered with the repeated use of 'I' and 'my'. Arthur advises Una to speak from her heart, as well as to listen with it. This echoes Thomas Wright's quotation from Saint Basil: "when the eyes are troubled we cannot perceive exactly the objects of our sight, even so when the heart is troubled no man can come by the knowledge of the truth."⁶⁸ An understanding of the truth can be brought closer through dialogue if the heart and conscience are pure. 'Faire feeling wordes' can restore harmony, give comfort, and sustain the soul. Arthur ends his speech with the advice that 'counsell mittigates the greatest smart; / Found neuer helpe, who neuer would his hurts impart'. We recall that Brooks described confession as 'a verbal act of self-recognition [...which] provides basis for rehabilitation'. To refuse confession, on the other hand, 'is to be resistant to amendment', leaving one unable to atone or to receive grace and salvation.⁶⁹ Only when confessional dialogue works efficiently can one gain comfort and strengthen one's faith.

Arthur and Una continue with a quick exchange to demonstrate the importance of seeking comfort through conversation:

Una: O but (quoth she) great griefe will not be tould,
And can more easily be thought, then said.

Arthur: Right so; (quoth he) but he, that neuer would,

⁶⁶ The 'sea of sorrowes deepe' to describe grief recurs in Book III with Britomart's love complaint by the sea, she verbalises her feelings and describes the 'Huge sea of sorrow, and tempestuous griefe', which is 'Far from the hoped hauen of reliefe', III.iv.8. Glauce provides Britomart with relief when she reminds her of Merlin's prophecy, thus restoring her faith, III.iv.11.

⁶⁷ Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 5.

⁶⁸ *The Passions of the Mind*, p. 126.

⁶⁹ Brooks, p. 2.

Could neuer: will to might giues greatest aid.
Una: But grieve (quoth she) does greater grow displaid,
 If then it find not helpe, and breedes despaire.
Arthur: Despaire breeds not (quoth he) where faith is staid.
Una: No faith so fast (quoth she) but flesh does paire.
Arthur: Flesh may impaire (quoth he) but reason can repaire.

Narrator: His goodly reason and well guided speech
 So deepe did settle in her gracious thought,
 That her perswaded to disclose the breach,
 Which loue and fortune in her heart had wrought,
Una: And said; faire Sir, I hope good hap hath brought
 You to inquire the secrets of my grieve,
 Or that your wisdom will direct my thought,
 Or that your prowess can me yield relief:
 Then heare the storie sad, which I shall tell you briefe.⁷⁰

Una finds her grief is difficult to describe. Perhaps speech has abandoned her at this moment; but Arthur, whilst agreeing with her, also argues that 'will to might giues greatest aid'. He counteracts her point that grief 'breedes despaire' by turning the phrase around, suggesting instead that 'reason can repaire' broken flesh.⁷¹ Arthur puts forward the three powers of will, faith, and reason to comfort her. Una will need to remember these three powers later in canto ix, when RedCrosse meets Despaire.⁷² It is his repetition of 'reason' and 'faith' which helps, finally, to return Una to her robust spiritual self – and Arthur turns her away from her feelings of despair.⁷³

Una reciprocates Arthur's attempt at forming a dialogic attachment by reflecting his words: 'faire Sir'. The narrator comments on the effect of Arthur's 'goodly reason and well-guided speech' to assure Una, but it is Una herself who describes the good fortune that has led to their meeting. Arthur's good reason has provided comfort and assurance to Una, reflecting the promise of salvation.⁷⁴ Vaught observes that dialogue 'accentuates the healing power of confession' and here, indeed, the reader recognises

⁷⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, I.vii.41-42.

⁷¹ Stegner observes that the 'sorrow that led Una to the brink of her desperation now serves as the emotional source for her renewed hope in locating RedCrosse', p. 69

⁷² To counteract the three powers of fate, necessity, and destiny invoked by Despaire in canto ix.

⁷³ Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 4.

⁷⁴ Richard Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) p. 19.

After Una recounts her story to Arthur, the final stanza of canto vii provides a further reminder of the earlier exchange between Duessa and RedCrosse:

Arthur echoes RedCrosse's speech in his exchange with Duessa discussed above. The repeated use of 'Assure your selfe', a reminder to have faith and never despair, brings to the fore Arthur's role of confessor and the divine providence of his character. Arthur assures Una that he will save RedCrosse with a reminder of the central Protestant doctrine of justification by faith.⁷⁸ Both Duessa and Una have spoken aloud their 'plaints', from their hearts, and have been re-assured by their respective 'confessors'. Both exchanges display the 'dialogue of accord' with a seemingly spiritual turning. But the narrator highlights the difference between the two women – Una is comforted by Arthur's speech, as 'his chearefull words reuiu'd her chearlesse spright', whereas Duessa is 'not all content' and only 'seemd' to be appeased. Arthur comments on Una's 'stoutest heart' whereas Duessa has allowed 'vaine feares' to

⁷⁸ Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 7. He describes Arthur as taking on the role of a preacher and considers his speeches resemble homiletic sermons.

procure her 'needless smart'. Duessa does not need spiritual assurance from RedCrosse; her aim, in fact, was to turn him away from Una – and, in this, she succeeds. By reading these two passages alongside each other, we can see that only Arthur's words create a true 'dialogue of accord' as he provides relief to Una, strengthens her heart, and therefore returns her to her faith. Now let us turn to the exchange between RedCrosse and Despaire, a disturbing dialogue that requires the reader actively to engage (or enter into dialogue) with the text, in order to understand the dangers hidden in 'honeyed wordes'.

'Dialogue of discord': RedCrosse and 'a man of hell, that calis himself Despaire'⁷⁹

The debate between RedCrosse and Despaire, in Book I, canto ix, takes place after the Orgoglio episode. Arthur has helped to rescue RedCrosse from Orgoglio's dungeon, and has captured and revealed the 'true' Duessa. RedCrosse, Una, and Arthur exchange stories (wrapped in the 'goodly golden chaine' of their relational dialogue) and gifts before they part to follow their respective quests. Una is concerned about RedCrosse, following his imprisonment by Orgoglio, and is aware of his 'decayed plight, / And shrunken synewes of her chosen knight'. She does not want to bring him 'forth in the face of dreadfull fight, / Till he recouered had his former hew: / For him to be yet weake and wearie well she knew'.⁸⁰ Una hopes that they can rest and recuperate; perhaps she is already guiding him towards the House of Holiness, to prepare for his final battle. At the beginning of canto x, after the Despaire episode, RedCrosse's continued debilitated state is described to echo the start of canto ix: 'her knight was feeble, and too faint; / And all his sinews woxen weake and raw'.⁸¹ Una attempts to guide RedCrosse away from physical battle. But the trial he will now face will demonstrate that to be sound in body is essential to being strong in heart and mind.

Spenser draws on the connection between Protestantism and despair, following the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Simply put: if you are to be saved then you must at some point repent and be assured.⁸² Alec Ryrie observes that 'one of the stranger sub-genres of Protestant devotional writing' depicted the 'dialogue between the soul and Satan, in which the soul defies the temptation to despair'.⁸³ As we saw in Chapter III above, the Christian soul does indeed need first to be broken before it can be restored. This is the drama of canto ix where RedCrosse's spiritual self must face

⁷⁹ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.28.

⁸⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.20.

⁸¹ *The Faerie Queene*, I.x.2.

⁸² Ryrie, p. 27.

⁸³ Ryrie, p. 32.

despair in order to feel the assurance of God's grace.⁸⁴ Critics have commented on the debate between RedCrosse and Despaire. Some, such as Donald Beecher, note that this is a 'pivotal event in the education' of RedCrosse, arguing that Despaire represents the 'epitome of the spiritual crisis that must lead to damnation or salvation'.⁸⁵ Harold Skulsky agrees that the Despaire episode is formative to RedCrosse's spiritual development.⁸⁶ This episode is no 'ordinary chivalric encounter with a dragon or giant paynim' but an encounter with 'a man of hell' whose weapon is 'no more than idle speech'.⁸⁷ Samuel Kessler considers more specifically the similarities between the Despair episode and William Perkins' *A Dialogue [...] Between Sathan and the Christian* (1589).⁸⁸ Kessler summarises that Perkins' work 'jointly derives from the rhetorical and theological culture with which Spenser was familiar'.⁸⁹ Kessler remarks on the similarities of tone between the two dialogues as both Satan and Despair attempt to secure their victims by forcing them to damn themselves.⁹⁰ Certainly, this episode is a further trial for RedCrosse, which does not involve physical combat. It is, in effect, a trial by dialogue.⁹¹ I will add to this debate by showing that although Spenser does draw from familiar rhetorical and theological traditions (as outlined in the previous chapters), there are important differences between the dialogue in canto ix and those offered by Gifford, Babington and Udall. In particular, Spenser is concerned to stage the tension between harmful and restorative dialogue, testing his reader's faith as well as RedCrosse's.

Despaire is coercive, misleading, and very persuasive. Spenser uses the dialogue form to explore the circumstances in the inner self that lead man to despair of God's grace and bring doom upon himself.⁹² Despaire succeeds because he imitates a prophet, even though he is false, seemingly to recant scripture.⁹³ Indeed the speeches of RedCrosse and Despaire seem to merge, suggesting two voices in one mind. This projection of the soul disputing with itself paradoxically illustrates the 'fundamental

⁸⁴ Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 4.

⁸⁵ Donald Beecher, 'Spenser's RedCrosse Knight: Despair and the Elizabethan Malady', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 23.1 (1987), 103 – 120 (p. 103 and p. 108).

⁸⁶ Harold Skulsky, 'Spenser's Despair Episode and the Theology of Doubt', *Modern Philology*, 78.3 (February 1981), 227-242.

⁸⁷ Skulsky, 'Spenser's Despair Episode and the Theology of Doubt', p. 227.

⁸⁸ Samuel Kessler, 'An Analogue for Spenser's Despair Episode: Perkins' *'Dialogue...Betweene Sathan and the Christian'*, *Notes and Queries*, (March 2000), 31-34.

⁸⁹ Kessler, p. 32.

⁹⁰ Kessler, p. 33. Perkins' work was published in 1589, a year before *The Faerie Queene*, but Kessler believes it is unlikely that Spenser read this before he wrote the Despair episode for Book I.

⁹¹ Richard McCabe, *The Pillars of Eternity: Time and Providence in The Faerie Queene* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), p. 67.

⁹² Beecher, p. 103.

⁹³ Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England*, p. 41.

worth of the spiritual struggle'.⁹⁴ As we will discover, the persuasive argument of Despaire reaches out to RedCrosse and ensnares him – demonstrating how easily the 'dialogue of accord' turns into 'discord'. Una (and the reader) observes this debate; she does not herself enter into discussion with Despaire. Unlike some of the interlocutors we have considered in the previous chapters (Frailtie, Diggon, and Palinode), Una does not have a fractured self. Her heart remains strong and robust – her earlier conversation with Arthur has bolstered her 'armoury'.⁹⁵

As Una and RedCrosse travel along the road (in dialogue tradition), they 'gan espy / An armed knight', who seemed 'from some feared foe to fly, / Or other griesly thing'.⁹⁶ This knight is Trevisan who is wearing around his neck a 'hempen rope', which ill agrees with his 'glistring armes'.⁹⁷ The narrator opens the episode:

Narrator: The RedCrosse knight toward him crossed fast,
To weet, what mister wight was so dismayd;
There him he finds all senceless and aghast,
That of him selfe he seemd to be afrayd;
Whom hardly he from flying forward stayd,
Till he these wordes to him deliuer might;

RedCrosse: Sir knight, aread who hath ye thus arayd,
And eke from whom make ye this hasty flight:
For neuer knight I saw in such misseeming plight.⁹⁸

RedCrosse recognises that the knight coming towards them is in fear for his life, being 'in such misseeming plight'. He directly addresses him ('Sir Knight'), hoping that his words will help to relieve him of his fear and terror. RedCrosse advises Trevisan to 'aread' or declare what has happened, alluding again to the ability of conversation to relieve grief. The term 'aread' means 'to counsel, advise, to determine by counsel, to decree', with its most common meaning, in 1590, being 'to advise or counsel'.⁹⁹ The word derives from the Old English 'arædan', which means to declare, make known, utter, or tell those things that are unknown to others. The use of this word is twofold; it is a request from RedCrosse to Trevisan, but also a signal to the reader to take heed of

⁹⁴ Beecher, p. 106.

⁹⁵ George Gifford describes the 'Armorye' of faith that can protect man if he believes in God's Word, 'The Epistle', *Dialogue*, q2v.

⁹⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.21.

⁹⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.22.

⁹⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.23.

⁹⁹ 'aread, v'. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2015. Web. 24th August 2017.

the counsel set out in the subsequent dialogue.¹⁰⁰ In this short exchange with RedCrosse, Trevisan tells of the demise of his fellow traveller, Sir Terwin, at the hands of Despaire. He explains in detail that he was given a rope and Sir Terwin a knife in order to end their lives.¹⁰¹ Trevisan warns of the danger of meeting and, specifically, listening to Despaire:

Trevisan: Fled-fast away, halfe dead with dying feare:
Ne yet assur'd of life by you, Sir knight,
Whose like infirmitie like chaunce may beare:
But God you neuer let his charmed speeches heare.

*RedCrosse:*How may a man (said he) with idle speech
Be wonne, to spoyle the Castle of his health?

Trevisan: I wote (quoth he) whom triall late did teach,
That like would not for all his worldes wealth:
His subtile tong, like dropping honny, mealt'h
Into the hart, and searcheth euery vaine,
That ere one to be aware, by secret stealth
His powre is reft, and weaknesse doth remaine.
O neuer Sir desire to try his guilefull traine.¹⁰²

Trevisan may have escaped with his life but he does not feel worthy of living, or 'assur'd of life' as he perceives RedCrosse to be. Trevisan continues to warn of the danger of listening to the 'charmed speeches' of Despaire and invokes God to assist in the prevention of hearing them. Trevisan admits that faith in God should help one to enter into debate with Despaire, which in effect is to undergo a trial of faith by dialogue. RedCrosse is surprised that a man can be persuaded to end his life, 'to spoyle the Castle of his health'. As we have seen, in the sixteenth century the heart was the organ of the body most clearly associated with religious faith. A place where one would feel the presence and love of God needs protection, of course, giving rise to the commonplace metaphor of the body as a castle.¹⁰³ An impenetrable building is

¹⁰⁰ Jane Grogan suggests that the poem 'repeatedly invites a readerly gaze', *Exemplary Spenser: Visual and Poetic Pedagogy in The Faerie Queene* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Beecher observes that 'Despaire as a personification, with his halter and knife, was a central figure in Tudor morality play and interlude', p. 106.

¹⁰² *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.30-31.

¹⁰³ Slights, p. 85.

imperative for the protection of those that live within its walls – in this case, protection against Despaire's damaging assault of words that 'searcheth euery vaine'.¹⁰⁴

Trevisan's warning to RedCrosse reminds the reader of the adventures that RedCrosse has already undergone. In the stanza above, there are references to the persuasiveness of words, with the phrase 'subtile tong' echoing Archimago's 'pleasing wordes' uttered with his 'tongue as smooth as glas'.¹⁰⁵ Trevisan continues to counsel because he knows of one 'whom triall late did teach' and begs RedCrosse never to 'desire to try his guilefull traine'. The 'guileful traine' brings to mind 'Errour's endless traine' in canto i.¹⁰⁶ RedCrosse's first error at the beginning of Book I leads into many others, which deepen into sins such as being seduced by Duessa disguised as Fidessa in canto ii.¹⁰⁷ RedCrosse's feeling of guilt from his sexual transgressions is sensed by Despaire who is able to see into the 'feeble harts' of those who are 'Emboist with bale, and bitter byting griefe'.¹⁰⁸ Despaire can then cause greater grief with his 'wounding words and termes of foule reprieue'.¹⁰⁹ The reader remains aware of the 'dialogue of false accord' that had earlier been sealed between RedCrosse and Duessa, and wonders now whether RedCrosse will be strong-willed enough to overcome this latest trial by dialogue.

Trevisan's advice to RedCrosse to be aware of the 'secret stealth' that will overtake his senses and render him weak is, in fact, a warning of the destructive power of dialogue: 'His subtile tong, like dropping honny, mealt'h / Into the hart, and searcheth euery vaine'.¹¹⁰ Echoing the earlier description of Duessa's words as 'soure gall with hony sweet', Trevisan describes false words as honey-coated. Importantly, in relation to their effect, these words are targeted towards the heart, the organ of man that can most easily be turned. A weak heart is indicative of a weak faith that needs protecting from despair; and Trevisan's advice is also directed towards the reader. However, RedCrosse has been unable to discern the difference between truth and duplicity in his previous adventures. He ignores the warning of danger and responds to what he perceives as Despaire's challenge to face him. He persuades Trevisan by promising 'I

¹⁰⁴ Spenser devotes canto ix of Book II to Alma's castle, which the narrator describes through bodily parts. The heart and lungs are linked together; the 'mighty furnace' is cooled by a 'huge paire of bellowes', *The Faerie Queene*, II.ix.29 and 30. See Erickson who describes the interrelated action of the heart and lungs, the lungs are soft and cooling for the hot passions of the heart, p. 12. Although the heart may be described by its physiological function, Alma is central as the nourishing soul and provides spiritual life to the castle, Jason Crawford, p. 162.

¹⁰⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.35.

¹⁰⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.18.

¹⁰⁷ Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Stegner, p. 57.

¹⁰⁹ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.29.

¹¹⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.35. The reference to honey is from Psalm 119, MEM.: 'How swete are thy promises vnto my mouth! yea more than honie vnto my mouth', quoted on the title page of Babington's *A Briefe Conference*.

shall neuer rest, / Till I that treachours art haue heard and tride'.¹¹¹ RedCrosse is determined to pursue dialogic exchange, believing that he is strong-willed enough to face and win this trial. In previous chapters, we saw that some interlocutors, such as Frailtie and Demetrius, entered into dialogue in order to gain self-knowledge and spiritual self-betterment. Babington and Udall made clear the benefits of dialogic discourse but Spenser, as we have seen, seldom demonstrate that same clarity. In this episode between RedCrosse and Despaire, Spenser puts forward a more complex and multi-layered dialogue which questions the cultural functions of dialogue – most particularly its pedagogical purpose.

Trevisan, 'against [his] liking', takes RedCrosse and Una to where Sir Terwin's corpse is 'all wallowed in his owne yet luke-warm blood'.¹¹² Next to him is 'that cursed man' with his 'griesie lockes, long growen, and vnbound', which hide his face 'through which his hollow eyne / Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astounded'.¹¹³ This sight angers RedCrosse:

With firie zeale he burnt in courage bold,
Him to auenge, before his blood were cold,
RedCrosse: And to the villein said, Thou damned wight,
The author of this fact, we here behold,
What iustice can but iudge against thee right,
With thine owne blood to price his blood, here shed in
sight.¹¹⁴

RedCrosse confronts the creature – not with reason, but rather with passionate determination to gain justice for the death of Sir Terwin. His 'zeale' fires up his courage rather than his faith and sense of righteousness. His passionate physical response contrasts interestingly with Gifford's description of man's heart that is 'inlamed with zeal' from reading scripture.¹¹⁵ RedCrosse reads the scene 'in sight' and makes a decision from what he sees – yet his sight has previously deceived him, and of course will continue to do so. Despaire's argument relies on the fear that man is not one of the elect and lacks faith in God's judgement.¹¹⁶ Despaire frequently stresses God's justice but ignores his mercy. He includes scriptural phrases but does not ponder on their true

¹¹¹ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.32.

¹¹² *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.36.

¹¹³ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.35.

¹¹⁴ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.37.

¹¹⁵ *Dialogue*, 30r.

¹¹⁶ Beecher, p. 109.

meaning; his aim is to mislead and confuse his weaker opponent. As Richard Mallette observes, Despaire purposefully 'warps scripture'.¹¹⁷ Unlike Gifford's delight in the clarity of scripture, Spenser uses God's restorative words, in the mouth of Despaire, to turn the faithful away from God:

Despaire: What franticke fit (quoth he) hath thus distraught
Thee, foolish man, so rash a doome to giue?
What iustice euer other iudgement taught,
But he should die, who merites not to live?
None else to death this man despayring driue,
But his owne guiltie mind deseruing death.
Is then vniust to each his due to giue?
Or let him die, that loatheth liuing breath?
Or let him die at ease, that liveth here vneath?¹¹⁸

Despaire addresses RedCrosse as 'foolish man' with a series of rhetorical questions that appear to invite a response from RedCrosse. Despaire argues that no one can decide whether a person should live or die except that individual. He denies being a murderer – the phrase 'despayring driue' nevertheless suggests that despair (rather than any other person) drove the man to death through his 'owne guiltie mind'. Despaire presents a logical, reasoned argument in his example of a traveller who 'meetes a flood, that doth his passage stay'.¹¹⁹ If it is acceptable to help such a traveller traverse a flood, Despaire argues, it is also acceptable to help them towards death. He continues to tempt RedCrosse:

He there does now enioy eternall rest
And happie ease, which thou doest want and craue,
And further from it daily wanderest:
What if some litle paine the passage haue,
That make fraile flesh to feare the bitter waue?
Is not short paine well borne, that brings long ease,
And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet graue?
Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England*, p. 38.

¹¹⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.38.

¹¹⁹ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.39.

¹²⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.40.

The repeated use of the word 'ease' reminds the reader of the exchange between RedCrosse and Duessa discussed earlier in this chapter. Duessa 'turn'd as to her ease' when she was satisfied that she had duped RedCrosse through her misleading 'dialogue of false accord'. The repetition of 'ease' and 'sleep' indicates that turning someone towards despair is easily achieved, particularly when the body is tired from 'toyle'. The weak passive body leads to a weakened heart, which is open to the effect of persuasive false words. If God's word can provide sustenance then the opposite must also be possible. Despaire sees that he can easily turn those that are weak to death and despair through his eloquent speeches. He concludes that the dead man is now at 'eternall rest', something that he suggests RedCrosse 'doest want and craue'.¹²¹ Despaire recognises the weakened physical and emotional condition of RedCrosse, which will make him susceptible to his argument.¹²² He knows that this knight is faint-hearted and will be easy to turn with his own 'honeyed words'.¹²³ The last two lines are indeed tempting for the weary knight: 'sleep after toyle, port after stormie seas, / Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please'. Despaire equates the relief from life offered by death to the rest that must follow any strenuous activity, as Beecher observes: 'Despaire is not only a confrontation with hopelessness, but also a loss of courage that makes resistance impossible'.¹²⁴ However, Calvinist doctrine of predestination dictated that man has no choice over when or how he dies. Calvinist theology is based on the premise that all men are damned to satisfy divine justice, but God in his mercy has elected some to salvation.¹²⁵ Justification by faith alone was central to Protestant doctrine; and man was obliged to put his faith in God to guide him.¹²⁶ Despaire argues, on the contrary, that man does in fact have a choice when to die; if he can persuade his listener to agree with him then his 'dialogue of discord' will overwhelm RedCrosse with despair.

RedCrosse attempts to counter Despaire's argument:

The knight much wondred at his suddeine wit,
RedCrosse: And said, The terme of life is limited,
 Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten it;

¹²¹ Crawford, p. 150.

¹²² This same frailty worried Una earlier in stanza 20.

¹²³ McCabe, *The Pillars of Eternity*, p. 67.

¹²⁴ Beecher, p. 106.

¹²⁵ Susan Doran and Christopher Durston, *Princes, Pastors, and People: The Church and Religion in England 1529-1689* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 19-20. See also Patrick Collinson *Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Ltd, 1988), Collinson refers to *The Faerie Queene* as 'a Protestant epic', p. 94, and Peter Marshall *Reformation England 1480 – 1642* (London: Arnold, 2005), pp. 127-28.

¹²⁶ Doran and Durston, p. 14.

The souldier may not moue from watchfull sted,
 Nor leaue his stand, vntill his Captaine bed.
Despaire: Who life did limit by almightie doome,
 (Quoth he) knowes best the termes established;
 And he, that points the Centonell his roome,
 Doth license him depart at sound of morning droome.¹²⁷

The knight is surprised that the creature is so eloquent with 'his suddeine wit'. Spenser gives Despaire 'rhetorical cunning to match the terrible ensnarement he represents'.¹²⁸ RedCrosse however remains determined to stress that man has no choice over the length of his life, comparing his existence with a soldier's duty to guard and protect his 'Captaine'. This refers to the earlier metaphor of the body as a castle, and reminds the reader of the importance of protecting one's faith from being turned. At this point, the two distinct voices of RedCrosse and Despaire begin to merge and the subsequent speech could belong to either.¹²⁹ It becomes difficult to determine whether RedCrosse or Despaire is speaking:

Despaire: Is not his deed, what euer thing is donne,
 In heauen and earth? did not he all create
 To die againe? all ends that was begonne.
 Their times in his eternall booke of fate
 Are written sure, and haue their certaine date.
 Who then can striue with strong necessitie,
 That holds the world in his still chaunging state,
 Or shunne the death ordaynd by destinie?
 When houre of death is come, let none aske whence, nor
 why.¹³⁰

Despaire continues to use rhetorical questions and the speech more closely resembles an internal debate between faith and despair than a two-way conversation between two characters. We remember the internal debate between Faith and Frailtie in Babington's *Briefe Conference* – but Spenser's dialogue is very different in scope and achievement. RedCrosse does not answer Despaire's questions, indicating Despaire's

¹²⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.41.

¹²⁸ Skulsky, 'Despaire', in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. by A. C. Hamilton (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 213–4 (p. 213).

¹²⁹ McCabe recognises that RedCrosse and Despaire become indistinguishable, *The Pillars of Eternity*, p. 70.

¹³⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.42.

control over the exchange through his 'craft of persuasion'.¹³¹ Through the power of his words, Despaire displays powerful and logical reasoning. Despaire invokes the three powers of 'fate', 'necessitie', and 'destinie'. We saw that fate and destiny were part of Duessa's complaint in canto i; and if RedCrosse had listened properly (with his heart), he would have the knowledge to recognise that Despaire's argument is similar. Mallette observes that Despaire's 'speech skilfully mimics the preacher's message of repentance' but he does not balance this with a message of forgiveness.¹³² The careful reader can make the connection between RedCrosse's dialogues with Duessa, and this present dialogue with Despaire – but the reader is unsure whether this exchange will result, eventually in 'dialogue of accord'.

Spenser employs syllogism to put forward his argument: 'The lenger life, I wote the greater sin, / The greater sin, the greater punishment'.¹³³ Faced with such logic, RedCrosse will need to be strong-hearted to avoid succumbing to Despaire's 'honeyed words'. But RedCrosse is not assured of God's grace at this point and is in danger of being turned by Despaire's argument, which begins with the central doctrine to Protestantism: predestination and justification by faith alone.¹³⁴ All are created eventually to die as their 'times in his eternall booke of fate / Are written sure, and haue their certaine date'.¹³⁵ If the timing is correct then death will befall a person whether he chooses suicide or not. The acceptance that God has made the right decision is the essence of faith which guides the Christian elect through life. Without belief in God's mercy, there can be no return from the depravity of the fallen man: 'For he, that once hath missed the right way, / 'The further he doth goe, the further he doth stray'.¹³⁶ Spenser's radical revision of the familiar routines of confessional dialogue allows him to subvert, through the character of Despaire, the role of confessor; and to sketch out, here towards the end of Book I, a thoroughgoing test of RedCrosse's faith

Despaire continues his eloquent attack on RedCrosse, recounting his misguided adventures in Faerie Land:

Despaire: Why then doest thou, ô man of sin, desire
To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree?
Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire

¹³¹ Skulsky, 'Spenser's Despair Episode and the Theology of Doubt', p. 227.

¹³² Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 16.

¹³³ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.43. Kessler refers to this as 'the Devil's Syllogism', p. 32.

¹³⁴ James Schiavoni, 'Predestination and Free Will: The Crux of Canto Ten', *Spenser Studies* (1989), 175-195 (p. 176).

¹³⁵ In Book V.ii.41, Arthegall expands on God's will and predestination whilst explaining the justice of his punishment for Pollente and Munera: 'They liue, they die, like as he doth ordaine, / Ne euer any asketh reason why'.

¹³⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, I.ix.43.

High heaped vp with huge iniquitie,
 Against the day of wrath, to burden thee?
 Is not enough, that to this Ladie milde
 Thou falsed hast thy faith with periurie,
 And sold thy selfe to serue *Duessa* vilde
 With whom in all abuse thou hast thy selfe defilde?¹³⁷

Despaire continues to address RedCrosse with 'thou', 'thy', and 'thine', to maintain dialogic attachment. Despaire reminds RedCrosse of his depravity and lowest ebb with his sexual dalliance with Duessa, assuming the role of 'an inverted confessor figure'.¹³⁸ Stegner observes that 'Spenser conceptualises sexual sins as particularly damaging to spiritual progress because they threaten to reactivate the original transgressive desire'.¹³⁹ Acknowledging his own submission to the temptations of the flesh seals RedCrosse's fall from grace and the inability of his 'dull eares' to listen properly.¹⁴⁰ This is worse than the depravity suffered in Orgoglio's dungeon as he has denounced Una, the one truth, and therefore God. This is compounded by the fact that Despaire refers to Una, 'this Ladie milde' – echoing Arthur's earlier address to this 'Ladie deare'. Despaire has the rhetorical skill to match Arthur, although they use their persuasive dialogue in opposite ways.¹⁴¹ Arthur's words nourish the soul, epitomising providential grace, whereas Despaire – as we have seen – scents out the weak-hearted and turns them away from faith. The reference to Una reminds the reader that Una is still present and listening as the events unfold. Her presence is required for RedCrosse's sin to be manifest; she must witness his despair in order to help him regenerate.¹⁴² This is in accordance with the paradigm of regeneration, widely accepted by English Protestants, through which the broken self could be restored and healed.¹⁴³

Despaire's rhetorical questions ensure the dialogue continues – but, by now, the exchange has morphed into RedCrosse's dialogue with his own self which only superficially resembles a two-way conversation: 'Why then doest thou, ô man of sin, desire / To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree?' At this point, the dialogue seems to stall and the narrator takes over:

¹³⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.46.

¹³⁸ Stegner, p. 57.

¹³⁹ Stegner, p. 45.

¹⁴⁰ Broadus, p. 603.

¹⁴¹ Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 15.

¹⁴² Schiavoni, p. 187.

¹⁴³ Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetic and the Seventeenth Century Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 16-18. This regeneration included several stages that a man should achieve in his life - election, calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification.

Narrator: The knight was much enmoued with his speech,
 That as a sword's point through his hart did perse,
 And in his conscience made a secret breach,
 Well knowing true all, that he did rehearse,
 And to his fresh remembrance did reuerse
 The vgly vew of his deformed crimes,
 That all his manly powres it did disperse,
 As he were charmed with inchaunted rimes,
 That oftentimes he quaked, and fainted oftentimes.¹⁴⁴

The affective consequence of this dialogue on RedCrosse, who has been 'much enmoued with [Despaire's] speech', is the eventual piercing of his heart – which in turn affects his conscience. Slights observes that cutting the heart was associated, metaphorically, with the brutal honesty required by Protestant religious self-scrutiny.¹⁴⁵ Despaire's words have triggered a 'remembrance', which 'did reuerse / The vgly vew of his deformed crimes', pricking at RedCrosse's conscience. The wounding effect of words again emphasises the tension between dialogue that can be spiritually uplifting, and dialogue that creates 'discord'. The word 'reuerse' means to bring back, or in this context, to 'turn' or convert RedCrosse. RedCrosse has lost his 'manly powres' because he has been reminded of his many sins by Despaire.¹⁴⁶ We remember the promise RedCrosse made earlier to Trevisan: 'I shall neuer rest, / Till I that treachours art haue heard and tride'.¹⁴⁷ RedCrosse has heard, has been tried, and has failed.

Despaire's 'dialogue of discord' therefore contrasts sharply with the spiritually bracing dialogues by Babington and Gifford discussed earlier. We also explored how Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* inverted the process of confessional absolution in order to question dialogue's usefulness for settled Protestant inwardness. Here in *The Faerie Queene*, we find Spenser continuing this exploration at greater length and with further complexity. Spenser inverts both the form and function of dialogue through the 'honeyed speech' of Despaire – who by now has 'turned' another victim: 'when the Miscreant / Perceiued him to wauer weake and fraile, / He shew'd him painted in a table plaine, / The damned ghosts, that doe in torments waile'.¹⁴⁸ RedCrosse proves himself incapable of sustaining rational dialogue with Despaire because his faith falters. James Broadus notes that 'RedCrosse knows the truth of Despaire's accusations, and

¹⁴⁴ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix. 48.

¹⁴⁵ Slights, p. 107.

¹⁴⁶ Stegner, p. 52.

¹⁴⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.32.

¹⁴⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.49.

he thinks he knows that God will necessarily condemn him for his sins'.¹⁴⁹ RedCrosse has reached his lowest state. Despaire has not yet finished with RedCrosse, however, as he still needs to take the final step. Dialogue has stalled and we are left with the narrator's descriptions of pictures presented by Despaire: 'nought but death before his eyes he saw, / And euer burning wrath before him laid'. This depicts what is, for RedCrosse, inevitable, as he does not have the assurance of faith and therefore cannot resist Despaire's 'charmed speeches'.¹⁵⁰ Despaire gloats over his success – 'then gan the villein him to ouercrow' – and brings forward a range of suicidal tools, 'swords, ropes, poison, fire', to help RedCrosse take his final step towards death.¹⁵¹ Here the heart remains central to Spenser's understanding of affective spiritual life: 'And troubled bloud through his pale face was seene / To come and goe with tydings from the hart'.¹⁵² RedCrosse can no longer speak, but his face struggles to express his thoughts. It is difficult to imagine a dialogic consequence further removed from the mutually reciprocal 'dialogue of accord' we saw between Una and Arthur, and the spiritually transforming dialogues of Babington and Udall.

RedCrosse finally decides 'to worke his final smart' and lifts his hand to take the final plunge – but he is not alone in his despair.¹⁵³ Una and the reader have both observed that RedCrosse has succumbed to the persuasive words of Despaire. Una is not susceptible to being 'charmed with inchaunted rimes', having impeccable faith in her own assurance.¹⁵⁴ Her brief despair, earlier in Book I, was healed by Arthur's wise counsel, and his 'faire feeling wordes' restored her own faith and her faith in the ability of RedCrosse. Una needs to act to restore RedCrosse back to his former self – she snatches 'the cursed knife' throwing it to the ground 'enraged':

Una: And said to him, Fie, fie, faint harted knight,
 What meanes thou by this reprochfull strife?
 Is this the battell, which thou vaunst to fight
 With that fire-mouthed Dragon, horrible and bright?

Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight,
 Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly hart,

¹⁴⁹ Broaddus, p. 585.

¹⁵⁰ Broaddus, p. 585.

¹⁵¹ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.50. 'Ouercrow' is spelt in the *OED* as 'overcrow', the example given is the above line from Spenser. 'Overcrow, v. means 'to crow, or exult over, to triumph over, and to overpower'. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2015. Web. 24th August 2017.

¹⁵² *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.50.

¹⁵³ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.51.

¹⁵⁴ Beecher, p. 116.

Ne diuelish thoughts dismay thy constant spright.
 In heauenly mercies hast thou not a part?
 Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art?
 Where iustice growes, there grows eke greater grace,
 The which doth quench the brond of hellish smart,
 And that accurst hand-writing doth deface,
 Arise, Sir knight arise, and leaue this cursed place.¹⁵⁵

Una reminds RedCrosse of his duty and mentions 'the battell', which echoes Despaire's earlier speech when he mentions all 'those great battels, which thou boasts to win'.¹⁵⁶ Una questions his lack of faith and hope: 'why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art?' Una (and Gloriana) chose RedCrosse for this quest; but Una also reflects that RedCrosse is one of the elect and that his salvation is assured – he just needs to have faith and believe this to be true. She reminds him that he must remember that he has a part in 'heauenly mercies' and to consider the effect of justice and greater grace.¹⁵⁷ She counsels him to 'come, come away' and to turn away from the 'cursed place'. This speech recalls how Una saved RedCrosse from 'Errour's endless traine' with words: 'Now now Sir knight shew what ye may bee, / Add faith unto your force, and be not faint: / Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee'.¹⁵⁸ RedCrosse overcame the trial by Errour with physical force, once he turned to his faith and believed that he could succeed.¹⁵⁹ However, the present dialogic trial with Despaire is more difficult since RedCrosse has been thoroughly absorbed by Despaire's 'charmed speeches'.¹⁶⁰ He now has to (re)turn back to the light of truth and faith by Una who recognises the importance of a well-defended heart.

Una begins to coax him through dialogue back from the brink of despair. Like Despaire, Una gains dialogic attachment by addressing RedCrosse directly with 'thou' and 'thy' and using a sequence of questions in order to gain a response. Her questions, however, remind him of his quest and she tries to affect his heart and mind with grace, justice, and of 'heauenly mercies'. The repeated mentions of his 'manly hart' are a reminder that RedCrosse's heart is weak and he needs assurance. His heart has been assaulted and damaged, bewitched by 'vaine wordes' – a reminder of his experiences with Archimago, and his encounter with Duessa's 'vaine fears' in the

¹⁵⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.52-53.

¹⁵⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, l.ix.42.

¹⁵⁷ Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching', p. 20.

¹⁵⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, l.i.19.

¹⁵⁹ Walls, p. 23.

¹⁶⁰ Crawford, p. 169.

first canto. Una is referring to the 'dialogue of discord' that is spiritually unfulfilling and leads the listener into temptation.

RedCrosse is finally restored to his full strength in the House of Holiness in canto x, once he has confessed his sins, demonstrated 'his cured conscience', and learned how 'to take assured hold' of hope.¹⁶¹ His conversion back to the Knight of Holiness, 'so God me grace', allows him to complete his quest – slay the dragon and return Una to the court of Eden.¹⁶² Once in Eden he has to confess the 'mishaps' of his adventures when he 'vnawares strayd'.¹⁶³ He now realises his weakness and inability to turn away from sin, and publically admits his guilt whilst blaming Duessa: 'Too false and strong for earthly skills or might / Vnawares me wrought vnto her wicked will'.¹⁶⁴ He eventually successfully completes his trial of faith – and an important part of this trial has taken place through dialogue. His restoration as the Knight of Holiness is described at the beginning of Book II: 'But now so wise and warie was the knight / By trial of his former harmes and cares, / that he descryde, and shonned still his slight: / The fish that once was caught, new bait will hardly byte'.¹⁶⁵ Much later in Book III, RedCrosse takes on Arthur's role of confessor to demonstrate that he has gained his surety of faith, turning Britomart away from despair in her quest to find Arthegall. Here he deploys Arthur's 'feeling' and 'pleasing words' to sink into her 'molten hart' to ease her hurt.¹⁶⁶ By now RedCrosse is able to listen correctly and to find, through dialogue, the affective words that can offer assurance and restore faith.

This chapter has traced the tension between 'dialogic accord' and 'discord' illustrated by three exchanges. First, we saw the 'dialogue of false accord' with Duessa when RedCrosse failed to discern her misappropriation of his assurance. Her 'bayted hook' remained within his heart, causing him finally, when he meets Despaire, to enter into a 'dialogue of discord' that proves to be coercive, dangerous, and soul-destroying. In contrast, we have seen that the weak-hearted can be turned away from despair by engaging in a 'dialogue of accord'. Arthur's 'faire feeling wordes' and 'goodly reason' restore harmony to Una, and she in turn uses a similar dialogue to help save RedCrosse from his total submission to Despaire. Una can restore RedCrosse from his despair by addressing him with 'accord' and 'goodly words' to reflect the 'goodly golden chain' that linked RedCrosse to Arthur at the beginning of canto ix. If 'accord'

¹⁶¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.x.28 and 22. Dughi comments that RedCrosse's spiritual training is complete by the end of canto x, p. 29.

¹⁶² *The Faerie Queene*, II.x.64.

¹⁶³ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.31.

¹⁶⁴ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.32.

¹⁶⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.4.

¹⁶⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, III.ii.15 – 'Hart that is inly hurt is greatly eased / With hope of thing, that may allege his smart'.

can turn into 'discord', then the reverse can also be possible. Spenser holds these two outcomes in productive tension throughout *The Faerie Queene* Book I, challenging the reader to recognise one from the other.

The reader acts as an external auditor to these dialogic exchanges, witnessing the process of conversion which takes place as affective words imprint themselves on the heart and mind. Furthermore, we have seen that the reader can engage, or be in dialogue, with the text since dialogic interaction that repeatedly employs 'you' or 'thou' is also addressing the reader.¹⁶⁷ Spenser indeed frequently invites us to 'aread' the signs correctly, drawing our attention towards 'charmed speeches' and 'foule words tempting faire'. The reader is drawn into the tempting dialogue through figurative language that affects our own minds and hearts, only to realise that dialogic exchange demands not only an open heart but also an effective spiritual 'armoury'. To recall Romans 10.17: 'Then faith is by hearing, and hearing by the worde of God'. Spenser's trial of faith through dialogue confirms the importance that our group of late sixteenth-century Protestant prose writers all placed on self-scrutiny for the achievement of a fulfilled life in faith. However, Spenser experiments with the fundamental assumptions behind dialogic self-scrutiny, putting particular pressure on dialogue's traditional pedagogical purpose. Gifford, Babington, and Udall all direct their readers to listen to (and aread) one particularly authoritative voice, but Spenser casts the nature of such authority into question – and, by doing so, tests his own reader's faith alongside RedCrosse's faith. The believer needs to enter into dialogue in order to secure their faith, but Spenser also shows how easily that faith can falter if the heart is frail. The next chapter will further consider the usefulness (and the perils) of entering into dialogue as a way of resisting temptation, focusing this time on the tension Spenser creates in Book II between civil spoken dialogue and physical violence.

¹⁶⁷ Brooks, p. 95.

Chapter V - Dialogue and chivalry: *The Faerie Queene* Book II

Words well dispost

Haue secret powre, t'appease inflamed rage¹

The previous chapter explored the tension in *The Faerie Queene* Book I between spiritually fulfilling dialogue, which turns the listener towards a stronger faith and is restorative for the soul, and 'dialogue of discord' that is coercive, life-threatening, and soul-destroying. In this chapter, I will consider the tension between verbal dialogue and physical violence, in a chivalric/romance context, drawing examples from episodes in Book II. The tension explored by Spenser between physical violence and verbal discussion brings to mind the rhetorical device of *discordia concors*. Richard McCoy in his study on Elizabethan chivalry describes *The Faerie Queene* as 'the period's fullest realisation of the militant, chivalric ideal of *discordia concors*'.² The success or failure of dialogic discourse represents *discordia concors* – particularly when a seemingly open debate disguises dialogue's sometimes persuasive and coercive nature. In Book II, the contrast between physical action and verbal exchange is striking. Central to the following discussion is the titular knight of Book II – Sir Guyon – who often finds himself caught between the restorative potential of temperate dialogue and the threat of intemperate physical violence. Dialogue is not necessarily in opposition to the physical action of the knights but, as we will see, it becomes a way to negotiate a path between combat in arms and verbal reasoning. As the above epigram suggests, words, when spoken by Prince Arthur, 'well dispost / Haue secret powre, t'appease inflamed rage'. This chapter explores the power of such words to overcome intemperance and turn the listener (or reader) towards the 'middle way'.

In the previous chapter, we saw the risks involved when dialogue turns from 'accord' to 'discord' in Book I, eventually leading RedCrosse into despair. In this chapter the repercussions, in Book II, are more radical – and dialogic discordance leads to death. We remember that George Gifford, Gervase Babington, and John Udall clearly outlined in their dialogues that assurance or forgiveness is obtainable through confession and steadfast commitment to God. Faith may sometimes be frail – but, through conference, assurance and a stronger faith can develop. We have seen how Spenser questions, in *The Shepheardes Calender*, the usefulness of dialogue as a surety to salvation. He continues to experiment with dialogue in *The Faerie Queene*, showing how knights may be tempted, through dialogue, away from faith and temperance. In the previous

¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.26.

² Richard C. McCoy, *The Rite of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (London: University of California Press, 1989), p. 129.

chapter, we saw that RedCrosse lost his faith when he succumbed to Despair's 'dialogue of discord' but Una deployed the 'dialogue of accord' to pull him from the brink of death. In Book II, Guyon faces yet more formidable risks of temptation; but dialogic opportunities keep arising, offering a middle way to avoid violence and death.

Book II explores the potential of 'words well disposed' which may have 'secret powre, t'appease inflamed rage'. The appeasement of rage becomes a significant issue throughout Book II, bearing in mind the titular virtue of temperance. The etymology of 'temperance' comes from the Latin *temperantia*, meaning moderation.³ Tiffany Werth observes that temperance 'means a careful modulation of passions, "a race with reason", self-control and restraint'.⁴ Michael Schoenfeldt agrees that throughout Book II 'temperance comes to mean the work of self-control' to govern 'forces within and without that threaten the integrity of the subject'.⁵ Temperance is not only relevant to Book II, of course, as Arthur pacifies Ignaro when he rescues RedCrosse in Book I: here, he 'calmd his wrath with goodly temperance'.⁶ As we saw in the previous chapter, Arthur's 'faire feeling wordes' epitomise how to enter into dialogue to provide comfort and assurance. We can perhaps understand this more fully through one of Spenser's sources, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* by Ramon Llull, and his description of the virtue of temperance:

Temperance is a virtue that is in the middle of two vices: one vice is sin in too great a quantity; the other is sin in too little a quantity. And therefore, the point in between too much and too little temperance in whatever the appropriate quantity must be a virtue, [...] And without temperance he could not uphold the honour of Chivalry nor could he make it be in the middle, which is a virtue precisely because it stands at neither extreme.⁷

The Palmer echoes this ideal of temperance: 'betwixt them both can measure out a meane, / Neither to melt in pleasures whot desire, / Nor fry in hartlesse grief and

³ *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2015. Web. 24th August 2017. The first definition is cited as the 'practice or habit of restraining oneself in provocation, desire, and passion, to have rational self restraint'.

⁴ Tiffany Jo Werth, *The Fabulous Dark Cloister: Romance in England after the Reformation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2011), p. 118.

⁵ Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 48.

⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, I.viii.34. In Book III Guyon and Britomart are reconciled 'through good ly temperance', III.i.12.

⁷ Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, trans. and ed. by Noel Fallows (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), referred to as *Order of Chivalry* throughout and all citations from the main text will be taken from this edition, p. 77.

dolefull teene'.⁸ J. Carscallen observes that 'Spenser's own idea of temperance can best be approached through his focal emblem for it, which is a very medieval one', associated with chivalric temperance, embodied in the Palmer.⁹ Carscallen describes temperance as the 'ruling of self or others' and that Guyon is ruled by his guide, the reasoning Palmer. He summarises Guyon's ability to 'rule others using gracious words where possible and stern force where necessary'.¹⁰ As this present chapter will show, Guyon may be able to rule others with stern force – but he is seldom successful at winning arguments with 'gracious words' and often struggles to achieve the middle temperate way.¹¹ Spenser also challenges the reader to recognise the difficulties of managing that middle way, and explores intemperate physical violence as the consequence when dialogue stalls. Knights who quest after 'noble deeds' need temperance and reason on their side, but knights who are unable to enter into dialogue, and therefore cannot achieve temperance or reason, will fail in their quest and become destructive, both physically and spiritually.¹²

In the chapter's opening section, we will consider how entering into dialogue forestalls physical combat between Guyon and RedCrosse (canto i), but on the other hand proves less effective between Guyon and Pyrochles (canto v). We will then examine the tensions that arise in a poly-vocal exchange, over an inert Guyon, between the Palmer, Arthur, Pyrochles, and Cymochles (canto viii). Here Spenser highlights the risks involved when temperate chivalric behaviour is not achievable through dialogue, and the only solution is to resort to physical altercation. I will argue that Book II is in fact actually *about* dialogue, specifically temperate chivalric dialogue. The titular knight, Guyon, gives as much advice as he receives.¹³ It is for this reason that Book II ends in dialogue – unlike the other five books, which all conclude with a summation by the narrator. We will consider canto xii at the end of this chapter, specifically stanza 85 and the final stanza 87, which present dialogic exchanges between Guyon and the Palmer. After the violent destruction of the Bower of Bliss, these exchanges seem surprisingly reasoned and rational. This final episode signifies the recuperation of dialogue; temperate behaviour has returned, and the middle way is restored. Before

⁸ *The Faerie Queene* II.i.59. Helen Cooney, 'Guyon and His Palmer: Spenser's Emblem of Temperance', *The Review of English Studies*, 51.202 (May 2000) 169-192 (p. 172).

⁹ J. Carscallen, 'Temperance' in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, pp. 680-2.

¹⁰ Carscallen, p. 681.

¹¹ Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 41, argues that one of the central concerns of Book II is the relationship 'between matters of body and conditions of spirit'.

¹² Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Chivalric Tradition in Renaissance England* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1986), suggests that *sapientia* (wisdom) must join with *fortitudo* (courage) to make a true knight. He continues by suggesting that 'courage and prowess without wisdom can become destructive', p. 90.

¹³ Richard Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 53.

we turn to the selected episodes from Book II, however, we will first briefly consider Spenser's sources in the chivalric romance tradition.

Spenser and Romance

To open up these questions further, we will first briefly consider the significance of two of Spenser's romance sources in order to determine a framework of chivalric behaviour: Llull's *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* (1276) and Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, in 1485.¹⁴ Frances Yates notes the significance of Llull, suggesting that *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* as 'a source book for Elizabethan chivalry has not been sufficiently recognised'.¹⁵ Alfred Byles, editor of the 1925 edition of Llull's book, however disagrees: 'all the chief writers on chivalry have recognised Caxton's translation of the *Order of Chivalry* as the most compendious mediaeval treatise on the obligations of knighthood, and have quoted it freely'.¹⁶ William Schofield described the importance of these sources a century ago: 'Spenser exalts the same knightly qualities as Malory; goodly temperance, stedfastness, golden mean as are lauded in the *Order of Chivalry*'.¹⁷ Llull's treatise was translated into English, from a French edition, by William Caxton, and was one of the first books he printed between 1483-85.¹⁸ Llull wrote his book as a propagandistic treatise to support the struggle against Islam in Iberia and the Holy Land, and to address the perceived failures of the knights themselves to exercise their office in the successful prosecution of these campaigns. His aim is total reform of 'the Order of Chivalry, where the knights are expected to regulate not only the world around them but also to look inward and regulate themselves'.¹⁹ Llull firmly juxtaposed physical force and verbal persuasion for successful reform. A recent editor of his work, Noel Fallows, succinctly describes how 'his clergy were expected to engage with Moslems in Arabic in order to convert them; his knights were expected to engage with Moslems in battle in order to kill them'.²⁰ Later we will explore this paradox (as tension) of physical action and verbal dialogue in relation to the actions of Spenser's knights.

¹⁴ Thomas Malory: *Complete Works*, ed. by Eugène Vinaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), all citations will be taken from this edition.

¹⁵ Frances A Yates, 'Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 20.1/2 (January - June 1957), 4-25 (p. 20).

¹⁶ *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, ed. and trans. by Alfred T. P. Byles (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 2004), p. vii.

¹⁷ William Henry Schofield, *Chivalry in English Literature Chaucer, Malory, Spenser, and Shakespeare* (London: Cambridge Harvard University, 1913), p. 147.

¹⁸ *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, trans. and ed. by Alfred T. P. Byles (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 2004), p. xxii. The original by Llull was written in his native Catalan.

¹⁹ Noel Fallows, p. 3. His edition is 'the first modern translation derived directly from the original work composed in medieval Catalan,' p. 31.

²⁰ Fallows, p. 10.

Caxton also printed Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, so that 'noble men may see and lerne the noble actes of chyvalrye, the jentyl and vertuous dedes that somme knyghtes used in tho days'.²¹ He urges his readers to 'see and rede in this sayd book and werke' in order to 'take the good and honest actes in their remembraunce, and to folowe the same; wherein they shall fynde many joyous and playsaunt hystories and noble and renommed actes of humanyté, gentylnesse, and chyvalryes'.²² Caxton provides similar advice in his epilogue to *Order of Chivalry*: 'O ye knyghtes of Englonde where is the custome and vsage of noble chyualry that was vsed in tho dayes'. These books were published by Caxton in the 1480s when chivalric traditions were remembered nostalgically, as indicated by the phrase 'tho dayes'. Paul Rovang describes the proliferation of chivalric handbooks published during the fifteenth century, arguing that the models from the past presented in these books were taking on a powerful new authority.²³ A century later, in Elizabeth's time, chivalry had however 'receded into the background of a culture more variegated and eclectic'.²⁴ *The Faerie Queene* incorporates various aspects of chivalry, such as Gloriana's 'Order of Maidenhead' at which knights are allocated their tasks – echoing Malory's knight-errantry.²⁵ There is also of course the intermittent presence of Prince Arthur whom Spenser describes as 'the image of a braue knight, perfected in the twelue priuate morall vertues'.²⁶

Critics may have agreed on the influence of chivalric romance on Spenser but have underestimated the importance of those sources.²⁷ As Alex Davis writes, 'until recent times critics have preferred to concentrate on Spenser's relationship to more prestigious sources, such as classical epic, Aristotlean philosophy, allegorical verse, rather than the chivalric nature of his work'.²⁸ Davis explores chivalry and romance during the early modern period and discusses 'how poorly treated chivalric romance literature is by critics'.²⁹ Other scholars, such as Arthur Ferguson, explore the use of chivalric tradition in Renaissance literature with particular reference to Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* and Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, which he declares are the 'finest and most

²¹ Caxton's 'Preface' to Malory, *Complete Works*, ed. by Vinaver, p. xv.

²² Caxton's 'Preface' to Malory, p. xv.

²³ Paul R. Rovang, *Refashioning 'Knights and Ladies Gentle deeds': The Intertextuality of Spenser's Faerie Queen and Malory's Morte d'Arthur* (London: Associated University Press, 1996), p. 52. See also Andrew King, *The Faerie Queene and Middle English Romance: The Matter of Just Memory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

²⁴ Ferguson, p. 12.

²⁵ See Malory's *Complete Works*, ed. by Vinaver and Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, (London: Penguin Books, 1991). McCoy observes that *The Faerie Queene's* 'Order of Maidenhead' is 'specifically an Elizabethan version of the Order of the Garter', p. 134. Other tournaments take place in *The Faerie Queene* – Satyrane's 'Tourneyment / For loue of Florimell' in Book IV, canto iv, and Marinell's tournament in Book V, canto iii.

²⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, 'Letter to Raleigh'. Ferguson, suggests that 'Arthur to the Elizabethans was a national hero, a political symbol rather than a personification of the chivalric ideal', p. 137.

²⁷ Kenneth Hodges, 'Making Arthur Protestant: Translating Malory's Grail Quest into Spenser's Book of Holiness', *The Review of English Studies*, 62.254 (April 2011) 193-211 (p. 193). He suggests that 'Book I of the Faerie Queene directly responds to the version of the Grail quest in *Le Morte d'Arthur*'.

²⁸ Alex Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), p. 6.

²⁹ Davis, p. 12.

enduring literary expression of the chivalric revival'.³⁰ Ferguson continues to describe the influence of the chivalric tradition in Elizabethan England:

the learning of humanism and the mystique of chivalry were able to achieve a kind of symbiotic relationship, and Sidney, and Spenser, and the rest were able to deck out their essential humanism on occasion on the deliberately chosen costumes of medieval chivalry.³¹

However, he argues that the war with Spain united Englishmen and the combination of 'patriotism and religious zeal made the war a crusade, and made it possible for men like Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser to believe that theirs was in some special way a Protestant chivalry'.³² This echoes Rosamund Tuve's description of the concept of 'double chivalry', that is, heavenly and earthly chivalry, which serves both God and King.³³ Tuve expands this by exploring how Christian symbolism was incorporated into the phenomenon of the early modern Christian knight. One clear example is Spenser's RedCrosse Knight and the cross he displays on his shield, which we will return to later.

Some critics, including Rovang, have considered the significance of dialogue in chivalric romance. In his study of intertextuality between *The Faerie Queene* and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Rovang comments that 'Spenser uses authorial intrusion, narration, and character dialogue to provide commentary on the standards and purpose of chivalry'.³⁴ He suggests that Spenser uses dialogue to communicate chivalric ideals in relation to character formation. This reflects Malory's narrative techniques, which include 'the minimum of descriptive visualisation' and the 'expression of character through gesture, direct speech and dialogue rather than through analysis or comment'.³⁵ Mark Lambert suggests however that such techniques had a mixed reaction among Tudor Protestants, some of whom attempted to create a distance between Malory and Spenser. He illustrates this with Roger Ascham's view that *Morte d'Arthur* was a 'product of the bad old days of papistry'.³⁶ Spenser himself, through E. K., expresses contempt for the authors of King Arthur in *The Shepheardes*

³⁰ Ferguson, p. 77.

³¹ Ferguson, p. 57.

³² Ferguson, p. 70.

³³ Rosamund Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and their Posterity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 51-52.

³⁴ Rovang, pp. 59-60.

³⁵ Derek Pearsall, *Arthurian Romance: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 89.

³⁶ Mark Lambert, 'Malory', in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. by A. C. Hamilton (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 450-1. He explains that Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* was reissued five times between 1498 and 1585. He concludes his survey with the note that 'there is no question that Spenser was acquainted with Malory'.

Calender calling them 'fine fablers and lowd lyers [...] who tell many an vnlawful leasing of the Ladyes of the Lake'.³⁷ Spenser nevertheless recreates Arthur as his chivalric hero in *The Faerie Queene*, awarding him with providential grace. Other critics such as Ann Dobbys have considered the subject of dialogue and romance literature in relation to character development.³⁸ Dobbys explores the establishment of character through dialogue in the works of Thomas Malory and Philip Sidney. She considers how romance writers create complexity in the portrayal of one character, or differentiate between similar characters using dialogue.³⁹ One example she cites is how words, specifically dialogue, develop different dimensions in the character of Guinevere in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. Dobbys suggests that 'the authors of romances employ language conventions when defining characters through dialogue' and that 'dialogue may be potentially one of the most productive ways the romancer has of elaborating ideas'.⁴⁰

These critics all comment on the place of dialogue in chivalric romance. I aim to build on this work by exploring how Spenser, in *The Faerie Queene* Book II, creates tension between 'verbal temperance' and 'physical violence' challenging the reader to recognise the complexity of dialogue as a solution to intemperance.

Chivalric temperate dialogue: canto i

As the titular knight, we expect Guyon to personify the eponymous virtue, but throughout Book II, he will undergo trials, through dialogue, that will test his ability to remain on that middle ground of chivalric temperance. To understand the significance of temperance we can briefly turn to Lull's account of the seven virtues that knights were expected to perfect: 'the three theological ones are faith, hope, and charity and the four cardinal ones are justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance'.⁴¹ For the purpose of this chapter and the use of dialogue in Spenser's Book II, the virtue of prudence or right reason is as important as the virtue of temperance.⁴² This is significant when considering the 'dialogue of accord', which nourishes the soul and mediates the temperate middle way. Working alongside temperance is the virtue of prudence, or reason: 'a virtue through which knowledge of good and evil is acquired

³⁷ 'Aprill', gloss to l. 120, *The Shepheardes Calender*, Edmund Spenser: *The Shorter Poems*, ed. by Richard A. McCabe (London: Penguin Books, 1999).

³⁸ Ann Dobbys, *The Voices of Romance: Studies in Dialogue and Character* (London: Associated University Press, 1989). Florence Jobson's thesis explores character development through analysis of character dialogue.

³⁹ Dobbys, p. 28.

⁴⁰ Dobbys, p. 27.

⁴¹ *Order of Chivalry*, p. 77. In the sixth section entitled 'On the Habits that Pertain to the Knight'.

⁴² John Erskine Hankins, *Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory: A Study of The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 129.

[...] prudence provides the ability to avoid physical and spiritual harm by using foresight and stratagems'.⁴³ As we will see in this chapter, the stratagem that Spenser employs for his 'right reasoners' in *The Faerie Queene* is dialogic discourse.⁴⁴

Guyon has a spiritual guide on his journey, the Palmer, as the narrator informs the reader:

Him als accompanyd vpon the way
A comely Palmer, clad in blacke attire,
Of ripest yeares, and haire all hoarie gray,
That with a staffe his feeble steps did stire,
Least his long way his aged limbs should tire:
And if by lookes one may the mind aread,
He seemd to be a sage and sober sire,
And euer with slow pace the knight did lead,
Who taught his trampling steed with equall steps to tread.⁴⁵

The Palmer appears to be a suitable companion for the knight of temperance. He represents prudence and, as we will see later, the Palmer's advice aims to prevent harm and disaster.⁴⁶ At this stage, Guyon has to control his horse to walk alongside his guide but early in canto ii, he loses his 'loftie steed' and has to continue on foot – matching the Palmer with his own 'equall steps'.⁴⁷ Their matching steps indicate an unspoken reciprocity, but the reader understands that the Palmer is the guide and the embodiment of the self-restraint and control that the temperate self requires. We will explore further the reciprocal relationship between Guyon and his 'sage and sober sire' throughout this chapter.

To explore the value of temperate dialogue as a way of forestalling physical action, let us begin by examining the dialogic exchanges between Guyon and RedCrosse in canto i. Knights were recognisable for their 'Words well dispost', or courteous verbal exchanges, for 'Courtesy and Chivalry belong together, for baseness and uncouth

⁴³ *Order of Chivalry*, p.73

⁴⁴ To recall George Puttenham's phrase 'right reasoner' and that 'we must always give to every person his fit and natural [speech], and that which best becometh him', *The Art of English Poetry* (1589), *A Critical Edition*, ed. by Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 321.

⁴⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.7.

⁴⁶ This relationship echoes the one Lull describes between the hermit and the squire, that is, a knight being led by an elder.

⁴⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, II.ii.11. Guyon remains on foot until he is reunited with his horse, Brigadore, at Marinell's tournament Book V.iii.29: 'Sir Guyon as by fortune then befell, / Fourth from the thickest preasse of people came, / His owne good steed'.

words are contrary to Chivalry'.⁴⁸ The episode in canto i illustrates how dialogue helps to mediate the middle way of temperance, and to promote courteous behaviour. At the beginning of canto i, Guyon and the Palmer meet with Archimago and Duessa. Interestingly, the above description of the Palmer is very similar to that of Archimago, encountered by RedCrosse and Una in Book I.⁴⁹ Archimago is described here as an 'aged sire, in long black weedes yclad', with 'his beard all hoarie gray, / Sober he seemed, and very sagely sad'.⁵⁰ Both aged men are 'sage and sober' and display a prowess with words, as they are able to persuade others into action – one to prevent harm, and the other to cause harm. They are both representative of the hermit, a traditional figure in medieval chivalric romance.⁵¹

We remember that, in Book I, RedCrosse and Una spend a pleasant evening with Archimago: 'With faire discourse the euening so they pas: / For that old man of pleasing wordes had store, / And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas'.⁵² Archimago can talk well and persuade others with his words, but his aim is to deceive:

For all he did, was to decieue good knights,
And draw them from pursuit of praise and fame,
To slug in slouth and sensuall delights,
And end their daies with irrenowned shame.⁵³

When Archimago sees Guyon and the Palmer, in Book II, again he 'weened well to work some vncouth wile' and tells a story of a lady who has been attacked by a knight.⁵⁴ Guyon struggles to understand how a knight can disgrace the chivalric code and he asks 'How may it be [...] / That knight should knighthood euer so haue shent?'.⁵⁵ His response echoes one of Malory's knights – Sir Lancelot: 'What? seyde Sir Launcelot, is he a theff and a knight? And a ravyssher of women? He doth shame unto the Order of Knyghthode, and contrary to his oth'.⁵⁶ Spenser will return to this knightly

⁴⁸ *Order of Chivalry*, p. 78. Courteous verbal exchanges are necessary for a knight to maintain the chivalric code, such as in the prologue to the *Order of Chivalry*; the squire waits for the hermit-knight to speak first.

⁴⁹ Comparisons between the first two books are outlined in A. C. Hamilton's article "'Like Race to Runne'", *The Parallel Structure of The Faerie Queene, Books I and II*, *PMLA*, 73.4 (September 1958), 327-334. More recently Jason Crawford, *Allegory and Enchantment: An Early Modern Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), considers Book I and II in terms of violence and apocalypse.

⁵⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.29.

⁵¹ McCoy, *The Rite of Knighthood*, p. 145. In Llull's treatise the hermit was a knight who he is an authority on the rules of chivalry and holds a prominent place within the story. The hermit in *The Faerie Queene* Book VI is called upon to give 'good counsell' to help Serena and Calepine, VI.vi.13. His advice includes to abstain 'from pleasure, and restraine your will, / Subdue desire, and bridle loose delight', VI.vi.14.

⁵² *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.35.

⁵³ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.23.

⁵⁴ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.8.

⁵⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.11. Keen, p. 174.

⁵⁶ *Malory: Complete Works*, 'A Noble Tale of Sir Launcelot du Lake', p. 160. See also Keen, p. 174.

ideal in Book VI with Calidore's comment to Tristram about the 'discourteous knight': 'For knights and all men this by nature haue, / Towards all womenkind them kindly to behaue'.⁵⁷ The reader is aware of chivalric values from Book II and Spenser continues to challenge the reader to recognise the difference between courteous and discourteous knights when they read the later books. As discussed earlier, two knightly virtues are prudence and temperance; and these promote self-restraint to prevent a knight causing harm to anyone who is innocent. Archimago ends by describing how the rogue knight 'threatned death with many a bloudie word; / Tounge hates to tell the rest, that eye to see abhord'.⁵⁸ The knight threatens not only with a 'sharpe sword' but also with 'bloudie word', suggesting something of the tension between verbal and physical violence with which Book II is centrally concerned. Guyon must tread a path between temperate dialogue and violence, whether physical or verbal.⁵⁹

Archimago leads Guyon to 'a gentle Lady all alone, / With garments rent, and haire discheueled'.⁶⁰ Guyon approaches in order to offer comfort and asks whether she might be willing to 'receiue reliefe', through dialogue.⁶¹ The narrator describes her initial response – 'she gan appease / her voluntarie paine, and feel some secret ease' – before she addresses Guyon:

Duessa: Eftsoone she said, Ah gentle trustie Squire,
 What comfort can I wofull wretch conceaue,
 Or why shoulde euer I henceforth desire,
 To see faire heauens face, and life not leaue,
 Sith that false Traytour did my honour reauue?

Guyon: False traytour certes (said the Faerie knight)
 I read the man that euer could deceaue
 A gentle Ladie, or her wrong through might:
 Death were too little paine for such a foule despight.

But now faire Ladie, comfort to you make,
 And read, who hath ye wrought this shamefull plight.
 That short reuenge the man may ouertake,

⁵⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, VI.ii.14.

⁵⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.11.

⁵⁹ Florian Kläger, *Forgone Nations: Construction of National Identity in Elizabethan Historiography and Literature: Stanihurst, Spenser, Shakespeare* (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2006), observes that in Guyon 'religious self-improvement as well as secular self-assertion in physical contact with another, converge', p. 143.

⁶⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.13.

⁶¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.16. To recall previous discussions from earlier chapters that focussed on the role of confessor to provide comfort and assurance. This situation is repeated in a later book when Calidore finds Priscilla in distress and counsels her to 'lay aside this grieve', IV.ii.46

Where so he be, and soon vpon him light.⁶²

In an exchange reminiscent of the one between RedCrosse and Duessa discussed in the previous chapter, we see the search for comfort and the offer of assurance. Duessa feels 'secret ease', which recalls her earlier turning in Book I 'as to her ease' away from RedCrosse.⁶³ The 'false traytour' Duessa refers to, and Guyon wrongly agrees with, is RedCrosse. Guyon attempts to discern the truth and uses the word 'read' for different purposes. As mentioned in the previous chapter 'aread' (a form of 'read') means 'to counsel, advise, to determine by counsel, to decree', and by 1590 the meaning is given as 'to advise or counsel'.⁶⁴ In the first example, 'I read the man that euer could deceaue', Guyon considers the man a 'false traytour' mainly because he has broken the chivalric code.⁶⁵ In the second instance, he wants to know what happened for the lady to be in 'this shamefull plight'. Guyon is prepared to question Duessa to ascertain the perpetrator of the deed but finds it difficult to believe what she tells him, particularly the description of the 'bloudie Crosse' on the errant knight's 'siluer shield'.⁶⁶ So rather than continuing with the dialogue and questioning her further, Guyon responds by extolling the virtues of the knight:

Guyon: Now by my head (said Guyon) much I muse,
How that same knight should do so foule amis,
Or euer so gentle Damzell so abuse:
For may I boldy say, he surely is
A right good knight, and true of word ywis:
I present was, and can it witnesse well,
When armes he swore, and streight did enterpris
Th'aduenture of the *Errant damozell*,
In which he hath great glorie wonne, as I heare tell.⁶⁷

Guyon and RedCrosse are both on quests from the Faerie court, following chivalric romance tradition. Guyon seems to be in a dilemma over what to believe – the reader recognises the danger of listening to duplicitous Duessa, but Guyon decides to find the knight who has wronged the 'faire Ladie', and declares 'he shortly shall againe be

⁶² *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.17-18.

⁶³ Feeling of ease recurs later: 'secret ease felt gentle Britomart', *The Faerie Queene*, III.ii.15.

⁶⁴ 'aread, v'. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2015. Web. 24th August 2017.

⁶⁵ Werth considers Guyon as a 'reformed reader' who advocates the use of reason and sober judgement, pp. 114-5.

⁶⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.18.

⁶⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.19.

tryde'.⁶⁸ This reaction is indicative of Guyon's tendency to believe what he has most recently heard. He is more likely to listen to what is happening in the present, and act on that information, than to ask further questions to determine the truth. Spenser is warning the reader to be wary, holding faith and frailty in tension for both his heroes and his readers. Guyon's own internal dialogue ('by my head [...] much I muse') has failed to provide him with a reason why 'that right good knight' could 'do so foule amis'.⁶⁹ The balance between what he has been told and what he knows is not equal and, as we will see, this leads him towards intemperance.

One notable absence in this exchange is the Palmer, and in fact when Guyon goes to find RedCrosse it is instead Archimago that guides him an 'vncouth way'.⁷⁰ Archimago spies RedCrosse in the distance and encourages Guyon to go forward 'inflam'd with wrathfulnesse'.⁷¹ As Guyon races towards RedCrosse, he prepares himself, 'His warlike arms about him'.⁷² The chivalric code dictated that knights should present a formal challenge before entering into combat.⁷³ However 'suddenly that warrior gan abace / His threatened spear, as if some new mishap / had him betide'.⁷⁴ Guyon realises his error before it is too late and suddenly reigns in his horse and cries out 'Mercie Sir knight, and mercie Lord, / For mine offence and heedless hardiment, / That had almost committed crime abhord'.⁷⁵ We are not sure why he suddenly demonstrates self-restraint in his attack but perhaps he recognises a fellow Christian knight and his temperate chivalric virtue comes to the fore.⁷⁶ His near-crime is two-fold: he both thought to enter into an unprovoked attack, and turned away from the truth by not having enough faith to believe in the honour of RedCrosse, a fellow knight.⁷⁷ RedCrosse, meanwhile, did recognise Guyon's shield, emblazoned with the 'faire image of that heauenly Mayd' (Gloriana, the Faerie Queene), but was obliged to bear arms in order to protect himself.⁷⁸

⁶⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.20. To recall the trial that RedCrosse attempted and failed in the previous chapter, which resulted in the exchange with Despaire.

⁶⁹ *Order of Chivalry*, pp. 47-8. The chivalric ideal is to protect women and the weak and knights should adhere to this and believe that all knights do the same. Honour of the code by knights is something Lull exalted in *The Order of Chivalry*.

⁷⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.24.

⁷¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.25.

⁷² *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.26.

⁷³ *Order of Chivalry*, Lull describes using reason and discretion when taking to arms, 'and he must not make a necessity or a habit of what is done by chance', p. 78.

⁷⁴ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.26.

⁷⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.27.

⁷⁶ Werth, p. 116.

⁷⁷ Schoenfeldt notes that the 'tension between divine and human action is manifested most explicitly' in this almost battle between Guyon and RedCrosse, p. 41.

⁷⁸ Knights have to decide whether to step outside their rules and Spenser explore this again in Book VI. Tristram defends why he broke the law of arms- he is a squire and he has killed a knight - he says he 'breake it should againe, / Rather than let my selfe of wight be stroken, / So long as these two armes were able to be woken', *The Faerie Queene*, VI.ii.7.

The two knights are however reconciled into fellowship.⁷⁹ As the narrator describes, they are 'both at one' and give 'goodly comportance each to other beare'.⁸⁰ Once again this mutual reciprocity emerges through dialogic exchange as RedCrosse addresses Guyon:

*RedCrosse: Sir Guyon, why with so fierce saliaunce,
And fell intent ye did at earst me meet;
For sith I know your goodly gouernaunce,
Great cause, I weene, you guided, or some vncouth chaunce.*

*Guyon: Certes (said he) well mote I shame to tell
The fond encheason, that me hither led.
A false infamous faitour late befell
Me for to meet, that seems ill bested,
And playned of grievous outrage, which he red
A knight had wrought against a Ladie gent;
Which to auenge, he to this place me led,
Where you he made the marke of his intent,
And now is fled; fouler shame him follow, where he went.⁸¹*

We saw RedCrosse at the end of Book I departing from Una to return to Gloriana's court. The narrator informs us that he has acquired self-knowledge and is 'now so wise and warie [...] / By trial of his former harmes and cares'.⁸² RedCrosse questions Guyon's behaviour, here in Book II, and perhaps it is his previous experience that causes him to assume 'some vncouth chaunce' must have influenced Guyon.⁸³ RedCrosse guesses correctly, for Archimago's influence did indeed lead Guyon, the 'vncouth way', towards violence rather than dialogue. When Guyon confesses his wrongdoing ('shame to tell'), he takes one step on his road to self-knowledge that will help him to assert self-control.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ This scene is repeated at the beginning of Book III between Britomart and Guyon: 'Thus reconciliation was between them knit, / Through goodly temperance, and affection chaste, / [...] with that golden chaine of concord tyde', *The Faerie Queene*, III.i.12.

⁸⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.29.

⁸¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.29-30.

⁸² *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.4. Unlike the reader, RedCrosse is unaware that Archimago and Duessa are abroad and intent on revenge.

⁸³ Stegner, p. 71.

⁸⁴ The beginning of Book III echoes this episode when Guyon meets Britomart, except this time Guyon does fight with another knight, and he is bested by her 'secret power vnseene', *The Faerie Queene*, III.i.7. The Palmer prevents any further violent action and with 'good meanes he him discourseled' and Arthur intervenes too: he 'handed, / His wrathfull will with reason to asswage'. *The Faerie Queene*, III.i.11.

As mentioned above, Guyon is on horseback – but loses his horse at the beginning of canto ii so the Palmer is able to keep ‘equall steps’ with him. Werth notes that the Palmer’s constant presence reveals the concern over ‘multiplicity or indeterminacy of meaning that required guidance to distil truth from falsehood’.⁸⁵ Guyon’s challenge is to read the signs carefully – although, by this point, he appears to have achieved temperance of sorts:

Narrator: So can he turne his earnest vnto game,
Through goodly handling and wise temperance.
By this his aged guide in presence came;
Who soone as on that knight his eye did glance,
Eftsoones of him had perfect cognizance,
Sith him in Faerie court he late auizd;
Palmer: And said, faire sonne, God giue you happie chance,
And that deare Crosse vpon your shield deuizd,
Wherewith aboute all knights ye goodly seeme aguizd.
[...]
But wretched we, where ye haue left your marke,
Must now anew begin, like race to runne;
God guide thee, *Guyon*, well to end thy warke,
And to the wished hauen bring thy weary barke.⁸⁶

Spenser’s choice of words (‘so can he turne his earnest vnto game’) is particularly interesting. Guyon can turn his serious intention to fight into a more light-hearted activity through his ‘wise temperance’, but this only becomes possible when he engages in dialogue.⁸⁷ However, the narrator is also commenting on the inconstancy of Guyon’s behaviour which changes readily between two extremes. McCoy comments on the narrow line between physical violence and social conversation: ‘[t]he tournament combined sporting contest, mock combat, and social drama into a form of conflict [...] enacting in its ceremonies the *discordia concors*, which is an informing principle of Spenser’s poetry’.⁸⁸ In Book II, this same contrast between fights and verbal exchanges is reflected in Guyon turning his ‘earnest vnto game’.

⁸⁵ Werth, p. 124.

⁸⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.31-32.

⁸⁷ In Book IV.iv.12-3 Cambell steps in to the argumentative group at Satyrane’s tournament ‘ye doe wrong / To stirre up strife, when most vs needeth rest’ and advises to wait until the tournament when ‘who so list to fight, may fight his fill’. ‘They all agreed, so turning all to game’ thus returning to the state of *discordia concors*. This is again instigated through dialogue.

⁸⁸ Richard McCoy, ‘Chivalry’ in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, p. 149.

The Palmer immediately recognises RedCrosse with 'perfect cognizance' since 'him in Faerie court he late auizd'.⁸⁹ The Palmer greets RedCrosse with reference to 'that deare Crosse' on his shield. The symbol of faith is important to the Palmer, for he believes that RedCrosse is 'aboue all knights' appropriately armed. The Palmer reiterates the importance of equating Christian symbolism with Christian valour. However, man's service to God remains the highest form of chivalry, the primary allegiance, and represents service to the highest lord.⁹⁰ Maurice Keen describes chivalry as a Christian discipline orientated towards man's highest goal – salvation.⁹¹ In Book V, canto ii, Spenser presents his own similar ideal of chivalric allegiance:

Nought is more honourable to a knight,
 Ne better doth beseeme braue cheualry,
 Then to defend the feeble in their right,
 And wrong redresse in such as wend awry.
 Whilome those great Heroes got thereby
 Their greatest glory, for their rightfull deedes,
 And place deserued with the Gods on hy.⁹²

These very same aims are included in Llull's description of a knight: 'It is the office of the knight to support widows, orphans and the helpless'.⁹³ Importantly, the knight should aim for the greatest glory – a place 'with the Gods on hy'. But as we have seen, Spenser, through dialogue, places his heroes (and readers) in situations where the familiar binaries of faith and frailty are never securely held opposed, and where the surety of that 'place on hy' is never certain. This uncertainty becomes especially apparent when we read Spenser in the wake of the contemporary spiritual dialogues by Gifford, Babington, and Udall, which make clear – through dialogue – their surety of faith and advocacy of following scripture to live a good Christian life.

The Palmer confirms the importance of faith and service to God with a blessing: 'God guide thee, *Guyon*'. He can see the significance of this exchange between the two knights in relation to RedCrosse's earlier adventures in Faerie Land and knows that

⁸⁹ Cooney, p. 172. 'cognizance/cognisance, n'. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2015. Web. 24th August 2017. The first definition is 'knowledge, understanding, and acquaintance', quoting the above line from *The Faerie Queene*. The third definition is 'a device or mark by which as person/company is recognised. In heraldry it is a device for emblem borne for distinction'.

⁹⁰ Tuve, p. 80.

⁹¹ Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 14.

⁹² *The Faerie Queene*, V.ii.1.

⁹³ *Order of Chivalry*, p. 50.

Guyon needs the help of God.⁹⁴ He reminds Guyon that they must continue their journey: 'to the wished hauen bring thy weary barke'. When RedCrosse and Guyon part, the narrator describes the 'courteous conge both did giue and take'.⁹⁵ Their formal farewell, or 'conge', ends their meeting and is in complete contrast to their rash and impetuous greeting. The references to their 'give and take' and 'pledges of good will' suggests a closing mutually reciprocal dialogue of sorts. Temperance is restored to Guyon and he is able to enter into dialogue and fulfil his knightly duties. It seems at this point that dialogue has the ability to reset the balance of the middle ground – but, as we will see, that balance turns out to be short-lived.

Guyon and the Palmer continue on their voyage:

Then *Guyon* forward gan his voyage make,
With his blacke Palmer, that him guided still.
Still he him guided ouer dale and hill,
And with his steedie staffe did point his way:
His race with reason, and with words his will,
From foule intemperance he oft did stay,
And suffred not in wrath his hastie steps to stray.⁹⁶

This stanza outlines the Palmer's role as reason personified, since he tempers Guyon's 'race with reason, and with words his will'. This reason will keep Guyon from being overcome by 'foule intemperance' when he acts quickly without thinking.⁹⁷ The narrator indicates that the Palmer's successful dialogue will be central to whether Guyon completes his quest. At the beginning of canto iv, the Palmer's role is reiterated again: 'He would through temperance and stedfastnesse, / Teach him the weake to strengthen, & the strong suppress'.⁹⁸ We now turn to an episode from canto v that echoes the above scenario (with RedCrosse) but features Pyrochles behaving discourteously.⁹⁹ But whereas Guyon does finally realise his mistake, and enters belatedly into dialogue, Pyrochles does not have the same ability.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ In Spenser's 'Letter to Raleigh' Guyon's adventure is described in the tale that is told on the second day of the festivities at Gloriana's court.

⁹⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.34. 'Conge' is glossed as 'formal farewell'.

⁹⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.34.

⁹⁷ Werth, p. 118.

⁹⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, II.iv.2. The Palmer continues to provide good counsel into Book III: he 'gan faire perswade' and 'by such good meanes he him discourtelled', III.i.10 and 11.

⁹⁹ One aspect of the chivalric code is that knights should be courteous and this can be displayed through a formal challenge before entering into equal combat. Keen describes the device of a 'pernon', a gong that is stuck to ready the combatants for engagement, used on the rites of challenge in tournaments, p. 205.

¹⁰⁰ *Order of Chivalry*, p. 51. Describes honour being acquired through loyalty, courtesy, liberality, and piety.

Chivalric intemperate dialogue – canto v

Our second episode again begins with one knight charging at another, adding a further layer to the *discordia concors* of Book II. Pyrochles on his horse does not offer a challenge or enter into dialogue: 'he neuer stayd to greete, / Ne chaffar words, prowde courage to prouoke'.¹⁰¹ He does not exchange words but rather strikes the first blow: 'Him first saluted with a sturdy stroke'. Not only has Pyrochles failed to enter into dialogue, he has also attacked a man who is on foot while he himself is mounted on horseback.¹⁰² Pyrochles is not able to enter into dialogue; he is too impassionate with his burning rage, surrounded by 'sparkling fire'.¹⁰³ The only option at this time is for the pair to fight until Pyrochles begs for mercy: 'Mercy do me not dye, / Ne deeme thy force by fortunes doome vniust, / That hath (maugre her spight) thus low me laid in dust'.¹⁰⁴ But Guyon stays his hand, and addresses Pyrochles:

Guyon: Then to him said, Liue and allegaunce owe,
To him that giues thee life and libertie,
And henceforth by this days ensample trow,
That hasty wroth, and heedless hazardrie
Do breede repentaunce late, and lasting infamie.

Narrator: So vp he let him rise, who with grim looke
And count'naunce sterne vpstanding, gan to grind
His grated teeth for great disdeigne, and shooke
His sandy lockes, long hanging downe behind,
Knotted in bloud and dust, for grieve of mind,
That he in ods of armes was conquered;
Yet in himselfe some comfort he did find,
That him so noble knight had maistered,
Whose bounty more than might, yet both he wondered.

Guyon: Which Guyon marking said, be nought agrieu'd,
Sir knight, that thus ye now subdewd arre:
Was neuer man, who most conquestes atchieu'd
But sometimes had the worse, and lost by warre,

¹⁰¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.v.3.

¹⁰² See Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, when Yvain knocks Sir Kay off his horse he dismounts to ensure he does not have an unfair advantage, p. 323.

¹⁰³ *The Faerie Queene*, II.v.2.

¹⁰⁴ *The Faerie Queene*, II.v.12.

Yet shortly gaynd, that losse exceeded farre:
Losse is no shame, nor to be lesse then foe,
But to be lesser, then himselfe, doth marre
Both losers lot, and victours prayse alsoe.
Vaine others ouerthrowes, who selfe doth ouerthrowe.¹⁰⁵

These stanzas represent one of Guyon's longer speeches. The Palmer remains silent and the narrator does not mention him until much later. Guyon is magnanimous following a physical victory over Pyrochles, and here displays another important knightly virtue: 'the over-arching value of magnanimity permeated the imagination of the medieval aristocracy and shaped its self-image'.¹⁰⁶ Guyon requests allegiance from Pyrochles demonstrating that a knight must be 'honoured by the people', and should 'be feared, for he is strong, and [...] praised, for he performs good deeds'.¹⁰⁷ Ironically Guyon criticises Pyrochles for his 'hasty wroth, and heedless hazardie', forgetting that he was guilty of the very same actions when he attacked RedCrosse in canto i. Guyon initiates a discussion but Pyrochles is not able to control his impassioned self, nor to enter into temperate dialogue. Although he finds some comfort that such a 'noble knight had maistered' him, he ignores the chivalric code when he fails to accept Guyon's offer of allegiance. The narrator makes clear that Guyon nevertheless seems able to 'read' Pyrochles: '*Guyon* marking'.

Guyon demonstrates that he understands the importance of accepting loss in order to achieve a strong and settled faith. He continues to offer Pyrochles advice:

Guyon: Fly, O *Pyrochles*, fly the dreadfull warre,
That in thy selfe thy lesser parts do moue,
Outrageous anger, and woe-working iarre,
Direfull impatience, and hart murdring loue;
Those, those thy foes, those warriours far remoue,
Which thee to endless bale captiued lead.
Bit sith in might thou didst my mercy proue,
Of curtesie to me the cause aread,
That thee against me drew with so impetuous dread.

¹⁰⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.v.13-15.

¹⁰⁶ Ferguson, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ *Order of Chivalry*, p. 80.

Pyrochles: Dreadlesse (said he) that shall I soone declare:

It was complained, that thou hadst done great tort
Vnto an aged woman, poore and bare,
And thralld her in chaines with strong effort,
Voide of all succour and needfull comfort:
That ill beseemes thee, such as I thee see,
To worke such shame. Therefore I thee exhort,
To chaunge thy will, and set Occasion free,
And to her captiue sonne yield his first libertee.

Guyon: Thereat Sir *Guyon* smiled, And is that all

(Said he) that thee so sore displeased hath?
Great mercy sure, for to enlarge a thrall,
Whose freedome shall thee turne to greatest scath.
Nath'lesse now quench thy whot emboyling wrath:
Loe there they be; to thee I yield them free.¹⁰⁸

Guyon addresses Pyrochles by name in order to develop a relational dialogue, warning him that unless he controls his 'outrageous anger' and 'direfull impatience' he will not be able to perform knightly duties. Although Guyon does fall into intemperance throughout Book II, he is nevertheless able to hold the moral high ground over Pyrochles, who shows no such restraint. Guyon, however, does want to 'aread' – through conversation – why Pyrochles, with 'impetuous dread', has attacked him so forcefully. The dialogic interaction between the interlocutors also addresses the reader, excluding no one.¹⁰⁹ We have seen that readers are often invited to actively engage when reading dialogic texts, with an opportunity to form their own conclusions.¹¹⁰ But whereas the writers of prose dialogues such as Gifford, Babington, and Udall had directed their readers towards a perceived 'correct' opinion, Spenser's more complex use of dialogue in *The Faerie Queene* questions whether truth can ever emerge through dialogue, and warns the reader not to assume that it will. So it is that Guyon does not know how to engage Pyrochles in dialogue, although he tries briefly to take on the role of confessor. As we saw in previous chapters 'the expression of inwardness cannot... proceed without a

¹⁰⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, II.v.16-18.

¹⁰⁹ Adrian J. Wallbank, *Dialogue, Didacticism, and the Genres of Dispute: Literary Dialogues in an Age of Revolution* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), p. 11.

¹¹⁰ Margaret McCabe, 'Form and the Platonic Dialogues' in *A Companion to Plato*, ed. by Hugh Benson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), pp. 39-54 (p. 45).

responsive interlocutor in the search for self-knowledge'.¹¹¹ Guyon enters into dialogue and attempts to lead Pyrochles away from physical violence, but the requisite dialogic attachment is missing – for Pyrochles does not want to confess or repent his behaviour.¹¹²

Pyrochles finally responds to a direct request but ignores Guyon's earlier comments on allegiance, and being 'subdewed'. As Joe Moshenska notes, Pyrochles sees 'only a knight who has grasped, mishandled, and abused a weak old woman'.¹¹³ But this act of seeing is a complex one, as James Kearney elaborates: 'we do not simply "see" another person or event; we "read" them. And unless we do read them we are likely, literally, to mis-read them'.¹¹⁴ Pyrochles does not properly see the allegory of Occasion, only the literal vision of an 'aged woman' and asks for the release of both her and her son. Ironically, Pyrochles seems to be following part of the chivalric code, to protect women and children, but Occasion and Furor are neither innocent nor weak. Guyon seems to accept Pyrochles' seemingly rational request, and the discussion ends with Guyon's magnanimous response. Although Guyon has captured both Occasion and Furor, he is now prepared to 'yield them free' to Pyrochles. He has some reservations about this decision, however, and warns Pyrochles that their 'freedom shall thee turne to greatest scath'. Guyon's warnings are ignored because Pyrochles remains unresponsive to the spoken word.

Pyrochles immediately releases the captives but Occasion offers no thanks to Pyrochles for releasing her, as she is intent on creating discord and encouraging Furor to fight with Pyrochles: 'she sought / To kindle his quencht fire'.¹¹⁵ Occasion uses words to stir up wrath and tries to do the same with Guyon: 'Him all that while *Occasion* did prouoke / Against *Pyrochles*, and new matter framed / Vpon the old'.¹¹⁶ Guyon does not listen to Occasion; or rather, he does not react to her. Even though she refers to his 'late wrongs' and his apparent 'kighthood shamed', these words do not stir him into fighting; Guyon remains temperate and is not inflamed by the utterances of 'vaine occasions'. He does not allow Occasion to stir up his wrath – 'nothing could him to impatience entise' – unlike the more susceptible, less temperate Pyrochles and Furor. Guyon does not engage in dialogue with Occasion perhaps because he recalls the

¹¹¹ Peter Brooks, *Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law and Literature* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 95

¹¹² Wallbank describes that dialogue can present the truth or falsehood of a particular idea through interaction, p. 10.

¹¹³ Joe Moshenska, *Feeling Pleasures: The Sense of Touch in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 116.

¹¹⁴ James Kearney, 'Enshrining Idolatry in *The Faerie Queene*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 32.1 (2002), 3-30 (p. 13).

¹¹⁵ Lauren Silberman, 'The *Faerie Queene*: Book II and the Limitations of Temperance', *Modern Language Studies*, 17.4 (Autumn 1987), 9-22 (p. 15).

¹¹⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, II.v.21.

Palmer's advice, in canto iv, on how to suppress Furor through Occasion: 'First her restraine from her reprochfull blame'.¹¹⁷ Then 'when she is withdrawn, or strong withstood', Furor will be contained as well. Guyon is indeed strongly withstanding Occasion's wrath by choosing to remain a silent observer. Here the tension between dialogue and physical action seems finely balanced. Guyon does not enter into dialogue, but neither does he engage physically. Spenser here explores the limits of temperance – even though elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene* we have seen that, within the chivalric tradition, there are times when violence seems inevitable. RedCrosse had to defend himself at the beginning of Book II against Guyon and, in turn, Guyon had to defend himself against Pyrochles. Although the influence of chivalric romance permeates Book II, Spenser challenges his readers to read carefully, like his knights, in order to question the usefulness and appropriateness of dialogic exchange.

Guyon only responds when Pyrochles pleads 'Helpe, ô Sir *Guyon*, helpe most noble knight, / To rid a wretched man from hands of hellish wight'. Guyon's sense of chivalric honour obliges him to respond to a request of help. He is 'greatly moued by the plaint, / And gan him dight to succour his distresse'. However, the Palmer intervenes to restrain Guyon:

Palmer: [...] Deare sonne, thy causelesse ruth repress,
 Ne let thy stout hart melt in pittie vayne:
 He that his sorrow sought through wilfulnesse,
 And his for fettred would relase agayne,
 Deserues to tast his follies fruit, repented payne.

Guyon obeyd; So him away he drew
 From needless trouble of renewing fight
 Already fought, his voyage to pursew.¹¹⁸

The Palmer constantly gives good advice and counsel to Guyon, who heeds without discussion; the narrator tells us that 'Guyon obeyd'.¹¹⁹ Werth observes that Guyon increasingly looks to the Palmer for guidance during the course of Book II.¹²⁰ He seldom however verbally responds – see for example the Palmer's unanswered advice

¹¹⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, II.iv.11.

¹¹⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, II.v.24-25.

¹¹⁹ Keen recognises the relationship between the church and knighthood with the knight being 'strong arm of the church' and to do the bidding of superior clerics without question, p. 4.

¹²⁰ Werth, p. 123.

to Guyon in canto ii: 'the Palmer gan to bord / With goodly reason'.¹²¹ After the Palmer's long speech, however, Guyon 'hearkned to his reason'.¹²² This same action is repeated later in canto xii:

Palmer: Said then the Palmer, Lo where does appeare
The sacred soile, where all our perils grow;
Therefore, Sir Knight, your ready armes about you throw.

He hearkned, and his armes about him tooke.¹²³

We remember that dialogue, by definition, does not need a verbal response; but the listener does need to listen actively and, as we saw in Chapter IV, to respond with their heart.¹²⁴ The importance of listening well is to absorb advice or good counsel and act on that information to develop one's self-knowledge.¹²⁵ Guyon follows the good reason of the Palmer without question, and 'his armes about him tooke'. The Palmer chooses his words carefully to address Guyon and remind him of his quest. Guyon responds to the verbal plea of Pyrochles but as the Palmer reminds him, he has already fought with both Furor and Pyrochles, and won. The Palmer again refers to the effect of words on the heart: 'Ne let thy stout hart melt in pittie vayne'. He cautions against the melting of the heart, which indicates a weakness and a lack of objective temperance. Although Guyon has been able to enter into dialogue, he has not been able to persuade Pyrochles to listen effectively, or respond temperately. Guyon has not yet gained the use of gracious words to rule others; for, at this stage, less than half way through Book II, he is yet to develop an effective persuasive dialogue that can 'appease inflamed rage'.

When polyvocal dialogue stalls - canto viii

From this chapter's epigram, 'Words well dispost / Haue secret powre, t'appease inflamed rage', we remember that entering into dialogue should – in principle – help to maintain the temperate way, and to steer knights away from hasty or inappropriate physical confrontation.¹²⁶ In this section, we will consider how Spenser uses poly-vocal

¹²¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.ii.5. Schofield observes that 'Spenser declares strong reason is what we must rely on to master frail passion', p. 152 – demonstrated by the Palmer's 'goodly reason' that guides Guyon.

¹²² *The Faerie Queene*, II.ii.11.

¹²³ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.37-38.

¹²⁴ Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in Generall*, ed. by William Webster Newbold (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986), Wright's point of view is that the listener may not respond with words but they may have an internal response, straight from the heart, p. 114.

¹²⁵ Brooks, p. 95

¹²⁶ In Book VI, Spenser holds this tension between Arthegall, the Knight of Justice, and Talus the implementer of justice. Talus has few lines to say, he is 'immoeuable, restless, without end' and with his 'yron flae' he 'thresht out falsehood,

dialogue to develop a more complex and nuanced picture of the tension between verbal conversation and physical violence. We saw that Demetrius, in John Udall's *The State of the Church of England*, demonstrates the usefulness of listening to many conversations, in 'conference', to gain self-knowledge and develop a more robust spiritual self. In canto viii, Spenser brings together the Palmer, Arthur, Archimago, and the brothers Pyrochles and Cymochles.¹²⁷ But the ensuing dialogue, as we will see, fails to confirm the speakers' chivalric resolve; and, as such, qualifies the close relationship we have been tracing between dialogic exchange and spiritual certainty. Spenser adds an extra layer to his use of dialogue in this episode with a confrontation between Christian and non-Christian.¹²⁸

At the beginning of canto viii, the Palmer finds Guyon lying inert on the ground and rejoices when he realises he is still alive. Guyon and the Palmer had been separated in canto vi by Phaedria, who refused to carry the Palmer over the Idle Lake. Guyon had subsequently met Mammon and been invited into Mammon's Cave, where he resisted the tempting offers of riches and wealth in favour of 'faire shields, gay steeds, bright armes', which are 'riches fit for an aduent'rous knight'.¹²⁹ On his return from his three-day journey through Mammon's Cave, Guyon faints 'for want of food, and sleepe'.¹³⁰ Guyon remains inert throughout the subsequent exchange whilst others argue over him. It is perhaps not surprising that Guyon plays a passive role in this scene – after all, he has been unable effectively to use dialogue in his previous encounter with the brothers. In canto v, as we saw above, he could not persuade Pyrochles to converse with him, and resorted to violence until Pyrochles begged for mercy. In canto vi, Guyon had fought with Cymochles – and the conflict ends only when Phaedria's 'pleasing words' calm 'the sea of their tempestuous spight'.¹³¹ We will see whether the reason of the Palmer and the providential grace of Arthur are enough to maintain, through dialogue, the temperate way in canto viii.

As the Palmer kneels over Guyon he sees approaching 'Two Paynim knights', 'an aged Sire', and a 'light-foot Page', who all 'breathed strife and troublous enmitie'.¹³² Samuel Kessler notes that the 'previous depictions of Pyrochles and Cymochles combine

and did truth vnfold,' VI.i.12 – he does not enter into dialogue, he follows orders. Even when Radigund's army is overcoming Arthegall, he did not think to 'reskew his owne Lord, but thought it just t'obay', VI.v.19. Arthegall has been taught by Astrea 'to weigh both right and wrong / In equall balance with due recompence', V.i.7.

¹²⁷ Schoenfeldt, p. 51 and Cooney, p. 173.

¹²⁸ Antonio Disalvo, 'Ramon Llull and the Language of Chivalry', *Mystics Quarterly*, 14.4 (December 1988) 197-206, (p. 199).

¹²⁹ *The Faerie Queene* II.vii.10

¹³⁰ *The Faerie Queene* II.vii.65.

¹³¹ *The Faerie Queene* II.vi.36.

¹³² *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.10.

etymology with plot to promote Temperance as the classical mean between extremes, but in canto viii the brothers are simply referred to anonymously as 'Paynim' from the start'.¹³³ Kessler suggests this 'serves the dual purpose of distancing the brothers from the meanings attached to them and distancing them from the Christian faith'.¹³⁴ The 'Paynim knights' approach and Pyrochles begins the dialogue, already 'inflam'd with rage':

Pyrochles: That sire he foule bespake, Thou dotard vile,
 That with thy brutenesse shendst thy comely age,
 Abandone soone, I read, the caitiue spoile
 Of that same outcast carkasse, that erewhile
 Made it selfe famous through false trechery,
 And crownd his coward crest with knightly strile;
 Loe where he now inglorious doth lye,
 To proue he liued ill, that did thus foully dye.

Palmer: To whom the Palmer fearlesse answered;
 Certes, Sir knight, ye bene too much to blame,
 Thus for to blot the honour of the dead,
 And with foule cowardize his carkasse shame,
 Whose liuing hands immortalized his name.
 [...]

Your selfe his prowesse prou'd & found him fiers & bold.¹³⁵

Pyrochles believes Guyon to be dead, but again demonstrates intemperance both verbally and physically. He is disrespectful ('he foule bespake') and addresses the Palmer with 'Thou dotard vile', showing no respect for the elder man.¹³⁶ The Palmer reminds Pyrochles that Guyon overcame him in an equal fight and recalls the honour of knighthood, which makes clear the obligation not 'to blot the honour of the dead'.¹³⁷

¹³³ Samuel R. Kessler, 'Guyon's Faint and the Elizabethan Soteriological Debate: Double Predestination in "The Faerie Queene", Book II, canto viii', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 43.1 (Spring 2012), 19-45 (p. 20). Kessler reads canto viii in context with the Soteriological debate in England during the last few decades of the sixteenth century. He interprets canto viii as 'an allegory of double predestination, namely, Pyrochles' reprobation and Guyon's election, p. 19.

¹³⁴ Kessler, 'Guyon's Faint', p. 21. Kessler also adds that the term 'pagan/paynim' occurs eleven times in connection with the brothers.

¹³⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.12-13.

¹³⁶ In the 'Prologue' to *Order of Chivalry*, the hermit 'realised that the squire did not wish to speak first because he wished to pay him honour', and so spoke first, p. 37. This suggests a precedent that the most senior, whether in age or social standing, should be honoured and that they should initiate the conversation. The squire engages in dialogue in order to 'learn about the Order and follow the Rule' and the hermit replies describing chivalry as two-way exchange between the knight and the Order itself.

¹³⁷ *Order of Chivalry*, Llull describes the virtues and honour given to the body and to the soul, 'the malfeasant knight who abandons the Order of Chivalry, by ceasing to love the office of knighthood, unmakes Chivalry itself', pp. 47-8.

However, the Palmer is unable to fulfil his role as 'right reasoner', and the brothers are unable to listen to his words. Cooney suggests that this 'episode works to reinforce the intriguing subtleties of the allegory of prudence [...] the distinction between prudence per se and the gift of counsel'.¹³⁸ More specifically, I suggest, this episode enhances the tension between 'prudent' verbal conversation and physical violence. For the Palmer's efforts are not reciprocated, even when Cymochles addresses him directly:

Cymochles: Then said *Cymochles*, Palmer, thou dost dote,
Ne canst of prowess, ne of knighthood deeme,
Saue as thou seest or hearst. But well I wote,
That of his puissance tryall made extreme;
Yet gold all is not, that doth golden seeme,
Ne all good knights, that shake well speare and shield:
The worth of all men by their end esteeme,
And then due praise, or due reproach them yield;
Bad therefore I him deeme, that thus lies dead on field.

Pyrochles: Good or bad (gan his brother fierce reply)
What doe I recke, sith that he dyde entire?
Or what doth his bad death now satisfy
The greedy hunger of reuenging ire,
Sith wrathfull hand wrought not her owne desire?
[...]

Palmer: Faire Sir, said then the Palmer suppliant,
For knighthoods loue, do not so foule a deed,
Ne blame your honour with so shamefull vaunt
Of vile reuenge. To spoil the dead of weed
Is sacrilege, and doth all sinnes exceed;
But leaue these relicks of his liuing might,
To decke his herce, and trap his tomb-blacke steed.

Pyrochles: What herce or steede (said he) should he haue dight,
But be entombed in the rauens or the kight?¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Cooney, p. 188.

¹³⁹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.14-15.

This poly vocal exchange highlights the efforts of Cymochles and Pyrochles to undermine the Palmer's authority. Both are able to engage in dialogue, but their questions and answers are threatening and aggressive. They are not interested in listening to the Palmer's reminder that chivalry provides a code of conduct which knights should protect and honour.¹⁴⁰ Indeed the Palmer upholds a Christian chivalric code that, by nature, Pyrochles and Cymochles seem unable to follow. Pyrochles with his 'rude hand' grasps Guyon's shield and 'th'other brother gan his helm vnlace'.¹⁴¹ The desecration of Guyon's body only halts when Arthur providentially appears, his approach heralded by Archimago:

Archimago: For yonder comes the prowest knight aliue, [...]
 That hath to Paynim knights wrought great distresse,
 And thousand Sar'zins foully donne to dye.
 That word so deepe did in their harts impresse,
 That both eftsoones vpstarted furiously,
 And gan themselues prepare to battell greedily.¹⁴²

Archimago is a master at persuasion through dialogue, understanding exactly which words will affect the brothers' 'harts' and stir up their wrath.¹⁴³ He appeals to their vanity announcing the arrival of the 'prowest knight aliue', and the possibility of revenging their own brethren – the other 'Paynim knights' that Arthur has 'foully donne to dye'. Thus, the brothers are 'suspended in a moment of self-consumption'.¹⁴⁴ They do not prepare carefully with temperance; nor do they consider a reasoned approach through dialogue.

Arthur's approach demonstrates the epitome of chivalry, and 'goodly salued them', but this is not reciprocated as the brothers did not 'him answere, as courtesie became'. Instead they with 'sterne looks and stomachous disdaine, / Gaue sighes of grudge and discontentment vaine'.¹⁴⁵ Arthur then turns to the Palmer:

Arthur: Said he then to the Palmer, Reuerend syre

¹⁴⁰ 'Prologue', *Order of Chivalry*, p. 38. To recall the words of Llull's hermit to the squire: 'for just as Chivalry gives all that pertains to the knight, so the knight must give of all his strength to honour Chivalry'.

¹⁴¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.17.

¹⁴² *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.18.

¹⁴³ To recall Thomas Wright's view on an effective speaker: 'if once they can stir a Passion or Affection in their Hearers, then they have almost half persuaded them, for that the forces of strong Passions marvellously allure and draw the wit and will to judge and consent unto that they are moved', *The Passions of the Mind*, p. 90. If an effective speaker can stir up faith then they can also turn away from faith.

¹⁴⁴ Crawford, p. 151.

¹⁴⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.23.

What great misfortune hath betidd this knight?
 Or did his life her fatall date expyre?
 Or did he fall by treason, or by fight?
 How euer, sure I rew his pittieous plight.¹⁴⁶

Arthur's respectful address to the Palmer is in contrast to Pyrochles' earlier one of 'dotard vile'. He immediately asks a series of questions to engage the Palmer in a verbal exchange to discover what has happened. The Palmer contrasts the discourteous (and physically violent) behaviour of Pyrochles and Cymochles to Arthur's chivalric, temperate ability to enter into dialogue. He addresses Arthur as 'faire Sir' and praises that 'honourable sight' which 'Doth promise hope of helpe, and timely grace'. The Palmer adds a reminder of the chivalric ideal – 'First praise of knighthood is, foule outrage to deface'.¹⁴⁷ Arthur's dialogic ability allows him to ascertain the truth of the situation; he asks the correct questions, and listens to the answers, in stark contrast to Guyon.¹⁴⁸ Arthur is aware of the power of words and hopes that 'better reason' will help to cool the 'rash reuengers heat'. His line 'Words well dispost / Haue secret powre, t'appease inflamed rage', summarises his belief in the power of dialogue. However, he adds a warning. If his words do not appease then he will resort to violence: 'leauue vnto me thy knights last patronage'.¹⁴⁹ Arthur is prepared to show courtesy and use his 'better reason' but if verbal persuasion fails, he is aware that other measures will be necessary. The turning point for Arthur is when his dialogue fails to persuade because the recipients of his 'words well dispost' are not inclined to listen properly.

Arthur turns to the brothers to address them. At first he attempts to be placatory, flattering the brothers by addressing them as a 'warlike payre', and suggesting that there may be 'iust wrongs' that have provoked their vengeance. He directs his speech towards each in turn: he aims 'the storme' of 'despight' at Cymochles, and then tries to 'settle patience in so furious heat' with Pyrochles. By addressing the brothers individually, he seeks dialogic attachment in order to protect Guyon's inert body. Wreaking their 'wrath on this dead seeming knight' is not necessary, as fortune has already 'laid [him] in lowest seat'.¹⁵⁰ Cymochles retaliates:

Cymochles: [...] For what art thou,

¹⁴⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.24.

¹⁴⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.25.

¹⁴⁸ Richard Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching, in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*', *Spenser Studies*, VII (1986) 3-25 (p. 4).

¹⁴⁹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.26.

¹⁵⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.27.

That mak'st thy selfe his dayes-man, to prolong
The vengeance prest? Or who shall let me now,
On this vile bodie from to wreake my wrong,
And make his carkasse as the outcast dong?
Why should not that dead carrion satisfie
The guilt, which if he liued had thus long,
His life for due reuenge should deare abie?
The trespasse still doth liue, albe the person die.¹⁵¹

Arthur's questions are left unanswered, and generate only a series of rhetorical questions in return. We saw previously in Spenser's 'Maye' eclogue the lack of concordance between Piers and Palinode in a section supposedly outlining accordance. But whereas Piers concludes 'Maye' with a riddling fable, Cymochles wants only to fight, rather than to talk. It seems that accord can only occur with someone like-minded, that is, with someone who has the same faith.¹⁵² We have considered, in the preceding chapters, how the emerging Protestant self fashions itself in opposition to an imagined 'other'.¹⁵³ In the episode currently under consideration, we see the contrast between Arthur, who epitomises the Christian chivalric code, and Cymochles, who has no concept of how to honour the dead or how to pay respectful homage. His refusal to accept Arthur illuminates the contrast between the virtuous knight and the revengeful intemperate knight. The main thrust of his argument is that the 'trespasse still doth liue, albe the person die'. Revenge therefore still needs to occur, as the deed needs to be punished. To Cymochles, physical action seems the only solution.

Arthur does not answer the questions of Cymochles but reminds the brothers that the final judgement is by God – 'So streightly God doth iudge'. However, Arthur is referring to his own Christian God to whom he owes allegiance. This is the crux of the matter: this dialogue will falter, as the opposing sides are unable to meet in the middle. Arthur the 'reasoner' attempts to initiate temperate chivalric dialogue with the brothers; he addresses Cymochles as a 'gentle knight' in order to persuade him not to despoil Guyon. However, Pyrochles is no longer interested in continuing the verbal exchange. His fiery rage needs to be quenched and he attempts to raise the sword to kill Arthur:

¹⁵¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.28.

¹⁵² *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. by William A. Oram and others (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 86.

¹⁵³ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: the Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), notes that 'self-definition comes from the not-self, from the alien other', p. 22.

'Therefore by Termagaunt thou shalt be dead'.¹⁵⁴ But, of course, this is Arthur's own sword – and it cannot strike him. Arthur's attempt at dialogue with the brothers fails because they refuse to engage in verbal exchange, and he has no choice but to defend himself or be killed. Arthur's prediction in an earlier stanza now comes true: 'Words well dispost / Haue secret powre, t'appease inflamed rage: / If not, leaue vnto me thy knights last patronage'.¹⁵⁵ His words do not finally 'appease inflamed rage' and there now seems no way back to the middle path.¹⁵⁶ The 'paynim' knight is spiritually lost and turns towards his own destruction. Kessler notes that the 'the providential significance of the battle would have resonated with early modern readers anxious to understand the workings of providence in their own lives'.¹⁵⁷ Spenser does not make Arthur's fight easy as his spear is broken by Cymochles, but the Palmer offers him Guyon's sword and advises to 'vse that sword so wisely as it ought' and prays 'great God thy right hand blesse'.¹⁵⁸ It is significant that the 'paynim' brothers are eventually killed with Temperance's sword, handed to Arthur by the Palmer – the voice of reason.¹⁵⁹

Guyon has no part in the above episode (except as the focus for the poly-vocal dialogue), but the providential character of Arthur offers the epitome of Christian chivalry. Guyon's inertness places him at the scene as a figure of passive temperance (echoing his passive reactions to the Palmer's advice mentioned earlier) whilst reason and prudence take precedence. Temperance (Guyon) could not engage Pyrochles in fruitful dialogue, and, as have we seen, neither could reason (the Palmer) nor grace (Arthur). Spenser places Pyrochles and Cymochles in opposition to his Christian knights in order to put pressure on their chivalric virtues, and to question whether it is possible to adhere to temperate chivalry even when under duress. We saw in chapter II, above, how Spenser experimented with 'aporia' in *The Shepheardes Calender* to challenge the true didacticism expressed in contemporary formal dialogues such as Gifford's *Dialogue*. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser raises the stakes still further. Now the 'aporia' represents not only a stalling and 'turning' away from dialogue, and so from

¹⁵⁴ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.29-30.

¹⁵⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.26. Arthur repeats this threat when he addresses Disdaine: 'from them lay your loathy hands; / Or else abide the death, that hard before you stands. / The villaine stayd not aunswer to innuent, / But with his yron club preparing way,' Book VI.viii.7-8.

¹⁵⁶ This situation is repeated in Book IV.ix, with a different conclusion. Arthur comes to the aid of Britomart and Scudamour who are defending themselves against Claribell, Blandamour, Paridell, and Druon. Britomart tries to speak to their attackers to 'some emparlance move' but they do not listen, IV.ix.31. Arthur appears with 'gentle words perswading them to friendly peace', IV.ix.32. At first his words have no effect and Arthur uses his military might to suppress the four errant knights who retreat. Once dialogue begins Arthur discovers the complaints and resolves the unrest and they become 'so well accorded all anew' that they 'ride together' and recount 'all that adventure' previously encountered for 'that faire Ladies [Amoret] loue', IV.ix.40.

¹⁵⁷ Kessler, 'Guyon's Faint and the Elizabethan Soteriological Debate', p. 24.

¹⁵⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, II.viii.40.

¹⁵⁹ Cooney, p. 189.

faith, but a 'turning' away from life itself. To read *The Faerie Queene* in the light of the spiritual certainty expressed in dialogues by Gifford, Babington, and Udall is to recognise afresh the frail *discordia concors* which Spenser sketches between the knights and their adversaries in Faerie Land. Let us now turn to our final episode in order to consider how Guyon and the Palmer negotiate temperate dialogue in canto xii during the journey to, and after the destruction of, the Bower of Bliss.

The return to temperate dialogue - canto xii

Guyon and the Palmer return to the narrative together in the final canto of Book II. They are close to ending their quest and are sailing towards the Bower of Bliss to overthrow Acrasia. Critics have recently commented on this climatic episode; Joseph Campana, for example, suggests that the destruction of the Bower of Bliss 'is the apparent moral telos of Book II'. John Wesley notes that the overthrow 'locates its apparent excess within the proscribed boundaries of a legitimate outlet', and Andrew Wadoski adds that the 'Bower of Bliss's destruction can be read as an attempt to eliminate the complications that fallen bodies and their pleasures pose to moral discourse'.¹⁶⁰ Werth argues that this episode, in particular, implicates the reader's own moral compass, for 'the reader sees as Guyon does'.¹⁶¹ Adding to this critical conversation, I will suggest that Spenser's particular attention to moral discourse, in this episode, is achieved through his subtle use of dialogic exchange. More specifically, Spenser's radical rewriting of dialogic convention holds in tension the verbal dialogue and physical violence which were both crucial to chivalric virtue as Guyon and the Palmer meet their final challenge.

Guyon does not respond verbally to any of the Palmer's speeches throughout their perilous journey in canto xii. In this final climatic canto, dialogue seems to have deserted him altogether – and this final episode needs to restore Guyon to dialogue in order to re-establish the equilibrium between physical and verbal temperance. Balanced dialogue does not however re-appear until the last few stanzas, following the capture of Acrasia. Ironically, these final stanzas deal with the difference between rational man and irrational beast, in the form of Grill, who has no voice. But let us first trace briefly the journey of Guyon and the Palmer through canto xii, beginning as they sail past the 'Rocke of Reproch':

¹⁶⁰ Joseph Campana 'Boy Toys and Liquid Joys: Pleasure and Power in the Bower of Bliss', *Modern Philology*, 106.3 (February 2009), 465-496 (466), Andrew Wadoski, 'Spenser, Tasso, and the Ethics of Allegory', *Modern Philology*, 111.3 (February 2014), 365-383 (376), and John Wesley, 'The Well-Schooled Wrestler: Athletics and Rhetoric in *The Faerie Queene* Book II', *The Review of English Studies*, 60.243 (March 2009), 34-60 (49).

¹⁶¹ Werth, p. 126.

Palmer: The Palmer seeing them in safetie past,
 Thus said; behold th'ensamples in our sights,
 Of lustfull luxurie and thriftlesse wast:
 What now is left of miserable wights,
 Which spent their looser daies in lewd delights,
 But shame and sad reproach, here to be red,
 By these rent reliques, speaking their ill plights?
 Let all that liue, hereby be counselled,
 To shunne *Rocke of Reproch*, and it as death to dred.¹⁶²

The Palmer uses the wreckage on the rock to illustrate to Guyon the risks facing knights if they turn towards intemperance and fail to follow the middle way. He issues a further warning suitably related to the effect of encountering words: 'here to be red'.¹⁶³ This advice to read the signs of intemperance is directed to both Guyon and the reader. The Palmer uses the visions of 'wanton ioyes, and lustes intemperate' strewn on the rock as a means of proposing the importance of temperance.¹⁶⁴ The use of the word 'reproach' is particularly interesting in relation to chivalry. Maurice Keen describes the status of the *chevalier sans reproche*, the knight without blame.¹⁶⁵ He explains that 'reproaches' would mean exclusion from tournaments, particularly if the knight were suspected of breaching his faith or dishonouring women. The Palmer's warnings are reinforced by the 'miserable wights' who speak about their 'ill plights'. The Palmer wants his counsel to be heard but also refers, here, to the ones who did not listen and were therefore unable to 'shunne the *Rocke of Reproch*'. They continue sailing with the Palmer guiding and helping to clear their passage: 'lifting vp his vertuous staffe on hye, / He smote the sea, which calmed was with speed'.¹⁶⁶

Throughout their journey, the exchanges between Guyon and the Palmer are limited. The Palmer speaks on several occasions – stanza 9 as discussed above, and stanza 26. In stanzas 28-9, the Palmer responds to Guyon's reported speech. When Guyon hears the sirens singing, the narrator tells us that he 'straight his Palmer bad, / To sterve the boate towards that dolefull Mayd'. The Palmer responds by refusing this request in order to protect Guyon's 'stubborne hart' from being affected with 'fraile infirmity'. As the narrator later makes clear, the Palmer has to remain vigilant to keep Guyon on the

¹⁶² *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.9.

¹⁶³ Werth, p. 127.

¹⁶⁴ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.7.

¹⁶⁵ Keen, p. 174.

¹⁶⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.26.

middle path: 'But him the Palmer from that vanity, / With temperate aduice discourseled.'¹⁶⁷ Towards the end of the canto, the Palmer again addresses Guyon:

On which when gazing him the Palmer saw,
He much rebuked those wandring eyes of his,
And counsele well, him forward thence did draw. [...]
Palmer: When thus the Palmer; Now Sir, well auise;
For here the end of all our travell is:
Here wonnes *Acrasia*, whom we must surprise,
Else she will slip away, and all our drift despise.¹⁶⁸

The Palmer warns Guyon against indulging his 'wandring eyes' when the naked maidens try to tempt him. Campana suggests that Guyon 'is in constant danger of falling into stasis', shown in this instance when he gazes at the maidens, who also draw the reader's eye.¹⁶⁹ I have also mentioned the verbal passiveness of Guyon in his responses to the Palmer – he listens but does not always reply. The Palmer with his good 'counsele' and 'temperate advice' has been Guyon's constant guide and kept him on the steadfast path to their goal through his dialogue throughout canto xii.¹⁷⁰ The next (and final) trial is the surprise capture of Acrasia, which must be accomplished quickly – or, rather without entering into dialogue.

Guyon and the Palmer were forewarned about the dangers of listening to Acrasia when they met the dying Amavia at the beginning of Book II. In this episode, Amavia had described Acrasia as 'a false enchaunteresse, / That many errant knights hath foule fordonne'.¹⁷¹ She continues to explain that Acrasia seduces men 'with words & weedes of wondrous might', so she can work 'her will to vses bad'.¹⁷² Amavia concludes with the fate of Sir Mordant:

With cup thus charmd, him parting she deceiu'd;
Sad verse, giue death to him that death does giue,
And losse of loue, to her that loues to liue,
So soone as Bacchus with the Nympe does lincke,
So parted we and on our iourney driue,

¹⁶⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.34.

¹⁶⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.69.

¹⁶⁹ Campana, p. 488.

¹⁷⁰ Kläger, p. 163.

¹⁷¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.51.

¹⁷² *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.52.

Till coming to this well, he stoupt to drinke:
The charme fulfild, dead suddenly he downe did sincke.¹⁷³

Acrasia's seduction of Mordant, with words, is maintained through her 'bayted hook' (to recall Duessa's attachment to RedCrosse) – in this case, the charmed cup. Amavia leaves them with a warning: 'if euer there ye trauell, shonne / The cursed land where many wend amiss'.¹⁷⁴ Bearing this in mind, the Palmer realises his wise counsel is needed to protect Guyon's 'stubborne hart' against Acrasia's speech. We also begin to realise that Guyon and the Palmer have to be together to defeat the Bower of Bliss – for its 'weake and thin' fence is vulnerable to both 'wisdomes power, and temperaunces might'.¹⁷⁵

It is perhaps significant that Acrasia is finally captured without words. The Palmer and Guyon find Acrasia, 'the faire Witch', who is 'now solacing, / With a new Louer, whom through sorcerie / And witchcraft, she from farre did thither bring'.¹⁷⁶ Acrasia and her new lover are quickly entrapped in a 'subtile net' that 'neither guile, nor force might it distraine', which the 'skilfull Palmer formally did frame'.¹⁷⁷ Acrasia the 'faire Enchaunteresse' does not have the chance to speak, being 'so vnwares opprest', and she fails to escape even with 'all her arts, & all her sleights'.¹⁷⁸ Physicality overcomes verbal dialogue at this point; a verbal argument would be ineffective against Acrasia. There is no exchange of words until the Palmer releases Verdant and gives him 'counsell sage'.¹⁷⁹ Guyon's lack of dialogue culminates in the 'pittillesse' physical violence he demonstrates when he destroys the Bower of Bliss. John Hankins summarises the significance of Guyon fulfilling his quest and overcoming Acrasia as this act 'brings to the soul a harmonious relationship', whereby 'the pleasures of the body serve to inspire and not to obscure the rational nature of man'.¹⁸⁰ Guyon can now turn to the Palmer and engage in dialogue with reason and prudence.

The final three stanzas of canto xii, and therefore Book II, demonstrate a balanced dialogue between Guyon and the Palmer. The middle stanza is the narrator's:

Palmer: Said he, these seeming beasts are men indeed,

¹⁷³ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.55.

¹⁷⁴ *The Faerie Queene*, II.i.51.

¹⁷⁵ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.43.

¹⁷⁶ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.72.

¹⁷⁷ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.81.

¹⁷⁸ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.81.

¹⁷⁹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.82.

¹⁸⁰ Hankins, p. 140.

Whom this Enchauntresse hath transformed thus,
Whylome her louers, which her lusts did feed,
Now turned into figures hideous,
According to their minds like monstrous.

Guyon: Sad end (quoth he) of life intemperate,
And mournfull meed of ioyes delicious:
But Palmer, if it mote thee so aggrate,
Let them returned be vnto their former state.

Narrator: Streight away he with his vertuous staffe them strooke,
And streight of beasts they comely men became;
Yet being men they did vnmanly looke,
And stared ghastly, some for inward shame,
And some for wrath, to see their captiue Dame:
But one aboue the rest in speciall,
That had an hog beene late, hight *Grille* by name,
Repined greatly, and did him miscall,
That had from hoggish forme him brought to naturall.

Guyon: Said Guyon, See the mind of beastly man,
That hath so soone forgot the excellence
Of his creation, when he life began,
That now he chooseth, with vile difference,
To be a beast and lacke intelligence.

Palmer: To whom the Palmer thus, The donghill kind
Delights in filth and foule incontinence:
Let *Grill* be *Grill* and haue his hoggish mind,
But let vs hence depart, whilst wether serues and wind.¹⁸¹

The form of these final stanzas demonstrates a balanced conclusion, effected through direct speech. Guyon and the Palmer share equally the two stanzas in which they speak. In the first, the Palmer speaks five lines and Guyon four. In the second Guyon speaks first; he has five lines, and the Palmer has four. The mutual reciprocal interaction between the two has previously been missing in their exchanges during this canto, and indeed during Book II as a whole. The Palmer begins by indicating that

¹⁸¹ *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.85-87.

‘these seeming beasts are men indeed’. He refers to the savage nature of man with ‘figures hideous, / According to their minds like monstrous’. Man has taken on the beastly manner most like his own innate nature. Guyon responds by commenting on the ‘Sad end [...] of life intemperate, / And mournfull meed of ioyes delicious’. The sad end and mournful ‘meed’, meaning reward, are surely just deserts for a life of disrepute. Even the knight of temperance falters, and Guyon’s words call to mind our earlier discussion of chivalry as a form of Christian discipline.¹⁸² To Guyon, the worst punishment is to be a beast and not have a voice. He has released his own passions by the destruction of the Bower of Bliss, a necessary act of violence, and now he is able to speak reflectively.¹⁸³ Guyon asks the Palmer to return the beasts ‘vnto their former state’, but offers him the final say: ‘But Palmer, if it mote thee so aggrate’. In the final stanza, Guyon is astounded that Grill would choose to ‘be a beast and lacke intelligence’, ruling himself out of reasonableness – and indeed the redemptive possibility of dialogic discourse.

In the middle stanza, the narrator describes the Palmer returning the beasts to their former human state. These creatures do not speak, and have lost the ability of reason. Although they are men ‘they did vnmanly looke’, and ‘stared ghastly, some for inward shame, / And some for wrath’. Only one ‘Repined greatly, and did him miscall’. Although Grill says nothing in *The Faerie Queene*, Raphael Lyne suggests that the early modern reader would have been reminded of the dialogue between Gryllus and Odysseus as related in Plutarch’s dialogue *Moralia*.¹⁸⁴ In *Moralia*, Gryllus promotes animal virtues that are natural, such as temperance. Beasts do not live luxuriously and are not greedy for worldly wealth (unlike men).¹⁸⁵ But, as Lyne suggests, Spenser does not precisely follow this classical example: ‘It is important for the allegory that Book II ends in a disciplined fashion but just as important to the poem is that there is a degree of resistance to that discipline’.¹⁸⁶ This chapter has shown how this resistance is explored in Book II through the elusiveness of temperate, balanced dialogue – and, more particularly, the elusiveness of the kinds of spiritual certainty that dialogue had come to represent in the 1580s. Spenser changes Homer’s ending for his own purpose: Grill has no voice because he is a savage beast. He is not able to have a civil

¹⁸² Keen, p. 14.

¹⁸³ Mutual reciprocity occurs later in Book V, when Guyon finds his horse he draws his sword to punish the thief, Braggadochio, but Arthegall, the Knight of Justice steps in to ‘stay the auengers forse’. Guyon reciprocates a few stanzas later, he asserts his virtue of temperance, and stays Arthegall’s hand when Braggadochio provokes him. Guyon advises: ‘it would dishonour bee / To you, that are our iudge of equity, / [...] It’s punishment enough, that all his shame doe see’, *The Faerie Queene*, V.iii.29.

¹⁸⁴ Raphael Lyne, ‘Grille’s Moral Dialogue: Spenser and Plutarch’, *Spenser Studies*, XIX (2004), 159-176.

¹⁸⁵ Lyne, pp. 164-5.

¹⁸⁶ Lyne, p. 173.

conversation, just as the 'uncivil Irish' are granted no voice in *A View*.¹⁸⁷ Grill cannot be turned back to a man as he is unable (or unwilling) to enter into dialogue.

The balanced dialogue between Guyon and the Palmer represents a harmony that has been absent in their previous exchanges, when Guyon had resorted instead to physical action. Their civil conversation is furthermore set in contrast, more generally, to the savage 'mind of beastly man'. The Palmer speaks the last line: 'let vs hence depart, whilst wether serues and wind'. He remains the guide and advisor to Guyon, pragmatic and steadfast. Campana observes that 'the Palmer and Guyon exit abruptly, without the elaborate ending of the Legend of Holiness'.¹⁸⁸ Importantly, however, Book II ends in a dialogue with the tension between conversation and physical confrontation resolved into a new albeit provisional *discordia concors*. Their brief balanced dialogic interlude is belated and compromised by all previous events, including the destruction of Acrasia's bower. Book III will begin with Guyon and the Palmer accompanying Arthur looking for further adventure, and the fragile balance restored at the end of Book II cannot therefore last long.

Throughout *The Faerie Queene* Book II, Spenser challenges the reader to question the ability of his knights to engage fruitfully and purposefully in dialogue. Guyon in particular treads a fine line between physical action and verbal dialogue, confirming the difficulty of finding a temperate middle way. Chivalric principles provide a framework for courteous verbal and physical behaviour, but the episodes explored above demonstrate that Spenser often used dialogue to scrutinise the purpose and usefulness of these principles. As Richard McCoy succinctly summarises: 'instead of resolving conflict, chivalric combat often simply increases discord. Spenser's conception of chivalry is both serious and playful; he firmly grounds its ideals in a sound code and function'.¹⁸⁹ The chivalric code and function is however put under particular pressure, as we have seen, when dialogue stalls or fails in Book II. The first three chapters of this thesis outlined the pedagogical value of dialogue in the 1580s, and its particular usefulness as a tool for reforming Protestant spiritual inwardness. Spenser complicates these didactic principles in *The Shepheardes Calender*, radically rewriting dialogic traditions,

¹⁸⁷ Edmund Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield and Willey Maley (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997). Eudoxus contrasts the 'sweet civility' of an Englishman with the 'barbarous rudeness' of the Irish, p. 54. Both interlocutors are English, the dialogue takes place in England, and Irenius and Eudoxus discuss as Englishmen issues relating to the reform of Ireland. The dialogue is between Englishmen because it does not offer both sides of the discussion, only the 'sweet civility' that is natural to England. See also Richard Helgerson, 'Barbarous Tongues: The Ideology of Poetic Form in Renaissance England', in *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Culture*, ed. by Heather Dubrow and Richard Strier (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 273-292 (p. 279). He discusses men who 'make themselves over in the likeness of a pattern of civility superior to what mere barbarous custom affords'.

¹⁸⁸ Campana, p. 494.

¹⁸⁹ Richard McCoy 'Chivalry' in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, p. 149.

especially the conventional 'aporia'. In *The Faerie Queene*, as we have seen, the achievement of dialogue's 'goodly golden concord' seems still more urgent and still more elusive.

Conclusion

Despite the popularity and sheer volume of prose dialogues dealing with Protestant interiority in the sixteenth century, these have, until recently, been overlooked by literary critics. The dialogue form was central to early modern education and culture, especially at this particular moment in the 1580s, and its flexible resourcefulness had a broad appeal to preachers and poets alike. Critics who have commented on early modern dialogue have tended however to read prose dialogues dealing with spiritual issues as though they were separate from literary sources and traditions, concentrating instead on their liturgical and ecclesiastical contexts. Meanwhile critical comment on dialogue in poetry has tended to be conservative in its intertextuality, confining itself to an exploration of how early modern writers adopted or adapted earlier medieval or classical sources. This thesis has read a group of 'non-literary', non-canonical writers, George Gifford, Gervase Babington, and John Udall, alongside one canonical, 'literary' writer, Edmund Spenser, and has explored the similarities and differences between their use of the dialogue form. Its work has been: to explore Spenser's dialogue afresh, in the light of the prose dialogues circulating at the time he was writing; and to recover the work of Gifford, Babington, and Udall, as a more or less distinct group, by reading them alongside the works of England's pre-eminent Protestant poet. The thesis therefore begins a new and integrated conversation about the place of dialogue in early modern spiritual and literary culture, and it is hoped that its findings will inspire further work in the future.

The dialogues considered in this thesis are only a small sample of the two-hundred-and-thirty prose dialogues written during the sixteenth century, but were chosen for their shared exploration of one particular, vernacular version of Protestant spirituality. Gifford, Babington, Udall, and Spenser were linked through their education at Cambridge University, and their connections with the Leicester/Sidney circle, as well as through their reformist agendas. All sympathised, at various points in their writing lives, with the 'hard' Calvinist wing of the English Church, and all assumed a similar religious stance on the context of the Elizabethan Church and its wider culture. They also shared, and responded to, a common classical inheritance, deploying familiar features of the dialogue form, including the journey trope, forms of aporia, competing voices, and strategies to foster 'relational' exchange and authenticity. One important difference between them, however, is their varying approaches to the pedagogical function of dialogue. Whereas Gifford, Babington, and Udall tend to make clear their desire to educate the reader, Spenser questions and challenges the usefulness of the form to teach and instruct. Spenser's sophisticated poetic interrogation of the dialogue

form in *The Shepheardes Calender* and *The Faerie Queene* only becomes clear, however, in the light of the committed pedagogical agenda expressed in the prose dialogues.

Together, as a group, these dialogues shed light on England's complex spiritual landscape in the 1580s. Dialogue tends to present, or to *seem* to present, opinions that are diametrically opposed to each other. And, as we have seen, Protestant self-scrutiny often worked by fashioning the self against an identified 'other' in order to establish coherent subjectivity. The prose dialogues do indeed present clear 'opposing' voices – such as Faith and Frailtie, or Protestant and Papist. Even when there are several speakers in 'conference', it is clear which way the reader is expected to 'turn'. But Spenser complicates these dialogic conventions in many ways. In the 'Maye' eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*, for example, the mirror of the Kid fails properly to mirror, and the foe appears as a friend. The spiritual assurance conventionally offered through dialogue always seems delayed, provisional, or fragile in Spenser's poetry. In this way Spenser subverts the idea of dialogues certainty as 'right reasoner', which had been outlined in the literary treatises of George Puttenham and Philip Sidney. To Spenser 'accord' and 'discord' are not easy to differentiate, and verbal fluency might easily slip into physical violence. Through Spenser's dialogues, the early modern spiritual self emerges in a fraught, complex process of transformation, which seems fundamentally resistant to both the rigid application of 'right reason' and any inflexible application of dialogic form.

One important way of theorising this transformation is through the practices of confession, which remained central to early modern culture in the late sixteenth century. Just as private self-scrutiny turns outward, into the public world, through the phenomenon of published dialogue, so the act of confession turns private introspection towards the public sphere, through the promise of self-reformation or self-transformation. This thesis has focussed, through its sustained attention to the forms and functions of dialogue, on various ways of 'turning', which reveal particular aspects of early modern spiritual crisis. These have included the 'turning' of conversation between speakers as they exchange one belief for another; and the 'turning' away from (or towards) doubt and faith. The dialogues explored above all consider, from a variety of perspectives, the labour and reward involved in the resulting reformation of faith. Confessional dialogue, as we have seen, is one particularly effective way to achieve assurance or, indeed, to lament the elusiveness of any such assurance. For whereas Babington and Udall model disciplined acts of a willingness to foster change, Spenser

on the other hand regards dialogue as a form of dynamic, fluid, and transitional possibility rather than an opportunity to reconcile two (or more) differentiated voices.

The different points of view of these writers only become clear, however, when they are read in synthesis. All of these writers focus in different ways, as we have seen, on acts of reception. These acts are undertaken by listeners described within the text, but also those who encounter the dialogue form from 'outside' as readers. The engagement of the listener/reader always involves the possibility for self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-knowledge, but encountering the words of others, through dialogue in 'conference', tends to put Protestant selfhood on probation. Protestant interiority placed a premium on believers' close engagement with the word. Bearing this in mind, this thesis has brought scholarship on dialogue together with recent critical attention to affect, especially readerly affect, and has considered how dialogic discourse in particular works to 'impassionate' the soul. The ability of dialogue to impress itself forcibly upon the body, mind, and soul of listeners has emerged in the above discussion as a central feature of its efficiency and appeal to the early modern faithful. Even in their epistolary dedications or prefaces, as we have seen, writers of dialogues emphasised the importance of affective listening to spiritual self-improvement. But, as so often, Spenser seems less certain than our prose writers that acts of reading or listening are arguably beneficial – or indeed possible to locate or direct with any precision. In *The Shepheardes Calender* and *The Faerie Queene*, the emotional effects involved in engaging closely in dialogic exchange emerge as far more risky and indeterminate.

Dialogue emerges as a flexible form capable of engaging, affecting, and revealing early modern spiritual life in a variety of contexts. It is hoped that this study might point the way towards further new readings of Spenser's dialogic poetry, particularly the later books of *The Faerie Queene*, including the Mutabilitie Cantos. Spenser's own prose dialogue, *A View*, could also be usefully re-considered in the light of the contextual findings outlined above. Prose dialogues continued to be written in the early to mid seventeenth century as social unease and spiritual conflict unfolded. Those published in the early years of the seventeenth century include, Arthur Dent's *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* (1601), Henoah Clapham's *Error on the Right Hand* and *Error on the Left Hand* (1608), John Murton's *Objections Answered by Way of Dialogue* (1615), and Timothy Rogers' *The Righteous Man's Evidence for Heaven* (1627). Close attention to the form, structure, and strategies of these prose dialogues, among others, would reveal further the uniquely flexible resourcefulness of the dialogue form to

address complex spiritual tension. This thesis has argued, however, that this resourcefulness is best understood in conversation with other examples of dialogic exchange in early modern culture, most especially the writings of England's foremost Protestant poet Edmund Spenser.

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