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Braggadocchio and the Schoolroom Simile

The simile never quite recovered from Aristotle's subordination of the figure to metaphor. Simile, he warned, is "longer" than metaphor and therefore simile is "less attractive" than metaphor: "it does not say outright that 'this' is 'that,' and therefore the hearer is less interested in the idea."¹ While metaphor's act of substitution, its claim that "'this' is 'that,'" startles us by its audacity, the simile builds hesitation, negotiation, even accommodation into its own syntax—in English, its *As* and its *So*. The simile's value as a rhetorical figure depreciates accordingly: "both speech and reasoning," Aristotle argued "are lively in proportion as they make us see a new idea promptly" (1410b 20–22). If metaphor presupposes an act of translation in the strictest sense of the word, a "carrying across" conceptual boundaries, the simile's syntax exposes the route of this translation. It forces us (at length) to retrace the journey, or even the poetic labor, that metaphor disowns. The formal structure of the simile weakens the end of its own comparative work—its ability to render the unfamiliar, familiar—by extending the time it takes for us to get from "this" to "that."² The very syntactical

This essay is indebted to a number of extraordinary readers, including Ann Baynes Corio, Emily C. Bartels, Michael McKeon, Thomas Fulton, Jeff Dolven, Sarah Kennedy, and Carrie Hyde; it is especially indebted to Jacqueline T. Miller.

1. *Rhetoric*, in *The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle*, tr. W. Rhys Roberts (New York, 1954), 1410b 18–20. For mitigating syntax of the simile (in contrast with metaphor), see Demetrius, *On Style*, tr. Doreen C. Innes, based on W. Rhys Roberts, 2 ed. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), p. 80; See also Longinus, in which these correlatives are grouped with the modest, "as it were," etc. *On the Sublime*, tr. W.H. Fyfe and rev. Donald Russell, 2 ed. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 32.4.

2. For temporal difference between metaphor and simile, see also Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, tr. H.E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), 8.6.8; Cicero, *De Oratore*, tr. H. Rackam, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), 3.39.157; Erasmus, "De Copia" in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, tr. Betty I. Knott, ed. Craig R. Thompson (Toronto, 1974), 24, p.337. With "*explicata*," Erasmus translates the temporal "*brevior*" into the spatial sense of

hinges, the *As* and the *So* that make the simile identifiable as a form, also offer a peculiar organization of time.

In comparison to metaphor, the syntax of the simile marked duration or an extension of time, but the very reliability of the simile's syntactical markers also turned them into a means of industry in the humanist schoolrooms of the sixteenth century. As both the formal indicators of a sententious bit and a kind of instrument in the production of discourse, the simile's syntax became both the sign of a piece of text ready to be gathered and a linguistic method for its accumulation. Classical and humanist rhetoricians distinguished the simile from metaphor by turning it into a mechanism for collecting images and defining it instead in relation to icon, parable, and the example.³ In the *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), George Puttenham defines similitude as the "common Ancestour" of icon, parable, and the example but he also treats it as a figure, the "bare similitude."⁴ According to this taxonomy, the simile or "similitude" appears as both a category encompassing these other figures of comparison and a discrete figure in its own right. When discussed alongside these other figures, pedagogues often praise the simile for its utility, the ease with which it might be found, and the ease with which it might be deployed.⁵ As a belabored metaphor and yet a reliable tool for the production of discourse, the simile's temporal organization appears even more peculiar. The very facility with which the simile might be handled appears to offset, though not conceal, the form's slower thinking.

As a genus encompassing other figures of comparison, similitude posited a separate temporal claim. In addition to being an industrious figure of elocution, similitude was a place of invention and, as a "place," similitude had come to participate within an increasingly spatialized

"spread out" and "stretched out." For the Latin, see "De Copia" in *Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. Betty I. Knott (Amsterdam, 1988), I.6, p.66.

3. E.g. Susenbrotus, *Epitome Toporum Ac Schematum*, tr. Joseph Xavier Brennan (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1953), pp. 95–99; Richard Sherry, *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550; facs. repr., New York, 1977), pp. 89–92.

4. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, Eng., 1936), pp. 240–41.

5. E.g. Erasmus, "De Copia," pp. 641–46; *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, tr. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), 4.47.61.

understanding of knowledge and its production.⁶ While classical and early humanist rhetoricians were content to allow similitude to act as both a place for the discovery of arguments (invention) and an ornament of style (elocution), a series of reforms under the name of Ramism drove a disciplinary wedge between these two functions.⁷ In brief, discovering an apparent overlap in the materials belonging to rhetoric and dialectic, the Ramists reduced rhetoric to “elocution” and “pronunciation,” while reserving “invention” and “judgment” for dialectic. This apparently simple redistribution carried a polemic: stripped of its engagement with *res* or things, limited only to the adornment of *verba* or words, rhetoric became the lesser hand-maiden to dialectic.⁸ While the Ramists began to define invention—and thinking, more generally—as an operation of the silent, meditative mind, their marginalization of the figures exposed an anxiety concerning rhetoric’s

6. Marsh H. McCall tracks the origins of similitude’s division into (or conflation of) figure and place in a survey to which the present essay is indebted: *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969). McCall concludes that, while we can separate the simile from other figures of comparison on the basis of form, we cannot separate it “in sphere and method of use” (p. 259). I will suggest that the simile’s unique form came to determine a celebration of its utility but also a fear of its overuse, and thus conditioned both “the sphere” and “method” of its use in early modern England. For treatments of the “places” as producing a spatialization of thinking, see Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 12–38. For a history of the topical places, see Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996), esp. pp. 1–24; 101–34.

7. Richard Sherry, e.g., writes “Neyther skylleth it that we haue rehearsed fiction and comparacion among argumentes, for there is no cause why that amplificacion and ornacion shuld not be taken out of the same places from whence commeth probacion” (p. 73). That Sherry found the need to anticipate and refute such an objection to the organization of his discourse, however, is itself evidence that the objection existed and that it had produced a certain anxiety or ambivalence among pedagogues. See also Quintilian, 8.3.72–75. Walter J. Ong’s study of Ramism and its implications for intellectual history remains the best introduction to the movement. See Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958).

8. See Gabriel Harvey’s printed lectures *Ciceronianus* (1577), tr. Clarence A. Forbes (Lincoln, Neb., 1945) and *Gabrielis Harveii Rhetor* (1577). The first stages a “conversion” to Ramism and, in the second, Harvey allegorizes the disciplinary land-grab. He ventriloquizes “*Eloquentia*” as she marks the new boundaries (“*terminos*”) of her estate and returns the land that had been so inconveniently bestowed upon her. “Why” she asks, “do you annex those under my rule and speech to whom I am myself indebted and wish to try and please?” (p. 54). For Ramism in England, see Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500–1700* (Princeton, 1956), pp. 146–247.

abiding commitment to language as such.⁹ Thus, as a place of invention within the reformed dialectic, similitude marked a turn away from the temporality of dialogic exchange and a turn toward a synchronic space within the mind, a space that increasingly privileged the visible and the quantifiable.¹⁰ By contrast, as a supplementary figure of elocution, the simile carried the threat of its own excess. It carried the potential to pervert the operations of dialectic by wresting thinking out of the synchronic space of the mind and into the temporality of speaking.¹¹ The Ramist reforms were an attempt to preserve the art of thinking—and the mind, for which the art had come to be a representation—from the contingencies of linguistic mutability.¹² Similitude's second life as a figure threatened to subject this art to its own peculiar organization of time. According to this organization, thinking might become subject to both the extension of the simile's syntactical markers and the labor of their accumulation.

The history of similitude both as a place of invention and as a figure of elocution marks the simile as a vexed structure of composition in early modern England. This essay seeks to recover the antagonism between similitude's two functions as it conditioned both the reading and the writing of similes. As a place of invention, the logical function of similitude facilitated an epistemological move toward abstraction. This move constituted a turn from temporal experience and a turn toward

9. E.g. Abraham Fraunce explains in his adaptation of Ramus' *Dialecticae*, "the whole force and vertue of Logike consisteth in reasoning, not talking; and because reasoning may be without talking, as in solitary meditations and deliberations with a mans selfe, some holde the first deriuation as most significant." *Lawiers Logike* (1588), fol. B1.

10. Ong calls this a "corpuscular" epistemology, p. 203. Jeff Dolven writes of the results of humanist pedagogy's emphasis on invention more generally: "there will be something fundamentally atemporal, anarrative, even ahistorical about the arguments you make. Even when you draw the words of the question through the place *a causa* you are seeking after commonplaces rather than a narrative, and seeking a space of memory that is not stratified or sedimented with time, but laid out in a topical field. The mind so represented is a timeless place." *Scenes of Instruction* (Chicago, 2007), p. 48. See also pp. 178–81.

11. Ong describes the Ramist relation to language as the "drive to tie down words . . . Words are believed to be recalcitrant in so far as they derive from a world of sound, voices, cries; the Ramist's ambition is to neutralize this connection by processing what is itself nonspatial in order to reduce it to space in the starkest way possible" (p. 89). See also Jessica Nash Smith, "(Dis)membering Quintilian's Corpus: Ramus Reads the Body Rhetoric," *Exemplaria* 11 (1999), 399–429.

12. See Gerard Passannante's account of the "containment mechanisms" with which Ramus' method attempted "to quarantine the problem of chance and contingency." "The Art of Reading Earthquakes: On Harvey's Wit, Ramus's Method, and the Renaissance of Lucretius" *Renaissance Quarterly* 61 (2008), 821.

the spatialization of knowledge. In this sense, the similitude's assertion of a hypothetical "as if" marked a transition into poetry's subjunctive space.¹³ In his *Defence of Poesy* (1595), Sir Philip Sidney described this subjunctive space as "what may be and should be."¹⁴ In her important study of figuration, for which the simile was paradigmatic, Susanne Wofford described this turn toward abstraction as the simile's ideological work. By asserting an identity between the "action" of a poem and "the cultural or poetic value attributed to it," the simile's claim to comparison was predicated on "the suppression of any direct acknowledgment of what could disrupt it."¹⁵ If the very necessity of the simile tended to indicate that such cultural value was not inherent within the action itself, the simile's aesthetic work amounted to a kind of interpretive violence upon that action. By contrast, as a figure of elocution the early modern simile also organized an experience of the indicative. Sidney called this the "bare 'was'" of history (p. 224). As an engine for the production of copia, the simile provided a narrative paradigm of accumulation. The juxtaposition of images this paradigm encouraged allowed for the very disjunction that similitude's subjunctive claims sought to suppress.¹⁶ Slow but industrious, the simile threatened to wrest the

13. "[A]s' modulates with 'as if,'" Catherine Addison writes, "a copula which extends perceptual knowledge into the realms of the hypothetical, the imaginative, and the fantastic." "From Literal to Figurative: An Introduction to the Study of Simile," *College English* 55 (1993), 405. See also Susan Wolfson, "Formings of Simile: Coleridge," in *Formal Charges* (Stanford, 1997), p. 88. Many critics have suggested that similes provide a view into a world that is not that of the poem proper. See Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca, 1964), p. 117; Anne Ferry, "Simile and Catalogue," in *Milton's Epic Voice: The Narrator in Paradise Lost* (1963; rpt. Chicago, 1983), p. 78. For Linda Gregerson writing of Milton's similes, "the grammatical suspension gives the reader a little sampling of Limbo itself." "The Limbs of Truth: Milton's Use of Simile in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies* 14 (1980), p. 138. Later, she calls this a "conceptual space" (p. 140). Raymond Stephanson, "The Epistemological Challenge of Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*," *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 23 (1983), 29. For A.D. Nuttall, Milton's similes are "rests, holidays," "an inhalation of air": "the very excursiveness . . . gives it the character of a window unexpectedly appearing in a wall of a long corridor." *The Alternative Trinity: Gnostic Heresy in Marlowe, Milton, and Blake* (Oxford, 1998), p. 75. See also Catherine Addison, "'So Stretched Out Huge in Length': Reading the Extended Simile," *Style* 35 (2001), 499.

14. *Defence of Poesy*, in *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford, 1989), p. 218.

15. *The Choice of Achilles* (Stanford, 1992), pp. 42–43.

16. I understand this alternative as a complement to what Wofford describes as the simile's "metonymic" tendencies, though where she separates the simile from "action," I am suggesting that the simile participates in narrative action (pp. 43–44). See also Wolfson's suggestion that, for Coleridge, the simile is among those "poetic processes [that] . . . are resistant, often devoted to fragments, disjunctions, and revisions" (p. 69).

subjunctive projections of its comparative claim back into an experience of the indicative and the contingency that indicative entailed.¹⁷

II

In his “Letter to Raleigh” appended to the 1590 *Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser described his own poetic labor according to the act of negotiation outlined by Sidney—the negotiation between “what may be” (p. 218) and the “bare ‘was’” (p. 224).¹⁸ The *Faerie Queene*, Spenser writes, offers an “ensample” of “such as might best be” (p. 716). The early modern simile with its conflicting temporal claims—its projection of a subjunctive space and its organization of the indicative—was among the instruments with which Spenser tested the limits of this negotiation. Most discussions of narrative temporality in *The Faerie Queene* operate at the level of genre and identify the digressive force of romance as a centrifugal pull against the linear movement of epic and the *telos* of its quest.¹⁹ The simile became a form with which Spenser could wield this digressive motion on both a local and a narrative level. On the local level Spenser exploited the simile’s capacity for temporal organization by suggesting that the form’s syntax might itself come unhinged. In the following simile Braggadochio, a vagrant traveler with knightly ambitions, climbs out from the bush in which he has been hiding. Getting himself together before Belpheobe, the beautiful huntress whose loud horn he has fled, Braggadochio reemerges from his bush as a shameless bird tending to its ruffled feathers:

As fearfull fowle, that long in secret caue
For dread of soring hauke her selfe hath hid,
Not caring how her silly life to saue,
She her gay painted plumes disorderid,
Seeing at last her selfe from daunger rid,
Peepes forth, and soone renews her natiue pride;
She gins her feathers fowle disfigured

17. Dolven has described the tension between “understanding as an abstraction from time” and the necessary return to time when one puts that understanding to use as a defining characteristic of Elizabethan pedagogy (p. 53). See esp. “Telling Learning” (pp. 15–64).

18. *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (London and New York, 2001).

19. See Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford, 1993); Patricia A. Parker, *Inescapable Romance* (Princeton, 1979).

Prowdly to prune, and sett on euery side,
So shakes off shame, ne thinks how erst she did her hide.

So when her goodly visage he beheld,
He gan himselfe to vaunt (II.iii.36–37.1–2)

This simile missteps. It stumbles out of its comparative image and, as if rousing itself, repeats its own correlative: “So shakes off shame,” (36.9), “So when her goodly visage he beheld” (37.1). If, as Aristotle suggested, the simile takes more time to get from “this” to “that,” from the bird resetting her “gay painted plumes” to Braggadochio reassembling himself before Belpheobe, Spenser suggests that the simile’s syntax is itself generative of further delay (36.4). The slow thinking of the simile is capable of resisting the process of abstraction, if only for another moment. By exploiting the correlative’s capacity to both modify the bird as she gets hold of herself—“So shakes off shame” (36.9)—and initiate the comparative turn toward our dubious knight—“So when her goodly visage he beheld” (37.1)—Spenser allows the simile’s temporal organization to displace the logical point of similitude. The simile’s own syntactical materials can get in the way.

For Spenser, the local formal work of the simile also informs the larger narrative of which Braggadochio is a part. As the thief of Guyon’s horse and spear, Braggadochio’s entrance onto the scene of *The Faerie Queene* initiates the digressive narrative threads that are characteristic of romance. When Guyon goes to collect his steed and spear and finds them missing, the poet delays revelation of the thief—“By other accident that earst befell, / He is conuaide, but how or where here fits not tell”—until a proper time that is decidedly not “here” and only, some time later, very awkwardly *there* (II.ii.11.8–9). This self-consciousness is typical of *The Faerie Queene’s* central books in which the poet’s proliferating narrative threads challenge his ability to move among them.²⁰ Braggadochio’s own narrative, however, is modeled after the labor of the schoolroom simile. Like schoolboys, Braggadochio collects other men’s

20. E.g., James Nohrnberg writes that Braggadochio’s theft of Guyon’s horse “opens a serial that is not closed” until Artegall returns the horse to Guyon and “the interlacement of Books III and IV cedes its functions in organizing the narrative to a more linear kind of parallelism.” *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton, 1976), pp. 355, 357. In what follows, I read Nohrnberg’s claim that Braggadochio’s groom, Trompart, “proceeds to *amplify* his master” more literally than he, perhaps, intended (p. 355, emphasis mine). Similitude is among the figures wielded for the amplification of discourse in Thomas Wilson’s *The Art of Rhetoric* (1560), ed. Peter E. Medine (Pennsylvania, 1994), pp. 214–15.

ornamenta, a word that describes both the weapons of war and the figures of rhetoric.²¹ If, in fact, Braggadochio's activity throughout the central books of *The Faerie Queene* constitutes a centrifugal pull against the *telos* of epic quest, Braggadochio proceeds through time by collecting comparative images—horse, spear, groom—and he uses them to generate his own simile: the likeness of a knight.²² Like the early modern simile itself, his accumulation of comparative images organizes the narrative temporality that constitutes this centrifugal pull against logical abstraction. In the following pages I attend to the paradoxical temporality of the early modern simile by situating it within the conflicting directives of humanist pedagogy. While the subjunctive projections of similitude facilitate the construction of “such as might best be” in faerie land, this abstraction operates at the expense of the simile's temporal work—its peculiar organization of time, its narrative paradigm of accumulation, and finally, its historicity as a tool available for use in time (p. 716). It will be the final move of this essay to suggest that the abstraction of a subjunctive space seeks to efface the poetic labor of the simile and—in the case of Braggadochio—the social mobility facilitated by the narrative of accumulation that also underwrites this labor.²³

III

At least one of Spenser's early modern readers stumbled, with the “fearfull fowle,” out of Braggadochio's simile (36.1). In his 1617

21. Wayne Rebhorn, *Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric* (Ithaca, 1995), p. 35.

22. James V. Holleran describes Braggadochio's acquisitions as a “comic subplot” to the epic quest, reversing the paradigm whereby knights lose their accessories and come to rely on the intervention of “a superior agent of good.” “Spenser's Braggadochio,” in *Studies in English Renaissance Literature, 1500–1900*, ed. Waldo F. McNeir (Louisiana, 1962), p. 20. See also J. Dennis Huston, “The Function of the Mock Hero in Spenser's ‘Faerie Queene,’” *Modern Philology* 66 (1969), 212–17. For Braggadochio as a figure from the Italian *commedia dell' arte*, see Maureen Quilligan, “The Comedy of Female Authority in *The Faerie Queene*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 17 (1987), 156–71.

23. In my suggestion that the collection of comparative images also doubled as an accumulation of cultural capital and a means of social mobility in early modern England, I am indebted to Mary Thomas Crane's *Framing Authority*. See also Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca, 1991). David Quint reads Braggadochio as a “courtly upstart” (p. 414) who embodies, by way of his bragging, a new version of the aristocrat: “in his case, clothes literally make the man” (p. 415). “Bragging Rights: Honor and Courtesy in Shakespeare and Spenser,” in *Creative Imitation: New Essays in Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene*, ed. Quint, et al. (New York, 1992), pp. 391–430.

Spenser, Ben Jonson marked a number of good similes. While Spenser's modern readers tend to take allegory as the defining trope (or genre, or mode) of *The Faerie Queene*, Jonson identified "Simile" alone among tropes and figures and schemes in the margins of his *Spenser*. Sometimes, and only when it was extended, he marked "Excellent simile." Once he commanded himself to memorize one of Spenser's similes with "M." for short.²⁴ In the margin beside the "fearfull fowle" simile, however, the kind of work Jonson is doing shifts. Rather than simply identifying the figure, as with a notation like "Simile," Jonson performs the sort of abstraction against which the simile's own syntax militates. Jonson's notes are reproduced to the side:

As fearfull fowle, that long in secret Caue	An excell.
For dread of soaring hauke her selfe hath hid,	Simile to
Not caring how, her silly life to saue,	Expresse word-crossed-out
She her gay painted plumes disorderid,	cowardnesse.
Seeing at last her selfe from daunger rid,	
Peepes forth, and soone renewes her natiue pride;	
She gins her feathers foule disfigured	
Proudly to prune, and set on euery side,	
So shakes off shame, ne thinks how erst shee did her hide.	

So when her goodly visage he beheld,
He gan himselfe to vaunt²⁵

Led in at least one wrong direction, initial interpretation is no sooner written than dashed quite, Jonson's careful step backward seems almost to mimic the simile's own misstep. While Spenser's simile seems to have slowed him down along the way, Jonson's final move is to elide this temporal work. The transition to "cowardnesse" witnesses an ambition

24. All references to Jonson's marginalia refer to the transcriptions provided by James A. Riddell and Stanley Stewart, in *Jonson's Spenser: Evidence and Historical Criticism* (Pittsburgh, 1995). For the annotation, "Simile," see pp. 164 (I.ii.16.1), 165 (I.iii.31.1; I.v.8.1). That a simile was only marked as "excellent" when it might be considered "epic" is Riddell & Stewart's, p. 78. For the annotation "excellent Simile" (including autographical variants), see pp. 168 (II.v.10.3), 175 (II.viii.42.1), 184 (III.iv.17.4). For "M." next to a simile, see p. 175 (II.viii.50).

25. Riddell & Stewart, p. 167. Text of the *Faerie Queene* is here quoted from the folio: *The faerie queen: The shepheards calendar: together with the other works of Englands arch-poët, Edm. Spenser: collected into one volume, and carefully corrected* (1617), fol. G2v.

to fix meaning upon a mobile narrative image by arresting it within a synchronic framework. The interpretive act that survives looks a lot like allegoresis. By insisting that this simile means something “other” to what it “speaks” and by identifying this “other” as “cowardnesse,” Jonson’s note suggests that the simile is only intelligible within a system of thinking that cancels out experience of the simile’s temporal organization. This notation eschews temporal experience in favor of erecting, and securing the simile within, a schematic conceptual plane.²⁶

The danger in reading similes within an interpretive framework that prioritizes abstraction (and is complicit in the spatial codification of a visual epistemology) is that the simile’s form can only become a measure of exegetical slack. The “As” and the “So” by which likenesses and differences confront one another in the simile simply keep the recalcitrant materials—those images which resist abstraction from narrative—in interpretive play. Thus, in the example above, “cowardnesse” rather too easily circumscribes the simile’s somewhat problematic suggestion that “shame” is the sort of thing one simply “shakes off” (36.9). Or, that “shame” persists only for as long as one “thinks” about the transgression from which it arose (36.9). Standing to the side of the stanza, “cowardnesse” is neither acquired nor lost; it appears to exist independent of what anyone “thinks” about it. Accordingly, the sort of allegoresis evidenced by “cowardnesse” offers the simile two equally limited functions. Within what Helen Cooney calls “meaning oriented” interpretations, the comparative image of the simile might act as extra figural mass, subject to abstraction’s centripetal pull and reining those recalcitrant materials in by way of “So.” Within what she describes as “self-referential” interpretations, “As” and “So” might mark the borders of a contained space in which to play with the potentially vagrant materials.²⁷ They produce the potential for digression only, finally, to dramatize an act of logical incorporation. Such readings prioritize the simile’s function as a place of invention over its function as a figure of

26. I understand my account of the simile’s subjunctive projections and the moral register of its abstraction as a complement to what Jeff Dolven has called (via Jerome Bruner), “*paradigmatic understanding*, which satisfies us by providing some kind of detemporalized paradigm . . . to which we can contract and compare the flux of experience” (p. 53). In this instance, “cowardnesse” enables just such a contraction.

27. Helen Cooney outlines these two major interpretive approaches to Spenserian allegory in “Guyon and His Palmer: Spenser’s Emblem of Temperance,” *Review of English Studies* 51 (2000), 171.

style.²⁸ That is, they prioritize the logical point of similitude as abstracted from the contingencies of time while subordinating the materials produced by the simile and determined by their temporal relation to one another.²⁹ As Jonson's act of allegoresis prioritizes an abstraction from the "fearfull fowle" to "cowardnesse," it cancels out the simile's temporal work. And that, in a moment when Spenser has dramatized the simile's capacity for even slower speaking: "So shakes off shame" (36.9), "So when her goodly visage he beheld" (37.1).

At least part of the hesitation evidenced by that one word, whatever it might have been, crossed out between "Expresse" and "cowardnesse," comes from the fact that Jonson switches, mid-note, between two

28. Stephen A. Nimis reports that allegoresis was among the strategies wielded by Homer's ancient commentators who found his similes "to be diffuse, loosely constructed and full of digressions and illogic." *Narrative Semiotics in the Epic Tradition: The Simile* (Bloomington, 1987), pp. 2–3. Such prioritization has been a defining feature of the simile's critical reception. Whether in the early modern preference for Vergil's similes over those belonging to Homer or in the modern critical vocabulary of "relevance v. irrelevance," (Empson) "homologation" v. "heterogeneity" (Whaler), "argument" v. "ornament" (Ferry), these oppositions prioritize the logical point of similitude over the figure's productive capacities. For the early modern preference, see its rebuttal in *Chapman's Homer: The Iliad*, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Princeton, 1998), p. 69. See also, William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (New York, 1974), p. 170; James Whaler, "The Miltonic Simile," *PMLA* 46 (1931), 1034–74, "Grammatical Nexus of the Miltonic Simile," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 30 (1931), 327–35, "Similes in 'Paradise Lost,'" *Modern Philology* 28 (1931) 313–27; Ferry, pp. 68–69. James Whaler's early opposition between "homologation" and "heterogeneity" attempted to prove the argument that Milton's similes "are reducible to logical patterns" by mapping them with symbols as static dichotomies in space, a process itself reminiscent of Ramus' dichotomizing branches ("Miltonic Simile," p. 1034). Harry Berger offers a critique of such dichotomies and their polemical subordination of "ornament" as "irrelevant," highlighting instead, "conspicuous irrelevance" as a strategy the poet might wield. *Allegorical Temper* (New Haven, 1967), pp. 120–60; esp. pp. 120–32. If, however, an earlier insistence on logical incorporation reined in seemingly irrelevant images *via prolepsis*, Berger places the burden of similitude in and on literary history *via allusion*. Without denying the importance of the logical point of similitude—and the model of intertextuality it might sustain—it is my argument that such a focus solves only half of the simile's problems.

29. Thomas Wilson distinguishes between questions "infinite which generally are propounded without the comprehension of time, place, person" from questions "definite, which set forth a matter with the appointment and naming of place, time, and person." Wilson begins by suggesting that "Things generally spoken, without all circumstance, are more proper unto the logician, who talketh of things universally, without respect of person, time, or place" (pp. 45–46). That he backtracks to include inquiries into the infinite within rhetoric's domain is one example of the rhetorical "expansionism" targeted by the Ramist reforms. Boethius offers a concise explication of this difference with reference to similitude: "Dialectic discovers arguments from qualities themselves; rhetoric, from things taking on that quality . . . the dialectician [discovers arguments] from similarity; the rhetorician, from a similar, that is, from the thing which takes on similarity." *De topicis differentiis*, tr. Eleonore Stump (Ithaca, 1978), p. 95. See Moss's analysis, pp. 15–17.

different ways of reading similes. The first part of his annotation, “An excell. / Simile” resembles Jonson’s more usual markings in the margins beside Spenser’s similes. There, he simply points to the figure and names it, “Simile.”³⁰ In this capacity his notes act like Richard Sherry’s lousy “common scholemasters,” lamented in “The Epistle” to his *Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550), who “saye vnto their scholers: *Hic Est Figura*” (p. 12). This first kind of reading identifies Spenser’s poem in terms of a unit of composition and suggests (as is particularly clear with the imperative to himself, “M.”) that the simile is detachable from the poem in which it appears by virtue of its formal integrity. Detachable, the simile becomes intelligible as an instrument of production. In the second part of his annotation, Jonson performs the kind of allegoresis we see in other moments of his reading. For example, “St. George!” is inscribed above Red Crosse Knight’s bumbling entrance into the poem.³¹ This notation points to itself (rather emphatically) as a parody of its own reductive gesture. If “to / Expresse” does not contain the bathos of such punctuated marginalia, it does suggest that this simile thinks something other than what it speaks. It is not difficult to imagine that “cowardnesse” serves as subject heading in a commonplace book, immediately preceded by “bravery.” The second kind of reading prepares the simile for entry into this commonplace book but this preparation requires that one read through the simile’s “As” as well as its “So.” The first way of reading suggests that the form of the simile itself renders the figure available for accumulation. The second way of reading suggests that the abstraction of allegoresis is a precondition for the selection and accumulation of similes.

As Jonson’s note transitions between these two ways of reading, the object of his interpretation shifts. According to the first, Jonson locates the figure within a narrative of poetic labor. “Simile” understands the *Faerie Queene* as “Poesy,” defined by Jonson as “labour and studye . . . skill, or Crafte of Making.” Jonson also calls this “the doing.” By contrast, the abstraction by which Jonson shuffles this simile under the heading of “cowardnesse,” takes, as its interpretive object, the “Poeme” or “the thing done.”³² With this transition, Jonson (to Richard Sherry’s

30. This notation is the most frequent identification of simile in Jonson’s *Spenser*. See pp. 167 (II.ii.24.2–3), 168 (II.iv.7.8; II.v.2.5) 175 (II.viii.48.4–5), 176 (II.ix.16.5), 180 (II.xi.19.4–5; II.xi.32.4), 181 (II.xi.36.6–9).

31. Riddell & Stewart, p. 164.

32. *Discoveries*, in *Ben Jonson*, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford, 1925), VIII.636.

great relief) prioritizes the “meaning of our mynd” over the “folyshe” inclination “to laboure to speake darkelye for the nonce” (p. 12–13). But prior to his marginalia’s shift from studying “the doing” to studying “the thing done,” from gerund to participle, from endless work to completed action, Jonson locates *The Faerie Queene* within the technology of poetic labor. “Simile” registers the figure’s availability for, if not other-speaking, other-makings.³³

If Jonson’s identification of “Simile” within this narrative of production would seem to say more about Jonson’s style than Spenser’s, it says even more about the pedagogical training that pervaded the early modern schoolrooms to which both Jonson and Spenser and many of their early readers at times belonged. Jonson’s most devoted pupil, William Drummond, also marked a particularly good simile in his 1609 *Spenser*; according to Jonson, Drummond’s verse “smelled to much of y^e schooles.”³⁴ One of Spenser’s early modern annotators left markings pointing out only similes.³⁵ “E.K.” calls attention to a number of the *Shepherd’s Calender’s* similes in his printed annotations and these comments are restrained in comparison to the notation’s ubiquity in the printed marginalia of books pedagogical, and also literary.³⁶ An entire subgenre of printed commonplace books devoted to collecting similitudes emerges in the sixteenth century.³⁷ Following the lead of humanist

33. For a discussion of the maker’s knowledge as an alternative epistemology, see Patricia Parker, “Rude Mechanicals,” in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margareta De Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge, Eng., 1996), pp. 43–82. esp. 49–53.

34. Alastair Fowler and Michael Leslie, “Drummond’s Copy of *The Faerie Queene*,” *Times Literary Supplement* (July 17, 1981), 821; “Conversations with Drummond,” in *Ben Jonson*, I.135.

35. Alastair Fowler, “Oxford and London Marginalia to *The Faerie Queene*,” *Notes & Queries* 8:206 (November, 1961), 417.

36. *Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. William A. Oram, et al. (New Haven and London, 1989), pp. 84, 181, 196, 211. See William W. Slights, “The Edifying Margins of Renaissance English Books,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 42 (1989), 690–91. E.g., pedagogical, Angel Day’s popular *The English Secretary* (1586), p. 181. Among the most interesting of the literary include: John Harington’s translation, *Orlando Furioso* (1591), George Chapman’s *Ovids Banquet of Sense* (1595), and Josuah Sylvester’s translation of *Bartas: his deuine vveekes and workes* (1605). For a schoolroom edition whose printed margins demonstrate a more general interest in locating “Adages, metaphores, sentences, or other fygures poetically or rhetorically . . . for the more perfyte instructyng of the lerners, and to leade theym more easilye to see howe the exposition gothe,” see John Plaggrave’s *Comedy of Acolastus* (1540), ed. P.L. Carver (London, 1973), p. 1.

37. Shirley Sharon-Zisser refers to the “compendium of similes” as a “sub-genre” in her Lacanian reading. *The Risks of Simile in Renaissance Rhetoric* (New York, 2000), p. 13. The most famous of these must be Erasmus’ *Parabolae Sive Similia* (1514). For discussion of the place of the *Parabolae* in sixteenth-century English schooling and literature, see Lizette Islyn Westney’s intro-

educators such as Erasmus, the simile becomes a figure for which one reads in books and in the natural world as if a book. Plants, animals, all are a source of similes.³⁸ The simile in turn becomes an engine for producing one's own speech or for converting someone else's speech to one's own purposes. As both text and natural world become a limitless supply of similes, the syntax of the simile itself becomes a method of composition. A common early modern proverb naturalizes this comparative work and distills it into the sort of pithiness one could inscribe on a ring or carve into one's dinner plate: *similis simili gaudet*, "like delights in like."³⁹

The underside to this naturalization is a fear of copious surfeit. The articulation of likeness might, by way of rhetoric's protean powers, transform an object into a resemblance where there was no likeness with which to begin.⁴⁰ The pilfered book of nature might run dry, as in one of John Marston's character's dreams. Here, the earth belches forth from the inside a parody of its own comparative fecundity: "For methought I dreamt I was asleep, and methought the ground yawned and belked up the abominable ghost of a misshapen Similie, with two ugly pages, the one called Master *Even-as*, going before, and the other Mounser *Even-so*, following after, while Signior Similie stalked most prodigiously in the midst."⁴¹ In *As You Like It*, Jacques "moralize[s]" the "spectacle" of his pastoral surroundings "into a thousand similes," and the very figure meant to gauge nature, to parcel it into useful pieces, becomes a mark of man's solipsistic distance and its superfluous iteration, a means of isolating the individual.⁴² If early modern pedagogy's

duction to *Parabolae Sive Similia: Its Relationship to Sixteenth Century English Literature*, tr. Lizette Islyn Westney (Austria, 1981), pp. 1–45. For Medieval manuscript precedents, see Moss, pp. 26–48.

38. E.g. Erasmus, "De Copia," pp. 641–46.

39. E.g. Erasmus, "De Ratione Studii," in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, tr. Brian McGregor (Toronto, 1974), XXIV.685. *Letters and Exercises of the Elizabethan Schoolmaster John Conybeare*, ed. Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare (London, 1905), p. 23.

40. As with Jonson's "Carlo Bvffone" from *Every Man out of His Humor* (1599) whose "Character" begins, "A Publike, scurrilous, and prophane Iester; that (more swift than Circe) with absurd similie's will transforme any person into a deformity," in *Ben Jonson*, III.423.

41. *Antonio's Revenge*, ed. W. Reavley Gair (Manchester, 1978), 1.3.61–67.

42. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Juliet Dusinberre (London, 2006), 2.1.44–45. This leads Robert N. Watson to ask, "Capturing the deer is certainly more brutal, but captioning its picture may be no less appropriative. Which has done more insidious violence to pristine nature as a collectivity, during its long siege by humanity: shooting it with arrows or shattering it into similes?" "As You Like It: Simile in the Forest," in *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia, 2006), p. 82.

emphasis on the sheer number of similes prioritizes the copious production of speech, abstractions such as “cowardnesse” emerge as a response to potential surfeit. As a place of invention, similitude facilitates this abstraction and reins in production under the *telos* of argumentation or persuasion.⁴³ Thus the figure’s apparent utility in the generation of discourse poses a particular problem for its narrative of poetic labor: if Jonson’s “Simile” imagines the poetic text within a narrative of production that neither climaxes nor concludes with *The Faerie Queene*, how did the exercises of early modern pedagogy control the shape of this narrative? Was the form itself always alien to the context of its appearance, pointing to its origins elsewhere? What end did the accumulation of similes serve? What sorts of texts might the simile project as a continuation of its narrative?

The fragmentation of the text implied by “Simile” is akin to the fragmentation performed by the commonplace book, a tool through which the early modern reader produced new speech from what he read. One seventeenth-century compiler described the entries in his commonplace book as “Rhetoricall expressions, description, or some very apt Simile” and this attention characterized his attempt to read what he called “understandingly.” Reading “understandingly” means that “he considers how aptly such a thing would fitt with an exercise of his.”⁴⁴ It understands reading as part of the writing process and may in fact be close to what Jonson meant when he suggested that “things, wrote with labour, deserve to be so read.”⁴⁵ Braggadochio acts as just

43. For fear of copious discourse and cultural containment strategies, see Patricia Parker, “Literary Fat Ladies and the Generation of the Text,” in *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, and Property* (London, 1987), pp. 8–35. See also Terence Cave’s discussion of copia in *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 3–34. His account tends toward the celebratory rather than the anxious.

44. Folger V.a. 381, pp. 86–87. Quoted in Heidi Braymen Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge, Eng., 2005), p. 147 and William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst, 1995), pp. 61–62.

45. *Discoveries*, VIII,638. For a discussion of reading as part of the writing process, see Rudolph Agricola, “Letter 38” in *Letters*, tr. Adrie Van Der Laan and Fokke Akkerman (Tempe, 2002), pp. 203–19. Following the work of Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, early modern scholars have understood reading with labor as “goal-oriented reading,” what Eugene R. Kintgen has described as a “teleological” reading: “primarily practical, aimed at some goal other than private edification, typically conceived of as private education for public action or persuasion.” See Eugene R. Kintgen, *Reading in Tudor England* (Pittsburgh, 1996), p. 148, and also Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, “‘Studied for Action’: How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy,” *Past and Present*, 129 (1990), 30–78. According to this version of “active reading” the spatial

such a reader in faerie land. Like the commonplace book compiler trolling for “some very apt simile” that “would fitt with an exercise of his,” Braggadochio’s acts of accumulation constitute the laborious production of a simile. Stealing Guyon’s horse and spear, acquiring a groom in Trompart and eventually making off with another man’s money and another man’s snowy lady, Braggadochio moves through time by collecting the comparative images that constitute the likeness of a knight.

Compiling other men’s *ornamenta*, he is a version of early modern composition, the “packet of pilfries” told by Thomas Nashe. These compositions arrive at press in “disguised arraie” and “vaunt” other poets’ “plumes as their owne.”⁴⁶ When Braggadochio crawls out from his hiding place and faces Belpheobe, his “plumes” (or *ornamenta*) are all in disarray. As he sets about reordering his “gay painted plumes disorderid” and refiguring his “feathers fowle disfigured,” the simile’s emphasis on individual pieces ill put together recalls George Puttenham’s description of indecorous poetic compositions: “as th’ excellent painter bestoweth the rich Orient coulours vpon his table of pourtraite: so neuertheless as if the same coulours in our arte of Poesie (as well as in those other mechanicall artes) be not well tempered, or not well layd, or be vsed in excesse, or neuer so litle *disordered* or misplaced, they not onely giue it no maner of grace at all, but rather do *disfigure* the stuffe and spill the whole workmanship taking away all bewtie and good liking from it . . . wherefore the chief prayse and cunning of our Poet is in the discreet vsing of his figures” (p. 138, my emphasis). As with “those other mechanicall artes,” bad work—the conspicuous placement of pieces, excess and superfluity—rots. They “sp[o]ill” the work because they display its labor and embed its figures in the time this labor implies. Conversely, the “discreet” poet, by using figures inconspicuously, produces an object outside of and untainted by

codification of allegoresis enables the *telos* of “goal-oriented reading”: the subject headings of the commonplace book usher its user’s selection into predetermined themes, “cowardnesse.” Ann Moss, however, describes commonplace books—such as that described by Juan Luis Vives—that prioritize “patterns of expression” over “a method of rational thinking” (p. 117). While not the dominant theorization of these books, such a prioritization would facilitate the narrative of production implied by “Simile.” See also Moss’s description of Jesuit commonplace books in Europe, pp. 166–85, esp. pp. 176–77.

46. Thomas Nashe, “The Gentlemen Students of both Vniversities,” before Robert Greene’s *Menaphon* (1589), ed. G.B. Harrison (Oxford, 1937), p. 5. Quint writes “what the upstart lacks in physical courage he makes up in his finery and swagger: his borrowed plumes are themselves a form of boasting” (p. 415).

this labor. If, according to Puttenham, indecorous poesie produces a waste that negates its labor, decorous poesie disguises the action of “workmanship” by producing an ordered (rather than “disordered”), a figured (rather than “disfigured”) poem. Work(manship) becomes “the thing done,” at one metonym’s remove from “the doing” and the verbal—or temporal—implications of this gerund.

When Puttenham suggests that “disordered” and “disfigured” compositions take “good liking” away from the “whole workmanship,” he may be referring to a somewhat casual aesthetic pleasure, as if a watered-down version of Horatian delight (p. 138). He may also, however, be projecting the subjunctive *telos* of a decorous composition—the thing that, once done, the poetic composition *ought* to be like. In the fumbling of the “fearfull fowle” simile, Spenser suggests that Braggadochio’s assembly resists this sort of abstraction from its own narrative of production. His process of accumulation—the collection of comparative images and the compilation of his own exercise—is visible precisely because it is ongoing. Spenser also suggests, as the “fearfull fowle” simile repeats the correlative “So,” that the simile’s formal structure is itself capable of resisting this abstraction. The simile’s “As” as well as its “So” are among the recalcitrant materials bound to narrative. Thus a more particular set of questions produced by the simile’s role within a narrative of poetic labor emerges: how did the conflicting directives of early modern pedagogy attend to the simile’s syntactical markers? In what ways might the simile’s form facilitate the subjunctive projections it would also seem to resist? And how did a pedagogy preoccupied with making good use of one’s time offset the simile’s slower thinking?

IV

In John Marston’s *Antonio’s Revenge*, the dream of “Signior Simile” who climbs up out of the earth, flanked by “Even-as” and “Even-so,” suggests that the figure itself was composed of a series of discreet parts (1.3.65–67). As the Ramist schoolmaster William Kempe instructed, the reduction of a composition into its smallest units might enable imitation. By “unmaking” a text, a student could make another text.⁴⁷ But

47. William Kempe, “The Education of Children,” in *Four Tudor Books on Education* (1588; rpt. Gainesville, Fla., 1966), p. 223. See also Dolven, pp. 36–38.

the Signior's parts are also moveable. Marston attributes to them a kind of agency: the agency to climb up out of the earth and the agency to fall into position (and perhaps, to fall out of formation). In the case of "Signior Simile," the agency is to get fat.⁴⁸ The "unmade" simile reduced to its discreet parts might come back from the dead—or the student's autopsy table—as a "misshapen" simile (1.3.64).

As "pages" to a simile, "Even-as" and "Even-so" point to the instrumentality of the simile's syntax, its humdrum utility if not its labor (1.3.65–66). A schoolboy's earliest formal encounter with the simile engages with the figure's "pages" as grammatical units. Among the various classifications of adverbs in William Lyly's *Shorte introduction to grammar* (1567), "some," one diagram declares, "be of Likenesse: as Sic, sicut, quasi, ceu, tanquam, uelut."⁴⁹ The *Grammar's* poem, *Carmen de Moribus*, reinforces this introduction to the syntactical "pages" with a simile that, as does the entire poem, combines instruction in right syntax with instruction in right morals:

Nam *veluti* flores tellus nec semina profert
 Ni sit continuo victa labore manus:
 Sic puer ingenium si non exercitet ipsum
 Tempus & amittet, spem simul ingenii (fol. D6v, emphasis mine)

According to the schoolmaster John Brinsley, each schoolboy was first expected to translate these lines, assuring his teacher that he "know[s] the meaning of them, and can construe them perfectly"⁵⁰:

For, *even as* the earth can cause neither seeds nor flowers to grow
 Unless it is made to thrive by the continuous labor of the hand:
Even so, if the boy does not exercise his genius,
 He will lose, at an instant, the expectation of this genius and time itself.

Next the teacher prompts his pupil to parse the text in the order of his translation; "veluti" would come early in this parsing and the child

48. The apparent corpulence with which "the misshapen simile . . . stalks prodigiously" is reminiscent of Patricia Parker's fat ladies who were made to embody—and contain—the threat of copious surfeit in "Literary Fat Ladies and the Generation of the Text." Barbara J. Baines reads Balurado's dream as a parody of Antonio's figurative excess. "*Antonio's Revenge*: Marston's Play on Revenge Plays," *Studies in English literature 1500–1900* 23 (1982), 284.

49. *A shorte introduction of grammar* (1567), fol. C3v.

50. The specific directives concerning the schoolmaster's examination of the pupil are taken from John Brinsley's *Ludus Literarius* (1612), p. 127. He exemplifies the practice by way of the first two verses of *Carmen de Moribus*.

should explain, “why he began to construe there” (p. 127). The child should be able to identify it as an adverb of “Likenesse” with, perhaps, a reference to the authority of his *Grammar*, as “set down in the booke” (p. 127). The teacher might ask “what . . . [veluti] is like” and the child ought to point to “Sic” (p. 127). He may or may not have been expected to know that the presence of the correlative “Sic” is rare.⁵¹ Here, the correlative makes the comparative structure of the verse its most prominent form. Students may have received the most elementary instruction in prosody and thus, if prompted, the child might be expected to know that the otherwise synonymous “velut” does not fit the meter as the long, final vowel of “veluti” does.

In early education this simile became a kind of syntactical touchstone within the mind. Eventually, the students were expected to take their own English translation and turn the verse back into Latin (the process known as double translation); then “(which is the principall, and wherein you [the schoolmaster] will take much delight),” the children were expected to recite this simile “with their bookes vnder their armes” (p. 130). Taking the poem two couplets at a time, students could move onto their afternoon lessons once, as another schoolmaster, Charles Hoole advised, “they have repeated these verses of Mr. *Lilies* so often over, that they can say them all at once pretty well by heart.”⁵² Thus the syntactical “pages” of this simile, “Veluti” and “Sic,” retrieved the logical point of similitude—the necessity of diligence—even as the simile itself served to reinforce the student’s knowledge of grammar. Memorizing the poem in fragments, a student would not have to run through the whole poem from the beginning to find his adverbs of likeness.⁵³ Similitude functions simultaneously in the service of abstraction and as a formal device, an engine for linguistic recollection, organization, and generation.

As a tool of intellectual labor, the slow thinking of simile becomes implicated in—if not the efficiency—then the temporality of educational cultivation itself.⁵⁴ The fear expressed in these lines from *Carmen*

51. For rarity of correlative “sic” following “veluti,” see c.f. “velut,” Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1955).

52. Charles Hoole, *A new discovery of the old art of teaching* (1661), p. 49.

53. See Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, Eng., 1990), p. 7.

54. For the relationship among Georgic imagery, pedagogy, and poetic labor, see Andrew Wallace, “‘Noursled up in life and manners wilde’: Spenser’s Georgic Educations,” *Spenser Studies* 19 (2007), 65–92.

de Moribus, perhaps even greater than that of the loss of genius, is the loss of that demonstratively produced, “*ipsum / Tempus*,” “Time itself.” At the very moment, “*simul*,” that the student loses the hope of his inborn talent, “*ingenium*,” the time of his labor transforms into an object of waste (fol. D6v). Even by turning “Time” into an object—one that can be possessed, one that can be lost—these lines initiate an abstraction from the experience of time, a kind of recuperative move in the face of its loss. Rhetorical instruction prioritized the simile as an instrument for the generation of discourse rather than as the expression of a point of resemblance. Its very instrumentality facilitated the temporal work of the schoolroom.⁵⁵ The schoolmaster might read a similitude out loud as a prompt for a writing exercise and thus generate multiple epistles from the unpacking of its comparative claim.⁵⁶ But the simile could also be useful for its form. This form might supply a writer with an easy transition: by allowing any text to pivot from one idea to another, the simile’s syntactical hinges became a structure to which any student might reliably refer when he needed to get to the next topic or idea (p. 33). The simile might also act as a closural device, lending any composition the sense of sententiousness enacted by its formulaic alteration (p. 107). As the simile becomes an engine of compositional productivity, it implicates its own discursive production in the economic enterprises of the classroom.⁵⁷ Within this economic register, the availability of a simile, readied—as Erasmus suggests, “in your pocket, so to speak”—offsets the form’s slower thinking (p. 635).

By contrast to its productivity in the generation of discourse, similitude was understood to be among the weakest forms of proof. As a place of invention, arguments *ex similitudine* offered abject evidence used more often by other, less rigorous disciplines (“other”

55. See Thomas Wilson’s illustration of how similitudes allow one to “dilate” matter “with poesies and sentences” so that “we may with ease talk at large” and he offers an extended exemplum comparing the lesser value of money to the greater value of time which, in wasting or “losing of time we lose all the goodness and gifts of God which by labor might be had.” See Wilson, p. 214, and also Erasmus, “De Copia,” pp. 622–23.

56. Erasmus, “De Conscribendis Epsitolis,” in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, tr. Charles Fantazzi (Toronto, 1974), XXV, 27; “De Copia,” p. 236.

57. When, in “De Ratione Studii,” Erasmus demonstrates how multiple figures can allow you to amplify on any topic, such as “iron,” the simile brings us back to the value of time: “Or the simile: just as iron is worn away by use, yet if not used it is eaten away by rust, so ability is consumed by over-working, yet if not exercised it is further atrophied by disuse and neglect” (p. 677).

to whatever discipline was at hand).⁵⁸ Similitudes acted as both a supplement to man's weakened intellect, what Seneca called "props to our feebleness," and as a sign of this decidedly less erect wit.⁵⁹ If similitudes were always among the weakest forms of proof, the Ramist reforms pushed this source of invention further to the margins of their discipline. Within the reformed dialectic, the student was taught to subject the similitude's "pages," its "Euen-as" and its "Euen-so," to a process of abstraction that denied temporal contingency. According to one Ramist, Abraham Fraunce, the simile's markers—"like as, euen as, so"—constituted the "plaine and eudent signes" of argument from similitude "briefly expressed."⁶⁰ A student proved an argument by testing these "signes" because "the coniunction is the very relation it selfe" (fol. Cc2). By abstracting the conjunction from its temporal work in the production of discourse, a student could only appeal to *doxa*, or preconceived opinion, in his testing. Thus, in his illustration of a fallacious argument from similitude, Fraunce elides any attention to contingency through recourse to *doxa*: "As a new coate is better than an old: so new friendship, and new wine; these be not like" (fol. U3v). The Ramist reforms were more generally invested in reorienting dialectic away from the probable reasoning of the discursive arts and toward the certainty of a demonstrative science.⁶¹ "Fayned similitudes," however, could only ever contribute to the "plausible" (fol. U2v). Hence, they served as the markers of the sort of knowledge Ramism strove to suppress: dialogic, contingent, and decidedly spoken.

The similitude's attachment to probability was a problem for the reformed dialectic. That same commitment was an asset within poetics. If as Sidney suggested in his *Defence*, poets "borrow nothing of what is, hath been or shall be," committing themselves solely to "consideration of what may be and should be," similitude's demonstrative failure made it useful in the construction of a subjunctive space (p. 218). While Sidney was ready to embrace similitude as an

58. E.g. Cicero, *Topica*, tr. H.M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), 10:45.

59. Seneca, "Epistle LIX," in *Epistles 1–65*, tr. Richard M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 413.

60. Fraunce, fol. T3.

61. See Ong, pp. 150–51.

abstracted principle of likeness that facilitates construction of a subjunctive space, he was not altogether sure that poets should not shun similes as tools. Readily available from newly translated rhetorical taxonomies, from printed commonplace books, similitudes filled everybody's pockets (so to speak). The sheer number of potential and actual similitudes was itself a threat to decorum: "Now for similitudes in certain Printed discourses, I think all herbarists, all stories of beasts, fowls, and fishes, are rifled up, that they come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits; which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible. For the force of a similitude not being to prove anything to a contrary disputer, but only to explain to a willing hearer, when that is done, the rest is a most tedious prattling, rather over-swaying the memory from the purpose whereto they were applied, then any whit informing the judgment, already either satisfied, or by similitudes not to be satisfied" (p. 247). Sidney's apparent concern for the weak nature of the evidence supplied by similitudes appears to understand persuasion as the figure's end. He treats it as a place of invention rather than as a figure of style, and locates it within the contested intersection of rhetoric and dialectic. And yet his articulation against this weak breed of evidence takes the form of a quantitative rather than a qualitative monster. Collecting "in multitudes to wait" upon the more dignified "conceits" or thoughts, similitudes signify a "surfeit" that overtakes the "ears" but does not penetrate the mind or facilitate thinking. Once a mnemonic, now the similitude distracts memory, displaces any kind of *telos* in favor of its own copious production. The poet with a sense of decorum knows to employ similitudes, "these knacks very sparingly" (p. 247). For Sidney, the threat posed by the simile within textual production is that it facilitates a certain kind of composition by men "more careful to speak curiously than to speak truly" (p. 247). Easily come by and easily deployed, the similitude's utility backfires. The figure threatens the ear with the endless iteration of its own syntactical "pages." "They come" Sidney warned "in multitudes."

In poetics, dialectical recourse to doxa survives under the sign of decorum and discretion. Sidney's quantitative fears at once assert an ideal of proportion and suggest that the simile's very utility—its capacity to generate copia—is a mark of the indecorous. In this sense Sidney's dismissal of similitudes limns the normative values that theo-

ries of decorum helped to sustain.⁶² His fears also suggest that such ideas of decorum were beginning to operate within a visual epistemology.⁶³ Here is not so much a concern for person, time, and place as a quantification of design that registers deviation under the sign of “surfeit” and reduces the value of deviation from poetry to “prattling” (p. 247). Implicit within the subjunctive projection of “what may be” is the ideological imperative of “should.” Therefore the conjunction that links the two projections in Sidney’s famous demarcation—“what may be and should be”—is misleading. The ideological imperative disguises its work with the additive “and.” On account of this disguise, the sort of composition that threatens the decorous becomes not only a violation of proportion, but also improbable.

V

The men who trade in these “knacks” upset not only decorum but also the harmony of a social structure that relies on the authority of the decorous. The man working with these similitudes “doth,” to quote Sidney again, “dance to his own music” (p. 247). He operates outside the poet’s subjunctive space. His presence challenges the parameters according to which that subjunctive space organizes itself. He suggests that the line between the plausible and the implausible, what may be and what may not be, is a social contingent. The stability of that line is predicated on the naming and the exclusion of implausible or indecorous speech.⁶⁴ In a moment reminiscent of the *Defence* itself Abraham Fraunce located the construction of those subjunctive parameters squarely within dialectical invention. “Whatsoever it bée,”

62. See Derek Attridge, *Literature as Difference from the Renaissance to James Joyce* (London, 1988), pp. 17–45; Barry Taylor, “‘The Instrumentality of Ornament’: George Puttenham’s *Arte of English Poesie*,” in *Vagrant Writing: Social and Semiotic Disorders in the English Renaissance* (New York, 1991), pp. 127–50; David Hillman, “Puttenham, Shakespeare, and the Abuse of Rhetoric,” *Studies in English literature 1500–1900* 36 (1996), 73–90; Wayne Rebhorn, “Outlandish Fears: Defining Decorum in Renaissance Rhetoric,” *Intertexts* 4 (2000), 3–24.

63. For the reorientation of conceptions of decorum toward a visual epistemology, see Ong, pp. 212–13.

64. John M. Hill (via Ludwig Wittgenstein) wrote that “every language has a structure concerning which nothing can be said in that language” and he suggested that Braggadochio was such a structure with respect to the poem’s “primary language” of a “Golden World.” While Hill’s understanding of the “Golden World Concept” is not compatible with the subjunctive space I outline here, his suggestion that “sometimes that structure has its own language” and his identification of Braggadochio as constituting a “second language” within the poem provides a nice parallel to my point. “Braggadochio and Spenser’s Golden World Concept: The Function of Unregenerative Comedy,” *English Literary History* 37 (1970), 322–23.

Fraunce begins before correcting himself, “nay whatsoeuer thou canst imagine to bée, although it bée not, neuer was, nor neuer shall bée, yet by reason it is inuented, taught, ordered, confirmed” (fol. B4v).⁶⁵ “Tedious prattling” wanders outside of invention’s reign and the figures according to which it proceeds mark the parameters of a zodiac out-of-tune (p. 247).

If Sidney’s *Defence* tends to emphasize the ideological imperative of “should” over the more ambivalent “may,” Edmund Spenser’s defense of his own poetic strategy threw “should” to the philosophers and reserved, for poets, a more accommodating subjunctive. For Spenser, this was the difference between Plato’s instruction in what “should be” and Xenophon’s “ensample” of a government “fashioned . . . such as might best be” (p. 716). While describing the “Methode” (p. 716) of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser defended his use of “historicall fiction” as “most plausible” (p. 715): “For this cause [the pleasing of “commune sence”] is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one in the exquisite depth of his judgement, formed a Commune welth *such as it should be*, but the other in the person of Cyrus and the Persians fashioned a government *such as might best be*. So much more profitable and gracious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule. So haue I laboured to doe in the person of Arthure” (p. 716). That which “might best be” is a subjunctive space that does not limit itself to a future indicative but does understand mortal lodgings as the essential parameters of its construction.⁶⁶ What “might best be” posits a gap between its own representation and a “may” or a “should” unmitigated by the limitations of historical temporality. As Demetrius indicated, we might think of Spenser’s subjunctive as restaging the difference between metaphor and simile: “When the metaphor seems daring, let it for greater security be converted into a simile . . . In this way, we obtain a simile and a less risky expression, in the other way, metaphor and greater danger. Plato’s employment of metaphors rather than similes is, therefore, to be regarded as a risky feature of his style. Xenophon, on the other hand, prefers the simile” (p. 80). If metaphor’s audacity lies in its claim to substitution (“‘this’ *is* ‘that,’” Aristotle said), simile’s caution

65. See also William Temple’s *Analysis of Sir Philip Sidney’s Apology for Poetry*, tr. John Webster (New York, 1984), p. 83.

66. For a reading of the subjunctive and the imperative in Protestant debates concerning the will, see Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 159–67.

erects a comparative structure of potential (but unrealized) exchange. Humanist pedagogy taught that that the simile's syntactical "pages" might also double as negotiating caveats intended to disarm metaphor's disruptive potential—"as if," "as it were," "if one may say so."⁶⁷ In these moments, the schoolboy's parsing of "veluti" returns: "veluti" might function as either the introduction to a comparative image or an apology to hedge metaphor's bet.

By comparing his own poetic production to Xenophon's—"So haue I laboured"—Spenser places himself along a spectrum of relative similitude that defined the textual production of the schoolroom (p. 716). If the abstraction encouraged by invention takes the simile's syntax out of time, the productive labor of the classroom conceived of likeness more generally as relative and flexible to change over time. A schoolmaster "compared" his students' Latin compositions to the original in order that they "might see as in a mirror what they have missed."⁶⁸ By comparing his own labor to Xenophon's, Spenser places *The Faerie Queene* within this textual history. This principle of relative similitude, however, constructed not only a spectrum of textual production but also a hierarchy among the students themselves: "stimulate the pupils' spirits," Erasmus advised, "by starting with comparison amongst them, thereby arousing a state of mutual rivalry."⁶⁹ It is worth remembering that the *Letter's* addressee, Sir Walter Raleigh, had begun his own poem to Elizabeth, *Ocean to Cynthia*. Spenser's engagement with a comparative textual history also constitutes a challenge to Raleigh. The act of comparison mobilizes the poet within a social hierarchy structured by poetic labor. As a result, the student's use of simile as an engine for the generation of discourse within a composition becomes an instance, writ small, of a method for wielding the more abstract structures that determined both his relation to other texts and his position within a social hierarchy. As a tool that one can carry out of the schoolroom—even sell, out there, in and to multitudes—the simile remakes the parameters of the schoolroom on the other side. The simile will necessarily negotiate with a different kind of indicative outside the schoolroom (for example, a monarch rather than schoolmaster), but it

67. E.g. Longinus, 32.4.

68. Erasmus, "De Conscribendis Epsitolis," p. 42.

69. Erasmus, "De Ratione Studii," p. 682.

remains one of the fundamental tools for building, out of the indicative, a plausible world of habitation.⁷⁰

Spenser's problem is, then, not altogether different from the problems Braggadochio faces as he generates his similitude of a knight. Like Spenser, Braggadochio attempts to create his own subjunctive space within faerie land. After this vagrant traveler has stolen a horse and spear from Guyon, "he gan to hope, of men to be receiu'd / For such as he him thought or faine would be" (II.iii.5.5-6). If Spenser's subjunctive, "such as might best be," displaces its source of judgment—with Abraham Fraunce—to *doxa* or, as the letter calls it, "communsence," Braggadochio's "would be" challenges this act of displacement (p. 716). Braggadochio's willed subjunctive suggests that individuated desire is never actually effaced, checked by, or subsumed within an appeal to the customary. Like the schoolboy pillaging texts for *ornamenta*—or even, like Jonson, collecting Spenser's similes—Braggadochio's theft of Guyon's horse and spear places his own composition within the spectrum of textual production that defined the schoolroom. According to this narrative, Guyon becomes the idealized model against which we (in the place of schoolmaster) might gauge Braggadochio's relative similitude. The poem also dramatizes the model text as vulnerable: Guyon himself becomes a debased version of this idealized text walking in most unknightly fashion on foot. As within the schoolroom, Braggadochio's entrance into this narrative of textual production also mobilizes him within the social hierarchy of faerie land. Running around collecting other men's *ornamenta*, Braggadochio imagines the generation of his similitude as the means of social advancement.

Through a sustained *paronomasia* (or pun), *The Faerie Queene* suggests that Braggadochio's accumulation of comparative images and his ability to advance within a social hierarchy are the effects of his words. When Braggadochio collects the third image of his similitude, he intimidates Trompart—the man who will serve as his groom—by waving his spear and whipping his horse. He also asserts his power over Trompart by what the poem repeatedly calls his "vaunts" (II.iii.13.1). Exhaling the "smoke of vanity" (II.iii.5.3), Braggadochio, as a "vaunter" (II.iv.1.6), offers merely speech. This "auaunting" verbiage is also,

70. For subjection to the schoolmaster as preparation for a student's relation to monarch, see Rebecca W. Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca, 1996), pp. 23-72.

however, a plan for social *advancement* (II.iii.6.3). When, with horse beneath him and spear in hand, Braggadochio first hatches his plan to construct a similitude of a knight, “to court he cast t’aduaunce his first degree” (II.iii.5.9).⁷¹ The narrative of Braggadochio’s productive similitude, the accumulation of his comparative images over time, understands advancement within faerie land’s social hierarchy as the product of his speaking. When Braggadochio charges Trompart, he approaches “As Peacocke, that his painted plumes doth pranck” and he speaks (II.iii.6.4):

Vile Caytiue, vassall of dread and despayre,
 Vnworthie of the commune breathed ayre,
 Why liuest thou, dead dog, a lenger day,
 And doest not vnto death thy selfe prepayre.
 Dy, or thy selfe my captiue yield for ay;
 Great fauour I thee graunt, for aunswere thus to stay (II.iii.7.4–9)

Braggadochio’s speech challenges the formal integrity of the stanza itself. A stanza holds together as a unit of verse by conditioning its reader to anticipate certain rhyme sounds (and rewarding this anticipation at the end of a line).⁷² Braggadochio’s speech challenges the ear’s ability to distinguish certain repeated sounds from others. The heavy repetition of rhyme sounds at the beginnings of lines, in the midst of lines, the alliteration of “d” and “v” (pronounced with a kind of physiological drama at the front of the mouth): each of these qualities aligns Braggadochio’s speech with the indecorous “surfeit” that bothered Sidney’s “ears.” His is a “tedious prattling” (p. 247).

Like the pun with which the poem couples Braggadochio’s “vaunting” and his desire to “aduaunce,” alliteration and rhyme (also known as *similiter cadens*, the “like falling” of words) suggest associations between things that are the product of a material likeness that acts in the place of abstraction. According to George Puttenham, alliteration—or “the Figure of like letter”—is a barbarism that should be used sparingly (p. 174). He continues, however, to suggest that it has this one virtue. Alliteration saves time. The repeated letter, Puttenham writes, “passeth from the lippes with more facilitie by iteration of a

71. Quint points to this pun, p. 415.

72. Puttenham writes that just as the “distaunces” between rhymes “may not be too wide nor farre a sunder, lest th’eare should loose the tune,” so “on the other side doth the ouer busie and too speedy returne of one maner of tune, too much annoy & as it were glut the eare” (p. 83).

letter than by alteration” while “alteration of the letter requires an exchange of ministry and office of the lippes, teeth, or palate, and so doth not the iteration” (p. 255). The production of like sounds is industrious because it localizes labor: alliteration maximizes the efficiency of the organs by which we produce speech by isolating these organs’ unique “ministry” and “office.” As Braggadochio’s recurring “d” requires the tongue to pluck (repeatedly) against the roof of the mouth, as his recurring “v” requires the teeth to bite (repeatedly if momentarily) the bottom lip, Puttenham suggests that this action operates within the same economy of efficient production that characterized the function of the simile in the schoolroom. Puttenham’s assessment of the utility of alliteration naturalizes the simile’s syntax by suggesting that it is the product of (rather than an imposition on) the organs with which the body generates speech.

Upon hearing Braggadochio’s “vaunts,” Trompart surrenders. He “cleeped” Braggadochio his “liege,” thereby transforming into a comparative image within Braggadochio’s simile (II.iii.8.9). As a comparative image, Trompart facilitates the subjunctive projection of Braggadochio’s “would be” (II.iii.5.6). The poem marks Trompart’s transformation into a comparative image with another simile. Trompart falls to the ground “as an offal,” as a piece of refuse, discarded waste that Braggadochio collects in order that it might participate, like horse and spear, in the production of his similitude (II.iii.8.7). And this comparative image “offal”—a waste that is a “falling off” from somewhere else—becomes a constitutive element of Braggadochio’s similitude.⁷³

VI

This characterization of Braggadochio’s speech as excessive allows Spenser to register Braggadochio as an indecorous figure within faerie land. Indecorousness is a method of exorcism. Braggadochio’s pretensions allow Spenser to draw a line between “such as might best be” (p. 716) and “such as” Braggadochio “thought or faine would be” (II.iii.5.6). The poem’s subjunctive space, however, then becomes dependent upon a difference that is quantitative rather than qualitative. That is, the sustainability of such a line requires the perpetuation of Braggadochio’s pretensions. At the same time, then, the poem’s iden-

73. Hamilton, p.181n.

tification of Braggadochio is not so much an exorcism as it is a goad to continuation. If Braggadochio's method for social advancement is implausible because his speech is excessive, then Braggadochio had better keep talking. His collection of comparative images becomes an imperative to the construction of "such as might best be" rather than a violation of it (p. 716).

Braggadochio's initial theft was not a piece of refuse. The spear and especially the steed are losses that Guyon feels. "[H]is good steed is lately from him gone; / Patience perforce" the poet demands of a figure who cannot hear him, "helplesse what may it boot / To frett for anger, or for grieffe to mone?" (II.iii.3.2-4). If Guyon begins Book II as a knight "who taught his trampling steed with equall steps to tread," he fares less well on foot (1.7.9). As several critics have noted, Guyon's feet often stray from his path.⁷⁴ In this sense, Braggadochio's narrative digression—for which the acquisition of Trompart is a continuation—becomes a measure of the difference between Guyon and the "Temperance" he fails to embody. The narrative of production that takes its shape from the simile's temporal work in the schoolroom—its work as a mechanism for the accumulation of comparative images—becomes a measure of the complexity with which allegorical narratives proceed in *The Faerie Queene*.

After acquiring Trompart, it becomes clear that Braggadochio is missing one crucial ornament in his similitude. When Braggadochio runs into the arch-villain, Archimago, he is almost recognizable as a knight. Archimago is impressed by the gleam of "armour fayre" and the speed of his "goodly courser" (II.iii.11.3-4). When addressing the pair, he inquires of Trompart, "what mightie warriour that mote bee," recognizing the "offall" as a groom (II.iii.12.2). While praising the "golden sell" (or saddle of his horse) and "spere," Archimago inquires into the "wanted sword" (II.iii.12.3-4). Without a sword, Braggadochio is not so much a knight as someone who looks like a knight. His most recent machinations having failed, Archimago is looking to avenge himself upon Guyon and Red Crosse Knight. He has hatched a plan but this plan requires a knight and this knight must have a sword. As both a reader of Braggadochio and a poet-maker attempting to reshape the central narratives of *The Faerie Queene*, Archimago recognizes that Braggadochio is incompletely assembled. Within the revenge plot that

74. E.g. Nohrnberg, pp. 299-300.

Archimago develops—a revenge plot to derail the one that has pit Guyon against Acrasia—Archimago seeks to transform Braggadochio, “Of his reuenge to make the instrument” (II.iii.11.6). He must get the knight his sword.

Braggadochio’s lack of a sword would seem to resist his transformation into an abstraction: from the likeness of a knight to Archimago’s “instrument” of “reuenge” (II.iii.11.6). In Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, Artegall becomes the “instrument” of Elizabeth’s “iustice” after acquiring his sword and the poem seems to promise, here, through an act of *prolepsis*, that Braggadochio’s digressive narrative can be incorporated into a larger allegorical design (*Proem*.11.8–9). By fixating upon the absence of a sword, Archimago suggests that Braggadochio’s incompleteness constitutes a centrifugal pull against his own act of allegoresis. Archimago’s attempt to acquire him a sword suggests that the digressive force of a “wanted sword” will succumb to the centripetal pull of abstraction (II.iii.12.4). While entertaining the idea for a while, pleasing Archimago with his boasts and swearing “dew vegeaunce,” upon Guyon and Red Crosse Knight, Braggadochio ultimately backs down (II.iii.14.7). When Archimago tells him that he can get him the sword of “the noblest knight” (II.iii.18.3) in all of faerie land, the sword of Arthur, Braggadochio trembles with fear “And wondred in his minde, what mote that Monster make” (II.iii.18.9). Braggadochio “gan to quake,” with Jonson’s own hesitating hand, between the narrative of production that has conditioned his movement through time and the final abstraction of allegoresis, incorporation into a monstrous subjunctive space, the “mote” of Archimago (II.iii.18.8).

This is only the first of many instances in which the poem—through suspect strategies—attempts to restrain the digressive force of the simile’s narrative of production by an act of abstraction. Ultimately, in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, Braggadochio’s similitude is disassembled. Going too far with his vaunts, Braggadochio is shamed by the Knight of Justice’s right-hand-man, Talus. Artegall himself plucks Braggadochio’s “borrowed plumes” (V.iii.20.7). Exposed as “conterfeits” and “forgerie,” Braggadochio’s similitude is made explicit as an indecorous composition: his beard is shaved, his shield turned upside down (V.iii.39.1–2). Braggadochio is turned into an object of laughter and, as the crowd “gan to iest and gibe full merilie,” the violence characteristic of Book V transforms the simile’s narrative of production into an emblem of shame (V.iii.39.4). Braggadochio’s ongoing similitude of a

knight is arrested within an iconic abstraction before he disappears entirely from *The Faerie Queene*.

I would like to conclude, however, by returning to the simile with which this essay began. I include Jonson's notes (once again), and a few lines from the previous stanza and the remainder of the stanza begun by the simile's stumbling correlative. Suspecting that the animal she has been chasing is making all of that noise behind the bush, Belpheobe is ready to impale her catch until Trompart fills her in and,

She staid: with that he crauld out of his nest,
 Forth creeping on his caitiue hands and thies,
 And standing stoutly vp, his lofty crest
 Did fiercely shake, and rowze, as coming late from rest.

As fearfull fowle, that long in secret caue	An excell.
For dread of soring hauke her selfe hath hid,	Simile to
Not caring how her silly life to saue,	Expresse word-crossed-out
She her gay painted plumes disorderid,	cowardnesse.
Seeing at last her selfe from daunger rid,	
Peepes forth, and soone renews her natiue pride;	
She gins her feathers fowle disfigured	
Prowdly to prune, and sett on euery side,	
So shakes off shame, ne thinks how erst she did her hide.	

So when her goodly visage he beheld,
 He gan himselfe to vaunt: but when he vewd
 Those deadly tooles, which in her hand she held,
 Soone into other fitts he was transmewd,
 Till she to him her gracious speach renewd;
 All haile, Sir knight, and well may thee befall,
 As all the like, which honor haue pursewd
 Through deeds of armes and prowesse martiall;
 All vertue merits praise, but such the most of all (II.iii.35.6–37)

It appears that Spenser's poem had as much trouble getting into this simile as it had getting out—"as coming late from rest" (35.9), "As fearfull fowle, that long in secret caue" (36.1). If the second, extended simile suggests that "as coming late from rest" did not quite get the job done, it also suggests the generative potency of "As." The sort of half-line simile that closes Spenser's alexandrine is characteristic of Belpheobe's famous blazón. (While the rest of us, with Trompart, have

been gazing at Belphoebe, Braggadochio has been staring at sticks and leaves or, more probably, with eyes shut tight.) In that blazón, the similes came out in succession: “Cleare as the skye” (22.3), “Like roses in a bed of lillies shed” (22.6), “Like a broad table” (24.2), to name a few. Their iterative procession attested to the inexpressibility of Belphoebe in language as each additional simile witnessed the failure of the previous. Their procession also, however, called attention to the production of the blazón they constitute—piecemeal and aggregative. The fragment “as coming late from rest” reminds us that a simile is just the sort of thing Spenser might use to fill out his alexandrine or lend it that sense of closure (25.9). In fact, when the blazón brought us to Belphoebe’s skirts, we would have done worse than to have looked for a simile in that missing half-line. Belphoebe’s “silken Camus,”

Which all about besprinkled was throughout,
 With golden aygulets, that glistered bright,
 Like twinckling starres, and all the skirt about
 Was hemd with golden fringe (26.9)

The half-line Spenser does supply, “as coming late for rest,” suggests that the subsequent simile of the “fearfull fowle” is already excessive, already superfluous, although its iterative structure, like Braggadochio’s own narrative, proceeds by accumulating more (25.9). Spenser tests the limits of the simile’s syntactical industry and in doing so makes its labor even more visible.

After reordering his “gay painted plumes disorderid” (36.4), and refiguring his “feathers fowle disfigured” (36.7), Braggadochio’s assembly is precarious. Fearing Belphoebe’s own *ornamenta*, Braggadochio’s comparative images—what Artegal will call his “borrowed plumes”—threaten to fall again into disarray. Belphoebe saves him by an act of interpellation (that he will soon give her cause to regret): “All haile Sir knight” is an abstraction that proceeds from a comparative judgment, “As all the like.” “All haile Sir knight” is an act of interpellation that compares itself to (and understands itself as interchangeable with) greetings issued to all knights everywhere. It recognizes Braggadochio only insofar as he is like or is a likeness. We might, therefore, revise an Aristotelian conception of the simile’s slow thinking. As Spenser exacerbates the simile’s pace by repeating its syntactical “page”—“So shakes off shame,” (36.9) “So when her goodly visage he beheld” (37.1)—he

dramatizes a momentary temporal resistance to an abstraction no more monstrous (and, in *The Faerie Queene*, no less monstrous) than direct address.

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