AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

ALLEGORY AND INTERPRETATION AFTER THE PROTESTANT
REFORMATION: *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS* AND ITS ANTECEDENTS

by
ELSIE MICHEL LABBAN

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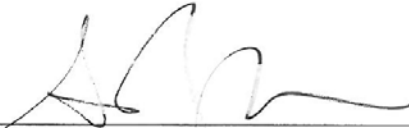at the American University of Beirut

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Elsie Michel Labban   for   Master of Arts

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Title: Allegory and Interpretation After the Protestant Reformation: *The Pilgrim's Progress* and its Antecedents

This study will trace the evolution of allegory from the Medieval to the Protestant Reformation, through a consideration of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. I will address the manner in which Puritan writers, despite great ambivalence if not open hostility to forms of allegorical representation, adapted the tropes of medieval allegory to serve their social and political ends. This thesis will explore the meaning and history of allegory to suggest how religious forces, both Roman Catholic as well as Protestant, have molded and formed these techniques to adapt to a diversity of literary contexts and purposes. It will show how allegory goes through a journey, much like that of Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, that pushes and pulls on the strings of technique, structure, and use of the term in order to reach a point where a text holds authority over meaning and interpretation within itself.

How is allegory able to be used in the mystical writings of ancient Greek philosophers, and then by the literalists of the Protestant Reformation? How did allegory adapt to these polar contexts? Is allegory a religious literary trope or a secular one? Why did writers as John Bunyan use a trope based on dual meaning to teach a hermeneutics of a single truth? Such questions will be considered and answered, as the project attempts to present a brief survey of the history of allegory from ancient Greece to 16th century BCE England. After highlighting the malleability of allegory throughout history, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* will be closely studied in light of the re-defined allegorical trope. I will argue that Bunyan does not contradict the literalism of meaning and interpretation of Scripture, but rather that allegory has been able to adapt to the theological hermeneutics of Bunyan and other Lutherans by attributing its dual meanings to a single truth. I will also present the discovery that the ways in which Protestant writers used allegory, was not with the intent to encourage fanciful reading, or double meaning. Rather, they deployed allegory so as to contain and restrict meaning. The close study of *The Pilgrim's Progress* will reveal how Protestant views of allegory favored one interpretation of the book. However, readers are able to find that both meanings in allegory- the literal and the implied- hold a certain truth be it that of this world or that of the divine.

CONTENTS

To Michel- a father who went to the heavens so that I may look up.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The interest which scholars have had in allegory is far ranging and deep. Many studies have been carried out on this particular mode of writing, and its roots as well as effects. It has been studied in a diversity of contexts- historical, political, social, religious etc… However, the mystery that it remains to uphold in its two-fold interpretation kept it on an elite, and yet not always desirable, shelf along with other forms of literature that have served purposes beyond literary edification or entertainment.

When I first thought of venturing into the world of allegory, I was childishly attracted to its complexity and imagery. So quickly did I realize that what most people understood and saw in allegory was merely the tip of the iceberg. The more I researched and studied, the more I saw allegory to have a life of its own, that I could only observe and follow through. It belonged to no one, and surly refused to be characterized to any. Questions of how it adapted, reformed, and carried through kept crossing my mind. What was allegory? What distinguished it from other forms of writing? Why has it always been at one end of a political or religious polarity? What is the driving force that powers this trope and its interpretation? Why have certain figures been afraid of its interpretation? Then, there came the question of the particular religious context of allegory. It was used in Biblical Scripture, and yet Protestantism opposed it vehemently. Why was that? How did allegory both infiltrate this literal mode of thought and still harbor enemies?

Allegory had become the topic of discussion during post Reformation times. Martin Luther and John Calvin, among others, opposed this trope, or acknowledged the great

delicacy with which it needed to be dealt with. However, John Bunyan freely adopted allegory into his religious writings and did so quite ingeniously. The question of why arises. Why did Bunyan use allegory to relay Protestant beliefs? What was his purpose in joining these relatively polar worlds? Also, how did allegory adapt to and fit into a literal mode of thought? What core characteristics of this trope changed and what remained constant, while molding into Reformative thought?

This project aims at answering the latter questions while going in depth through the nature and history of allegory, which serve as the hidden part of the iceberg. After having disclosed the nature of the allegorical trope, I will surface up and re-address the issue of John Bunyan's use of allegory in his post Reformation writing, in light of what I have seen. The study will begin with a review of some of the characteristics and definitions of allegory. Following, will be an extensive survey of the chronological history of how allegory developed from the 8th century BC by early Greek philosophers, leading to the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century AD. The project will end with an in depth revision of *The Pilgrim's Progress*- highlighting the areas where allegory has taken most interest in appearing and adapting.

This study will help in better understanding a literary trope that has been for long dwarfed under a restrictive view. I will endeavor to disclose certain unnoticed fragments of allegory that have been overlooked, in attempt to portray the malleability of the trope and its ability to adapt. The aim is to prove how allegory has not necessarily changed through time, but by tracing the history, we can understand and value its flexibility as a rhetorical tool. In doing so, I will prove that the Protestant view of allegory does not contradict itself and can accept allegory- as it did in *The Pilgrim's Progress* among a handful of other texts,

and showed that it was not an abnormal mode for Protestant discourse. I will present the ways in which Protestant writers used allegory not in the intent of double meaning, but rather, to contain and restrict meaning under their control. A re-reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress* will better display the deployment of allegory as a form of restriction rather of interpretation, as opposed to that of freedom of thought and reading.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis circles around the historical trajectory of allegory in light of a particular exemplary text known as *The Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan. Though the focus of this study is allegorical exegesis and the trope itself, Bunyan's text holds an important position in the process. To better understand my position, I will attempt to provide a well rounded and selective review of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, from the perspective of others who have observed it before me. I will also provide a brief and yet collective review of the allegorical trope as a literary mode of writing.

Many studies have been carried out on John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Under the intent of common critique or religious discernment, authors have written countless articles with this particular text in mind. John Bunyan has long been considered a man of many literary successes and equal religious achievements. He lived, what can be considered as, a pious life after his reformation into a Puritan. Adapting to Protestant understandings of the Christian faith, he wrote many pamphlets and short stories that helped express his religious experience and desire to preach his beliefs. Bunyan was, like St. Paul, St. Augustine, and Martin Luther a latecomer to the faith. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is one of his most prominent texts, which gained both religious and literary fame. It was an amalgamation of linguistic technique that ventured into use of allegory, as well as Puritan hermeneutics.

According to Julie Campbell, *The Pilgrim's Progress* has influenced the novelistic techniques of the centuries that followed. Thus, it can be safely said that the Bunyan's

literary influence exceeds the time period during which he wrote this particular text. He

used methods that were not commonly used during his time, and possibly even frowned

upon by the Church of England or his Protestant counterparts. *The Illustrated Magazine of*

Art mentions that:

> …John Bunyan is the first who has mingled narrative and dialogue together- a mode of writing very engaging to the reader, who, in the most interesting passages, finds himself admitted, as it were, into the company, and present at the conversation. (285)

Campbell points out that Bunyan's writing becomes personalized under his claim that his

narrative was "Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream," as is excerpted from the title of

the book. James Montgomery is quoted in *The Illustrated Magazine of Art,* saying that

Bunyan's representation of:

> …his story under the similitude of a dream, enabled him to portray with all the liveliness of reality the scenes which passed before him. It makes the reader himself, like the author, a spectator of all that occurs; thus giving him a personal interest in the events, an individual sympathy for the … sufferers. (285)

Bunyan was considered "…the first of allegorists as Demosthenes is the first of orators,

or Shakespeare the first of dramatists…" by *The Illustrated Magazine of Art.* In a central

piece on John Bunyan featured in the afore mentioned magazine issued in 1853, the writer

claims that while "…other allegorists have shown great ingenuity… no other allegorist has

ever been able to touch the heart, and to make abstractions objects of terror, of pity, and of

love."

Julie Campbell has labeled Bunyan's work as being a quest narrative. She continues to

explain that a:

> …quest narrative has a very long pedigree and has proved elastic enough to allow for myriad interpretations and re-workings, changes of emphases and direction. From Homer's *Odyssey* to Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, from

> *Huckleberry Finn* to *The Waste Land* or *The Great Gatsby*, the quest has been used to convey classical, cultural, Christian, and secular meanings and has often provided a vehicle for a reinterpretation of one context in terms of another - for example, a classical, pre- Christian belief system in terms of a Christian. (285)

Being placed under such a label brings to light the connotative additives such as the religious explanations, and socio-historical implications that are placed upon the writer and the narrative itself.

Bunyan writes *The Pilgrim's Progress* from a point of view that he calls "practical Christianity", which is known as the Puritan system of salvation (Golder 327). However, Harold Golder continues to explain that, from "…the viewpoint of pure narrative, the story is a series of situations from the romances" (Golder 327). He explains that the stories which were "…centered around Bunyan's Christian heroes are the conventional episodes of romantic fiction" (Golder 325). Golder adds that his text was "…close to chivalric episodes, in diction and in action" (Golder 325-326). In his opinion, it was the presence of giants and monsters "…and not the important theological and moral truths, that made *The Pilgrim's Progress,* for many generations, a rival of *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe* in the affections of English and American children" (Golder 330). The chivalric tales are as "…important in the genesis of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as that of the *Faerie Queene*" (Golder 330-331).

Thonias Hyatt Luxon added that Bunyan was "…primarily interested in the epistemology of allegorical language" (Luxon 73). Campbell, as mentioned in her article *Pilgrim's Progress/Regress/Stasis*, believed that the authority that Bunyan's text carried was:

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> …shared by no other text of its time and culture, and this authority, as both an informing and an interpretative context, gives Bunyan's text its foundation, its dynamics, its raison d'etre, and its meaning. (139)

Nonetheless, to be able to truly understand John Bunyan and his work, one must consider the influential personal and historical context during which his literary work, and himself, were molded. Golder explains that a large amount of Bunyan's private life and inner man have been kept from the public. "Consequently we see him as his flock of admiring Nonconformists saw him- an honest man, an upright man, a saintly man" (Golder 324). Campbell relays that "Bunyan was writing at a time when there was a dramatic schism in England which had resulted in the Civil War of 1642-46, a split which had not been satisfactorily healed following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660" (Campbell 138). This separation was not only political, but had extended to a religious schism of churches, resulting in the Church of England and the Protestant movement being the two major polarities of the Christian faith.

Campbell explains that Bunyan had not been at peace with the authorities of his time. Being a preacher who did not wish to withhold his voice from preaching his beliefs, he got himself into trouble and ended up in jail. She maintains that, "…in his narrative he counters…" these political and religious forces "…with a "higher" authority which confirms his faith: the Bible" (Campbell 139). Dayton Haskin explicates in his article, *"The Pilgrim's Progress" in the Context of Bunyan's Dialogue with the Radicals*, that "…although he was, like many Dissenting ministers after the Restoration, silenced and thrown into prison, Bunyan aligned himself with conservative Reformation theology" (74).

Luxon clarified that Protestant theology had shaped both Bunyan's mind as well as *The Pilgrim's Progress* in turn. "The central issues of Protestant theology are, not surprisingly,

the central concern of Bunyan's allegory" (Luxon 73). Bunyan had allowed his religious faith to take over his life and his writing. He found answers and many raised questions in his dive into Protestantism. He studied the Bible very thoroughly, and adapted from it continuously in his writing. However, Luxon explains that the Scripture passages that have been quoted or adapted from the Bible in Bunyan's work are themselves the agents; "Bunyan simply "suffers" them" (Luxon 77).

Many praised Bunyan for his bold stand against the religious authorities of his time. However, some went as far as to consider him to be a "hypocrite"; a man who preached one thing and wrote another (Golder 324). In his article, *John Bunyan's Hypocrisy*, Harold Golder considered it:

> "…a relief to discover that John Bunyan was a hypocrite. In one respect he was a whited sepulcher, filled not with dead men's bones, but with abundant life and a very human weakness for a pleasure that his stern code denied him. How Bunyan indulged that weakness is a fascinating glimpse into the intricacies of the Puritan mind." (324)

Golder found honesty and humaneness in this 'hypocrisy', as he labeled it. It served as the very thing that the people were attracted to. Bunyan's weakness for and appreciation of literature brought forth the great crowd of admirers and quieted many of his radical critics.

Dayton Haskin explicates Bunyan's attraction to the radicals, from whom he emerged and yet digressed when it came to literary expectation. Bunyan was interested in "…correlating ancient biblical truths with more recent religious experience." Haskin continues to say that *The Pilgrim's Progress* offered "…a model for reconciling past and present that he inherited from [Martin] Luther" (Haskin 74). It can be said that Bunyan had attempted to bring together past and present, religious and historical within one literary work, aimed at the bettering of mankind. Haskin claims that, "*The Pilgrim's Progress*

eschews interest in historical referentiality almost altogether; its fictionalizing method

implies that Bunyan, like the radicals, thought the real meaning of Scripture lies in its

capacity for teaching moral and religious lessons, not in its record of historical truths"

(Haskin 92-93). Though fiction and romanticism were not aligned with religious writings,

at the time, Bunyan thought it ought to be otherwise. "A fictional story can re-present the

Bible's meaning, and the author presents his allegory as a reiteration of gospel-truth"

(Heskin 93). This served to create the theological novelty of the book and retain its power

to be disguised even from Bunyan himself (Heskin 93).

Marian M. Walsh holds, in her article *Introducing "Pilgrim's Progress,"* that what

constitutes *The Pilgrim's Progress* to be "…an allegory is that the hero represents any man

or woman on his way through life to his heavenly home, the Celestial City" (400).

Bunyan's work was considered as more than just a novel form of spiritual or religious

writing. Its allegorical structure was an adaptation from medieval allegory with an addition

of more contemporary technique in a prominent religious context. To better understand the

importance and efficacy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, one must take a closer look at allegory

and its transition through time.

Allegorical poets of the Middle Ages were assumed to write with a primary motive of

"…writing for the people: something for their soul's need" (Baugh 164). Thus, allegory

became to be perceived as a moral form of writing that had fear, as the dominant feeling

invoked upon. In turn, allegory became an easy way for illiterate people to easily

understand a religious message thought to be complex. This allegorical motive "…implies

from the outset normalizing, projecting on a surface, crystallizing… [and it] supplied a very

earnest craving of the medieval mind" (Huizinga 205). The peasantry of the medieval

period can poor and mostly illiterate. According to most historical accounts, their rough and laborious lifestyle was too demanding for them to trouble themselves with complex issues of theology and the such .They "…were folk hardly penetrable to abstractions of any kind, and confronting the refinements of medieval theology with the stubborn passive resistance of a mind already brimful with other cares" (Coulton 267). Therefore, allegory in the Middle Ages, was used to popularize moral lessons by presenting the material in comprehensible and simple ways, which resorted to constant use of fear.

Rudolph Bultmann raised the issue of stepping away from medieval allegorical conceptions. In the words of Bloomfield, Bultmann claimed that "…in order to get to the core of the Christian message, the mythological elements in the New Testament must be eliminated. We no longer live in a world of demons, of astrological powers, of magic, of miracles. These elements are stumbling blocks for moderns." (qtd. in Bloomfield 304)

Thus, with the Reformation, perceptions and understanding of allegory shifted. Martin Luther "…set the pattern for Protestant hermeneutics when he deplored the extravagances of patristic and medieval allegorizing. Casting out the whole system of fourfold interpretation, he repeatedly insisted on the sole legitimacy of the literal historical sense" (Haskin 81). Haskin argues that, with Luther, there came a more modern and filtered view of allegory; one which was aware of and resistant to fourfold interpretations of the Bible. To quote Luther, "In the schools of theologians it is a well-known rule that Scripture is to be understood in four ways, literal, allegoric, moral, anagogic. But if we wish to handle Scripture aright, our one effort will be to obtain… [a passage which] has one clear, definite, and true sense of its own. All others are but doubtful and uncertain opinions"(qtd. in Farrar 327).

In other words, according to reformist ideology, when interpreting one must avoid allegory, "…that he may not wander in idle dreams." (Farrar 328). "Allegories are empty speculations, and as it were the scum of Holy Scripture." (Farrar 328). George L. Scheper caries on to say, in his article, *Reformation Attitudes Towards Allegory and the Song of Songs*, that Calvin moved "…forward the doctrine of one plain literal sense with even greater thoroughness than Luther and rejected allegorical interpretation even when invoked for purely ornamental and homiletic purposes". (Scheper 551)

According to Scheper, Protestant commentaries to literary works, Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* being among them, opposed the following:

> …papist and monkish interpretations, that is, allegorizations that reflect the ecclesiastical structures of the Catholic Church or the monastic milieu (e.g., the enclosed garden as the monastic cloister), replacing them with allegorizations reflecting Protestant ecclesiastical structure, vocabulary, and doctrine (such as justification by faith or the imputed righteousness of Christ). (557)

Today, however, Morton W. Bloomfield explains that "…one of the basic functions of allegory is to make literary documents relevant." He roots the allegorical method back to Alexandria when it was used to interpret Homer, and later on in Palestine to interpret the Old Testament, "…so that it could be seen as the foreshadowing and prediction of Christ or the future kingdom of God." (Bloomfield 301) In this sense, allegory becomes "…the seeing of the significance of a literary work beyond its meaning." (Bloomfield 301). Bloomfield points out the central importance of words in a literary work, and explains that if we knew the language in which a work was written in, then we can acquire meaning (Bloomfield 301). "The significance of that meaning is what may be called allegory. The problem of interpretation is the problem of allegory-whether historical or ahistorical." (Bloomfield 301)

Allegory becomes "…the method of modernization, that which has made, makes or keeps modern those literary documents of the past which can bear such a load of continual reinterpretation" (Bloomfield 302). Medieval theology is based on the notion that one of the critical elements of allegory is moral conflict. Allegory becomes the depiction of the internal conflict that each of its representations hold within themselves. In relevance to this idea, *The Pilgrim's Progress* can be easily seen to relay an amalgamation of both medieval and post Reformation perceptions of allegory.

Though some would claim that allegory "…was consciously used in pre-Renaissance texts to preserve important truths in messages understandable only to the wise, and hidden from the ignorant (Quilligan 24), it was not so for Bunyan. For his allegorical account served to clarify and possibly even simplify a representation of every man's journey.

Some critics, like C. S. Lewis, who came after the Reformation, have attempted to separate allegory, apart from symbolism; "…reserving the former for what we would call personification-allegory" (Bloomfield 304). Not many have kept to this distinction, although some critics whom would agree with Coleridge, have viewed allegory negatively, as being more fanciful than imaginative (Bloomfield 304). Bloomfield explains how allegories, be they literary or artistic, usually refer to "…something more than texts which contain symbols or emblems. They possess a level of significance in the work deliberately emphasized and manipulated by the writer and in principle detachable from the text" (Bloomfield 305). Thus, pointing out the necessity of revisiting Bunyan's work in the new light of allegory and its interpretation.

One commentator, Maureen Quilligan, claimed in 1979 that we lived in an 'allegorical age' that had "…been running for some time, and have had a particular currency in much recent art criticism and theory" (Quilligan 155). Gail Day points out, in the article, *Allegory: Between Deconstruction and Dialectics*, that "…most commentators were content to explore the character of allegory in its modern and traditional forms, and to draw out certain ignored values in allegorical literature" (Quilligan 105). In light of that approach, I intend to revisit John Bunyan's allegorical works. Questions of intent and of method will be researched. Such questions will be inclusive, but not exclusive of, why Bunyan wrote his dream narrative in allegorical form? Was it to protect, conceal, or possibly reveal his thematic motive? Having learned that Bunyan was familiar with medieval literature, and more specifically middle-age allegory, one comes to question why he chose to use this literary technique in a Reformation and Post-Reformation period. Following the questioning of Bunyan's motives, come the inquiries of how *The Pilgrim's Progress* served as a bridge between ancient and modern allegory. How did it connect religion and secularism in the realm of literature? What is it that bonded this schism and why or how was Bunyan such a prominent counterpart of that connection?

The following study will go in depth within the realms of allegory and John Bunyan's literary mind. Allegory will be closely examined in light of historical context, and then placed in retrospective of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. I intend on tracing the evolution of allegory throughout a selective historical journey, reaching Bunyan's time. In retrospect, *The Pilgrim's Progress* will be readdressed in light of the focal characteristics highlighted in the latter historical overview.

CHAPTER III

DEFINING ALLEGORY

This section of the project will attempt to give a selective preview of the different perspectives on allegory and its counterparts. In doing so, I will attempt to give a panoramic view of the diversified definitions that allegory has come to hold. This outlook will help clarify the understanding under which I will continue this study of analyzing allegorical exegesis.

Allegory is more complex in the way it came to be, than it is in the form that it exists in. It can be categorized literarily as well as historically. I will attempt to give an extensive overview of both forms of perspective while pointing out relatively prominent texts that exemplify these labels and show allegory in action. To begin with, allegory can be perceived in a literary and linguistic form. According to Jon Whitman in his book *Allegory: The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique*, allegory can be divided into two major forms—that of interpretation and that of composition. "Interpretative allegory claims to discover the truth hidden beneath a text" (Whitman 3). Whitman traces this thought back to the 6th century BCE with Homer where he explains the existence of a divergence between apparent and actual meaning of a text and yet a correspondence between the two (Whitman 2-3). This form of allegory would perceive a text as merely a "…fiction of the true meaning" (Whitman 3). Thus, in the interpretation of such a text, one

would depart from the apparent meaning in attempt to sustain a correspondence through reinterpretation (Whitman 4).

The second tradition of allegory according to Whitman is composition allegory. While interpretive allegory holds a more philosophical approach, this form applies a more grammatical or linguistic technique (Whitman 4). This form "…personifies abstract concepts and fashions a narrative around them" (Whitman 4). Thus, personification becomes a prominent literary element in the production of an allegorical text. This term carries a very similar dilemma that allegory retains—a disparity between "…reconciling the fiction personification with the human personality it wishes to represent" (Whitman 272). The distinction between fiction and fact preoccupies the technique and creates the manifold layers of meaning and interpretation.

Symbolism and personification seem to go hand in hand with allegory and the process of interpretation. All three being considered as forms of literary techniques, overlap and amalgamate to create a piece of fiction that seems to retain an unfaltering truth. Symbolism comes from the core of the word *symbol* which refers to a pictorial representation of a more complex idea. Thus, in the process of creating this dual world between object and symbol, a parallel plane of fiction and fact are simultaneously created. The fictitious world becomes a representation of the factual existence, and retains as well as mimics many of its qualities and characteristics. Very similarly in personification, the personified object or idea represents a factual person, or characteristic thereof, and creates a duality of the truth. The duality of the truth emerges because there is the factual truth which is the existence of the object, as well as the truth of the existence of the fictional representation. Both being their own versions of reality, symbolism and personification

come to find balance in allegory, which provides a field where truth retains several faces and meaning is more diverse than is presented in a mere symbol.

According to Robertson in his article on symbolism and allegory in medieval gardens, there "…is a difference between a work whose 'symbolism' resides solely in the things referred to and a work which contains personified abstractions" (Robertson 40). Thus, he brings to light the depth and complexity of understanding both symbolism and personification. One must try to comprehend the three dimensional model of allegory as being a plane which is the result of a complex interplay between the two distinct forms of literary techniques. Allegory contains personified figures and presents them in a narrative context, some might say formulated on an already existing historical plot, while relaying them in a symbolic ideological framework. In other words, allegory presents characters that carry out a story. This whole of the parts becomes symbolic of a greater existing truth external from the fictional world allegory has played out. We see this interplay in texts such *The Roman De La Rose*. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, authors of *The Roman De La Rose*, both "…experiment with the claims of philosophical truth in poetry" (Kamath and Copeland 136). The role commonly upheld by a human was now replaced by nature (Kamath and Copeland 137). The allegorizing is not only on the level of theme, but also of character. In *The Roman De La Rose*, the Rose is presented in an allegorical form, having the role of a botanic flower, as well as the implied materialization of a possible woman being desired. Nature too serves a dual role of setting and character- where every tree, every object presented in the garden is made to have more than the literal meaning it is displayed in. Even certain characters are actually the embodiment of characteristics- such as Courtesy. This is a technique that will become very common, and used in other

allegorical writings to be discussed in this study, where characters hold a weight far more than a role.

Coleridge explains that allegory is the "…translation of abstract notions into picture language…" and that is where symbolism comes into play, by serving as the pictorial representation in linguistic form (qtd. in Cohn 181). Symbols, in addition, are said to carry an unmediated and original sense that roots the truth back to its cosmic source (Cohn 181). Thus, this understanding gives allegory factual meaning in interpretation of the symbols that it retains. Noah D Guynn, in his article *Allegory and Sexual Ethics in the High Middle Ages,* designates allegory as being representative of a "symbolist mentality" (17).

Moreover, Edmund Spenser asserts that allegory is the symbolization of a philosophical view and goes hand in hand with the creation of fiction (Honig 180). As explained above, allegory becomes the battle ground where truth meets fictional creation. Some have reduced allegory to mere fictional literature and, in doing so they make the mistake of overlooking the truth that lies in the symbolic representations. Unlike other forms of fiction, allegory extends across to the world of fact and truth. Within its manifold interpretations, one is able to uncover a truth in the symbols it represents, or the ideas and objects it personifies.

Bloomfield explained that allegorical works of literature that are symbolic in nature hold meaning beyond the text which contains these symbols. They retain a prominence within the complete work which is "…deliberately emphasized and manipulated by the writer…" (Bloomfield 305). Bernard Lamy, along the lines of the eighteenth century AD, wrote with reference to medieval symbolic literature, that "[a] work of art is not only what it says, but also what it is" (Lamy 363). There lies a truth in the existence of allegorical

works, layered underneath the various emblems and symbols that it is represented as. These representations are "…equated with the meanings lying outside the narrative itself" (Brooks and Warren 556). Through personification, abstract qualities are "…treated in the narrative as though they were real persons" (Brooks and Warren 557). An example of how personification abstracts an externally existing truth can be seen by referring to *Piers Plowman*. This medieval text exemplifies the personification of the abstract trait "Sloth" and presents it as a real person "…all beslobbered with two slimy eyes" (Langland 43). The qualities of slothfulness are depicted through unappealing clothes, and an apathetic manner of speech, all acted out in the human disposition of laziness. Therefore, the personification of the abstract characteristic takes the form of a fictional creation of a person. Nonetheless, this personification does not lose its truth in reformation and recreation in the narrative, but only takes another form of representation.

Allegory is a genre on its own, and does not systematically become characterized under fiction. Its counterparts— symbolism and personification—allow it be a separate form of literature which analysts cannot but attribute truth and meaning to. Allegory, in all its shapes and colors, must be deciphered and read into, in order to acquire the diverse and hidden meanings it holds. Critics of such forms of literature have approached allegory from several angles and with different perspectives. One of the major approaches is one that looks into allegory in light of historical representation. The obvious approach would be to view allegory through literal interpretation. However, history plays a very important role in understanding allegory, both in context and apart from it.

There exists a certain triangular polar force between allegory, fiction, and history. After having explained the correlation between allegory and fiction, I will now explain the

connection between history and the other two polarities. History, in itself, is considered the relation of past truth. It is ideally the objective relaying of past happenings and holds a certain immovable factuality in the physical documentation that it comes in. With this factuality comes a form of authority and correctness which lies in the commonly accepted truth it culminates.

Historically speaking, allegory can be traced as far back as Homer. Although, Homer never really used the allegorical form of writing in any of his works, he did inspire its essence and the ideology behind it. An incipient form of allegory was derived from his "twofold perspective" that worked to create the allegorical traditions of "…one procedure seeking to analyze the constituents of the divine world, the other seeking to articulate the categories of the human one" (Whitman 14). Soon after, a more Stoic interpretation of Homer's dual perspective helped develop allegory, around the last centuries BCE (Whitman 31). This form of exegesis brought with it a radical approach to philosophy and language (Whitman 31).

With the turning of the centuries however, Judaism and Christianity became a more prominent way of thought, and influenced the process of explication. Thus, allegory in that light, gained a tendency of disrupting philosophical and rhetorical norms, which can be said to have even turned allegory against itself (Whitman 58). However, in the process of the destruction of past frameworks, allegory also recreated new ones, carrying out radical acts of reconstruction simultaneously (Whitman 58). One of the primary shifts was based on a Jewish contribution to Christian exegesis, which lay in the shift of the kind of texts that were allegorized in earlier times (Whitman 60). Allegory began to include the mythology of the ancient Egyptians as well as the Scriptures of Jews and Christians (Whitman 59).

Allegorists of these early centuries gave "…self-conscious expression to their own interpretive interplay by their developing doctrine of a once single, now diversified revelation" (Whitman 59). Such exegetes, claims Whitman, sought to "…qualify rival interpretations and to refine their own perspectives" (Whitman 59). Therefore, philosophy in turn becomes the belittled in comparison to Scripture, while Scripture gains its authoritative position as the common truth (Whitman 61).

With the thorough study of Scripture in light of philosophy and interpretation, the concept of the 'symbol' came into the picture. The 'symbol' being used in an allegorical context, first arose during Homer's interpretation of *Cave of the Nymphs,* and came to suggest the "…obscurity of the material cosmos and the mystery of the intelligible one" (Whitman 64). In Christian context, such symbols were inclusive of concepts extracted from the Old and New Testaments. The 'symbol' was thought to enrich Christian exegesis (Whitman 64). Through these formulated symbols and their intertwined forms of representation, came a "…strategy of typological interpretation" (Whitman 67). With it came a Pauline understanding of Christian theology, which was based on the concept that with the sin of one man, being Adam, there came the fall of mankind, and through one man, being Christ, there was total redemption (Whitman 67). Augustine adapts this Pauline exhortation and qualifies his own interpretations of allegorical exegesis. He centers on the importance of the Scriptures and their centrality. Reason alone, began to lose its authority in interpretation. It no longer was considered as the "…arbiter of the true meaning of divinely revealed wisdom" (Whitman 79). "The final criterion for determining the literal or figurative meaning of a passage was rather a broad rule of faith in basic religious truths"

(Whitman 79). Augustine emphasized that what a text signified should signify another in turn, "…until all signs eventually disappear in God" (Whitman 79).

One of the aims of bringing spiritual depth into the material world was to help bring the Scriptures into an illiterate and possibly still pagan-influenced society. As mentioned before, the medieval peasantry was underprivileged, illiterate, and brutalized by their rigorous life to engage in philosophical contemplation. According to Bloomfield, one of the very essential functions of allegory was to make texts relevant (Bloomfield 87). That would mean that one must view allegory as giving a text importance beyond its literal meaning (Bloomfield 301). He continues to explain that historically, the allegorical method "…was developed in Alexandria to interpret Homer *properly*, and somewhat later there and in Palestine to interpret 'properly' the Old Testament, so that it could be seen as the foreshadowing and prediction of Christ or the future kingdom of God" (Bloomfield 301). Allegory developed with a persuasive purpose, being edification and instruction to relay moral lessons to the masses.

Allegory began to be used to teach and edify people of the moral lessons that the Scriptures held. The extended metaphor which allegory was based on, helped simplify complex theological concepts through "…a narrative in which the objects and persons are equated with meanings lying outside the narrative itself" (Brooks and Warren 556). And through personification, abstractions were "…treated in the narrative as though they were real persons" (Brooks and Warren 557). Such moral allegory was based on fear, which was a prominent emotion that preachers evoked for spiritual instruction. Thus, medieval allegory popularized theology by representing information in a simpler more comprehensible manner for the masses.

However, with the turn of the centuries, Catholic Christian interpretations to allegory did not remain as the only forms of Christian exegesis. With the Protestant Reformation, and the separation from the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century AD, came new ideas of Scriptural interpretation. Martin Luther urged a return back to the importance and value of the literal word, most specifically in the context of Scripture. He also encouraged literacy through his translation of the Bible. With the masses being encouraged to do their own reading and some form of independent interpretation, allegory began to take a new shape.

To begin with, Luther cast out the whole system of multifaceted interpretations, and greatly insisted on returning to the legitimacy of the "literal historical sense" (Haskin 90). In the words of Luther:

> In the schools of theologians it is a well- known rule that Scripture is to be understood in four ways, literal, allegoric, moral, anagogic. But if we wish to handle Scripture aright, our one effort will be to obtain unum, simplicem, germanum, et certum sensum literalem…Each passage has one clear, definite, and true sense of its own. All others are but doubtful and uncertain opinions. (qtd. in Scheper 551)

This reformative movement discouraged allegory as it were understood in previous centuries. It saw them as "…empty speculations, and as it were the scum of Holy Scripture… Allegory is a sort of beautiful harlot, who proves herself specially seductive to idle men….Allegories are awkward, absurd, invented, obsolete, loose rags" (Farrar 328). John Calvin, too, carried forward the doctrine of one "…literal sense with even greater thoroughness than Luther and rejected allegorical interpretation even when invoked for purely ornamental and homiletic purposes" (Scheper 551). Protestant commentaries to texts began to oppose "…what they called papist and monkish interpretations, that is, allegorizations that reflect the ecclesiastical structures of the Catholic Church or the

monastic milieu… replacing them with allegorizations reflecting Protestant ecclesiastical structure, vocabulary, and doctrine" (Scheper 557).

Nonetheless, allegory did not become extinct in this religious literary context. It found its way into religious writing, and rebuilt a new definition to its multi-layered interpretive mode. "The original and authorizing pre-text of all Christian allegory is of course the Bible, functioning not as a source of ideas so much as a source of power, authority, and the truth the allegorist reinvigorates" (Swaim 22). Thus, writers continued to use allegory, yet acknowledged the eminence of meaning being rooted in the literal interpretation of Scripture. Many allegorists have even gone so far as to allocate privilege to the Bible at the expense of threatening the autonomy of their narratives (Swaim 23).

Protestantism could not diminish the duality of understanding that existed at the core of Christian theology. Based on Pauline texts, which refer to the letters written in the New Testament by Paul the Apostle, Luxon discusses the re-birth of a Christian, and "…he contends that Protestants or Puritans interpreted this world as a shadow of the next, locating reality out-side of time and space and reducing history to the status of the unreal. Thus to be reborn is to become real; to be unregenerate is to be a mere figure of the real" (Robinson 629). In this perspective, Protestant theology acknowledges an allegorical form of perception, which lies in the duality of the existence of reality. Under this umbrella, allegorists continued to write their metaphorical texts, with the understanding that they are merely mimicking a biblical form with the aim of correct Christian exegesis and praise of Scriptural morals and beliefs, as did John Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Allegory, as seen in the latter review of the multiple definitions and perspectives on the matter, is a trope that carries more than the simplistic technique of exegesis. It holds

meaning in the process of attributing meaning to certain symbols it creates. Allegory also

connects polar worlds as that of the carnal and that of the divine, or even that of the literal

and that of the symbolic. In doing so, it creates a universe for itself, where its rules do not

coincide with those of other tropes. It has been used in a variety of frameworks and

contexts, however, has been seen to adapt to whatever plain it is put in. That will be further

discussed in the following chapter, as allegory will be reviewed chronologically. I will

highlight certain historical focal points where this trope picked up long lasting influences

which impacted its formulation and current state.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ALLEGORY

The general purpose of carrying out this extensive study into allegory and its interplay with Protestant and Medieval counterparts is to highlight the malleable nature of this literary trope. To better understand its nature and how it became what we see it as in post Reformation times, one must have a clearer idea of its background and where it has come from. This chapter aims to trace the ways in which allegory has been used for either poetic or edifying purposes from the time of the ancient Greek philosophers such as Homer, towards the Reformation at around the 16th century AD. In order to display the adaptable nature of allegory, I will identify certain prominent historical and ideological influences that serve as the foundation that the allegorical trope was built upon. This chronological study will also display the interrelationships among the differing influences of philosophy, theology and politics upon allegory spanning across time and various studies. Hence, this study illuminates how allegory adapts to the varying, and at times contradictory, fields of literary expression. By carrying out this selective historical study, I will show just how malleable allegory is as a literary trope and rhetorical tool.

Historically speaking, allegory can be traced as far back as when poetry was first read (Obbink15). Poetry was read with the expectation that its surface concealed registers of meaning (Obbink 15). The process and practice of deciphering and translating the underlying meanings within a text came to later be known as allegorical reading. Thus, the

goal of the allegorical reader became to set out and find what a particular poem means. In turn, the poem itself became "a repository of hidden insight" (Obbink 15).

As early as the 8th century BCE, one is able to see evidence of a multi-faceted reading that digs deep into a text. The early Greek period that nurtured the philosophical works of literary geniuses, as Homer, can also be considered as the fertile grounds on which the seed of allegory slowly grew and, later on, thrived from. However, allegory as we know it today is not how it was perceived then. To begin with, it was not considered as an independent trope, as opposed to how allegory was later on identified. It was not perceived "as a self-conscious or distinct literary procedure" (Obbink 16). As such, the more progressive consideration of allegory as being the process "of composing personification fictions, in which characters are correlated to abstract ideas in a one-to-one correspondence" did not comply with early Greek conceptions of allegories or textual explications (Obbink 16).

Nonetheless, allegorical reading is evidently reflected within the textual fruits of the early Greek period. Dirk Obbink identifies several examples of allegory from the said time period. Such examples that served as the stepping-stone or template for later samples of allegory included Zeus's jars as referenced to in Homer's *Iliad*. The Hawk and the Nightingale found in Hesiod's *Work*s and Days also reflect characteristics of allegory. The "Ship of State" image found in Alcaeus's lyric fragments is yet another good example of the early forms of allegory (Obbink 16). These were personifications of abstractions that were portrayed in artistic representations holding more than the literal sense.

In relation to the latter examples, one can conclude that 'allegoresis' can be perceived as a "reading that looks for knowledge" (Obbink 17). During the early Greek

period, Sophia, or knowledge, was highly valued and revered. Philosophers aimed to achieve it. According to Plato, Sophists saw historical poets as ones who used poetry as a "screening device" to conceal a certain wisdom within the text they wrote (Obbink 17). This inspires the idea of poets being of a higher league- more intelligent than the common people. Allegoresis becomes the key that held the power to knowledge, well hidden within artistic poetry. Thus, we can see that in one of its earliest forms, allegory was seen as holding a superior position in literature. This will later be contrasted to the inferior status it held during the time of the Protestant Reformation and the great emphasis on Lutheran literalism- a time when literal meaning was revered at its highest.

However, poetic allegoresis was not only the technique of the artistic and those who were considered discerned- wise and all knowing of things not only of this world. A more systematic form of allegory came forth through Metrodorus of Lampsacus around the fifth century. He presented the idea of perceiving the gods as segments of a body while the divine heroes as parts of a universe (Obbink 18). In other words, allegory becomes a model for a biological organism with the aim of relating "parts to a whole, microcosm to macrocosm" (Obbink 18). This concept brought together an abstraction signified through concrete means, which reflected countless implied further abstract ideas. What started out as a simple signified and signifier became a complex procedure that entailed a transition from intangible and unattainable to tangible and comprehensible. But then taken further and looped back to the intangible through the agent of meaning. The act of ascribing meaning to the signified through the signifier became an elite process, able to be carried out only by the elect few who were considered wise and discerned.

This relationship between signifier and signified later became a prominent factor in justifying the use of allegory in Protestant literature. By having a clearer understanding of their intertwined relationship, one is able to understand how the interpretation of allegorical texts as such was justified, without taking away from the 'literal' meaning that the Puritan faith valued. In this sense, allegory brought the world of poetic interpretation and literary rhetoric together under common grounds. Nonetheless, in ancient understanding, both the signified and the signifier held a much loftier and universal post that helped integrate a scale of vision larger than to only allegorical build up allegory, but also included a skill of interpretation. This understanding of two major elements of symbol and what it symbolizes allowed for a process of exegesis that reflected meaning through a better and deeper understanding of the distinct counterparts. Thus, meaning became relayed not only through the greater message as a whole, but also through the individual parts that made up the allegory and their relationship with one another.

An appropriate example of such a process would be the allegorical reading of an Orphic poem by a Derveni commentator (Obbink 19). It discusses the origins of the gods by revealing the latest applications of scientific theories. In doing so, he aims at deriving "an extension of meaning from the text, drawing it into the sphere of the author's own interests, namely religion and cult" (Obbink 19). The commentator views the poem as being "ainigmatodes" or enigmatic , due to the certain references to incoherent cosmological elements as the god Zeus being interpreted as air or the sun being described as a form of generative element of genital organ (Obbink 19-20). In doing so, the commentator is creating equivalences and asserting them between abstractions and concrete elements. However, he does not stop there. He continues to expand into a "more fulsome

observation on the nature of the cosmos" (Obbink 20). Elements are explicated in their poetic context through allegoresis, but then returned back to their origin- the universe. This process brings to light the concept of everything coming from preexisting things, and places the mind at the center, giving it an "ontological priority to the whole" (Obbink 20). It coincides with Anaxagoras' belief of the mind being "the governing agency of the cosmos" (Obbink 20). This perspective of the mind also relates back to what was mentioned earlier on how constituents of an allegorical account can find unity in their relationship with one another, even on grounds that thrived on literal interpretation. In other words, even though Protestant theology attests to a unified truth, allegory can find its place in that framework, so long as it too acknowledges this single truth This Protestant ideology focusing on the unified powering agency was exemplified through Anaxagoras' conception of the governing power of the mind, which was placed at a focal point with all signifiers moving in a centripetal motion towards the single signified.

The latter account, of the power of the mind in the pursuit of meaning, exemplifies the role and the technique of the commentator as being an agent of allegoresis. Allegory, in this light, is a complex process which aims at relaying and revealing deep rooted meaning through parts of a concrete world, concealed through enigmatic abstractions, only to attempt to connect and represent the abstractions of the unfathomable cosmos- which is in fact the interplay between concrete physical features and abstract laws and frameworks. This is the very concept that St. Augustine among others, builds upon in justifying allegory as a suitable literary trope in the exegesis of the biblical Scriptures.

To put things back into perspective, allegory can be perceived to have become a middle ground between two polarities; one being the tangible world that we know, see, and

feel, and the other being the universe, which we have yet to completely understand. Allegoresis serves as the moving train that passes along the track of literary interpretation. One is able to lean towards a more concrete interpretation where meaning is carried through tangible objects. Or, one is also able to lean towards the opposite side of the spectrum where abstract meaning is actually a little more concrete and carnal as opposed to the enigmatic and unfathomable concepts of the cosmos, which allegory attempts to signify.

The commentator of the Orphic poem does not only exemplify the technique of connecting between parts and a whole, but also displays the role of etymology in the process of allegoresis. Etymology serves to ascertain meaning through possible derivations of words, thus giving the process of naming an authority accompanied with connective interpretations (Obbink 21). A name no longer is simply a name, but a reference to a deeper meaning that can be dug up through the sifting of shallow connections, revealing the roots that are its true source of meaning. In the context of the Orphic poem, Orpheus the poet understands names as having the ability to adapt to the reader, rather than being a fixed entity. In doing so, names are seen as a fluid entity which may carry various designations, accommodating to the audience. Therefore, just as there is a multiplicity of parts that unify in a whole, so do variant names find a similar referent (Obbink 21). This view of multiplicity finding unity is one entity which signifies the hidden reality beneath language and invites readers to interpret through allegoresis. It is also one which serves a prominent role in better understanding the role of names of the characters in a post Reformation allegorical text such as *The Pilgrim's Progress*- where each character holds a

name that serves to express a meaning beyond the character himself, but also play a part in developing the greater meaning of the text being signified.

Language plays a very important role in the creation and interpretation of allegory. Nonetheless, there are other factors in action during the process of relaying hidden meaning. Gorgias gives discourse and persuasion a certain discerning power, with an effect comparable to that of drugs (Obbink 22). He identifies specific emotions or feelings to poetry or speeches. In doing so, he generalizes understanding as opposed to having a more literal and specific interpretation of discourse (Obbink 22). Dirk Obbnik discusses Gorgias's perception of tragedy within this understanding of discourse. He explains that Gorgias "claimed that by means of stories and emotions, tragedy creates a deception in which the deceiver is more honest than the deceived, and the deceived is wiser than one who is not deceived" (Obbink 22). Deception becomes a natural condition, while honesty is a virtuous enlightenment not attainable by all. Emotion, here being tragedy, serves as a vehicle which relays a truth that is implied (Obbink 23). The power of discourse is presented through the ability to evoke collective emotions while relaying exegetical explanations through this irrational process.

In Plato's *Republic*, we are able to vividly see the interplay of emotions and the inexplicable effect of fleeting sentiments upon enlightenment in discourse. The use of laughter, crying, lamenting, and other excessive emotions were distracting and yet imperative to the hidden truth that these sentimental emotions were subtly relaying. Thus now, it can also be understood why there was great objection to the instruction of poetry and its effect on the moral character of the youth. In this light, poetry becomes a literary example of the Trojan Horse used by the Greeks to delude the people of Troy while they

transported powerful soldiers within a wooden hollow statue. This seemingly harmless

amicable gesture was in fact laden with a threatening reality. Similarly, allegorical poetry

can be seen as an emotional literary expression that acts as a vehicle for truth that is relayed

through a helpless and pathetic emotional display. Only the wise, according to the afore

mentioned view of exegesis, are able to discern the gravity of allegory and hidden meaning,

while the rest are left in a deception that symbols only go as deep as what they seemingly

signify. Where some, such as Plato and Aristotle, would view poetry as an artistic form of

expression to be admired as something distinct and very far from reality, others are able to

see it as the key to the hidden truth of the cosmos. When distinction is made between the

process of interpreting allegory and the depth of meaning, one will be able to begin to

fathom the complexity of the allegorical trope. In turn, its use even in a context that seems

to oppose allegoresis altogether, proves the complexity of allegory, connecting it to ancient

contexts, including that of Plato, who knew there was more to allegory than its symbols.

However, Plato and Aristotle's distrust and belittlement of the process of allegoresis

set them apart as philosophers, and categorized allegorical interpretation as philosophically

marginal (Most 27). However, the Hellenistic period introduced other schools of thought.

The Stoics- being influenced by Antisthenes and earlier thinkers- "…brought allegorical

interpretation from the margins of the philosophical enterprise to its center" (Most 27).

They, in turn, passed on allegory to the Western culture, with a new appraised perception of

it being indispensible to both poets and philosophers (Most 27). The Stoics viewed allegory

differently because their cultural context was quite different from that of Plato or Aristotle.

The Mediterranean world had undergone various changes, inclusive of the discovery of

new cultures and peoples, the weakening of Greek power and influence, and the value of a

cosmopolitan new world that had outgrown a micro-cultural context (Most 28). What texts and practices used to be validated within a limited and focused framework, became very trivial once repositioned into the expanding panoramic vision this new world brought with it. Allegory, thus, decontextualized local interpretations stifled by the limitedness of the old world, and recontextualized understanding within a more universally valid comprehension (Most 28). In doing so, Stoics attributed ancient wisdom and brought it to light through new doctrines (Most 28). This view perceived the cosmos as being the ultimate and truest polis and where gods and humans were all citizens, and to understand both the constituents and the dynamics of the world, one had to have an intelligibility of the universal 'logos' as characterized by Glenn W. Most (Most 28). In other words, allegory began to come out of its marginalized position and take a more prominent role in literary works. In relation to theology and religious texts, allegory found a source of strength in attributing meaning to this 'logos' which served as the epitome of knowledge and understanding that energized and powered the movement and progression of the cosmos. In relation to this, the Stoics believed that "…no moment of history, nor any part of the world, could be totally devoid of the at least partial presence of this *logos*" (Most 28). Allegorical interpretation revealed this universal 'logos' through its manifestation of hidden meaning that was implicitly connected to an endless web of meaning and interpretation. Zeno of Citium, whom can be considered the founder of Stoicism, wrote several books and commentaries on Homer and Hesiod's works (Most 29). He identified the gods of these texts with natural elements such as air, fire, and sea (Most 29). "According to the Stoics the particular gods are contained within the natural world as manifestations of the single dominant god" (Most 29). This

manifestation links Stoic theology with that of Stoic physics, and thus exemplifies the idea of the 'logos' being the focal point of all entities when put together.

Stoic allegorical interpretation went even deeper to provide a broad rationale for further philosophical systems (Most 28). Augustine's tripartite theology can be attributed to Hellenistic sources and Stoic philosophy. It presents three kinds of discourse which assign poets to discussion of the gods, philosophers to those of the mythical, and people to those of the physical (Most 29). In light of that, allegorical manifestations of philosophical tenets do not "falsify" but restore their "full meaning" (Most 29). Stoic allegorical interpretation carried out by poets is not completely literary, but involves external authority that is mingled with the etymology of names and the intentions of the authors (Most 29). This resembles Orpheus's perception of the deeper meaning behind names, and the wide opportunity for understanding to take a life of its own through the process of collecting the parts to recreate a whole. In other words, both Augustine and Stoic philosophy built upon the conceptions of early Greek philosophers, and acknowledged the existence of a more elusive and greater factor that allows for the enigmatic model of the parts connecting to the universal whole. This inexplicable factor can later on be understood as pertaining to divine inspiration or intervention, in light of Christian theology and exegesis. This factor was therefore used to justify the use of allegory: According to Augustine and other Pauline hermeneutics, the Holy Ghost inspires meaning and will always guide to one final interpretation. This outlook on the process of interpretation or the integration of divine inspiration to substantiate any exegesis is based on Stoic understandings of allegoresis.

Stoicism, however, was not the dominant thought during the Hellenistic period. Other currents of thought counteracted Stoic intervention and brought forth a compromise

between two polarities of interpretation. Stoicism began to decline with the rise of the Roman Empire (Most 30). The transmission of early Greek thought passed through Alexandria, and during the third and second centuries BCE, a group of Alexandrian philologists formed and gave rise to a counterintuitive outlook on allegory. Alexandrians and Stoics parted on the ways of "linguistic theory" (Most 31). The former believed in the "principle of analogy in grammatical questions" while the latter adopted the "rule of anomaly" (Most 31). Alexandrians attempted to carry out exegesis from and through the text itself, thus appraising "…one mode of interpretation which remained resolutely within the poet's own words and conceptions" (Most 31). Stoics favored "…an allegorical strategy which did not hesitate to posit explanatory equivalences between elements within a poem and doctrines of a later and foreign philosophy" (Most 31). The oppositions were rooted in who to attribute meaning to, or in other words, where the authority of interpretation was positioned. Post Reformation theologians feared just that. They did not want to attribute Scriptural meaning to any higher authority besides that of the Logos, or Holy Spirit, and thus resisted this understanding of allegory.

Regardless of who did hold linguistic and intelligible authority, the allegorical method of interpretation slowly became a more widely accepted form throughout the Hellenistic period. It soon became a philosophically legitimate instrument for poetic composition (Most 35). Poets made use of allegory to add "…depth and sophistication to their works, to advertise their own learning, and sometimes to achieve effects of irony and wit" (Most 35). Thus, writers began to adopt and adapt allegory for the purpose of displaying their knowledge and wisdom, rather than conceal hidden meaning. In book 3 of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, is a, somewhat semi comic and tragic farcical, scene

where Aphrodite bribes her son Eros with one of Zeus's toys so that she could get him to make Medea love Jason (Most 35). Within this account, Adrasteia, Zeus's favorite nurse, is associated with ancient powers of cosmic reprisal (Most 35). Looking into the etymology of her name, we will find that it means "inescapable" or "she who cannot be outrun" (Most 35). The toy which Aphrodite bribes Eros with is a perfect ball, which Glenn W. Most claims to serve as an unmistakable symbol of the universe, with its golden zones referring to the celestial zones, the two circular joints representing the celestial equator and ecliptic, as well as the dark blue band described as possibly referring to the zodiac (Most 35). These implied and yet obvious connections between symbol and meaning display the Hellenistic use of allegory as a device to show off the knowledge of the poet of both linguistic as well as philosophical and scientific competence. This particular interplay between the ancient gods and their reference to cosmic entities shows how mythical and physical theologies take part in allegorical interpretation.

As poets adapted allegory for their personal literary purposes, they not only integrated it into their own compositions, but allowed for allegorical interpretation to become a rhetorical instruction, that can be learned and taught (Most 37). Allegoresis became a poetic device, which allowed space for error, according to Protestant literal approaches. Nonetheless, younger, newer poets of the Hellenistic period were instructed on how to introduce allegory into their works, on a small as well as large contextual scale. In doing so, allegory had by "…now established itself as a rhetorical device" in its shift from philosophy to poetry (Most 37). Unlike its shift to a poetic device, which put on display the efforts and wisdom of the author, allegory's becoming a rhetorical device was a move that the Post Reformation did not shun altogether. Plutarch writes at around 100CE that what

Plato called "hyponoiai" in the *Republic* was in the Hellenistic period referred to as

"…*allegoriai*- a terminological nicety denoting an epochal conceptual shift" (Most 37).

Glenn W. Most explains that "hypo-noia" is a kind of "under-thought" and can be

considered to pertain to philosophy because it is a kind of concept (Most 37). While, he

continues to say that "all-egoria" means "other-speaking" and thus is more of a form of

speech and therefore would pertain to rhetoric (Most 37). This distinction presents allegory

in a new light that brings it out of the ancient world and into the more modern one which

views it as a trope used in literary texts (Most 37). It is here where allegory becomes a

trope that takes into account the repercussion of false translation and the meticulousness of

language, both of which are prime factors in understanding Protestant reservations on the

process of allegoresis.

It is important to note that allegory's treading into the world of rhetoric and

compositional technique lays the groundwork for future perspectives on allegorical

interpretation in early Christian context. The distinction between *hyponiai* and *allegoriai*

can be seen as the fertile ground on which the differentiation between Catholic and

Protestant allegory thrived. The roots of these allegorical interpretations are traced back to

meaning being hidden in thought, as represented by *hyponiai* as opposed to meaning being

implied through speech reflected in the linguistic technique of *allegoriai*. This approach

will fit into the greater framework of allegory, after having presented a detailed description

of either Christian context, leading up to the great divide of interpretation.

The period of early Christian context, at around the 1st century AD, is a crucial time

to understanding how the perception of allegory evolved after the Protestant Reformation.

Having a clearer understanding of this time period allows us to understand why some

favored allegory, while others opposed it vehemently. Within the early Christian context, allegory was perceived in two major ways. One view judged allegory as the energizing engine behind Pauline reinterpretation, while the other favored a more non-literal approach. Either of the views focused on the literalism of allegory and its interpretation of religious texts (Boyarin 39). Origen, a "formative thinker of early Christian allegorical exegesis" applied a non-literal interpretation which abandoned the literal sense of a text and thus allowed for a more Platonic reading (Boyarin 39). Instead of giving authority to Scripture, he concentrated on personal attribution of philosophical meaning. In doing so, Origen paved the way for the transition of allegorical interpretation from a "pagan practice… to a foundational piece of an emerging Christian biblical hermeneutics" (Boyarin 39).What was once a poetic device used in the deciphering of enigmatic meaning through epistemological theory, turned into a rhetorical technique applied in the understanding of monotheistic theology. The former provided a framework in which the latter could understand and interpret the unanswered questions of Christian theology (Boyarin 39). Christian Logos theology believed in the notion of Christ being the incarnate of the Word- with reference to the Scripture or Old and New Testaments. In light of that Christian view, allegory becomes "the purest form of interpretation" since it does not deny the text it is interpreting- or the Word- but openly distinguishes between meaning and text and acknowledges itself as a device (Boyarin 40). Origen discusses this observation through a commentary on Canticles in his book *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*. He explains that everything in the corporeal world can be related to the incorporeal world (Origen 223). Using earthly, tangible, and real things, we are taught about the things which cannot be seen, those that are considered heavenly (Origen 223). Origen goes further to explain that even in Scripture,

"terrestrial" events and happenings take place but reference to hidden things that are divine (Origen 223). He gives examples of the people of God journeying through the difficult deserts of Egypt, the exposure to dangerous serpents and droughts as being symbols or images that relate to a greater meaning or lesson that is sent from God (Origen 223). Origen goes even further to say that not only do these images symbolize a divine meaning, but so does the structure of the text itself mimic that of the universe (Boyarin 40). Just as one uses metaphor to describe real things in the universe, so also is there a duality in structure within the Scriptures. Meaning of these Scriptures is found in disclosing the corresponding "hidden things" without doing away with the reality and truth behind the events relayed in the religious Christian texts. However, he positions the concealed things above those that are seen, having them pertain to heavenly sources (Boyarin 40).

For Origen, the Scriptures become the epitome of allegory. In order to find meaning in the Old and New Testaments, one must acknowledge the link between the heavenly and the carnal worlds that Christian theology attests to. The two elements which interplay in the interpretation of allegorical Scripture are the spiritual meaning- or as David Dawson explains to be the "real" meaning- and the literal meaning which is directly taken from the text at face value (Boyarin 41). In light of such a perspective, Early Christian interpretation becomes a supporter of allegoresis since it does not do away with the core of the Pauline theology, but rather reinforces the divine inspiration that is necessary in understanding Scripture.

However, in finding symbiosis with the allegorical technique of interpretation, there arises also the problematic of the multiplicity of meanings or methods of interpretation, which Origen explains to be at the root of the emergence of a multiplicity of sects within

the religion (Boyarin 42). He goes further to attribute this phenomenon to Judaism and its support of a "variety of interpretations of the writings of Moses and the sayings of the prophets" (Chadwick 135). The scriptural text, to Origen, in the form of written word allows for various interpretations, and thus in turn for various opinions regarding the theology behind the meaning. Because there is no clear distinction or expectation of what is considered as the true meaning, no one interpretation can be favored over another; the result being the acceptance of sectarianism "in all good faith" (Boyarin 42).

Gorgias of Leontini did not attest to Origen's platonic submission to a multiplicity of equating interpretations. He argued that a text does not contain any meaning, and even if it did, it was interpreted by man, and this said man could not pass along this discovered meaning to another (Empiricus 15). Daniel Boyarin explains Gorgias's statement to assert that only the physical world exists, thus denying any philosophical sense (Boyarin 43). Richard Leo Enos explains that Gorgias denied all "Platonic notions of ontological 'essences'…". He continues to say that "…ideals attain existence only through the extrapolations of the mind and are dependent upon the referential perceptions of their creator." (Enos 81-82) In other words, a man's idea will cease to exist the moment it has passed from his mind. Enos concludes that ideal notions of meaning cannot be formulated since the whole process of interpretation and understanding is a personal experience (Enos 81-82). Then Boyarin links what Enos argued back to Gorgias to attest that even if a certain ideal interpretation did exist, man would not be able to perceive it because of human limitations of the mind (Boyarin 43). Humans functioned and processed through the senses-which are receptors and communicators of the carnal world. Thus, using tools that

interpreted the physical world cannot be used to understand a divine and spiritual cosmos. Human language becomes limited in the interpretation of Sophistic thought.

Gorgias emphasizes the importance of situational circumstances that influence interpretation. Plato however argued against this, by seeking a truth that is independent of any contextual influence (Boyarin 44). Thus, there came the rise of the Sophistic opposition tothe Platonic perspective on finding meaning or truth (Boyarin 44).

The Judeo-Christian hermeneutics jumped at the opportunity to solve this theoretical problematic- Origen being one of the primary tenets of this school favoring certainty in rhetoric (Boyarin 44). Philo, Origen's predecessor and Jewish Alexandrian supporter of spiritual meaning, argued that there are certain truths that cannot be denied. The existence of the Logos, or God, is one of them. He also explained that the Logos communicated with a "magic language" – a Platonic philosophy that is rooted in labeling and the names of everything in the world w know. Philo believes that the Logos had all meaning, and being able to see all, he was able to give names to all- names "…that corresponded perfectly to the language of the *nous* or Logos" (Boyarin 44). "For Philo, God's language is entirely different from the language of humans…" (Boyarin 44). Dawson explains that Moses, for example, holds divine insight that is superior to that of common men. In doing so, he is able to perceive the true meaning, though the language at his disposal is inferior to the said meaning it holds. "The message is always clear and determinate once it is perceived, but it lies hidden in the very indirect linguistic expressions marked by various forms of semantic indeterminacy. (Dawson 92) The language becomes a hindrance due to its carnal limitations; standing in the way of spiritual meaning attained through divine interpretation.

In the process of such interpretation, the allegorist comes into the picture- no pun intended. His role is to understand and then translated the message from the "magic language" it is in to more visible language. Thus, the process of allegoresis becomes the interpretation of divine language to carnal language- creating a link between physical symbols and metaphysical ideals. Origen states the importance of contemplation upon Scripture to be able to carry out such a process. He claims that only by combining the spiritual and carnal 'senses', will a Christian be able to see with the "…vision of the heart and the perception of the mind" so as to reach the depths of meaning (Boyarin 45).

Therefore, according to Origen, true meaning is achieved through the translation of the divine language. Any translation of Scriptural text would be mimicking the greatest and most prominent translation of divine language into carnal senses- the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Word, being Jesus according to the Gospel of John, took the form of a human being for humans to fathom and perceive God, or the Logos. In other words, the divine form of the Logos was trans-mutated into a carnal existence so as to be seen and perceived by the mind of the physical man (Boyarin 46). Boyarin presents this magnificent problematic and its solution, through the allegorizing of Jesus Christ and his incarnation. The Word becoming the epitome of truth, leads Origen and Philo to claim that "any external words of Scripture are [mere] "copies" of words and meanings in the divine language" (Boyarin 46-47). In combining Origen's philosophy and Boyarin's take on the incarnation of the Logos, or Word, the Logos becomes the incarnate in Jesus Christ as well as in the scriptural text (Boyarin 47).

This concept of allegory becoming the epitome of a greater truth, just as Christ is the incarnate epitome of the Logos, presents the issue of how man was able to write of such

spiritual truths and then how they were communicated (Boyarin 48). Boyarin suggests that

this is done "via possession of the "mind of Christ,' referring… to Paul's own Wisdom

Christology" (Boyarin 48). In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he discusses the

difference between Christian knowledge and that of the Jews prior to him. He says in I

Corinthians 2:11, "So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of

God." And in reference to understanding the words of the Torah, he continues to say that,

"… we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit,

interpreting spiritual truths…" (Boyarin13). In doing so Paul is presenting the initial point

of discussion put together by Boyarin in light of Origen's conceptions of divine language.

Boyarin explains that Paul is:

> …producing the earliest version of a Christian hermeneutical theory of
> allegorical reading, on that insists that Scripture can only be interpreted with the
> direct aid of the Holy Spirit, identified with the mind of Christ who alone knows the
> mind of the Lord and can, therefore, interpret the Torah as a "secret and hidden
> wisdom of God which God decreed before the ages for our glorification (I
> Corinthians 2:7)." (49)

Boyarin adds that the incarnation of Jesus Christ is not the only "paradigm of this

pedagogy," but also that which allowed for a *correct* reading of Scripture (Boyarin 50).

> It is not only that "in the taking on of flesh the Logos makes himself comprehensible
> to all those who wear flesh"… but that in taking on flesh he could speak the magic
> language directly to human flesh and thus make himself, for he is the magic
> language, comprehensible to all those who speak human language. (Torjesen 115)

A Christian reader is then able to comprehend the truth in Scripture through the Holy Spirit,

which translates the hidden or incomprehensible language these texts hold. Torjesen

expands on that view saying, "In the incarnation the Logos speaks with his own voice. In

Scripture he speaks through the mouth of the prophets and saints" (Torjesen 111). Seeing

that the 'voice' of the teacher or truth is superior to the "inscriptions" relayed through that

voice, similarly, the incarnation of the Logos becomes far more significant than the words that are written about it- giving the presence of full meaning to the act of incarnation (Boyarin 51). Martin Irvine points out that, "The transcendental signified remains beyond the reach of all temporal sign relations yet is immanently manifest in all of them" (Irvine 266). It disregards the multiplicity of interpretation of language of a Scriptural text, under the belief that this differentiation will find unity in the Logos- the epitome of Truth.

After this Alexandrian perspective of allegory was brought into light by Origen and his companions, there came the Neoplatonists. They believed in a Platonic view of allegory which held that appearances had a form of reality that was superior to the forms they dwelled within (Boyarin 57). Peter T. Struck adds that we do not have access to such realities through our physical senses, and thus invites the intervention of "allegorical aspirations," which Plato vehemently declines (Boyarin 57). Neoplatonists took Plato's concepts of reality being held within carnal forms, and took it further into the process of reading. The world of reality becomes a "…world of mere images" which imitate the truth and only carry possible connections with the "higher world" (Boyarin 57).

The Neoplatonists presented an ideology that diverged from its predecessors, both the Platonists and the Early Christian Allegorists. Nonetheless, they did stay faithful to certain beliefs of antiquity, such as that of the Stoics on language being linked to meaning and thus its interpretation could sometimes lead to insight (Struck 58). Another point of both divergence and meeting is that on the term *symbol*. According to Struck, "…ancient literary critics had very little to say about 'symbols' (*symbola)*" (Struck 68). In contrast, symbols held a prominent role in allegoresis after the beginning of the third century BCE.

Symbol was used as a synonym for enigma in ancient allegoresis, and was merged with the term *allegory*, losing any distinction between the two (Struck 69). Later allegorical readers began to create a defined distinction between *symbol* and *allegory*, as we will see in the theories of late antiquity.

Around the 14th century, Nicholas of Lyra presented what was considered as the general consensus on the interpretation of Scripture as having four senses (Turner 71). The first sense was "literal, historical, or narrative" and related to the direct understanding of language. The second was "moral or tropological" which was rooted in Christian interpretation and meaning. The "anagogical or mystical" sense was the third form and favored a symbolic understanding. The last form standing of sense is the "allegorical" which was distinguished from the latter sense, and held a sort of embodiment of truth rather than an expression thereof. Nicholas held that readers of his time had mistakenly been misled by their attempts to understand the non-literal sense and thus have exploited these mystical and allegorical senses. In addition, they have lost sight of the fundamental literal sense which is actually hidden underneath the mystical conflagration. Nicholas posits that reading Scripture should be mostly done on a literal level, referring occasionally to an allegorical reading, since that would ensure a true and more accurate interpretation, untainted by the exploitation of the attributed mystical (Turner 73).

The problem of Nicholas's statement of depending on literal meaning is how to identify this literal sense. And, according to him, it is the identification of *literalness* which is the cause of excessive allegorizing of Scripture (Turner 74). To be able to understand Nicholas's argument, we must trace his ideologies back to their roots in antiquity. Origen, one of the many influences of Nicholas, holds that Scripture makes its own distinction

between what it holds as literal and what it holds as allegorical (Turner 74). Cassian adds to

the latter the perception of the Old Testament as being the allegorical allusion to the New

Testament (Turner 75). In that light, the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled and

explicated within the New Testament. Thus, Denys Turner posits:

> …the literal sense stands to the allegorical as promise stands to fulfillment. History, as literally narrated in the Old Testament, *means* more, because it *intends* more, than the events if literally records. What the Old Testament literally records is allegory for the New… In short, the Old Testament is, in terms of its true meaning, "other" than itself, it is allegory for other "mysteries" than its own. (75)

Origen thus emphasizes this concept by explaining that biblical narrative held obscurities

that cannot but be viewed in allegorical terms, rather than simply literal (Turner 75). We

can see a suitable example of such obscurities where it would be best to interpret the text

non-literally in the book of Genesis. There is reference to "the tree of life" and "knowledge

of good and evil" lost through eating from its fruit (Turner 76). The text itself encourages

and directs a non-literal interpretation since a literal one would limit the understanding of

disobedience and seeking haughty wisdom to the mere act of specific biting into a fruit.

Thus, as Turner understands Origen's take on the latter, the Scripture is best understood in

a non-literal way so as to allow space for the spiritual interpretation- of the rhetorical

anomalies- only attained and deciphered through the Holy Spirit (Turner 76).

Augustine also attests to the same thought of non-literal meaning, urging readers to

look past the literal text (Turner 76). In *Confessions*, he claims that the allegorical meaning

of Scripture is both concealed and revealed through literal depiction (Turner 76), claiming

that it was purposefully obscured by God for the humbling of the reader during the process

of meditative reading(*On Christian Doctrine* 37). Gregory the Great builds on this idea of

God using allegory and takes it from another angle. He says:

> …allegory supplies the soul separated far from God with a kind of mechanism by which it is raised to God… By that which we do know- out of such are allegories made- divine meanings are clothed and through our understanding of external speech we are brought to an inner understanding… (*Eros and Allegory* 217-218)

Therefore, allegory becomes the tool used to interpret and translate that which is divine and concealed from the literal. Origen, Augustine, and Gregory all encouraged the deviation from literal interpretation of Scripture, based on the fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New Testament through the incarnation of Christ. Thus, once again, the allegorization of the incarnation of Christ is presented at the heart of Christian hermeneutics.

Though Augustine encourages the non-literal understanding of Scripture, he warns against using allegorical interpretation as means to run away from complex metaphorical texts (Turner 77). Metaphors are distinguished from allegory, in this framework. Where allegory holds theological importance, metaphor acts as part of a created literary trope (Turner 77-78). Based on this distinction between allegory and metaphor, Thomas Aquinas and Nicholas of Lyra posited two senses of the word "literal" contrasted with either non-literal form (Turner 78). One of the literal senses is contrasted with the metaphorical meaning and the other is contrasted with the allegorical meaning. In turn, Augustine also identifies a distinction between a theological and literary allegory (Turner 79). This distinction can be rooted to the early Greeks, whom Christian theology referenced to, defining the term *allegoria* as relating to the "concealment of divine or cosmic meaning," and the Latin definition of carrying two differing meanings (Turner 79). The Medieval Christians generally agreed that allegory was to be used in the theological sense and was distinct from a literary trope such as the used of metaphor or figures of speech (Turner 79). Thomas explains that the allegory was not the "semantic property of the *words* in Scripture, but… the meaning of actual the *events*… the Scripture literally narrates through those

words" (Turner 80). He also says that "…things are signified by words: and this is the literal sense… things and events are figures of other things: and this is what the spiritual sense consists in" (*Eros and Allegory* 352). Thus allegorical interpretation differs from literary interpretation, in that it is authorized by the Holy Spirit (Turner 81).

In conclusion, it can be said that allegory has taken a long journey to reach the Medieval conceptions that were just discussed by favor of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and many others. Whether it is a trope, a rhetorical method, a theological tool, or simply a play on words, allegory seems to unify in its malleability and constant ability to adapt and fit into any theological or philosophical framework. It has been described to carry, reflect, emulate, or embody a certain truth. One may be as bold as to even question the fluidity of allegory in light of the inconsistency of *truth*. If we were to reconsider the cosmos and our place in it, we may possibly reconsider the position that allegory has in relation of this grandeur- for a literary trope that is able to expand over both secular and religious grounds, is one that can withstand the oppression of both. Allegory holds a vast abyss of concealed meaning that seems to be deep enough for just about anyone to dig into and claim their own.

This overview of the selective history of allegory will be used in the following to chapter to take a closer look at a post Reformation piece of literature. As we will see in the detailed study of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, allegory's medieval, and ancient influences will come to light in a historical and theological context that overtly opposed its method of exegesis. This next chapter will take the prominent characteristics of allegory discusses in the previous two chapters and reflect them off *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in order to further display how allegory is malleable and able to adapt to any context.

CHAPTER IV

ALLEGORY AND THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

The Pilgrim's Progress is a post Reformation literary text which serves as an accurate example of how allegory is able to manifest itself even in the most barren of poetic literature, thought to be enemy grounds by some. This book reflected Puritan thoughts and Protestant theology. It is the religious adaptation of a Lutheran and Quaker combined. By taking a closer look at the work of Bunyan, I will attempt to display the varied land upon which the allegorical trope was set up on- only to prove that even to those who favor the most literal of interpretations, allegory can find a place in meaning and rhetoric.

The points I will be discussing in this chapter regarding *The Pilgrim's Progress* include a brief overview on the current contextual perception of literacy and the Protestant view on education and self interpretation. There will be a close study of John Bunyan's purpose for writing this text, where I will delve into the Apology he opens his book with, and the implications behind his dream vision exposition. Following that, there will be a close study of a few characters and both their role as well as their names. I will highlight certain figures created by Bunyan and dissect their allegorical form in light of ancient philosophies of interpretation. In addition, I will also analyze the physical features and concrete images presented in *The Pilgrim's Progress* so as to better institute the allegorical nature of this text, while exemplifying Puritan hermeneutics.

Within a Post Reformation context, one would assume to find appraisal for texts that exhibited and valued literal meaning. Martin Luther edified against having multiple meanings, or layers of interpretation. However, John Bunyan, though being a supporter of

and having been greatly inspired by Luther, wrote an allegorical text that was made to be read into with double meaning. Many have discussed Bunyan's literary risk, or his rebelliousness to religious conformity. What has not been often placed under the spotlight is the possibility of Bunyan 'not' having gone against his Protestant literalism, but found a loophole where about he may exemplify the use of a literary trope in the reflection of what he believed to be the ultimate truth. One may go as far as to say that it is possible that Bunyan had such strong faith in what he perceived as the ultimate and only truth/meaning that he was comfortable enough to use a poetic device out of its categorical jurisdiction. If one were to consider the view of education and literacy at the time Bunyan wrote this book, one would find that Protestantism encouraged the education of the laymen and even further, Luther encouraged individual reading and interpretation of the Scriptures. This was rooted in Luther's revolt against the hierarchy developed by the traditions of the Catholic Church. He believed in the priesthood of every believer based on the first epistle to Peter 2:9, which called God's children "royal priests". In application, this encouraged every Christian believer to approach God, and dissipated any human mediator in between. It was not only applied in theological standing, but also in the process of edification and enlightenment. According to this perspective, with the help of the Holy Spirit only, every individual may read the Scriptures to obtain the 'true' meaning being relayed as well as, achieve spiritual enlightenment. Even though Luther argued for literal interpretation of the Scriptures, he also encouraged a personal engagement with the text. Like Origen, he saw that one had to integrate his/her own experiences and beliefs to reach a unified meaning. Bunyan wants his readers to be fully engaged in his text and not sit passively receiving information. He says of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, "Yea, it will make the slothful active be;/

The blind also delightful things to see" (Bunyan 9). Like Augustine warns against using allegory as a means to avoid interpretation to hide from finding meaning, Bunyan encourages allegory so as to engage the reader and incite active interpretation and involvement (Turner 77). Unknowingly, or perhaps ingeniously, Protestantism allocated space for more than one road to reach an ultimate end in meaning- a road that thrived on personalization and internalization. Though it blatantly fought against allegorical interpretation, it still acknowledged the diversity of individuality in the process of a unified interpretation.

In other words, Luther paved the way not only back to literal interpretation, but also to a semi-contradictory path that encouraged the active engagement of every individual with the text- a prime factor in the process of allegoresis. Similarly, John Bunyan encouraged the individual reading of his book, while also warning against reading too far into it, in his introductory apology. He acknowledged the reader's engagement in the text, and asked for a personal evaluation of its success.

In his apologetic introduction, as seen in the first nine lines, Bunyan expresses his surprise at how his book, or the narration of Christian's journey, turned out to be an allegory (Bunyan 4). He even says that he "fell" into allegory, as if it were out of his hands, and not intentionally thought out (Bunyan 4). Bunyan also attempts to justify the use of this trope as not only not being his intention but also the only way he could present his story, since it seemed to take a life of its own- comparing it to the sparks of a fire that would "breed" and extend (Bunyan 4). According to him, this allegorical account was out of his hands, and not an expression of personal literary preference. He clarifies that he did not use this form to appease his "neighbor" (Bunyan 4). Even his intentions to being writing,

altogether, were noble, as he explains, thus the resulting bold style that *The Pilgrim's Progress* ends up in is not really his fault- or so he tries to convince his readers to believe (Bunyan 4). In doing so, he is lifting any responsibility off of his shoulders, and creating an external influence that could be construed as divine inspiration or intervention.

Bunyan acknowledged the controversy of his literary work. He mentions the division of reception even before his book was published or simply printed (Bunyan 5). Nonetheless, having identified this division between those who approved his work and those who did not, protected Bunyan from being accused of taking one side or the other or offending one or the other. He tells the readers that those who did not like his work had the freedom to not read it. In doing so, they would not be acknowledging the allegorical form of this religious account and thus would remain faithful to their forms of literal edification. Bunyan also compares his work as a cloud (Bunyan 5). Just as a cloud could be either dark or light and bring forth the same needed rain, so also, his work will bring forth the rejuvenating truth, regardless of its form. However, he also compares those who choose not to respond with open minds to this account as a woman who is offered two kinds of fruit- the result of the latter precipitation discussed in the previous comparison (Bunyan 5). Bunyan explains that if she were to choose to eat neither fruit because she deems herself "full," she will not gain any "blessings" (Bunyan 5). This can be understood as a remark towards those who claim they 'know' the truth and do not need a book that is not the Bible to teach them about the 'Christian truth'. Such people are too full of their assumptions that they are blinded from their ignorance and unaware of that they lack. Thus, Bunyan's allegorical account, which defies common Protestant beliefs of literal interpretation,

becomes more favorable in comparison to arrogance that is sugarcoated with stern religious dogmatism pretending to be adherence to literalism.

Bunyan does not only throw responsibility on the reader, but then later acknowledges that as an author he needs to adapt his writing to be able to catch the attention of disinterested people. Being a preacher himself, Bunyan explains in his Apology, that he like a fisherman who needs to try a little more than throwing in a hook or net- which symbolize the literal and direct forms of getting across to the reader (Bunyan 6). He must "grope" and "tickle" his catch, which in turn is translated to using certain indirect literary tropes so as to catch the reader (Bunyan 6). Bunyan presents other similar examples where he tries to explain that the process of 'catching' may be diverse, however, the message and the aim are one. This keeps him in line with Protestant literalism while still justifying his use of allegory.

However, Bunyan does not completely dismiss the gravity if his literary rebellion. He posits what others will possibly say to him. "But they want solidness."Speak, man, thy mind. /"They drown the weak; metaphors make us blind"(Bunyan 6). Claiming that the alternative style for his writing would be a more 'solid' one, raises a very important issue on the fluidity of allegory. One of the most prominent characteristics of this literary trope is that it is malleable and can adapt to a variety of contexts and purposes. In doing so, allegory keeps itself from pertaining to a particular framework, and when used in a differing context, it cannot be held against it. In this particular post Reformation context, Bunyan's use of allegory is justified in the trope's malleability and at the same time does not lose firmness or 'solidity' since its core lies in its ability to bend without breaking. In other words, *The Pilgrim's Progress* does not lose face having been presented in allegorical

form, but rather gains strength since it can withstand the strong currents of objection and

defiance of literalism through its adaptable nature.

Bunyan also finds strength to support his allegory in the word of God, that he

explains his whole work is based on (Bunyan 6). He protects his literary work by

attributing divine power to it through its extensive reference to Scripture, which allegory

has easily adopted and adapted into the narrative. Bunyan also shifts the reader's attention

away from the form and into a parallel plane where his aim and purpose lay. His intentions

are for the reader to gain spiritual enlightenment, which will be attained through hearing

the voice of God, regardless of the tool used to relay it (Bunyan 7). Bunyan also reflects his

stylistic form into Scripture, and claims that he uses allegory no more than the Bible does.

<div style="text-align:center">

The prophets used much by metaphors
To set forth truth: yea, who so considers
Christ, his apostles too, shall plainly see,
That truths to this day in such mantles be.
Am I afraid to say, that holy writ,
Which for its style and phrase puts down all wit,
Is everywhere so full of all these things,
Dark figures, allegories? Yet there springs
From that same book, that lustre, and those rays
Of light, that turn our darkest nights to days.
Sound words, I know, Timothy is to use,
And old wives' fables he is to refuse;
But yet grave Paul him nowhere doth forbid
The use of parables, in which lay hid (7-8)

</div>

Those who wish to accuse Scripture as lacking 'solidness' would have to also face

the consequences of accusing Scripture as lacking the same gravity. Bunyan indirectly

equates his work with that of Scripture, under the justification of his superfluous references

in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In this merging, a somewhat novel perspective of allegory

arises. Allegory becomes a literary trope that does not necessarily take away from the

prominent truth it relays. As St. Augustine and Origen had earlier discussed, Scripture held

an allegorical face, while still owning an immovable truth. With Bunyan's use of allegory,

his literary work does not lose the Protestant face of 'one unified truth' but simply skips in

a curvature path towards attaining this meaning as opposed to walking in a straight line to

reach it. One who journeys down a path can run, stroll, or jump a skip rope down the path,

and all three different ways would still qualify as a singular journey, reaching a unified end,

while allowing for personalization and personal expression.

       The initial purpose of this chapter was to delve into Bunyan's text and present a

theatrical display of how allegory does not only cause conflict, but merges opposing

literary worlds. The interpretation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a very controversial

endeavor. Many have attempted to allocate a variety of meanings to its narrative, symbols,

intentions, and many more. I will not go as far as interpreting Bunyan's narrative, but

simply identify a few key characteristics that allow allegory to hold literal Protestant truths.

Such pillars include the use of names and labeling, which are intertwined with the roles of

the figures holding said names.

       Bunyan creates a diversity of characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which serve a

variety of roles throughout the narrative. The locations and certain geographical features

also hold distinct names and reflect a greater purpose in the plotline. The names attributed

to the latter are names that identify the characteristics this figure holds. Certain

expectations come with the name, as do certain fateful ends. The name becomes more than

a simple indicator of the figure, but also a deeply rooted identifier of the being that

occupies this name. The figure and the name both pass through the narrative as prime

factors of the plot, while sometimes even creating the dynamics that power the forward

projection or any sudden turns in the allegory. Characters like Evangelist, whose name obviously refers to the evangelism or preaching of the gospel, initiate the projection of the narrative and elicit Christian to begin his journey (Bunyan 11). Christian, himself, is named to signify every Christian believer. This generalization creates unification among the depth of diversity in allegoresis. Thus, such namely symbols become unifiers as opposed to dividers in an allegory.

Similar characters, whose roles are more than literary supplements, include the characters Faithful and Talkative. Faithful lives up to his name, and remains faithful to the Word until death. Talkative first appears on page 44, when he meets with Faithful and they both have a discussion about their journeys and decide to accompany one another (Bunyan 44). The character of Talkative can be seen to represent what characteristics are attributed to him by his name- namely excessive vocalizing without any core depth and meaning to what is said. Such a description can be associated with those who attack Bunyan's work without any real grounds to base their accusations on. They go along with his explanation under the misconception of debate or discussion, only to end up having been "beguiled" and time wasted (Bunyan 46). Talkative becomes a figure of more than a talkative man whose words are plenty and actions bitter. He can be regarded as a name given to those who display such behavior in real life. The individual being named as such remains to exist in reality. The symbol only reflects this reality, allowing the 'name' to connect the two. In light of this, allegory becomes the 'naming' of truths.

We can see this literary phenomena over and over again in characters such as Worldly Wiseman, the Interpreter, and Ignorance; all of which are names of kinds of people who exist in the world, and respectively hold characteristics as a balanced

indignation between divine and carnal, as the ability to translate divine and carnal truths, and as one who assumes to know all and understand, but in truth, knows nothing. Bunyan uses such characters in his narrative, not to conceal truth from the reader, but rather point it out. He gives obvious names that do not complicate and hinder the relaying of the ideas, but rather call them out. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, characters do not merely symbolize the diversity of man and his hardships encountered in the process of spiritual enlightenment. Characters serve to *name* the characteristics that man posits in reality.

The nature of allegory being flexible and able to adapt to any context is not only seen in the process of Bunyan naming his characters. This malleable nature can also be observed in the developing of a name as well as its change. Some characters have an initial name that changes throughout the narrative. An example of such is how Graceless becomes named Christian (Bunyan 29). In this shift of names, there isn't a shift of character, nor of plot, but that of destiny. This allegorical alteration serves as a miniature representation of how allegory works in relation of meaning. It does not take away from the truth, nor does it belittle its historical realness, but merely changes its name and "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet". Thus, Christian's change of name signifies an allegorical phenomenon which Bunyan asserts in order to re-portray a divine immovable truth that he upholds vehemently, without undermining it. Just as the Logos holds a variety of names- the Word, Holy Spirit, Jesus, God- so do Bunyan's characters and concepts. Having said that, a certain *truth*, can come in more than one name, and still remain that particular *truth*.

John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a prime example of allegory in the post Reformation era. Protestant literalism was prominent, and Lutheranism detested allegoresis and the possibility of multiple interpretations. Bunyan merged a world of rhetoric and that

of literalism and created an allegorical work that is justified in the hermeneutics that attacked it to begin with! According to Bunyan, anyone who attempted to scrutinize *The Pilgrim's Progress* would be questioning the foundations of Scripture. As a result, allegory no longer is perceived as a leper among theological literal texts. It serves as a divine mode that is accumulated by the Holy Spirit, interpreted through the Holy Spirit, and issued to see or hear the Holy Spirit. From all three sides, this triangular Bermuda that has for so long been labeled to one genre of poetic writing, became the tool Bunyan used to relay his theological message of spiritual enlightenment, strengthened in its interwoven connections with Scripture.

The Pilgrim's Progress is a post Reformation text which exemplifies the fluidity of the allegorical trope and its ability to fit into any rhetorical framework. John Bunyan proved that in the harshest of literary and historical contexts, allegory can live up to its reputation. Bunyan molded subtle yet prominent building blocks through characters and other figures named so meticulously, which helped characterize *The Pilgrim's Progress* as an allegorical text, without openly rebelling against the Puritan literal sense of meaning. He did it so wisely, ensuring he was safe from any valid criticism by hiding under the gracious hands of the Word and the height at which it was regarded by Protestants. In light of the greater picture, Bunyan's work exemplifies what was proven to be the malleable nature of allegory, displayed in the historical overview of the trope.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In conclusion of the project, it is important to re-present the focal argument that helped develop and sustain the aim of this study. Allegory serves as a malleable literary trope whose exegesis adapts to the various philosophical and religious views that have come up in history, allowing it to be adopted as both a means to conceal as well as reveal certain truths deemed not of this world, or incomprehensible in their natural form. In other words, Allegory does not pertain to a single context, but is flexible enough to meet all purposes and adapt to a variety of frameworks. Similarly, as it is able to pave the way for the freedom of interpretation through double meaning, it is also able to confine meaning, as in the context of Protestant, post Reformation literature. In Bunyan's work, this trope becomes a tool that works with Protestantism and not against it- however, not in the Lutheran sense. *The Pilgrim's Progress* becomes the means by which divine knowledge is relayed to people. It serves as an allusion to Scripture, which is also in turn, in need of divine interpretation to acquire knowledge from. Allegory becomes more than just a single literary trope. It becomes a form of interpretation that extends beyond solely Bunyan's work. Christian allegory, in this sense, is an aporia resolved in the rhetorical study of textual interpretation.

When we stop characterizing allegory to one single framework, we will begin to understand how a trope that favors double meaning can be used to relay teachings prized on literalism. My intentions in pursuing this project were to delve into the allegorical trope, knowing and expecting to find a complex entity that lightly surfaces in texts such as *The*

Pilgrim's Progress. Beneath the surface is a vast sea of the intertwining of allegory with many historical events, philosophical ideologies, and socio-political influences. This project is not aimed at proving that Martin Luther was wrong to focus on the literal interpretation of Scripture, or the ancient Greeks were narrow minded to have considered early forms of allegory as simply poetic imagination. Allegory does not attack or question the context it arises in. It merely finds common grounds in which to submerge its roots and show that unity that exists in the greater cosmos. It is essential to reconsider the meaning of *literalism* and the weight the word carries. Words, in themselves, are a means of representative communication, and thus an allegorical form. In addition, as was seen in *The Pilgrim's Progress,* the allegorical trope was not used for its power to convey double meaning through fanciful reading, but was deployed to restrict meaning and interpretation. *Allegory* helps bring into perspective that the literary world is part of the greater cosmos that both the ancient Greeks as well as the Protestant Reformation theologians believe is a constituent of the carnal world and the divine and more superior world. Allegory becomes the bridge between the two; the translator, since it speaks the language of the tangible and the language of the inaudible, incomprehensible, hidden truth, as displayed in Scripture.

I only hope that this project opens the door to further research on the matter of allegorical interpretation. Allegory has much more to disclose. This study has taken me on a journey through the world of textual interpretation. There are other worlds of artistic expression that it has encompassed, which have not yet been re-observed. However, for the purpose of time, space, and intention, allegory was studied in text and meaning, and shown to be the tight rope acrobat that could twirl and plunge on any height it deemed fit, and on any platform it felt the need for.

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