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ALLEGORY IN BUNYAN'S *PILGRIM'S PROGRESS:*

SPIRITUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL JOURNEY TO THE SELF

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ANNOTATION

Hana Pechová

Allegory in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress:* Spiritual and Psychological Journey to the Self

Supervisor: Mgr. Tomáš Jajtner, Ph.D

This thesis deals with the allegorical features of the novel *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) by John Bunyan. Based on the comparison with the medieval form of allegory, the morality play, and with regard to the areas of narrative techniques, relationship between verse and prose, and the role of characters in both works, it tries to examine the transition from pure allegory to the modern novel. The connection with the edifying principle typical of Puritan literature is discussed and the aspects of psychological introspection and resulting modernity of the work are stated.

ANOTACE

Hana Pechová

Alegorie v Bunyanově románu *Poutníkova cesta*: Psychologická a duchovní cesta k sobě samému

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Tomáš Jajtner, Ph.D.

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá alegorickými prvky v díle Johna Bunyana *Poutníkova cesta* (1678). Je postavena na srovnání se středověkou alegorií, konkrétně ve formě morality, a s ohledem na vyprávěcí techniky, vztah mezi prozaickými a veršovanými pasážemi a role postav v obou dílech se snaží postihnout přechod od čisté alegorie k modernímu románu. Zkoumá též výchovné tendence typické pro puritánskou literaturu a konstatuje moment psychologického obratu do nitra jedince, z něhož vyplývá nadčasovost díla.

Contents

1. Introduction

The Pilgrim's Progress (1678) by John Bunyan (1628-1688) is considered to be the best known allegory in the English language (if not in the world). As such, it has deserved particular critical attention not only of literary historians and critics, but also of psychologists, sociologists, and religionists. It is an allegory of Christian salvation where the main character named Christian represents a general figure - a type of *Everyman*. His pilgrimage then represents a simplified and condensed version of the average man's journey through the trials and tribulations of life on his way to Heaven.

In my thesis I would like to deal with the aspects of this allegorical text that have contributed to its modernity and timelessness, especially the formal aspects resulting from Bunyan´s conscious choice of the allegorical mode. The first, theoretical part of my thesis will start by the definition of the genre of allegory. Then I will shortly describe the history of the term and its different applications from Classical to Medieval and Renaissance literature. Attention will be also given to the medieval fourfold reading of the Scripture and the question of typology. Then I will briefly touch upon the changes allegory was undergoing in the 16th and 17th centuries with regard to the Catholic and Puritan attitudes to it. Finally I will define the constituting elements of the medieval allegory as the springboard for the next part.

In the second, practical part of my thesis, I will then concentrate on *The Pilgrim's Progress* itself, its formal structure and the individual features it shares with the genre of medieval allegory, especially in the form of a morality play. The comparison between the morality play and Bunyan's pilgrimage allegory will be based on the following three areas: the narrative techniques (with singular concentration on the typically allegorical framework of a dream vision), the relations between prosaic and rhymed passages within the text, and the different kinds of characters and their respective roles in both narratives. In my comparison I will largely draw from Wolfgang Iser's essay *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress: The Doctrine of Predestination and the Shaping of the Novel* published in 1978 in his collection *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose and Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett.* The underlying principle of my analysis will be examination of an individual on his life's journey to salvation and recognition of the self. I will conclude my thesis by summarizing the

aspects in which Bunyan's allegory is modern and overcomes the morality play and allegory in general in favour of the novel.

1.1 **Allegory**

1.1.1 **Definition**

The word was first attested in English in 1382. It comes from Latin *allegoria*, which is the latinisation of the Greek word ἀλληγορία (*allegoria*) "veiled language, figurative" compounded from ἄλλος (*allos*) "another, different" + ἀγορεύω (*agoreuo*), "to harangue, to speak in the assembly" which comes from ἀγορά (*agora*), "assembly". The basic meaning of the word *allegoria* can be therefore resumed as "speaking otherwise" or simply: "saying one thing and meaning another". Under the heading Allegory in *The Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* we can further read that it is usually: "a story in verse or prose with a double meaning: a primary or surface meaning, and a secondary or under-the-surface meaning" which can be read, understood, and interpreted on two levels (and in some cases, even on more - three or four levels). It is closely related to the genres of fable and parable which, however, usually end with a definite moral and are relatively short, while allegory generally has no specific moral and no determinate length.

Traditionally, allegory has been treated as a rhetoric figure. Nevertheless, it does not have to be expressed only in the language: examples of allegory can be also found in the representative and mimetic art in the form of a painting, sculpture, drama or even, most modern, film.

Some authors (Tambling 2) claim that giving a concrete and precise definition of allegory may be misleading and that individual forms of writing are just "more or less allegorical". The most radical perspective in this respect is then represented by the attitudes of the Canadian literary critic and theorist Northrop Frye and the American medievalist Morton Bloomfield who both see as allegorical **all** writing and **all** literature (Berek 1).

1.1.2 Origins

The origins of allegory are very ancient. We can quote Brenda Machosky here (1): "Allegory is perhaps as old as language itself and certainly as variable as the languages and styles in which it has been written." Besides the variability of allegory, its permanent presence in literary history, theory and critique also needs to be stressed: "Between occasional pinnacles, allegory has maintained a constant presence in artistic forms and humanistic study." (ibid) Such uninterrupted popularity and related timelessness of allegory can be undoubtedly attributed to its all-embracing character: allegory has always belonged to one of the most universal modes of expression.

The uses and definitions of the term were established already by classical Roman writers. As allegory they regarded both the mode of writing (as well as speaking) and the form of reading and interpreting various texts. The latter was later termed **allegoresis** and defined as: "interpreting the text in an allegorical manner, also: reading the text as an allegory".

1.1.2.1 Antiquity

1.1.2.1.1. Plato

Although Plato has been well acknowledged as the author of one of the first examples of the genre known as *The Allegory (or Myth) of the Cave*, he expresses certain hostility to allegory. In the second book of his *Republic* he lets Socrates speak about the education children should have, not wanting them to hear stories about gods: "for the young are not able distinguish what is and what is not allegory". As Tambling observes (8), Plato, through Socrates, fears that the double meaning literature carries, firstly at the level of meaning and secondly at the level of language which expresses the meaning, may be destabilizing, because it is "offering dangerous meanings inadmissible to adult common sense which expects language to convey a single truth". Here, the binary essence of allegory is hinted at and recognized as a possible source of misunderstanding and misinterpretation and therefore as something potentially dangerous.

1.1.2.1.2 Cicero and Macrobius Theodosius

The lost sixth book of *De Republica (On the Republic)* which was written around the year 51 BC by Cicero introduces a dream narrative called *Somnium Scipionis (The Dream of Scipio)*. It is an early example of allegory in the form of a dream vision. Later, in the early fifth century, Macrobius Theodosius, compiled a commentary on it in two books (*Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*) which had a considerable influence on the allegorical treatment of dreams and on allegory in general in the Middle Ages.

1.1.2.2 Early Middle Ages

1.1.2.2.1 Prudentius

The first Christian and probably the most influential "pure" medieval allegory called *Psychomachia (The Battle for Man's Soul)* comes from the late 4th century when it was written by the late antique Latin poet Prudentius. Here for the first time, virtues like *Hope, Sobriety, Chastity,* and *Humility*, and vices like *Pride, Wrath, Paganism*, and *Avarice,* are in the conflict for a Christian's soul. Several Biblical figures exemplifying the virtues, such as Job as the example of *Patience*, also appear. The figures are always women, because in Latin the terms for these abstract concepts are in the feminine gender. The fight itself is then described as a battle in the style of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

1.1.2.3 High and Late Middle Ages

Among the great European allegories from this period definitely belong these four: the French, widely inspiring, *Romance of the Rose (Le Roman de la Rose)* in two parts by Guillaume de Lorris (c. 1230) and Jean de Meung (c.1275)*,* the Italian *Divine Comedy (Divina Commedia)* (between 1308 and 1321) by Dante Alighieri, and the English *Piers Plowman* (around 1382-87) attributed to William Langland and *Pearl* from late 14th century by an unknown author. We can see that allegory in the Middle Ages was popular throughout the whole Europe. The particular allegorical works then played their roles as the core works in the rise of the individual national literatures in vernacular languages.

1.1.2.4 **Renaissance**

Allegory as a genre was widely used also in the Renaissance period. However, there was a certain shift: from the medieval concept of a dream vision, further discussed below, to the greater emphasis on the setting of the court and the theme of courtly love. A typical example of such a Renaissance allegorical work could be found in Edmund Spenser's unfinished epic poem *The Faerie Queene* (published in six books and two halves in 1590 and 1596).

1.1.3 **The four readings of the Scripture**

In the Middle Ages four categories of meaning (and interpretation of texts) were used. They were based on the Biblical interpretation - exegesis from the early Christian era and included literal (or historical), typological (or allegorical), moral (or tropological), and anagogical meanings. The first, literal meaning means the basic interpretation of the events in the story for historic purposes with no underlying meaning and refers backwards, to the past. The second, typological meaning is based on the search for the connection between the Old and the New Testament and is interested in the relationship between the past and the present. The third, moral meaning brings the moral interpretation of the story, whereas the fourth, anagogical meaning concentrates on the future events resulting from the story, thus referring to the present and the future, respectively.

1.1.4 **Typology**

For the rise of the allegorical genre in the Middle Ages, which we are now interested in, the first two meanings, literal and typological, are crucial. They date back to the times of the first Christians who studied both the texts of the Old and the New Testaments and regarded them as equally important and equally inspired by God. Nevertheless, certain discrepancies and discontinuities arouse for them in the Old Testament with regard to their everyday lives, e.g. applying the Jewish kosher laws or other strict laws. Trying to overcome these discrepancies, they ceased to interpret the

Old Testament in the merely literal sense and introduced the typological reading of it. In other words, the events, characters, and statements in the Old Testament – called types – began to be read as primarily foreshadowing the events, characters, and statements in the New Testament – antitypes. The most typical examples of typological reading are the Old Testament characters of Isaac, Moses, or Jonah in their specific ways foreshadowing the antitype of Christ. The theory of typology was highly popular in the Middle Ages and then again in the Protestant Reformation under Calvinism, which also corresponds with the period of high interest in the allegory.

1.1.5 Constituting elements of allegory

1.1.5.1 Narrative technique

1.1.5.1.1 Dream allegory

A specific narrative technique typical of allegory, which can be met also elsewhere, is called a **dream allegory** (also a **dream vision**). It is a conventional device used widely throughout the Middle Ages in order to make the distant and fantastic worlds of personifications and symbolic objects more acceptable and believable to the readers. Or it was also used with the exactly opposite purpose, to stress the distance of the narrator to the events he describes to the audience as fictional. Occasionally, it was applied both in earlier (cf. the *Somnium Scipionis* by Cicero mentioned above) and in later periods. The principle of the narration is that it takes place within the framework of a dream: initially, the narrator claims to have fallen asleep, dreamt the events of the story and then awoken again to retell his dream as the actual plot of the story.

Examples of European medieval dream allegory include the first part of the already mentioned French *Le Roman de la Rose* from the 13th century and several pieces in the English literature: *Piers Plowman*, *Book of the Duchesse* (1368-1372), *The House of Fame* (1379-80), *Parlement of Foules* (1381-2), and *The Legend of Good Women* (around 1386-88) all by Geoffrey Chaucer, William Dunbar's *The Thissil and the Rois* and *The Goldyn Targe* (early 16th century), and also, more than 150 years later, the main

subject of our interest in this thesis, the early modern Puritan novel *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).

Most dream visions, including Bunyan's allegory, usually do not express the natural logic (or rather the illogicality) of dreams, because they show the events in the order they normally occur in real life, not in the irrational and often confusing order typical of dreams. The only book that can be regarded as consistently and successfully keeping the dream-like logic is Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

1.1.5.2 Verse vs. prose

As already stated above in the definition of the genre, in allegory, either rhymed or prosaic form can be used - without much difference in meaning or any other further consequences for the interpretation. Thus, on the one hand, we can have allegorical poems such are the unfinished six books of *The Faerie Queene* by Edmund Spenser, or allegorical short stories, like Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* (1835) and allegorical novels, like George Orwell's *The Animal Farm* (1945), on the other hand. Allegory can be also successfully used in drama as show the examples of the medieval morality plays, like the Dutch (Flemish) *Elckerlijc* and its English counterpart *Everyman,* as well as other similar examples, such as *Mankind, The Castle of Perseverance,* or *Wisdom*, all from the late 15th century.

1.1.5.3 Characters - types

It was this specific genre of medieval dramatic allegory **- the morality play -** that established typical allegorical characters called **types**. Within the morality play, the protagonist, who is a type himself, is met by personifications of various moral attributes who try to make him choose eternal life instead of damnation and in this way fight for his salvation. Since the main character should represent either humanity in general or a specific social class, he is given a universal name such as *Everyman* - as in the most well-known English morality play with the same title from the late 15th century. The

other characters are then strictly polarized: they embody either virtues (or good qualities) like *Fellowship, Kindred, Good Deeds, Knowledge, Beauty, Strength,* and *Discretion*, or vices, like the individual personifications of the Seven Deadly Sins: *Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth, Wrath, Envy,* and *Pride*. The three main temptations coming from Hell are usually represented by *The Devil, The World* and *The Flesh*, with *The Good Angel* or *God* representing Heaven, respectively. The fight between good and evil over the soul of the protagonist is the central action of the morality play.

As we have just seen, the role of each of the types within this kind of allegory is clear and predictable, for it is given a priori. Right from the first appearance of the character on the stage, the audience know what to imagine and what to expect: it is the name that gives the characters their meaning and their immediate interpretation. The name shall not reflect any individuality of human fate or the psychological complexity and many-sidedness of human personality in the modern sense therefore it is not presented in any form of a proper name which would suggest uniqueness in any sense. On the contrary, it is always a common noun that should evoke a general notion of a certain personal quality - a mental stereotype shared by all people.

The boundaries between good and evil in the morality play are always clear-cut. The characters, both the virtues and the vices, are expected to behave exactly according to what their names express. Neither should they carry any psychological profundity nor are they supposed to undergo any mental or spiritual development during the play. All of them are fixed and serve just one particular purpose.

This purpose - the main purpose of morality plays - can be summed up as the education of the masses by means of entertainment. Through the dramatic spoken word, it was possible for the illiterate people to learn easily and quickly about the basic doctrines of Christian faith. In this way, abstract topics such as original sin, temptation, damnation, redemption or atonement were made more understandable and recognizable to them. Also for these reasons, in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, the period of the pre-Reformation and the beginnings of the Reformation Movement, the time of great theological turbulences in the whole Europe, allegories in the form of a morality play were especially popular. They were performed largely in the favour of the Catholic Church which could through them both persuade the people about the central truths of

its teaching and also try to consolidate its gradually destabilizing position within the establishment.

The examples of morality plays can be found even in the Post-Reformation period, but with a shift in the focus. Being fuelled by Protestantism this time, they do not aim to reinforce the Catholic doctrine, but, on the other hand, tend to destroy the credibility and power of the Catholic Church by mocking it. The stress is no longer on the human behaviour imitating the Virtues and abhorring the Vices, but on seeing the former as representing the faith of an individual, who is able to make one's own decisions, and the latter as the dogmatic, corrupted and no more acceptable church system.

2. The Pilgrim's Progress

2.1 The genre of allegory

The Pilgrim's Progress (*from This World to That Which Is to Come* in its full title) is a novel published in the year 1678 in London. It was entered in the Stationers' Register on 22nd December 1677 and licensed on 18th February 1678, which is considered to be the official date of its first publication (cf. Lynch 84). The novel has a second part published six years later, in 1684. Whereas the first part presents the pilgrimage of the character *Christian* alone, the sequel describes the journey through the same stages of his wife *Christiana*, their two sons and a maiden from the neighbourhood called *Mercy*. Both of the books are written in the same form of allegory.

Let us now briefly consider the two levels of meaning, as introduced above in the definition of the genre, shared by both of Bunyan's allegories. The primary (or surface) meaning is in both cases the actual description of the physical journey of the individual characters. The secondary (or under-the-surface) meaning is then the spiritual development of an individual from the initial state of anguish and despair through the various trials and tribulations of life to the final salvation. The hints to the allegorical reading of the text as an illustration of one of the basic Christian doctrines – life as the road to salvation – can be found directly within the allegory itself. These are e.g.

already the names of the characters, such as *Christian* and *Evangelist*, and other obvious circumstances in the plot, like the fact that at the very beginning of his journey *Christian* is given by *Evangelist* a book of advice and help where he can read about the death and judgement, and about heaven and things to happen after death, which is obviously, though never mentioned directly, the Bible.

2.2 **The writing method**

Now to some other aspects connected with the genre and the origin of the text. The process of writing and the style of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are consciously reflected by John Bunyan. Direct evidence of it can be found within his rhymed "prologue" to *The Pilgrim's Progress* called *The Author's Apology for His Book*. Here he not only mentions the controversies expressed by his friends preceding the final publication of the book in 1678: *"Some said, John, print it; others said, Not so: / Some said, It might do good; others said, No"* (5), but he also tries to defend his own method of writing – either by asking rhetorical questions:

> *May I not write in such a **style** as this?*
> *In such a **method** too, and yet not miss*
> *My end-thy good? Why may it not be done?* (5-6, emphasis added)

or by simply stating:

> *I find not that I am denied the use*
> *Of this my **method***
> *(...)*
> *Use it I may then, and nothing smother*
> *Truth's golden beams: nay by this **method** may*
> *Make it cast forth its rays as light as day.* (9, emphasis added).

Besides, he also comments on the language he used and the expected effect of his text on the reader: *"This book is writ in such a dialect /As may the minds of listless men affect"* (...) *"This book will make a traveler* [sic] *of thee, / If by its counsel thou wilt ruled be"* (10).

2.3 **The fall into allegory**

The style and method directly referred to are further specified and defined by Bunyan as: **an allegory**. The prologue of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, "disarmingly modest" as Carolynn Van Dyke precisely remarks (157), describes the unpremeditated origin of the text and does it in a very vivid and remarkably detailed way. Bunyan admits that it all came to him as a result of a sudden divine inspiration, which he was nothing more than a humble beneficiary of:

> *And thus it was: I, writing of the way*
> *And race of saints in this our gospel-day,*
> ***Fell suddenly into an allegory***
> *About their journey, and the way to glory.* (4, emphasis added)

As Thomas H. Luxon correctly observes (30), the composition of Bunyan's first explicitly allegorical work is then depicted as a kind of automatic writing proceeding itself almost against the author's will:

> *In more than twenty things which I set down*
> *This done, I twenty more had in my crown,*
> *And **they** again **began to multiply**,*
> *Like sparks that from the coals of fire do fly.*
> *(...)*
> *Thus I set pen to paper with delight,*
> *And quickly had my thoughts in black and white;*
> *For having now my method by the end,*

> *Still as I pull'd, it came*; *and so I penned*
>
> *It down;*   (4, emphasis added)

Whereas Bunyan openly states that this all happened to him while he was writing something else, namely a different book:

> *When at the first I took my pen in hand*
> *Thus for to write, I did not understand*
> *That I at all should make a little book*
> *In such a mode: nay, I had undertook*
> *To make another; which, when almost done,*
> *Before I was aware I this begun.* (4),

Luxon speculates (159) that Bunyan "fell into allegory", while he was "reading himself". By this he means the process of looking for Bunyan's own inner self, a process that seemed to be a rather complicated and conflicted one (cf. Bunyan's spiritual autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*).

This "fall into allegory" is worth pondering over. According to Roger Pooley, it may mean two things: either a happy accident, an example of God's providence, or **a fall** connected with **the Fall** (Dunan-Page 82, emphasis added). The second given explanation refers to something substantially more serious: the Biblical transition of the first man from the state of absolute innocence and obedience to God to the exact opposite, state of guilt and complete disobedience. Although it is not directly described in the Bible, the notion of this concept can be found in the Book of Genesis, third chapter. It has always been connected with the idea of the corruption of the innocent nature of man and the rise of original sin in man. Here it may refer to Bunyan's decline from the official Puritan attitude to allegory, which could be then perceived by Bunyan himself as a certain form of "a fall".

Pooley in his idea about the downfall seems to be in agreement with Luxon, who, however, further develops the notion in a completely opposite way. According to

him, Bunyan with his fall **into** allegory in fact falls **back** into, or - in other words - returns to, the allegory Protestantism required (30).

2.4 **The literary convention**

In this respect, as Luxon suggests, Bunyan's apology for the book and the allegory as a whole seems to be nothing more than a contemporary literary convention. Let us now examine it shortly. Similarly as the morality plays a century or two ago aimed mainly at the education of the masses, the primary function of literature for Puritans in the 16th and 17th centuries was also edification of common people ("the vulgar") "who had never before been supposed capable of literary engagement" (Dunan-Page 14). This corresponds to one of the key requirements of the Protestant Reformation Movement - to enable direct access to the Scripture (translated into vernacular languages) for everybody. The Puritan readers were thus taught to approach texts written in their own mother tongue, the vernacular, not Latin, based on direct contact with God's word and formed on the principles of aesthetic plainness. All this is reflected throughout Bunyan's allegory, especially in the language it speaks - plain, colloquial and comprehensible.

2.5 **The divine inspiration of the text**

The introductory passage of *The Pilgrim's Progress* brings up as one of the topics the divine inspiration of the text: "*It seems a novelty, and yet contains /Nothing but sound and honest gospel strains*" (10). Bunyan is here trying to overcome the anticipated scepticism and fear of new things among his readership by hinting at the highest authority - the Bible. In older literature, this was a conventional device used commonly to express the writer's modesty and, at the same time, to acknowledge the most reliable (in fact, the only acceptable) source of inspiration. What is more, Bunyan in his prologue does not forget to stress the fact that the Bible as his model has also used the poetic language full of metaphors, types and allegories:

Were not God's laws,

His gospel laws, in olden time held forth

*By **types**, **shadows**, and **metaphors**?* (7, emphasis added)

that holy writ,

Which for its style and phrase puts down all wit,

Is everywhere so full of all these things,

Dark figures**, **allegories (8, emphasis added)

I find that holy writ, in many places,

*Hath **semblance with this method**, where the cases*

*Do **call for one thing to set forth another*** (9, emphasis added)

In accordance with his readers' expectations at that time, Bunyan presents his writing as solely dependent on the Bible. As we can read in his spiritual autobiography, he: "found by experience that what was taught me by the Word and Spirit of Christ, could be spoken, maintained and stood to, by the soundest and best established Conscience" (Grace Abounding 87-8, qtd. in Dunan-Page 19).

Moreover, Bunyan explicitly denies having been inspired by any other literary sources than the Bible. He: "never endeavoured to, nor durst make use of other men's lines" (ibid.) and never "fished in other mens [sic] Waters, my Bible and Concordance are my only Library in my writings" (Miscellaneous Works VII: 9, qtd. in Dunan-Page 20). Here Bunyan is consciously understating – he is trying to make himself less educated and less read than he, in fact, was. In spite of coming from a lower class family, (which in itself is a very interesting piece of information from the sociological point of view and has therefore been a subject of several sociological studies, cf. Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch, or Herbert Schöffler mentioned by Wolfgang Iser 1-2), he had definitely been acquainted with and largely derived from John Foxe's famous martyrology *Actes and Monuments* (better known as *The Book of Martyrs*) (1563) as well as Luther's commentary on Galatians in the English translation (1560) (Dunan-Page 20). His stressing the lack of education and lack of sources must then again be

understood in the contemporary literary context: education was seen by radical Puritans and Nonconformists as an obstacle rather than advantage in the relationship with God.

2.6 **Possible source(s) of inspiration**

Apart from the Bible and the two books just mentioned, there have definitely been some other sources of Bunyan's inspiration for writing *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Let us now concentrate on just one of them, which will serve us as a suitable background for the comparison of the genre of allegory in two different literary and historic periods.

2.6.1 **Guillaume de Deguileville as the pioneer of the pilgrimage allegory**

One of Bunyan's early predecessors in the genre of pilgrimage allegory could be found in the French Cistercian and writer Guillaume de Deguileville (1295 – before 1385). His three poems written in Old French *Le Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine* (*The Pilgrimage of Human Life*), *Le Pèlerinage de l' Âme* (*The Pilgrimage of the Soul*), and *Le Pèlerinage de Jhesucrist* (*The Pilgrimage of Jesus Christ*) belonged to the most widely read pilgrimage allegories of the Middle Ages. Portions of the trilogy had been translated into English, Dutch, German, Latin, and Castilian by the mid 16th century. The English rendering of *Le Pèlerinage de l' Âme* (translated presumably by John Lydgate) first circulated in manuscript and then was printed by William Caxton in 1483 under the title *The Pylgremage of the Sowle*. In her essay Stephanie A. Viereck Gibbs Kamath (muse.jhu.edu) claims that among all the foreign lands it was England that offered Deguileville's allegories the warmest literary reception. By that, the door for popularizing the genre of pilgrimage allegory in England had been definitely opened.

Some authors, e.g. Charles Kingsley and his contemporaries in the mid 19th century, saw Deguileville's *Pilgrimage of Human Life* as a direct source of inspiration for Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Others, especially the modern writers, however, are not so confident about this fact (cf. Vance 74).

Nevertheless, from today's point of view, Deguileville's treatment of the motifs of both the pilgrim and the pilgrimage appears to be very different from that of

Bunyan. Deguileville's allegory is close to the morality play in that it is also a part of the medieval tradition and therefore its major interest is definitely not in the individuality of human character or in the human soul as such. As Iser observes (4), the pilgrim in *The Pilgrimage of Human Life* is given, within the first 10.000 verses and, in fact, before he even sets off on his journey, a prescribed set of instructions he needs to follow to be granted at the end what is the primary goal of the whole pilgrimage: the *certitudo salutis* (certitude of salvation). The message of this Deguileville's allegory is that the grace is possible to be gained, but only through the human active participation in the gradual process of the education to holiness. This process is based on the pilgrim's performance of certain actions, which are recognized as the individual acts of holiness. All of this must have sound familiar to the reader at that time, since it corresponds to the teachings of the Catholic Church prevalent in the Middle Ages known as "justification by works". It can be well contrasted to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination promoted by Puritans in the Reformation period, with the reference to the specific example in Bunyan's pilgrimage allegory.

2.7 The contradictions of allegory

Let us now discuss the speciality of Puritan conception of allegory. Luxon describes Bunyan's relationship to allegory as "nervous and contradictory" (7). No wonder, if we take into consideration the general attitude of Puritans to allegorical writing. As Luxon further remarks elsewhere: "No mode of discourse is more consistently vilified by Reformation authors from Tyndale to Milton than allegory." (ix). Reality and its depiction in fiction were problematic categories for Puritans. In accordance with the proclamations of the Reformation Movement, they were principally hostile to literature. They saw it as nothing else than Devil's work and acknowledged it just as a means of edification for the masses. Generally speaking, no fiction was allowed or welcome and the purpose of edification was accomplished either by the Scripture in the vernacular language or by the books of devotion – principally the conduct books, further mentioned below. These were needed by Puritans predominantly

to convey to the simple people the core of the Calvinist doctrine of the predestined salvation.

As Iser observes, this doctrine makes the attainment of *certitudo salutis* into something "objectively unattainable" (4). The reason is obvious: according to Calvin's teaching, the man is pre-destined, chosen to be either saved or damned, and this is given in advance. No education to holiness is therefore possible or suitable. The question for the Puritan pilgrim is thus different from that for the medieval pilgrim – now it is not only: **What shall I do to be saved? -** a question *Christian* himself asks at the beginning of his journey (*The Pilgrim's Progress* 13), corresponding to Acts 16, 30-31 (*New International Version*) – but also, the more striking and the more urgent: **How do I recognize that I am saved?**

As the salvation for the Puritan was not sure, only hoped for, each of the pilgrims on the allegorical journey (and each of the people in everyday life) had to look for any probable signs of it on their way. The doubt about the fact of salvation remains for the whole journey (or life), the salvation is never sure, as we can see in the case of the character of *Christian* who even in the waters of the river within the eyeshot of the Celestial City experiences doubts and despair similar to those from the beginning of his journey.

The doctrine of predestination in its essence must have necessarily caused certain fears among the Puritan sects. As Iser remarks in his essay (2), it was the necessity to somehow counterbalance these fears that, in fact, brought to life, after the edifying conduct books and other pieces of exemplary writing, the first Puritan fiction represented by Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Later, as Iser also mentions, it led another Puritan, Daniel Defoe to write his *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), considered to be the first novel of the English literature arising from the same dissent environment.

Thus, in accordance with Iser's reading, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination can be seen as one of the incentives for the rise of the novel in the English literature. The reason behind that is such that the literary fiction has used the space between the rigidity and dogmatic understanding of predestination on the one hand and the human inadequacy and fallibility on the other and within this space offered its readers a sensible orientation and advice in their religious and psychological despair. It is exactly

this that Bunyan addresses in his apology when he invites the reader in his ambiguous situation to read on:

> *Would'st read thyself, and read thou know'st not what,*
> *And yet **know whether are thou blest or not**,*
> *By reading the same lines? O then come hither,*
> *And lay my Book, thy Head and Heart together.* (11, emphasis added)

2.8 Individual experience of conversion

What has made Bunyan's allegory even more trustworthy and generally applicable for the readers is the individual experience of spiritual conversion standing behind it. In this respect and also chronologically, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is preceded by *Grace Abounding on the Chief of Sinners* (1666). Pooley defines the former as "a fictional, allegorised and universalised version of Bunyan's conversion experience" whereas the latter is characterized as: "a pretext for allegorising" (Dunan-Page 81). In fact, both of them were written as a form of adaptation of the so-called conduct books, a genre used by Puritans to generalize and convey the already discussed Calvinist teaching of predestination to the masses. The conduct books were primarily set out to advise Christians in their everyday lives, particularly in the matters concerning marriage and family, and their ultimate source was naturally the Bible (Schucking 18).

The generality of conduct books and the individuality of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are put into sharp contrast by Iser (28). According to him, the character of conduct books, though generally systematic, was rather private and necessarily truthful in its record of experiences. By contrast, Bunyan's allegory is fictional and in its individualization of human feelings of distress and certitude paradoxically more general and acceptable to the Puritan readers than the conduct books themselves. Thus, argues Iser, *The Pilgrim's Progress* has played its historical role particularly in the "fictional humanizing of theological rigorism" (ibid.).

2.9 **Allegory as a form of "disguise"**

Apart from the literary and theological explanations, the use of the allegorical mode by Bunyan may have had also purely practical reasons. As N.H.Keeble suggests in his essay on Bunyan's literary life (Dunan-Page 16): "oblique and implicit expression of meanings that could be denied if need be" would serve to circumvent the authority of the censor which was the everyday reality for Nonconformist writers and preachers, one of whom John Bunyan was.

Already the origin of the text was connected with particular fears: the writing of *The Pilgrim's Progress* was probably begun as early as 1668 and finished three years later, in 1671, during Bunyan's imprisonment in the Bedford County Gaol. As Keeble continues: "the seven-year delay [before the final publication in 1678] was perhaps due in part to apprehension about its reception by authorities" (ibid.). In the meantime, the novel circulated among Bunyan's friends in manuscript, as was quite common at that time. The apprehensions about the quality and reception of the text expressed both by Bunyan himself and his friends were openly reflected in *The Author's Apology for His Book* (cf. above).

2.10 **Constituting elements of *The Pilgrim's Progress***

2.10.1 **Narrative techniques**

Within the chapter of narrative techniques we will take into consideration especially the specific form in which *The Pilgrim's Progress* is narrated, i.e. the framework of a dream, and compare it with the medieval dream allegory as defined above.

2.10.1.1 **Dream allegory**

The Pilgrim's Progress is set as a dream vision from the very beginning. Already on the title page of the first edition from 1678 we can read (as a part of the full, long and characterizing title, typical of the early-modern books) that it is: "Delivered

under the Similitude of a Dream" (*The Pilgrim's Progress* 1). The word "dream" is printed in capital letters and in the largest typeface to stand out for the reader as the most important information on the front page.

2.10.1.2 **Dream OR allegory?**

Why is "dream" such a crucial word for Bunyan – especially if we know that in the case of *The Pilgrim's Progress* we are dealing with an instance of allegory and Bunyan himself openly admits this fact in his apology for the book? One possible answer could be that he does not distinguish between these two concepts of literary genres. Both dreams and allegories seem to have been always present in Bunyan's life and have carried similar importance for him. Sharon Achinstein (70) even does not hesitate to say that Bunyan **loves** allegories since they are: "integral to his spiritual project, and central to his mission of educating his readers."

Let us now exemplify this presumption on a specific situation recorded in his spiritual autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. He is writing here about "a Dream or Vision" of the poor Christian people from his future parish in Bedford, a situation that later became a crucial episode for his own conversion experience (Dunan-Page 80). In the following passage we can read how he directly connected the explication of the dream with allegory by giving it an allegorical interpretation:

> *Now, etc., was thus made out to me; the Mountain signified the Church of the living God; the Sun that shone thereon, the comfortable shining of his merciful face on them that were therein: the wall I thought was the Word that did make separation between the Christians and the world: and the gap which was in this wall, I thought was Jesus Christ, who is the way to God the Father.* (20, qtd. in Dunan-Page 80-1)

As Pooley remarks, sometimes as if Bunyan was given the interpretation from outside, presumably as the inspiration by the Holy Spirit: "*this Mountain and Wall (...)*

*was thus **made out to me***" (ibid., emphasis added). In other situations it seems more like his own interpretation of the dream: *the wall **I thought** was the Word* (ibid., emphasis added). These two positions to interpretation Bunyan adopts, the passive and the active, as well as the two genres and narrative modes he uses, the allegory and the dream, are close to each other in his writing and in *The Pilgrim's Progress* they are especially carefully and creatively intertwined.

2.10.1.3 **Not a dream, just a similitude of it**

What is more, Bunyan uses the traditional and highly popular medieval allegorical device of the dream vision in a different manner than it would be expected. First of all, we are not presented with a dream as such, but, as the author does not forget to remind us, just with a **similitude** of it. This "correction" of his is done already on the front page of the book. Between the rules, and below his name printed, we can further read:"I have used Similitudes" in which Bunyan is directly quoting the Old Testament prophet Hosea 12, 10. By that, he is again acknowledging his major source of inspiration and the highest spiritual authority, as already discussed above.

The dream in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* – or rather, strictly speaking, the similitude of it – does not take us to any world beyond this one, as had been previously given by the tradition of the genre, but, exclusively to the present world. Contrary to the long title of the novel promising the culmination of the story in "the world which is to come", we are kept all the time in the dream narrative within "this world". The preparation for the future life in this world seems to be more important than the future world itself.

The dream vision is first introduced by the narrator like this:

> *"As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold, I saw a man..."* (13)

Later in the narrative, the dream is always reintroduced and recalled for the reader in a similar way: *Now I saw in my dream... Then I saw in my dream... I saw moreover in my dream... I beheld then...* etc. Besides these dream passages, *The Pilgrim's Progress* also contains a running commentary of the narrator on their meaning. As with real dreams that deserve their own specific explications, the dream vision here also needs to be explained and understood thoroughly. Above all it is the reader who does this interpreting job, but always with the great help of the narrator.

The narrator in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is omniscient, knows more than all his characters and is willing to share this knowledge with the reader. He is able to see the whole journey up to the Celestial City, where the salvation will be finally attained, unlike the characters that just see what is immediately in front of them and are never sure about their salvation. The narrator usually introduces the situation himself, but his commentaries are quite often outbalanced by the power of the dialogue of the individual characters. Iser (7) speaks here about the fact that: "a dream vision (...) for long sections (...) is virtually expunged by the force and immediacy of dialogue".

The stress on the individual description and reflection of the situation by the characters themselves, as opposed to the knowledge and perspective of the omniscient narrator, again fully corresponds to the edifying purpose of the book. The readers should be able to identify easily with the pilgrims, their errors and inadequacies and thus learn from them naturally how to solve each particular situation on their spiritual way through life.

2.10.2 Verse vs. prose

In the same way as the different narrative perspectives of the narrator and the characters, the balance between verse and prose in the novel is also equally important. Above in the definition of allegory, we have already noticed that there is not much difference between the use of prose and poetry within the allegorical genre. Now, with *The Pilgrim's Progress* specifically in mind, we want to compare and contrast the prosaic and rhymed passages and define their significance in Bunyan's novel.

The Pilgrim's Progress is for the most part written in prose. Still, at certain places prose changes into verse. Apart from *The Author's Apology for His Book*, which is rhymed as a whole, the verse usually comes in a few lines at the beginnings or at the ends of each of the ten individual chapters (called "stages" here). The rhymed passages are very short, again with the exception of the apology, so they seem to be just interruptions of the continuous flow of prose.

Nevertheless, they come at specific places: they are always summing up the various incidents taking place during the journey. And what is more, they also generalize the specific situation of the particular characters, very often in the form of a song they sing. So e.g. in the ninth stage, when *Christian* and *Hopeful* forgot the good advice they had been given, succumbed to the sweet talk of the *Flatterer* and had to be made aware of the right way again by one of the *Shining Ones*, they go along and sing:

> *Come hither, you that walk along the way,*
> *See how the pilgrims fare that go astray:*
> *They catched [sic] are in an entangling net,*
> *Cause they good advice lightly did forget:*
> *'Tis true, they rescued were; but yet, you see,*
> *They're scouged to boot, let this your caution be.*
>
> (The Pilgrim's Progress, 95-6)

The poetic part serves here as a summary of the individual story previously told in full length in prose. It is written for the characters to remember, but even more for the Puritan reader who is still expecting his portion of edification in the literary fiction. The abstraction from the individual characters and their errors in verse gives the reader an example of a general conduct as should be adopted by a true Christian. In the prose, and especially in the lively dialogues, as we already discussed it, the reader was experiencing the doubts and temptations with the characters virtually as his own. Now he needs to be given a particular distance to be able to realize the effect of the situation. The distance is given to him by the rhymed passages coming quite unexpectedly and thus standing out for the reader.

As we have seen, the rhymed passages always bring a moral. The moral works well when uttered by any character. However, it is even more effective when the verses are spoken by the pilgrim himself – as when he reaches the Hill Difficulty and wants to climb it:

> *"The hill, though high, I covet to ascend;*
> *The difficulty will not me offend;*
> *For I perceive the way to life lies here:*
> *Come, pluck up heart, let's neither faint nor fear.*
> *Better, though* difficult, *the right way to go,*
> *Than wrong, though* easy, *where the end is woe."* (ibid. 35)

Here, *Christian* is making general statements about "*the way of life*" and encourages the reader "*neither faint nor fear*" for "*the difficulty will not me offend*". He himself is the source of inspiration and courage for the reader, obviously referring to the Bible, Mat. 7. 13-14: "*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*"

2.10.3 **Characters**

Let us now move our attention to the last area of interest and these are the characters. The characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress* can be divided into three different groups, according to their functions in the narrative. Successively, we will deal with all the individual groups.

2.10.3.1 **Personifications of virtues and vices**

The first group are the characters which are close to the types from the morality play as defined above. The protagonist, a pilgrim called *Christian*, represents a universal, everyman-like kind of figure. On his physical (and spiritual) journey from the

City of Destruction to the Celestial City he is challenged by various other characters - types. They are similar to (sometimes exactly the same as) the original personifications of virtues and vices fighting together over the soul of the Man.

They include the vast majority of characters in the novel - in order of appearance: *Obstinate, Pliable, Help, Legality, Civility, Goodwill*, *Passion, Patience, the Shining Ones* (three characters), *Simple, Sloth, Presumption, Timorous, Mistrust, Formality, Hypocrisy, Discretion, Prudence, Piety, Charity, Discontent, Pride, Arrogance, Self-Conceit, Worldly Glory, Shame, Wanton, Lord Hate-Good* (the judge), *Envy, Superstition, Pickthank* (the three witnesses at the court), *Mr. Blindman, Mr. No-Good, Mr. Malice, Mr. Love-Lust, Mr. Live-Loose, Mr. Heady, Mr. High-Mind, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Liar, Mr. Cruelty, Mr. Hate-Light, Mr. Implacable* (the twelve members of the jury), *By-Ends, Mr. Hold-the-World, Mr. Money-Love, Mr. Save-All* (the four schoolfellows taught by *Mr. Gripeman*), *Vain-Confidence, Giant Despair, Diffidence* (his wife), *Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, Sincere* (the four Shepherds), *Ignorance, Faint-Heart, Guilt, Little-Faith, Great-Grace, Vain-Hope* (the ferryman).

With a few exceptions (*Obstinate, Pliable, the Shining Ones, Simple, Timorous, Watchful, Sincere*) all the names in this category have the form of common nouns (not adjectives) denoting good and bad human qualities and/or virtues and vices. A distinctive group is then made up by the jury members and also by *By-Ends'* schoolfellows whose names are in most cases in the form of compound nouns and are used with the honorific title Mr. There are also several characters with real Biblical names and prefigures, such as *Adam the First, Moses, Demas, Beelzebub,* and *Apollyon*, the last mentioned being further discussed below.

2.10.3.1.1 Obstinate and Pliable

Let us now examine more closely the two characters of *Christian*'s neighbours who follow *Christian* at the beginning of the novel and appear together as an inseparable pair only to be separated a while later: *Obstinate* and *Pliable*. With their pursuing *Christian* at his departure from the City of Destruction they in fact reflect *Christian*'s own state of mind and allegorize his own antagonizing feelings at that

moment. While *Obstinate* with his resistance to "*the company of these crazy-headed coxcombs*" (*The Pilgrim's Progress* 15) expresses *Christian's* rational inclinations to go back home to the rest of the family: *"Go back, go back, and be wise"* (ibid.), *Pliable* with his opposing tendency to follow *Christian*, together with the instructions of the book given to him previously by *Evangelist*, could be seen as representing the other, emotional side of human psyche: *"my heart inclines to go with my neighbour"* (ibid.)

Neither of them prevails in the end: *Pliable's* seemingly stronger attitude and his willingness to endure do not last any longer than *Obstinate's* desire to return home. *Pliable* keeps up with *Christian* only until the first obstacle – the Slough of Despond – comes into their way. So eventually, both *Obstinate* and *Pliable* end up in a similar way: they come and go very quickly. As Iser (12) remarks to these two contradictory characters: "once *Christian* is actually on the way, *Obstinate* and *Pliable* disappear - they have played their part and fade from the scene".

Here we have touched upon the importance in the narrative of all the characters from this first group. As we have just seen on the examples of *Obstinate* and *Pliable*, their role is purely functional: they always appear on the scene, move the plot forward and withdraw again, usually not to return anymore. This can be simply attributed to the fact that these characters should epitomize abstract and general ideas and as such cannot develop themselves in any way. So after achieving the goal prescribed to them they have to disappear: there is no further space for their psychological development as characters.

2.10.3.1.2 **Evangelist and similar characters**

Several types belonging to this first group have a name of a slightly different character: *Evangelist, Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Formalist, Interpreter, Porter, Atheist,* and *Flatterer.* These are nouns expressing either a certain role or a job: *Interpreter, Porter*, a particular trait of character (still different from the vices and virtues mentioned above): *Flatterer*, *Formalist,* or a specific attitude or worldview: *Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Atheist*. The identity of some of these characters is disclosed immediately to *Christian* (and the reader): for instance the type of *Flatterer* is described by one of the three

Shining Ones as "a false apostle that hath transformed himself into an angel of light" (*The Pilgrim's Progress* 95). Similarly, the character of *Interpreter* is directly identified by the author in his footnote as the Holy Spirit (ibid. 26).

2.10.3.1.3 **Evangelist himself**

Completely different is then the name and character of *Evangelist* who plays the role of *Christian*'s (and later also *Faithful*'s) heavenly guide and spiritual counsellor throughout his/their journey. With clear Biblical references to one of the Four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the authors of the Four Gospels, he does not embody any human quality, neither vice, nor virtue. He rather represents for *Christian* on his way "from this world to that which is to come" (as the title page of *The Pilgrim's Progress* says) a direct connection to Heaven, in the same way as *Apollyon*, further mentioned below, represents a direct connection to Hell. Still are *Evangelist*'s, as well as *Apollyon*'s, functions fixed and apparent from their first appearance and thus similar to the types from the morality play.

Evangelist is the only character in this group that once again is a bit different. Now it is due to the fact that he reappears several times during the novel. As a spiritual guide to *Christian* he comes whenever he is needed. Right at the beginning he points *Christian* from the walls of the City of Destruction to the Wicket-Gate and gives him a parchment roll with the instructing inscription "Fly from the wrath to come" (ibid. 13-14). Then he comes when *Christian* is deceived by *Mr. Worldly-Wiseman*, lets *Christian* retell him the whole story, gives him his explanation and redirects him again (ibid. 20 - 22). And finally, he appears to both *Christian* and *Faithful* coming together out of the wilderness, after previously having met each of them individually. Again, he gives explanations of what has happened to them and also a spiritual counsel to what future holds in store for them (ibid. 65-66). When they later feel in despair, they gratefully recall what *Evangelist* has told them before.

2.10.3.1.4 **Differences from the morality play types**

Apart from the similarities with the types from the morality plays like *Everyman*, there are also certain differences. Firstly, the characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress* do not fight for the soul of *Christian* simultaneously, i.e. **all at the same time** (cf. Iser 16) as in the allegorical play. The plot of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a metaphor of a journey has a more linear and dynamic character than the medieval drama, which is in itself rather static and circular. Since the characters that *Christian* meets on his pilgrimage play a role of specific "accelerators" of his spiritual growth, they need to come one after another in a logical and chronological way.

Secondly, if we take a closer look at the character of the fight in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, we will find out that, in fact, the characters do not fight for *Christian*'s soul **at all** (ibid.). The only character in the whole novel that really physically fights with *Christian* is the monster *Apollyon* in the Valley of Humiliation.

2.10.3.1.4.1 **Apollyon and the fight with him**

Apollyon as a character also stays a bit aside from the other types in this group. As already noticed above, in certain features he is similar to *Evangelist*. Both of them share originally Biblical connotations, which are, however, more obvious in the case of *Evangelist*. *Apollyon* is described by Bunyan as "a foul fiend" (*The Pilgrim's Progress* 45). According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the Greek name Ἀπολλύων, which means "destroyer", is taken from the Rev. 9.11 where it represents the Hebrew word Abaddon (literally "place of destruction", but here it is personified). *Apollyon* also carries the epithet of "the angel of the Abyss" (Rev. 9.11) and is often regarded as the personification of the Devil – the greatest enemy of human soul. That is the already hinted connection with Hell he represents for *Christian*.

It is significant that the only character with which *Christian* really needs to fight is *Apollyon* and the only fight which really needs to be fought is the one with *Apollyon*. All the other characters in this group represent a fight on a completely different level. Rather than an outside struggle with sin and temptations as in the

morality plays, they embody the inner conflict taking place within *Christian*'s own mind. And what is more, it seems to be *Christian* himself, not the outside influences and challenges, who is the greatest source of his own temptations.

2.10.3.1.5 **Individualisation and psychologisation of the characters in** *The Pilgrim's Progress*

The medieval allegory, for the already mentioned purpose of edification and also for the sake of universalisation of human experience, which goes hand in hand with it, necessarily tended to de-personify and unify the characters. What we see in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is the exact opposite: a tendency to individualisation and psychologisation of the characters, even the type-like ones. In this respect, the concept of allegory has been significantly changed in Bunyan's hands: the allegory has become much more introspective and also largely subjective. Iser sums this up by saying that in Bunyan: "Mere allegory is surpassed through the sheer aliveness of the characters and it is this that gives the work its appeal" (3).

2.10.3.2 **Faithful and Hopeful**

In comparison with the first group, the other two groups of characters are significantly smaller, but all the members of both of them share certain features: above all, they extend beyond mere functionality in the narrative. The second group comprises of characters which are in fact two-folded and can be defined as a mixture of the already discussed personifications of general virtues and vices on the one hand, and of the personifications of *Christian*'s own inner qualities, both positive and negative, on the other hand. Principal members of this group are two: *Christian*'s companions for much of the way called *Faithful* and *Hopeful* who come consequently in the story replacing one another.

In some situations during the journey they embody allegorical features as corresponds to their names and are therefore close to the types, in others they become psychologically deeper, i.e. subjective and personal, and in this respect, they overcome

the purely cardboard essence of the types. Their names are expressed by adjectives: *Faithful* and *Hopeful*, not by common nouns (*Faith* and *Hope*) or compound nouns, and denote those traits of character which are more or less stable: faithfulness and hopefulness, respectively. Yet, *Faithful* and *Hopeful* are still able to undergo certain psychological and spiritual development within the space given to them in the novel and therefore belong to this second group of characters.

We can again agree here with Iser (17) who, with reference to and in comparison with the types, describes the characters of *Faithful* and *Hopeful* as: "far more than just embodiment of a single idea". The reason is simple: these characters are here again for the Puritan reader to easily identify with. For the purpose of edification, which has been largely discussed above, they shall be as much individual as possible, because it is exactly this individuality that makes the characters more believable and universally acceptable. They are also far from being ideal – both ideal people and ideal pilgrims – and this, once again, brings them paradoxically closer not just to the character of *Christian*, but to the reader as well. Similarly as Bunyan **falls into** allegory, as he subjectively reflects the situation, (cf. *The Author's Apology for His Book* discussed above), his characters of *Faithful* and *Hopeful* every now and then **fall out of** their allegorical roles to become livelier and psychologically deeper.

When compared with the functional figures from the first category, the characters of *Faithful*, *Hopeful*, and also *Christian* from the third category, are different in terms of attention given to them by the author. With regard to their importance for the readers, they get much more space and are generally described in a greater psychological detail. Iser uses here a film terminology and speaks about "a sort of narrative close-ups" (13) applied in the description of these characters. He notices this especially in the case of *Christian* and his initial state in the novel further discussed below.

Before the character of *Faithful* comes on the scene, we first just hear about him. It is the *Porter* at the Palace Beautiful who tells *Christian* that there is somebody else on the road in front of him and what the name of this pilgrim is. *Christian* reacts by saying: "*I know him, he is my townsman, my near neighbour, he comes from the place where I was born.*" (*The Pilgrim's Progress*, 44) This should suggest that the quality of

faith embodied by the character of *Faithful* is already inherently present in *Christian* from the very beginning of his journey. But it would fully manifest itself in the physical appearance of the character on the scene only after *Christian* has gone through particular stages of his spiritual development. Firstly, he has to fight his greatest enemy *Apollyon* and then go through the Valley of the Shadow of Death where his faith is tested. The final and greatest evidence of the quality of his faith is given at the court at Vanity Fair where *Faithful* shows his readiness to die for it.

After that, the character of *Hopeful* succeeds. He symbolizes the quality of hope *Christian* will need from that moment up to his death. Iser (17) describes this succession of characters as a sequence in which "a readiness to believe can turn into hopeful perseverance". These two characters then personify not only the pilgrim's readiness to believe and to hope, but they also show on the example of *Christian* that this readiness can be achieved by overcoming one's own human weaknesses. In this respect, Bunyan's allegory again overcomes the medieval allegory where the meaning of destiny is given a priori. Here the meaning of destiny stands out gradually from the character's understanding himself and recognizing his flaws.

2.10.3.3 Character stepping outside the allegory - Christian

The third group is made up by just one character, but it is the most important of the whole novel: the protagonist *Christian*. His original name was also allegorical, similarly to the members of the first group: *Graceless*. We learn this from his answer to *Porter*'s question in front of the Palace Beautiful (*The Pilgrim's Progress* 38). He had lost his name and was called *Christian* for the first time after having been given the parchment roll by *Evangelist* and having made the final decision to leave the anonymous and hostile City of Destruction (ibid. 14). With it he was given not only a new name, but also a new identity – he became a Christian, as the name suggests. The change of character is obvious: he is no longer called *Graceless*, he is no longer just a simple type.

Neither is *Christian* himself a simple allegorical figure, nor is he surrounded by any allegorical figures at the initial situation of the novel. The presence of his wife and

children, as well as his neighbours, who are all normal people from flesh and blood, is significant, because it only underlines the human identity of *Christian'*s character and his state of despair which are necessary for an easy identification of the reader.

Similarly as his companions *Faithful* and *Hopeful* mentioned above, *Christian* can be also regarded as everything but an ideal pilgrim as we can read in the prologue:

> *This Book (...)*
> *shews you whence he comes, whither he goes,*
> ***What he leaves undone****, also what he does;*
> *(...)* ***how he runs and runs****,*
> *Till he unto the Gate of Glory comes.* (emphasis added, 10)

The disclosure of the protagonist's weaknesses right at the beginning of the novel serves the reader for an easier identification with the character immediately when he starts reading. Also the liveliness of the other characters from any of the mentioned groups, who are at different stages on their road to salvation, helps the reader better recognize and understand his own role in life and his own position on the spiritual journey. Such immediacy and liveliness, together with other aspects discussed above, are definitely features characteristic for the novel and in this respect Bunyan successfully overcomes the medieval allegory and anticipates the modern novel.

3. Conclusion

John Bunyan is the author of one of the most famous and most respected allegories in the English language (if not in the world) *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). In writing it he may have been inspired, among other books, also by the thirteenth-century pilgrimage allegory by the French Cistercian and writer Guillaume de Deguileville *Pilgrimage of Human Life* in a later English translation. His allegorical novel definitely shares certain features with the medieval allegory in the form of a morality play, but, at the same time, in many respects overcomes it.

The mutual agreements include above all the typical characters established by the morality play, the types. In both works their roles are fixed and purely functional:

they embody virtues and vices or good and bad human qualities with no development. In Bunyan, however, they are more diversified and represent also other features and characters not present in the morality play. Such are the examples of *Obstinate* and *Pliable* who allegorize the inner struggle within *Christian*'s mind at the beginning of his journey, or *Evangelist* and *Appolyon* embodying for *Christian* the spiritual connection to Heaven and Hell, his heavenly guide and his greatest enemy, respectively.

However, the most important characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress* are those who step outside their allegorical roles, like *Christian*'s companions *Faithful* and *Hopeful* and also *Christian* himself. They are depicted as characters from flesh and flood with their mistakes and inadequacies which are, nevertheless, more identifiable for the reader than would be the ideal pilgrim.

Similar passages of identification can be found also on the level of the narrative. The characters are more believable and reliable when they introduce themselves in the form of a dialogue. The narrator, though omniscient, is the one who just comments on their situation. Similarly, the rhymed passages uttered either by the protagonist, or by other major characters, are crucial for the reader, because they summarize the key actions of the characters and bring the expected moral by the characters themselves.

As we have just shown, and as corresponds with the Puritan requirements of the role of literature, the edifying principle seems to outweigh in Bunyan's novel. However, there is more than just edification. Not only overcomes Bunyan the pure allegory in favour of the novel because of his stylistic and literary abilities demonstrated above, he also overcomes the rigidity of exemplary writing of the Puritan dissent by introducing the psychological aspects of introspection into literature. By that, he has become individual and unique as an author and *The Pilgrim's Progress* as his masterpiece has become modern, inspiring and timeless.

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