

PREFACE

The intention of this book is to describe and interpret two of T.F. Powys's major novels, *Mr Weston's Good Wine* (1927) and *Unclay* (1931) in the light of modern, post-Romantic allegorical theory. In 'A Polemical Introduction' a brief survey of Powys's work will be given as well as the arguments for concentrating on these particular novels. Next the problem of allegory in literature is discussed and the starting-points of this study are accounted for: firstly, contrary to received opinion, an appreciation of allegory as one of the oldest and most expressive literary techniques; and secondly, a limitation of our research to those allegorical theories that are oriented towards modern, Saussurian linguistic and semiotic insights. It will be concluded that literary allegory belongs to the realm of semantics, in particular to polysemy or multiple meaning.

Chapter I, 'Romantic and Recent Theories of Allegory', consists of four sections: in section one I will discuss some nineteenth-century views of allegory, in particular those of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and to a lesser extent those of William Blake and Thomas Carlyle. Their views should be seen within the historical context of the controversy over the dichotomy between allegory and symbolism. This debate extended well into the twentieth century, as a brief discussion of the New Critics and of C.S. Lewis's influential study *The Allegory of Love* (1936) will show.

Starting with Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), which laid down some of the major lines of the modern approach, section two will survey a number of recent theories of allegory formulated by Edward Honig, Rosemond Tuve, Gay Clifford, Maureen Quilligan, and others. In section three some recent structuralist and post-structuralist positions with regard to metaphor and symbol will be presented briefly, since they have contributed to the revaluation of allegory; it is further suggested that the concept of intertextuality adds to our understanding of the nature of allegory.

Finally, I will describe in detail the allegorical model proposed by Angus Fletcher in his *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (1964), which I have used as a working hypothesis for describing and interpreting the allegorical mode of T.F. Powys's companion novels. This descriptive interpretation will be followed by a speculative assessment of Fletcher's 'searchlight theory' in the light of recent sophisticated theory formation.

Chapters II and III will deal respectively with *Mr Weston's Good Wine* and *Unclay*, whose allegorical structures will be analyzed in terms of *daemonic agency*, that is to say allegorical characterization dominated by 'daemons', or powers for good and evil; of *cosmic imagery*, or the hierarchically ordered system of symbols; of *patterns of symbolic action*, comprising the 'progress' or journey and the battle, which are also paradigmatic of syntactical patterning and narrative technique; of *forms of magic causation*, including various types of magic and magical doubling; and, finally, in terms of *thematic effects*, comprising various forms of ambivalence and patterns of thematically opposed relationships, such as love and death, light and dark, illusion and reality, and time and eternity.

Although both novels are analyzed in the light of Angus Fletcher's allegorical model, there is an important difference in approach between the two chapters. In Chapter II I start from the proposed allegorical theory and describe and interpret *Mr Weston's Good Wine* accordingly. In Chapter III I start from the text of *Unclay* and allude only briefly to the allegorical theory employed. In this way these two chapters can be seen as mirroring each other. One reason for this difference of approach is that *Unclay* has been out of print for many years and is not easily attainable from libraries, so that the reader is less likely to be familiar with it than with *Mr Weston's Good Wine*. It will be concluded that allegory both as a mode of thought and of figurative expression is essential to these novels and to the way we read and respond to them.