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Summary

The Faerie Queene is a long epic poem that begins and ends with Christian affirmations. In it, Edmund Spenser draws on both Christian and classical themes, integrating the two traditions with references to contemporary politics and religion. The poem begins with a representation of holiness in book 1, and the Mutabilitie Cantos (first printed with the poem in 1609 after Spenser's death) conclude with a prayer. Book 1 is identified as the Legend of the Knight of the Red Cross (or Saint George) in canto 2, verses 11-12. Red Cross, as an individual, is the Protestant Everyman, but as Saint George, historically England's patron saint, he also represents the collective people of England. He is a pilgrim who hopes to achieve the virtue holiness, and for the reader his adventures illustrate the path to holiness.

Red Cross's overarching quest, as an individual, is to behold a vision of the New Jerusalem, but he also is engaged in a holy quest involving the lady Una, who represents the one true faith. To liberate Una's parents, the king and queen, Adam and Eve, Red Cross must slay the dragon, who holds them prisoner. The dragon represents sin, the Spanish Armada, and the Beast of the Apocalypse, and when Red Cross defeats the dragon he is in effect restoring Eden. Red Cross is then able to enter the House of Holiness and is deemed worthy to be united with Una.

Book 2 depicts Guyon, the knight of temperance, who learns the wisdom of the classical dictum "Nothing too much" (or "Nothing in excess"). Guyon is accompanied in his quest by a holy palmer and, when he faints at one point, is aided by an angel. These Christian elements suggest that in the quest to achieve temperance grace plays a role complementary to that of reason. Guyon is educated in the house of Alma (soul) and then challenges the sorceress Acrasia (lust) in the Bower of Bliss. Guyon frees the men who have been changed into beasts by Acrasia's magic, but one of them (Grill) decides to remain a hog, suggesting Spenser's conviction that there are limits to human perfectibility.

Book 3 concerns chastity and concludes the first part of *The Faerie Queene*. Even though book 4 is the beginning of the second part of *The Faerie Queene*, it is linked to book 3 because they both focus on Britomart, a female knight who represents Britain and Elizabeth, and a number of other characters whose stories are interlaced. Britomart falls in love with Artegall, the knight of justice, whose name means "equal to Arthur," and Merlin prophesies their marriage. Elizabeth is also portrayed as Belpheobe, a beautiful virgin with whom Timias (understood as a figure for the real-life Sir Walter Raleigh) falls in love. Amoret, the twin sister of Belpheobe, is allegorized as married love. She is imprisoned in the House of Busirane, held prisoner perhaps by her own fears of sexuality or perhaps by the perversions of her captor, but it is Britomart who frees her so that she can be united in marriage with her fiancé Scudamour. Book 4 celebrates friendship and concord as social love.

In book 3 it is revealed that Britomart, as England, will be united with Artegall. In book 5, Artegall is presented as the knight of justice, and he is accompanied by Talus, an iron man who is pitiless. Spenser illustrates the scope of the common law in five episodes and then turns to Equity, which is not bound by precedent and so can extend mercy when the letter of the law denies it. Britomart frees Artegall from the prison of Radigund, an Amazon queen, who has enslaved him as a housemaid. This domestic aspect of justice is supplemented by an analysis of political justice in relation to foreign affairs. England is shown as victorious over Spain in a number of episodes. For example, Belge, representing the Netherlands (then under Spanish control), is freed by Artegall.

Book 6 appeared in the 1596 edition of *The Faerie Queene*, and it was the last section of *The Faerie Queene* to appear during Spenser's lifetime. At the conclusion of book 5, Artegall is attacked by the Blatant Beast, a fierce dog with many tongues, who slanders innocent people. In book 6 Calidore, the knight of courtesy, pursues the Blatant Beast; he succeeds in restraining him for a while, but the Blatant Beast breaks free again in the closing lines of the book. Spenser juxtaposes the chivalric ideal, associated with the court and power politics, to the idyllic pastoral world of nature, but even the pastoral and natural world can be disrupted by villains. Calidore falls in love with the beautiful Pastorella, daughter of Meliboe, but when he wanders away into a nearby glade to observe the three Graces dancing to the piping of Colin Clout, he returns to find the shepherd community destroyed by the Brigands. Pastorella and Meliboe are led away as captives; Meliboe is killed in a dispute among the Brigands. Calidore rescues Pastorella, who turns out to be the noble daughter of Sir Bellamour and his lady Claribell, not the simple shepherd girl she seemed. Calepine, a secondary hero in book 6, rescues Serena from the cannibals. The cannibals' lust for Serena is presented in a literary blazon in which a woman is described from head to toe. Calepine arrives just in time to keep the cannibals from eating her. The literary language of chivalry, pastoral, and love poetry contrasts with the real world of the Blatant Beast, the Brigands, and the cannibals.

Book 7, or the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie* (the Mutabilitie Cantos), was printed posthumously along with Books 1-6 in the first folio of *The Faerie Queene* (1609). The printer says that in form and matter the two cantos seem to be a fragment of an unfinished book related to the theme of constancy. The Mutabilitie Cantos contain two distinct narratives and conclude with a Sabbath prayer. The major narrative describes Mutabilitie's attempt to challenge the divine hierarchy in which Jove rules the heavens. Her rebellion leads to a trial that is finally judged by Nature, who gives the somewhat ambiguous verdict that change does not cause anything to alter its essential nature. The passing of time is an unfolding in which the fabric of reality realizes its nature. In a comic subplot, Faunus, a Pan-like wood god, promises to help the river nymph Molanna to win the love of Fanchin if she will help him see her mistress, Diana, in her bath. Diana and her nymphs discover Faunus and chase him but do not kill or geld him. Molanna is punished by stoning but is metamorphosed into a stream and joins her lover, the river Behanagh. In the two concluding stanzas of the poem, Spenser prays that he may rest eternally with the great God of Sabbath.

Additional Summary: Summary

Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* was published in two parts: the first part (books 1 to 3) appeared in 1590; the second part (books 4 to 6), with which the first part was reprinted, appeared in 1596. The dedication to the 1596 edition is addressed to Elizabeth I, whom Spenser describes as the empress of England, France, Ireland, and Virginia. He adds that he is consecrating "these his labours to live with the eternitie of her fame." Although *The Faerie Queene* makes use of romance, as well as epic conventions, Spenser intended the poem to function as an English epic, a celebration of the emerging British empire. In his letter to Sir Walter Raleigh dated January 13, 1589, he states that the "generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." Spenser also states that he will use the Aristotelian virtues as a means of organizing the themes of his epic, indicating that he will write a twelve-book epic, portraying in Arthur the twelve private moral virtues that he exercised before he was king. If this work is well received, he

adds, he may continue by describing how Arthur came to embody the twelve “politick” virtues after he became king. When the second part appeared in 1596, the title page described the poem as “disposed into twelve bookes, fashioning XII morall vertues,” but no suggestion is given regarding whether the moral virtues are private or public.

One of the most distinctive stylistic features of *The Faerie Queene* involves Spenser’s use of allegory and typology, both of which are unfamiliar to a modern audience and have therefore often been misinterpreted. Renaissance authors inherited a tradition of reading texts allegorically from medieval writers. The method of reading Homer’s works and the Bible in terms of a fourfold allegory derived from Alexandrian exegesis of these texts. According to this method of reading, anything that was not educational or useful in a text should be interpreted figuratively. No level of meaning would be taken literally. A reference to the Temple of Jerusalem, for example, would be interpreted historically as the Temple of Jerusalem, allegorically as the Church on earth, morally as the individual believer, and anagogically or mystically as the final communion of the saints in heaven.

Renaissance readers and writers think of allegory somewhat in the way that modern readers think of symbolism; meanings are concealed in the imagery and narrative. In Spenser’s case, the allegory is not continuous, nor is it consistent. Elizabeth, for example, is represented by the maiden hunter Belpheobe and by Britomart, the female knight, who will marry Artegall (equal to Arthur), the knight of justice. The offspring of Britomart and Artegall will produce the Tudor dynasty culminating in Elizabeth, but in book 5 Elizabeth is also represented in Mercilla, a queenly figure who dispenses both justice and mercy.

A character or event frequently is to be interpreted on multiple levels of significance: In book 1, Redcrosse knight is the champion of the virtue holiness, but he is also the embodiment of Saint George, the patron saint of England and the defender of the one true Protestant church. Instead of trying to arrive at a specific interpretation of *The Faerie Queene*, one needs to be aware of the potential multiplicity of meanings that may be suggested in any one episode.

Interpretation of Spenser’s allegory is rendered more difficult because, during the eighteenth century, the significance of the term “allegory” changed, creating confusion about what a Renaissance author intended when he wrote allegory. Instead of being used to refer to the structure of images and narrative incidents, allegory came to be used as a synonym for personification. Spenser does use personification, for example, in the monsters Error in book 1 and Lust in book 4, but under the rubric of allegory he also includes other genres such as fable, prophecy, and parable and devices such as irony (saying one thing but meaning another), hyperbole, and historical and contemporary allusions.

George Puttenham, in his *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), makes an interesting distinction between mixed allegory, in which the poet tells the readers what the metaphor means, and full allegory, in which the poet allows the readers to determine the meaning. According to Puttenham’s definition, the play *Everyman* (1508) would be considered a mixed allegory because the author reveals that Good Deeds means a Christian who follows Christ’s teaching; on the other hand, William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (pr. c. 1600-1601, pb. 1603) would be considered a full allegory because the character Hamlet is a specific Danish prince but can also represent Everyman. Most modern handbooks of literature reverse these classifications and would consider *Everyman* “more allegorical” than *Hamlet*.

The Faerie Queene fits Puttenham’s definition of full allegory. When Spenser refers to his poem as a “dark conceit,” he is alluding to the structure of images and to the narrative and rhetorical techniques in the poem, not to a structure of ideas outside it. In the letter to Raleigh, he comments: “To some, I know, this Methode will seeme displeasaut, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, then thus dowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall devices.” The allegory, for Spenser, consists of “cloudy devices,” not of precepts or sermons.

Typology, another device used throughout *The Faerie Queene*, is even less familiar than allegory to modern readers. The term comes from *typos* (Greek, “to strike”). In biblical typology, a type is defined as a detail in the Old Testament that foreshadows its antitype in the New Testament. The detail may be a person (Adam, Moses, and David are all types of Christ); it may be an event (the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea foreshadow the Redemption); or it may be an institution (the Levitical priesthood and the ritual of the old Temple are figures of the blessings of the spiritual priesthood of Christ).

In Nowell’s Catechism, which every sixteenth century reader would have known, the master asks, “Why should not the Decalogue refer to the Israelites alone, because God’s introduction declares: ‘Hear, O Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the House of bondage.’” The student is supposed to answer that the pharaoh of Egypt is the figure of the devil ready to oppress the Christian and that Moses’ rescue of the Israelites from bodily bondage is a type of Christ’s delivery of all of His faithful followers from the bondage of sin (antitype). Spenser’s readers would have interpreted the battle between Redcrosse knight and the dragon in canto 11 of book 1 typologically. The imagery used to describe the three-day battle makes it clear that Redcrosse is triumphing over Satan, but the imagery also summons images of the Passion and of the harrowing of hell.

In most of Spenser’s verse, including his justly acclaimed short masterpiece, *Epithalamion*, one finds him using the techniques of allegory and typology.

Additional Summary: Summary

Book I

In this opening section, Spenser explains the legend of the Red Cross Knight and focuses on the importance of morality and holiness in man’s life. This first book opens with the Red Cross Knight and Una journeying to destroy a dragon and rescue Una’s parents. When a storm occurs, the knight and lady, accompanied by her dwarf, take shelter in a dark forest. Here they come across the monster, Error, who hates the light of truth, and her thousands of offspring. Error attacks the knight, who does not listen to Una’s warnings. The Red Cross Knight must kill the monster to escape, cutting off her head. As the three continue their journey, they come across Archimago, an evil enchanter, who casts spells on the group as they sleep. The Red Cross Knight is given erotic dreams of Una, who is abandoned in the forest by the knight and dwarf, who believe the dreams. The Red Cross Knight continues on his journey where he foolishly releases the evil enchantress, Duessa, from her prison. The Red Cross Knight and Duessa continue on the journey, he still not knowing who she really is. As they journey, they arrive at a castle, inhabited by Lucifera, the mistress of Pride. She has six wizards: Idleness, Gluttony, Lechery, Avarice, Envy, and Wrath. Together, this group comprises the seven deadly sins. After a fight, which the Red Cross Knight wins, the knight leaves, still unaware that Duessa is not who she claims.

Meanwhile, Una, who has been abandoned in the forest, is searching for her knight. She encounters a lion, who is tamed by Una’s beauty. The lion accompanies Una on her journey, guarding her. Archimago, who has disguised himself as the Red Cross Knight, finds Una, who is happy to be reunited with her knight. The group is attacked by Sans Loy, who does not recognize the disguised Archimago. The lion attempts to save Una but is killed by Sans Loy. Una successfully resists Sans Loy’s attempts to seduce her, and she is quickly rescued by Fauns and Satyrs, the wood gods, who worship her as a god. Once again, Una is in need of rescue, and soon a woodsman, Satyrane, helps her to escape. As they journey, Archimago, now disguised as a traveler, tells them that the Red Cross Knight is dead. While Satyrane engages Sans Loy in a battle, Una flees. Meanwhile, Duessa catches up with the Red Cross Knight. As the knight drinks from an enchanted spring, the giant, Orgoglio, appears and attacks the knight. Duessa agrees to become the giant’s mistress and the Red Cross Knight becomes the giant’s prisoner. The dwarf takes the knight’s spear, armor, and shield and leaves. He meets with Una and tells her of all that has happened. Next, Prince Arthur appears and assures Una that he

will rescue the Red Cross Knight from Orgoglio. After a fierce battle, Arthur kills the giant and disarms Duessa, who has used her magic to try to kill Arthur. With the battle ended, Spenser takes a moment to tell Arthur's story and that he is on his way to the Queen of Faeries, whom he loves.

The Red Cross Knight, now freed, and Una continue on their journey to free her parents. They come to the cave of Despair, which tries to convince the Red Cross Knight to kill himself. Una reminds the knight of his duties and of the rewards of justice and mercy, and the two continue on their journey. Una brings the Red Cross Knight to the House of Holinesse to be healed. There, Reverence, Zeal, Fidelia (Faith), Charissa (Charity), Speranza (Hope), Patience, and Mercy work to heal the knight and restore him to his previous strength and valor. An old man, Contemplation, provides a vision to the Red Cross Knight that allows him to see his parentage and the future, in which he will be known as Saint George of England. Although reluctant to leave this happy place, the knight soon sets out with Una to fight the dragon. The battle is a long one, but eventually the knight slays the dragon and the King and Queen are freed. The Red Cross Knight is acclaimed a hero, and he and Una are married.

Book II

In this book, the main focus is on temperance and prudence. This section begins with Archimago free from the dungeon that had imprisoned him. He still wants to destroy the Red Cross Knight, and so, in disguise, he tells Sir Guyon, who is accompanied by the Palmer, that the Red Cross Knight has violated a virgin. Duessa pretends to be the virgin and identifies the Red Cross Knight as her attacker. Sir Guyon attacks the Red Cross Knight, but each knight recognizes the other's virtue, and together, their temperance prevents a tragedy. Next, the Palmer and Sir Guyon meet with a woman whose husband has been a victim of Acrasia and her Bower of Bliss. Sir Guyon swears vengeance for the damage that Acrasia has caused to this family and to the child, now orphaned. Since his horse is now missing, Sir Guyon continues on foot, carrying the child with him. Sir Guyon stops at a castle, wherein he meets Medina, whom he calls an image of the virgin queen. Sir Guyon leaves the orphaned child with her. Spenser includes a brief comic interlude with Braggadocchio (Windy Boasting) and his companion, Trompart. This section describes their meeting with the beautiful damsel, Belpheobe, who rejects the comic pair's attempts to woo her. Meanwhile, Sir Guyon is having many adventures, fighting Furor and Occasion and others, all of which teach him to beware of false pity. He also meets with Phaedria, who tempts men with idleness. Soon, Sir Guyon, now separated from his Palmer, meets Mammon, who represents financial greed. Mammon takes Sir Guyon on a tour of his riches; this place is hell.

When he returns from Mammon's hell, the Palmer is waiting with Prince Arthur, who must first battle with two paynim (heathen) knights. Sir Guyon tells Arthur that he, too, can be one of the Faerie Queene's knights, joining her Order of Maidenhead. Sir Guyon and Arthur continue on their journey together, and when they reach the Bower of Bliss, they destroy it.

Book III

This book focuses on virtue and chastity. Sir Guyon and Arthur continue on their journey, where an old squire and a young knight join them. The knight knocks Sir Guyon off his horse, and the Palmer stops the battle after he recognizes that the knight is Britomart, a chaste damsel, who is searching for her love, Artegall. Spenser spends some time telling Britomart's story and explaining how she came to be looking for Artegall, whose image was shown to her in Merlin's mirror. Meanwhile, Sir Guyon and Arthur are trying to rescue a damsel, Florimell, who is being chased by a forester. Arthur's squire, Timias, is wounded, and the fair Belpheobe treats him with herbs and heals him. When he awakens, Timias falls in love with Belpheobe. At the same time, a witch and her monstrous son are pursuing the beautiful Florimell, and soon an old fisherman is lusting for her. Spenser next turns again to Britomart's adventure. Britomart is told of Amoret, who has been held prisoner by a knight who tries to force her love. Britomart battles the two guards and frees Amoret, who joins Britomart in the search for their true loves.

Book IV

The focus of this section is on friendship and loyalty. Amoret thinks that Britomart is a man, since she was disguised as one when she rescued Amoret. But soon, Britomart reveals her identity after successfully defeating a knight during a tournament. After once again assuming the disguise of a man, the two young women continue on their journey. They soon encounter the disguised Duessa and participate in another tournament, of which Britomart is again the winner. One of the knights that Britomart defeated is her love, Artegall, whom Britomart is seeking. However, Artegall is also disguised, and so Britomart has no idea that she has unseated the man she loves. Soon things are set right, and Artegall learns that Britomart is a female. Amoret's true love, Scudamour, is also present and learns that Britomart is not a male, and thus, could not have dishonored Amoret. Amoret, though, is missing, having wandered off while Britomart was at rest, but after a wild monster seizes her, she is eventually rescued by Arthur. Soon, Amoret and Scudamour are reunited in the Temple of Venus.

Book V

In this section, Spenser focuses on justice, with Artegall to be the champion of justice. Artegall administers justice quite swiftly and with little indecisiveness. Most importantly, according to Spenser, is that Artegall has the power to enforce justice. Artegall has several successful encounters, but then he confronts a group of women about to hang a man, he hesitates when he sees their beauty and is captured. When Britomart learns of Artegall's capture, she sets out to rescue her lover. Britomart defeats the Amazons and Artegall is freed to resume the journey that the Faerie Queene had sent him on—to free Irena (who represents Ireland) from Grantorto (who represents Spain). Artegall soon arrives at the trial of Duessa (representing Mary, Queen of Scots), at which Arthur is also present. Duessa is found guilty, although she is not sentenced. Belgae (who represents the Netherlands) also asks Arthur for help against Geryoneo (representing Spain). Arthur travels to Belgae's land and helps to free them from the Inquisition, slaying Geryoneo. After his success in freeing Belgae's land, Arthur joins Artegall in trying to help Irena. Artegall kills Grantorto and Irena is freed. With his mission ended, Artegall returns to the Faerie Queene.

Book VI

The focus of this final book is truth, honesty, and civility. These ideals represent the civilized world, as Spenser defines it. Calidore is the most gentle of knights, a man who represents these traits, which Spenser sees as so essential. Sir Calidore has many adventures, where in he teaches people the importance of courtesy and living in harmony. Arthur, who has finally been reunited with his squire, Timias, encounters the Blatant Beast. Meanwhile, Calidore is also pursuing the Blatant Beast. Calidore has a pleasant interlude in a pastoral paradise, where he is nearly distracted from his quest. However, he soon continues on his journey, where at last, Calidore meets and defeats the Blatant Beast.

Mutability Cantos

The Mutability Cantos are two small unfinished pieces, which Spenser had not completed. It is uncertain where Spenser intended to put these cantos, but they would have been intended for some section of the six books that Spenser intended but did not complete. These fragments deal with philosophical questions about nature. Mutability breaks the laws of nature, arguing that nature is changeable. However in a trial, Nature finds that Mutability's argument has flaws and finds against Mutability. According to nature, beings change but not from their first nature.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Introduction and Book I, Cantos i-iv

Book I: "The Legende of the Knight of the Red Crosse, or Of Holinesse"

New Characters

Abessa: The pious, prayerful mother of Corecca, who does not mind her dating a thief.

Archimago: A magician who disguises himself as an old man.

Corecca: The deaf and dumb daughter of Abessa, who is dating Kirkapine the thief.

Dwarf: The carrier of belongings, a lackey for the Lady and the Knight.

Error: A vile monster with a long, poisonous tail and many offspring.

Fidessa/Duessa: An ancient and ugly sorceress (Duessa) disguised as a beautiful young maiden (Fidessa).

Fradubio: Once a man, now bewitched into a tree.

Fraelissa: Fradubio's Lady, also bewitched by Duessa into a tree.

Gloriana: The Queen of Faerie Land and an allegorical representation of Queen Elizabeth.

Kirkapine: Corecca's lover, who steals money and jewels from priests and churches.

Knight of the Red Cross: The hero, a good and true Elfin Knight who fights for honor and is in the service of the Faerie Queen and Una.

Lucifera: The daughter of gods and creator of her own kingdom, which she rules by her own whims and a strong police force.

Morpheus: The god of sleep.

Queen Elizabeth: Queen of England in the sixteenth century and the person to whom the Faerie Queen is dedicated.

Sans joy: The youngest brother of Sans loy and Sans foy, a Paynim Knight and a Sarazin.

Sans loy: The middle brother of Sans foy and Sans joy, a Paynim Knight and a Sarazin.

Sir Walter Raleigh: A contemporary and friend of Spencer's.

Spencer: The author of *Faerie Queen*.

Sprites: Spirits, some of whom do the bidding of the Archimago.

Sans foy, or the Sarazin: The eldest of three brothers, protector to Fidessa.

The Lady Una: A beautiful royal woman whose land and fortunes have been destroyed by a dreadful fiend, and who has pressed the Knight into service to remedy the disaster.

Summary

The *Faerie Queen* is Edmund Spencer's unfinished epic poem about Knights, chivalry and England that opens with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth, the English ruler at the time of his writing. In an introductory letter intended to avoid confusion about the subject matter and clarify references within the poem, Spencer explains

to his friend Sir Walter Raleigh that the poem is intended to be an allegory and alludes to many contemporary people and the state of England at the time of his writing. Spencer tells Raleigh that he wrote the poem like an adventure story to make it easy to read, but that it is really intended to instruct men on how to become virtuous. The *Faerie Queen* is based on the legendary figure of King Arthur while he was still young and not yet a king. Spencer clarifies that the setting of the book, Faerie Land, is meant to symbolize England under Queen Elizabeth's rule. The characters of Gloriana, Belphoebe, and Diana are allegorical representations of Queen Elizabeth.

Spencer then uses the letter to tell the story prior to Book I's beginning. A gangly young fellow presented himself at the Court of Queen Gloriana and asked to be a Knight on the same day that a beautiful young Lady, Una, came to ask Gloriana to send aid to her kingdom where a dragon was terrorizing her people and her parents. Una had brought armor with her for a Knight to wear. The young man begged for the role, but both Gloriana and Una expressed reservations. However, Una declared that if the Christian armor she had brought fit the young man, then he could be the Knight. The armor fit, and so Una and the Knight set off to save her kingdom. Spencer describes two more incidents in which someone petitioned for aid and a Knight stepped forward from the Court, and then begs Raleigh to remain his friend and read the poem.

The *Faerie Queen* is broken up into six finished Books and one unfinished Book, Book VII. Each finished Book tells the story of a Knight trying to complete an adventurous quest and is broken down into twelve Cantos, or sections, composed of stanzas. Many of the Cantos in each Book include brief musings by the author on the broader, philosophical aspects of the work. Book I opens with one such passage, in which the author reveals his wish to tell stories of praise about Knights and Ladies, stories he believes have been neglected for far too long. However, Spencer believes that he needs the help of the gods and pleads with them to aid his writing, thoughts and style.

Canto i: The story opens with a gentle Knight riding across a plain in his battered but mighty armor. Across the Knight's breast and shield is a red cross, which symbolizes the (now dead) Lord to whom the Knight had dedicated his life. The Knight is on an adventure given to him by Gloriana, the Queen of Faerie Land, in order to win her favor.

Beside the Knight rides the fair Lady Una on a white ass. She is beautiful, but is in a state of distress. The Knight's mission is to destroy the fiend who laid waste to the kingdom that is the Lady Una's by right and heritage. A dwarf follows far behind the Knight and the Lady, carrying the gear.

As they ride, a storm descends upon them. Worried for the Lady Una, the Redcross Knight looks for shelter. He guides them to a forest where the branches are so broad and high that all of the sky is blocked out, and it is perfectly dry. They pass through the wood, listening to the birds, but when the storm ends and they try to find their way out they cannot. They follow a well-marked path, assuming it must lead to something, and eventually reach a clearing.

In the clearing, the Knight dismounts and approaches a cave, but the Lady issues a warning about such rash behavior. Una declares that they are in the wandering wood and that there is a vile monster nearby, and that they should flee rather than confront it.

However, the Knight yearns to prove himself in battle, and so he goes directly into the dark hole before them. His armor lights his way, and before him he sees the terrible monster Error with an enormous tail tipped with poison. A thousand monstrous infants suckle at her body, but when the Knight enters, they crawl into the monster's mouth. The terrible monster Error rushes out of the cave, but is terrified by the light and tries to retreat. The Knight, however, uses his spear to keep her from re-entering the cave and begins the fight. Error's first maneuver, however, is to wrap him in her tail so that he can move no limb, and the monster then begins to strangle him. The Lady Una cries out that he must strangle the monster, and with that the Knight manages

to grab the monster so tightly she loosens her grip.

However, Error then begins to spew poison from her mouth and the Knight has to let go. Following the poison, her spawn begin to come out of her mouth along with a wretched smell. The Knight's courage begins to fail as the deformed baby monsters crawl all around him.

However, the Knight is more afraid of exhibiting shame than of the actual danger, and so he makes a terrible stroke with his sword and cuts off the monster Error's head. The infants gather about the mother and suck up her blood.

After vanquishing the monster, the Knight and Lady travel in search of more adventure. Eventually, they meet an old man dressed all in black, with a rosary and black-bound book. His scholarly, priestly appearance encourages them to trust him, and they listen while the old man tells of a strange man, a cursed creature, who lays waste to the all the country. He then promises to take him to the very spot where this creature lives. The Knight and Lady follow the old man to his home to stay the night, and they fall asleep.

The old man immediately begins to weave evil spells. He sends a sprite, or spirit, to Morpheus, the god of sleep, who is sound asleep. The sprite wakes him after great effort and conveys a message from his Archimago, or arch-magician, the old man. The Archimago asks for a false dream to confuse sleepers, which Morpheus agrees to. Meanwhile, the Archimago has created another sprite in the image of the Lady.

The Knight then dreams that the Lady Una has come to seduce him. When he awakens, he finds the image of the Lady (the sprite) before him, and she weeps and begs him to love her as she loves him. Although he cannot imagine why she approaches him so, the Knight does not fall prey to this. Disturbed at her bizarre behavior and apparent lack of chastity, the Knight cannot sleep.

Canto ii: Later that night, the sprites return to the Archimago to confess that they have failed. The Archimago turns one of the sprites into the image of a young Squire, and the other to the image of the Lady, and puts them together to "joy in vain delight." He then wakes the Knight and brings him to see the Lady (the sprite), ruining her honor.

The Knight is too enraged and furious to fall back asleep. At dawn the Dwarf comes to him, and they leave the castle together. When the Lady Una wakes, she finds herself alone, with neither Dwarf nor Knight, and rides after them as fast as she can. The Knight is far away, however, and chances across another Knight, a Sarazin with the words "Sans foy" written on his shield. With him is a beautiful Lady dressed all in red, purple and gold, who urges battle.

The Sarazin fights well, but the Knight of the Red Cross triumphs, and the Lady flees. The Knight follows, and the Lady bids him be merciful with her gentle person. She tells the Knight how *Sans foy* had protected her and was the eldest of three brothers. She calls herself Fidessa, and the Knight agrees to protect her.

As they ride, the hot sun beats upon them. When the Knight sees a glade of trees, he rides to it seeking shade. There he believes that Fidessa is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen, and tries to weave a garland for her hair. When he plucks a bough, however, blood rolls out of the tree and a sorrowful voice yells. The tree tells him that it was once a man, Fradubio, and the other tall, beautiful tree in the glade was once a woman. Fradubio tells the Knight that a sorceress named Duessa transformed him and his Lady. This enchantment was wrought because Fradubio bested Duessa's Knight and then held a beauty contest between his Lady, Fraelissa, and Duessa. Duessa cast a spell to make Fraelissa look as if she was truly ugly and only enchanted to look pretty (which was true of Duessa, not Fraelissa), and so won the contest. Fradubio took Duessa as his Lady. But one day he saw her in her proper form and was astonished by her hideousness and deformities. When Duessa realized what he had seen, she transformed him into a tree beside Fraelissa.

The Knight plunges the tree limb into the ground and covers the wound in the tree with clay and then turns back to the fair Fidessa, who is in a false swoon. The Knight kisses her back awake and they ride off together, though he still does not know her true nature, which the author reveals as the evil and base Duessa.

Canto iii: Canto iii opens with a lament by the author for the wretched unfairness of beautiful, chaste women being brought to calamity and misfortune. Una's plight brings tears to the author's eyes as he describes her lonely, wandering state looking for the Knight. Her steadfast determination and solitude wrings the heart of the author, especially after her beauty calms a savage lion. The lion follows Una, protecting her.

Una wanders the desolate country, and when she sees a woman bearing a pot of water, she tries to get her attention. The woman does not respond, but when the lion walks up next to her, she panics, drops the water jug, and runs away. Una realizes that the woman, Corecca, is deaf and dumb, and she follows her to a small hut. The inhabitants do not respond when she knocks, so the lion breaks down the door. Abessa, a pious old woman and the mother of the girl, is the only other person inside. Una stays the night there. The lion watches her while she cries and weeps for the Knight, not understanding why he has left her.

In the night, a thief creeps into the house with stolen church jewels and clothing, intended for Corecca. Thinking the thief is an intruder, the lion kills him.

In the morning, the Lady and the lion leave. Corecca and Abessa soon thereafter discover the body of the thief, who was their sole means of survival. Abessa declares that they will take revenge on Una, and they chase her. Abessa howls curses at her. When Abessa realizes that her curses are useless, she returns toward her home. On the way, she runs into the Archimago disguised as the Knight of the Red Cross, and he asks her if she has seen a Lady. Abessa tells him exactly where she is, and the Archimago finds her.

Una is fooled by the Archimago's Knightly disguise and begins to apologize for whatever she has done. The Archimago tells her that he was fighting a felon, but has now returned to her side. Una forgives him because "true love has no power / to look back; his eyes be fixed before. / Before her stands her Knight, for whom she toiled so sore."

They ride together, and she tells him of the lion. Then they see a Knight approaching in the distance, with "Sans loy" written across his shield. Mistaking the Archimago for the Knight of the Red Cross who killed his brother, Sans loy defeats the Archimago, who falls to the ground gushing blood. Una cries out for Sans loy not to kill him, but Sans loy is not swayed by these words. However, when he removes the helmet he sees the old, gray head of the Archimago, and he recognizes what he has done.

Leaving Archimago near death, Sans loy takes Una as booty. The lion tries to defend her, but is bested by Sans loy. Una begs him to let her free, but he hears nothing, as he is caught up in his bestial rage and lust.

Canto iv: Before continuing the Redcross Knight's story, the author admonishes young men about changing their beloved Lady too quickly, as the Redcross Knight has done in abandoning Una and taking up company with Fidessa. The Redcross Knight has demonstrated fickleness in love.

The Redcross Knight and Duessa ride towards a massive, decadent house surrounded by troops of people traveling towards it. Few return in the other direction.

As they approach the City of Pride, they see a magnificent throne and an even more beautiful Queen sitting atop it. She is Lucifera, the daughter of gods, who had named herself a Queen and rules her kingdom not with laws, but with police. The court is filled with admirers and servants. Everyone recognizes Duessa and tries to flatter and impress her. But when Lucifera rises and leaves her throne, every courtier and admirer turns to worship her. Lucifera rides in a coach with her six advisors, and the coach is pulled by six animals that

resemble her six advisors. The first is Idleness, who rides a slothful ass, carries an unread book of prayers, and sleeps through much of his days. The second is Gluttony, an enormously fat man clothed in vine leaves and riding a swine. The third is Lechery, who rides a bearded goat and is rough, black, and filthy but somehow appealing to women. Avarice is the fourth, who rides a camel laden with gold and coffers of money but wears threadbare clothing. Envy rides upon a ravenous wolf and nurses hatred even for Lucifera because of her wealth. Wrath rides a lion and wears bloodstained clothing. These six correspond to six of the seven deadly sins, but the seventh is Satan himself, who with a whip lashes the other six onwards.

Duessa chooses to ride next to Lucifera, flaunting her status in this City of Pride. However, the Knight does not consider this company fit for a warlike man, and so he rides behind them as they take the air in the fields.

As the company returns to this House in the Kingdom of Pride, an enraged Knight with "Sans joy" written on his shield rides up and spies the Faerie Knight of the Red Cross holding the shield of Sans loy. They fight until Queen Lucifera demands that they stop and have a proper tournament the next day. The Paynim Knight apologizes profusely, telling her of his great grief and sorrow at the death of his brave brother and the shame of his brother's Lady (Fidessa) being in the care of his brother's killer. The enraged Elfin Knight throws down a gauntlet and promises to fight Sans joy the next day.

That evening is spent feasting and courting, and then sleeping it off, under the care of Gluttony and Sloth. When Morpheus causes the whole company to fall into deep sleep, Duessa goes to the Paynim Knight. She finds him awake and planning his battle. Duessa tells him how much she misses and loves Sans foy, enflaming the poor Knight with ever greater desire to win the battle. She lies to Sans joy, telling him that the Knight of the Red Cross had pressured her to have sex with him, and that she loathes him and her life with him. She implies that she belongs to Sans joy as an inheritance right and insists that she likes Sans joy almost as much as she liked Sans loy. Sans joy swears to take revenge for Sans foy and kill the Knight of the Red Cross, but Duessa states that she is afraid of the "fickle freaks of fortune false, and odds of arms in field" and raises doubts in the mind of Sans joy. She suggests that the Elfin Knight might carry a charmed shield or enchanted arms. Duessa then promises to subdue the Elfin Knight and protect Sans joy with her "secret aid" before leaving him to sleep.

Analysis

In order to understand the *Faerie Queen*, Spencer's intent and stated purpose needs to be clear. As explained in the introductory letter to Raleigh, Spencer intended to write 12 Books that taken together would introduce all of the virtues that any man needs in order to be happy and good. These virtues were taken from Aristotle's injunctions about virtue. However, Spencer only completed the first six Books and parts of Book VII. Although Books I-III were published together, they were only the first installment in Spencer's grand plan, and were published in 1596 with the inscription, "Disposed into twelue bookes, Fashioning XII Morall virtues." In an attempt to create a tone similar to Chaucer's and give the stories a bit of a feel of antiquity, Spencer also affected an archaic method of spelling and vocabulary. Spencer wrote at the same time as Shakespeare, but sought to evoke and resemble Chaucer in his writing. This gives his language an unwieldy, convoluted archaism that can make it difficult to read. However, Spencer's consistency in this endeavor allows the reader to gradually become more skilled with reading what has come to be known as Spencerian language, so the work becomes easier and easier to interpret the more one reads.

Spencer wrote primarily as a devout Protestant. He worshipped Queen Elizabeth, who reigned directly after Queen Mary—otherwise known as Mary Queen of Scots or "Bloody Mary." Queen Mary was Elizabeth's half-sister and a devout Catholic. During her reign, Queen Mary killed Protestants and considered them heretics. Queen Mary ruled capriciously with religion, not politics, as the most important element. When Elizabeth took over, she inherited conflicted country with a disrupted economy and poor international credit. As ruler, Elizabeth made financial security and stable politics her first priority. In these goals, she succeeded admirably. Spencer was only one of her many admirers, but Catholics in England felt severe loss and sorrow

at the disappearance of their Catholic Queen.

Spencer saw anti-Elizabeth propaganda circulated by Catholics, and also noticed the corruption and power that the Church in Rome held over its believers. Since Spencer loved and admired Queen Elizabeth, he wrote the *Faerie Queen* partially to honor her and partially to malign and show the evils of Catholicism. (Spencer also wanted to have Queen Elizabeth as a patron and so wrote with that in mind as well.)

As explained in the introductory letter, Spencer's poem should be read as adventure story, but should also be read allegorically. An allegory is an extended metaphor in which the fictional components of the text represent aspects of real life. Allegories often convey ideas about religion, politics and virtues. Spencer's poem is allegorical on several levels. On one level the play conveys the history of England, in that the conquering of savage lands becomes a lawful and chivalrous goal, and Spencer's interludes explicitly discuss the history of the land itself. The poem is also about the triumph of Protestantism over paganism and Catholicism. In this allegorical level, the Redcross Knight and Una represent different stages of belief, culminating in Protestantism. And on yet another level, Spencer was using *Faerie Queen* to honor Queen Elizabeth I and Protestants in general. For example, many "good" characters are Protestant, and reinforce the Protestant faith by the end of the book. Most of the "bad" characters can be linked to Catholicism or other religions that threaten Protestantism. The names of the characters often illustrate their allegorical meanings. Gloriana, the Queen of the land that is the setting of the poem, has "Gloria" in her name. Gloria can mean a "halo" and also means "glorious," while "ana" means "grace." The character of Gloriana also represents Queen Elizabeth in the political allegory of this work. Gloriana is beautiful, good, chaste, wise and honorable. She protects the weak, honors the strong, and wields her power benevolently and fairly. Many characters in the poem wish to return to her Court or to meet her, because she is legendary and wonderful. Although we do not meet Gloriana, she is so central to the work that the poem is named after her; Gloriana is the Faerie Queen. This devotion to Queen Elizabeth did not go unnoticed, as Queen Elizabeth responded by naming Spencer poet laureate of England.

Throughout the *Faerie Queen* there are ruminative interjections by the author that interrupt the plot. These interjections usually introduce important ideas or reflections on the events in the poem. In the prologue, the discourse tells the reader what sort of book this is (an adventure) and what sort of lessons can be drawn from it (moral ones). Further, by calling upon the Muses to guide his writing, Spencer links himself to other epic traditions. The ancient poets Homer and Virgil both begin their books in the same way. However, Spencer carefully places himself within a classical context of writing. He aligns himself with Homer and Virgil in the prologue at the beginning of the first Book and throughout refers to medieval poets and playwrights, the Bible (especially the Book of Revelations), and numerous Greek and Roman myths. These allusions allow Spencer to establish himself as a knowledgeable and informed poet who is well suited to write this work.

The style of the *Faerie Queen* makes use of an innovative stanza and rhyme scheme that had never been used before. Spencer invented what came to be known as the "Spencerian stanza," with each stanza comprising nine lines with a rhyme scheme of *ababbcbcc*. Eight lines are in iambic pentameter. An iamb is a short syllable followed by a stressed syllable, like the word "above" or the word "delay." Each iambic pentameter consists of five iambs. The ninth line of each stanza is an alexandrine. An alexandrine means that there are 12 syllables making up 6 iambs, with a final syllable that is a caesura. A caesura marks a change in rhythm or a break in rhythm, so the final word in the final line of each Spencerian stanza breaks rhythm, although it maintains the *ababbcbcc* rhyme scheme.

In the poem, the words Faerie, Elf and Elfin are all used to indicate someone of the faerie race. The Faeries are better than regular humans—stronger, more virtuous and more handsome or beautiful. Thus, the Redcross Knight and Una both have many lines devoted to their praises. Furthermore, the blood-colored cross on his shield also indicates that he wears Christian armor, similar to St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians about donning Christian clothes. The Redcross Knight can thus be seen as the individual Christian learning about himself and

his religion. The Lady Una, whose name means “truth,” represents true faith. The Redcross Knight must not only love and honor Una, but also never doubt her and be humble before her. Only when he has found and accepted true faith will he be a good Christian. In Book I, Una’s character is also meant to represent Queen Elizabeth, and as such she is good beyond compare. She loves the Redcross Knight absolutely, but remains honorable, chaste, and subject to no one. In the first Canto, the Knight and Una first wander into the Forest of Error, meet the Monster of Error and then meet a master of deception, the Archimago. The Archimago can appeal to gods and work with sprites (spirits) to deceive, and he will be the enemy of not only the Knight of the Red Cross, but also of the Knights in other Books. The name Archimago means “arch-image” or “arch-magician,” and it is worth noting that one criticism of Catholics by Protestants is that they are idolaters because they worship images. The black clothes and rosary the Archimago carries further links him to Catholicism. Canto ii brings about the separation of Una and the Knight of the Red Cross, and it should be noted that the Knight abandons Una because he doubts her chastity. Una’s name also means “the one;” the Knight is making a terrible mistake not only because he has been deceived by the Archimago, but also because he has doubted the honor of someone so good. The Knight then compounds his error by trusting Duessa/Fidessa, who is actually an evil sorceress and also a master of deception. By the end of Canto II, although he has been warned by Fradubio about trusting the appearances of beautiful women, the Redcross Knight is still with Duessa/Fidessa. It is key that the Redcross Knight is only susceptible to falsehood (in the form of the Archimago’s lies and then Duessa’s deception) when he has been separated from Una, or the truth.

Canto iii introduces another of the Archimago’s fraudulent acts wherein, for the first time, the Lady Una is deceived. She believes the Archimago is the Redcross Knight, and her false belief leads to immediate danger. The Archimago’s loss in battle means that Una is the booty of the Sarazin, who has no respect for her honor. However, the implication of this Canto is not that Una herself is in error, but rather that her true love blinds her to the Archimago’s deception. Even when in error, Una’s steadfast nature shows through. Her goodness is never in question. The Redcross Knight, on the other hand, is clearly blamed for being taken in by Fidessa. He is in the wrong.

The Redcross Knight’s error is not just being deceived by appearances; Spencer is far more intolerant of Redcross’ fickleness. By turning his back on Una and taking up with Fidessa, the Redcross Knight shows inconstancy, and that seems to be his true error throughout this Book. He fails to listen to Una in the forest of Error, showing a lack of trust that is tapped by the Archimago. In his heart, the Redcross Knight was not steadfast in his affections toward Una. Since Una represents true faith, the Redcross Knight, as a Christian, has betrayed the most important values a Protestant can have. Further, Duessa appears arrayed in purple and gold robes, which suggests both the Whore of Babylon and the pomp of the Roman Catholic Church.

Duessa’s company clearly influences the Knight negatively. Una discourages the Knight from vain battles, like the unnecessary fight with the monster Error. When accompanying Duessa, the Redcross Knight allows himself to be drawn into the vain and prideful battle with Sans joy. This battle is not to redress a wrong or to help anyone. Rather, this battle is over Sans joy’s ruined pride in seeing his brother’s shield as booty, and the Redcross Knight’s proud attitude in refusing to return the shield. The battle does neither of them any good and represents the Redcross Knight’s inability to see the true way. He lets himself be teased into battle through his own pride. When he flees the House of Pride, he does it shamefully because he knows how close he has come to falling into that sin. The Redcross Knight does not seem to realize that he also errs in taking himself too seriously, which is also a form of pride. If he was less concerned with appearances and booty, he would have recognized that the fight had no point but solemnity and dignity for the participants.

Book I is subtitled “Of Holinesse,” and the explicit discussion of religion begins with the introduction of the Sarazins. “Sans loy” means “without law” and “Sans foy” means “without faith.” “Sarazin” is a French word for a Muslim or an Arab (the English version is spelled “Saracen”). These brothers, then, demonstrate the weak, hedonistic natures of Muslims in Spencer’s work. One tries to ravish Una, symbol of all that is good and pure, and the other falls for Fidessa’s lies and hot-headedly challenges the Redcross Knight to fight.

The lion that protects Una also falls into place when one knows about Spencer's allegorical intent. The lion is king of the jungle and hence part of the natural law. Even his fierce nature, however, cannot withstand truth and faith. Thus, the lion supports and furthers Una's importance in the Book as a figure of right and virtue. Even nature bows before faith. Yet this obviously does not hold with weak or wrong faith, as Abessa, Corecca, and Kirkapine demonstrate. Abessa's name recalls "abbess," or the head of an abbey. She also has a rosary and prays in the manner of a Christian. Since she is blind and her daughter is deaf and dumb, they represent the failings and self-centered isolation of the Catholic Church. Kirkapine, or church robber, brings them the donations left for the poor as well as objects of wealth from the Church. During Spencer's time, many people accused Catholic monasteries of keeping the donations given for the poor, and so Spencer brings to light another aspect of hypocrisy in Catholicism. The lion easily kills Kirkapine but does not bother with Corecca or Abessa. Their faith is weak, and natural law easily defeats them and renders them poor. However, because Sans loy is "without law," the lion cannot defeat Sans loy and Una is taken captive.

Meanwhile, the Redcross Knight explores the House of Pride. Its leader, Queen Lucifera, obviously links to Lucifer, the angel who was thrown out of heaven for his sin of pride and created his own empire. Furthermore, Queen Lucifera rules unjustly and without natural rights to rule. She is, therefore, the antithesis of Gloriana, Una, and, by extension, Queen Elizabeth. Queen Lucifera's entourage of sins and Satan demonstrate that pride is the primary sin and all others are subservient to it. These sins are primarily Catholic sins, and the entire House of Pride can be linked to the Pope and Rome as having pomp, circumstance, and changing rules as a background for false leadership.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book I, Cantos v-viii

New Characters

A simple man: The disguised Archimago, who gives Satyrane and Una false information.

: The wind, father of Orgoglio.

Aesculpius: A fantastical healer who, though alive, has been consigned the darkest cave of hell for bringing the dead to life.

Diana or Cynthia: The virginal goddess of the hunt, who lives in the forests with an array of nymphs.

Earth: The mother of Orgoglio.

Hippolytus: A huntsman sent to hell because his father had him brought back from the dead.

Ignaro: Orgoglio's stepfather, an ancient and blind man.

Jove: The king of the gods.

King of Babylon, King Croesus and Antiochus: Historical figures who are in hell as prisoners of Pride.

Merlin: A great sorcerer.

Night: The goddess of Night, who rides in an iron chariot across the sky.

Orgoglio: The son of Earth and wind, a giant who captures the Knight of the Red Cross.

Pluto: The Greek god of the underworld.

Satyrane: A half-man, half-satyr mix raised in the forest to feel no fear. Seven-headed Monster: The steed Orgoglio gives to Duessa.

Sylvanus: The lord of a troop of satyrs, fauns and nymphs.

The Prince, or the Knight: A good Knight who bears armor and shield crafted by the sorcerer Merlin and who is revealed to be Prince Arthur in Canto IX.

The Squire: Prince Arthur's squire.

Troop of satyrs, fauns and nymphs: Minor characters, wood gods living together in the woods and satisfying their lustful urges.

Summary

Canto v: The Knight of the Red Cross spends the night mostly awake and burning with desire to redeem his honor from the lies of the Sarazin. In the morning, the two of them are plied with wine and spices to give them courage. They swear an oath to each other to obey the laws of arms of all Knights.

When Queen Lucifera emerges, the battleground is prepared and the winner's laurels displayed. A trumpet begins the battle, and "with greedy force" the Knights begin to hammer at each other's shields. The older, stouter Sarazin fights for blood and revenge, while the young, fierce Elfin Knight fights for praise and his good name. They fight so hard that sparks fly from their swords and shields. Their previously shining, glittering shields become stained red with blood, and the audience becomes unsure whom to even cheer for because the wounds are so fearsome and deep.

The Sarazin happens to see his brother's shield and his rage redoubles. He calls out to the spirit of his brother to tell him that he has taken the shield back, and it will no longer stand as a mark of vanquish and victory. The Elfin Knight falls under the spell and begins to lose the battle.

However, Duessa calls out to the Sarazin and the sound of her voice awakens the Knight of the Red Cross from his swooning dream, and he hits the Paynim Knight so hard that he is forced to one knee to avoid death. Then the Knight of the Red Cross raises his sword to deal the deathblow, but a dark cloud sweeps in and the Sarazin vanishes. The Elf calls out to him, but there is no answer.

Duessa runs to the field and congratulates the Knight of the Red Cross, telling him to beware the infernal powers that have hidden his foe. She begs him to accept her as his victory prize. The Knight of the Red Cross greedily searches the field but cannot find the Sarazin anywhere. Finally, he returns to Fidessa and falls upon one knee to make a present of his service to her. Fidessa/Duessa and the Knight make the triumphant march home, and he is given medical treatment.

Meanwhile, Duessa weeps bitter tears until nightfall. She goes to the home of Night, surprising the goddess, and begs her to wait to hear a message. Curious, Night stays, delaying the onset of darkness in the world. Duessa tells her of the death of Sans loy and the defeat of Sans joy, and how he sleeps in an enchanted cloud of darkness. Duessa calls the brothers Night's children and demands that Night avenge the death and dishonor of her sons.

Night replies that the great Jove must be honoring the sons of the Day and declares that she cannot "turne the streame of destinee" because destiny is tied to Jove's seat and he would know. Then Night swears vengeance on the Knight of the Red Cross and demands that her visitor tell whom she is, to bring Night information

about her own nephews. Duessa reveals that she is the daughter of the Deceit and Shame, and a descendent of Night herself. Night bows down before her granddaughter and praises her disguise, and then takes to the sky, bringing darkness to the world. The two women come quickly to the Paynim's hiding place and bind his wounds. While Night touches the ground, dogs continually bay, owls shriek and wolves howl. They bring the Paynim to hell and down to Pluto's house.

They pass into the deepest, darkest, most woeful cave, where Hippolytus is kept. Hippolytus was the handsome and brave son of the Sea, who scorned his stepmother's sexual advances. To take revenge, she accused him of treason, and his infuriated father dashed him to pieces on the cliffs. The stepmother then killed herself while avowing Hippolytus' innocence. The penitent god of the Sea brought Hippolytus to Aescalpius, who was renowned for his medical skill. Aescalpius re-assembled Hippolytus and brought him back to life. The king of the gods, Jove, was so dismayed at this rupture of natural law that he sent Hippolytus to hide in the darkest cave of hell by hitting him with a thunderbolt. Hippolytus lived there with Aescalpius, who continually tries to heal Hippolytus from the wounds caused by the divine fire. Night begs Aescalpius to heal her grandson, Sans joy. The rueful Aescalpius needs serious persuasion to consider repeating his crime of healing the dreadfully wounded, but Night is persuasive. She argues that he has already been excluded from heaven and so has nothing more to fear. If Aescalpius' punishment is complete and tragic, there is nothing more that can be added to it.

Duessa returns to the hall of Pride. The Knight of the Red Cross has departed, though his wounds are not yet healed. He has been warned by his Dwarf of dungeons that are full of wretched men who had devoted themselves to the Court and are now perpetually tortured by Envy and Wrath. These men are all prisoners of Pride, and include the king of Babylon, who tried to compel all men to worship him as God and for that was transformed into an ox. Also included are King Croesus and proud Antiochus, who desired things beyond mortal reach. Thousands of men and women fill the dungeon, all tortured day and night for their sins of pride.

The Dwarf tells his master of souls trapped because they had lingered in idleness and play, and the Knight takes them as an example he must not follow. Instead, he and the Dwarf wake early and flee as furtively as possible, afraid of the wrath of Queen Lucifera. The Knight can barely find his way amongst the foul gathering, but sneaks through the corpses of murdered men and past an enormous dunghill of corpses to flee the "sad house of Pride."

Canto vi: The Elfin Knight feels enormous relief at having safely escaped the house of Pride. However, he misses the Lady Fidessa, although he misses Una much more.

Una has been taken into the forest by the foul Sans loy, who defeated the Archimago. There Sans loy tries to convince her to willingly have sex with him, but she is unyielding. He rips off her veil, and her beauty moves him to lust with or without her consent. The narrator bewails this state of affairs: "Ah heavens, that do this hideous act behold, / And heavenly virgin thus outraged see, / How can ye vengeance just so long withhold, / And hurle not flashing flames upon that Paynim bold?" The heavens do not intervene, but Una's shrieks are so loud and so dismayed that a troop of fauns and satyrs sleeping in the woods hear her and come to find the source of the ruckus. They terrify Sans loy away, and Una turns from her rapist to find a group of rapacious wood gods. Her fear and despair affects the wood gods, however, and they, "in compassion of her tender youth / And wonder of her beautie souveraine" begin to kiss her feet and bow before her. They bring her before their master, Sylvanus, with great fanfare. Because the beauty and goodness of others pale in comparison to Una, Sylvanus immediately falls out of love with his nymphs. Overcome with envy, the nymphs of the troop flee. From this point forward, the satyrs consider only Una as beautiful, and the "luckeless lucky maid" begins to teach the troop not to worship false idols. Her lessons, however, are mostly in vain.

It just so happens that at the same time a brave and glorious Knight named Satyrane is wandering through the forest looking for his father, a satyr who bewitched and raped a peasant woman. The half satyr, half man-child

grew up in the woods with violent and beastly games and pastimes. He was raised to conquer his own cowardice and fear in all things and so rode wild bulls and stole the whelps of lions from the mother's teat. As he grew, even his father was afraid of the fearless man Satyrane had become and his talent with yoking beasts that should have been wild. Satyrane is known throughout Faerie land for his power and ferocity. After his adventures in the wider world and successes in many wars, however, Satyrane liked to come home to the forest and visit. He is on such a visit when he first sees Una teaching sacred lore to a group of enthralled, but stupid, satyrs.

In a short time, Satyrane, like the others in the troop, comes to love and worship Una and also understands and accepts Una's faith and virtues. Unlike the others, though, Satyrane is privy to Una's secret that she wishes to escape and find her Redcross Knight. Satyrane helps her to do this by conveying her with such speed the wood gods cannot chase her.

Satyrane and Una find a simple, poor man out walking and beg him for news. The man says that he saw the Redcross Knight die only a short time ago. Una faints at this news, but Satyrane revives her, and they continue to question the man.

The man informs them that he saw a Paynim kill the Knight of the Red Cross in open battle. Moreover, he tells them that the killer is still nearby, bathing his wounds. Una and Satyrane ride off in haste and find this Paynim Knight, who turns out to be Sans loy. Satyrane challenges him to a duel. A tremendous battle ensues, and the Paynim Knight tries to pursue Una yet again. Satyrane halts him, and the fight continues while Una flees.

The Archimago watches the battle from his disguise as a simple, poor man, delighted with his latest trick. When Una sneaks away, though, the Archimago follows.

Canto vii: The narrator briefly admires Duessa's skill in pretending to be the truthful, beautiful, young, and chaste Fidessa when she is really an ugly, ancient, and terrible witch. She returns to the house of Pride but finds that the Redcross Knight has fled. She searches and finds him resting by a stream with his armor off and his horse grazing. As usual, she deceives him with fond and kind words and then lays beside him in the shade.

However, the stream has been cursed by Diana. The Knight drinks from these waters, but in the excitement at courting Fidessa, he does not notice the effects. When a loud and repeated noise causes the trees to tremble, the Elfin Knight leaps to his feet and begins to don his armor and weapons. But before he can do so, a giant walks into the clearing.

The giant, Orgoglio, is the son of Earth and , the wind. Arrogant because of his godly parents, the giant scorns all powers, including those of Knights. The giant wields an oak tree as a mace and advances upon the undressed Knight, who now feels the weakening effects of the stream and can barely lift his blade. When the giant swings at him, the Knight manages to leap out of the way, but the wind from the weapon moving through the air knocks him to the ground and renders him unconscious. The giant is ready to kill him.

Duessa pleads with him to halt for a Lady's sake and make the Knight his slave and to take her with him. The giant obeys, and Duessa willingly crawls into his arms. Orgoglio picks up the still-unconscious Knight, brings him to his castle, and throws him in the dungeon.

Orgoglio's infatuation with Duessa means that she rules as a virtual queen. Orgoglio gives her a fearsome steed to command respect from the people. Her new steed is a seven-headed monster with an endlessly long tail and an iron breast.

While taking care of the grazing horse, the Dwarf had watched the battle with the Giant. He gathers up the Knight's armor, shield and spear and sets out to tell the story of his captive master. He finds Una as she flees from the Paynim Knight, who Satyrane is keeping occupied in battle. Upon seeing the Dwarf's burden of shield and armor, Una assumes the worst and falls prostrate in grief.

The Dwarf revives Una, who awakens and speaks a long and morbid lament. Una then faints again, and the Dwarf must revive her three more times before she calms enough to ask him to tell her the story of the Elfin Knight. She reassures the Dwarf that "thy sad tongue cannot tell more heavy plight, / Then that I feele, and harbour in mine hart."

The Dwarf tells of the Archimago's deceit and the vision of the unchaste Una, of the adventures with Fidessa and in the House of Pride, the battle with Sans joy and then the defeat and capture at the hands of the Giant.

Una listens to what the Knight has endured, and her love of Redcross grows greater and greater. After the tale finishes, she wanders through hills and valleys searching for the Knight again. On her way, she meets a good and shining Knight who carries a precious stone shaped like a Lady's head. The Knight has a helmet shaped like a Dragon and a glittering tail stretching down his back. His armor is made of gold and covered in precious stones, and his shield looks like it is made of diamond. However, this Knight carries enchanted goods that only resemble such precious substances and in reality are even greater and more awesome. His armor was made and designed by Merlin, the great enchanted sorcerer. It was so beautiful and so well crafted that the Faerie Queen had it brought to Faerie land.

This Prince and Knight calls out to Una with pleasantries, but quickly discerns her sorrow. She laments, claiming that neither earthly worlds nor human speech can reach a heart so sorrowful. She announces that her last comfort is her "woes to weepe and waile."

The Knight asks her to tell him her story. The two of them engage in a dialogue in which Una declares that telling her story will only hurt her unless aid is offered, and the Knight tells her to have faith in others. His reasoned and thoughtful speech convinces Una.

Una reveals that she is the daughter of a King and a Queen who ruled many territories. However, a terrible dragon despoiled their kingdom and has trapped the King and Queen in a castle these past four years. Many Knights tried to kill the dragon, but none succeeded. So the Lady Una herself went to find a Knight with greater prowess and skill and found the brave and true Redcross Knight. She then describes the Archimago's false vision of her lack of chastity, and the Knight's desertion of her. She confesses how much she loves the Knight of the Red Cross and would never give up her body to anyone else. She tells of Duessa's false charms and then of the captivity at the hands of the Giant.

Moved by her story, the Prince swears not to forsake her until he has freed the Redcross Knight. Together, under the guidance of the Dwarf, they set out to do so.

Canto viii: Una travels with the Prince until the Dwarf recognizes a castle as the one where the Redcross Knight is captive. The Prince advances on the castle alone and blows a golden bugle. The shrill sound of the bugle terrifies everyone in a three-mile radius and opens all locked gates and doors. Every door in the Giant's castle flies open and the Giant emerges to find the source of the noise. Duessa follows on her beastly steed, and the Prince immediately attacks. The Giant lashes out with his club, but the Prince avoids the blow, which causes a mini-earthquake. The club is buried three feet in the ground, and while the Giant tries to pull it out, the Prince cuts off his left arm. The Giant lets out a piercing yell, and Duessa and her monstrous steed try to come to his aid.

However, the Prince's Squire stands between the monster and the Prince, blade in hand. He does not let Duessa pass him, and so Duessa takes out the items of sorcery and sprinkles the Squire with poisons that sap his courage. He falls down before the beast, deprived of the will to live, and the beast begins to eat him. The sight of his beloved Squire being wounded brings anguish and courage to the Prince, who advances and slices open one of the monster's seven heads. The Giant runs in, saves Duessa from the monster's thrashing agonies, and forces the Prince to retreat.

The Giant then raises his club in his one arm and brings it down with a crashing blow. The Prince catches it on his shield but is forced to the ground. However, his glittering shield reflects sunlight and blinds both the Giant and Duessa's monstrous steed. Duessa cries out to Orgoglio, begging him to help before they all perish. The Giant tries to come to her aid, but in the light from the shield he has seen their end. The Giant's eyes are dimmed, and his senses daunted.

The Prince fights with renewed force and cuts off one of the Giant's legs. The Giant falls ponderously to the ground, causing the earth to quake. The Prince leaps to the advantage and beheads Orgoglio. Everyone is bathed in the Giant's blood, but the body shrinks into a tiny bladder as soon as the breath leaves the Giant's body. Duessa casts down her magical implements and tries to flee, heartbroken at the loss of the Giant who gave her a kingdom. However, the Squire captures her and returns her as booty to the Prince.

Una's delight moves her to offer herself in service to The Prince and his Squire forevermore. In her gratitude, she begs God to praise and love the two as much as she does. Una follows this offer with a plea not to let foul Duessa escape, as Duessa was the one who held her Redcross Knight in thrall.

The Prince tells his Squire to keep the "scarlet whore" carefully while he frees the Redcross Knight. He enters the deserted castle and calls out for someone to aid him. An ancient, blind man comes to him with a spare set of keys. This man, named Ignaro, is stepfather to Orgoglio. The Prince asks him where the other inhabitants are, but Ignaro says that he cannot tell. Angry, the Prince demands that Ignaro answer, but then realizes that the old man is feeble-minded. The Prince takes the keys and enters every room of the great castle. He finds the blood of innocents and a defiled altar. Finally, he discovers a huge, locked iron door with no key. The Prince calls through a grate on the door for anyone behind to answer, and a dreary, plaintive voice responds by begging for death.

At the sound of the voice, the Prince feels enormous pity. The Prince breaks down the door and finds a deep pit on the other side and has to lift the forlorn Redcross Knight, who is too weak to even stand, out of his prison.

When Una sees the Redcross Knight, she runs to him and tells him of her joy at seeing him and her pain at his condition. Una declares "fie on Fortune mine avowed foe" for keeping them apart.

Together, the Prince, Redcross Knight and Squire strip Duessa of her royal garb and find her true, misshapen body, which is not only old and ugly but also has a fox's tail, an eagle's claw for one foot and a bear's paw for the other. They let her go naked into the woods, with her monstrousness revealed. Duessa flees from the company, into the wilderness and hides under rocks and in caves.

Una and her Knight, however, move into the castle to rest and feast.

Analysis

In Cantos v-viii, the *Faerie Queen* reinforces Protestant values and shows the trouble that ensues when one fails to keep to good faith. The Redcross Knight's vain battle with Sans joy results in his winning Duessa as a prize. Pride leads Redcross to an unworthy and deceitful booty—Duessa not only worked to defeat Redcross, but also feigns admiration and fondness of him to further her own devices. Duessa is a terrible prize, and

Redcross' inability to recognize that demonstrates how far he is from the truth.

Of course, Redcross' plight becomes worse. The positive act of leaving the House of Pride in search of more worthy adventure is completely negated by Redcross' repeat performance of being seduced by Duessa. When Duessa finds him by the stream, Redcross lingers and courts her rather than questioning her about the House of Pride, or her intentions, or simply getting up and riding off in search of more worthy pursuits. By taking off his armor, Redcross removes himself from the virtues that Knighthood endows and suggests that he can deal with any eventuality without the armor of a Christian. Redcross succumbs to the desire to rest, relax, and be distracted from the pain of life, and so he essentially gives up on being good and faithful. Because he lets himself be flattered by Duessa, Redcross becomes subject to the stream's debilitating effects. Orgoglio not only finds Redcross, but finds him weakened and without his armor. Orgoglio finds Redcross when Redcross is at his most prideful, weak, and full of himself. This is at least partially from Duessa's influence.

While accompanied by Una, Redcross was discouraged from entering into unnecessary battles (like the one with the monster Error) and stayed vigilant against attacks. Una's penetrating intelligence and vision guided Redcross. Duessa weakens him, however, making him susceptible to sins like pride, and convincing him to dally in unsafe ways. This all results in his entrapment by Orgoglio. Her lies and falsely beautiful appearance mislead him, and he does not listen to Fradubio's warning. Therefore, the imprisonment by Orgoglio seems to complete the downfall that Redcross' lack of faith in Una had begun. Without Una, Redcross is subject to temptation, lies, sin, weakness, and defeat.

Sixteenth century Protestants often alluded to the "Whore of Babylon" as a reference to Roman-Catholicism. Since Duessa is consistently described as wearing scarlet, the color of both the Roman-Catholic church and the Whore of Babylon, Duessa can be seen as a symbol of Catholicism. The House of Pride, with its self-made ruler, also suggests Catholicism. The pomp and falsity of the House of Pride, as well as the entourage of sins and Satan that only Queen Lucifera can command, suggest the Pope and a string of fears he can command. When Redcross leaves the House of Pride, he effectively rejects Catholicism. However, he allows Duessa to re-enter his life and so shows himself fickle not only to Una and Protestantism, but also in his rejection of Catholicism. This fickleness allows his capture and imprisonment. Since Una represents more than just a Lady or a love—she is also the embodiment of the one truth, the one religion and the one ruler—the author's admonition in Canto iv against changing one's Lady too quickly represents only the surface of events. The Redcross Knight fails to respect and honor religion and holiness when he walks away from Una and takes up with Duessa.

Religious themes continue with Una in the forest. She takes wild wood sprites and manages to discipline them and teach them to be good. The main reason she is able to do this is because of her beauty, but she also wins them over by being a holy example and speaking and teaching about religion. Even the most feared wood sprite, Satyrane, becomes her devoted follower. Una embodies the power of religion. Her goodness and her beauty result from her holy life.

Una's beauty is thus starkly different from Fidessa's. Duessa enchants herself to hide her own ugliness and age. Duessa's inner hideousness is masked by superficial beauty, while Una's goodness, chastity, and holiness are revealed in her outer appearance. Redcross' inability to differentiate between these two types of beauty shows his naïve state.

Just as Queen Lucifera is a self-made ruler, Orgoglio too has created a kingdom without the divine authority, lineage, or virtue to justify such an act. Further linking Queen Lucifera and Orgoglio is Orgoglio's name. In Italian, Orgoglio means "pride." Duessa causes Redcross to visit the House of Pride and to be captured by Orgoglio. Giants are often associated with rebellion and pride. For instance, the Titans tried to overthrow the kingdom of heaven. Spencer is clearly aware of this, as Book VII is about a giantess descended from the Titans. Furthermore, Orgoglio is born of wind and Earth, and he causes earthquakes. Quite frequently,

earthquakes refer to the wrath of the gods. Since Redcross is caught by the symbol of Pride, who causes earthquakes, at the very moment when he most shows voluptuousness and lack of good behavior, Orgoglio seems a punishment wrought by Redcross' own actions.

Redemption and grace enter Book I in the form of Prince Arthur. Prince Arthur's magical armor and weapons are gifts from Merlin, but Prince Arthur himself is something of a Christ-like figure. He seeks and rescues the lost (in this case, Redcross), removes them from the pit of despair, and returns them to the one right religion. Furthermore, his horn that causes doors to open and locks to unlock is reminiscent of the horn that Joshua uses to destroy the walls of Jericho in the Book of Joshua (chapter 6) in the Bible. That horn caused the victory to be attributed to God, not mankind.

Orgoglio's very being as a giant with a name meaning pride illustrates his role as a vile unbeliever. However, his castle is also associated with unbelievers in the Bible. Joshua was sent as a representative of God to take over the lands of unbelievers, just as Prince Arthur has been sent to save a potential believer and in the process destroys the castle of unbelievers. Furthermore, Jericho was destroyed because of a harlot, just as Duessa causes Orgoglio's destruction by convincing him to imprison Redcross. In addition, the harlot that causes Jericho's downfall is allowed to live, just as Duessa is released once she has suffered for her crimes. The harlot of Jericho also saves the lives of good men as Duessa convinces Orgoglio to imprison rather than kill Redcross. Prince Arthur thus has a link to Joshua, who destroyed the city of Jericho and freed the harlot who caused its downfall. Clearly, Joshua and Prince Arthur both have God at their side in the battle against evil. Orgoglio's castle is further linked to unbelief and terrible pride through the seven-headed monster that Duessa rides. This beast is similar to a monster described in Revelations 12 and 17, and Duessa herself is dressed in the clothes of the Whore of Babylon and carries a cup similar to the Whore's. After the defeat, she is stripped naked, made desolate, and sent into the wilderness, a fate similar to that of the Whore of Babylon. Thus, Orgoglio's castle was built out of pride, is ruled by pride, and houses the Whore of Babylon. When Prince Arthur takes it over, he symbolically rejects disbelief while saving the wayward soul of Redcross, who had been oppressed by these non-believers.

Prince Arthur saves Redcross' body and soul. Jesus Christ seeks those who might believe in a figurative sense, while Prince Arthur literally opens doors and calls out to find those who believe. Una, who represents truth, takes even the twice-fallen Redcross back as long as he accepts her wholly and no longer believes the Archimago's lies. In this way, Spencer references the Gospels' idea of the truth leading to freedom

Also present in the *Faerie Queen* are themes of despair, suicide, and redemption. When Una sees the Dwarf with Redcross' armor, she cannot think of how that would come to pass but for Redcross' death, and so she despairs. She begs her eyes to be permanently sealed against the woes of the world and pleads for death to ease her suffering. This yearning for rest from the endless pain of life continues in several other characters throughout the work.

However, when Una survives and waits, her fears are proved unfounded, and instead of dying, she is reunited with the Redcross Knight, and her enemies are defeated. Similarly, when the Redcross Knight hears Prince Arthur's voice, he calls out for someone to kill him. He pleads for death even in the face of rescue and redemption. When he survives, Redcross discovers that he is free, united with his love, and that his enemies are dead or punished. Spencer writes kindly about the impulse towards suicide—he does not condemn it. But in each instance, he sets out to prove it to be faulty. Spencer's work implies that despair is natural, as life is full of woe. However, if one remains steadfast and holds to belief, despair will end and redemption will follow. This theme continues in this Book and other Books of the *Faerie Queen*.

One related theme in the *Faerie Queen*, which reaches its first full development here in Book I, is that of helplessness in sin and divine grace. The first instance of this is when Redcross wanders in the Forest of Error, fights the monster simply because it is a monster, ignores Una's admonitions against fighting the monster, and

then becomes immobilized in the monster Error's tail. This act is significant because it is a direct result of ignoring Una's advice. Una advises Redcross to be faithful and so defeat the monster, but it is his vainglorious pride that gives him strength to defeat Error. Even in defeating Error, Redcross has done so in a way that emphasizes his fall towards sin. This helplessness is exacerbated because his weakness or susceptibility to illusion is exploited by the Archimago. However, the weakness itself is a part of Redcross, at least in the opening Cantos, because he does not fully believe. The prideful battle with Sans joy places Redcross in another position of helpless futility when his opponent disappears. Redcross cannot finish the battle. This inability to act, or forced immobility, is most evident in Redcross' interactions with Orgoglio. The stream may have sapped Redcross' strength, but regardless of cause, Redcross cannot avoid death. Only the sinning Duessa persuades Orgoglio to spare Redcross, and she does so not for Redcross' own sake, but to become a queen. This frustrated inability to act reaches its pinnacle when Redcross is imprisoned in the dungeon.

In fact, only divine grace saves Redcross from his paralysis and sinful hell in the dungeon. Prince Arthur's Christ-like connotations peak when he pulls the weakened Redcross from the dungeon and lifts him into the light. Without divine intervention, Redcross would have been lost entirely. Yet he only falls into this sort of helpless despair when he ignores Una's advice and allows himself to be separated from her. Prince Arthur represents a direct intervention of divine grace, but Una is a more constant positive force. Redcross' quest depends upon Una, not only to gain Gloriana's favor and his own fame, but also to save his soul.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book I, Cantos ix-xii

New Characters

Charissa: Dame Celia's daughter, who is pregnant.

Contemplation: A man who fasts and prays to lower the effects of his body upon his spirit, and who gives Redcross much information.

Dame Caelia: Runs a holy house for rejuvenation with her three daughters.

Despair: A demon that removes all hope from men.

Dragon: A fearsome creature devastating Una's land.

Fidelia and Speranza: Dame Celia's virginal daughters.

King: The lord of the land the dragon was decimating and father to Una.

Mercy: The leader of an order of goodly Protestants who give aid and succor to those who need it.

Messenger: A minion who turns out to be the Archimago.

Obedience: A squire in Dame Caelia's house.

People: The people of the Kingdom of the King and Queen.

Queen: The King's wife and Una's mother.

Seven Men: Each has a charge from Mercy to dole out various kinds of support and help.

Sir Terwin: A Knight who was in love with a Lady who liked to see him in the throes of anguish.

The Porter, Zele: A minor character at the house.

The Trevisan: The fearful Knight, fleeing from something terrible and a once-companion of Sir Terwin.

Timon: The foster-father of the Prince who has freed the Redcross Knight.

Summary

Canto ix: Una pleads with the Prince to tell his name so that he can forever be honored in story and lore for his success in defeating the Giant and Duessa, and for freeing the Redcross Knight. However, the Prince announces that this he cannot do, as he does not know his lineage. The Prince reveals that he was raised by a foster father, a Faerie Knight (like the Redcross Knight) named Timon who taught him martial arts and virtuous lore. The great sorcerer Merlin visited often to oversee his tutoring, but although Merlin confirmed that Arthur was a Prince he would not reveal the brave young man's lineage.

Lady Una questions why Merlin would send him on adventures in Faerie land, and the Prince replies, "Full hard it is to read aright / The course of heavenly cause, or understand / The secret meaning of th' eternal might, / That rules mens wayes, and rules the thoughts of living wight."

This discussion of fate and God is similar to Una's discourse when she thought the Redcross Knight was dead, although Prince Arthur emphasizes that God determines chance and fortune. The Prince, like Una, then becomes more and more enraged as he tells his story. Although previously good and calm, his story becomes more and more emotional. His rage first developed when he was still young, but Timon bade him stay good. However, the young Prince was unable to control his confused emotions, and so he caused trouble, disdained joy, and laughed when others cried. His cold reactions and loose life continued for many years until one day, while he was sleeping in the grass, a royal maid appeared. She told him to love her, and he complied. As she disappeared, she told him that she was the Queen of the Faeries. Upon waking, the young Prince's dismay at her vanishing took all of his playful coldness and loose life out of him. He vowed to do good labor and find her, and has been searching since with her image in his mind.

Una tells the Prince that his case was not entirely unusual, and the Redcross Knight reassures him that his valor and goodness would make him worthy even of the Faerie Queen, should he manage to find her.

The Knights exchange gifts of friendship. Prince Arthur gives a diamond box containing a potion that will heal any wound, and the Redcross Knight gives a book of religious testament. Then they set out on their separate quests, Prince Arthur to find the Faerie Queen and the Redcross Knight to conquer the dragon ravishing Una's land.

Una wishes to let the Knight recover from his ordeal in the Giant's dungeon, but as they ride they see a Knight fleeing from something, riding with fearful backward glances and a bloodless, pained expression. He has a rope tied around his neck and no helmet. The Redcross Knight inquires what causes such distress, but this only terrifies the Knight further. The fearful Knight begs the Redcross Knight not to delay him, but he is forced to stay and tell his story.

The terrified Knight says that he used to ride with a Knight named Sir Terwin who loved a Lady who liked to see him languish and lament after her. As they rode together, they met a demon named Despair who infected them with hopelessness. Despair provided Sir Terwin with a rusted knife and the Knight with a rope. The Knight was more scared of death than of Despair, and so he fled from the scene. He entreats the Redcross Knight to let him flee because no man knows if weakness to despair lurks in his heart, and Despair persuades his victims well.

The Redcross Knight ignores this warning and asks the Knight, whose name we learn is Trevisan, to guide him to this demon. Trevisan agrees, but only if he can flee rather than confront the face of Despair again.

They ride to a barren, lifeless land and into a cave where a greasy-haired, emaciated man in rags sits in his own blood, which still wells from the wound caused by a rusted knife. The Redcross Knight burns with the desire to avenge this man and the terror of Trevisan, and advances while challenging the villainous demon to pay a debt of his own blood in exchange for Sir Terwin's.

The demon replies that Sir Terwin's own mind drove him to kill himself. The Redcross Knight stands by his principle that no man may lengthen or shorten his life beyond what it should be, and that one cannot ignore the death destiny has ordained. Undeterred, the demon tells the Redcross Knight that his misadventures and ordeals, most recently in the dungeon, are signs that death calls for him already. The demon reminds him that he has perjured the Lady Una's chastity and fallen for an evil sorceress's lies, and that he will probably acquire yet more sins if he continues to live. The demon concludes that "death is the end of woes."

Affected by this undermining of his confidence, the Knight reviews his ugly acts and beliefs and begins to accept that he is an unworthy and sinful man. Then the demon, sensing his weakness, shows the Redcross Knight a painting of damned ghosts tortured by demons. The sight afflicts the Redcross Knight and he sees only death before him. The demon brings him instruments to kill himself: poisons, ropes, swords, and fire. Finally, the demon brings out a dagger and hands it to the Knight, whose hand shakes in fear and acceptance.

Una snatches the knife from the Knight's hand and throws it to the ground while reproaching him for his weakness. She tells him to leave with her, feeble as he is, because he fights for justice and so cannot doubt himself without doubting justice, too. The Knight rises and follows her, and the demon tries to kill himself. However, the demon cannot die until his time is up, and so this attempted suicide fails like all the rest.

Canto x: Even given his prowess in battle, the Knight cannot and should not attribute any success to himself. A stanza on thanking the gods makes that clear at the start of Canto x. To heal him from his wounds and starvation, Una takes the exhausted Knight to a house of holiness. The goodly Dame Caelia runs the house with her three daughters. Fidelia and Speranza are virgins, but the third daughter Charissa has many children.

The Porter, Zele, opens the door for Una and the Redcross Knight and leads them to Dame Caelia. Dame Caelia immediately recognizes Una's virtuous, heavenly bearing and welcomes them with open arms. She remarks on the strangeness of seeing an errant Knight in her house, and that "so few there bee, / That choose the narrow path, or seeke the right." As she welcomes them, her two virtuous daughters enter. Dressed in all white, Fidelia carries a golden cup filled with wine and water, in which a serpent rests, and a book written in blood. Speranza, dressed in blue, has a silver anchor on her arm and stares up at heaven, praying.

Una greets the daughters and asks after Charissa. The daughters tell Una that Charissa is pregnant and so cannot come to welcome her. Dame Caelia calls a squire, Obedience, who takes the Knight to a lodge to rest and take off his armor. After they have rested, Una asks Fidelia to teach the Redcross Knight of her religion. Fidelia agrees to teach him "celestial discipline" and thereby open his eyes. She teaches out of the book written with blood, which contains thoughts "of God, of grace, of justice, of free will."

This teaching changes the Knight's perception: "such perfection of all heavenly grace, / That wretched world he gan for to abhore; / And mortall life gan loath, as thing forlorn." Guilt for his wrongdoings make him wish to end his life, but Speranza comforts him and teaches him to take hold of her silver anchor. Distressed by her Knight's anguish, Una asks Dame Caelia what to do. Dame Caelia advises her to counsel Patience, who can listen to whatever grief eats away at the Knight's mind and heart.

The Knight fasts and dresses in sackcloth to repent his sins, and Speranza takes care of him. Penance, Remorse, and Repentance, Speranza's handmaids, treat him to a strict way of life. Redcross groans and tears at his own flesh, and Una is so moved by his pain that she too tears her garments, but keeps her patience. Finally, true repentance reaches the Knight and he becomes calm.

Una then brings him to the pregnant Charissa, who is beautiful, graceful, and loving. Many children surround her. Charissa instructs the Knight in behavior and calls to an old woman, Mercy, to take care of him so that he "should never fall" and so "that Mercy in the end his righteous soule might save." This old woman leads Redcross through a hospital for the poor and needy. Seven men provide all that any soul could need. Entertainment, lodging, food, drink, and useful clothing are given to those who need it, as well as grace and divine forgiveness. One man rescues prisoners and captives, while another comforts and heals the sick. Yet another aids and dresses corpses, while the last helps widows and orphans after the death of a loved one. All bow before Mercy, the leader of their order. Charissa is the founder.

The Redcross Knight stays at the hospital for a time to rest, and during this time Mercy instructs him in the seven jobs of the seven men so that Redcross can provide help to any who need it. During his time there, Redcross becomes "perfect" and learns how to lead a life of "holy righteousness, without rebuke or blame."

Eventually, Mercy takes Redcross out of the hospital and brings him to a chapel in a hermitage. There, Redcross meets Contemplation, who ignores bodily needs to commune with divinity. His fasting and spiritual thought keep his physical being "low and chaste" so that his mind can rule his spirit and stay good. Contemplation forces Redcross into forty days of fasting and praying before he shows him a steep path to a good city made of precious materials. Angels descend from heaven into that city. Breathless, Redcross inquires what city it is, and Contemplation responds that it is "the new Hierusalem, that God has built / For those to dwell in, that are chosen his." Contemplation continues and tells Redcross that one day he will wash his hands of all bloodshed and sin and will become Saint George.

Redcross asks why he may not do that now, and Contemplation replies that he cannot forsake his promise to Una. First Redcross must complete his quest. During the conversation, Contemplation refers to Redcross as a Briton, not as a Faerie descendant. Redcross inquires why, and Contemplation responds that although Redcross does not know his own ancestry, he is descended from Saxon kings and was exchanged with a batch of Faerie children so that, even as a Briton, he could live in Faerie Land. Redcross thanks Contemplation for all the useful information.

After this divine episode, Redcross is blinded by the darkness of the earthly realm. He returns to Una, and together they continue their quest to restore her lands.

Canto xi: Una asks the now-recovered Redcross Knight to help free her captive parents. She takes him to her lands and points out the tower where her parents are prisoners. As she rejoices at being near her parents again, a roar fills the air and they spot the dragon lounging in the sun. The dragon's size makes him resemble a hill rather than animal, a feature of the landscape rather than a foe to be defeated.

The Knight urges the Lady to out of the way and bravely turns to face the dragon. The dragon's scales are so thick that no sword or spear can pierce them and as the dragon moves they make a clashing, ringing sound. His sail-like wings scare even the clouds away, "and all the heavens stood still amazed with threat." The dragon's tail is almost three furloughs long and has stingers at the end. However, the dragon's mouth and claws are his most fearsome characteristics. He has three rows of teeth and sharp claws, and breathes fire. His eyes are full of rage as he approaches the Knight.

The Knight courageously charges the dragon, spear in hand, but the dragon's scales turn the spear aside easily. The force of the blow, however, angers the dragon, who knocks the Knight over with his tail. The dragon has

never felt such a powerful blow, though many Knights have tried to wound him. The dragon takes to the air and uses his massive claws to snatch the Knight, still astride his horse. The Knight struggles even in the air, and after much flying the dragon sets him down. The Knight runs at the dragon again with his spear and tries to hit his scaly neck. The spear slides down the body of the dragon and catches under his wing, in a soft spot where the spear rips into flesh and wounds the dragon. The dragon's cry is like the sound of stormy seas.

The dragon reaches under his wing and breaks off the spear, and a river of blood floods the plain where they are fighting. His mighty tail wraps around the legs of the Knight's horse, throwing him to the ground. Enraged at being immersed in the dragon's blood, the Knight throws himself upon the dragon, hacking at him with his sword. However, the dragon's scales are so strong that they do not even dent. The blows sting the dragon but do not wound him. Striving to escape the Knight, the dragon tries to fly away, but his wounded wing will not support him. The furious dragon breathes a tongue of fire that scorches and bakes the Knight inside his armor.

Pained and near death, the Knight wishes to die. However, directly behind him a spring bubbles up from the ground. In better times, it was known as the well of life, and it has healing and medicinal powers. The Knight falls into this spring and disappears.

The dragon claps his iron wings in victory, and the heart-stricken Una begins to pray. She prays all through the night and keeps a keen eye out looking for her brave fighter. She does not give up hope and so sees when the Knight rises up out of the well, whole and renewed. The Knight smites the dragon on the head so fiercely that he wounds him, although the narrator does not know how this could happen.

The dragon lashes out with his tail and one of his stingers pierces the Knight's shield and lodges in his shoulder. But the Knight is more aware of his honor than of his body, and he continues to fight, hacking off part of the dragon's tail. The dragon rises and descends on the Knight's shield, clinging to it with both paws. The Knight bashes at the exposed parts of the dragon and succeeds in cutting off one paw entirely. The "hell-bred beast" throws back his head and belches fire, darkening the sky with his smoky breath and choking even heaven.

The heat of the flames drives the Knight backward, and he slips in the bloody muck and falls to the ground near a tree covered in beautiful, red apples. It is the tree of life, and although its twin tree, a bit further away, gives knowledge, this tree gives health and healing. Balm flowing from the tree saves the Knight from death by the dragon's flames. He falls to the ground and is covered in its balm, and although he is slow to rise, he is being healed. Una watches fearfully from afar, not knowing what is going on. Another night passes before the Knight stands, and the wounded, exhausted dragon charges at him with mouth open, intending to swallow him.

The Knight plunges his sword into the soft, unshielded mouth of the dragon, and like a rocky cliff sliding into the sea the dragon falls. The Knight stands beside the dragon and Una runs to him and thanks him for defeating the monster.

Canto xii: When the dragon dies, the watchman on the tower calls out to the King and Queen, who have been prisoners for so many years. The King orders trumpets to sound and a feast prepared. The King and Queen bow before the Redcross Knight and a procession of dancing virgins, playing children, and music begins. They crown Una with a garland and gaze at the Knight. Everyone stays away from the body of the dragon, but marvels at his size and invents scary attributes to the corpse, like fire in his eyes or a twitch in his talons.

The King presents endless gifts to the Knight and embraces Una. A feast begins, and when everyone is sated the King asks the Knight to tell his adventures. They listen and "lament his luckeless state, / And often blame the too importune fate, / That heaped on him so many wrathfull wreakes." The King begs the Knight to enjoy a life of ease and leisure in their kingdom, but the Redcross Knight has promised six years service to the Faerie

Queen, and so must decline.

With regret, the King says that the marriage of the Redcross Knight to Una must therefore wait six years. He explains that he had promised that whoever killed the dragon would have the hand of his daughter in marriage. He calls to Una, who enters looking like a fresh spring flower and appears more beautiful than ever.

Before she can speak, a messenger bearing letters runs into the room. He falls at the foot of the King and announces that the Knight cannot marry Una because he is already betrothed to Fidessa. Furthermore, since the Knight has made pledges sworn on burning altars, he belongs to Fidessa alive or dead. The King demands an explanation from the Knight.

The Knight tries to explain that Fidessa is really the enchantress Duessa, who fooled him while he was traveling. Una corroborates his story, saying that Duessa is a deceiving, lying woman, and that she guesses that this messenger is no messenger at all, but rather the Archimago in disguise. The messenger is thrown into a dungeon and Una and the Redcross Knight are bound to each other with secret vows and rites, and the celebrations continue.

However, the Redcross Knight must keep his vow, and so he returns to the Faerie Queen and Una is “left to mourn.”

Analysis

Redcross endures many trials. First, Orgoglio’s dungeon subjects Redcross to mortification of the flesh and deprivation of the senses. Trapped in darkness, without food or stimulation, the dungeon denies Redcross any sensual experience but pain. He emerges from the dungeon like a corpse, but his trials are not through. His battered senses only represent one of several levels at which he must change in order to be holy.

Directly after surfacing from the dungeon, Redcross must battle with his emotions. The demon Despair represents this challenge. Redcross enters this snare because he is still subject to all kinds of errors—he doubts Trevisan’s strength and suspects Trevisan is weaker than he is. His stated reason for finding Despair is vengeance, but this recalls Sans joy, who clearly was in the wrong as Redcross now acts wrongly. Despair also knows secrets about Redcross and so can attack him at a very personal level. In many respects, Despair seems to be Redcross’ own guilty conscience and fearful thoughts. Despair argues that Redcross escaped the dungeon only through luck, without any mention of grace or divine Providence. The negative slant of Despair’s arguments and the immobile, fearful state that they induce in Redcross are reminiscent of his wish for death. Redcross has already called out for death once, and Despair merely augments this tendency with semi-logical arguments.

These personal attacks on Redcross are supported by a general philosophy about God and action. The possibility of sins accruing and never decreasing, dooming one more and more with every act, must be overcome by faith in God and God’s grace. Despair directly attacks Redcross’ weakest point, lack of faith. However, Redcross meets Despair while in the hands of Una. Una’s truth and simple faith are conveyed to Redcross in just a few words, and she takes him out of Despair’s cave. Una convinces Redcross because she tells him that if he acts for justice, then he can only doubt himself if he also doubts justice. Una provides an intellectual basis for Redcross’ faith, and thereby saves him. The very clear implication is that Redcross would have committed suicide if it were not for the grace of Una’s presence; had he met Despair prior to being reunited with Una, he would have succumbed. Despair’s arguments are only logical on the surface; they ignore and obfuscate important issues. Despair uses God’s judgment to invoke fear, but never mentions God’s mercy or divine grace. The best sophistic trick that Despair uses is to hide and deny anything positive.

These combined trials call Redcross’ very identity into question. He loses his armor, the symbol of himself as a Christian seeker. Although a valiant Knight, he cannot defend himself against either Duessa or Orgoglio.

Redcross requires rescuing, which is a characteristic of damsels, not brave and strong Knights. When he emerges from the dungeon, he cannot even walk—even his humanity is called into question, for men walk the earth while creatures on four legs crawl. When Prince Arthur rescues Redcross, Redcross desires only death, not any part of life. Redcross is unable to save himself from the physical entrapment of Orgoglio's dungeon or the mental collapse caused by Despair.

Only after this sort of self-demolition and the recognition of his own helplessness can Redcross recognize grace and be open to the true religion, Protestantism. Only after Redcross has been decimated can he be rebuilt as a true Protestant and a completely good man. This work happens at the House of Holiness, under the guidance of Charissa and Mercy. In the beginning of Canto x, Spencer has a stanza about grace being the assurance of victory, not strength. This is the lesson that Redcross has just learned. But he needs to also be cheered and strengthened to do battle with the dragon in Una's land. That is the role of the House of Holiness—to remake and help Redcross to win his battle against the dragon. It is preparation for a better life with bigger challenges than ever before. In the House of Holiness, as opposed to the House of Pride, Redcross becomes clear about what his quest, his identity, and his religion are and should be.

Fidelia teaches Redcross about grace and sin, but this throws him into a state resembling that which Despair induced in him. Only the care of Speranza and her handmaids help him to reconcile with God, religion, and himself. The names of each woman help to indicate their role. Fidelia indicates fidelity, while Speranza is the Latin word for hope.

In these trials, for which salvation is the goal, Redcross must have endurance: the same quality that helped him through the previous trials, as well as his battle with the monster Error. Spencer's heroic action ultimately comes down to perseverance or endurance in the face of terrible odds. Even Prince Arthur's victory over Orgoglio can be attributed to sheer endurance. Rather than overwhelm or outthink the giant, Prince Arthur hangs on until the giant's blow loosens his shield covering and the brilliant light of the shield blinds Orgoglio. Of course, Prince Arthur does more than endure. He also defends himself and makes the most of opportunity when it presents itself. But for Redcross, only perseverance and strength really aid him in any of his trials.

Once Redcross has absorbed the patience, wisdom, endurance, and holy writings of the House of Holiness, action immediately ensues. Secure in his identity and destiny as Saint George, Redcross immediately begins to fight the dragon. The dragon embodies his original quest, the honor he seeks from the Faerie Queen, and all sin. Unlike previous opponents, the dragon can be seen easily. No deception or illusion obscures the Redcross Knight's quest or how to complete it. Yet the quest is not easy. Rather, the immutability of the dragon is similar to that of land and mountains. Wounding or killing the dragon seems a superhuman feat because of its very construction. But in this fight, no matter how difficult, Redcross has no perceptual challenges to overcome. Only his fighting ability matters, and that, for Redcross, is a straightforward pursuit.

A stray line in Canto x, stanza 45 offers some resolution to the theme of chance, or fortune, brought up in the analysis of the last section of the *Faerie Queen*. Spencer writes, "It chaunst (eternall God that chaunce did guide)." This suggests that fortune or chance is only perceived as coincidental, and that God directs all action, whether or not humans perceive it. St. George is an important historical and religious figure for Britain. He is the patron saint of England. As depicted in numerous paintings, the main act St. George is remembered for is the slaying of a massive dragon. Several stories exist about the historical St. George, including that he fought against the Roman empire because they persecuted Christians, that he held to his Christian faith despite being tortured for it, and that he tore down an edict demanding persecution of Christians. To those who already know about St. George, Redcross would immediately be associated with him because St. George's emblem is a red cross on a white background. This emblem was used in many British battles as a marker of British troops, including those against the Scottish and French. The story of St. George and the dragon revolves around a nasty dragon that held a city at bay and demanded human sacrifices to keep from killing the whole city at once. St. George, an avowed Christian who stated his beliefs despite persecution by the Romans,

attacked the dragon and saved the city and the princess who was to be sacrificed. By writing the first Book of the *Faerie Queen* about St. George, Spencer increases the possibility of the poem being a canonical work in British literature, because St. George is so beloved by the nation. Combined with the dedication to Queen Elizabeth, the epic poem gains political and religious approval in the widest circles in Britain.

Redcross' victory over the dragon clearly is due to God's grace. He would not have survived either being burned alive in his own armor or the heat and blow that cause him to fall. Only the well of healing water and the balm from the healing tree save the Redcross Knight, and those are clearly miraculous items placed by God upon the earth. The healing tree is next to a tree of knowledge, like the one in Eden, and suggests that Una's kingdom is, in fact, Eden itself. If Eden is a physical locale, then Biblical events are literally true and God's existence is assured.

The healing water calls to mind the holy rite of baptism, while the tree is the tree of life, the fruit of which gives a happy life to any who eat it. Both are clearly Biblical and obviously reference the acceptance of God into one's life. Because the Redcross Knight is ready for the battle mentally, physically, and spiritually, he is able to be redeemed through God's grace and succeed on his third attempt to kill the dragon. This ability to rise from the dead echoes Redcross' corpse-like emergence from Orgoglio's dungeon, with the significant difference that this time Redcross needs no human intermediary to receive God's grace. Instead, he accepts grace himself.

Yet both the well and the balm of the tree illustrate that Redcross cannot claim victory to himself. Redcross' victory depends upon God and flows from God. The Christian cannot glorify him or herself with action because God guides all actions. Any victory is really God's victory, with a human as the vessel of God's grace.

Canto xii wraps up Book I in an odd manner. This Canto is far more literal and realistic than any of the previous Cantos. The characters are less mythical and strange than in previous Cantos, and the dominion of clear perception means that the story is less beguiling and more realistic. People marvel at the dead body of the dragon, and can't quite shake their fear of it, and the celebratory procession includes many details that make it easier to believe in (playing children, for instance).

When the Archimago and Duessa try to reassert the world of illusion by sending the Archimago to the court, neither Una nor the Redcross Knight are deceived. For the first time, both see through the magical disguise and the Redcross Knight is able to not only see through the enchantment, but also to explain it to others. The implication is that the trials and redemption have fundamentally changed Redcross and made him even more of a hero.

However, Spencer does not let Book I end particularly happily. Although the guy gets the girl (Redcross is betrothed to Una) and wins the battle (Redcross defeats the dragon), before calm peace and happiness can ensue Spencer inserts a delay. Six years of service to the Faerie Queen restrain Redcross from living the happy life he has just discovered. Furthermore, the Redcross Knight leaves his betrothed Una to help the Faerie Queen fight a "proud Paynim king" working against her. Paynims are unbelievers, and so Redcross leaves his beloved in order to help Gloriana, who represents Queen Elizabeth, fight against those who do not embrace Protestantism. Thus, the political and religious allegory links to Spencer's own time and Queen Elizabeth's battles to secure her nation as a Protestant stronghold.

In addition, although the Archimago is temporarily imprisoned, he soon escapes and is loose for the next Books. So although it seems that the couple is content, the monster defeated, the quest ended, and the enemies subdued, Spencer undoes each of those happy things so that things are left unsettled at the end of Book I. Perhaps this is meant to encourage the reader onward, but it certainly shows that the order restored in Book I is a temporary order, something hard-won but easily lost. The happy ending is a qualified one because Duessa,

the proud Paynim King, and the Archimago are still conniving against chivalrous and Protestant Knights and Ladies.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book II, Cantos i-vi

Book II: “The Legend of Sir Gvyon, or Of Temperavnce”

New Characters

A Palmer: An old man traveling with Sir Guyon (a “palmer” is a pilgrim).

Atin: A squire and messenger who announces Pyrochles’ arrival.

Belpheobe: A beautiful woman, possibly a goddess, who amazes Braggadoccio.

Braggadoccio: A braggart who uses Sir Guyon’s horse to pretend to be a Knight.

Claribell: The Lady of the Squire, a chaste and noble woman.

Crying Woman: Although claiming she has been raped, the woman is really Duessa.

Cymochles: Pyrochles’ brother, whose loves the sorceress Acrasia.

Dan Faunus: A rude and rustic character who pursues a Nymph with lewd intentions.

Elissa: The oldest sister in the castle, loved by sir Huddibrus.

Furor: A violent madman.

Infant: Son of suicidal woman and Sir Mordant, orphaned.

Medina: The middle sister in a castle divided by three sisters, also the nicest and most virtuous.

Miser: One of Archimago’s disguises.

Occasion: A hag, the mother of Furor.

Perissa: The cruel and conniving youngest sister with Sans loy in her service.

Phedon: A young squire being tortured by Furor.

Philemon: The deceitful friend of the Squire.

Phoedria: A beautiful but vain young woman who serves Acrasia and rows on the Idle Lake.

Pyrene: Claribell’s handmaiden.

Pyrochles: A descendent of gods, an undefeated and powerful Knight until he meets Guyon.

Sir Guyon: A good Elfin Knight, the hero of Book II.

Sir Huddibras: In service to the oldest sister, a strong and lucky but stupid Knight.

Sir Mordant: A good Knight who met the Sorceress Acrasia.

Sorceress Acrasia: A vile enchantress who lives on a Wandering Island.

Suicidal Woman: Sir Mordant's wife and mother of his child.

Trompart: A fool pressed into service by Braggadoccio.

Summary

Proem: The author opens Book II discussing where Faerie land is and how to find it. He discusses the lands that have been discovered recently like Peru and the Amazon River and Virginia. With these examples, he argues that it is impossible to claim that only things that can be seen actually exist, for who had seen Virginia before it was discovered? Secure in the existence of the setting of the poem, Spencer continues by saying that if he fails to represent Queen Elizabeth in all her glory, then she may always use a mirror to see her beauty.

Canto i: The Archimago's lies did not succeed in ruining the Redcross Knight's happiness, but Canto i of Book II opens with the Archimago's escape from the dungeon. Angry that he could not interfere with Una and Redcross, the Archimago sets out to cause havoc and mischief for the Redcross Knight as he travels back to the Faerie Queen. However, even his best-laid traps fail to confuse the Knight, who is wary because of his late experiences with sorcerers and Duessa.

When the Archimago stumbles across Sir Guyon and a Palmer traveling together, he sees the opportunity to work deceitful magic. The Archimago disguises himself as a miser and stops the pair. He tells them that a Knight has raped a young virgin. Sir Guyon replies with rage, asking if the wretch still lives. The Archimago directs the infuriated Knight to where he may avenge the woman.

When the Palmer and Guyon arrive, however, they find no unworthy Knight. Instead, a crying woman in torn clothing greets them. She bewails the loss of her honor, and the Knight promises to take revenge upon the traitor who has done such a vile deed. Although surprised by the accusation of the Redcross Knight, Sir Guyon rides off to seek him out and avenge the vile deed. As he rides away, the woman stops crying: it is Duessa. The Archimago has lifted her out of the rocks and nakedness and helped her to find a way to take revenge on the Knight and Una.

Guyon finds the Redcross Knight resting by a stream with his armor off. Guyon rides at the Redcross Knight, ready for battle. However, before their spears meet they recognize each other and turn away from the clash. Each apologizes to the other for their "hastie hand so farre from reason strayd" and acknowledges their allegiance to the same Lady. The Palmer tells Guyon that if he keeps his good ways he will be on the rightful path to heaven. Redcross Knight then rides off for more adventures.

After adventuring and spreading his glory throughout the land, Guyon and his Palmer hear a woman calling out for death from inside a thicket: "come then, come soon, come sweetest death / And take away this long lent loathed light: / Sharpe be they wounds, but sweet the medicines bee, / That long captived soules from wearie thraldome free." She continues by blessing her child, telling the child to live and be happier than his parents were, and then terrible shrieks and death sounds fill the woods. Guyon dashes into the thicket and finds a woman by a stream with a dagger in her chest. She is dead, and the baby in her lap is playing with the blood dripping from her chest and into the stream. Beside them is the body of a smiling, handsome Knight. When Guyon sees him, he freezes, his heart turns to stone, and his blood runs cold.

Guyon races to the woman, removes the dagger and staunches the wound. His treatment succeeds, and the woman begins to breathe. He asks her to tell her story, for “help never comes too late.” When the woman opens her eyes and sees a shining Knight beside her, she swoons three times. Guyon catches her each time, and then begs her to tell her story, for one must give voice to remedy grief. She begs him to leave her alone and give her the peace of death, but Guyon insists that even if she is to die, he wants to remedy her plight or avenge the insult that has caused her such despair.

She throws her feeble hands into the air and begins her story. The dead Knight is Sir Mordant, the goodliest Knight that ever there was. He had set off in search of adventures while she was pregnant, and he met the Sorceress Acrasia on her Wandering Island in the perilous gulf. Acrasia traps Knights in her Bower of Bliss, where she “makes her lovers drunken mad” and then uses them for her own devices. While Sir Mordant was thus trapped, the story-telling woman bore his son and set off to find him. When she did, Sir Mordant had been changed so much by drugs and lust that he did not recognize her. so. She reclaimed his mind and used a charmed cup to bribe Acrasia to let Sir Mordant go. However, as Sir Mordant was released, the deceitful Acrasia cursed him, that as soon as he drank anything he would die. And so when Sir Mordant stopped at the stream, he took a sip of water and died.

With her story ended, the woman loses her strength and dies. In tears, Sir Guyon tells the Palmer that “raging passion with fierce tyrannie / Robs reason of her due regalitie / And makes it servant to her basest part.” He continues by vaunting the virtue of temperance, and mourns the loss of this woman to anguish, rather than crime. She has been defeated by emotions. Guyon and his Palmer bury the two bodies. Guyon swears over the grave that he deserves terrible curses if he doesn’t avenge this grievance.

Canto ii: Once Sir Mordant and his wife are buried, Sir Guyon picks up their orphaned child and tries to wash him, but the blood does not wash off. Sir Guyon does not know if the blood is a sign of his guilt for not having avenged the terrible deaths, or if it is a filthy effect of the charm on the blood of the infant’s mother.

The stream Sir Guyon uses, however, has an unusual history. A chaste nymph was out hunting and was pursued by Dan Faunus. She ran, to protect her chastity, but when she could run no more she called out to Diana to help her. Diana transformed the nymph into a stone, and her tears became the stream. Therefore, the stream cannot be polluted and cannot absorb filth. The infant’s stain cannot be washed off at this particular stream because it rejects all impurities.

And so the infant’s bloodied arms remain as they are as a symbol to chaste women and as a reminder to take revenge.

The Palmer carries the child while Sir Guyon carries all of the belongings. When they emerge from the thicket, their horse is gone. They walk for many uncomfortable days until they find a beautiful and well-made castle. Three half-sisters have divided the castle into three parts and live separately, fighting with each other.

The middle sister, Medina, greets Sir Guyon and the Palmer and brings them into the house. The other two sisters are entertaining their Knights. Sir Huddibras, a stupid but strong man, is the lover of the eldest sister. Sans loy, who recently shamed Una, is the lover of the youngest sister. The two Knights fight constantly, and upon hearing that a new Knight had arrived at the castle they gird themselves for battle with him. However, upon meeting each other on the way to fight Guyon, they begin to battle each other. The noise of the battle draws Sir Guyon, who dashes into the fight to try and stop it to understand what has happened. However, Sir Huddibras and Sans loy turn on him and battle him together. Like a fierce ship beset by waves on either side, Sir Guyon clashes with both of them, and defeats them both, adding to his glory.

Distressed by the conflict, Medina runs into the midst of the battle with torn clothing and her hair pulled out. She entreats them to quit fighting, but her two sisters urge the Knights on. Medina then makes a speech about

how peace and agreement nourish virtue and friendship and can make people strong enough to triumph over anger and pride. The Knights are so moved by her sentiment that they cease fighting. Medina asks them to rest and reconcile, and the Knights agree. Everyone follows Medina to her quarters, where a feast is readied.

The two other sisters conceal their hatred of Medina and pretend to delight in the new peace. The eldest sister, Elissa, does not speak or dance or eat, and she frowns through the festivities. Perissa, the youngest sister, laughs, dances, and eats to excess. Sans loy enjoys the festivities with her, but Sir Huddibras broods and grieves. Medina keeps the feast calm but lively, and asks Sir Guyon to tell of his travels.

Sir Guyon begins by describing the Faerie Queen's beautiful and virtuous appearance, then describes her moral qualities and how all men must adore her for her excellence. He tells the company that he has been given the order of Maidenhead, and that each year there is a feast for the order's honor. At the feast this past year, the Palmer had presented himself to the Faerie Queen with a grievance, and Sir Guyon had been chosen to redress the wrong. He must find and defeat Acrasia, the sorceress, and now the blood-stained infant provides additional incentive to do so to avenge the deaths of his parents.

Medina encourages Sir Guyon to continue to tell his tale, so that the company may learn of the dangers of pleasure and learn to abstain. Sir Guyon tells of Sir Mordant and his wife, and the guests listen. When he finishes, they all go to bed.

Canto iii: Before leaving on his quest, Sir Guyon names the infant Ruddymane and gives him over to Medina to be raised and taught to avenge his parents' death. Then he sets off on foot, since his horse is gone. He walks beside the Palmer, not knowing that a commoner stole his horse while he spoke with the dying wife of Sir Mordant.

The horse thief, now riding with Guyon's stolen spear in hand, sees a man lying like a peacock on the ground. He readies his spear and rides toward the fellow, demanding that he either fight for his honor or give himself up as a captive. The man, fearful, kissed the seeming Knight's stirrup and became his liegeman, and they quickly become arrogant and foolish together. At this point, the author reveals that the horse thief's name is Braggadoccio, a fitting name. The vainglorious and foolish liegeman's name is Trompart.

As they ride together, the arrogant pair meets the Archimago. The Archimago is now angry with both Sir Guyon and the Redcross Knight and figures that any Knight he passes might be an instrument with which to attack them. The Archimago asks why the Knight carries only a single spear. Braggadoccio replies that the slight of having once lost his sword made him swear never to wear one until he had reclaimed the lost one. Besides, the braggart continues, he only needs one spear to defeat a thousand enemies.

The Archimago delights in this fool and begins to complain of two Knights who have slain Sir Mordant and his Lady, and very quickly Braggadoccio becomes enraged and demands to know where those terrible Knights might be. The Archimago eggs him on, but also suggests that he perhaps find a sword before meeting them, even if they are disgraceful examples of Knighthood, because they are quite powerful. However, Braggadoccio continues to vaunt himself. The Archimago promises to bring him only the best sword, Prince Arthur's, so as to be ready for his battle. The Archimago then vanishes in a blast of wind.

Trompart and Braggadoccio enter a forest, but every leaf and every noise scares them. A horn sounds, and they hear someone coming through the brush. Braggadoccio falls from his horse and hides on the ground, but Trompart stays astride to confront this extremity. A Lady steps through the bushes, dressed in wealthy hunting clothes. She is absolutely beautiful and has gleaming lights in her eyes that even the gods envy. She is as fast as Nymphs, holds a spear and carries a bow and quiver, and wears her blond hair loose and entwined with flowers and leaves.

This magnificent Lady (Belphoebe) stymies Trompart, who does not know if he should hide or approach. She speaks to him and asks if he has seen a hind, or deer, with an arrow in its flank. Trompart replies no, but begs to know which of the goddesses he converses with. Before she can answer, she hears movement in the bushes, and she stalks the noise with her spear in hand. Trompart steps between them, begging her hold back because his lord rests in the shade in that direction. Braggadoccio crawls out of the bushes. She speaks to him, telling him that Knighthood is a brave and glorious pursuit. He replies with wonder at her appearance there in the wilds, saying "The wood is fit for beasts, the court is fit for thee." The Lady, Belphoebe, replies that court is full of oblivion and ease and leads people off of righteous paths, while work and toil and bravery bring one honor and goodness. She tells Braggadoccio that she seeks wars, woods, peril, and pain to try and be good, although the gate to easy pleasures is always in sight.

Braggadoccio marvels, but her beauty also arouses him. He leaps to embrace her, and she holds him off with her javelin, then flees. Trompart asks why Braggadoccio hid, and hears a re-invented tale of a pious and brave Knight errant, Braggadoccio's version of events. The author concludes that anyone can see that Braggadoccio is not a proper Knight, and that even his horse chafes under him, eager to be free of the "base burden."

Canto iv: The fourth Canto of Book II opens with the author's opinion that some people are born to be valorous and to ride a horse well. The first stanza speaks of "gentle blood" and how others may sometimes ride horses, but not with the skill of those of gentle blood. Then the author follows Sir Guyon, who has been forced afoot by the loss of his horse. As he walks with the Palmer, Sir Guyon finds a madman dragging a wounded young man, a squire, by his hair over the ground. A wicked, limping hag follows them, hurling insults and reproaches to provoke the madman. She hands him stones and her staff with which to hit the young man. Guyon approaches and asks the hag what has passed, but she thrusts him away. Then he grabs the madman and pulls him away from the young man, and the madman attacks Guyon. However, the madman is too crazed to attack well and so hurts himself.

Not familiar with such fighting, Guyon tries to wrestle the madman to the ground, but falls over himself and is hit about the face with clumsy fists. Rising, Guyon draws his sword to stop the madman, but the Palmer cries out and stops him. The Palmer tells Guyon that this foe cannot be mastered or destroyed, cannot be hurt by steel or strength. The madman is Furor and the Hag is his aged mother, Occasion, "the root of all wrath and despight." The Palmer explains that Occasion gives her son the power of Furor, to master and passionately overwhelm.

Sir Guyon turns to the Hag and throws her to the ground by her bedraggled hair, but she continues to provoke her son verbally. Even once her tongue has been pierced with a lock and she cannot speak, she beckons her son and makes signs to inflame him further. Sir Guyon ties both her hands to a stake so that she cannot move, and her son flees. Sir Guyon catches him and squeezes him in a bear hug. Furor fights back and Sir Guyon binds his hands and fastens him to an iron rack, then wraps him in a hundred iron chains and knots.

Having conquered Furor and Occasion, Sir Guyon stands but immediately sees the poor Squire tortured almost to death by the ruthless pair. Sir Guyon treats him and the man breathes and bemoans that "misfortune waites advantage to entrap / The man most warie in her whelming lap" and that he was "brought to mischief through occasion." The Squire explains that he had a friend since childhood, Philemon. But the Squire loved a noble Lady, Claribell, so much that they never even disagreed, and "love that two harts makes one, makes eke one will: / Each strove to please, and others pleasure to fulfill." Philemon seemed happy for the Squire, and the Squire managed to win the Lady's hand in marriage from the dubious family and friends. However, the day of the wedding Philemon came to the Squire and told him the Lady was dishonorable and that the Squire should wait to marry her until he knew more. Jealous and enraged, the Squire asked Philemon to advise him. Philemon replied that he knew of the place where Claribell's assignations were with this other man.

Philemon had courted Claribell's handmaiden, Pyrene. He had told her how beautiful she was, how shameful it was that she had no rich clothes and jewels to match her own beauty, and he planted the idea that she should wear Lady Claribell's clothes. Philemon, disguised, met Pyrene, who was dressed in Claribell's clothing. The Squire watched, was deceived by the costume into thinking Claribell cheated on him, and left angrily. When he encountered Claribell, he killed her.

After the murder was discovered, the Squire was astonished to hear Pyrene step forward and confess that she had stolen her Lady's clothes that night and would have appeared disguised. The Squire poisoned Philemon, then chased Pyrene with a dagger. However, fear inspired her to run quickly and she ran through woods and plains until Furor found the Squire.

Amazed by the story, Sir Guyon tells the Squire that what he lacks is temperance. The Palmer joins in, telling the Squire that "wrath is a fire, and gealousie a weede, / Griefe is a flood, and love a monster fell" and that all of these he must "expel." The Squire tells them his name is Phedon, and then a man runs up to the three who are discussing temperance. He is exhausted and unimpressed by Sir Guyon's Knightly status. This man, Atin, has a shield with flames on it and the words "Burnt I do burne" and holds two poisoned darts. Atin boldly tells Guyon to leave, or stay at his own risk, that a Knight is coming who is so powerful that he has never been defeated. Guyon inquires as to the Knight's name, and is told it is Pyrochles, descendent of immortals and impossible for mortals to defeat.

Atin then announces that he has been sent ahead to find Occasion, for his master seeks a fight. The Palmer reprimands him, saying that Occasion cannot be found, and that his quest is that of a madman. Guyon tells Atin to take the message to his Lord that the old woman is bound already. Atin accuses Guyon of shaming Knighthood by fighting such an old woman and warns that Pyrochles will requite such shame. Atin throws a dart at Guyon, but Guyon raises his shield and deflects it. Atin flees.

Canto v: Canto v starts with an ode to temperance and how it gives one a steadfast life, but its greatest enemy then becomes the perturbation of that temperance. Pyrochles is one who upsets his own balance. He rides up to Sir Guyon on a blood-red steed whose hooves smoke with each step. Firmly standing his ground, Sir Guyon beheads the horse with his sword. On equal footing, the fight begins in earnest. Pyrochles smites Sir Guyon and splits his helmet and shield open. Angered, Sir Guyon strikes back and splits Pyrochles' shoulder armor open and wounds him. In a fit, Pyrochles slashes around him with powerful strokes that could wound any man through any armor, but Sir Guyon stays back, feints, and avoids the blows.

The author compares the fight to an imperial lion and a proud unicorn; the lion can duck aside and cause the unicorn to ram his horn full force into a tree and then be stuck. With such sleights of hand and tricks, Sir Guyon exhausts Pyrochles and forces him to kneel and worship the saint on Pyrochles' own shield. He then cuts the crest off his helmet, knocks him over, and puts one foot on Pyrochles' chest. Then Guyon tells Pyrochles he can live, but he must swear allegiance to the victor, Guyon. Guyon comforts Pyrochles in his loss by saying that all men lose sometimes and it is "no shame." Guyon tells him to direct his rage at himself and master his anger, impatience and murdering love.

Pyrochles defends himself, accusing Guyon of subduing and defeating an old woman. Pyrochles demands that Guyon set Occasion and Furor free in the name of Knighthood. Guyon gives him the captives, and Pyrochles immediately sets them free. Immediately upon release, Occasion and Furor admonish and insult both Knights. Quickly angered, Pyrochles fights Furor, but no matter what Occasion has to say, Guyon stays calm and patient and will not "with vain occasions be inflamed." Armed with a burning brand and growing stronger with Pyrochles' anger and impatience, Furor subdues Pyrochles before dragging him through the dirt.

Moved with pity, Guyon moves to save Pyrochles, but the Palmer warns him off of such "pitty vayne" and says that if he does so he "deserves to tast his follies fruit." Guyon refrains.

Meanwhile, Atin has ridden away upon seeing Pyrochles falling under Guyon's sword. Atin announces Pyrochles' death to Cymochles, Pyrochles' brother. Cymochles fights for a Lady, none other than the sorceress Acrasia of the Bower of Bliss. Cymochles has given himself up to a life of lust and luxury and is bedecked in roses and lies beside a stream. On the other side are numerous half-naked damsels playing and stripping to compare body parts. This sight is enough to cause any man to be "made drunke with drugs of deare voluptuous receipt."

Atin shames and insults Cymochles out of his pleasantly hedonistic situation and forces him up and onto his horse with news of Pyrochles' death. Canto vi: Cymochles rides to find Guyon and arrives at a stream. A gondola drifts down carrying a woman, who is laughing and talking to herself.

Cymochles asks for a ride across the stream, and the woman agrees but will not let Atin onto the boat. She steers the boat very haphazardly and tells good stories but interrupts them with vain laughter. However, Cymochles is charmed and relaxed, and the author observes, "So easie is, t' appease the stormie wind / Of malice in the calme of pleasant womankind." Cymochles asks her name and the woman boastfully replies that it is Phoedria, a fellow servant of Acrasia. She rows him into the Idle Lake and onto an island.

The island is extraordinarily beautiful. Phoedria leads Cymochles to a shady area, puts his head in her lap and sings him to sleep. She then drugs Cymochles to keep him asleep and continues rowing. She soon comes across Guyon, who also asks her for passage. She takes Guyon, but leaves his Palmer behind on the far side.

Guyon is not charmed by Phoedria's manner or stories, and rather dislikes her loose attitude. When he sees the island, he becomes angry with her and demands that she take him to the other side of the river. Phoedria laughs at his request, blames the wind for their course, and suggests that he rest on the island until the wind changes. Guyon assents, and she shows him the beautiful bowers and sings for him even prettier than the birds. Yet he is not charmed, and wishes to leave her as soon as possible.

When Cymochles awakes, his ire is renewed and enhanced by his anger with himself for being seduced by Phoedria. He finds Phoedria and Guyon attacks them. Cymochles hurls insults at Guyon and enflames his rage. Cymochles shears off part of Guyon's sword, and in a rage Guyon cleaves his helmet in two, cutting Cymochles to the bone.

Phoedria throws herself between them and begs them to stop fighting over her. She insists that if they must fight for her favor, they should do it in the way that best pleases her, without arms at all and through love and pleasure. The men listen, and calm down, and the Faerie Knight asks for passage off the island, which Phoedria willingly gives.

On the far shore, the Redcross Knight sees Atin, who curses him for killing Pyrochles. Guyon continues on, and the author shifts the attention to Atin, who is still waiting for passage across the river.

As Atin waits, he sees a strange spectacle: a Knight on foot running in bloodied armor straight into the water. Atin approaches to try to help, and finds it is Pyrochles. Pyrochles yells from the water that he is "burning in flames, yet no flames can I see" and begs Atin to help him kill himself. Atin sees the Archimago and begs him to help. Pyrochles tells them that his organs have been set afire by Furor. The Archimago inspects him and cures him, thus saving him from slow death.

Analysis

Book II is subtitled "Of Temperance," and temperance is Guyon's strength. To be temperate is to live a balanced and moderate life, exercising restraint on the passions and not giving in to weaknesses. Like in Book I, Guyon is guided by a moderate, faithful companion who advises him in tricky situations. This is not a Lady, like Una, but the Palmer. The Palmer is the source of Guyon's quest given to him by Gloriana, just as Una

gave Redcross his own quest.

Book I's foretelling of trouble to come is reinforced when the Archimago reappears. He and Duessa cause confusion in the very first Canto, although Redcross is too learned and holy to fall for their machinations. Yet the Archimago's continued presence speaks to the uncertain state of order throughout the entire work. One virtue, and one virtuous Knight, is not enough to quell the negative forces working against good Protestants. The narrative thread from Book I is also reinforced by Sir Guyon meeting Redcross and recognizing him.

The first adventure reinforces Guyon's quest with the Palmer. Sir Mordant and his Lady were killed by the very sorceress Guyon seeks. The suicide of the Lady also fits in with Book I, so that not only the narrative structure but also the thematic structure continues into Book II. Just as in Book I the central temptation for both Una and Redcross was rest and an end to worldly sorrow, here Sir Mordant's Lady calls out for an end to light that reveals only more pain. The temptations that beset Redcross have not disappeared from the *Faerie Queen* just because Redcross has vanquished them personally. These evils persist. However, Sir Mordant's Lady commits suicide because of an excess of despair and hopelessness. Sir Mordant dies because of his lasciviousness in the Bower of Bliss. Both of these deaths are the result of intemperance, as Sir Guyon points out. If reason had prevailed and moderated their behavior, Sir Mordant and his Lady would have survived. Ruddymane, the infant, and his bloodstained arms indicate that the infant is marked with the sins of its parents. The father fell into wanton lust and the mother succumbed to suicide, and those sins have marked the child so that he will always be reminded of those weaknesses.

Guyon's moral quest is the pursuit of a moderate and well-mannered life in the form of temperance. The opposite of temperance is indulgence, of either pleasure or pain. The suicidal Lady provides information about the sorceress Acrasia, Guyon's enemy. Acrasia is a fitting rival for a model of temperance, as her Bower of Bliss lulls men with drugs and lust until they are passive, able to respond only to her whims. The Bower of Bliss exemplifies excess and lack of moderation, and so Acrasia is Guyon's enemy not only for this adventure, but also as a symbol of all that Guyon must reject in order to be temperate and good.

Furthermore, the passivity of those captured by Acrasia contrasts with Guyon's active state. Guyon finds orphans, hears tales, meets vain Pyrochles, entertains Medina, and bickers with Phoedria, while those in the Bower of Bliss lie back and accept voluptuous pleasure. Guyon's temperance results from his activity. This passivity is common in Spencer—it is the paralysis of man trapped by sin, as discussed in the analysis of Book I. The men trapped in Acrasia's bower ignore their wives and children, and even when they try to escape, they are cursed and die. Their indulgence has taken away their fighting spirit, their moral values, their families, and their lives.

The interval at Medina's castle illustrates another important concept about temperance. The three sisters represent different states of being, where the brooding, silent Elissa embodies excess of thought and despair; the lustful, gluttonous Perissa illustrates lack of restraint; and Medina shows the happy medium of temperance.

Braggadocchio the horse thief epitomizes a lack of honor and honesty. He pretends to be a Knight, fabricates tales to explain his lack of a sword, intimidates a vainglorious man into being his squire, and ignominiously cowers in the forest when he hears rustling noises. Even Trompart is braver than Braggadocchio. Yet for all his bluster and tall tales, the only truly bad acts that Braggadocchio commits are the theft of the horse and the attempted rape of Belpheobe. Both of these are portrayed as impotent, foolish acts done by someone who simply didn't think enough to know better. Despite causing Guyon much more anguish than the Archimago, Braggadocchio's character is much more sympathetic and bumbling than purely evil. He simply lacks thoughtfulness. In addition, he lacks noble blood. Spencer makes this point in numerous ways, referring to Braggadocchio as "base" and "lowly" at several points, and saying that noblemen are born to ride horses and others simply cannot. In some respects, Braggadocchio remains exempt from criticism because he is too

simple and lowly to know better.

The character of Belphoebe deserves special consideration because Spencer continually returns to the notion of androgyny in the *Faerie Queen*. Belphoebe's beauty and sex are evident, but she also hunts for her own food, defends herself from Braggadocchio's rape, remains vigilant and brave, and takes up arms like a man. This gender-crossing behavior does not in any way make her unwomanly; on the contrary, Belphoebe is considered a paragon of a woman, practically godlike. Belphoebe's androgyny completes her and frees her from feminine weaknesses.

Belphoebe also presents the philosophical argument against leisure and court life. She considers hers to be a harsh but moral life of work, war, and hunting--far superior to the easy task of finding pleasure. She even considers sweat a sign of good, active labor. Since she is speaking to a consummate idler, Braggadocchio, this speech is particularly pointed. Spencer suggests that those with noble blood know both how to spend time in pleasure and how to do good, godly work and therefore must choose between the two options. However, the lowly who fall into pleasure and leisure are even stranger to the equation, and so Braggadocchio's newfound semblance of Knighthood illustrates both base pretension and unjustified laziness.

Braggadocchio's failings are those of a poor man, while Furor and Occasion are simply personifications of human error. Furor and Occasion are minor enemies of Sir Guyon, but they illustrate the effects of unbridled passion. Furor's rage renders him impotent. Occasion's power lies only in her tongue-lashing and ability to egg her son on and cause distress by proxy. With the Palmer's advice, Guyon easily overcomes and immobilizes both of them. Their rancor and ire are unjustified and untargeted, and they are excessive and impartial, almost to the point of being deadly, in their careless venting of passion. Even when immobilized and rendered helpless, they continue to spew venom. These characters represent extremism without moderation.

Pyrochles' character is more complex. Pyrochles has faults, but they are more embedded in his personality and interests. The displays of vanity and anger by Pyrochles illustrate his lack of moderation, but Pyrochles does not resemble base characters such as Occasion and Furor. Pyrochles has faults, but he is essentially still a Knight who defends old women. This is in sharp contrast to Braggadocchio, who hides from noises in the forest. Pyrochles' noble blood and brave behavior differentiate him from Braggadocchio, Furor, and Occasion. He is more like Guyon than any of those characters, although his weaknesses are on display in a way that Guyon's aren't in these Cantos.

Cymochles is similarly Knightly, although in the first scene he has succumbed to lustful idleness by gazing at the scantily clad maidens across a river. Cymochles and Guyon are further related in the mind of the reader when they both meet Phoedria, travel to the Lake of Idleness, and try to escape the beautiful island. Although Cymochles falls under Phoedria's spell more so than Guyon, the two Knights are quite similar. In some respects, Cymochles fate seems, mirror that of Guyon's. However, Cymochles fails to recognize the importance of his own quest to fight Guyon, and so he is led astray. Guyon chafes under the delay with Phoedria, while Cymochles is able to release his worldly cares and concerns, forget about his quest, and enjoy the moment. By forgetting his quest, Cymochles has committed the worst error possible in this Spencerian world: neglect of duty.

Atin's reunion with Pyrochles and the chance meeting with the Archimago highlight something which happens quite often in the *Faerie Queen*. Just as the good Knights recognize one another and often befriend one another, as Redcross and Guyon do, the evil characters often ally with each other. The Archimago and Duessa are the first to unite, but when the Archimago heals Pyrochles from the wounds Furor and Occasion caused him, the Archimago positions himself to use to injure Knights.

Throughout these Cantos in Book II, characters with varying degrees of temperance appear, and Guyon can measure himself against them. Medina and the Palmer are the two most temperate and wise guides that Guyon can have, but Guyon leaves Medina's castle. When Guyon boards Phoedria's boat, he separates himself from the Palmer. Just as Redcross was separated from his guide Una, and therefore lost his way, Guyon quickly finds himself on a pleasant island designed for idleness. However, Guyon seems to be made of sterner stuff than Redcross, and does not succumb to temptation.

When compared with the others in Book II, Guyon's temperance proves to be outstanding and firm. He easily defeats each intemperate character and berates them about their need to control their passions. Even when presented with seductive, beautiful places for idleness, Guyon's sense of duty drives him onward.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book II, Cantos vii-xii

New Characters

Alma: A good virgin who is Lady of a castle beset by villains.

Boatman or Ferryman: The man who guides Guyon's boat as he seeks Acrasia.

Brutus: A royal descendent who cleared Britain of giants and became King.

Bunduca: A female martyr who rose up against the Roman rule but whose forces were decimated and so she killed herself.

Caesar: An Emperor who took over much of Europe and attacked Britain.

Fiend: The guardian of riches, who stalks visitors in hopes he can kill them when they touch or steal an item of wealth.

Giants: Enormous, strong creatures that destroyed the land that was to become Britain until Brutus arrived.

Impotence and Impatience: Two hags in attendance on Maleger.

Lady Estrilde: A woman who King Brutus has an affair with.

Maleger: The captain of the villainous band attacking the castle of Temperance.

Mammon: A false God of wealth and riches.

Maximinius: A Roman ruler of Britain who inherited a weakened country with too few battle-ready men, and it was during his rule that the Pagans overran Britain.

Pagans: Any type of non-Christian, particularly those who believe in polytheistic religions.

Philotime: Mammon's daughter and holder of the Chain of Ambition.

Picts: Scottish men.

Prays-Desire: A sad Lady who seeks honor and fame and who Prince Arthur finds fascinating.

Prometheus: A legendary Greek figure who supposedly created man and stole heavenly fire to give his creation life.

Sabrina: The first female ruler of Britain, daughter of the slain Brutus. Shame, Care, Horror, Fear, Fraud, etc: The personifications of negative emotions that guard or warn off visitors to hell and the place of riches.

Shamefastnesse: A woman who represents shame as a binding force holding people in patterns of good behavior, and who fascinates Guyon.

Tantalus and Pilate: Seekers of the golden apple, trapped in the black waters of Cocytus.

Summary

Canto vii: Although Guyon has lost the Palmer, his guide, he continues to travel on the far side of the Idle Lake. He traverses a barren desert, and when he sees a shady glade he decides to rest there. Under the trees he finds a filthy man surrounded by gold and riches. Upon seeing Guyon, the man pours his gold into holes in the ground, but Guyon stops him. Guyon inquires why the man lives in the desert, alone, with these riches. The man replies that he is Mammon, the greatest god below the sky, and he graces people with all the world's good: riches, renown, and honor.

Guyon tells Mammon to impress those who love wealth, rather than his own humble self, because he has no interest in "worldly muck" that "low abase[s] the high heroicke spirit." Mammon replies that money buys shields, horses and other necessities, and besides wealth is one thing that men "having not complaine, and having it upbraide." Guyon replies that intemperance causes weak men to crave financial gain, but it is superfluous to a well-lived life.

Then Guyon tells the story of how men came to find and crave wealth. At first, in their innocence, men were happy with the work of the creator. However, they began to wound earth and find underground veins of gold and silver, and that caused pride, avarice and greed. Mammon laughs at Guyon's appreciation for such a rude, "antique age" and offers to let him take whatever gold he wishes, so long as if he refuses he does not lament it later.

Without knowing the origin of the gold, Guyon will not accept it. Mammon then brings him into his cavernous underground lair to meet the guardians of Mammon's cave, who are also the guardians of Hell: Pain, Strife, Revenge, Despight, Treason, Hate, Jealousy, Fear, Sorrow, Shame, and Horror. Mammon brings him to a small door adjacent to Hell's open cave. Guarded by Care from Force and Fraud, the door is between Sleep (which might let Force or Fraud in) and Hell's gate. Mammon enters the door, which slams shut behind them. A fiend begins to follow them, watching Guyon in hopes that he will steal or touch something and can thus be killed. Mammon leads Guyon to a solid gold cave full of coffers and human bones. Through another door is the greatest collection of wealth ever in the world, guarded by a warrior sprite.

However, Guyon still refuses Mammon's lure by saying he wishes for identity and freedom, rather than riches. So Mammon led him into another room, full of forges and metal-workers. Mammon tells Guyon that this is the source of the world's wealth and it is not stolen at all. Guyon is unmoved and asks permission to continue on his quest.

Angered, Mammon leads him to a golden gate guarded by the powerful villain Disdain. The sight of Guyon causes Disdain to cry out for battle, but Mammon warns Guyon against such an act, and with his reason pacified, Guyon proceeds. Inside the gate, an assembly of people worships an artful woman who has dressed carefully, applied make-up, and surrounded herself with pleasant lighting, all of which conspires to make her beautiful and fair. She is Mammon's daughter, Philotime, who controls all the world's dignity and honor because she holds the Chain of Ambition, which extends from heaven to hell. People try to ascend the Chain,

but are beaten back by those above and held back by those below.

Mammon offers Guyon his daughter as a spouse, which would assure him great status and power. Guyon demurs by saying that he loves another. Angry, Mammon guides Guyon to the Garden of Prosperina. Next to Prosperina's throne is a tree laden with golden apples and surrounded by the black waters of the river of Cocytus. Souls weep and wail from the water, and Guyon sees many souls reaching for the golden apples. These poor figures forever drown in the waters, for that water cannot kill but can only stop the soul from progressing, so that the soul suffers death time and time again. Guyon asks one soul who he is and what he is doing, and the soul replies that he is Tantalus and begs for food or drink. Guyon declines, saying that Tantalus is an example of intemperance and deserves his fate. Guyon speaks to another soul, who says that he is Pilate, the "falsest judge" who "delivered up the Lord of life to die" and so was "soyled with foule iniquitie."

Mammon interrupts this and asks Guyon to sit and rest and contemplate the wealth he must want. Guyon sits, but remains so long that his body begins to fail for want of food and sleep. Three days have passed underground, and no mortal may stay so long in this cave of the dead. So Mammon is forced to return Guyon to the surface. At the surface, Guyon passes out.

Canto viii: The author laments man's position in the world, partly because angels and devils fly to aid people in good and bad acts, which means that divine beings can cause man's downfall. However, divine love can save many men, and so the author asks, "[W]hy should heavenly God to men have such regard?"

The author then returns to the Palmer, who finds Guyon in a trance after the traumatic escape from Mammon's lair. The Palmer sees a beautiful young boy child sitting by Guyon, and realizes that it is Cupid. The child tells the Palmer that Guyon has had many trials, but that courage will restore him. Then the Palmer is given charge of Guyon, by the gods' order, to keep him safe. Cupid then shows his wings and flies away.

After taking Guyon's pulse and finding that he is still alive, the Palmer begins to rejoice. However, two Paynim Knights, directed by the Archimago, ride up to battle the still-unconscious Guyon. Pyrochles spouts off about Guyon's bad habits leading to his bad death, but the Palmer plays along and shames him for insulting a "dead" man. Pyrochles' brother, Cymochles, then threatens to take Guyon's shining armor, for what use have the dead for armor, but the Palmer argues that this would be a blight on their Knighthood, for it is a foul act to steal from the dead.

Pyrochles and Cymochles do not listen to the Palmer, and they seize Guyon's shield and helmet. At that moment, a Knight rides up. It is Prince Arthur. Seeing the Knight laying in his armor, Prince Arthur asks what tragedy has happened. The Palmer tells him that the Knight is alive but unconscious and that Pyrochles and Cymochles have just tried to steal his armor. Prince Arthur reprimands the brothers for taking advantage of a man "whom fortune hath already laid in lowest seat." The Paynim Pyrochles raises the sword that Archimago stole from Prince Arthur and tries to use it to smite Prince Arthur.

The blow causes Prince Arthur's horse to stumble, but Prince Arthur lands safely and uses his spear to wound the Pagan Pyrochles. In the process, he destroys the shield Pyrochles has stolen from Guyon. Infuriated at the wound his brother has received, Cymochles attacks Prince Arthur after calling upon his gods to help him. Prince Arthur has no sword, and fighting on foot with a spear daunts him, especially since Pyrochles has regained his feet and both brothers are facing him armed and ready. However, Prince Arthur's stout heart gives him courage, and using his spear, he holds off both brothers until Cymochles drops his shield for a moment and Prince Arthur stabs him, thereby wounding him. The maddened Pyrochles seriously wounds Prince Arthur in return and breaks his spear. Prince Arthur uses a truncheon to hit Cymochles, and the Palmer is so touched by his courage that he gives him Guyon's sword.

Rejuvenated, Prince Arthur begins to win the fight. However, he does not wish to strike at Guyon's shield and damage the picture of the Faerie Queen painted on it any further. Yet he quickly dispatches Cymochles, causing Pyrochles to tremble with fear and hatred. Pyrochles leaps at him, but the sword will not obey him, as it is Prince Arthur's enchanted sword. He throws the sword aside and attacks Prince Arthur barehanded but is quickly subdued. Prince Arthur does not kill him, but demands that Pyrochles act as his vassal. Pyrochles refuses and is beheaded.

Guyon wakes to find the Palmer beside him, his sword and shield gone and the bodies of the Sarazins on the plain. He wonders at this, and Prince Arthur reassures him that he was only doing his Knightly duty, obeying his lifelong oath to protect and serve.

Meanwhile, the hidden Archimago and Atin flee.

Canto ix: After returning Guyon's shield and recovering his own stolen sword, Prince Arthur asks Guyon who the Lady painted on his shield is meant to resemble. Guyon replies that it is the Faerie Queen herself, and describes her as such: "My liefe, my liege, my Soueraigne, my deare, / Whose glory shineth as the morning star." Prince Arthur reveals that he seeks the Faerie Queen, and Guyon offers to guide him, but says he must finish his current adventure first. Guyon explains about his mission to Acrasia for the Palmer and the bloody-handed child as the pair of Knights ride.

At nightfall, they come upon a massive, barricaded castle. Fearing whatever enemy causes the people to erect such fortifications, the Knights ask for shelter. The watchman advises them to flee and explains that the castle has been under siege for seven years, and he cannot open the gates for anyone. As he finishes his explanation, a horde of villains descend from the rocks and caves around the castle. Prince Arthur and Guyon fight then valiantly, and the villains are dispersed like "scattered sheepe" but are able to regroup under the direction of their captain. However, they cannot withstand the power of Prince Arthur and Guyon, who handily triumph. Then they approach the castle gates once again, and the good Lady of the castle, Alma, gratefully entertains them. Prince Arthur and Guyon request to see the view from the castle, and Alma brings them to the castle wall. The castle wall is part circular, representing woman, and part triangular, representing man. A built-in chamber houses a guard who denies entrance to rogues and dissemblers. In the castle kitchens, Diet, Appetite, Concoction, and Digestion bow to the Lady Alma. A massive cauldron bubbles and is taken care of with ingenious machines and excessive care.

Alma then leads them into a pleasant room full of men and women courting each other. The Prince immediately focuses upon a Lady who is holding a poplar branch and looks surprisingly sad. He asks about her sadness, and she reproves him. Prince Arthur is drawn to this sad woman named Prays-desire. Guyon, meanwhile, becomes infatuated with a woman who is both modest and blushing. Guyon begs her to tell the cause of her blush and apologizes if he is to blame. Alma explains to Guyon that the woman is Shamefastnesse herself, the source of the shame that holds people in good behavior out of fear of what would happen if they were to misbehave. Alma pulls the Knights away from their courtly games to show them a turret where carefully built beacons burn in inspired, well-worked stone. Inside the turret live sages who advise Alma on how to govern her castle. In one of the sages' rooms they find a library with the books that interest each of them most, and Alma gives them leave to read.

Canto x: The subject of the book that Prince Arthur has chosen to read from Alma's sage's room is the history of Britain. Spencer takes this opportunity to discuss the empty, savage land that Britons took over and claimed. The interior of that land was full of vicious giants until a Briton named Brutus arrived, killed them in battle and became King. After an era of peace and stability, King Brutus found himself distracted from his wife by a Lady Estrilde, with whom the King had an affair. His wife killed him for this. Sabrina, King Brutus's daughter by his wife, ruled the land sagely and well until her son came of age, and then she surrendered the throne to him.

Several more traditional, male rulers followed Sabrina. For seven hundred years, all rulers were descendents of Brutus, until an ambitious and cruel mother murdered the final son in the line. Some of the rulers were good and some were weak, but the power and glory of Britain continued to rise. Then another line of rulers arose, and the empire of Britain continued to expand, through Britain's subjugation of Ireland, Denmark, and other countries.

When Caesar attacked Britain, he was repulsed twice. Then a foreign traitor betrayed Britain, and Caesar won admittance. The Romans ruled, but Christianity was slipping into Britain. Although the Holy Grail legends had always existed, they had largely been ignored. Then a King who died without an heir converted to Christianity, so the issue became relevant to the people again. The Romans ruled until Maximinius came to power after many wars had decimated the population of Britain. Picts and pagans overran Britain until a British ruler was named King.

Prince Arthur's book ends abruptly on a page about the descendents of that British ruler. Prince Arthur's rapturous awe of his country has only increased, and he calls out, "How brutish it is not to vnderstand, / How much to her [Britain] we owe, that all vs gaue, / That gaue vnto vs all, what euer good we haue."

Meanwhile, Guyon reads another history book. His concerns the history of the Faerie race and kingdom. His book begins with the story of Prometheus, who created man and stole fire from heaven to animate his creation. The book calls this created man "Elfe" or "Elfin," and while wandering, this man meets a creature, a "fay", whom he deems to be heavenly. The elf and the fay are the progenitors of all Faerie kind. Each Faerie ruler overcame whole countries or species (like goblins) and added to the fame and glory of their race.

Both Knights read happily for hours, until Alma calls them away, citing the late hour and the supper waiting for them, and they leave their books and begin to feast.

Canto xi: Spencer spends a stanza and a half discussing the "fort of reason" and the besieging forces of passions and "strong affections." Then Guyon rides away from the castle of Temperance and boards a ferry to continue his journey at the Palmer's behest.

Prince Arthur stays at the castle, and no sooner has Guyon left than the villains attack the castle again. Their captain arranges them into 12 groups and sets them cleverly on different parts of the castle, where it is likely to be weakest. The captain targets five of the castle's bulwarks in particular: Sight, Hearing, Smell, Taste, and the unnamed bulwark which is attacked with lustfulness (touch, presumably).

Seeing Alma's distress, Prince Arthur volunteers to fight the enemy. He rides outside the castle, and just the sight of his armor causes the attacking hordes to yell in fear and then to attack fiercely. Prince Arthur defeats many of the horde, and the captain of the attacking forces comes to find the cause of the disarray in his ranks. The captain, Maleger, wields arrows like those the Indians use and rides a tiger. Two hags, Impotence and Impatience, follow him.

Maleger fires arrows at Prince Arthur, and when the Prince readies his spear to attack, Maleger flees on his tiger, riding so swiftly he can barely be seen. As he flees, Maleger continues to shoot deadly arrows at Prince Arthur. One hag gathers up the spent arrows and returns them to Maleger, so he never runs out of ammunition. Prince Arthur stops to tie her hands. The other hag dashes over to stop him and the two overwhelm Prince Arthur. Only the intervention of his trusty Squire saves Prince Arthur's life, and the author comments that "fierce Fortune" can take even the best of men and ruin them, and only when blessed by "grace" will even the strongest survive. The shame that Prince Arthur feels "unite[s] all his powers to purge himselfe from blame" because he thinks again "of glorie and of fame."

Maleger rides up to the prone Prince Arthur and throws away his bow and arrows to pounce upon him, but Prince Arthur is like a bear taunted by dogs, who throws the oppressors off with ever-increasing rage and power. “Yet wrothfull for his late disgrace,” Prince Arthur smites Maleger, knocking him to the ground. Then Prince Arthur picks up an immense stone and throws at the villain, who retreats and avoids it. Maleger is wounded again and again, but sheds no blood. The landscape can be seen through the wounds in his flesh, but still Maleger stands and fights.

Doubt seizes Prince Arthur, who goes cold and immobile at the thought of “wounds without hurt, a bodie without might, / That could doe harme, yet could not harmed be.” Then Prince Arthur throws aside his trusty sword shield and attacks Maleger with bare hands, crushing his body, and throwing it so hard that it bounces off the ground. Believing himself safe, Prince Arthur begins to relax when blows rain down on him again. An idea comes to Prince Arthur when he remembers that earth is Mother Earth, the giver of all life. He fights Maleger without letting Maleger touch the ground, carries him miles away to a lake, throws Maleger in, and kills him.

Wounded and weak, Prince Arthur tries to return to Alma but must be helped by his Squire. They return to the castle of Temperance and are comforted and cared for.

Canto xii: As Guyon travels toward Acrasia, the boatman steers away from the Gulf of Greediness. Its enormous mouth sucks the sea in a whirlpool, and rocks covered with ruined ships surround the gulf. They are the Rocks of Reproach. The Palmer cautions all aboard against loose living and the lure of luxury because the Rocks of Reproach will maim and mutilate any who give in to those temptations.

The boat then passes the Wandering Islands, beautiful yet treacherous islands that confuse and befuddle men. All in the boat fix on their course and stay it, but a beautiful damsel calls from one of the islands and gives them reasons to stay with her. When they ignore her, she boards a boat without oars and overtakes them. It is Phoedria, who rowed Guyon about the Lake of Idleness. She boards and displays loose behavior, but the Palmer reproves her, and she goes back to her island.

The boatman guides them between the quicksand of Unthriftyhood and the whirlpool of Decay only to have a storm and sea monsters overtake them. The Palmer recognizes them as illusions from a witch, strikes the sea with his staff, and the monsters vanish. The trio successfully navigates through many other perils.

Then a mist of confusion descends upon the boat. Horrible winged creatures surround them, but the ferryman continues to row and the Palmer steers them a straight course to land. Guyon arms himself, and he and the Palmer disembark and journey on. They meet wild beasts that succumb at the sight of the Palmer’s good staff, which has virtue in its very wood. Finally the Palmer and Guyon reach the Bower of Bliss, which has a weak, decorative fence to keep those inside trapped. The gates hang open, but a soft figure, Genius, sits before them. Genius embodies the great qualities every man wishes to see in himself. Genius greets each guest with wine, but Guyon breaks his staff, overturns the wine, and enters the Bower.

The Bower has soft green grass and endless flowers. It is not subject to normal weather, but is always temperate and warm. Guyon ventures forward, “bridling his will,” and not allowing himself delight. He finds another gate, made of twining branches and flowers, and beneath the gates is a woman in disarray. She holds a cup into which she squeezes fruit, turning it into wine. She offers the cup to Guyon, but he tosses it to the ground, and the woman, Excess, lets him pass.

The next area of the Bower is so beautiful Spencer inserts a remark about nature and Art: “nature had for wantonnesse ensude / Art, and that Art at nature did repine; / So striuing each th’ other to vndermine, / Each did the others worke more beautifie.” A beautiful fountain flows with precious water in impossible and beautiful formations, and handsome young boys play in the waters. Naked women wrestle in the water

without caring for their own decorum. Guyon slows and watches two of the women who alternately hide and reveal themselves by staying below or above the water.

The Palmer rebukes Guyon and urges him to focus and continue forward. They reach Acrasia's hiding place, and the Palmer urges Guyon to surprise her so she cannot flee. A beautiful sound fills the air, something even songbirds cannot imitate. Inside, Acrasia hovers over her latest lover and sucks his spirit—which has been made molten by the lascivious excess—through his eyes. Lovely women and lascivious boys surround the pair and sing. Someone chants about taking advantage of your time to love while you still can, but Guyon and the Palmer advance steadily, secretly, towards Acrasia and her lover.

Guyon and the Palmer capture Acrasia and her lover in a net, and all the attending men and women flee. The Palmer's net cannot be undone, and Acrasia is held captive. The lover is freed and counseled to return to his blameless life before the Bower. Guyon destroys every beautiful aspect of the Bower of Bliss. Then they retrace their steps with Acrasia and the lover. When they reach the wild beasts, the Palmer pacifies them with his staff, and Guyon asks what they are. The Palmer replies that Acrasia the enchantress transformed her lovers into animals and "sad end (quoth he) of life intemperate." With a stroke of his staff, the Palmer restores the creatures to their former manly shapes, but they are full of shame, wrath, and fear and cannot appreciate the transformation. Guyon laments that man chooses to be a beast, and the Palmer replies that those who delight in filth will do so, but he and Guyon must leave.

Analysis

There are four significant and symbolic events in these Cantos of Book II. First, Mammon's cave tempts Guyon with wealth and ambition, and Guyon collapses from the temptation. Second, Prince Arthur fights the inimitable Maleger and barely wins. Next, Guyon and Prince Arthur enter the Castle of Temperance and see the living example of a city with moderation and temperance, a parallel to the vision of the House of Holiness in Book I. Finally, Guyon overthrows the Bower of Bliss and defeats Acrasia.

A secondary but still important segment of this Book is the summary of the history of England.

Unlike the first half of Book II, this section of the *Faerie Queen* does not present characters with varying degrees of temperance to illustrate the desired middle ground for living. Instead, the second half of Book II is devoted to temptations and resistance of excess. In this battle for temperance, Guyon fights with his mind, not his sword. His moral quest requires endurance, moderation, and stealth. Temperance does not demand feats of arms.

Guyon's entry into Mammon's cave is a choice he makes after Mammon invites him in. Although Guyon willingly accepts this invitation and wishes to see as much of the cave as possible, Guyon does not give in to temptation all the way. However, his very curiosity shows that he is not yet beyond temptation. Without the Palmer, Guyon gives in to curiosity and in effect gives in to his desire, the desire to see. Mammon, as a miser and the personification of wealth, is a word that literally means "wealth." It also has a Biblical allusion: "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt 6:24). Another Biblical reference to money clarifies why God and mammon would be incompatible: "the love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim 6:10). Mammon's cave thus represents the most unholy, excessive collection that a man could be tempted by, for to accede to this vice leads to all other vices. Guyon's entrance into the cave is thus a very dangerous act. However, his curiosity gives Guyon the ability to perceive and comprehend exactly what it is that he rejects while he lives a temperate life. After seeing the contents of the cave of Mammon, Guyon will be able to make reasoned, informed choices about temperance. Ironically, one suspects that the reasonable Palmer would have guided Guyon away from this temptation, keeping Guyon from knowing exactly what excess Guyon would have denied.

When Guyon rejects Mammon's initial offer of money, his reasoning is that he does not know its source and therefore might be accepting blood money, or money gained through foul purposes. This is a particularly Aristotelian idea of virtue revealed through action. Mammon's response to Guyon's rather naïve and somewhat stupid argument that he has no need of money if he lives a worthy life is much more convincing than Guyon's rejection. Mammon references the usefulness of money to aid a worthy life, such as in the purchase of shields with which to avenge those who have been wronged. Yet Mammon lives in the desert guarding his wealth, with the money serving no purpose whatsoever.

The second temptation that Mammon presents to Guyon is that of ambition and recognition. Mammon's daughter, Philotime, is offered as a prize that would guarantee Guyon fame and glory. Philotime at first seems to resemble Acrasia in her beauty and power over others. However, Philotime only seems beautiful. She uses artistry to maintain her beauty. Like Mammon, she seeks control over as many as possible. Quantity, not quality, is the focus of both father and daughter. It is not her beauty that lures; rather, the chain she holds expresses her lure. The chain of ambition implies the successes that Guyon does want—fame, recognition, power, glory, beauty. Philotime holds those possibilities, and so even in artifice she has massive appeal. But the chain does not reach to spiritual benefits, only to the material and physical. Besides, any recognition that Guyon receives must come from worthy action for it to mean anything. Guyon rejects Philotime not only because he is temperate and cautious, but also because his idea of glory and fame relies upon his own actions to secure that recognition. Without action, Guyon cannot consider himself to have attained the goals that Philotime offers.

Finally, Mammon tempts Guyon with the golden apples that have secured so many men the love of a woman. Greek myths are rife with stories where golden apples trick or legitimately win over women who previously would not have a man. For example, a golden apple was awarded to the prettiest goddess as decided by Paris. The golden apple was given to Aphrodite because she promised to help Paris seduce Helen of Troy, which began the great and tragic Trojan War.

Guyon escapes the cave of Mammon, but the strain causes him to fall unconscious. The episode in Mammon's cave gives Guyon Christ-like overtones. Guyon is underground for three days, and then emerges on the third day just as Christ is resurrected on the third day. While underground, Guyon is subjected to three temptations just as Christ was subjected to three temptations in the wilderness. Christ's wilderness stay lasted forty days, while Guyon's temptations and trials last forty stanzas. The collapse itself can be explained as Guyon's spirit and will being stronger than the limitations of his body. Although Guyon rejects temptation, three days without food, water, or sleep is the maximum his body can sustain, and so his frail, human limitations lead to collapse.

The Palmer finds him and stands over him, but just as Redcross could not always rescue himself, Guyon too needs a protector at this point. When Pyrochles and Cymochles come, the Palmer saves Guyon's life by pretending that he is dead, and so Pyrochles and Cymochles have no reason to kill him. Then, when Guyon's Knightly accoutrements are about to be taken away, Prince Arthur intervenes to save his honor. Just like the Redcross Knight, Sir Guyon requires grace to survive, even though unlike Redcross, Guyon has successfully rejected temptation. That grace takes the form of the good Prince Arthur.

Prince Arthur's summary defeat of Pyrochles and Cymochles illustrates their weakness as warriors, although Spencer had already made clear their moral weaknesses. This episode is significant because it frees and saves Guyon from death and offers him another chance to fulfill his self-made vow of defeating Acrasia.

When Prince Arthur and Guyon approach Alma's castle, they seek aid but find a battle. The castle has strong defenses and an orderly structure, but the inhabitants still welcome the aid of the two Knights in defeating the strange brigands. Upon victory, the Knights are shown a castle which is a model of order and good reasoning. Inside its walls are useful things put to useful purposes, careful safeguards against evil and excess, designated

flirtation zones, and history books. Each element balances the other elements. Because Alma means “soul” in Spanish, the castle itself could be seen to represent a whole being, one with temperance and good guidance from a reasoned and intelligent soul. The history that Prince Arthur reads in the Castle of Temperance focuses on the Roman occupation of England. Since Book I was concerned with St. George, who was a martyr for his Christian beliefs during the Roman occupation, the narrative connects between books yet again. Furthermore, the importance of Britons ruling Britain becomes clear. Only when Britons rule does prosperity and peace result. Otherwise, martyrdom, Picts, and pagans overrun the glorious land.

The Castle of Temperance fortifies Guyon, although not as much as the House of Holiness fortified Redcross for his battle in Book I. Yet the Castle reinforces Guyon’s tendencies towards temperance and causes him to finally head directly for the enemy that his quest demands he defeat. The feasting, historical reading, and example of Alma give Guyon strength, and his reunion with the Palmer gives him initiative and drive to return to his duty rather than allowing temptation to seize him.

After Guyon leaves, Prince Arthur’s battle with Maleger begins. This battle is characterized by paralysis, stasis, and immobility-- themes first introduced in Book I. At first, Prince Arthur is trapped as if on a treadmill, chasing Maleger without the ability to catch him. Maleger’s store of arrows is continually replenished by Impotence, but Prince Arthur has no similar weapon to use at long range against his foe. Prince Arthur is shown in a vain, prolonged stasis, at a disadvantage, and unsure what action to take. When Prince Arthur tries to kill Impotence, Impatience overthrows him and the two nearly manage to kill Prince Arthur. Spencer comments on this remarkable turn of events by saying that only God’s grace saves any man, no matter how powerful, and only the intervention of Prince Arthur’s Squire saves him from death at the hands of the two hags. It must be remembered that Prince Arthur is a Christ-like figure in the Faerie Queen, and so for him to be so near death and to require God’s grace to survive illustrates the plight of all men. If Prince Arthur must depend upon grace, then surely all men must.

Prince Arthur’s best tactic in his battle with Maleger is his simple endurance and obstinacy. Although frustrated, angry, and confused about what action to take, he continues the battle as best he can. When an idea comes to him, he takes action upon it immediately. By separating Maleger from the Earth and drowning him, Prince Arthur wins the battle. However, the actual victory is unsatisfying. What matters in this fight is not the final triumph, which is glossed over rapidly, but the facts that even Arthur requires grace and that it is a virtue to fight despite seeming helplessness. This double-edged sword means that although a good warrior knows that his survival is utterly dependent on something outside himself that he cannot influence (i.e., God), at the same time he cannot give in to helplessness and must act as best he can at all times. Prince Arthur defeats Maleger by acting as best he can and accepting God’s grace.

In light of the philosophical overtones of Prince Arthur’s battle with Maleger, the overthrow of Acrasia and the Bower of Bliss seem anticlimactic. The overwrought, Baroque-like Bower does not inspire admiration in Guyon. Guyon’s temperance is so sturdy at this point that only once in the entire garden is he even slightly tempted by his passions, and a few words from the Palmer are enough to remind him of his duty. The sneaky attack on Acrasia is unsatisfying because there is no challenge and no victory procession. Unlike Redcross, Guyon’s victory gives him no immediate gain. Instead of a betrothal, a feast, and the promise of a kingdom, Guyon is simply urged to leave the premises by the Palmer. The lack of resolution for Guyon suggests that Temperance is a never-ending quest, and one that never calls for celebration or relaxation. Continuing to strive for temperance is the best reward for temperate behavior.

One must keep in mind, however, that Guyon’s quest was not to achieve eternal salvation. Redcross was lucky enough to receive reassurance that he would achieve sainthood, but Guyon’s highest achievement is to fulfill his vow of destroying the worldly embodiment of temptation, the Bower of Bliss, and its architect, Acrasia. This corresponds to the virtue itself--one cannot be commanded to be temperate, or to find temperance. External authority will not lead to temperance, but only deprivation or the hunt for excess. By definition,

temperance is a personal quest and a personal goal.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book III, Prologue-Canto vi

Book III: “The Legend of Britomartis, or Of Chastitie”

New Characters

Adonis: The lost lover of Venus, who in legend died in a boar hunt but was restored to Venus for a part of each year.

Amoretta: Belphoebe’s twin, who was raised by Venus.

Britomart: The heroine of Book III, a chaste but fierce woman disguised as a male Knight to seek her love.

Chrysgonee: A Faerie and the mother of Belphoebe and Amoretta.

Cupid: The winged god who causes mortals to fall in love with each other.

Cymoent: Marinell’s mother, a protective and loving guardian although she is also a goddess and lives in the sea.

Dwarf: A servant of Florimell, seeking her in the forest.

Florimell: A beautiful woman chased by a lustful man.

Glauce or the Nurse: An older woman who looked after the young Britomart.

King Ryence: A friend of Merlin’s and Britomart’s father.

Liagore: A nymph with skill at doctoring.

Louts: Six men who worship Malecasta.

Lustful Man: Chasing Florimell.

Malecasta: A beautiful, false, lustful woman who rules a castle.

Marinell: A haughty and wealthy Knight who obeys his goddess mother’s instructions to never become close to women because of a prophecy.

Neptune: The god of the sea and Marinell’s uncle, who has given him the wealth that has fallen to the bottom of the sea.

Pleasure: The child of Cupid and Psyche.

Psyche: The mortal married to Cupid.

Scudamore: A Faerie Knight and the husband of Amoretta.

Tryphon: A god famed for his ability to doctor.

Two Brothers: The ungracious and cowardly brothers of the lout who chased Florimell.

Venus: The legendarily beautiful goddess of love and the mother of Cupid.

Summary

Prologue: The third Book of the *Faerie Queen* tells of the legend of Britomart, with the sub-heading “Of Chastity.” Spencer’s prologue first acknowledges the foolishness of inventing a story to demonstrate this virtue when it is already enshrined in his sovereign’s breast. He then continues by saying that the very perfection of Queen Elizabeth means that no author, no poet, could possibly convey it as well as a living example. Therefore, Spencer chooses to write about the mythical Britomart.

Canto i: Continuing the story from the previous Book, Acrasia has been sent under heavy guard to Gloriana’s court for justice. Prince Arthur and Guyon ride together in search of adventure and “to recouer right for such, as wrong did grieue.” They encounter a Knight with a lion-embossed shield who attacks Guyon and causes him to fall from his horse. This Knight is Britomart, who has disguised herself as a male Knight to seek the love of her life, who she has seen in Venus’s looking glass.

The Palmer, “by his mightie Science,” knows that Britomart’s spear is enchanted and so speaks to Guyon, calms him, and asks him to speak to the stranger. Guyon blames his horse for swerving, thereby assuaging his pride at the fall, and he and the strange Knight reconcile “through goodly temperance, and affection chaste.” Guyon, Britomart, and Prince Arthur travel companionably until a beautiful woman crashes out of the underbrush. A moment later, a lustful man rides out of the bushes chasing her. Prince Arthur and Guyon set out after the lustful man, but Britomart stays behind, not tempted by beautiful women and knowing that the two Knights can easily overtake and defeat the man.

Britomart rides towards a castle. Outside, six louts are beating the Redcross Knight. Britomart asks what cause they have, and the louts declare that their Lady demands all men’s devotion and this man will not declare his love of her. They threaten Britomart with the same fate if she does not give her allegiance to their Lady as well, and Britomart and the Redcross Knight band together and fight all six men. The six defeated men bring Britomart to the Castle, Castle Joyeous, and introduce her to their Lady, Malecasta.

Malecasta had a true love once, but he loved to hunt and was gored to death by a wild boar. Since his death and her loss, she has lived a lascivious and depraved life with only the barest semblance of honor and chastity. Malecasta receives visitors while lying on an immense bed with gold and tapestries surrounding her beauty. However, her eyes roll and flirt more any chaste woman’s would. She asks Britomart and the Redcross Knight to relax and enjoy the entertainment of the castle. All the men of the castle take off their armor and begin to feast.

In her armor, Britomart easily passes for a man, but without her armor her sex is apparent. So Britomart refuses to remove her armor even to relax. Instead, she simply raises the visor and shows her beautiful face, which Malecasta believes is male. Infatuated, Malecasta begins to connive how to get this handsome Knight into her bed. Spencer laments this tendency in women: “Faire Ladies, that to loue captiued arre, / And chaste desires to nourish in your mind, / Let not her fault your sweet affections marre, / Ne blot the bounty of all womankind.” For Spencer, love and lust cannot be reconciled—good women are chaste. Malecasta represents the lack of chastity, while Britomart is so chaste that she does not even recognize Malecasta’s lustful advances as such. Spencer describes Malecasta’s lust as a cancer.

After feasting, dancing, and general merriment, everyone retires to bed. Britomart disrobes and sleeps, but Malecasta sneaks into her room. Britomart wakes only when Malecasta has climbed into bed with her. In only

a nightdress, Britomart leaps out of bed and arms herself. Terrified, Malecasta screams loudly enough to wake the castle, then faints. When the men of the castle enter, Britomart threatens them with her sword, but her golden hair is loose and her sex is revealed. One man shoots an arrow at Britomart and causes a skin wound. She leaps at the six men. The Redcross Knight joins her in the fight, and they triumph. Then they dress and leave.

Canto ii: Spencer again laments his inability to properly praise Queen Elizabeth before rejoining Britomart and Redcross. Redcross asks Britomart why she pretends to be male and what motivates her to travel. A fit of passion shakes Britomart before she can tell her story. Britomart tells Redcross that from childhood, she was trained in warfare and traveled from Britain to Faerie Land in search of honor and fame. However, she concludes with a plea for Redcross to tell her any news of a dastardly fellow named Artegall. Redcross replies that that fellow is good and true, and that he will hear no news to the contrary as it must be lies. Britomart is overjoyed at this assessment of Artegall, for he is her true love. Eager for more news of Artegall, Britomart goads Redcross with implications of Artegall's wrongdoing. Redcross appeals to her reason and stories of Artegall protecting orphans and Ladies. Britomart listens raptly and then asks how she would know this fellow if she met him. Redcross describes his armor, shield, and steed.

However, Britomart already knew these things about Artegall from looking in an enchanted mirror. The great magician Merlin once designed a mirror that shows only those things pertinent to the looker. For instance, the mirror would show an enemy's assault, or a friend's help. Merlin gave the looking glass to his friend King Ryence so that he would never be surprised by an attack. Britomart looked into the mirror one day and saw a handsome young Knight. Before this time she had never felt lust and "was pure from blame of sinfull blot" although Spencer says "her life at last must lincke in that same knot," presumably the knot of love and lust that for Spencer should end in the knot of marriage. Although she did not realize it for some time, Britomart fell in love with Artegall through the mirror. She cried a lot, dreamt of the young Knight's face, and eventually her Nurse asked if she was in love. Britomart denied this, for it was unlike anything she had ever heard love to be. After all, Britomart was in love with an image in a mirror, not a real person whom she knew, or even was certain existed. Relieved, the Nurse told her there was no shame in loving an image, and exclaimed that at least it was not lust that afflicted Britomart.

Unlike her Nurse, Britomart found no relief. Instead, she felt even more estranged from normal love and reality and feared that she would never be able to love a real person. The next morning, Britomart and her Nurse prayed in church, and then Britomart drank an herbal potion made by the Nurse, who tried to work magic to undo the love. But Spencer says this is impossible for gentle, true people because "no idle charmes so lightly may remoue" affection in a good person's heart and so the love continued to burn in Britomart, and she remained insomniac and inconsolable. The Nurse did not know what to do.

Canto iii: The Nurse continued to try to cure Britomart of her lovesickness, but could not. Finally, they decided to ask Merlin, the maker of the mirror, to discover where this unknown paramour lived so that Britomart may find him. Disguised, Glauce and Britomart journeyed to Merlin's underground lair, where he laughed at them for coming to him about love charms and love potions. Glauce explained that only serious magic could work so strongly on her Lady, and Merlin laughed again and said that Britomart could not hide under any disguise and of course he knew who she was.

Merlin prophesied to the Nurse and Britomart that when Britomart finds her true love, from the pair will spring a line of honorable and good people, culminating in a great sovereign. Merlin further told them that destiny guided Britomart to look in the mirror, not some mere chance, and that she must follow the guidance of her destiny. Merlin told Britomart that her lover was Artegall, a Briton was kidnapped and raised by faeries in Faerie Land. According to Merlin, Britomart's destiny is to find Artegall, bring him back to human land, fight with him to reclaim that land from Paynims, marry him, and bring forth a line of warriors and kings.

Merlin then presaged the future, describing horrors and oppression that Britons would have to undergo for hundreds of years. This diatribe continues for many stanzas, and its purpose seems to be to establish that Britomart is a descendant of the Trojans, and her progeny will rule Britain because of that noble heritage. After the great battles, during peacetime, Merlin predicted that Britons will focus on books and learning and a virgin queen will rise to rule them. A fit passed over Merlin, but when it ended he returned to his normal self and Britomart and Glauce took their leave of him.

Glauce thought up dressing in armor, with weapons, in order to pass through dangerous and warring lands without harm. Glauce reassured Britomart that warrior women run in her family and that she would make an appropriate “Mayd martiall.” Then they discussed the fierce warrior “faire Angela” who led her Saxon people in battle, and Britomart found the courage and inspiration for her quest. The castle had recently captured one of Angela’s sets of armor, and so after purloining this and dressing Glauce in squire’s clothing, the pair armed themselves and set out for Faerie Land.

After telling her tale, Britomart and the Redcross Knight part and continue with their own adventures.

Canto iv: This Canto opens with Spencer’s longing for warrior women to reappear. He asks why there are none now when Homer and other poets report that brave, strong women fought in many times and places. Spencer suggests that men’s insecurity keeps women from becoming true warriors in the sixteenth century. However, Spencer says that none of the legendary female heroes can “with noble Britomart compare” in valor, chastity or virtue. Spencer also says that Queen Elizabeth is of Britomart’s lineage, as Merlin suggested in the last Canto.

While traveling alone, Britomart recounts everything the Redcross Knight had said about Artegall, because she cannot quit thinking of him. However, this merely feeds her obsession. Eventually, she stops by the seaside with Glauce and sighs. Britomart complains to the sea, likening the love she feels to strong waves that have crazed her “feeble vessel” and that both fortune and love give no assurance or comfort of success. Then she forces herself to regain composure—just in time, as a strange Knight rides down the beach and threatens her with death for trespassing. Britomart’s sadness turns to rage and she attacks and sorely wounds the Knight.

Britomart has unknowingly but grievously wounded Marinell, the son of the goddess Cymoent. Marinell has lived with knowledge of a prophecy saying that a woman who was a stranger to him would cause him great pain and trouble. Because of this prophecy, Cymoent has urged him to forego all women, and Marinell has done so. He is a fierce and brave Knight, but his divine ancestry made him cocky and arrogant. The sea god, his uncle, brings him all the treasures that have fallen to the bottom of the sea and lines Marinell’s beach with gold and gems. It had never occurred to Cymoent to worry about a woman’s skill at arms, only at love. Marinell has thus lived in a state of suspended chastity because of fear for his life. Spencer inserts a comment about fate and destiny here: “So tickle be the terms of mortall state, / And full of subtile sophisms, which do play / With double senses, and with false debate, / T’approve the vnknown purpose of eternall fate.”

Believing Marinell dead, Cymoent weeps on the beach with her servant nymphs. His uncle Neptune watches the grief of Cymoent and is also moved. If Cymoent weren’t immortal, the pain of losing her son would have killed her. However, she eventually calms and begins to clean Marinell’s body. One nymph who helps her, Liagore, feels for Marinell’s pulse and discovers that he is still alive, although badly wounded. Cymoent immediately moves Marinell to her home under the sea and sends for a famous doctor, Tryphon.

Meanwhile, Britomart rides with Glauce but with no other Knights. Hidden behind her and delighting at her solitude, the Archimago plots against her. Far away, the Prince, the Prince’s Squire Timias, and Guyon ride after the fearful Florimell. They split up in order to find her more quickly, and the Prince finds her. She flees, but he gives chase while calling out reassurances. His unfamiliar shield and arms scare her, and she flees until

sunset. When Prince Arthur can no longer see Florimell because of darkness, he gives up the chase, lets his horse graze and tries to sleep. He curses Night for her hasty appearance: "Night thou foule Mother of annoyance sad, / Sister of heauie death, and nourse of woe." The Prince continues by lamenting that any heart heavy with cares finds only trouble and pain in night, that slothfulness and the inability to see the beauty of God's work hurts all men. Further, Prince Arthur equates light with life and darkness with death.

In the morning, rising from uneasy and short sleep, Prince Arthur continues his quest grumpy and unhappy.

Canto v: Spencer opens with a remark about how love can inspire some to base, low thoughts and behaviors, while in others love inspires great heights of chivalry and good deeds. Then he returns to Prince Arthur, who meets a Dwarf running through the woods. The Dwarf asks if he has seen a blond, beautiful maiden on a white horse. Prince Arthur replies that he tried to save her from a lustful lout, but she fled from her rescuer, Prince Arthur, as well. The Dwarf tells Prince Arthur that the Lady is Florimell, who loves and is devoted to Marinell. When word reached the court that Marinell had died, Florimell fled vowing never to return until she had found him, alive or dead. The Dwarf pleads with Prince Arthur to help him find Florimell. Prince Arthur replies with a quote that defines one of the major responsibilities of Knighthood: "Ill wears he armes, that nill them vse for Ladies sake."

Prince Arthur laments the loss of his squire, Timias. Timias has been chasing the lustful villain who scared Florimell. However, the lout escapes and finds his two brothers, who are as ungracious as him. The lout incites the brothers to find and kill the Squire who caused him such distress. They hide on the bank of a river where Timias must pass and surprise him, and one of them uses his spear to keep Timias from crossing the river. Timias' horse struggles in the deep water, but eventually rage allows Timias to cross despite wounds. Using forestry weapons (a scythe, boar spear and bow and arrow), the three bothers sorely wound Timias both while he is trapped in the water and once he makes it to land. However, Timias triumphs and kills all three brothers.

Once danger has passed, the severe wounds cause Timias to swoon. Luckily, the hunting maid Belphoebe (from Book II, Canto iii) is passing through the forest and finds him. She doctors him with herbs, and he regains consciousness and asks if she is an angel or a goddess. Belphoebe blushes and replies that she is the daughter of a wood nymph. Furthermore, she asserts that all men are linked by a "commun bond of frailtee / To succour wretched wights," or, in other words, that all men can be injured and so must take care of those they find injured.

Belphoebe brings him to a pavilion in the woods where she nurses the squire back to health. However, in the process of healing his physical wound, Belphoebe opens a wound in Timias's heart and he falls in love with her. He chastens himself for his base, low nature and accuses himself of wishing "to blot her honour, and her heauenly light" and tries to die rather than love so disloyally. However, he plays devil's advocate with himself and says that gods find all love equal, so a squire could love even a heavenly born woman if it was true love.

Eventually, the lovesickness manifests as physical sickness. Doubting her nursing skills and unaware of Timias's love, Belphoebe continues to treat him. He tries "to dye for sorrow great, / Then with dishonorable termes her to entreat."

Canto vi: Spencer here recounts the story of Belphoebe's birth, as well as that of her twin Amoretta. Both were born full of celestial grace and beauty. Their birth was miraculous, as Chrysogonee was a virgin. While asleep in a meadow one hot summer's day, the sunbeams themselves impregnated her. However, Chrysogonee feared disgrace and shame when she realized she was pregnant, and so she fled into the woods and bore her children there.

Meanwhile, the goddess Venus sought after her son, Cupid. Cupid had run away after Venus had said harsh words to him, and with a mother's fear she wanted to find him and offered a reward to anyone with news of him. Everyone who she asked, however, told her that love was terrible, wreaked havoc and caused languishing dismay. After looking in the courts, cities and countryside, Venus searched the woods. There, she came upon Diana naked. Diana's nymphs closed in around her to protect her modesty from Venus's gaze, and Diana asked why Venus had ventured into the forests. Venus asked for news of Cupid. Diana replied scornfully, and Venus reprimanded her about the foolishness of looking down on another's sorrow, when it might become one's own one day. Venus then suggested that Cupid had disguised himself among the nymphs and deflowered some of them. Diana became angry, so Venus changed tactics and flattered her until Diana relented and sent her nymphs to search the woods.

The nymphs found Chrysogonee. Just as she had conceived while asleep, she bore her children while sleeping, and just as she felt no pleasure while conceiving, she felt no pain in giving birth. The goddesses decided to take her babies. Belpheobe was taken by Diana and raised in the woods as a virgin. Venus took Amoretta to the Garden of Adonis, which is more pleasant than any other place. Although the garden is filled with flowers, its purpose is to grow the souls of all living things. Human and animal souls and the forms they will inhabit coexist in this peaceful, beautiful garden without corruption. The seasons happen simultaneously. No gardener is needed to tend the plants, which grow in the most beautiful of forms naturally. Mortality threatens all souls, but the Garden of Adonis is where souls escape that by continuous mutability. Souls grow and age, die and are reborn, but always persist in this Garden. Naked men and women's souls, naked in the sense of without clothes and without bodies, wander the gardens delighting in love and sexuality. Spencer shares a rumor that Adonis, Venus's lover who was killed, can live there and be visited by Venus.

Cupid and Cupid's wife, Psyche, and daughter, Pleasure, usually live in the gardens. Venus brought Amoretta to Psyche and asked her to raise her in "true feminitee" there in the garden as if she was her own daughter, Pleasure.

Amoretta thus grew up a model of chastity and honor and then traveled to the Faerie Court, where she met and fell in love with the good Knight Scudamore.

Analysis

By chastity, Spencer actually means sexual continence, or temperance of desire. The ideal for Spencer is that sort of love that Una and the Redcross Knight have in Book I, in which sexuality is satisfied and bound by marriage. Spencer does occasionally urge virginity, but he also glorifies lovers. Spencer's chastity is really sexuality within legal bounds, not outright abstinence. Interestingly, Spencer's females seem to either have or lack chastity in the same way that one either has or lacks noble blood (although the two are not synonymous). Through enchantment, Duessa had outward beauty, but her sinful and deceitful nature also was associated with her sheer ugliness. In an inverse example, Una's beauty is revealed to be a product of her inner virtuousness when she spends time in the forest with the satyrs.

Britomart begins this book as a virginal, chaste woman. Unlike Redcross or Guyon, Britomart does not need to mature, be contemplative, or endure trials in order to achieve chastity. Her companion, Glauce, does not have to rein in Britomart's desires the way Una and the Palmer must for the male Knights. Britomart simply has chastity, in the same way that she has physical beauty. Belpheobe, a character from Book II who resurfaces, is also an exemplar of chastity, but in a different way than Britomart. Belpheobe loves no man and has no expression of desire. Both women are beautiful, feminine, desired, fierce, and good in battle. Britomart and Belpheobe are similar in that their warrior status gives them androgyny and self-protection in a way that traditional ideas about women cannot. In this androgynous, gender-crossing behavior both women resemble Queen Elizabeth, who ruled a country despite being female. As usual, their names indicate their androgynous status, as Britomart means "sweet maid" but also sounds like "Brit Mars," or British Mars. Mars was the Roman god of war, so Britomart is a sweet maid of war. Since "phoebe" is another name for Diana, the virgin

huntress, and “bel” references the word for “beauty” in several languages, Belphoebe means beautiful virgin huntress and links Belphoebe to the gods. However, Belphoebe strives for self-sufficiency in a way that Britomart does not. Britomart seeks to extend her chastity into the bounds of marriage and so be active in her chastity. Belphoebe is immobilized by her chastity, although she still lives a good and chaste life.

Spencer directs Queen Elizabeth to compare herself to Belphoebe, not to Britomart, and since Queen Elizabeth is the virgin queen, who has no intention of marriage, this makes sense. However, the virtue of chastity that Spencer celebrates in Britomart’s story is more than that virginal, static, unchanging resistance to desire that Belphoebe displays. Britomart actively searches for a channel for her desires. Britomart seeks the appropriate, moral, balanced married life that is both chaste and fulfilling. In contrast, Belphoebe’s rant to Braggadocchio about work and wars being the way to challenge one’s self and keep away from the palaces of pleasure has a martyr-like ring.

The need for forceful, strong women to protect themselves and the virtue of chastity suggests that Queen Elizabeth’s chaste leadership not only models virtue for her people but also protects herself. By reminding the reader that Gloriana also represents Queen Elizabeth, Spencer manages to bolster the possibility for reading compliment and praise into the comparisons with Queen Elizabeth. Gloriana’s beauty, diplomacy, and rule cannot be questioned because Gloriana does not appear in the *Faerie Queen* except as a remote, glorified figure. Prince Arthur’s search for Gloriana and his adoring love of her offer a potential worthy suitor that suggests Gloriana’s chastity could turn into Britomart’s goal of chastity-in-moderation through marriage. However, Prince Arthur cannot find Gloriana, and so her chastity remains steadfast. Gloriana, like Queen Elizabeth, is in every sense untouchable. Spencer’s obvious omission of Britomart as a reference to Queen Elizabeth suggests that Britomart fundamentally differs from his Queen because Britomart seeks true love and married bliss.

However, Britomart is in the unfortunate position of never having met her true love. Prince Arthur has at least met and dallied with Gloriana, however briefly. Britomart pursues prophecies and images because of intense inner upheaval, while Prince Arthur at least knows and has an accurate representation of the person he loves. This state of suspended true love links Prince Arthur and Britomart. Neither has visible flaws or loses a battle. Since in Book I Prince Arthur is a Christ-like figure, Britomart too may represent God’s grace on earth.

Similar to Prince Arthur, Britomart’s initial experience of recognizing her true love completely alters her life. The powerful emotions Britomart feels for the man she is fated to love and marry initially cause her to fall ill and require assistance. She states her main fear as that she will never be able to love normally, but instead will forever yearn for an unreachable image. The other part of her fear lies in the strength of her love for Artegall. Her fear of being an aberration suggests that she believes the power of her emotion to be a negative attribute, something illustrating her own weakness or instability. Britomart’s main task in Book III is to reconcile the depth and intensity of her love for Artegall with her notions about chastity. Merlin’s prophecy about descendants and kings for Britain suggests that Britomart’s chastity will indeed be sexual temperance, or desire confined by marriage. The descendants give Britomart a useful and religiously acceptable reason for sexual desire. She can overcome the negative implications of losing her virginity because she will contribute to society. Spencer gives Britomart a Christian purpose in seeking her fulfillment of desire.

In this celebration of healthy, Christian desire, Spencer may be suggesting that Queen Elizabeth has a Protestant duty to marry and have children. If so, it is certainly not explicit. However, Spencer could not write such an opinion explicitly, because that would presume to advise or criticize the beloved Queen. Not only would that offend much of his readership, but it might also offend the Queen, his patron. At the very least, Spencer suggests that nothing in religion prohibits powerful women from having children.

When Britomart discovers the louts attempting to bully Redcross into changing his love from Una to Malecasta, the allegorical reading of this passage is that Chastity defends Holiness from the temptations of

other women. Britomart then accompanies Redcross into the castle, and when Malecasta accosts Britomart in bed, it is revealed to Redcross just what confusions and negativity can be engendered by unchecked lust. Britomart's male appearance leads to comedic interludes. For instance, when Britomart unseats Guyon with her enchanted spear, Guyon must exercise his temperance to moderate his rage at what he perceives as his own failure. Since the reader knows a woman wielding an enormous phallic object just knocked Guyon off his seat, Guyon's attempt to exert self-control takes on additional overtones. Spencer uses the introduction of counterexamples to chastity to invoke humor as well. In the Castle Joyeous, Britomart's innocence keeps her from recognizing Malecasta's advances as such. Hidden in armor, presumably awkward in movement and gait, just the face of Britomart inspires the lustful and unscrupulous Malecasta to sneak into Britomart's bed. The gentle mockery of a woman so lustful that she craves a barely seen, completely oblivious stranger, culminates when Malecasta screams in fear at the realization that the Knight she so lusted after was a woman. The irony, of course, is that Malecasta is more afraid of the "weaker sex" than of a lustful male Knight.

On an allegorical level, the Malecasta incident indicates again that lust obscures vision and those who wish for clarity of thought and action must not give in to temptation. Malecasta's name literally means "badly chaste," or "unchaste," and she is a counter-example Spencer provides as a comparison against Britomart's unswerving chastity and devotion to Artegall. In Canto vi, Venus' life with Adonis in the Garden of Adonis also provides a counterexample to Malecasta, who has let herself fall into lechery and vice because of the death of her true love. On the other hand, Venus remains devoted to her lover even in death—although it is somewhat easier for her, as she can keep him alive!

Book III differs from Books I and II in that Spencer deviates from the tale of Britomart on numerous occasions to tell the stories of many other characters. Book II has the single odd interlude between Braggadocchio and Belphoebe, but Book III has many such interludes, beginning with Marinell and continuing with Florimell, Timias, and Belphoebe. The story of Britomart is much less focused and contains many more diversions. Duessa returns to Sans joy with Night, and the Archimago and Atin explain what has happened to Pyrochles, but Marinell is not linked to any of the enemy characters in the *Faerie Queen*. Instead, Spencer seems to tell Marinell and Florimell's stories as parallel discussions of chastity to complement Britomart's tale.

Marinell lives a chaste, warrior's life by the seaside. His nymph mother Cymoent has begged him never to have relations with women because of a prophecy saying a woman would seriously harm him. So Marinell's behavior is chaste, but only because of self-love and self-preservation. It is a cold, barren chastity without a basis in virtue.

On the other hand, Florimell has fallen desperately in love with Marinell, to the point where the touch of any other repulses her. And yet Florimell, who is purely feminine and lacks any androgynous or male characteristics, possesses a beauty that draws lustful men. When first introduced, she is seen fleeing a lustful man. The Dwarf informs Prince Arthur that Florimell fled the Faerie Court because she heard Marinell had been killed, and her love of him inspired her to vow to find him or die. As we have learned in the previous Canto, Canto iv, Marinell has never returned Florimell's love. Like Britomart, Florimell seeks a love without knowing what form that love will take, only what the man looks like. Also like Britomart, Florimell does not know where her love is, or if he is safe, injured, or dead.

However, Florimell is not like Britomart, who actively seeks her love while doing good works. Florimell's helplessness is made quite clear. Her only resort when lustful men chase her is to flee. Florimell's fear of lustful men also proves unjustified sometimes; even when the good Prince Arthur pursues Florimell in order to reassure and protect her, Florimell runs and will not listen to him. Florimell may attract lustful men, but she also distrusts all men because of some men's uncontrollable lust. Despite her beauty and femininity, Spencer makes clear that Florimell's helplessness in self-defense leads to harmful, dangerous fear. In this respect, Britomart's androgyny serves her well. When a lustful maiden accosts Britomart, or if Britomart were to be

approached by a lustful man, she has no need to flee. Britomart can defend herself, but Florimell has only one resort, flight.

The most carefully described battle scene in Book III is Timias the Squire's battle with the three foresters. Timias chases the lustful lout who had pursued Florimell, and the lout and his two brothers ambush Timias with implements of forestry. In Spencer's time, the forester was a common symbol of lust. Therefore, Timias fights three embodiments of lust. Furthermore, the battle begins with Timias trapped in the river, and for a surprisingly long time he remains there immobilized. Although he has set out to attack the lustful lout, now Timias is under attack. The temporary imprisonment in the river further complicates this reversal of his fortunes. Skill does not free Timias; instead, anger does. Perhaps his lack of temperance, his use of rage instead of moderation or skill, leads to his overwhelming lust for Belpheobe.

Belpheobe's inability to discern Timias' lust echoes Britomart's inability to recognize Malecasta's. Since Florimell so easily perceives lust and even imagines it in chaste men (like Prince Arthur), Belpheobe and Britomart's inability to recognize lust suggests that their ability to defend themselves has freed them from worry about others' lust. They have mastered their own desires in themselves and do not fear it in others, and so it does not occur to them as a reason for behavior. However, this is a blind spot in their vision that leads to problems. Britomart must defend herself against Malecasta's henchmen, reveal herself as a woman, and leave the Castle Joyeous. Belpheobe's blind spot causes Timias' illness, since she does not send him away or remove herself from his presence, and his love grows until he would rather die than admit it to such a chaste, kind virgin. Timias perceives himself as unworthy because he knows that Belpheobe will not reciprocate his love and lust, and therefore considers his emotions base and baseless. Oddly, when Timias nears death, Spencer begins several stanzas praising Belpheobe's chastity, as though driving men out of this world with lust and not recognizing it were a virtue in and of itself. Since Britomart went through a phase of lovesickness earlier in Canto i, condemning Timias for the same failing seems a bit underhanded. Yet Spencer devotes much time to praising Belpheobe for her chastity as Timias lies dying.

This is particularly curious since part of Redcross and Guyon's experience of mastering a virtue involved experiencing or witnessing the vice firsthand. However, Spencer praises Belpheobe for being in the presence of the vice and still being unable to recognize it. Her very ignorance is part of her virtue. The underlying theme seems to be that the most fabulous of chaste women are ignorant about lust, inherently chaste, and defend their honor when provoked into recognizing lust. In addition, Spencer spends quite a bit of time describing Belpheobe's beauty (although nowhere near as much as in Book II). In this way, Spencer's praise of Belpheobe's chastity links to the beauty that is part of what inspires lust in others. Spencer spends quite a bit of time in the *Faerie Queen* discussing how beauty should be worshipped and should inspire men to great, chivalric deeds. Therefore, the implication is that Timias should appreciate Belpheobe's beauty and be moved to ever-greater heights of action by it, but should not feel, much less succumb to, the paralyzing vice of lust.

However, Timias does not speak of lust, nor does Spencer once use the word "lust" to describe Timias' state. Instead, Timias is accused of loving Belpheobe when she does not love him back. The main difference then between Timias' and Britomart's lovesickness is that Britomart has been assured that her love will reciprocate. The incident with Timias illustrates some of the particularly strange aspects of Spencer's ideas about love. Apparently, any unreciprocated love is disloyal and should be stopped.

Belpheobe's birth and the revelation that she is one of two twins raised by goddesses adds support to Braggadocchio's and Timias' first impression that Belpheobe is a goddess. Her beauty is augmented by her inner virtue and adherence to a chaste life, but at least partially derives from her divine upbringing and the special circumstances of her birth. It is difficult to say what Belpheobe's lineage is, exactly, but there is a suggestion that Apollo, the god of the sun, impregnated Chrysoگونه while she was sleeping. Thus, Chrysoگونه resembles Mary, the mother of God, because her offspring were conceived without original sin, lust, or even sensuality. Furthermore, some passages in the Bible cite Christ's birth as painless because Mary

did not engage in original sin to conceive, and so Chrysogonee's painless labor and delivery again links her to the mother of Christ. Her name is composed of two Greek words, "chrysos" and "gone," which means "gold-producing" or "gold race," suggesting that Belphoebe and Amoretta are golden, and thereby radiant and precious from birth.

Since Belphoebe was raised in an atmosphere of female chastity among Diana and her nymphs, Belphoebe represents a sterile, androgynous, chaste female who can defend herself and seeks causes to uphold. Belphoebe works for chastity, literally, although it is also inherent and natural to her.

The Garden of Adonis is one of the most discussed sections of the *Faerie Queen*. It is often compared to Acrasia's Bower of Bliss from Book II, a garden that produces the opposite effect upon men. The Garden of Adonis stresses Spencer's emphasis upon classical legend and medieval poets, since the story of Venus and Adonis is a classical Greek legend told by Ovid, a medieval Roman poet. Throughout the *Faerie Queen*, there are references to classical gods, such as Morpheus, Diana, Earth, and Air in Book I. Numerous other sources are referenced in the description of the Garden of Adonis as well. The Garden illustrates how Spenser uses allusion to tie his work to other sources, from other epic poetry to the Bible to romance literature of his time.

The Garden of Adonis also displays Greek philosophical thought. Even in the garden, no living thing can escape time and therefore mortality. So those in the garden must go through infancy, adulthood, and old age. However, the soul itself does not change. The shape the soul occupies changes form and shape, but the soul is changeless and eternal, shifting from body to body while in the Garden. This is a reference to Plato's theory of forms, which says that all things have a perfect, permanent component that exists despite the constant change and imperfection of the world. The physical form the souls inhabit allows mortality's demands to be satisfied, but that very mutability does not affect the form of the soul, which persists perfectly forever.

In the Garden of Adonis, love and procreation are natural and inevitable. Cupid and Psyche's sexual life leads to their child, and Spenser approves. This sharply contrasts with the Bower of Bliss, where men's sexuality saps them of manhood. The main difference is that in the Bower, sexuality is limited to stimulation without love or procreation. The Bower is a place of indulgence and excess, while the Garden of Adonis balances sexual pleasures with love and filial responsibility. Unlike the Bower of Bliss, all stages of life are represented in the Garden of Adonis. Life is complete and sexuality is healthy. Jealousy, sterile lust, and dissipation do not occur in the Garden. The Garden's healthy sexuality proves that there can be sinless sexuality. The vice of lust need not afflict all those who engage in sexual behavior, and the Garden as a sinless, ageless setting is one way in which souls may have sex without blot or degradation.

The Garden of Adonis also seems like a second Eden in the *Faerie Queen*. The first references to Eden occurred in Una's kingdom, in Book I, Canto xii. The Garden of Adonis has naked men and women wandering around free from original sin and delighting in the garden and each other. This is very similar to the description of the Biblical Eden before the Eve and Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge. Thus, the Garden of Adonis is a heavenly model of an Eden that still persists, although the earthly Eden has been disrupted. The earthly Eden can even be overrun by a dragon, so far is it from the original state of bliss.

The religious allegory in Book III is subdued. Chastity is defined in a Christian way, with sin attaching to lust, but with healthy sexuality being part of life and procreation. The Garden of Adonis links easily to Eden, and the notion of souls clearly supports Christian ideas. However, the characters are more examples of chaste and unchaste behavior than they are allegorical symbols of Roman Catholicism (like Duessa) or of Catholic sins and pomposity (like Queen Lucifera and Orgoglio).

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book III, Cantos vii-xii

New Characters

Argante: A giantess who is infected with lust.

Busirane: A vile wizard who tries to win Amoretta's consent with torture and fear.

Hellenore: The young and carefree wife of Malbecco.

Malbecco: An elderly miser with a young and beautiful wife he keeps imprisoned out of (unfounded) jealousy.

Monster: A vile thing resembling a hyena, called up by the witch because it feeds on women's flesh.

Ollyphant: A giant, the twin brother of Argante and also a slave to lust.

Palladine: A female Knight, chaste and brave.

Paridell: A Faerie Knight sent out to search for Florimell.

Paris: The Trojan whose love for Helen, the most beautiful woman in Greece, started the Trojan War.

Porter: The man who answers calls at the gate.

Proteus: A god of the sea with icy breast and beard.

Son: The witch's son, who is also wicked.

Squire of Dames: A man on a hopeless mission for the Lady he loves.

The false Florimell: A fake woman animated by spirits and created by the witch.

The old fisherman: A fisherman asleep in his boat near shore.

Witch: A wicked woman who lives in a desolate valley far from other people.

Summary

Canto vii: Florimell continues to flee, although she has escaped danger. Her horse guides her deep into the woods until he is exhausted and lies down. Florimell climbs off her horse and flees on foot. Finally, she spies a valley with a single, small house. Hungry and tired, she stops there.

The cottage belongs to a witch who works magic on distant people who have offended her. When Florimell enters and startles her, the witch turns her fear to anger and accuses Florimell of being guided by the devil. Used to those who respect and care for honorable Ladies, Florimell cries and appeals to the good sense of the witch and asks for a place to rest. Even the witch is touched by her beauty and simple honor and asks her to sit by the fire.

Florimell rests, and the witch's son comes home. Amazed at the beautiful woman in his home, he asks his mother who this Lady is, but the witch gives no answer. At first, the son's fear holds him in check. However,

as time passes, lust begins to swell in him. He brings Florimell game from the forest and garlands of flowers, which she accepts out of fear of his vile nature. When Florimell has rested and her horse has found her, she sneaks out of their house in the early morning. She does so secretly because she knows that the vile natures of the witch and son might be revealed if she tries to leave openly. When the son wakes and discovers her absence, he claws at his face in distress because his “love to frenzy turned.” Potions and charms have no effect, and the witch cannot reason with her passionate son. She turns to her evil arts and calls up a monster resembling a hyena that feeds on women’s flesh, and she sends that monster out to find Florimell.

When the monster almost overtakes Florimell, she flees faster. Her horse carries her as far as he can, and then she leaps from her horse to the ground and runs on foot. The seashore is before her, and she would rather drown than be caught by the monster. At the edge of the water, however, is a poor fisherman’s boat, with the fisherman sleeping inside. Florimell jumps into the boat and pushes away from shore. The monster does not brave the waves, but instead takes his anger out on her horse, killing him.

The brave Knight Satyrane (from Book I, Canto vi) rides past, scares the monster away, and recognizes Florimell’s horse. Nearby, Satyrane sees Florimell’s bloodied golden girdle. Enraged at what he perceives as Florimell’s murderer, Satyrane chases the monster and attacks him. However, the monster is enchanted and can not be harmed. Finally, Satyrane bears hugs the monster and entraps him until the monster submits. Then Satyrane binds the monster’s hands with Florimell’s golden but bloodied girdle and leads him around like a pet.

As Satyrane rides away, he sees a Giantess with a Squire tied to her saddle running from a Knight. Satyrane releases the monster and gives the Giantess a terrible blow. The Giantess drops the Squire and flees, and Satyrane gives chase. However, he cannot catch her and she will not stay to fight. Eventually, Satyrane realizes the futility of his chase and returns to untie the Squire and question him. The Squire reveals that the Giantess is Argante, who had sex with her twin in the womb, and who satisfies her lust with any man or beast that she can capture and imprison on her isle. The Squire also tells Satyrane that his name is Squire of Dames, and he serves a Lady who first tested his love by sending him out for twelve months to become lover to any Lady who would agree. Then he returned to her with three hundred names and pledges of the Ladies he had bedded. The conniving Lady further tested his love by asking that he find an equal number of chaste, brave Ladies who refuse him, and the Squire has been searching ever since. He has only found three so far, but continues to search. The other Knight trying to save him from the Giantess was Palladine, the female Knight who is chaste and brave. Satisfied with these explanations, Satyrane returns to his Lady to tell of Florimell’s supposed death.

Canto viii: When the witch sees the monster return with Florimell’s bloody clothing, she rejoices and believes Florimell dead. Quickly, the witch tells her son. However, the son finds the news the end of all hope, for his love for Florimell is as strong as ever. He turns upon his mother in a rage. She flees to a secret spot where she consults the spirits and asks how to heal her son. The spirits advise her to create a false Lady for the son to love. Using lamps, golden wire, and other materials, the witch does so, and she animates her creation with a sprite. This golden-locked, snowy-skinned, spirit-animated woman is full of guile and flirtation and strongly resembles Florimell.

When the son meets the snowy Lady for the first time, he believes the deception. He lives happily with the false Florimell until the vain and fearful Braggadocchio (from Book II, Canto iii) sees her and steals her from him. Braggadocchio makes no headway with the false Florimell, and a passing Knight sees her resistance to Braggadocchio and requires Braggadocchio to fight for her. Of course, Braggadocchio has no knowledge of fighting. Instead, once they had ridden a furlough apart so they could charge one other, Braggadocchio flees, leaving his squire Trompart and the false Florimell behind. The Knight remains happily with the false Florimell, believing her to be the real woman.

The real Florimell, however, is still at sea. The old fisherman wakes from his sleep and marvels at the beauty in his boat, believing himself still dreaming or that “dazed was his eie.” Florimell thanks him for the safety of his boat and requests that he guide it well, for she fears the sea. The old man rudely leaps at her with lust in his heart, but she rebukes him. He then adds “strength” to his “will,” because he is too set in his ways to learn virtue: “Hard is to teach an old horse amble trew.” The old man attempts to force Florimell as she struggles and screams for help.

Although no Knights are near, the shepherd of the seas, Proteus, hears her cry. Proteus beats the old man and calms Florimell by kissing her and moving her into his chariot. Proteus ties the old man to the back of the chariot, drags him through the waves, and tosses him ashore. Then Proteus takes Florimell back to his underwater cave, where he woos her for days. Florimell refuses him. Proteus begins to threaten Florimell and transforms himself into the shapes of giants, centaurs, and storms. When nothing works, Proteus throws her into an underwater dungeon. Florimell finds that “eternal thraldome was to her more lief / Then losse of chastity, or change of loue.” Spencer then holds Florimell up as an example all women should follow.

The narrative returns to Satyrane, who meets another Knight, Paridell. Paridell tells Satyrane of Marinell’s death and Florimell’s disappearance, and how all the Faerie Knights are out seeking the beautiful Florimell. Satyrane tells what he has seen, including Florimell’s dead horse and the bloody girdle. Paridell refuses to give up the hunt until a body has been found and announces his intent to continue searching. Satyrane urges Paridell to rest first and accompany him to a nearby castle. Although by tradition all castles are open to Knights, this castle denies them entrance, and Spencer saves the reason for it for the next Canto.

Canto ix: Spencer begins with an apology for his depictions of wanton Ladies and faithless Knights. He justifies his bad examples by saying that even in heaven “a whole legione / Of wicked Sprights did fall from happy blis; / What wonder then, if one of women all did mis?” Spencer then begins the story of why Paridell and Satyrane are denied entrance into the castle. Malbecco, an elderly Knight whose main interest is hoarding ill-gotten wealth, lives there with his beautiful, young wife, Hellenore. His jealousy keeps all men away from her. Thus, no strangers, including Knights, are allowed into the castle. Satyrane laughs at this notion of keeping a woman closed up because “A woman’s will . . . is disposed to go astray.” Satyrane argues that rather than constraint, the way to keep a woman is to anticipate her needs, offer her courtesies, and give her pleasure. Paridell says that Malbecco must be mad to love his bondage, even if it is pretty bondage.

Paridell and Satyrane agree to try to enter by flattery, and if that fails, to enter by force. They speak to the Porter at the gate, who says that everyone is in bed and the keys are with the master. Paridell threatens the Porter, but to no avail. A storm descends, and Paridell and Satyrane take shelter in a pig shed near the castle.

In the darkness, another Knight rides up to Malbecco’s castle to ask for shelter. This Knight, too, is turned away and finds the pig shed. There is no room inside, and the new Knight threatens violence if space isn’t shared. Paridell becomes angry, mounts his horse, and rides out threateningly into the storm. The new Knight knocks Paridell from his horse, and Satyrane intervenes. Satyrane urges them to turn their anger towards Malbecco instead, and so the three Knights ride to the gate. They threaten to burn it down, and Malbecco runs out and offers them lodging, excusing the earlier refusal as an error by his servants.

The three Knights undress to dry their wet garments, and the strange Knight is revealed to be Britomart. All the males in the castle fall in love with her, and her chivalry and fighting prowess as well as her beauty awe Paridell and Satyrane. They sit down to dinner with Malbecco and demand that his wife join them. Malbecco dissembles, but they insist until he brings her out. During dinner, Paridell sits out of Malbecco’s view and exchanges flirtatious looks with Hellenore. With spilled wine, he indicates his love for her, and she drops her own glass into her lap, indicating that his passion is reciprocated. At the end of the meal, Hellenore urges the Knights to tell of their adventures, and Paridell seizes the opportunity to vaunt himself before Hellenore.

Paridell begins by tracing his ancestry to Paris of Troy, who fought the Trojan War over Helen. He continues by justifying his presence outside of Greece with his desire for fame and adventure. Britomart jumps into the conversation because she is proud of her Greek ancestry, as Britons came from the bold Trojans. She laments the loss of Troy, such a marvelous city. Paridell and Britomart trade facts about Troy, and Britomart declares that a third Troy will one day arise in Britain. Paridell tells a story of Britons subduing the cannibals in the Northern isles, and then Paridell apologizes for attempting to fight Britomart, a fellow Trojan, earlier. Hellenore listens to Paridell carefully while “fashioning worlds of fancies euermore” and lusting after him. They soon depart and go to sleep.

Canto x: Britomart and Satyrane leave the castle in the morning, but Paridell pleads that his injury falling from his horse at Britomart’s hand is too serious, and he cannot yet leave. Paridell stays behind, much to Malbecco’s chagrin. Malbecco torments himself and Hellenore by not allowing her to leave his sight.

However, Paridell gradually wins Hellenore’s heart, and she eagerly watches him all the time. They speak in a coded language. He writes ballads for her and serves her every need until the walls of her modesty and faithfulness fall, as any wall will with “continual battery.”

Hellenore finds an opportunity and steals some of Malbecco’s wealth to run away with Paridell. She burns the rest. Spencer calls her the “second Hellene.” As Malbecco runs to save his money, Hellenore runs to Paridell’s arms and then screams that the guest means to ravish her and carry her away. Torn, Malbecco cannot decide whether to save his money or his love, but eventually chooses the money. Paridell and Hellenore escape together.

Malbecco’s anguish increases, as most of his money is burned and his love gone. For days he paces and plots how to win her back. Finally, dressed as a poor pilgrim, he sets out find Hellenore. She is too clever to be caught, and Malbecco is forced to wander for a long time. Finally, he sees a man and a woman riding together and believes it to be Paridell and Hellenore. When he approaches, he realizes it is Braggadocchio and Trompart. The boasting Knight forces Trompart to drag the (seeming) poor pilgrim before him, and then Braggadocio talks down to Malbecco, calling him a wretch. Malbecco explains that he is a “silly Pilgrim driuen to distresse, / That seeke a Lady.”

Reveling in his role as brave and good Knight, Braggadocchio urges Malbecco to tell his story because noble help is near at hand. Malbecco says that he has a noble and wonderful Lady who was lately stolen by a terrible Knight. Then Malbecco attempts to bribe Braggadocchio to find and save Hellenore. Still in his role as Knight, Braggadocchio refuses such a base offer and turns away, distressed at the slight to his supposed honor. Trompart, however, knowing his master well, bows before Braggadocchio and begs him to forgive the simple man for being so foolish.

Intending to take his treasure at a good opportunity, Trompart and Braggadocchio accompany Malbecco in his search for Hellenore and Paridell. As they ride, they see Paridell riding alone. After he had had sex with Hellenore, he abandoned her. Malbecco faints at the mere sight of Paridell and then asked where Hellenore might be. Paridell suggests the forest and rides on. Braggadocchio does not even have to fight him because Malbecco urges Braggadocchio to help rescue Hellenore from the wild beasts of the forest. Spencer informs the reader that Hellenore wandered into a forest and was found by satyrs. The satyrs brought her to their home to be a wife to them all.

Trompart then suggests that Malbecco stay with his treasure outside the dangerous forest, so that his money will not be stolen. Fearful Malbecco does not wish to be left alone, and so Trompart suggests that he blindfold Trompart and Braggadocchio and then hide his treasure somewhere. This is done. They enter the forest and shortly hear a loud commotion. They sneak up on the source of the noise and find Hellenore dressed as the May-Lady, bedecked in garlands, and dancing happily amidst satyrs. The happy wood-dwellers dance all day

and conclude the celebration with every satyr kissing Hellenore before she drops off to sleep.

Malbecco crawls through the grass to Hellenore and awakens her. She urges him to leave her alone, and Malbecco tries to persuade her that this unnatural life, abhorred by humans and gods, will have no effect on her if she just returns home to the bonds of matrimony. Hellenore refuses and declares she will stay with the satyrs. Malbecco pleads with her all night, then flees at daybreak.

Jealous and depressed, Malbecco begins to run and then cannot stop. He covers so much ground that his body begins to waste and melt away. Finally, he falls on rocks by the sea and crawls into a cave, where he survives on toads and frogs. There, dread and doubt corrupt his entire body and “transfixe the soule with deathes eternall dart.” His hatred and grief turn him into a living example of jealousy.

Canto xi: Spencer calls jealousy the vilest of passions and begs for love to dwell in jealousy’s stead, as it does for Britomart. As Satyrane and Britomart ride, they see a giant, Ollyphant, the brother of Argante. Both Knights give chase to the giant, but he outruns their steeds. Ollyphant hides in the forest, and the Knights split up to try to find him. Britomart does not find Ollyphant, but finds a fountain where a Knight without his armor lies groaning on the ground. The Knight calls out to the Lord to give justice and good causes heed, rather than allowing vain and endless pursuit of good. The Knight complains that Amoretta is held captive by Busirane, while vile Scudamore remains free and cannot defeat the foe.

Britomart comes forward to comfort Scudamore, startling him out of his lament. Britomart comforts him by telling him that providence has sent him a Knight to help win his cause. Taking no comfort from this offer, Scudamore explains that strength of arms will do no good, as a wizard holds the Lady with fiends as guards and no “living means” may free her. The Lady is tormented day and night but refuses to yield to the evil wizard.

Touched by the story, Britomart vows to free the Lady or die trying. She urges Scudamore to join her in this pursuit, rather than giving up. He dons his armor and leads her to the castle. There is no gate, but instead a raging fire that Scudamore says cannot be quenched. He wishes to give up the quest again, but Britomart puts her shield up to her face and runs directly into the fire, which parts to allow her passage. Scudamore tries the same tactic, but the fire rages fiercer than ever before him and he throws himself to the grass, burying his forehead in the dirt.

On the other side of the flaming wall, Britomart discovers gold and silk hidden amongst the walls of the castle. Portraits of love and lust line the walls, along with tapestries of Cupid’s wars and many images of the various conquests of the gods. Written over the doorway is the phrase “Be Bold,” the meaning of which is opaque to Britomart. Britomart marvels at the tapestries, designs, and riches, but also at the emptiness and lack of people. Over every door the phrase “Be Bold” is written, until at last she finds an iron door that says, “Be not too bold,” and there she waits until evening, seeing no one, and she falls asleep.

Canto xii: During the night, a trumpet sounds and wakes Britomart. Then a windstorm begins, but Britomart perseveres in her watch. Finally, the iron door swings open and a heavily costumed man holding a laurel branch enters, beckons for silence, and proceeds forward. On the back of his robe is written his name, Ease. Then a joyous group of minstrels proceed out with bards and poets and music fills the hall. Fancy, Desire, Doubt, Danger, Fear, Hope, Dissemblance, Suspect, Grief, Fury, Displeasure, Pleasance, Despight, and Cruelty process through the hall clad in odd clothes that befit their names. A blindfolded, winged god resembling Cupid emerges and rattles his arrows. He orders his blindfold removed and surveys the company. Then Reproach, Repentance, Shame, Strife, Anger, Care, Unthriftyhood, Loss of Time, Sorrow, Change, Disloyalty, Riots, Dread, Infirmary, Poverty, Death and many more maladies emerge. They march around the room three times and then return through the door they had entered through. The door then blows shut and locks behind them.

Britomart emerges from her hiding place in the shadows and tries to open the door, but it is locked shut with charms and enchantments. Seeing no other option, Britomart waits through the day for the same time the next night. When the door finally blows open again, she enters without care for the shows or charms that she saw the night before. Inside, a Lady is bound to a pillar, and the vile Enchanter Busirane works on books of magic. The captive Lady's chest is split open and her exposed heart pumps blood into Busirane's pen, so that he writes his words in her living blood. Upon seeing Britomart, the Wizard turns over his desk and papers and runs at Britomart with a knife. She wrestles with him, and the knife pierces her chest, bringing forth a few drops of blood. Drawing her sword, Britomart strikes back fiercely, knocking Busirane to the ground half-dead. As Britomart readies for the deathblow, the captive woman begs her to stop, else she will suffer from his enchantments forever. Reluctantly, Britomart stays her hand and commands the Wizard to restore the captive to her former health or die immediately. The pair stand.

Busirane reads magic words while Britomart's sword hovers over his head, ready to kill him at any moment. The ground and house begin to shake, and then the pillar to which the captive Lady is tied shatters and the chain around her waist falls. The wound on her chest heals and she is whole. The former captive, Amoretta, falls prostrate before Britomart and swears allegiance to the brave Knight who has freed her. Britomart raises her to her feet and tells her that Scudamore awaits outside the castle. Amoretta ties the Wizard with the chain that had bound her to the pillar and led him to "wretchedness and wo."

Britomart and Amoretta leave the castle, noting that all of the tapestries, portraits and flames have disappeared and thus are revealed as mere enchantments. They return to where Britomart left Scudamore but find no one there. Doubtful Scudamore had believed Britomart dead in the flames and counseled Glauce to leave with him to seek possible quests among the living.

(In the first edition of Book III, Scudamore remains, and he and Amoretta embrace in true love, their very souls entwine in happiness. Seeing them, Britomart sorely envies their ease and passion and wishes for her own quest to end.)

Analysis

After the example of the healthiest form of chastity in the Garden of Adonis, Spencer returns to Florimell. Just like Una in Book I, when Florimell is exhausted and alone, she seeks out a place that happens to house wicked people. Although Florimell has fled from all men previously, she remains in the house even when the witch's son comes home. Her fear of the vile nature of the witch and her son grows the more she observes them. When the witch's son begins to adore her, Florimell does not know what to do but accept his offering and eventually resort to the tried-and-true response to men's lust: flight.

Because Florimell does not confront or change the lustful, she seems much more passive than most of the female characters in the *Faerie Queen*. Her response only varies when she is trapped on a boat with the base, lustful male. Only when absolutely forced to do so does Florimell fight. But even then she fails, requiring the intervention of yet another lustful male to aid her, and ending up in an even worse situation in Proteus' dungeon. Her responses are always fear-based. She is afraid of being deflowered, though she is not necessarily virtuous. In this way, she resembles Marinell, whose chaste behavior was also a result of fearful self-preservation.

However, Florimell's chastity has elements of the divine and religious. Presumably a sea god flattering a young girl and being in love with her would be at least somewhat tempting. But even Proteus' shape shifting does not alter Florimell's attitude. The change in form is only physical, and Florimell's concern is for her soul. Since force, kindness, and displays of power do not win Florimell over, the lustful Proteus confines her to a dungeon, consigning her to be unseen and therefore keeping her from inspiring lust again. Her imprisonment limits the power of her beauty because no one can see her.

Spencer's explicit admonition to all women to prefer a dungeon to losing their chastity or changing whom they love recalls the admonitions he made about Redcross in Book I. When Redcross began to dally with Duessa, Redcross warned all men about changing their love too quickly from one woman to the next. Constancy in love remains a major theme to Spencer. One of the reasons Spencer celebrates Britomart is her fixed attention for Artegall. Spencer holds up two examples of inconstant behavior in these Cantos. The giantess Argante and the Squire of Dames both exemplify Spencer's opinion that chaste women are few and far in between. The Squire of Dames slept with three hundred women in a year, but since then has found only three chaste women. The obvious equation is that no more than one out of a hundred women is chaste, and so chastity is a precious trait. This suggests that even Florimell's fearful chastity, with all of its negative effects, is still to be praised. Argante represents the far opposite end of the spectrum, the foul embodiment of lust. Argante began having sex in the womb and has been insatiable since, even satisfying herself with beasts. Since Argante acts only to satisfy sensual desire, she is portrayed as incapable of true love. By having Palladine, a chaste female Knight, chase and subdue Argante, Spencer's allegory seems to read as only chastity defeats unbridled lust.

The *Faerie Queen* is rife with mistaken identity and doubles. One example of this is that Duessa is the opposite of Una. Enchantment leads to false recognition. The false Florimell is another such example of magic disguising something base and without virtue as something beautiful and worthy. The false Florimell has no soul and was created by the witch only to appease her son when the witch realized that even the supposed death of Florimell would not end her son's love and longing. This false Florimell is another thread in Spencer's continued distrust of outward appearances, but the description of her creation by the witch leads to a moment of allusive humor. Petrarch wrote love sonnets about lamps in women's eyes and the golden wire of beautiful women's hair, and the witch uses actual lamps, actual golden wire, and other Petrarchan symbols.

In addition to lacking virtue, the false Florimell merely imitates thought. A sprite moves and speaks for her. She imitates the heavenly beauty of real women. Her imitation cannot substitute for or surpass that of real women. In addition, the false Florimell does not seem to care when she is taken by Braggadocchio. Her coy and guileful nature was not created to be loyal or to love, and so no matter who accompanies her, she behaves the same way.

The story of Hellenore, another diversion from Britomart's quest, illustrates that neither a woman's love nor her chastity can be forced or enforced. Malbecco's elaborate imprisonment of Hellenore does not stop her from straying, and she does so with gleeful vengeance. Satyrane's laughing remark that subduing a woman's will leads a woman astray is aptly demonstrated. Hellenore is the opposite of Britomart. While Hellenore is trapped by a man, turns willful, and reaches satiation with satyrs, Britomart uses her will to actively seek the one man she loves so that she can be sated. Hellenore's promiscuity emphasizes Britomart's steadfastness.

Although political allegory may seem difficult to insert into this narrative about chastity, Spencer does find opportunities. The discussion of the Trojan lineage serves to glorify Queen Elizabeth and England. The Trojans and the Roman empire were considered by many in the sixteenth century to be the two peaks of civilization. Britomart's assertion that a third Trojan empire will emerge serves to suggest that the British Empire under Queen Elizabeth might create one of the best civilizations possible. Thus, the Trojan link creates a flattering political allegory for British readers and particularly for the Queen. Also, by suggesting this sort of triumph on the part of the British, Spencer downplays the possibility that any other country or institution could achieve similar status. Since Queen Elizabeth's Protestantism was part of her rule, implied in British success is the failure of Catholicism, which could not possibly rival a third Trojan empire. The Trojan heritage also serves the plot by connecting Paridell and Hellenore with Paris and Helen. Britomart's noble heritage comes as no surprise.

Malbecco's use of Braggadocchio to find Hellenore is ironic. As a husband, Malbecco was almost as much of a failure as Braggadocchio is as a Knight. Yet Braggadocchio, with Trompart's help, manages not only to

accept the quest, but even to complete it. Since Braggadocchio successfully leads Malbecco to Hellenore, and they are both failures at their roles, it is no surprise that Malbecco leaves without Hellenore. Braggadocchio has no noble blood, and Malbecco has no true love, only lust and jealousy. Malbecco's transformation into a creature of jealousy serves as warning to anyone who tries to imprison their loved ones instead of allowing them to choose freely.

Britomart's discovery of Scudamore mourning over his inability to save Amoretta serves to give Britomart something concrete to do, rather than simply wandering in search of Artegall. Britomart leaps to aid Scudamore and promises to save Amoretta or die trying. Britomart's strength and determination far outweighs Scudamore's. While Britomart charges into the flames, Scudamore worries about himself too much to follow. Since Britomart is attempting to rescue someone she has never met because of a story told by someone she has also never met, her bravery is particularly remarkable.

Busirane, like the elderly fisherman, serves the narrative as a symbol of insatiable lust. His castle has three anterooms. The first is full of images of gods lusting after humans. Some show rape scenes, and all of the tapestries are bright and distracting and suggest that lust is a divine trait. The second room is gilded with false gold and filled with instruments of war and war spoils, so that although it appears rich and precious, it is only a false approximation of wealth that glorifies violence. The third room seems empty, but soon hosts a procession of negative emotions. The procession resembles the host of negative emotions that Guyon had to walk past with Mammon to enter Mammon's cave. Both sets of figures are ultimately harmless because the Knight does not attack them or even pay them much mind. The implication is that both Knights are able to overcome negative emotions because they focus on a goal. Emotions are trumped by reason and duty. Britomart does not try force the locked iron door or attack the procession. Her patience and fearlessness allow her to easily enter Busirane's innermost room without any significant opposition.

Each of the anterooms in Busirane's castle displays weaknesses of the mind: lust, violence, and other negative emotions. The first two rooms contain the two largest threats to chastity, as exemplified in poor Florimell. The negative emotions are those that would keep even a brave Knight from attacking Busirane and rescuing Amoretta, the symbol of true love, just as Scudamore remains outside the wall of fire. Thus, the castle itself symbolizes the attacks on chastity that have been modeled throughout Book III.

The plight of Amoretta illustrates the lengths to which one can go without altering true love. Both Amoretta and Florimell are trapped by someone more powerful than they who uses magic to try and coerce their love. However, Florimell's situation is more prosaic than Amoretta. Florimell's prison is just a prison. Busirane's lust leads him to split open Amoretta's chest and steal her very lifeblood while she is imprisoned. Yet true love cannot be disturbed even by torture or death, and so Amoretta will not renounce Scudamore or give up her chastity to Busirane. Even the promise of vengeance upon Busirane does not obscure Amoretta's vision of returning to Scudamore; rather than let Britomart kill Busirane, Amoretta begs Britomart to force Busirane to restore her heart to its proper place. When Amoretta and Britomart emerge from Busirane's castle, Amoretta has been fully restored and still loves Scudamore intensely.

The personal development of Britomart is quite different from that of Redcross or Guyon, but one significant shift occurs during Book III. Britomart moves from being fearful that her love is abnormal or wrong to defending love in its purest form from the evil enchanter Busirane. Busirane seeks to gain Amoretta's love, but if he cannot do that he intends to render her unable to love by using her blood and removing her heart. Busirane does not respect either Amoretta's right to choose whom she loves nor married chastity. Obviously, Busirane is an enemy to happily married love and temperate sexuality within the sinless bounds of marriage. By fighting Busirane, Britomart establishes that she has accepted even very powerful love as something positive and worth protecting.

Book III is very strange in terms of plot. Much of Book III does not even concern Britomart and Glauce. Instead, Spencer seems mostly concerned with presenting examples of chaste and unchaste behavior in all sorts of situations. Given the tightly knit plot structure of Books I and II, Book III marks quite a stylistic departure for Spencer. This style continues in the later Books of the Faerie Queen, and some of the other books feel similarly fragmented. However, the same characters continue to surface and interconnect.

The strangely incomplete nature of Book III is exaggerated when one compares the original ending with the one that eventually was published. In the original ending, Amoretta and Scudamore present a model of true love by merging into one being as they kiss, resembling a hermaphrodite. Their love merges and completes them, and they have both male and female components that balance them. Watching them, Britomart yearns for a similar transformation through love. Britomart has already taken steps to become androgynous by donning armor and fighting her own battles, but in this she has effaced her own sex rather than merged into a complete, balanced union of both sexes. Amoretta and Scudamore's long embrace shows just what Britomart lacks without Artegall, and so furthers Britomart's acceptance of the need for and delight in true love.

However, Spencer changed that ending in later publications. Rather than witnessing true love, Britomart emerges to find that Scudamore has disappeared. Believing her dead, he and Glauce have traveled off together. This throws Amoretta and Britomart together for the next section of the story. Both Amoretta and Britomart venture in search of their man, but Amoretta does so passively, in that she depends upon Britomart and Britomart's protection. In the revised ending, Britomart seems stronger and more powerful than Amoretta. Scudamore's doubt of Britomart and Amoretta's survival suggests that Scudamore's weak, doubting nature makes him less of an equal to Amoretta than the alternate ending. Artegall may be excused for not finding or seeking Britomart, since he does not know she exists; but Scudamore's failure to rescue Amoretta and his capitulation to hopelessness renders him weak. In the revised ending, Britomart's strength and true love seems purer and stronger than Amoretta and Scudamore's.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book IV, Proem-Canto vi

New Characters

Agape: A Faerie with much knowledge of nature who has extended the lives of her three sons.

Ate: The mother of all discord, war, and debate.

Blandamour: A false and fickle Knight who accompanies Duessa.

Cambell: A good, true, and fierce Knight whose sister is Canacee.

Cambina: Triamond's sister, a student of magic.

Canacee: Cambell's wise and intelligent sister who refused to love any man, instead obeying the governance of her mind.

Care: A blacksmith who makes iron wedges of unquiet thoughts that invade peaceful minds.

Man in Castle: A man who lives in an area where if a man does not have a woman by nightfall, he is thrown outside the castle gates.

Triamond: A Knight who travels with Cambell and is one of Agape's three sons.

Summary

Proem: Spencer defends himself against critics who say that vaunting love creates weakness in the young. He then rededicates his work to Queen Elizabeth, who is a perfect, chaste example of his principles.

Canto i: Spencer reveals that Amoretta was captured by Busirane (the enchanter in Book III) on her wedding day. Amoretta would rather die than lose her virginity to a man who was not her husband. Amoretta knows that according to tradition, she owed the Knight a debt for saving her; a woman saved by a Knight becomes his booty. Believing Britomart to be a man, Amoretta is afraid, though grateful. However, Britomart makes no advances upon Amoretta. One night, in a strange castle, Britomart fights to keep Amoretta from a man who claims her. After winning, Britomart discovers that the man will be cast out of the castle for not having a woman. Britomart claims him as her own, removes her helmet, and reveals that she is a woman. Amoretta therefore realizes she has nothing to fear, and the man is able to remain in the castle. This just solution to a thorny problem was entirely of Britomart's devising.

Amoretta and Britomart travel together seeking the men they love. One day, they meet Duessa, the witch introduced in Book I. Duessa is accompanied by Ate, who is the mother of all discord; Blandamour, the fickle Knight; and Paridell, the lascivious, lying Knight from Book III. Blandamour attempts to fight Britomart, who injures him severely. When Blandamour then meets Scudamore (Amoretta's husband from Book III), Blandamour is too sore to fight him. Blandamour's jealousy over Amoretta's true love for Scudamore causes him to rue his fight with Britomart. Paridell offers to fight this new Knight for Blandamour, then charges Scudamore. Scudamore defeats Paridell, and his company rides up to watch Paridell suffer.

Duessa chides Scudamore and Blandamour for fighting over the same woman (Amoretta) while she is off loving some other man (Britomart), and Ate supports this false version of events.

Canto ii: Paridell, Blandamour, Duessa, and Ate encounter Sir Ferraguh, who won the false, spirit-animated Florimell from Braggadocchio at the end of Book III. Paridell and Blandamour are immediately infatuated with the snowy-skinned, false woman. Now it is Paridell who is too sore from his last fight (with Scudamore), and so Blandamour attacks Sir Ferraguh. Blandamour disables the proud Knight with one blow, and so wins the fake Florimell. For days, Blandamour courts the false woman, who is so well schooled in the art of flirtation that Blandamour falls ever more in love with her. Paridell becomes inflamed with jealousy. Forgetting their friendship and honor, Paridell and Blandamour fight like dogs until the Squire of Dames (also from Book III) witnesses their battle. The Squire of Dames tells the pair of base Knights that Satyrane, who had found Florimell's girdle and horse and believed her to be dead, had declared a tournament to be held. Each Knight was to bring his Lady, and the Lady judged fairest would receive the girdle. Squire of Dames tells the pair that they should fight to keep that girdle, and Florimell's honor, in the right hands.

As Paridell and Blandamour ride with Florimell to the tournament, they meet Cambell and Triamond, who are both with their Ladies. Canacee is Cambell's sister, whose right to be without a man and obey only her own mind is defended by Cambell. Triamond loves Canacee, and Triamond and Cambell good friends now.

Canto iii: Spencer declares that Triamond's mother is "fond and vaine" for wanting to extend the misery of her three son's lives, for life is a perilous and pained experience. She had connived to get the fates to join the threads representing the three lives of the brothers so that their souls and lives were combined. This way, any one would have the length of life of all three combined, and so years ago when Cambell killed Triamond's two brothers in a fight over Canacee, their spirits and length of life entered Triamond's body. Only a magic ring kept Cambell alive despite his wounds and Triamond's onslaught. Without that ring, any one of the brothers might have dispatched Cambell. However, Triamond's uncannily long life was also enchanted. In a final blow, Triamond and Cambell killed each other.

The crowd began to disperse, but Canacee wailed and both Triamond and Cambell started up, fully alive again. The battle recommenced. They only paused when a chariot drawn by lions pulled up beside them, bearing Triamond's sister, Cambina, a student of magic. The sister had a rod of twined serpents and a cup of nepenthe, the drink that soothes all men's minds and brings eternal peace. Cambina looked at each man, then tried to convince them to stop fighting. When they continued, she threw herself down on the ground, where her tears mixed with the blood and sand. The men ignored her and the fight raged on. Finally, Cambina stood, immobilized them with magic, and gave them sips from the cup of nepenthe. The men were immediately good friends, and Cambell married Cambina while Triamond married Canacee.

Canto iv: When Paridell and Blandamour realize these two feared warrior friends are approaching, Blandamour wishes he were not so "sore of his late lucklesse fight." Although he is too sore to fight, when Cambell and Triamond approach, Blandamour nevertheless begins to insult them. Braggadocchio rides up and demands to have the false, bewitched Florimell back, and Paridell says that anyone who wins Florimell gets the hag Ate as well. Braggadocchio says that if, rather than a hag, another beautiful woman was promised, then he would fight. Everyone laughs. Cambell chastises everyone for loose behavior when they should be resting for the challenges ahead.

On the day of the tournament, Satyrane hangs the prize girdle in plain view, and the battle commences. Sir Ferramont defeats both Paridell and Blandamour and scares Braggadocchio out of entering the fray. Triamond leaps to fight instead and defeats Ferramont and three others who come to Ferramont's aid. Thus, Triamond nearly decimates the entire force supporting and defending Satyrane, who attacks Triamond himself. A dreadful wound causes Triamond to retire to the edge of the battle. Satyrane is declared victor for that day, and Triamond does not return to fight the next morning when the battle continues.

Cambell steps up to fight Satyrane for Triamond. Only after several hours of fighting, when Satyrane's steed stumbles, does Cambell gain the advantage. When Cambell leaps from his horse to take Satyrane's armor, all of Satyrane's supporters surround him and point their swords at him, and he must fight all one hundred of them until he is taken captive. Triamond leaps up from the bed where he is supposed to be healing, dons Cambell and Cambell seizes a weapon and the two fight side by side. Triamond and Cambell are declared victors for that day of the tournament.

The third and last day, Satyrane's forces prevail. Finally, a strange Knight enters the field alone. This Knight's armor is like wood and moss, and the horse is covered in oak leaves. The new Knight kills seven of Satyrane's Knights. Rumors circulate that it is Artegall himself. Artegall dominates the field until evening, when another strange Knight emerges and with a spear knocks him off his horse. Cambell runs out to dispatch Artegall. Triamond then runs out to avenge Cambell, but also is defeated. Blandamour then also fails. The enchanted spear belongs to Britomart, who overthrows any who comes near her. Britomart declares herself allied with Satyrane's forces, the Knights of the Maidenhead, and they win the prize.

Canto v: Spencer explains that Florimell's girdle represents chaste beauty combined with honor, the perfect Lady for a Knight to serve. The final part of the tournament requires the Ladies to compete in beauty for the award of the girdle, which will give them chaste love and true wifhood. The prizes for the fighting part of the tournament are divided: Satyrane for the first day, Triamond for the second day (since Cambell was taken captive), and Britomart for the third day. Artegall takes issue with Britomart's prize, not knowing Britomart is a woman, and waits for a chance for revenge.

Each Knight brings his Lady to the judges and removes her veil. Cambina, Canacee, and Duessa begin the procession, and a hundred other Ladies follow. Amoretta precedes the false Florimell, who overwhelms all who see her. The bewitched spirit overwhelms all good sense and reason. The judges award the girdle to the false Florimell, but it falls off every time they try to fasten it, as if the girdle knows the wearer unworthy. Other women try the girdle on as well, but the girdle falls from each. The Squire of Dames turns it to a joke,

and the entire company laughs until it is discovered that the girdle fits Amoretta. The false Florimell tries again, but the girdle continues to fall. The judges still award it to the bewitched spirit that resembles Florimell and try to give the false Florimell to the third day's victor, who no one knows is Britomart. Britomart is unmoved by Florimell's beauty and so refuses her. Instead, the false Florimell is given to Satyrane. Furious at his loss, Blandamour challenges Satyrane to a duel. Braggadocchio claims prior ownership, to which the false Florimell gives witness.

Dismayed at the permanent fighting this enchanted Florimell causes, Satyrane invents a solution. He suggests that they let Florimell voluntarily choose any Knight she wishes, for "Sweet is the loue that comes alone with willignesse." She chooses Braggadocchio, who creeps away with her under cover of night. In the morning, all the Knights pursue her, except Britomart.

Canto vi: Scudamore meets Artegall, the Savage Knight, who declares that he is waiting for the Knight who disgraced him at the tournament. Scudamore knows that Britomart wields the enchanted spear and declares that that foul Knight stole his Ladylove. Artegall and Scudamore travel together to avenge their honor. They quickly find Britomart who immediately disables Scudamore but Artegall proves more resilient. Artegall kills Britomart's horse, forcing her afoot, where she cannot use her enchanted spear. Bravely, she fights and wounds Artegall. Thus, unknowing, the two who greatly love each other and will love each other even more, continue to fight. Finally, a forceful stroke from Artegall breaks Britomart's helmet in half. Her beautiful face and tumbling blond locks are revealed. Artegall drops his sword, then drops to one knee and begs her pardon for his error. Britomart holds up her hand, ready to fell him with a wrathful stroke but is unwilling to kill an unarmed man. She begs him to finish the fight, but he will not. Scudamore approaches, sees that Britomart is a woman, and he kneels before her as well.

Glauce approaches and removes Artegall's helmet, revealing the face that Britomart has sought so long and so dear. Scudamore realizes his error at believing Britomart to have had sexual relations with Amoretta. Britomart finds herself unable to even scold Artegall, and Artegall finds himself enraptured with Britomart. Scudamore apologizes and says Artegall's name, and Britomart rejoices. Glauce chastens each, reminding them of their pride, anger, and "rebellious[ness] vnto loue" and concludes that "For louers, heauen must passe by the sorrowes hell."

Scudamore inquires after Amoretta, and Britomart reveals that she disappeared one night in the desert, presumably to seek Scudamore, as Amoretta only ever loved him. Seeing Scudamore's distress, Britomart vows to find Amoretta to either see them united or kill whomever has hurt her.

Artegall and Britomart vow to marry. However, Artegall has one quest, and Britomart has yet another, so they must part, although with "ten thousand vowes from bottome of his heart" that they would return to each other as quickly as possible. Scudamore and Britomart return to the desert to search for Amoretta.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book IV, Cantos vii-xii

New Characters

Aemylia: A prisoner like Amoretta in the lustful beast's cave.

Amyas: A Squire of low degree who loves Aemylia.

Corflambo: A monstrous pagan whose eyes shoot deadly beams of fire.

Dwarf: Amyas' keeper when he was held by Poëana.

Lustful Beast: A strange, hairy creature that survives by capturing maidens, deflowering them, and then eating them.

Placidas: A Squire fleeing Corflambo with a Dwarf.

Poena: Corflambo's beautiful but wanton daughter.

Summary

Canto vii: When Britomart had fallen asleep in the forest, Amoretta had gone for a walk. A hairy beast swept down from the trees and snatched her. His ears stretched to his waist and blood stained his teeth. Thrown into a cave with another prisoner, Amoretta had begun a conversation to try and find out where she was and what her fate would be. The other captive told her that their captor deflowers and then consumes maidens. Including Amoretta, there are three trapped women, and seven have been consumed since the talkative prisoner, Aemylia, arrived.

When the lustful beast returns, Amoretta runs out of the opening he makes to enter the cave, but the lustful beast re-captures her. A Squire sees the beast capture Amoretta and goes to her defense, but the lustful beast uses the Lady as a shield, so that the spear lands on her instead of him. The Squire manages to land one strong stroke that disables the lustful beast, who throws Amoretta down to give chase to the Squire.

Belphoebe hears the battle and approaches. The lustful beast knows she is death for him, so he flees. Belphoebe gives chase. At the entrance to his cave, she kills him with an arrow. She frees Aemylia and returns with her to the Squire and Amoretta. The Squire injured Amoretta in only one place, while the lustful beast bruised her all over. Yet Belphoebe chastens the Squire severely and turns her back on him. Bereft, he follows until it is clear she will never forgive him. Then he enters the forest, breaks all of his warlike equipment, builds a cabin, and lives alone.

Prince Arthur travels through the forest one day and meets this now-gaunt hermit. He discovers that it is his own Squire, Timias. On every tree in the area is carved Belphoebe's name, and the Squire cannot speak or respond to Prince Arthur, but only stares mutely.

Canto viii: The gentle Squire-turned-hermit befriends a turtledove that has recently lost her love. The bird sings to him, and Timias feeds the bird. One day, he puts a jewel he had given to Belphoebe around the bird's neck, just to see it on a living being again. The bird immediately flies away, leaving Timias bereft. However, the bird flies to Belphoebe. Seeing her familiar jewel, Belphoebe tries to remove it from the bird's breast. The bird hovers just out of reach and leads her back to the Squire.

When Belphoebe sees the Squire, she feels great pity for the wretch before her but does not realize who it is or that she caused his distress. When he speaks and tells her, she forgives him completely. Timias lives a happy life with her in the woods, attending to her.

After leaving the Squire, Prince Arthur wanders through the woods with his horse and meets Aemylia and Amoretta. Aemylia is weak with hunger, and Amoretta has not yet recovered from the battle wounds. Greatly pitying their situation, Prince Arthur gently puts them both atop his horse to lead them to somewhere where they might get care. Spencer pauses to praise the chaste, honest times of old, when men and women could travel together without any lustful advances. For Spencer, older times are more virtuous and innocent times.

However, dangers still existed. As Prince Arthur and the two women travel they see two men fleeing before a fierce man on a camel whose eyes sprout fiery beams that incinerate and kill at a distance. Prince Arthur takes the women off his horse, mounts, and attacks the monstrous man. After a great battle, Prince Arthur beheads him. The two who had been fleeing stand in awe of Prince Arthur's prowess. They tell him that the man was

Corflambo, who had taken over many cities simply because he was an unstoppable terror who could kill but not be killed.

Prince Arthur asks how they came to be chased by Corflambo. One is a Squire, Placidus, and he replies that he had a friend, Amyas, a Squire of lowly degree. This Squire of lowly degree loved a beautiful woman far above him in class, one Aemylia. Aemylia loved him back and swore to run away with Amyas from the father who would not let them marry. When Amyas went to meet Aemylia, however, he ran into Corflambo on the way and was thrown into the dungeon. Corflambo's daughter Poena visited one day and fell in love with Amyas. She told him she would free him if he loved her back, and as he saw no other way to escape that prison, he consented. The freedom she gave was less than complete, and Amyas was still held captive by a keeper, a Dwarf. The Dwarf is the storyteller's other companion, who was also fleeing Corflambo. Placidus resembles the Squire of lowly degree so much that when the Dwarf met Placidus one day, he believed that Amyas had escaped his dungeon without anyone being aware of it, and had Placidus brought before Poena. She immediately had Placidus thrown in prison and berated him, thinking he was Amyas, for taking her love so lightly.

Seeing his good friend Placidus also captive, Amyas despaired. However, Placidus had a plan. Amyas did not yield to Poena because he loved Aemylia. Placidus had no Lady and so no such reservations. When Poena called for Amyas, Placidus went in his stead and assented to her caresses. Delighted with her conquest, Poena granted Placidus (thinking he was Amyas) more freedom to walk and roam, so long as the Dwarf attended him. On one such walk, Placidus seized the Dwarf and fled with him.

At this point, the women interrupt the story. Aemylia runs to Placidus, embraces him, and asks if Amyas still lives.

Canto ix: Spencer names the three kinds of love: affection, sexual, and friendship. He says that Amyas has true love because all three meet in his love of Aemylia.

Prince Arthur devises a plan to enter the castle and free Amyas. He ties Corflambo's head to his body and then drapes Placidus over the saddle horn. Prince Arthur directs the Dwarf to guide the horse to the castle. Thinking Corflambo has captured the lowly Squire, the watch lets Prince Arthur in along with what they perceive as Corflambo. Prince Arthur captures Poena and has the Dwarf free everyone in the prison. Amyas and Aemylia embrace while Poena cries bitterly. However, Placidus marries Poena and rules over all of her lands. They are happy together, and Poena becomes faithful as a wife.

Prince Arthur departs with Amoretta. Amoretta still lives in fear, for until she is married she is simply a prize, a spoil to be won, and her chastity depends upon the victor who has her. With Prince Arthur, of course, Amoretta is safe. One day, they see six Knights fighting on a plain. Britomart and Scudamore hold off two unknown Knights as well as Blandamour and Paridell. The four fighting against Britomart and Scudamore represent the four least honorable kinds of love: love of single life; overwhelming and consuming love; fickle love (Blandamour); and constant lust (Paridell). The four had long been fighting over the false Florimell, who was not even present. When Britomart and Scudamore happened across the fight, the four Knights recalled the shame Britomart had caused them and turned upon her. Although it was four fighting two, Britomart and Scudamore are evenly matched against four lesser foes.

Seeing such an unfair fight, Prince Arthur divides them and tries to convince them of peace. Instead, all four dishonorable Knights fly at Prince Arthur. He is so fierce that eventually they calm and tell him that Britomart stole the praise, glory, and most beautiful woman from them at a tournament. Britomart defends herself. Scudamore relates that he seeks his love, and that he has for a long time. The Knights ask him to tell his story, and Scudamore acquiesces.

Canto x: Scudamore tells the story of how he won Amoretta. As a young Knight, adventuring for glory, he found Venus' Temple. The only entrance was over a long bridge past twenty strong, valorous Knights. In the middle of a distant plain was a pillar with the shield of love, which bore the inscription: "Blessed the man that well can vse his blis; / Whose euer be the shield, faire Amoret be his." Scudamore defeated the twenty Knights, seized the shield, and tried to enter the temple. Upon showing that he actually had the shield, he was admitted, although there were many attempts to delay him. At the next gate, a giant stood guard. Scudamore attacked, and the shield again gave him entrance.

On the temple grounds, a beautiful garden full of pleasant activities and blooming flowers awaited Scudamore. Heroes like Hercules showed the joy and "noble deeds" that result from chaste virtue instead of wanton love. Inside the temple building, altars attended by female priests surrounded the goddess Venus, who is attended by Womanhood, Cheerfulness, Modesty, Courtesy, Silence, and Obedience. Amoretta sat in Womanhood's lap. The moment Scudamore saw her, his heart was hers. By showing the shield, Scudamore won the right to Amoretta. Together, they left the castle.

Canto xi: Proteus still holds Florimell captive, hoping to win her love by "crueltie and awe." For seven months Florimell is trapped in darkness, surrounded by monsters that keep her from escape. All her suffering originates from her love of Marinell, who scorned her because of his mother's advice (see Book III).

After being wounded by Britomart and doctored by his nymph mother, Marinell survives. His mother attends a water nymph wedding feast at Proteus' lair. All the sea gods and water nymphs process into the lair, with great description of their mighty powers and life-giving waters.

Canto xii: At the wedding feast, Marinell waits for his nymph mother. He may not enter the feast because he is half mortal and so may not eat immortal food. Marinell wanders on the rocks outside Proteus' lair and hears a woman's voice bewailing her situation. She speaks of a stone-hearted captor and declares that "yet will I neuer of my love repent / but ioy that for his sake I suffer prisonment." She then wails that Marinell should know that this is all for his sake.

Shocked and in awe of this woman who has suffered so much, Marinell begins to devise plans for setting her free. Each plan seems more foolish than the last. When the feast ends and the gods emerge, Marinell still has no plan. He returns with his mother, but no earthly pleasures satisfy him anymore—he will not eat or sleep. Eventually, he is confined to bed.

Marinell's mother does not know about his love, so she returns to the doctor and demands that he heal her son. The doctor proclaims her son healthy and without wound. With the counsel of others, Marinell's mother comes to the conclusion that Marinell suffers from lovesickness. She asks him who causes such pain, and she worries when she finds it is Florimell. Finally, she goes to the king of the sea, Neptune, and kneels before him. She asks that her son be saved by releasing Florimell. In order to stop the matter from becoming a war among gods, Neptune assents. Marinell's mother brings Florimell to Marinell. Both are quickly infatuated with the other.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book V, Proem-Canto vi

New Characters

Amidas: The younger, luckier brother betrothed to Lucy but who eloped with Philtra.

Astroecia: The woman who raised Artogall to know right from wrong and justice from injustice.

Bracidas: The unlucky but virtuous brother who fights with Amidas.

Clarinda: Radigund's handmaiden and fellow woman warrior.

Dolon: A fallen Knight who hates Artegall because he killed Dolon's son in a fair fight.

Grantorio: An evil giant.

Irena: A good woman who is oppressed by Grantorio.

Lucy: A poor girl with virtue who tries to kill herself and instead marries Bracidas.

Munera: Pollente's Lady, who receives all the money he robs from others.

Philtra: A wealthy but greedy girl.

Pollente: A Sarazin taking a toll from any who wish to cross a particular bridge.

Radigund: An Amazon warrior woman who hates Knights and delights in their subjection.

Sir Sanglier: A Knight without honor.

Squire: A man who loves a Lady who is taken from him.

Talus: An iron man, unbending and inflexible but strong and unbreakable.

Terpine: A Knight caught by warlike women.

Summary

Proem: Spencer laments that the "golden" age is over and life is becoming more base and full of vice. He affirms that this Book's purpose is to demonstrate Justice.

Canto i: A goodly dame named Irena makes her way to the Faerie Queen and complains of a tyrant named Grantorio keeping her from her heritage. The Faerie Queen calls upon Artegall to remedy this ill because he was trained by Astroeia in his youth to know the intricacies of justice. Artegall takes his Squire, Talus, who was left for Artegall by Astroeia. Talus is an iron man, "immoueable, resistlesse, without end."

As they travel, Talus and Artegall meet a Squire crying beside a beheaded woman. The Squire tells the two travelers that as he and his love sat talking a stranger rode up beside them, threw down his own Lady, and picked up the Squire's love. As the stranger rode away with the Squire's Lady, his own Lady followed crying to be taken with him or killed. The stranger beheaded her. Artegall asks what direction this Knight went, and the Squire tells him and reveals that his shield was a bloody field with a broken sword. Talus speeds off after the man and overtakes the Knight, Sir Sanglier. Talus captures and binds Sir Sanglier and brings the Lady back to where Artegall and the Squire wait.

Sir Sanglier denies that the headless woman is any Lady of his. Rather, he says he was simply riding with his own Lady. Since both Sir Sanglier and the Squire deny the dead woman as their own, Artegall thinks of a way to force the one who loves the still-living Lady to reveal it. He threatens to cut both the living and the dead women into halves and give them each a part. Sir Sanglier does not protest, while the Squire says he will take the dead woman if that is the only choice. Artegall rules the Squire worthy of the living and Sir Sanglier only worthy to bear the head of his Lady before him, to show what he had done.

Canto ii: Artegall meets Florimell's Dwarf, who tells him that the real, still-living Florimell and Marinell have been joined in love and Florimell has been rescued from a dungeon. The Dwarf says that he will be at Florimell's wedding only if he can cross a bridge where a Sarazin kills those who do not pay money to pass. This Sarazin, named Pollente, is strong and clever. Pollente gives all of his stolen riches to a greedy woman named Munera.

Artegall rides out to fight Pollente. First, he kills Pollente's squire. Then he rides at Pollente, across the bridge. Pollente lets down a trap where both men and horses fall into the river, and then Pollente's steed attacks Artegall's. Pollente's experience in the water shows, while Artegall has never tried this kind of fight before. Finally Artegall forces Pollente to dismount and swim, and Artegall is his equal in swimming. Pollente flees to the land, and Artegall follows, kills him, and posts his head atop the bridge.

Artegall and Talus approach Munera's castle, and Talus tries to gain entrance. Seeing Talus' inevitable entrance, Munera begs him to stop and throws money and gold over the side of the castle wall to bribe him. They enter without bothering to pick it up. When Artegall and Talus find Munera hiding under a pile of gold, Artegall chops off her hands and feet and displays them for all to see.

As Artegall and Talus ride on, they meet a giant holding a pair of balances. He had enthralled many vulgar people by speaking about inequality and hopes for uncontrolled freedom. Artegall takes the giant aside to speak with him about respecting the Creators and their creations. He chastens the giant to respect the natural order and find the reasons for why things are as they are, rather than striving to change what he does not understand. The giant argues that tyrants, lords, and the rich oppress other men and that equality is vital. The giant also says that he will level the mountains and return the ocean to its proper level. Artegall defends the status quo by arguing that the "great Maker" did not create us to ask questions. He continues, "The dales doe not the lofty hills enuy. / He maketh Kings to sit in souerainty; / He maketh subjects to their powre obay." Artegall wins the argument when he shows the giant that no amount of wrongs can outweigh a few rights. The giant still seeks the wrong, and so Talus throws him into the sea, where he drowns.

The people who had believed and trusted in the giant react to his death violently and arm themselves. Artegall sends Talus to find the cause of their trouble, and they attack. However, Talus cannot be harmed and defeats the crowd. Then Talus returns to Artegall and they journey on.

Canto iii: A fabulous wedding and feast ensues for Florimell and Marinell, both so lately suffering and now so happy. During a tournament, Marinell defeats many Knights, to his own greater glory. For three days Marinell dominates the tournament successfully. On the fourth, his enemies trap him. Artegall and Braggadocchio free Marinell. At the end of the fighting, Florimell greets every Knight. Braggadocchio lifts Artegall's shield, to great acclaim, and Florimell thanks him. The vain Braggadocchio makes a stupid response, saying it was not for Florimell he fought, but his own Lady. Then he brings the spirit-animated witch's creation of the false Florimell forward. Everyone is thunderstruck at the two seeming twins, only the false Florimell has an aura of perfection that no real woman could have.

Disgusted with Braggadocchio, Artegall interrupts the silence. He tells Braggadocchio to reveal his wounds and dents in his shield to prove he was the one who fought to free Marinell. Artegall then accuses Braggadocchio of having a creation, not a real woman. When the real Florimell and the false Florimell are placed side by side, the false melts away and vanishes. Only the girdle remains. When Florimell tries it on, it fits her perfectly, unlike all the other women who could not get it to stay on their bodies in Book IV.

At that moment, Guyon comes forward to kill Braggadocchio for stealing his horse (see Book II). The crowd holds him back, and Artegall judges who is the rightful owner of the horse. Guyon names a black spot on the inside of the horse's mouth, and that spot does exist, and so Artegall rules the horse is Guyon's. Braggadocchio rails at Artegall, and in his wrath Artegall almost draws his sword. Guyon calms him, saying

the judge should not be overcome by wrath, and Artegall agrees. However, Talus punishes Braggadocchio and his groom by disfiguring them and breaking their weapons. The rest of the group continues with the wedding feast.

Canto iv: After the wedding feast, Artegall rides on and encounters two brothers fighting. Their Ladies implore them to quit, but the brothers are vengeful and aggressive and continue. Artegall persuades them to stop and tell him what is the matter. The older brother, Bracidas, explains that their father gave them an island each, but his own island has eroded away and the soil been added to his that of Amidas, his younger brother. Amidas also stole Bracidas' Lady, Philtra, and her wealthy dowry. This left Amidas' own Lady, Lucy, a poor, virtuous girl, without love or protection. Lucy threw herself into the sea but repented once she began to drown and grabbed onto a sea chest floating in the waves. She and the chest washed up on the elder brother's beach, and he married her with the chest as dowry. Inside, they found great treasure. Philtra claimed it was her dowry, which had been carried away during a shipwreck. Bracidas says that Philtra and Amidas have no claim to the chest, which was only found because of Amidas' stupid cruelty. Amidas then claims he can prove the chest is rightfully Philtra's.

Artegall asks if they will lay down their swords and submit to his judgment, and the brothers agree. His judgment is that the sea's "imperial might" cannot be second-guessed, and that the sea gave the chest to Bracidas. Then Artegall rides on.

The next situation Artegall rides into is a suite of warlike women about to hang a man named Terpine. When Artegall nears, the women surround him with venomous intent, and he sends Talus to scare them away. Perplexed, Artegall approaches Terpine and asks what is going on. Terpine begins by explaining that Radigund is an Amazon warrior woman who, once scorned by a Knight she loved, hates Knights and wars against them wherever possible. When Radigund captures a Knight, she dresses him in women's clothing and makes him sew and do women's work. If the Knight refuses such emasculation, Radigund hangs him. Upon hearing this story, Artegall frees Terpine and asks him to show the way to Radigund's city. The city gates are opened for the two Knights and Talus, but inside they are greeted with arms and arrows. A battle ensues.

When Radigund sees Terpine, she attacks like a lioness, like a bear, and only pauses when she holds him down with one foot and is ready to kill him. Like an eagle, Artegall fiercely drives her away from Terpine. Talus disperses the warlike maids and breaks their weapons while Artegall and Radigund battle. When night begins to fall, they stop battling, and Talus quits wreaking havoc on the townspeople and Radigund's warrior maids. Artegall sleeps outside the castle walls, while Radigund spends a sleepless night worried about the damage wrought upon her city.

Finally, Radigund sends a warrior Lady to speak with Artegall. Radigund and Artegall agree to settle the dispute through single combat and agree that the loser will submit entirely to the will of the victor.

Canto v: In the morning, Radigund and Artegall begin their one-on-one fight. Radigund attacks with savage ferocity, and Artegall tries to wait until it subsides, but Radigund's savagery does not diminish. Finally Artegall attacks as if Radigund were an anvil, beating upon her so hard that sparks fly. Her shield shatters. Artegall makes ready to kill the unconscious Radigund, but when he removes her helmet, her beauty and fine features move him to peacefulness. She awakes from her swoon and attacks him mercilessly. Artegall does not fight, but only defends himself: "So was he overcome, not overcome, / But to her yielded of his own accord." Artegall and Terpine are taken prisoner, although Talus will not allow himself to be constrained and fights free.

Artegall is disarmed and dressed in women's clothing, then brought to a hall full of Knights in women's clothes. They must work on linen or starve. Artegall takes up his womanly task and begins work. Spencer laments, "Such is the cruelty of womankind, / When they have shaken off the shamefast band, / With which

wise Nature did them strongly bynd, / T'obay the heasts of mans well ruling hand. . . virtuous women wisely vnderstand / That they were borne to base humilitie.”

Although Radigund's pride won't let her admit it, Artegall's strange and submissive behavior sparks infatuation in Radigund's heart. Finally, Radigund admits her newfound love to her handmaiden, Clarinda.

Through hints, Clarinda conveys the possibility of Radigund's love to Artegall. In the process of convincing him to woo Radigund, Clarinda too falls in love with Artegall. When Radigund demands to know what Clarinda has accomplished, Clarinda lies to keep Artegall away from Radigund, out of jealousy. Radigund orders Artegall's food decreased and work increased, and then urges Clarinda to try again. Clarinda continues to lie, telling Radigund that Artegall denies her and Artegall that Radigund denies him. Artegall's food continues to decrease while his work increases, and Radigund's despair grows.

Canto vi: Talus goes to Britomart, Artegall's true love from Book IV, and tells her of Artegall's sad, emasculated plight. When Britomart hears about the “harlot's bondage” that keeps Artegall from completing his quest, she asks how he could be trapped if he is not forced and not overcome in fight. Finally, dissatisfied with Talus' answers, she dons her armor and rides out after Artegall. A strange Knight, Dolon, gives her lodging for the night, but Britomart cannot sleep and does not take her armor off. Talus waits outside her door like a guard dog to ensure that no one disturbs Britomart. In the night, the sleepless Britomart watches the bed collapse into a hole—the bed itself was a trap for the unwary. Armed men march on her chamber, and Talus defeats them. Dolon, the fallen Knight whose house it is, hates all Knights and acts treacherously towards them. Because of the iron man, Talus, Dolon believes he has captured Artegall, who killed Dolon's son in a fair fight. When Britomart sallies out of her room to avenge the treachery of Dolon, she finds the castle deserted. She rides on and at the bridge where Artegall overthrew Pollente, Dolon and his company await her. Britomart vanquishes them and tosses them from the bridge.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book V, Cantos vii-xii

New Characters

Adicia: Souldan's wife, who eggs Souldan on in evil deeds.

Belge: An honorable mother of seventeen sons, twelve of whom have been killed by a tyrant.

Gerioneos Seneschall: A deformed tyrant with three bodies who worships his dead father, who was also similarly deformed.

Isis: An Egyptian nature goddess.

Malengin: A shape-shifting robber who lives in an underground labyrinth.

Paynim Knights: Two pagan Knights who chase Samient.

Queen Mercilla: The good and kind queen of the region.

Samient: A fleeing damsel who serves Queen Mercilla.

Souldan: A vile man who tries to kill Queen Mercilla and her people.

Summary

Canto vii: Britomart arrives at Isis' temple and stays the night. Talus cannot enter, but Britomart is welcomed by the priests. Britomart admires the building and the idol of the goddess, prays, and sleeps by the altar. In the night, she has a vision of herself arrayed in robes and jewels while a storm threatens the temple, enlarging the holy flames to dangerous levels. Then, in the dream, Isis's crocodile comes to life and threatens to eat Britomart, but Isis holds him back and the crocodile fawns before Britomart instead. Britomart then dreams she becomes pregnant and births a lion. In the morning, a priest asks what troubles her, and Britomart reveals her vision. The priest tells her that gods see through all disguises (such as Knightly armor) and that the crocodile is her own lover, Artegall.

Reassured by this interpretation, Britomart rides to Radigund. Because Radigund is afraid of Talus decimating her people, Radigund moves outside the city walls so as to prevent Talus from needing to enter. Britomart and Radigund fight fiercely and well, and Britomart does not hide her sex. When Radigund sees an advantage, she taunts Britomart by telling her to take her death to her lover as an offering. The wound made while Radigund taunts Britomart hinders Britomart from using her shield properly, but rage causes Britomart to smite Radigund through helmet and skull to her very brain. Still angry, Britomart beheads Radigund.

Talus enters the gate and holds it open for Britomart by killing townspeople. When Britomart realizes the carnage, she asks him to stay his hand, and Talus does so. Seeing Artegall dressed as a woman rends Britomart's heart, but she changes his clothes and causes all the other subjugated Knights to swear fealty to Artegall, thus restoring his manliness. Then Britomart sends Artegall on his mission, again, and sets off to try and calm her emotions.

Canto viii: Spencer praises Artegall for his dedication to his mission from the Faerie Queen despite Britomart's allure. As he rides, Artegall sees two Knights chasing a damsel, and a third Knight chasing the two Knights. The Lady rides to Artegall for protection, and he accidentally kills one of the Knights by breaking his neck with his spear. Meanwhile, the third Knight kills the other Knight who had been chasing the damsel. Then the third Knight rides at Artegall, intending to fight. They break their spears, but then the Lady, Samient, begs them to stop, for the Paynim Knights are dead and there is no cause for danger. The third Knight is then revealed to be Prince Arthur. Samient explains that she serves Queen Mercilla, a merciful and kind Queen. She continues by saying that a man named Souldan, spurred by his evil wife Adicia, torments and attempts to kill both Queen Mercilla's people and the Queen herself.

Artegall dons one of the Paynim Knight's armor in order to gain entrance to Adicia's court. He brings Samient with him as a pretended prize and refuses to remove his armor, for fear of discovery. Prince Arthur soon arrives and demands that Souldan release Samient. The insolent and rude Souldan fights Prince Arthur for greed and self-advancement, and Souldan uses darts to confuse and strike at Prince Arthur even from afar. Finally, Prince Arthur brings out his magic shield, which blinds the horses pulling Souldan's chariot. The horses flee, and Souldan cannot control them. Prince Arthur follows until the chariot is overturned and Souldan lies on the ground, cut and bruised. Even his armor is broken and smashed. Prince Arthur gathers and displays the armor as a warning to all men not to be greedy or prideful.

Upon seeing the signs of her husband's defeat, Adicia runs down to Samient's prison with a knife in hand, ready to kill her. Artegall stops her and Adicia runs into the forest. Prince Arthur enters Souldan's castle as victor, and the next day he, Artegall, and Samient leave for Queen Mercilla's castle.

Canto ix: Spencer begins with a lament: "What Tygre, or what other saluage wight / Is so exceeding furious and fell, / As wrong, when it hath arm'd itselfe with might?" On the way to Queen Mercilla's palace with Samient, Prince Arthur and Artegall meet the robber and villain Malengin. Malengin stores his stolen treasures in his underground labyrinth. Samient leads them to the entrance of the labyrinth and wails as if in distress to lure Malengin out. Malengin has a staff tipped with iron hooks and a net with which to catch his

prey and steal from them. He begins to perform magic tricks and sleight of hand for Samient, to calm her. Meanwhile, he readies the net and captures her. Then Malengin runs with her into his lair, where the two Knights greet him, having sneaked over while Malengin was distracted. Malengin throws Samient down and runs, but Artegall chases him while Prince Arthur guards the labyrinth entrance.

Malengin leaps around the mountains like a goat, so Artegall sends Talus to chase him. Malengin transforms into a fox, a bush, and a bird, but Talus captures him. When Malengin is brought to Artegall, he transforms into a hedgehog; Artegall drops him and Talus has to catch him again. Finally Talus beats him until Malengin dies.

The company travels on until they reach Queen Mercilla's palace. It is beautiful and enormous, and the court is open to all honest people. Awe and Order stand guard. Queen Mercilla sits on a high throne wearing the cloth of state, which is held up by angels. Angels also sing around the throne. Virgins and a lion sit at her feet. As the Queen was in the midst of dispensing justice and hearing complaints, Artegall and Prince Arthur are placed on either side of her to listen to the next case.

The case is against Duessa, who has committed crimes against Knights and against Queen Mercilla by deceiving two Knights, Blandamour and Paridell, into conspiring to kill Queen Mercilla and take her throne. Many others testify against Duessa, including Kingdoms Care, Authority, Religion, and Justice. However, Pity, Regard, Danger, Nobility, and Grief testify on Duessa's behalf. Queen Mercilla still sentences Duessa to death.

Canto x: Queen Mercilla, Artegall, and Prince Arthur are just, firm, and remorseful in their treatment of Duessa. Spencer praises them for their fortitude and sorrow. In the Queen's court, petitions continue to be heard. A widow named Belge sends two of her sons to complain of a tyrant who has killed twelve of her seventeen sons and sacrificed their blood to his father's idol. This tyrant, Gerioneos Seneschall, has the power, bodies, and limbs of three men, like his father.

When none of the Knights in court step forward to take on the adventure, Prince Arthur volunteers. Belge's sons accompany him to guide and inform him as they travel. Artegall rides out soon after in search of his own adventures. Prince Arthur and the brothers find Belge hiding in the fens, alone and terrified. Belge, the brothers, and Prince Arthur ride to the city the tyrant has taken over. An armed guard rushes Prince Arthur, but he kills one and the rest flee. Prince Arthur leads Belge back into her castle.

Canto xi: The Prince and Gerioneos battle outside the castle, while Belge and her sons watch. The tyrant has the advantage with his extra limbs, since he can move his sword and fighting axe from hand to hand and attack his opponent by surprise. The Prince cuts off one of Gerioneos' arms and the tyrant strikes at him fiercely, but only kills Prince Arthur's horse. The Prince attacks the tyrant again and cuts off two more arms, rendering one side of the tyrant bare and defenseless. Then the Prince drives the sword through all three bodies of the tyrant, killing him.

Belge emerges from the castle to thank the Prince and begs him to finish the job he has started by killing the monster that defends the tyrant's idol. The monster has the face of a woman followed by body parts from lions, dogs, dragons, and eagles, attached to a worm-like body. The Prince battles the monster and kills her. With the monster dead, the Prince destroys the idol and returns to the city. A joyful parade surrounds him. The Prince remains with Belge until her reign is re-established and then rides on in search of adventure.

Meanwhile, Artegall has been adventuring alone. Grantorio has captured Irena, the woman Artegall was traveling to save. Grantorio threatens to kill her if a champion does not rescue her within ten days. Artegall vows to rescue her within the deadline and rides off in pursuit of that goal. However, almost immediately he finds a Knight and a damsel harassed by a rabble. He and Talus free the Knight, but the Lady is captured. The

Knight is Burbon and the Lady is Flourdellis, and Burbon explains that they were happily in love until Grantorio stole Flourdellis with kind words and gifts. Burbon stole Flourdellis back, but Grantorio had sent the rabble to reclaim her. Burbon was Knighted by the Redcross Knight (of Book I), but he laid aside his shield because he was recognized by it and the villains pursued him because of it. Burbon intends to reclaim and use his shield again. Burbon begs Artegall and Talus to help him reclaim his Lady, and they agree despite mistrusting him for laying aside Redcross' shield.

When they have fought the rabble and freed Flourdellis, she rejects Burbon unkindly. Artegall rebukes her for her "change of love" and upbraids her for lack of faith. Ashamed, Flourdellis mounts behind Burbon and rides away with him. Artegall stops Talus from his continued rout of the rabble and they continue their quest.

Canto xii: Artegall rides to Grantorio's castle and accepts the challenge to save Irena. When Grantorio takes the field, he wears brown armor and is a giant. Grantorio strikes often and hard, and Artegall suffers. Finally, Grantorio deals what should be the deathblow, but Artegall thrusts his shield between the sword and himself. The sword sticks fast in the shield, and Grantorio is unarmed. From then, the battle is Artegall's, and he kills Grantorio. The watching people cheer and fall at the feet of Irena, their rightful queen. Artegall restores Irena to leadership and punishes everyone who supported Grantorio.

When word comes from Gloriana that Artegall must return to the Faerie Court, he takes his leave of Irena. On the way, he meets two hags, Envy and Detraction. They had entrapped Irena in the first place and now are angry with Artegall for releasing her. They have a monster with them. When they see Artegall, they shriek and descend upon him. Detraction hurls insults while Envy spits upon him. The monster chases him and barks. Artegall passes through without seeming to hear or see them and forbids Talus to attack them either. Artegall refuses to "swerue / From his right course" to Gloriana.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book VI, Proem-Canto vi

Book VI: "The Legend of S. Calidore or, Of Covrtesie"

New Characters

Aladine: The son of Aldus who is incautious enough to be seriously wounded while enjoying his Lady's courtesies.

Aldus: An older, honorable, retired Knight who owns a castle, father of Aladine.

Blandina: A Lady who was with an unworthy Knight, Turpine.

Briana: A proud woman in love with Crudor.

Calepine: A Knight in love with Serena.

Calidore: A brave, courtly Knight who exemplifies courtesy.

Crudor: A self-absorbed Knight who demands Briana provide a garment made of hair and beards before he will yield to her love.

Despetto, Decetto and Defetto: Three enemies of Timias who send the Blatant Beast after him.

Maleffort: Briana's henchman, who takes a toll of beards and hair.

Matilde: The childless wife of Sir Bruin.

Priscilla: The Lady of a Knight attacked without cause while dallying with her in the forest.

Savage Man: A good, deaf-mute, naked man protected by magic.

Serena: A Lady stolen by the Blatant Beast.

Sir Bruin: A warrior who defeated a giant and now rules the giant's lands.

Squire: An unfortunate who informs Calidore about a region.

Tristram: A nobleman in exile who Calidore takes as his squire.

Turpine: An unkind Knight who dislikes and targets other Knights.

Summary

Proem: Although weary of writing, Spencer is so enamored with Faerie Land and finds such delight in it that he forgets his tiredness to write on. He calls Faerie Land "the sacred nursery / Of vertue," a combination of heavenly and earthly delights. In that nursery, the fairest flower is that of courtesy, which is the subject of Book VI.

Canto I: Calidore is a Knight who lives in Court and exemplifies courtesy. He is well loved for his courtesy, but now travels on a "hard aduventure." On the way, he meets Artegall, who explains his latest quest (see Book V). Calidore then tells his own quest, to kill the Blatant Beast who "is a Monster bred of hellishe race" and delights in tormenting Knights and Ladies. The description prompts Artegall to describe the beast accompanying the two hags whom he lately encountered, and Calidore confirms that this is the beast. Calidore hurries off in the direction Artegall had just traveled.

As he rides, Calidore encounters a Squire tied hand and foot to a tree and frees him. The Squire tells of a nearby castle where a toll is charged to pass through the narrow and rocky canyon that allows access to other lands. That toll is the hair of any Lady and the beard of any Knight. The Lady of this strange and cruel castle is Briana, who loves Crudor the Knight, who refuses to yield to her unless she brings him a mantle made of the hair of Ladies and the beards of Knights. Briana has put her henchman, Maleffort, in charge of this task. Maleffort met with this Squire and his Lady, shaved the Squire, bound him to the tree, and set off after his Lady. The Squire was to stay until Maleffort returned. As the Squire finishes the story, he and Calidore hear a woman screaming. They see a woman being pulled along by her hair.

Calidore pursues the unfortunate woman and her captor to the doorway of the castle, where he slays Maleffort. Calidore enters the castle and beats back the men who try to keep him from continuing. Upon entering a main chamber, Briana berates Calidore for killing her steward and her people in such an act of treason, then asks him to justify his unprovoked violence and theft of her castle's treasures. Calidore encourages her to be courteous, and the Lady responds with disdain. The Lady then calls a Dwarf to take a message to Crudor saying that a Knight has her and her people captive. The next morning Calidore and Crudor battle. Crudor is knocked unconscious, but Calidore leaves him alone until he wakes and the battle resumes. Calidore knocks Crudor into the dirt, but before he can kill him Crudor begs for mercy.

Calidore lays down conditions for Crudor to survive. Crudor must welcome strange Knights and treat them respectfully unless they commit an offense; he must give up his foul dowry demand; finally, he must marry Briana and teach her courtesy. Briana embraces Crudor despite his subjugation before Calidore. Briana gives Calidore her castle and throws a banquet for him, but Calidore quickly gives the castle to Squire who almost

lost his Lady. Calidore stays long enough to heal from his battle wounds and then continues on his quest.

Canto ii: The next adventure Calidore encounters is a young man on foot fighting with a Knight on horseback. Calidore rides up to a Lady watching the fray to find out what is going on, but as he does so the young man slays the Knight. Amazed at the youth's fighting prowess, Calidore speaks with the youth. The youth, Tristram, declares that he had no wish to attack a Knight, but he saw him riding his horse with the Lady running on foot beside, and when the Lady lagged (as she surely must), the Knight poked her with his spear. Seeing such discourtesy, the youth spoke to the Knight, who taunted Tristram and then hit him. Tristram threw a dart and killed the Knight.

The Lady confirms the youth's story and adds the details about what happened before Tristram was engaged. While riding with her own Knight, the pair encountered another Lady and a Knight in disarray. In a fit of lust, the Lady's own Knight threw the Lady from the horse they were sharing and fought the other Knight for the other Lady. Meanwhile, the other Lady ran into the forest and hid. When the Lady's Knight realized this had happened, he searched the forest with fury. Then, angry with his own Lady, he refused to take her up onto his steed and forced her to run beside him, hitting her with the butt of his spear to encourage her to hurry. So it passed until they met the young Tristram.

Still impressed with the fighting prowess and courtesy of Tristram, Calidore asks if he is noble born. Tristram replies that he is the son of a Briton King who died before Tristram was of age. A brother took over the throne and Tristram's worried mother sent him to a foreign land rather than have him assassinated as a threat to the brother's power. Since then, Tristram has traveled and tried to do good and resist idleness, but he implores Calidore to take him on as a squire. Calidore does so happily, but sends Tristram to take care of the Lady rather than join him on the quest to destroy the Blatant Beast.

Calidore continues and quickly finds the other Knight and Lady. The Knight is suffering from grievous wounds, and the Lady Priscilla explains that they were "joying together in unblam'd delight" when a Knight named Turpine killed her unarmed love. Calidore reassures Priscilla that the villain is now dead, places the wounded Knight on his shield, and bears him to a nearby castle.

Canto iii: Spencer begins by explaining that courtesy is vital because "the gentle minde by gentle deed is knowne," and only those whose deeds reflect a good personality are worthy of respect. One example of courtesy is the elderly Knight, Aldus, who owns the castle where Calidore brings the wounded Knight. Aldus recognizes the wounded Knight as his son, Aladine. Priscilla worries that her good name will be besmirched by the discovery of her dalliance in the forest with Aladine, but Calidore's courtesy leads him to keep quiet. When Aladine begins to regain consciousness, his first thoughts are for Priscilla and her honor. Aladine entreats Calidore to escort Priscilla back to her father's house safely, as Aladine cannot do it himself.

Calidore rides with Priscilla back to her father's house, and on the way cuts off the villainous Knight's head and presents it to her father as evidence of a vile fellow who had detained Priscilla. Priscilla's honor is thus saved.

Calidore continues on his way, and as he passes through a forest glade he sees a Knight, Calepine, out of his armor dallying with a Lady. After apologizing for the interruption, Calidore sits and talks with Calepine for a time, hearing about each other's adventures and praising the Lady, Serena. As they talk, the Blatant Beast rushes out of the forest, grabs the Lady Serena, and disappears. On foot, Calidore chases the Beast. The Beast drops Serena and runs away, but Calidore leaves her to her Knight and continues chasing the Beast.

Calepine finds Serena and tends to her wounds, then carries her, seeking somewhere safe. Calepine spies a respectable home and tries to approach, but a broad river stands between him and it. As Calepine tries to devise a plan, another Knight and Lady ride up and Calepine begs the Knight to take Serena on his horse

across the river. The Knight refuses rudely, and his Lady tries to offer her horse, but Calepine declines. Bravely, Calepine wades into the river and uses his spear to hold himself upright even with his burden. The Knight mocks Calepine from the river's edge until Calepine accuses him of being a "blot" upon all Knights and challenges him to a duel. The Knight laughs and rides away with his Lady. When Calepine knocks at the house, the doors are shut against him. All of his entreaties are in vain, and the porter tells him that a Sir Turpine owns the house and refuses entrance to all.

Calepine and the sorely wounded Serena spend the night outdoors, then try to continue on. A Knight approaches, and Calepine sees it is the same Knight who mocked him from the water's edge the day before. The Knight pursues him, intending to kill Calepine. Finally, the Knight—who Spencer then reveals is Turpine himself—spears Calepine and sorely injures him. Spencer then hints at a great rescue to occur in the next Canto.

Canto iv: Drawn by Serena's shrieks, a savage man wandering in the forest rushes into the fray between Turpine and Calepine. The savage man attacks Turpine. Unbeknownst to all, the savage man roams naked because magic protects him from all injury. Even when Turpine hits him with a spear, the savage man has no wound. Turpine flees, and only because of his horse does he manage to escape the savage man's chase. The savage man returns to the Serena and Calepine. Although he cannot speak, the savage man reassures both of them and uses herbs to stop their bleeding. Then the savage man takes them to his home to rest.

Calepine heals from his wounds under the savage man's care, but Serena's wounds have festered. Calepine wanders the woods one day, when he is healed, and comes across a bear holding a crying infant. Although unarmed, Calepine chases the bear and throws a stone into the bear's open throat and then finishes the job by choking the bear to death with his bare hands. Then Calepine takes up the babe, but he is lost and cannot find his way back to the savage man's lair.

As he wanders, Calepine encounters a crying woman. She tells him that she is Matilde, wife of Sir Bruin, who defeated a giant and now rules the giant's land. However, Sir Bruin has no children and blames Matilde for this. Calepine offers Matilde the baby he has just found and reminds her that many brave Knights and heroes were of unknown lineage. Seeing no wrong in it, Matilde accepts the baby and keeps it as her own, deceiving her husband into believing it is his child. Matilde offers Calepine arms and a horse in exchange, but he declines and continues to search for Serena. Calepine can feel no rest or ease until he finds her.

Canto v: Spencer observes that the savage's good treatment of Serena implies that somewhere in his lineage must be noble blood, for gentleness to women must come from gentle blood. When the savage realizes Calepine is missing, he seeks him in the forest but returns empty handed. Serena pounds her breast in sorrow and aggravates her wound's bleeding. Although the savage man tries to treat her, Serena finds her horse and readies to seek Calepine. The savage man dons Calepine's armor and travels with her.

They travel until Serena's horse has trouble. At this point, the savage man lays aside his armor and tends to the horse. Prince Arthur and Timias ride past. Since Spencer last told of Timias, he has regained Belphoebe's love but is pursued by three enemies: Despetto, Decetto, and Defetto. They used the Blatant Beast to attack Timias and chased him into an ambush. Backed against a tree, Timias fought them all off until tiredness began to set in. Prince Arthur happened upon the battle and freed the outnumbered and trapped squire before Prince Arthur realized that it was Timias, his own squire.

When Prince Arthur and Timias see a savage man surrounded by pieces of armor, they assume the worst. Timias attempts to take the armor, and the savage man restrains him. They prepare to battle, but Serena calls out, and Prince Arthur steps between them. Serena explains that the savage man has a gentle and good mind. Prince Arthur and Timias join them.

Since the Blatant Beast has wounded both Timias and Serena, the four travel slowly. They exchange stories, and Prince Arthur vows to avenge the pain Turpine has inflicted upon Calepine and Serena. That night, the four travelers stay at a hermitage. Timias and Serena cannot sleep for pain from the wounds. The next day, they cannot continue traveling, and so Prince Arthur rides out alone.

Canto vi: Spencer reveals that the Blatant Beast causes wounds of “infamy,” and that is why they are so slow to heal. A poisoned humor infects Serena and Timias with corrupt ideas and body. The hermit who cares for them used to be a Knight, but age forced a retirement, and he chose the hermitage. While tending to Serena and Timias, the hermit realizes that the wounds are festering. The hermit also realizes that only good living and virtuous thought will heal them since the Blatant Beast infects the mind as well as body. He tells Timias and Serena that they must seek a cure within themselves rather than relying on salves and potions. He concludes that they must “subdue desire, and bridle loose delight” and live a temperate, careful life in order to defeat wounds caused by the Blatant Beast.

By obeying the hermit, both are healed. They leave the hermitage together and meet a mourning maiden led by a fool. However, Spencer breaks the narrative here to return to Calidore’s story.

Prince Arthur has pursued Turpine to avenge his terrible behavior. When he finds the castle, it is deserted. The savage man has accompanied him and stables his horse while Prince Arthur wanders. Eventually, a groom emerges and challenges Prince Arthur for trespassing. Prince Arthur feigns injury and asks for the right of an errant Knight to be housed and fed by the castle. The groom lays hands upon the Prince to throw him out of the castle, and the savage man witnesses and charges the groom. Drawn by the commotion, people emerge from the castle and call to the Lord of the castle, and Turpine enters and demands that his people kill the Knight who has hurt one of his own. All of the castle servants descend on Prince Arthur while Turpine moves into position to attack from behind. Sensing the trap, the Prince turns on Turpine, causing him to flee. The Prince follows to the chamber where Turpine’s good Lady Blandina sits, waiting to hear what has happened during the altercation. There, Prince Arthur knocks Turpine unconscious.

Blandina shrieks and covers Turpine with her own dress to protect him. When Turpine regains consciousness, Prince Arthur upbraids him for his un-knightly behavior and unkind treatment of strangers. Because the Prince respects the Lady, he gives Turpine’s life to her, but demands that Turpine live “in reproch and scorn” and give up all semblance of Knighthood. Then Prince Arthur returns to the savage man, fearing for his life. However, he finds the man surrounded by slain enemies and killing more. The Prince calms him and takes him to Blandina and Turpine. The sight of Turpine causes the savage man to rage again, but Prince Arthur soothes him.

Analysis

Spencer’s dual weariness and fascination with Faerie Land compel him to keep writing but suggest that Book VI will be different from previous Books.

Calidore attacks Briana and Crudor because they have uprooted the social order and threaten good Squires, Knights and Ladies. Briana and Crudor have created a new custom requiring a toll of Ladies’ hair and men’s beards before any can pass, and that sort of custom is degrading. Calidore attacks because he perceives them as being discourteous and rude. Some have interpreted Calidore as attacking in order to uphold the social order, which requires Ladies to have long hair and men to have beards. However, when Calidore confronts Briana, she accuses him of unprovoked violence and asks why he has come to steal her wealth. Briana cleverly turns Calidore into the dishonorable one, and in the process suggests that he lacks virtue. This question cannot be brushed aside casually, no matter how strange and seemingly cruel Briana’s mistreatment and shaving of passers-by has been. Although Knights engage in violence to protect others and themselves, violence itself is certainly looked down upon in Protestant teachings. Spencer has even referenced this matter before, in Book I when Redcross is informed that he will eventually become St. George once he has laid aside

his arms.

Since Calidore represents courtesy, and courtesy is considered not only a virtue but also the “fairest” of the virtues, examining what Spencer means by courtesy may help to resolve this problem. Spencer first defines courtesy in his own words at the beginning of Canto iii. He says that gentle deeds and a good personality show courtesy. Courtesy is akin to the “Golden Rule” from the New Testament, of treating others as you wish to be treated, and implies having consideration for the situation of others and providing generously for such situations. Thus, when Calidore regards shaving Knights and Ladies as wrong, he does not directly support the prevailing social order. Rather, he considers how those Knights and Ladies are likely to feel, and what ramifications the shaving would have for them in various situations. Such are the factors of how Calidore would determine a behavior as courteous or discourteous, and by those standards Briana’s new custom is unquestionably discourteous. Such behaviors remove the symbols of masculinity and femininity, rendering men pre-pubescent and women freakish by sixteenth-century standards.

With that in mind, Briana’s accusation is pure sophistry. She tries to confuse the issue rather than confronting her own lack of respect for the men and women shaved on her orders. However, Briana raises the valid point of whether or not any form of violence is justified, even if done by a Knight for a cause generally considered to be right. Of course, much of the *Faerie Queen* concerns battles and tournaments and other forms of ritualized violence, and many enemies die at the hands of righteous Knights. However, since Spencer sets the action in a distant, fictionalized land in the past, he can follow historical precedents without having to deal with the issue of the moral qualities of violence. With this stylistic device, Spencer can to some degree circumvent pacifism and criticism of violence. Even Redcross had to fight the dragon before he could give up warfare and live peaceably.

Tristram is the first example of courtesy besides Calidore. By saving the Lady from her uncouth and abusive Knight, Tristram shows bravery and courtesy. However, to demonstrate his courtesy, Tristram has had to transgress social convention by fighting his superior in rank. Calidore’s response, to make him his Squire, brings up the issue of superiority and rank yet again. The fact that Tristram has noble blood and handsome features connects courtesy to those with good lineage and implies that possession of a virtue improves one’s features. These two suggestions have appeared in every Book of the *Faerie Queen* to some extent, so their appearance here is no surprise. But Tristram’s lowly status despite being a Prince, and Calidore’s almost token gift of making him a Squire without allowing Tristram to accompany him, illustrate that social convention trumps courtesy.

The episode with Priscilla demonstrates Calidore’s courtesy in a way that his attacks on the discourteous have not. The admiration of Tristram’s nearly unarmed defense of a Lady’s pride illustrates some of Calidore’s impressions about courtesy, but with Priscilla we get to see firsthand how Calidore operates courteously. Although he cannot slay the rude Knight who dishonored Priscilla and Aladine, when he sees the wounds on Aladine he immediately places him onto his shield—rendering himself vulnerable to attack—and carries Aladine to the nearest castle. Once there, he does not relate the story as Priscilla has told it to him, but rather says nothing that would imply that Priscilla had sexual relations with Aladine. In this way, he allows Priscilla to preserve her honor.

There is a sense of mystification when Calidore stumbles upon Serena and Calepine in the forest. Serena and Calepine are having sex, with Calepine’s armor off and weapons laid aside, just as Priscilla and Aladine were when the savage Knight found them. Calidore’s courteous response is a bit strange; he reassures them that their behavior is fine, and he sits down to speak with Calepine. Although it’s strange enough to converse with a couple engaging in the sexual act, what makes this even odder is that despite his experience in such matters, he does not warn the couple that what they are doing could lead to trouble. Thus, when the Blatant Beast emerges from the woods and seizes Serena, the reader can only feel a sickening sense of déjà vu.

The Blatant Beast seizing Serena would have reminded any sixteenth-century reader that society looked down upon women having sex before marriage. The Blatant Beast, who is described in greater detail later, embodies slander. Because Serena was seized by Slander just after dallying with Calepine, the suggestion is that other people would grab her and “chew her up” for her actions, just as the Blatant Beast does. Calepine remains with Serena, suggesting he truly does love her, although he was helpless to protect her from the Blatant Beast. On an allegorical reading, Calepine’s love cannot stop gossip-mongers from ruining Serena’s honor.

Based on letters and notes made by Sir Walter Raleigh and Spencer, *Faerie Queen* aficionados speculate that Serena represents Sir Walter Raleigh’s wife. Raleigh had sex with his wife before he married her, and then tried to keep both that and the marriage a secret, but failed. Both were courtiers at Queen Elizabeth’s Court, and for their behavior were imprisoned and exiled from the Court. Raleigh’s wife suffered more insult and degradation than he did, as a woman who had sex before marriage generally fared worse than the man. Raleigh eventually publicly announced the marriage, but the damage to his wife’s reputation was irreparable.

Although Calepine and Serena are portrayed sympathetically, note that Calidore does not remain to help them. Rather, Calidore pursues the object of his quest. Courtesy does not stop Calidore from continuing his duty rather than offering succor to the grieving and seriously wounded.

Turpine’s mockery at Calepine’s efforts to aid Serena by crossing the river suggest that even once Calepine publicly proclaims his loves for Serena, they will still be derided. Because Turpine is basically unlikable and cruel, Spencer manages to add another narrative aside in which societal norms are criticized.

Turpine forbids the wounded Serena and forlorn Calepine entrance to his house, and the next day he wounds Calepine terribly. If Turpine represents society, society is thus shown by Spencer as using its power unjustly. This notion is reinforced when the savage man, who is by definition outside of societal norms, accepts the wounded couple and heals them out of the goodness of his heart. In this way, the savage man demonstrates both more courtesy and more regard for human nature than Turpine or even Calidore. Spencer’s speculation that the savage man has noble blood illustrates an interesting point about Spencer’s own preconceptions about human nature. Although the slander that would attend to a woman who had sex before marriage would be worse in court or public places, Spencer here implies that nobles practice better behavior than others. Spencer seems oblivious to any hypocrisy here.

The bizarre interlude with Calepine, the infant, and Matilde shows that Calepine is courteous even to those he does not love. The encounter and wrestling with the bear to save the baby makes for good reading, but Calepine then promptly gives the baby to the crying Matilde, and we never hear about the infant again. However, Calepine’s courtesy is established by his kind and brave behavior in saving the infant, and his generous, trusting gift of the baby to Matilde.

Yet the savage man seems to exceed Calepine in courtesy, for he is willing to give up his entire life to keep Serena from traveling alone while wounded. By donning Calepine’s forgotten armor, the savage man does exactly what Calepine would have done had he been present. The savage man then defends Serena in several encounters, although he lacks the capacity to always understand when his prowess is required and when to stop fighting. This shows that a high intellect or social training is not required to be courteous, that only a good heart is needed to be courteous.

The intervention of virtuous Prince Arthur allows Calepine’s disappearance and Timias’ weakness to persist while Prince Arthur deals with Turpine. In Spencer, villains rarely go unchallenged, and Turpine’s foul behavior requires some sort of response. The pairing of Prince Arthur as a good fighter and Turpine as a wretched soul also allows for a comparison of the virtuous with the virtue-less.

Turpine's cowardly behavior during the fight with Prince Arthur provides a comic interlude. First, Turpine grandly commands his minions to fight, but when Prince Arthur approaches, the grand lord flees to his Lady's bedchamber, where she covers him in feminine garments and pleads for his life. From his failure to fight to his Lady's bargaining for his life while he is draped in a dress, Turpine goes from a mocking, irreverent figure to a defeated fool, however temporarily.

The goodly time spent at the hermitage provides rest, healing, and philosophical wisdom for the wounded Timias and Serena. The festering of wounds caused by the Blatant Beast are due to the secondary meaning of the Beast, that of Slander. Slander not only hurts reputations, but also hurts the recipient's feelings and often leads to more scandalous behavior as they struggle to reclaim their good name. The hermit's firm advice to be temperate and avoid strong emotions as well as excesses of behavior would allow any slandered person to regain self-control as well as outward appearances. By listening to the hermit, Timias and Serena, on a symbolic level, learn both how to heal from slander and how to avoid it in the future.

Chapter Summaries: Summary and Analysis: Book VI, Cantos vii-xii

New Characters

Brigands: Lowly thieves who prey on shepherds or anyone else they can.

Claribell: Bellamour's love, who bore him a child left for dead outdoors.

Colin: A shepherd and musician.

Coridon: The shepherd most in love with Pastorell.

Disdain: A giant who punishes Mirabella according to Cupid's dictate.

Lord Bellamour: The goodly Knight to whose castle Calidore brings Pastorell.

Meliboe: Pastorell's father, a good man who disdains money.

Mirabella: A hard-hearted but beautiful woman who lets many men die out of longing for her.

Pastorell: A beautiful maid honored by shepherds and maids alike.

Scorn: A fool who helps the giant punish Mirabella.

The Graces: Venus's damsels, who dance and embody love.

Summary

Canto vii: Turpine pursues the Prince because he feels humiliated. Upon meeting two traveling Knights, Turpine lies and tells them the Prince did wrong to himself and his Lady. The Knights attack the Prince while Turpine waits. After killing one, the Prince forces the other to explain why they have attacked without provocation. The young Knight tells the Prince about the Knight who accused the Prince of bad deeds, and the Prince demands that he bring the accuser to him immediately.

The young Knight rides to Turpine, who is astonished by his severe wounds. Turpine rudely inquires where the captive Prince is, and the young Knight lies and tells him he will guide him to the Prince's body. Turpine gladly follows. The prince has taken off his armor and lies on a grassy knoll, resting.

The savage man emerges from the forest and sees Turpine near the sleeping Prince. He uproots an oak to attack Turpine, remembering that the last time he saw Turpine, Turpine's castle attacked him and the Prince. The noise wakes the Prince, who grabs his sword to defend himself from Turpine. The Prince leaps upon Turpine and knocks him over.

Spencer returns to the mourning Lady, riding an ass led by a fool and a villain. This Lady, Mirabella, was once a beautiful and good woman, but her beauty led others to admire and aid her, and she turned prideful and arrogant. She disdained all love and ignored suitors, preferring to follow her own whimsy than seek a love and companion. Many men died out of longing for Mirabella, and Cupid discovered this. Cupid brought Mirabella to trial, and she discovered that twenty-two men had died because of their love for her. She was thus sentenced to a punishment whereby a fool whips Mirabella's horse and herself with unclean hands while a giant named Disdain insults and demeans her.

When Timias beholds the treatment the giant gives to the good Lady, he attacks the giant, who quickly overwhelms Timias, binds him, and leads him along beside Mirabella's horse. The fool whips Timias along with Mirabella. Seeing Timias fall at the hands of the giant, Serena assumes he is dead and flees.

Canto viii: Spencer first urges Ladies to be as soft and tender in mind as they should be in behavior, or else they will suffer as Mirabella suffers. He continues by describing her compassion for the Squire Timias, who has been bound and attached to her procession, and so is now suffering as she does. The company soon meets Prince Arthur and the courteous Knight Enias. Timias hides his head and is not recognized, but Enias still acts to free the Lady and the Squire. He attacks the giant, but suffers the same bondage as Timias. Prince Arthur dismounts and joins the battle by smiting the giant's leg. Although no wound appears, the leg cracks like a pillar. The Prince readies to behead the giant, but Mirabella calls out to him and stops him. She explains that if the giant dies, she will die a lamentable death. For her "proud and hard rebellious hart" she must do penance since she did not love any of them back, but rather laughed at and mocked those who pined away for her. Cupid sentenced her to roam the world with Scorn and Disdain until she has saved as many as she has killed. Mirabella must collect her tears in a bottle and her repentance in a sack, although the bottle leaks and the bag is torn. When they are full, her penance will be done, but she can see them leaking out behind her, and so her sorrow increases.

Realizing the justice of this punishment, the Prince frees the Squire, and upon realizing that it is Timias, he rejoices. Meanwhile, the savage man flies at the Fool and Scorn to free Enias. If Mirabell hadn't summoned the Prince, the savage man would have killed the Fool and Mirabell would have been destined to permanent suffering. Mirabell and her tormenters part and the Prince, Timias, Enias, and the savage man continue on the Prince's quest.

Meanwhile, Serena blames Calpine and her love of him for her sad plight. Serena lies down to sleep, but a band of cannibals finds her. When she wakes, Serena sees the cannibals sharpening their knives and screams. They strip her and look at her naked body, but their religion prohibits them from rape, so instead they put her on the altar. Their priest says charms while the others play horns and bagpipes prior to killing her.

By chance, Calipene has been searching for Serena nearby and is awakened by the noise. He approaches as the priest wields the knife above the naked Serena, and he immediately rushes into their midst and saves her.

Canto ix: Calidore continues to chase the Blatant Beast. He comes across group of shepherds if they have seen the beast, and they deny it but offer him food and drink. Calidore accepts and notices a beautiful maid sitting who is surrounded by maids and shepherds. Many love Pastorell, but one shepherd in particular sickens with love of her, and his name is Coridon. Pastorell's father, Meliboe, notices Calidore and invites him to sleep with them for the night, and Calidore accepts. When Calidore inquires about the father's secret to happiness, Meliboe responds that he does not envy anyone and is happy with his lot. The father reveals that he once lived

at court, but found it to be a waste of time, and so returned to his village. Calidore respects the father and is highly attracted to Pastorell. Calidore asks if he can stay with them and restore himself, and he offers old to recompense them for any trouble. Meliboe refuses the money, “that mucky masse, the cause of mens decay.”

Calidore stays and courts Pastorell, but his mannerisms are strange to her, and she does not respond. In order to change tactics, Calidore dresses as a shepherd and accompanies Pastorell in herding each day. Jealous, Coridon talks badly about Calidore. During a celebration, Pastorell and Calidore are chosen to lead a dance. Calidore puts Coridon in his stead. Another time, Coridon and Calidore wrestle. Calidore wins and almost breaks Coridon’s neck, but presents the prize back to Coridon, saying he is the true winner, and eventually Calidore’s courteous, gentle behavior wins Pastorell’s attention.

Canto x: Despite his behest to keep from delays, Calidore halts his search for the Blatant Beast to woo Pastorell. One day, ranging the forests, he enters a fabulously beautiful place. It is the retreat of Venus and home to the Graces. Hiding in the woods, Calidore sees one hundred naked maidens, the Graces, dancing. Enraptured, Calidore moves toward the dancers, but when they spy him they disappear.

The only one to remain is the shepherd who played their music. Calidore asks him who those beings are, and why they allowed Colin’s presence but not his. Colin explains that that they are the Graces, and are gentle, mild, kind, free of malice and guile.

Calidore returns to Pastorell and competes with Coridon for her favor. One day, while all three of them are picking strawberries, a tiger comes out of the woods and heads for Pastorell. Coridon fears for his own life and does not rescue her, but Calidore stands before the beast with his shepherd’s hook and beheads him. This act helps to win Pastorell’s heart.

One day, while Calidore is out in the forest, a group of brigands steal everything Meliboe has and imprison his people. Coridon and Pastorell are captured. The brigands travel underground and keep their captives there, intending to sell them as slaves. Trapped, Pastorell’s beauty fails as she becomes more and more sorrowful.

Canto xi: Spencer complains that once luck turns bad, it continues to get worse and worse. While trapped by the thieves, Pastorell incites the lust of the captain of the brigands. Her heart will not bend to his will, however, and so he begins give her trouble. Afraid that he will rape her, Pastorell feels forced to show him small favors. Eventually, she falls ill from a sickness of the mind. The captain leaves her bedside only to receive the merchants and slave-traders who demand the sale of all captives.

When Pastorell does not emerge to be sold, the slave-traders become agitated. The captain responds angrily and reprimands them for begrudging him one small girl, now so ill and pale that she is almost useless. To prove his point, the captain brings them to Pastorell. Despite her sickness, her beauty still shines through. The slave-traders offer pots of gold, but the captain becomes enraged at the thought of selling his love, and he draws his sword. During the fight, Coridon escapes into the cave, but Meliboe is slain. Meanwhile, the captain defends Pastorell. When a stroke slices through and kills him, it also hits Pastorell, and she falls into a swoon. Corpses fall atop her. The brigands find Pastorell and try to heal her. When she regains consciousness, she realizes that everyone she knows is dead, and that she is the booty of the slave-traders.

Spencer leaves Pastorell in this plight to return to Calidore. When Calidore returned to the cottage and found the village empty, the cottage destroyed, and Pastorell missing, rage and sorrow took him over. He searches the woods, plains, and surrounding areas, but finds no one. Finally, he sees a ragged soul and chases him down: it is Coridon. Coridon tells him of Pastorell’s plight. Calidore asks Coridon to lead him to the place of the fight, and they dress in shepherd’s weeds and go. Underneath his clothes, Calidore is armed.

When they approach a flock of sheep, they see some of the thieves sleeping around it, keeping the sheep penned in. The thieves hire Calidore and Coridon to care for the flock. That night, Calidore invades the cave, kills the captain, and frees Pastorell. After killing the remaining brigands, he restores the flock to Coridon.

Canto xii: After rescuing Pastorell, Calidore takes her to Lord Bellamour's castle for safekeeping. Bellamour and his love, Claribell, were thrown into a dungeon by her angry father for secretly marrying Claribell, but even in separate cells they could not be kept apart, and she conceived a child. Afraid, Claribell gave the infant to her handmaid, who took the baby girl outdoors and left her to die or be found. A shepherd found her. When the angry father died, Bellamour and Claribell's fortunes were reversed and they have since ruled the castle. They care for Calidore and Pastorell until Calidore remembers his quest and sets out to kill the Blatant Beast.

While dressing Pastorell, her handmaid recognizes a birthmark on her chest as the same as that of the baby girl from so many years ago. The handmaid runs to Claribell and tells her that Pastorell is Claribell's child. Claribell dashes to Pastorell and tears open her dress, and upon seeing the birthmark embraces her. Bellamour and Claribell celebrate.

Meanwhile, Calidore ventures forth. He follows the trail of ruin that the Beast leaves behind. Eventually, he finds the Beast in a monastery. Upon seeing Calidore, the Beast flees, but Calidore pursues. In a narrow enclosure, Calidore traps the Beast, who runs at Calidore with an open mouth filled with iron teeth and a thousand tongues. Unafraid, Calidore stands his ground and soon quells the Beast. Calidore closes his mouth forever, stopping the reign of insults and terror upon Knights and Ladies. Then Calidore leads the Beast through Faerie Land, proving his own prowess and the Beast's subjugation. Defamation and rude insults are stopped in Faerie Land forever.

Eventually, the Beast is released in Briton, outside Faerie Land, and there the Blatant Beast still lives. Not even poets can escape insult and injury.

Analysis

Prince Arthur's failure to intimidate Turpine into good, courteous behavior surprises anyone who has read Books I-III of the *Faerie Queen*. In those books, Prince Arthur is presented as an almost Christ-like figure containing superior virtues. For Prince Arthur to fail at a task now is quite odd. For Prince Arthur not only to fail, but to also fall asleep and put himself into danger is absolutely bizarre.

Overall, Book VI provides numerous examples of flawed surrogates who try to do what Calidore successfully manages to do--that is, to restore order. Prince Arthur cannot quell Turpine on first try, and bizarrely falls asleep while waiting to confront him. The savage man requires the restraint of others with more reason. Calepine becomes injured and then lost and has to be awakened to save Serena from being sacrificed, proving that he is unable to take care of himself, much less his Lady. The implication here is that courtesy requires great strength, reason, and fighting ability. However, even Calidore has clear weaknesses. Calidore uses his sword to enforce courtesy, and yet rides away from each situation once it has been verbally resolved. It seems likely that Turpine would have followed Calidore if Calidore had been the one to subdue him.

Furthermore, like Redcross, Calidore becomes seriously distracted from his quest. Unlike Redcross, Calidore is attracted to a good and chaste woman, but the long delay from his quest increases the terror and havoc wreaked by the Blatant Beast. The eventual release of the Blatant Beast in Britain endangers the very author who writes the story, Spencer, because Slander can attach itself to any poet. As a hero, Calidore seems untrustworthy and flawed, even though he does succeed in his quest temporarily.

Spencer wrote Book VI when little fame or praise had accrued to him from the publication of previous Books. Presumably he was beginning to fear that all of his labor was for naught, and that may explain the Proem at the beginning of Book VI. By relating his weariness to the reader in the context of why he keeps

writing—because his story is fascinating—Spencer suggests both that he deserves praise, and that without it he may not continue writing. Book VI also directly opposes things that were considered virtues or vices in other Books. In Book I, violence was specifically named as a sin, but in Book VI Calidore's violence is condoned and considered part of his virtuousness because he fights for courtesy. Book III celebrates chastity, but Calidore covers up unchaste behavior with lies and speaks kindly to unchaste couples. Spencer's weariness practically takes the form of calling vices virtues and virtues vices. The craving for rest reaches a peak in the last existing stanzas of Book VII, but this exhaustion makes a decidedly pertinent appearance at the beginning of Book VI.

Spencer's response to the reception of his work is ironic, given how he praises the perseverance of his characters. In Books I, II, and III in particular, the characters—not just the Knights, but also side characters such as Florimell—are put through an endless number of harrowing circumstances. Spencer praises those that fight on despite the situation seeming dire or hopeless. A common message is that persistence will be rewarded through God's heavenly grace. Characters who give in to hopelessness are pitied and maligned, while the heroes never swerve from duty and active work even in the face of terrible odds. So for Spencer to despair over the reception of his work directly contradicts the message he conveys through his characters.

Overall, because Book VI is so different than what has come before it, it is difficult to interpret it in light of the moral structures and themes of the previous books. Mirabella, who embodies careless flirtation, seems to be one exception. Her cold and unfeeling behavior to men who were deeply in love with her fits into Book II, in which Belpheobe told Timias she cared for his wounds because all humans are bound by their weak bodies, and so people must care for one another's injuries. In Book III, Amoretta and Florimell illustrate how passionate love can lead to horrible circumstances and should be appreciated on its own terms. All of Florimell's attackers failed to respect her emotions, and Busirane could not force Amoretta to change her love even through enchantment and the removing her heart. Duessa's cold use of men against each other was a transparent example of the evilness of lack of emotion. These stories all demonstrate that women should not only respect the love of others', but should also refrain from any mockery or derision of love. Love is natural when presented with beauty, and the men who display it should not be treated badly. Deep, abiding love untainted by the vice of lust is always worthy of respect in Spencer's world. Mirabella's failure to respect that leads to her harsh, perpetual punishment.

A parallel also exists between Serena's story and Una's. Both are captured by wild bands, but Una's inherent goodness wins her the adoration of the wild creatures that capture her. Perhaps because she was not chaste, Serena has no such effect on the cannibals. Una hardly ever requires rescue because her grace and goodness keep most men's behavior within acceptable bounds. Serena has no similar effect, and so needs Calepine to save her from the Blatant Beast as well as the cannibals.

Calidore's interlude of staying with the shepherds to woo Pastorell breaks up Book VI oddly. Calidore continues to be courteous and does kind things for Meliboe and Pastorell, but the focus of the Book seems lost. The Blatant Beast is ignored, the enforcement of courtesy is put aside, and Calidore delights in acts of simple labor and wandering the forest.

However, Spencer cannot leave Calidore in that idyll. First, the incident with the graces breaks his routine. This seems like a heavenly nudge to Calidore to remember that things exist outside of his idyllic little world. Because the graces disappear when Calidore approaches, Spencer introduces the somewhat dismal idea that nothing perfect and delightful can sustain close scrutiny. And like the graces, God's grace may vanish if Calidore does not start to behave appropriately to a Knight.

Shortly thereafter, the outside world intervenes and destroys the entire idyllic setting and most of the characters. The story of Pastorell's suffering resembles Florimell's story in several key respects. Both women possess beauty such that unchaste, un-virtuous men are driven to extremes of lust and violence upon merely

viewing them. Both women accept gifts and flattery out of fear of the man who offers them. Both women are trapped in underground caves for long periods of time. It seems as if Spencer has tired of the plight of beautiful women and so has devised the same punishments and plotline for both characters. The significant difference is that Pastorell's story destroys her entire life. Her home, her beauty, and her family are gone.

This rupture in Calidore's dream world impels him to return to his quest. When he finally kills the Blatant Beast, the description of the Beast emphasizes its many tongues, which is appropriate for an animal that represents slander. By killing the Beast and ending slander in Faerie Land, Calidore completes his quest and frees himself to return to Pastorell and try to recreate his happy life. However, while he was away, Pastorell found her birthparents and a new home. By the time Calidore returns, he will find Pastorell and her new family together and will be able to enter into a different, but possibly still happy, world with Pastorell.

The story of Bellamour and Claribell strongly resembles the story of Raleigh and his wife. It also emphasizes the principle brought forth in the Malbecco and Hellenore episode in Book III. Love cannot be constrained or forced, and those who try will find themselves facing the same situation they were trying to prevent. Pastorell's happy new life with her newly discovered parents also allows the beautiful girl to have noble blood and live a life befitting one of noble blood. For Spencer, a natural order has been restored when a shepherdess too beautiful for her setting is discovered to be a princess and is treated as such.

However, Book VI does not end with the happy reunion of Calidore and Pastorell, although that ending would be quite easy. Instead, Calidore is seen leading the muzzled Blatant Beast from village to village as a spectacle to add to his own glory, but there is no mention of his return to Pastorell. Perhaps her time in the cave so faded her beauty that Calidore no longer loves her.

The note that Book VI ends on is ominous. Spencer's weary and half-angry stanzas about the defamation of poets and good people suggests that far from being fascinated by his own characters and wondering what will happen to them next, or delighting in telling the tale, Spencer's thoughts have spiraled back onto himself and his unrecognized, un-praised situation in the world. This suggests that perhaps for Spencer Faerie Land is no longer as fascinating as it once was.

Themes: Christian Themes

Spenser was influenced by the classical conception of the four cardinal virtues of Fortitude, Temperance, Justice, and Prudence and the Christian tradition of three theological virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, but in *The Faerie Queene* his treatment of virtue becomes his own synthesis of these traditional concepts. In his "Letter to Raleigh," he says that his first twelve books will be concerned with the twelve private virtues identified by Aristotle and that he will postpone his treatment of public virtue or "politicke virtues" to a later work. When he died, he had completed only six books of the projected twenty-four. Spenser's six books deal with holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship, justice, and courtesy. Attempts to classify these virtues as either public or private have been unsuccessful. Although it is possible to identify specific allegorical passages in which Spenser draws upon a specific tradition—for example, the presence of personifications of Faith, Hope, and Charity, in the House of Holiness—his handling of virtue has to be understood within the context of episodes in the poem.

Spenser guides the reader to a concrete understanding of the abstract virtues of Holiness or Temperance by a sequence of imaginative adventures and images. The knights functioning as protagonists of each book undergo tests of their respective virtues and battle antagonists as a means of defining their virtue. For example, the first book shows Red Cross (Saint George of England) visiting the House of Pride, where he sees a pageant of the seven deadly sins (pride, wrath, jealousy, avarice, gluttony, sloth, and lechery). He falls under the spell of the deceitful Duessa, which leads him to the dungeon, ruled over by the giant Orgoglio, an

emblem of pride. Remorse over these lapses makes him vulnerable to the spell of Despair, whose rhetoric is almost irresistible. After a vision of the New Jerusalem from the Mount of Contemplation, he visits the House of Holiness. This visit prepares him for battle with the dragon, and he triumphs over the dragon (representing Satan, the Beast of the Apocalypse, and the Spanish Armada) in a fierce three-day battle, paralleling the harrowing of Hell by Jesus Christ. Spenser depicts holiness, traditionally understood to be a contemplative virtue, as an active, even heroic virtue.

The presentation of Christian themes is less explicit in succeeding books, but virtue in its individual and social configurations remains central to *The Faerie Queene*.

Themes

Duty and Responsibility

Throughout the *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser emphasizes the importance of performing one's duty and accepting responsibility to complete the quest. Several heroic figures emerge during the course of the poem and each is given a question to undertake, a monster or demon to extinguish. Each time, the hero must overcome disadvantage and hurdles to succeed, but the importance of the quest is always the overriding concern. Although the Red Cross Knight must fight several demons and overcome despair, he always continues on the quest to rescue the King and Queen of the West. Similarly, Artegall must be rescued himself by Britomart. And although he really wants to continue with her, he must complete the quest of freeing Irena. Calidore is also momentarily distracted, enjoying a brief pastoral respite, but he also realizes that he must complete his quest in subduing the Blatant Beast. Throughout this epic, Spenser makes the same point again and again: mankind must be responsible and fulfill the duties set before them.

Deception

For Spenser, deception is most often represented by the Roman Catholic Church and by Spain, which most clearly represents Catholicism in Britain. Archimago and Duessa represent how deception will attempt to prevent the honorable man from completing his journey and prevent him from meeting with god. During this period, the division between the Catholic world and Protestant world was filled with suspicion and animosity. Spenser uses this idea as a way to posit that an ideal Britain is one in which the true religion, the Anglican Church, defeats the monstrous Roman Catholic Church. This idea is personified by the Red Cross Knight's overcoming the tricks played by Archimago and Duessa. Since all good men will be tempted, these two characters reappear throughout the epic, thus requiring their defeat by several honorable knights. Spenser's audience would have easily identified Archimago and Duessa as representing the Catholic Church or key Catholic personages, such as Mary, Queen of Scots.

Friendship

The bond between all men, his relationship with everyone around him, is important to Spenser's work. None of the knights acts alone. The Red Cross Knight needs the help of Prince Arthur to succeed. And Arthur misses his squire, Timias, when he is lost. Arthur reappears frequently in the epic, each time to bond with another knight and help him in his quest. No knight works alone, with each one requiring the friendship of another to complete his quest. In addition to the friendships between men, friendship becomes the central focus of Book IV. The two women, Britomart and Amoret, continue the search together to find their true loves, illustrating the importance in women's friendships in achieving goals.

Humanism

Humanism was an intellectual movement of the Renaissance, beginning in Italy and quickly moving across Europe and into England. Sir Thomas More and Desiderius Erasmus were important authors of this movement, which promoted the education of a Christian gentlemen. Ideally, the education of Christian gentlemen emphasized, as a first concern, a preparation for public service. There was an emphasis on classical

texts and on learning Latin language, the language of diplomacy. Spenser's purpose in composing *The Faerie Queene* was to create a model for the ideal gentlemen. He sought to educate the public to chivalric ideals by recalling the medieval romance that he thought presented a better society. Spenser's text not only revives the classical epic, which in its purest form, had not been used since Virgil, but it emphasizes the ideals of charity, friendship, and virtue, which are the hallmarks of the Humanistic movement. Prior to the Reformation, Humanism embraced Catholicism as a representative ideal, as was the case with Sir Thomas More. But after the reformation, Protestantism became the ideal for Humanists in England, such as Spenser.

Justice

Justice is an important theme throughout *The Faerie Queene*, but in Book V, it is the central focus. Sir Artegall is the champion of Justice. As Spenser creates him, Artegall has the power to dispense justice, but he also discovers that justice can be a complex issue, with not every man receiving what is due him. Artegall discovers that what is right or fair is not always clearly defined. With Sir Sanglier, Artegall must use wit to devise a Solomon-like decision to expose the guilty party. Later, Artegall must rule on the consistency of law when he settles a dispute between Bracidas and Amidas. Artegall also discovers, when dealing with the Amazons, that sometimes justice, tempered by pity, does not work well. The trial of Duessa, that completes Book V, illustrates that justice is effective when applied to solve problems.

Virtue

Virtue is a theme that runs throughout *The Faerie Queene*. According to Spenser, the virtuous will succeed at completing their journey or quest. Every knight who undertakes a quest for the Faerie Queene is forced to confront obstacles or deception. That each knight succeeds is a result of his inner strength, both his commitment to his quest, but just as importantly, his commitment to a moral life. The knights deserve to win because they are good, virtuous men. To contrast with a life of virtue, Spenser provides the example of virtue's enemies. In Book I, the Red Cross Knight meets with Lucifera, who is the mistress of Pride. Her six wizards are Idleness, Gluttony, Lechery, Avarice, Envy, and Wrath. These seven deadly sins constitute the opposite of the virtuous ideal. In Book III, four women must fight to preserve their chastity: Britomart, Florimell, Belphoebe, and Amoret. Spenser uses four different examples, and there are several others throughout the six books, to illustrate how important chastity is in a Christian life. Morality is essential to the chivalric ideal in other ways. When Arthur rescues Amoret, in Book IV, there is never any question that he will deliver her, unmolested to her destination. He is an honorable knight, as are Artegall, Guyon, and Calidore. Each man performs according to their code, which makes virtue, morality, and chastity, an essential part of each man's personality.

Characters: Characters Discussed

Gloriana

Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, an idealized portrait of Queen Elizabeth. Although she does not appear in the extant portion of the poem, many of the knights set out on their quests from her court, and they often praise her virtue and splendor.

Prince Arthur

Prince Arthur, the legendary British hero, who represents Magnificence, the perfection of all virtues. He rides in search of Gloriana, who had appeared to him in a vision, and, on his way, aids knights in distress.

The Red Cross Knight

The Red Cross Knight, the hero of book 1, in which he represents both England's patron, Saint George, and Christian man in search of holiness. He sets out confidently to rescue Una's parents from the dragon of evil, but he is attacked by forces of sin and error that drive him to the point of suicide. He is restored in the House of Holiness by the teachings and offices of the church and, refreshed by a fountain and a tree, symbolizing the sacraments of baptism and communion, he triumphs in his three-day combat with the dragon.

Una

Una (EW-nah), the daughter of the King and Queen of the West, Adam and Eve; she personifies truth and the church. She advises her knight wisely, but she cannot protect him from himself. Deserted, she is aided by a lion and a troop of satyrs. She is finally restored to the Red Cross Knight, who is betrothed to her after his victory over the dragon.

The Dwarf

The Dwarf, her companion, Common Sense.

Error

Error, the Red Cross Knight's first adversary, a monster who lives in the wandering wood.

Archimago

Archimago (ahr-chih-MAH-goh), a satanic figure who uses many disguises in his attempts to lure the knights and ladies of the poem into sin and disaster.

Duessa

Duessa (dew-EHS-seh), his accomplice, whose attractive appearance hides her real hideousness. She represents variously Falsehood, the Roman Catholic Church, and Mary, Queen of Scots.

Sans Foy

Sans Foy,

Sans Loy

Sans Loy, and

Sans Joy

Sans Joy, Saracen knights who attack Una and her knight.

Fradubio

Fradubio (frah-DEW-bee-oh), a knight betrayed by Duessa and transformed into a tree.

Kirkrapine

Kirkrapine (KURK-rah-peen), a church robber, slain by Una's lion when he tries to enter the cottage where she has taken refuge.

Abessa

Abessa (AH-beh-sah), his mistress.

Corceca

Corceca (KOHR-seh-kah), her blind mother.

Lucifera

Lucifera (lew-SIH-feh-rah), the mistress of the House of Pride.

Malvenu

Malvenu (MAHL-veh-new), her porter.

Vanity

Vanity, her usher.

Night

Night, the mother of falsehood, to whom Duessa appeals for help.

Aesculapius

Aesculapius (ehs-kew-LAY-pee-uhs), the physician of the gods.

Sylvanus

Sylvanus (SIHL-vah-nuhs), the leader of the satyrs who rescue Una from Sans Loy.

Satyrane

Satyrane (SA-tih-rayn), a valiant, gentle knight who is half nobleman and half satyr.

Despair

Despair, an emaciated creature who drives warriors to suicide with his sophistic recitals of their sins.

Trevisan

Trevisan (TREH-vih-san), one of his intended victims.

Dame Coelia

Dame Coelia (CHEE-lee-ah), a virtuous matron who lives in the House of Holiness.

Fidelia

Fidelia (fih-DAY-lee-ah),

Speranza

Speranza (speh-RAN-zah), and

Charissa

Charissa (cha-RIHS-sah), her daughters, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Contemplation

Contemplation, a holy hermit who gives the Red Cross Knight a vision of the City of God, then sends him back into the world to complete his quest.

Guyon

Guyon (GWEE-on), the Knight of Temperance, the sternest of the Spenserian heroes, who must violently destroy Acrasia's power and all of its temptations that lead men to intemperance.

Palmer

Palmer, his faithful companion, who stands for Reason or Prudence.

Acrasia

Acrasia (ah-KRAY-zee-ah), the Circe-like mistress of the Bower of Bliss. She lures men to their ruin in her world of debilitating luxuriance and turns them into animals.

Amavia

Amavia (ah-MAY-vee-ah), the desolate widow of one of her victims.

Ruddymane

Ruddymane, her baby, whose hands cannot be cleansed of his dying mother's blood.

Medina

Medina (meh-DEE-nah),

Perissa

Perissa (peh-RIHS-sah), and

Elissa

Elissa, sisters who personify the mean, the deficiency, and the excess of temperance.

Sir Huddibras

Sir Huddibras (HEW-dee-brahs), a malcontent, Elissa's lover.

Braggadocio

Braggadocio (brahg-ga-DOH-chee-oh), a vainglorious braggart who masquerades as a knight on Guyon's stolen horse.

Trompart

Trompart, his miserly companion.

Belpheobe

Belpheobe (behl-FEE-bee), a virgin huntress, reared by the goddess Diana, who cannot respond to the devotion offered by Prince Arthur's squire, Timias. She is another of the figures conceived as a compliment to Elizabeth.

Furor

Furor, a churlish fellow whom Guyon finds furiously beating a helpless squire.

Occasion

Occasion, his mother, a hag.

Phedon

Phedon (FAY-don), the maltreated squire, who falls into Furor's hands through his jealousy of his lady, Pryene, and his friend Philemon.

Pyrochles

Pyrochles (PIH-roh-kleez) and

Cymochles

Cymochles (SIH-mah-kleez), intemperate knights defeated by Guyon.

Atin

Atin (AT-ihn), Pyrochles' servant.

Phaedria

Phaedria (FAY-dree-ah), a coquette who lures knights to her island, where she lulls them into forgetfulness of their quests.

Mammon

Mammon, the god of riches, who sits in rusty armor surveying his hoard of gold.

Philotime

Philotime (fih-LOH-tih-mee), his daughter, who holds the golden chain of ambition.

Alma

Alma, the soul, mistress of the castle of the body where Guyon and Prince Arthur take refuge.

Phantastes

Phantastes (FAN-tahs-teez) and

Eumnestes

Eumnestes (ewm-NEHS-teez), guardians, respectively, of fantasy and of memory.

Maleger

Maleger (mah-LEE-gur), the captain of the shadowy forces who attacked the bulwarks of the House of Alma.

Verdant

Verdant, a knight released by Guyon from Acrasia's clutches.

Grille

Grille, one of Acrasia's victims. He reviles Guyon and the Palmer for restoring his human form.

Britomart

Britomart (BRIH-toh-mahrt), the maiden knight, heroine of the book of Chastity. She subdues the forces of lust as she travels in search of Artégall, with whom she fell in love when she saw him in a magic mirror. Her union with him represents the alliance of justice and mercy as well as Spenser's ideal of married chastity, which surpasses the austere virginity of Belpheobe.

Malecasta

Malecasta (mal-eh-KAS-teh), the lady of delight, beautiful and wanton, who entertains Britomart in Castle Joyous.

Glauce

Glauce (GLAW-see), Britomart's nurse, who accompanies her as her squire.

Merlin

Merlin, the famous magician, whom Glauce and Britomart consult to learn the identity of the knight in the mirror.

Marinell

Marinell (MA-rih-nehl), the timid son of a sea nymph and Florimell's lover.

Cymoent

Cymoent (SIH-mehnt), his mother.

Florimell

Florimell (FLOH-rih-mehl), the loveliest and gentlest of the ladies in Faerie Land. She is pursued by many evil beings, men and gods, before she is wed to Marinell.

Timias

Timias (TIH-mee-as), Prince Arthur's squire, who is healed of severe wounds by Belpheobe. Although he falls in love with her, he can never win more than kindness as a response.

Crysogene

Crysogene (krih-SAW-jeh-nee), the mother of Belpheobe and Amoret, who were conceived by the sun.

Argante

Argante (ahr-GAHN-tee), a giantess, one of the figures of lust.

Ollyphant

Ollyphant (AW-lee-fant), her brother and lover.

A Squire of Dames

A Squire of Dames, Argante's prisoner.

Snowy Florimell

Snowy Florimell, Braggadocio's lady, a creature made by a witch with whom Florimell had stayed.

Proteus

Proteus (PROH-tee-uhs), the shepherd of the sea, who rescues Florimell from a lecherous fisherman.

Panope

Panope (PAN-oh-pee), an old nymph, his housekeeper.

Paridell

Paridell (PAR-ih-dehl), a vain, lascivious knight.

Malbecco

Malbecco (mal-BEHK-koh), a miserly, jealous old man.

Hellenore

Hellenore (HEHL-leh-nohr), his young wife, who runs away with Paridell.

Scudamour

Scudamour (SKEW-dah-mohr), the knight most skilled in the art of courtly love. He wins Amoret at the court of Venus, but she is taken from him almost immediately.

Amoret

Amoret (AM-ohr-eh), his beautiful bride, who is taken prisoner at her own wedding by Busirane, who represents her own passions and the confining forces of the rigid code of love in which she has grown up.

Busirane

Busirane (BEW-sih-rayn), her captor.

Venus

Venus, the goddess of love and a personification of the creative force in nature, Amoret's foster mother.

Adonis

Adonis (uh-DON-ihs), her lover.

Diana

Diana, the divine huntress, the virgin goddess who raises Belphoebe.

Ate

Ate (AH-tay), Discord, a malicious old woman who stirs up strife.

Blandamour

Blandamour (BLAN-dah-mohr), a fickle knight.

Sir Ferraugh

Sir Ferraugh (FEHR-raw), one of the suitors of Snowy Florimell.

Cambello

Cambello (kam-BEHL-loh), one of the knights of friendship.

Canacee

Canacee (KA-nah-see), his sister, a wise and beautiful lady who is won by Triamond.

Cambina

Cambina (kam-BEE-nah), Cambello's wife.

Priamond

Priamond (PREE-ah-mond),

Diamond

Diamond, and

Triamond

Triamond (TREE-ah-mond), brothers who fight for the hand of Canacee. The first two are killed, but their strength passes into their victorious surviving brother.

Artegall

Artegall (AHR-teh-gahl), the knight of Justice, Britomart's beloved.

Talus

Talus (TAH-luhs), the iron man, his implacable attendant, who upholds justice untempered by mercy.

Aemylia

Aemylia (eh-MEE-lee-ah), a lady imprisoned with Amoret by a villainous churl and rescued by Belphebe.

Corflambo

Corflambo (kohr-FLAHM-boh), a mighty pagan who corrupts his enemies by filling them with lust.

Poeana

Poeana (pee-AH-nah), his rude, tyrannical daughter.

Amyas

Amyas (ah-MEE-ahs), the Squire of Low Degree, Aemylia's suitor.

Placidas

Placidas (PLAH-see-dahs), another squire loved by Poeana. Encouraged by Prince Arthur, Placidas marries Poeana and reforms her.

Druon

Druon (DREW-on) and

Claribell

Claribell, pugnacious companions of Blandamour and Paridell.

Thames

Thames (TAH-meess) and

Medway

Medway, the river god and goddess whose marriage is attended by the famous waterways of the world.

Neptune

Neptune, the sea god to whom Marinell's mother pleads for Florimell's release from Proteus.

Grantorto

Grantorto (gran-TOHR-toh), a tyrant who holds Irena's country in his power. He is the emblem of the political strength of the Roman Catholic Church.

Irena

Irena, his victim, who appeals to the Faerie Queene for help.

Sir Sanglier

Sir Sanglier (SAHN-gee-ayr), a cruel lord who is chastened by Talus.

Pollente

Pollente (pohl-LEHN-tay), a Saracen warrior who extorts money from travelers.

Munera

Munera (MEW-neh-rah), his daughter, the keeper of his treasury.

Giant Communism

Giant Communism, Artegall's foe. He tries to weigh everything in his scales, but he learns, before Talus hurls him into the sea, that truth and falsehood, right and wrong, cannot be balanced.

Amidas

Amidas (AH-mih-dahs) and

Bracidas

Bracidas (BRA-see-dahs), brothers whose dispute over a treasure chest is settled by Artegall.

Philtera

Philtera (FIHL-teh-rah), Bracidas' betrothed, who weds his wealthy brother.

Lucy

Lucy, Amidas' deserted sweetheart, Bracidas' wife.

Sir Turpine

Sir Turpine (TUR-pih-nay), a knight whom Artegall discovers bound and tormented by Amazon warriors. He refuses aid to Calepine and Serena.

Radigund

Radigund (RA-dih-guhnd), the queen of the Amazons. She captures Artegall and dresses him in women's clothes to humiliate him, then falls in love with him and tries unsuccessfully to win him.

Clarinda

Clarinda, her attendant, who comes to love Artegall as she woos him for her mistress.

Dolon

Dolon (DOH-lon), Deceit, a knight who tries to entrap Britomart.

Mercilla

Mercilla (mur-SIHL-lah), a just and merciful maiden queen whose realm is threatened by a mighty warrior.

The Souldan

The Souldan, her enemy, thought to represent Philip of Spain. He is destroyed by the brilliant light of Prince Arthur's diamond shield.

Malengin

Malengin (mah-LEHN-gihn), an ingenious villain who transforms himself into different shapes at will. Talus crushes him with his iron flail.

Belgae

Belgae (BEHL-jeh), a mother who loses twelve of her seventeen children to the tyrant Geryoneo and appeals to Mercilla for help.

Geryoneo

Geryoneo (jeh-ree-OH-nee-oh), her enemy, the power of Spain, who is slain by Artegall.

Burbon

Burbon, a knight rescued by Artegall as he fights Grantorto's men to rescue his lady, Flourdélis (France).

Sir Sergis

Sir Sergis, Irena's faithful adviser.

Calidore

Calidore (KAH-lih-dohr), the knight of Courtesy, sent to destroy the Blatant Beast, malicious gossip.

Briana

Briana (bree-AH-nah), a proud lady who abuses the laws of hospitality by demanding the hair and beards of ladies and gentlemen who pass her castle.

Crudor

Crudor, the disdainful knight for whom she weaves a mantle of hair.

Tristram

Tristram, a young prince reared in the forest who impresses Prince Arthur with his instinctive courtesy.

Aldus

Aldus (AL-duhs), a worthy old knight.

Aladine

Aladine (AL-ah-deen), his son.

Priscilla

Priscilla, Aladine's lady.

Serena

Serena, a noble lady, severely wounded by the Blatant Beast.

Calepine

Calepine (KAH-leh-peen), her knight.

Blandina

Blandina, Sir Turpine's wife, who tries to assuage his cruelty.

The Salvage Man

The Salvage Man, a "noble savage," another untaught practitioner of courtesy.

Matilde

Matilde, a childless noblewoman who adopts a baby rescued by Calidore from a bear.

Mirabella

Mirabella, a proud, insolent lady.

Disdaine

Disdaine (dihs-DAYN) and

Scorne

Scorne, her tormentors.

Pastorella

Pastorella, a nobleman's daughter who grows up with shepherds. Calidore falls in love with her and with her rustic life.

Meliboee

Meliboee (MEHL-ih-bee), her wise foster father, who warns Calidore that happiness is not to be found in one place or another but in oneself.

Coridon

Coridon (KOHR-ih-don), Pastorella's shepherd admirer.

Colin Clout

Colin Clout, a shepherd poet who pipes to the graces on Mount Acidale.

Sir Bellamour

Sir Bellamour, Calidore's friend and Pastorella's father.

Claribell

Claribell, his wife.

Melissa

Melissa, her maid, who discovers Pastorella's true identity.

Mutability

Mutability, a proud Titaness who challenges the power of Cynthia, the moon goddess.

Cynthia

Cynthia, her rival.

Mercury

Mercury, the messenger of the gods.

Jove

Jove, the king of the gods.

Mollana

Mollana, a nymph and an Irish river.

Faunus

Faunus (FAW-nuhs), a satyr who pursues her.

Dame Nature

Dame Nature, a great veiled figure who hears Mutability's arguments and judges, finally, that order reigns in all change.

Additional Characters: Characters

Acrasia

Acrasia is the mistress of the Bower of Bliss. She is Circe-like in her ability to lure men to their destruction. It takes both Sir Guyon and Prince Arthur to destroy her Bower.

Archimago

Archimago is an evil enchanter, a satanic figure who uses spells and disguises to lead his victims to sin. He represents Spain and the Roman Catholic Church. After the Red Cross Knight defeats the dragon, Archimago is arrested and thrown into a dungeon. Archimago reappears frequently, always in disguise, and always in an attempt to injure or tempt someone.

Artegall

Artegall is the Knight of Justice. Britomart has seen his face in a magic mirror and is seeking him. Eventually, Britomart and Artegall are united. Later, the Faerie Queene sends Artegall on a quest to rescue Irena (Ireland) from Grantorto (Spain).

Arthur

Prince Arthur appears initially as a rescuer of first Una, and later, the Red Cross Knight. Much of the Arthurian legend is incorporated, including the story of Merlin and his role in Arthur's birth. Arthur is in love with the Faerie Queene, whom he has dreamt of but never seen, and is on his way to find her when he encounters Una. After saving the Red Cross Knight and uniting him with Una, Arthur continues on his journey with Guyon. Later, Arthur will assist both Artegall and Calidore on their quests. Arthur is excessively moral and virtuous, serving the Faerie Queene with the same ardor as exists in the Arthurian legends.

Belphoebe

Belphoebe is a beautiful woman, as beautiful as the goddess Diana, who reared her, or the Queen of the Amazons. Bellphoebe is a virgin huntress, but she remains aloof from Timias, whom she has saved and who loves her.

Britomart

Britomart first appears disguised as a knight. And like a knight, she is brave and willing to risk her life to do the honorable thing. Britomart has seen a vision of the man she is to love in a mirror, which Merlin has provided, and she is on a journey to find this man, Artegall. Britomart has several adventures, in which she proves that a woman can be as brave and moral as any man. She successfully defeats several men, including

Artegall, while disguised as a man.

Calidore

Calidore is the last knight to appear. He is gentle and courteous, working during his quest to create harmony and to restore compassion to the world.

Contemplation

Contemplation is a hermit, who gives the Red Cross Knight a vision of the City of God and sends him back to complete his quest.

Duessa

Duessa is an evil enchantress, a partner of Archimago. She appears attractive on the outside, but inside, she is corrupt. Duessa represents several things: falsehood, the Roman Catholic Church, and Mary, Queen of Scots. She reappears in several disguises, but her duplicity is eventually recognized.

Dwarf

The dwarf accompanies Una and the Red Cross Knight on their journey to kill the dragon. The dwarf represents natural reason.

Error

Error is a monster, half woman and half serpent. She represents Eve and the serpent who deceived her. Error is surrounded by thousands of sucking offspring who gnaw at her. She cannot tolerate the light that is reflected from the Red Cross Knight's shield and she attacks him. After she is killed, her corpse vomits books and papers. Error is an important influence on John Milton who uses her as a model for Sin in *Paradise Lost*.

Gloriana

Gloriana is the Faerie Queene, who orders the Red Cross Knight to undertake a mission to rescue Una's parents. Gloriana is meant to represent Elizabeth I. She is a virgin queen and the knights who fight for her belong to the Order of Maidenhead. Although she has a small role, the Faerie Queene is the motivation for many of the knights' activities.

Guyon

Sir Guyon is a Knight of Temperance. He must be strong and uncompromising as he seeks to destroy Acrasia's power. Although he is tempted and frequently attacked, by using moderation, Sir Guyon is able to defeat his enemies and succeed in his quest.

Palmer

The black clad Palmer is Sir Guyon's companion and guide. He represents reason and prudence.

Red Cross Knight

The Red Cross Knight carries a shield that is dented and battered due to the many battles that he has fought. There is a cross on the shield that is the color of blood. The Red Cross Knight is a heroic figure, representing England's Saint George and the generic Christian man. The Red Cross Knight is impetuous and easily fooled, not always able to see beyond the obvious. He is confident of his abilities when he undertakes the mission, but after many confrontations, he is nearly suicidal. The Red Cross Knight is rescued by the teaching of the church in the House of Holiness. He is successful after a lengthy battle with the dragon and is married to Una.

Sans Foy

One of three knights who are Saracen knights that attack Una and her knight. Sans Foy represents lack of faith.

Sans Joy

One of three knights who are Saracen knights that attack Una and her knight. Sans Joy represents lack of joy.

Sans Loy

One of three knights who are Saracen knights that attack Una and her knight. Sans Loy represents lawlessness.

Timias

Timias is Arthur's squire, who is healed by, and falls in love with, Belpheobe. Disappointed by love, he becomes a hermit, but is finally healed by love and reunited with Arthur.

Una

Una is a beautiful woman, who is descended from the King and Queen of the West, a daughter of Adam and Eve. She represents truth and the true church. She requests the Faerie Queene's help in rescuing her parents. As she accompanies the Red Cross Knight, she rides a donkey, as did Christ when he arrived in Jerusalem. She also leads a lamb, the Paschal Lamb, a symbol of sacrifice. Una can advise the knight, but she cannot force him to listen to her wisdom, nor protect him from his own impetuous decisions. When she is deserted, she is assisted by the lion who willingly sacrifices his life for her. After Una is reunited with the Red Cross Knight and the dragon slain, she is married to the Red Cross Knight.

Critical Essays: Critical Evaluation

The Faerie Queene was the first sustained poetic creation after that of Geoffrey Chaucer, and its beauty and power made for it a secure place in English literature as soon as it was given to the world. At present it is generally accorded a high place in the history of English literary art. Combined with Edmund Spenser's poetic power was his high moral purpose.

Only six books of the twelve planned by Spenser were completed. The fragmentary seventh book was published in 1609, ten years after his death. What he did finish is so great that *The Faerie Queene* is, sad to say, generally more honored than read. The grand conception and execution of the poem reflect both the life of the poet and his participation in the life and ideals of his age. Spenser was committed to public service in the expansive period of Elizabethan efflorescence. A gentleman poet and friend of the great, Spenser never received the preferment he hoped for, but he remained devoted to Elizabeth, to England, and to late sixteenth century optimism. Even during his lifetime, Spenser was honored as a poet by the court and by other men of letters. Spenser's allegorical imagination and his masterful control of language have earned him a reputation as "the poet's poet."

Like other Elizabethan poets, Spenser produced eclogues and a sonnet sequence, but *The Faerie Queene* is his great accomplishment. In a famous letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, Spenser explained the ambitious structure and purpose of his poem. It was to be composed of twelve books, each treating one of Aristotle's moral virtues as represented in the figure of a knight. The whole was to be a consistent moral allegory, and the twelve books taken together would describe the circumscribing Aristotelian virtue of magnanimity, which Spenser called Magnificence.

At some point Spenser apparently decided to modify this plan. By the fourth book the simple representation of one virtue in one hero has broken down, though each book still does define a dominant virtue. More significantly, virtues are included that are not in Aristotle. Spenser is true to Aristotle, however, in consistently viewing virtue as a mean between extremes, as a moderate path between many aberrations of excess and defect.

The poem owes many debts to other antecedents. It is filled with references to and echoes of the Bible and the Greek and Latin classics. It is suffused with the spirit and much of the idealized landscape and atmosphere of medieval romance. However, its greatest debts are to the writers of the Continental Renaissance, particularly Ludovico Ariosto. Ariosto's loosely plotted *Orlando furioso* (1516, 1521, 1532; English translation, 1591) was the most influential single model, and Spenser borrows freely, but where Ariosto was ironic or skeptical, Spenser transforms the same material into a serious medium for his high ethical purposes. Moreover, while allegory is a dimension added to Ariosto by his critics, Spenser's allegorical purpose is unmistakable. In this aim, he is within the Renaissance tradition of writing courtesy books, such as Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528; *The Book of the Courtier*, 1561), guides to conduct for the gentleman who would seek excellence in behavior and demeanor. *The Faerie Queene* is a courtesy book turned to the highest of purposes—the moral formation of the ideal Christian gentleman.

Book 1, the story of Red Cross Knight, the Knight of Holiness, is the truest to the original structure intention. Red Cross is assigned to Una to relieve her kingdom of a menacing dragon. Through the book Red Cross's chivalric exploits gradually develop in him the virtue he represents, so that he can ultimately kill the dragon. Book 2 also makes its demonstration in a relatively straightforward way. Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, despite temporary setbacks and failures, eventually gains the knowledge of what true temperance is by seeing how it is violated by excess, by defect, by self-indulgence, and by inhuman austerity. Ultimately Guyon can reject the opulent pleasures of the sensuous Bower of Bliss.

In book 3 the allegorical method begins to change, probably because the virtues represented are more sophisticated in concept and more difficult to define. This complexity is mirrored in plot as earlier characters reappear and subsequent characters make brief entries. The result is an elaborate suspense and an intricate definition of virtues by means of examples, comparisons, and contrasts.

Book 3 deals with Chastity, book 4 with Friendship; both incorporate Renaissance platonic notions of love. Chastity is infinitely more than sexual abstinence, because by the perception of beauty and experience of love a person moves closer to divine perfection. The concept of mutuality is emphasized in book 3 by the fact that Scudamour cannot accomplish his quest without Britomart's contribution to his development. Book 4 further explores platonic love by defining true friendship through a series of examples and counter examples that culminate in the noblest kind of friendship: that between a man and a woman.

In book 5, the adventures of Artegall, Spenser develops a summary statement of his political philosophy. Justice is relentless and inexorable; it is not only a matter of abstract principle but also of wise governing. After the stringency of the Book of Justice, book 6 is a softer, more pastoral treatment of the chivalric ideal of Courtesy in the person of Sir Calidore.

Spenser's allegory is enlivened by the meanderings of plot as well as by the fullness and appeal of his personifications. In addition to the well-wrought moral allegory, there is sporadic political allegory, as Elizabeth occasionally becomes visible in Una or Britomart or Belpheobe, or as contemporary events are evoked by the plot. At every point Spenser's style is equal to his noble intentions. The verse form, the Spenserian stanza, is an ingenious modification of the rhyme royal stanza, in which the last line breaks the decasyllabic monotony with a rhythmically flexible Alexandrine. The diction has often been called archaic, but it is perhaps more a capitalizing on all the resources of Elizabethan English, even the obsolescent, in the service of the beauty of sound. Alliteration and assonance also contribute to a consummate aural beauty that not only reinforces sense but also provides a pervasive harmony that is distinctly Spenserian.

Critical Essays: The Faerie Queene

In a letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, Spenser stated that his purpose in this epic poem was to “fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline.” Although Spenser may have intended to write twenty-four books, twelve concerned with private and twelve with public or political virtues, he completed only six books and *The Mutabilitie Cantos*, a fragment of a possible seventh book.

Spenser’s first book focuses on the virtue of holiness and relates the story of Redcross Knight, also St. George of England, who hopes to liberate the parents of Una (Protestantism), the one true religion. Sir Guyon, the hero of the second book, is the knight of temperance who must withstand the temptations of the Cave of Mammon and the Bower of Bliss.

Books III and IV focus respectively on chastity and friendship. The central figure of both books is Britomart, the female knight of chastity, who seeks her promised lover, Artegall or justice. Britomart is chaste in an Aristotelian sense; she wants to be united with Artegall in honorable marriage, not to live as a celibate.

Artegall, the hero of Book V and knight of justice, sets out to free Lady Irena (Ireland) from Grantorto (Roman Catholicism) and to defend Belge (Netherlands) against her enemy (Spain). Book VI focuses on courtesy and the adventures of Sir Calidore and Sir Calepine, who try to restrain the Blatant Beast (slander).

In *THE MUTABILITIE CANTOS*, Spenser revels the constancy of order which is obscured by the mutability of the natural and political world. An eclectic and fascinating work, *THE FAERIE QUEENE* represents Spenser’s celebration of Elizabeth I and his analysis of 16th century civilization.

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Freeman, Rosemary. *“The Faerie Queene”: A Companion for Readers.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970. Displays a keen appreciation of Spenser’s poetry and the peculiarity of his epic. Part one discusses the poem’s origin, structure, and allegory; part two makes a book-by-book thematic analysis.

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Parker, M. Pauline. *The Allegory of “The Faerie Queene.”* Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1960. More accessible than other studies of the poem’s allegory. Approaches the poem thematically, identifying five major themes that cross the boundaries of individual books.

Sale, Roger. *Reading Spenser: An Introduction to “The Faerie Queene.”* New York: Random House, 1968. Speculates that Spenser’s transformation from a medieval to a modern poet prevented him from finishing his epic. Also argues that the poem is intentionally “undramatic.”

Critical Essays: Sample Essay Outlines

Topic 1

1. Duessa deceives Fradubio and the Redcross Knight because she is beautiful and acts as if she is chaste, yet secretly she is ugly and evil. How does the reader know that Una is not the same way? What clues does Spencer provide that Una is good and Duessa deceitful? Discuss their names and the way that the Redcross Knight meets each Lady, as well as her influence upon him.

I. Thesis: In Book I of Spencer's *Faerie Queen*, Una's goodness is unquestionable and displayed in her behavior and her effect upon others. Duessa's evil nature is revealed by warnings that the Redcross ignores as well as by the idle and lascivious behavior she induces in him.

II. The method of meeting each Lady and the immediately following adventure illustrates the Lady's nature.

a. Una was supported by the Faerie Queen in her petition for aid, and so receives the highest possible recommendation.

b. In the Forest of Error, Una urges Redcross not to enter the cave but when he does tells him how to kill the monster.

c. Duessa fled Redcross as if she were used to rough society, not nobles. Her companion Sans foy was a brute.

d. Fradubio warns Redcross, but Redcross does not listen.

III. The effect of each Lady on Redcross and others illustrates Una's nature to the reader.

a. Una moderates Redcross' enthusiasm and helps him to win battles. She advises him well.

b. Una tames the wood gods and teaches them religion.

c. Una brings Prince Arthur to save Redcross and then heals him in the House of Holiness.

d. Duessa causes Redcross to fight the vain battle with Sans joy.

e. Duessa distracts Redcross by the stream so he is weak and gets captured by Orgoglio.

IV. The appearance of each Lady illustrates her nature, as does her name.

a. Una is in black, aptly mourning for her kingdom.

b. Una is so beautiful she inspires peace and calm in wood gods.

c. "Una" means one.

d. Duessa wears scarlet and is decked in gems like the Whore of Babylon.

e. The reader knows Duessa's beauty is false.

f. "Duessa" implies "two" and hence duplicity.

V. Conclusion: Una and Duessa's natures are diametrically opposite. Una embodies goodness while numerous clues mark Duessa as deceitful, duplicitous, and evil.

Topic 2

2. There are several chaste women in Book III. Compare and contrast the motivations for Belphoebe, Florimell, and Britomart's chastity. Spencer limits comparisons to Queen Elizabeth to Belphoebe and not to Florimell or Britomart. Why would that be? Does Belphoebe have something more than Florimell or Britomart, or is her chastity simply different? Discuss the role of Timias and her birth in the portrayal of Belphoebe's chastity.

I. Thesis: Although Britomart is omitted from the characters who represent Queen Elizabeth allegorically, this is not because she lacks anything other characters have. On the contrary, Belphoebe lacks an element of chastity that Queen Elizabeth lacks but that Florimell and Britomart have: the desire for healthy sexuality. By limiting Queen Elizabeth's comparison to Belphoebe, Spencer may be criticizing the Queen's lack of heirs.

II. Florimell is chaste out of fear.

- a. She runs from all men, even Prince Arthur.
- b. She accepts witch's son's presents out of fear of his nature.

III. Britomart is chaste out of love.

- a. Britomart is androgynous and so is unafraid of lustful men; self-defense.
- b. Britomart loves and seeks Artegall.
- c. Britomart defends Amoretta and thus true love.

IV. Belphoebe is chaste in a sterile but self-conscious way.

- a. She tells Braggadocchio that she works for chastity, and likes sweat, wars, and hunting.
- b. She can defend herself, so has no fear of lustful men.
- c. Raised with women, she may not have felt love or lust for men.
- d. She is unconscious of lust in others and nearly kills Timias.
 - i. She does not know why he continues to sicken
 - ii. She tries to doctor him traditionally
- e. She is born without original sin.
 - i. Purer than any other human but Amoretta and Christ.
 - ii. Raised by Diana, a heavenly virgin, and so surrounded by divine grace and example throughout childhood.

V. Book III demonstrates that sexuality can be healthy even in religious context.

- a. Garden of Adonis
 - i. Sexuality in context of love and procreation.

ii. Heavenly Eden.

b. Marriage

i. Like Garden, contextualized and not dissipating.

ii. Sinless in marriage and for procreation.

VI. Conclusion: Belpheobe's chastity is closer to divine chastity than it is to Protestant or religious chastity. Britomart and Florimell's chastity seeks the unity of married love and healthy sexuality. Britomart's behavior is more pure because it comes from positive thoughts and action rather than fear.

Critical Essays: Suggested Essay Topics

Introduction and Book I, Cantos i-iv

1. The Redcross Knight and Una love each other, yet he abandons her because he suspects that she is not chaste. Further, the pair travel together not out of love but because Una has a task she wishes the Redcross Knight to complete. Describe the kind of love they have for each other. Also, the Knight is strong and brave, while Una is wise, careful and in need of protection. These are stereotypes of men and women. How does Spencer use these stereotypes to reinforce his ideas of their kind of love?

2. Duessa deceives Fradubio and then the Redcross Knight because she is beautiful and acts as if she is chaste, yet secretly she is ugly and evil. How does the reader know that Una is not similar? What clues does Spencer provide that Una is good and Duessa deceitful? Discuss their names and the way that the Redcross Knight meets each Lady, as well as her influence upon him.

Book I, Cantos v-viii

1. In Book I, Redcross makes a series of mistakes. First, he battles the monster Error. Then he believes the Archimago's deception and abandons Una. He rides with Duessa, who is linked to Catholicism and duplicity. He lingers in the House of Pride, fights a prideful battle, and then is captured by Orgoglio. Discuss Redcross' descent into error as a sign of his inherent sinfulness. Argue for the inevitability of his gradually worsening situation, and then discuss the role of Prince Arthur in saving him.

2. Discuss the possibility of free will and choice in Book I of the *Faerie Queen*. Did Redcross cause his own entrapment and imprisonment by ignoring Una's advice and failing to believe in her chastity? Do you think Redcross have avoided all pain if he had listened to and believed in Una from the beginning? Discuss the role of the Archimago's false vision, Duessa's call out to Sans joy, and Fradubio's story as points of choice for Redcross in this Book.

Book I, Cantos ix-xii

1. Redcross spends time with Duessa in the House of Pride, which is ruled by Queen Lucifera. He later spends time with Una in the House of Holiness, which is governed by Dame Celia and her three daughters. Compare the House of Pride and the House of Holiness. Pay particular attention to their effects upon Redcross in terms of his own perception of himself and his ideas about his place in the world.

2. The Redcross Knight is placed to be a hero from the beginning of Book I. However, his weaknesses continue to appear until his stay in the House of Holiness. He is subject to pride, lust, and deception, is unfaithful to the Lady he loves, and even after being rescued by Prince Arthur he walks into the cave of Despair. Defend Redcross as a hero and Christian. Are his failings common to all humans? If so, how can he overcome them at the end of Book I? If he is a particularly weak man, how can he be the hero? Duessa's role

as a symbol of Catholicism means that Redcross betrays Protestantism in the course of Book I. How can a betrayer be a good Christian and later a saint?

Book II, Cantos i-vi

1. Spencer divides the world into those of noble blood and those of common, base blood. In addition, he divides the characters into those of Faerie and those of worldly blood, and those are further subdivided into those of Briton and those of Roman, Pict, or pagan blood. Discuss virtuousness as related to these divisions. Use Braggadocchio, Alma, Pyrochles, and Guyon as examples.

2. The Palmer acts as a reasoned check on Guyon's behavior. The Palmer tells Guyon the nature of Furor and keeps Guyon from freeing Pyrochles from Occasion and Furor. Does the Palmer's watch over Guyon decrease Guyon's ability to demonstrate his own virtuousness? If so, are the other characters in the Book deficient in temperance because they don't have reasonable guides like the Palmer to help them? If not, how can Guyon be the master of his own self if he requires guidance?

Book II, Cantos vii-xii

1. Although Redcross has to return to the Faerie Queen and postpone his life with Una, Redcross receives a celebratory procession, a feast, the promise of sainthood, the hope of a happy marriage, and the eventual rule of a kingdom at the end of Book I. Guyon simply gets to leave the island where the Bower of Bliss is located in Book II. Neither of these endings are entirely happy, but the Book II ending is much less satisfying. Explain these strangely unhappy endings in terms of the virtue each Knight was striving for. Tie in the role of the Faerie Queen and the motivation for each quest.

2. Prince Arthur saves Guyon from being robbed while passed out from his time in the cave of Mammon. In turn, Prince Arthur is later saved by his Squire during a battle. Each of these instances shows a helpless Knight receiving aid from a surprising source. Show how these instances illustrate Spencer's religious ideas about helpless sinners and God's grace. Do both situations emphasize the same parts of those religious ideas?

Book III, Prologue-Canto vi

1. There are several chaste women in Book III. Compare and contrast the motivations for Belphoebe, Florimell, and Britomart's chastity. Spencer limits comparison to Queen Elizabeth to Belphoebe and not to Florimell or Britomart. Why? Discuss the role of Timias and her birth in the portrayal of Belphoebe's chastity.

2. Compare the Garden of Adonis to the Bower of Bliss from Book II or the House of Holiness from Book I. Unlike Guyon or Redcross, who visit those locations, Britomart does not actually visit the Garden of Adonis, but she does meet Amoretta who comes from there. Discuss Amoretta's role in Britomart's psychological development, and compare and contrast it with the effect of the House of Holiness on Redcross or the Bower of Bliss on Guyon.

Book III, Cantos vii-xii

1. Neither Florimell nor Amoretta give in to the powerful, magical beings who keep them captive, yet neither of them has a man who can rescue them. What motivates their refusal to yield when all the odds are against them? Make a case for not giving in to helplessness even when no possibility of hope can be seen. Does Britomart represent God's grace when she saves Amoretta? Argue that Britomart's meeting with Scudamore was not a coincidence.

2. Although several chaste characters are seriously endangered in the course of Book III, neither Malecasta nor Hellenore meets any harm. Compare and contrast Malecasta and Hellenore as examples of lack of chastity and speculate as to why Spencer felt no need to demonstrate their punishment when many chaste characters are imprisoned and/or tortured. Is Spencer suggesting that a lack of virtue leads to a happier life?

Book VI, Proem-Canto vi

1. Briana accuses Calidore of violence, somewhat justifiably. How can courtesy be paired with violence and still be a virtue? Consider the role of religion in your answer.
2. Both Crudor and Turpine are chastised by temperate and courteous Knights in Book VI. Compare their offenses against courtesy and offer an explanation for why Turpine loses the trappings of Knighthood, but Crudor does not. Are there degrees of vice and offense in Spencer? If not, why are the punishments different for each man? If so, what does that say about virtues?

Book VI, Cantos vii-xii

1. The *Faerie Queen* is heralded as a Protestant poem, but Book VI endorses unchaste behavior, uses violence to enforce the virtue that is its theme, and the embodiment of God's grace is shown to be deeply flawed. Does Book VI still model Protestant values? If so, in what ways? If not, what explanation or interpretation can you give for why not?
2. Although Spencer explicitly dedicates the *Faerie Queen* to Queen Elizabeth, this Book contains no mention of her and no praise of her. What plausible explanation can there be for this omission? What role might the Blatant Beast and Sir Walter Raleigh play in that explanation? Include the proem and final stanzas of Book VI in your answer.

Critical Essays: Critical Overview

Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, has had a lasting effect on the literary community. In some cases, it has been Spenser's nine line, Spenserian Stanza, that influenced poets such as Burns in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, Shelley in *The Revolt of Islam* and *Adonis*, Keats in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, Tennyson in sections of *The Lotos-Eaters*, and Byron in *Childe Harold*. But Spenser's influence extends far beyond the construction of a stanza of poetry. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* draws from Spenser, especially in his development of Sin, who with her grotesque appearance and gnawing offspring, is taken from Spenser's depiction of Error in Book I. But Spenser influenced Milton in other ways. Spenser resurrected a classical literary genre that had been virtually ignored for hundreds of years. While there had been other compositions that were called epics, such as Thomas Mallory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, most of these works did not draw on classical traditions. Mallory's epic is a collection of legends, assembled into one work. However, Spenser is returning to the Greek and Latin genesis of the epic, inspired by the works of Homer and Virgil. This recalling of the classical past also inspires Milton to create his own classically inspired epic. As a result, *Paradise Lost*, like *The Faerie Queene*, is modeled on the classical Greek origins of the genre.

In becoming such an important influence, it is easy to overlook Spenser's social and political contributions in composing *The Faerie Queene*. During Elizabeth's rule, there existed an aspect of her life that has been labeled the Cult of Elizabeth, which defines the literary treatment of women affected by the fact that the country was ruled by a virgin queen. Elizabeth was the object of enormous flattery. Her courtiers and poets provided her with adulation in language similar to that paid to a Petrarchan mistress. As a ruler, she was clothed in divinity because she was a woman and because she was a virgin. She was called Diana (the virgin goddess of the moon and of hunting), Cynthia (celebrated as the goddess of the moon), and Semele (mother of Dionysis). And, according to Spenser, Elizabeth was Glorianna in *The Faerie Queene*. Few women enjoyed the liberty and personal freedom of Elizabeth. Both traditional patriarchy and religion maintained that women were inferior; but as queen, Elizabeth could proclaim her superiority. As the ordained representative of god, the queen inverted the traditional claims of male superiority. Poets responded with exaggerated claims of her virtue, wisdom, and strength. The problem with the Cult of Elizabeth was that it provided little for ordinary women, who lacked God's endorsement of their adequacy. Whether it was because of the patronage system or just simple admiration for his queen, Spenser was a leading proponent of Elizabeth. As an anti-Catholic,

nationalist, Spenser hoped to leave a legacy of national pride to inspire the sort of chivalry that he thought was missing from the Elizabethan world. Much of these emotions went into his epic. However, the patronage system was also an important factor in Spenser's glorification of Elizabeth. Simple economics influenced Spenser's work, as should be expected. With Elizabeth providing an income, a grateful poet might be expected to exaggerate his patroness' virtues, as well as the strengths of her court and couriers.

When Sir Philip Sidney wrote his *Defence of Poesy* in 1579, he saw little to admire in English poetry since the time of Geoffrey Chaucer. Spenser's letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, which opens *The Faerie Queene*, describes Spenser's intent to compose twenty-four books. The first twelve were to explore private virtues, and the last twenty-four were supposed to examine public virtues. Spenser died before he could complete the first twelve, but it is clear from this letter to Raleigh that Spenser intended to rectify the sad situation that Sidney described. Spenser envisioned becoming the sort of great poet that Sidney said England needed. Spenser wanted to create a great national literature, and did so with *The Faerie Queene*.

Most often, only the first book, or occasionally, the first three books of Spenser's epic, *The Faerie Queene*, are read by students. Spenser's use of archaic language is difficult for many students, as is the convoluted plot and the many characters, most of whom appear only briefly. In addition, the characters are only superficially defined, since they represent allegory. Often, characters reappear at random, with new roles and a new allegorical affiliation, such as Duessa and Archimago. Other characters appear only as needed, seemingly called, as if by telepathy, such as Arthur, who drifts in and out of the epic whenever he is needed. This perceived lack of continuity often intimidates first-time readers, who are unprepared for the effort it takes to read and absorb *The Faerie Queene*. In spite of any difficulties, writers, from Spenser's death, through the end of the twentieth century, have found inspiration in Spenser's language. Students, too, have found that Spenser provides a wealth of characters and myths, each one worth the time to explore.

Essays and Criticism: The Faerie Queene Contributions

Sixteenth-century England is framed by two fictional works that depict an ideal society. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), which began the century, and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590), which ends the century, both create an ideal world where men behave with dignity and with truth and valor. This is a world in which personal values are more important than greed or lechery. When More creates his *Utopia*, he is responding to changes in English life, as English society moves from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance. In More's world, education is changing, as men are being educated for public service. In addition, the people are moving away from the church and a career in the clergy and into more secular interests. At the end of the century, when Spenser writes his epic, *The Faerie Queene*, England is once again facing change. Queen Elizabeth has ruled more than thirty years, nearly all of Spenser's life, and the country has begun to worry about an heir to the throne. Although the queen is healthy (she lives until 1603), the idea of a virgin queen has been losing its appeal for some time. Elizabeth has resisted all efforts, first to marry and give birth to an heir, and second, to name anyone as heir to her throne. In short, the Elizabethan world is on the cusp of change, just as More's Tudor world was eighty years earlier. As one way to respond to political and social tensions, Spenser illustrates the usefulness of literature, especially when combined with religion, history, and philosophy, as a means to effect social change.

In *The Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser presents his ideas of what constitutes an ideal England. In the letter to Sir Walter Raleigh that was published with Books I-III, Spenser states that his purpose in writing is to create a model for educating young men, but he is not simply providing an academic model. Spenser maintains that his purpose is to, "fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." To ease this learning, Spenser points out that his work will, "be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read." Spenser understands that his audience needs to find education palatable, and he continues in his letter to state that he has chosen King Arthur and his world as the

topic of his epic because Arthur's story carries no political implications. In fashioning his epic as a means to teach valor and graciousness, Spenser is meeting the challenges set forth by Sir Philip Sidney only a few years earlier. In his *Defence of Poesy* (1579), Sidney argues that poetry creates pleasure and that pleasure makes learning more enjoyable. Sidney pointed out that men learn best when they want to learn, when they are eager to learn. Making learning pleasurable is one goal of the poet, according to Sidney: "he [the poet] doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it." The poet, says Sidney, has the power to make the distasteful, more agreeable: "even as the child is often brought to take the most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste." Thus the poet is akin to the mother who puts cherry flavoring in medicine to entice a child to swallow. For Spenser, the cherry flavoring is Prince Arthur and his knights, who teach honor and truth, through entertainment.

A classical epic, such as those composed by Homer or Virgil, requires a hero of imposing stature, one of national importance. Prince Arthur, the Red Cross Knight, Guyon, Artegall, and Calidore, fit this definition, since each knight engages in adventures and rescues damsels, requiring abilities far beyond the means of ordinary men. Their deeds are those of great valor, often demanding super human courage, just as the epic tradition requires. Spenser draws on England's legendary past, which recalls a time of greatness and of grandeur. He implies that with these models to guide them, England's people can achieve this greatness again. In Spenser's world, there is sin and evil, balanced by virtue and goodness. Moreover, the manifestations of these qualities are interesting and alive, filled with plotting and deception, and the ability to create change. Spenser's heroes and villains are representative stereotypes. The Anglicans against the Catholics is a plot, really no different than the cowboys against the Indians of twentieth century cinema. An effective writer needs both heroes and villains to illustrate an idealized world. Unlike Sir Thomas More in *Utopia*, Spenser takes a chance and reaches back into England's history to appropriate his knights and their quests. Like More, Spenser was an apostle of humanism, but Spenser sought to use his text to educate the nobility to chivalric ideals, which he thought were superior to contemporaneous ideals. In his reading of Spenser, Graham Hough says that Spenser intended to educate the nobility to chivalric integrity by recalling the medieval romance that he thought represented a better society. Hough points out that there are no exact locations, with everything in Spenser's epic appearing rather dream-like. This vagueness of location adds to Spenser's ability to depict an ideal world and makes it safer for him to do so. He is not competing with his own rather politicized world, and no one can condemn the poet for wanting to replace England with a dream—no matter how idealized.

In his work, Spenser is reflecting the Renaissance emphasis of leading a life of beneficial action. At the same time, his text reflects the real-life tensions between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England (established by Elizabeth I in 1559). Northrup Frye argues that Spenser saw *The Faerie Queene* as a means to reclaiming the virtue and education necessary to return fallen men to a higher level of nature in the upper world (Frye divides nature into four worlds and man should be closer to the top). Frye argues that education is the central theme of *The Faerie Queene*, pointing out that, "if we had to find a single word for the virtue underlying all private education, the best word would perhaps be fidelity: that unswerving loyalty to an ideal which is virtue, to a single lady which is love, and to the demands of one's calling which is courage." This emphasis on fidelity is the underlying ideal that motivates all of Spenser's heroes and heroines. For Spenser, the Anglican Church epitomizes this fidelity. Thus, Spenser's text relies on biblical allegory to present his perfect world. The imperfect world is represented by allusions to the Catholic Church. For instance, Archimago is first seen as a hermit singing Latin, the Ave Maria, the language of the Catholic Church. He represents evil and deception and the Pope. His accomplice, Duessa, is false, and at different times, she is Mary Queen of Scots, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Whore of Babylon. Her attempts to deceive the Red Cross Knight reveal the attempts of the Papacy to deceive the faithful. To serve as contrast to the evil of Archimago and Duessa, Una is truth, the Anglican Church. Red Cross Knight, the hero of Book I, represents St. George, the Christian man who must rescue Una's parents and defeat hypocrisy. When he is driven to the brink of despair (a considerable sin in Renaissance life), only the teachings of the church (in the House of Holiness) restore him. In this epic, truth defeats the world (the House of Pride), flesh (Duessa at the fountain), and the devil (the cave of despair). Prince Arthur (ancestor to Elizabeth) defeats the giant, Orgolio, and the

Catholic Church is defeated by the Anglican. The characters in Spenser's epic are allegorical representations of this tension between Protestant and Catholic belief. The setting is medieval England, but the topic is Renaissance in origin. As Sidney argued, poetry has merit in its ability to make education sweeter and easier to swallow. Spenser accomplishes this by resurrecting the medieval romance and the chivalric knight as instruments to demonstrate the righteousness of the Church of England.

Spenser's attempt to create an ideal world and to remind men of the importance of virtue was not a new idea. Sir Thomas More had attempted something similar at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The setting for More's *Utopia* (1516), is the ideal community that More wishes could be created in England. This is More's opportunity to criticize government and the ruling class in a less obvious way. If, as Horace argues (and later Sidney), the purpose of art is to educate, that must certainly be what More had in mind with *Utopia*. In this work, More offers political solutions disguised as fiction. Reform is at the center of More's design, and religious tolerance is his purpose. More felt that only an objective outsider could see the problems that plagued England. His work, then, is a guide for how to improve the world. *Utopia's* ideal society is defined as a democracy of equal representation and equality of class. More envisioned the responsibilities of government being shared by the people—at least through their elective choices. Tyranny in a ruler would not be tolerated. In this sense, More is echoing his own *History of Richard III*, with its condemnation of rulers who misuse power. He is nonpartisan in that text just as he is in *Utopia*. *The History of Richard III*, is not directed at one particular king but at the despotism of poor government.

Interestingly, More rejects the chivalry of the medieval period, which Spenser will embrace in *The Faerie Queene*. Because More is really on the cusp between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, this omission is curious. Warriors have no place in his world. Perhaps More is saying that his *Utopian* people are better Christians than his contemporary Englishmen. Asking such questions in England could be dangerous, as it ultimately was for More. Because of this danger, More uses fiction and a fictional faraway location to ask serious questions and propose solutions to the domestic, political, and religious strife that defined English society. The problem with More's idealized world is that it is boring. There is no art, literature, or drama. There is no difference of opinion, and it is too safe. Why does man need god if his life is already perfect? This *Utopian* ideal contradicts human nature, which thrives on dissent and argument. Creativity and new ideas evolve out of conflict. Edmund Spenser appears to understand this, since his text, while presenting an idealized world, also makes a world that is rich in conflict and danger, full of risk, and offering the opportunity for redemption. Spenser's world still needs God and the Anglican Church to survive.

In each author's need to create an ideal world, there exists a desire to make England a better place. A heroic past, which emphasized honor and truth, was particularly important in a society where so much disorder had reigned. Peace and the end of the War of the Roses were only a century old. In addition, the reign of Mary, which was particularly bloody and painful, was still a recent memory. There had also been recent rumblings from Mary Queen of Scots and plots to seize the throne. Elizabeth I craved order, as did her subjects. Peace and order in the monarchy were too recent to be taken for granted. The setting of *The Faerie Queene* may not be Renaissance England, but the content was still topical and important to that culture. By recapturing the past, Spenser has made the present more palatable, and he has instilled hope for the future.

Source: Sheri E. Metzger, for *Epics For Students*, Gale, 2001.

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Essays and Criticism: Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*

The entrapment of the newly betrothed Amoret in the house of the magician Busirane in *The Faerie Queene*, book IV—and her extreme reaction to that place—has for decades sent readers scrambling for a satisfactory

explanation. Why is she there? Whom should we hold responsible? Busirane has been seen as a presentation of the male sexual imagination "trying busily (because unsuccessfully) to dominate and possess woman's will". Scudamour, Amoret's aggressive new husband—who, while a complete stranger, abducted her against her will from her home in the Seat of Womanhood—is cited as the one responsible for engendering such terror in the young maiden toward this masculine force. It is he who reveals "the tension between husbandly love and its implicit antagonism to women." According to this reading, Scudamour, though he tries to rescue his wife from the magician's house, is, ironically, the one who put her there.

I, however, following Roche, find the source of Amoret's trials in her own character and upbringing. One must recall that Amoret was taken by Busirane during her wedding celebration, only hours before her marriage was to be consummated. In her blooming fear of her first sexual experience, she is blind to the difference between chaste love in a Christian marriage and lawless lust outside that institution: "Amoret makes no distinction between them, for her there is only the horror and enslavement of physical surrender."

Amoret, having spent time both in the Garden of Adonis, where she witnessed the beauty of natural generation, and at the Seat of Womanhood, where she learned the role of the virtuous lover, appears to have forgotten the lessons of the former and corrupted the lessons of the latter. For if Amoret, as most agree, stands for chaste affection, it can hardly be appropriate for her to withdraw from conjugal love with her presumably Christian husband. Even Paul, who thought the celibate state preferable for a Christian, taught: "Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. [...] Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer." (Corinthians 7.3, 5)

Nor is Amoret the only character who makes this mistake. When the beautiful maiden is first grabbed by Scudamour in the Temple of Venus, the figure of Womanhood castigates him: "it was to knight vnseemly shame, / Vpon a recluse virgin to lay hold, / that vnto Venus seruices was sold." Here Womanhood is making what to Spenser would be a tragic, almost perverse, error: She is equating reclusive virginity with divine service. Representing only the civil, confined, retiring idea of woman, Womanhood is apparently unaware of the procreative nature of woman celebrated in the Garden of Adonis. That procreation, of course, is just as much a part of "Venus seruices" as Shamefastness and Obedience. It is unavoidable that if Amoret is destined to be married she must partake in both aspects of Venus; her education is designed to make the two complementary. Both aspects are necessary, yet neither can be regarded as sufficient in itself, or an end in itself; each can only find its completion and its harmony in the other. Womanhood, however, would deny "the lore of loue" that Amoret learned in the Garden and would argue for half an education—and half a responsibility—as a whole. She views any affection beyond that half as "vnseemly shame."

This is the attitude Amoret appears to have brought to her wedding. The polite circle of ladies in the Temple, then, because their tutelage expands beyond the designated half of Amoret's learning, is not merely a circle but a chain, restricting Amoret with links of fear and false notions of love. And given that Amoret is later trapped in the Cave of Lust, we should not dismiss the reality of her own sexual nature. It is not unthinkable that a portion of her fear and disgust is directed at her own sexual feelings, which she only begins to recognize after meeting Scudamour.

Busirane, then, cannot simply be regarded as a lust figure, or the overactive male sexual imagination. For regardless of Scudamour's claim that Busirane tortures his bride because "to yield him loue she doth deny," love—whether carnal or emotional—is hardly what Busirane seems to be after. He does not lust after Amoret in any way heretofore understood in the poem. Indeed, he looks nothing like the figure of Lust who later traps Amoret in his cave, or the more courtly lust figure Corflambo, who "cast[s] secret flakes of lustfull fire / From his false eyes." The poet actually gives us very little sense of Busirane's appearance, only that he is a "vile Enchaunter [...] Figuring straunge characters of his art."

What Busirane seems to be doing in removing the "living blood" from Amoret's heart is not generating lust in her, or satisfying his own, but emptying her of the spirit of chaste affection, leaving a cold "dying heart" whose chastity is the brittle, life-denying kind which Spenser abhorred. It is the chastity that regards any and all forms of sexuality with suspicion and distaste; the chastity that denies the dual aspects of Venus and creates an Amoret who "cannot distinguish between the act of marriage and adulterous love".

The House of Busirane, therefore, should more rightly be termed the House of Fear. The reason Busirane is so vaguely described by Spenser is that the poet wishes to mimic the very formless and indecipherable nature of fear itself, which becomes more debilitating as one's apprehensions become less localized and less justified. The reason Britomart must not merely kill Busirane but make him reverse his magic is that Amoret needs not only to shirk off her unwillingness to consummate her marriage, but also to be cured of the essential fear which caused her reluctance in the first place. The life blood of ideal chastity must be restored to her.

Britomart's rescue, then, should be regarded not simply as one woman rescuing another from the evils of male domination, but as a character more experienced in the trials of the heart helping another, who is much less so, to put aside wildly exaggerated and frightful notions. Britomart, who herself has felt the painful wound of love and been succored by Merlin's instruction that her affection is not an ignoble one, is the lone character in the poem, male or female, with the requisite sympathy, serenity, and power to free Amoret from her fear. After all, Dame Concord approved of Scudamour's stealing his would-be bride from the safe, virginal Seat of Womanhood. Timid Amoret cannot possibly understand that benediction. Britomart can assure her of it.

Source: John Vanderslice, "Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*," in *The Explicator*, Vol. 57, No. 4, Summer, 1999, pp. 197-199.

Essays and Criticism: Spenser's Customs of Courtesy

The decrees of society are temporary ones. —Nabokov

In the first half of his *Faerie Queene*, published in 1590, Edmund Spenser generally looks to the distant past for those values that would fashion a gentleman to the ideals of chivalry. By the time he published the second installment of his poem in 1596, Spenser seems to have struggled more openly with the relationship between social practice and values: Should one tolerate customs of which one disapproves? What can be done when others condemn what one believes is right?

The allegory of Book VI, the legend of courtesy, foregrounds these questions. The hero of this section of Spenser's romantic epic is Sir Calidor, charged by the Faerie Queene to track down the Blattant (or Blatant) Beast, a hound-like creature that Spenser named after the *beste glattisant* that the pagan knight Sir Palomides tracks as hopelessly as he pursues the love of Isode in Malory's *Morte Darthur*. Calidor's quest is also incomplete, for he finds the baying animal but cannot muzzle it permanently.

The critical consensus that the Blattant Beast represents the inevitability of slander or detraction has not been matched by agreement over the way the rest of Book VI manifests the operation of courtesy. Hamilton's introduction finds no adequate social context for the story, declaring that "allegorical interpretation [is] entirely inadequate, irrelevant and disposable. Of all the books, Book VI seems closest to romance with its aura of manifold, mysterious meanings conveyed in a 'poetic' context and not at all in any abstract moral, philosophical, or historical argument." Most critics find the central theme of the legend in Calidor's vision of the Graces during the pastoral interlude in cantos 9 through 11.

What Hamilton and others attribute to the magic of romance, however, can be shown to be a deliberate vagueness that solves a problem that an enthusiastic reformer like Spenser could not avoid: how to establish

good conduct, when too radical a theory of change will leave one's own system exposed to a similar revolution. Only by defining "custom" in general and universal terms as "courtesy" can Spenser open up the possibility for change and claim the prerogative to effect it. Faced with the problem that no simple rule or persuasive argument suffices to establish the priority of one of two competing moral systems, Spenser constructs a narrative solution in *The Faerie Queene* by drawing on the conventions of chivalric romance, which he read in ethical terms. Three times in the first half of Book VI, once at Crudor's Castle and twice at Sir Turpine's Castle of the Ford, Spenser uses the custom of the castle topos, a narrative structure in which clashing standards of behavior open a gap between moral knowledge and moral action. Spenser could have found the topos in many chivalric romances, but he certainly knew it from Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. In earlier books Spenser adopted the convention for the unchaste usage of Malecasta, the suffocating social arrangements of the Castle of Couples, and the injustice of Pollente's bridge. Unlike Britomart and Artegall, the heroes of Book VI find greater difficulty in countering charges of their own ill conduct, as first Sir Calidor, then Sir Calepine, and finally Prince Arthur face customs that someone else regards as proper. Their tribulation—the difference between what they think is right and what action they can effect—foreshadows Calidor's ultimate failure to eliminate detraction.

The narrative convention of the custom of the castle, as a model of moral uncertainty, allows the Book of Courtesy to make its point that courtesy is characterized by imprecision and vagueness. This lack of formal definition characterizes other virtues, but it seems more paradoxical in Book VI, since we usually associate courtesy with show and explicit forms of behavior. Red Crosse takes precise steps and learns fairly exact lessons (the seven acts of mercy) in the House of Holiness. But Spenser's letter to Walter Raleigh emphasizes what Spenser calls "the show" rather than "precepts . . . sermoned at large." Sir Calidor therefore properly enters a world of romance, pastoral woodlands and pirates, whose surface hides practical reasoning. For if good customs are merely equivalent to manners and fashion, then their social construction and relativity become embarrassingly obvious in the encounter with the Other. But if courtesy resides in the mind as some sort of universal ideal, then it can assume various outward forms.

The need for a general understanding of courtesy coincided with Spenser's early experience in Ireland. The flexible planning necessary to implement English social control over Ireland encouraged the optimistic attitude toward social change that Book VI explores. The other lesson of Book VI, that denigration accompanies accomplishment, warns that if a courteous knight wants to be a reformer, his reputation will fare better in Fairyland than in Ireland.

We first see Sir Calidor, a knight known for his "faire usage" (his moral habits), congratulating Sir Artegall, from whom he learns that Artegall's attempts to embody Justice in Book V have aroused Envy and Detraction and attracted the Blatant Beast. Artegall's perhaps misplaced certainty of his own virtue ("I that knew my selfe from perill free") contrasts to Calidor's perhaps overly pessimistic fore-knowledge that his quest is endless and without instruction ("an endlesse trace, withouten guyde"). Their encounter suggests that a clash of values may be resolved not by proving the invalidity of another culture (Artegall's task) but by striving to put one's own house in order. But few rules suffice for all occasions in the Book of Courtesy.

Sir Calidor attempts to apply the self-reliance Artegall preaches during his first adventure, when he confronts the foul customs of Briana and Crudor. The knight travels until by chance he finds a squire tied to a tree, who tells him about the local practice of exacting a toll (a form of custom) from passing knights and ladies:

Not farre from hence, uppon yond rocky hill,
Hard by a streight there stands a castle strong,
Which doth observe a custome lewd and ill,
And it hath long mayntaind with mighty wrong:
For may no Knight nor Lady passe along
That way, (and yet they needs must passe
that way,)
By reason of the streight, and rocks among,
But they that Ladies lockes doe shave away,
And that knights berd for toll, which *they* for

passage pay. (my emphasis)

Calidor also learns that the source of the custom is Sir Crudor, who demands that Briana make a mantle "with beards of Knights and locks of Ladies lynd" to win his love. Calidor unbinds the squire and then rescues the squire's maiden by killing Maleffort, who works for Briana. Calidor next invades Briana's castle and slays the porter. He is putting the castle to the sword, sweeping away the inhabitants like flies ("bryzes"), when Briana accuses the knight of courtesy of murdering her men—and of threatening to rob her house and ravish her. Hamilton hears an invitation in her declaration of helplessness, but surely the point of the scene is to force Calidor verbally to defend his attack on the custom of the castle. The rules of civility vary in different times and places. Spenser's scene therefore gives prominence not just to the difficulty but to the uneasiness that accompanies the establishment of civility. Briana's charge that the knight of courtesy has vilely murdered her men dramatizes the perception that one has a difficult responsibility when imposing upon the customs of others.

False traytor Knight, (sayd she) no Knight at all,
But scorne of armes that hast with guilty
hand Murdred my men, and slaine my Seneschall;
Now comest thou to rob my house
unmand, And spoile my selfe, that can not thee withstand?
Yet doubt thou not, but that some
better Knight Then thou, that shall thy treason understand,
Will it avenge, and pay thee with
thy right: And if none do, yet shame shal thee with shame requight.

Chagrin takes hold of Calidor, as he listens to Briana: "much was the Knight abashed at that word." Puttenham's term for this significant pause is "aporia," whose effect is to raise doubt, as "when by a plaine manner of speech wee might affirme or deny him." The nervous anxiety raised by the question of customary behavior gives a false edge to Calidor's response to Briana. First Calidor denies responsibility for what he has done. "Not unto me the shame, / But to the shameful doer it afford." Calidor's speech implies that good customs, which characterize civility, preexist the evil efforts of Briana and her people to negate them.

Bloud is no blemish; for it is no blame
To punish those, that doe deserve the same;
But they that breake bands of civilitie,
And wicked customs make, those doe defame
Both noble armes and gentle curtesie.
No greater shame to man then inhumanitie.

Briana, however, remains deaf to the "courteous lore" of Calidor, forcing him to fight Crudor.

The battle between Calidor and Crudor figures the particular strain felt by someone who alters the custom of others. Their lives are compared to castles, impenetrable, as each seeks entrance to the other. With no direction—no fixed rules of deportment—Calidor and Crudor "tryde all waies." Their battle mirrors Calidor's perennial pursuit of the Blatant Beast, "an endlesse trace, withouten guyde". The phrase tells us that no written manual of instruction exists. The duel of Crudor and Calidor therefore figures the wandering ways, the labyrinth of fairyland.

Calidor's strain and chagrin undercut his reformation of Crudor. The battle technically ends when Calidor reduces Crudor's pride and cruelty, imposing humility on the fallen foe whose life he spares. Calidor then lectures Crudor on the Golden Rule and demands that he marry Briana without a dowry. Glad to be alive, Crudor agrees to his terms. At once something snaps in Briana (her sudden "affect"). She quiets down and gives her castle to Calidor, who redistributes the property to the squire and lady to recompense their lost beard and hair.

The moral would seem to be that a rude population will offer up their property in grateful exchange for lessons in civility—a fit fantasy for an English colonist in Ireland—were not Crudor's reformation curiously incomplete. How can Calidor's lesson in chivalry ("Who will not mercie unto others shew, / How can he mercy ever hope to have?") guarantee a new mode of conduct? Pressured by the threat of death, forced to swear allegiance on his conqueror's sword and the holy cross, Crudor bends to superior power rather than to reason. Does his mind remain stubborn?

Spenser never lets us trust what we see as each quest of *The Faerie Queene* opens. Here, he casts doubt on the extent to which Crudor takes to heart the new custom of courtesy, for if Crudor arises as bidden, he does so "how ever lief or loth." This episode is self-contained in the canto and never referred to again. Yet there are enough clues to the problems of reformation that we may suspect we are not violating the poem's artistic premises by wondering whether the new custom has indeed become customary, or whether Crudor's behavior may revert in an instant. Faced with a similar scoundrel, Boiardo's Brandimarte says, "A frog will never leave the mud!" Spenser's attitude is not devoid of such aristocratic disdain for the lower classes, but in contrast to Boiardo's rule of force in the face of hopeless intransigence and his appeal to a limited audience, Spenser's epic promises to fashion a gentleman without distinguishing whether he means to fashion one from scratch or merely to polish a gentleman born.

A spectacle, rather than specificity, solves the problem for one who, like Spenser, stands in the present and wonders what is the right thing to do today and how to ensure that pattern of behavior for the future. Cicero regarded eloquence as the source of civility, and we usually regard Spenser as promoting this humanist view. But the first custom of the castle scene in the legend of courtesy suggests that eloquence is a necessary but limited means of shaping social behavior. Calidor makes Crudor agree not to mistreat strangers. He tells him to help ladies, without explaining how. Crudor must marry Briana without demanding a dowry, but he receives no instructions on daily behavior. Such negative injunctions merely check the inclinations, including such selfishness as Crudor and Briana show. The purpose of the scene in the legend of courtesy is therefore not to promote Calidor or condemn Crudor and Briana, let alone to propose a blueprint for land appropriation or marriage settlements, but to explore social customs as a scene of contested values.

Spenser adopted the archaic mode of chivalric romance both for its essentially arbitrary form and to allow him to claim the authority of the past for those virtues he was keen to convey as guides for the future. But other people's customs represent formidable obstacles, because they too can claim the authority of the past. How can a reformer justify change without generating an uncontrollable force that can destroy the reformation process? To illustrate this issue, the custom of the castle motif operates as a dialectical structure in which social issues may take narrative form without our resorting to the ethical habit "of ranging everything in the antagonistic categories of good and evil" with the result that "what is bad belongs to the Other." The custom of the castle raises, as Jameson phrases it, "in symbolic form, issues of social change and counter-revolution."

There is, therefore, no bright line test for courtesy in *The Faerie Queene*. The Blatant Beast represents neither good nor evil but the way of the world: not just slander, but inevitable slander, from which no pastoral retreat provides protection. His bite seems arbitrary, like fashions or the complex set of duties determined by the rank of those one faces. Following the reformation of Crudor's castle, Spenser's narrative voice suggests that such courtesies are so bewildering that nature eases things for some people by making them naturally civil. Calidor, for example, has nature's gift, but Sir Calepine, Calidor's lesser image, is less fortunate in this respect, as the narrative proceeds to demonstrate.

The rude forest figures the uncertainty of moral guidelines by offering Calepine and his lover Serena opportunities for behavior that others—courtiers in a castle, for example—might regard as uncivil. Calepine and Serena are sporting in the forest when Calidor happens upon them, replaying a previous adventure in which a discourteous knight (slain by Tristram) stumbled on Aladine and Priscilla making love outdoors. Unlike the earlier knight, Calidor is too well heeled to stoop to jealous envy of their game; instead, he engages

Calepine in conversation until they hear the screams of Serena, whom the Blatant Beast snatches in his jaws as she wanders away to make a garland for her head. The beast soon releases her, but Calidor continues chasing it, and we do not see him again until he begins his pastoral interlude in canto 9. Meanwhile, Calepine finds Serena wounded and travels with her till nightfall, when a "fair and stately place" beyond a river comes into view as they seek shelter.

The place is Turpine's castle, and its custom is discourtesy. Turpine refuses to help Calepine carry Serena across the ford. Calepine crosses anyway, then calls on Turpine to fight and justify his failure to lend assistance to those in need. When Turpine ignores him, Calepine calls him a coward, as Arthur will later. Turpine represents more than cowardice, however. He stands for the inevitability of social detraction when two competing sets of values confront each other.

Normally the foul custom of a castle is that one must fight for lodging rather than receive unquestioned hospitality. Turpine's custom adds a twist by setting this battle not in the present or future but in the past. The porter shuts the gates in Calepine's face and tells him:

that there was no place
Of lodging fit for any errant Knight,
Unlesse that with his Lord he formerly did fight.
(my emphasis)

The custom doubly bars Calepine from entering since not only does Turpine fail to appear at his castle, but he has already refused to battle him at the ford. Turpine's barrier to entry is the kind of catch-22 or double bind that Spenser characteristically gives to villains who keep castles in Book III, the legend of chastity: the custom of Malecasta's Castle Joyous precludes any escape; Paridell will seduce Hellenore whether Malbecco watches jealously or not; and Amoret suffers whether she yields to or resists Busirane's black magic. Spenser does not label these practices as customs, but where a central personality organizes events, the pattern of behavior established by the moral habits of the individual symbolize those of an institution, as in the *Roman de la Rose*, the allegorical ancestor and source for medieval conventions of love.

Like the complex game of love that hinders access to the Rose in Jean de Meun's poem, the logic of Turpine's custom bewilders a naive Calepine. Turpine fails to abide not just by the rules of hospitality, but even by the normal foul custom of a castle, where a host insists on fighting his guests before giving them harbor. Calepine misses the point that he is therefore ineligible to enter. Sounding like Malory's Sir Dinadan, he tells the porter, who "no manners had," that he is weary, his lady is wounded, and he is in no mood to fight his host. He does not know that the man who refused to help him cross the ford also owns this castle. When he asks the porter for the name of the "Lord / That doth thus strongly ward the Castle of the ford," it seems that he has not conceived who and what he is up against. The custom of Turpine's castle finally forces Calepine and Serena to sleep outdoors, under a bush—appropriately for them, for they earlier made love outdoors "in covert shade."

Calepine's obtuseness reflects his incomprehension of the basis on which others disapprove of his conduct. The custom of Turpine's castle, which Calepine cannot overcome, therefore represents the larger social power that underlies the force of detraction. By keeping Calepine out, the society he faces robs him of his dignity. The custom of the castle distorts Calepine's reputation. Even Turpine's name infects the final syllable of "Calepine," which otherwise echoes Calidor as well as the generic Renaissance word for a dictionary: both Calepine and a word book are open to the inspection of others not familiar with their culture or language. They list rules for those not to the "manner" born. Moreover, Turpine causes not just mischief to Serena but inconvenience. English law distinguished an inconvenience from a mischief. An "inconvenience" results when the public is affected (*publicum malum*), while a "mischief" (*privatum damnum*) concerns private individuals. Serena inconveniences Turpine, in this public sense, so he refuses to admit her. Turpine's response is that of society—of those who believe the slander of the Blatant Beast, whose bite has wounded her.

As a "dark conceit" of detraction, Turpine continues his attacks after Calepine and Serena proceed on their way. Just as Calepine did not equate the knight at the ford with the keeper of the castle, so he does not realize that the knight who attacks him the next day is that lord of the castle whom he never saw the night before. The image of Calepine hiding behind "his Ladies backe" as Turpine attacks shows not a coward but someone who pays a social penalty for his actions. Calepine lacks awareness, as happens when one does not suspect the ill will of others. Turpine and his castle hold a distorting mirror up to the social reputation of whoever approaches them. They represent the sheer otherness of customs.

Detraction cannot harm one outside the society that circulates a slander. Once away from society, Calepine and Serena are safe. It is therefore fitting that "a salvage man" rescues them from Turpine. The savage's invulnerable skin, a romance image of his outsider status, makes him immune to the uncivil society Turpine represents. After chasing Turpine away, the savage invites Calepine and Serena to his forest home. Ensuing events suggest, indirectly, that Serena gives birth and Calepine arranges a foster family for the baby. When Calepine wanders away from her, he suddenly has an infant on his hands, which he gives to Matilda. Serena meanwhile is lodged in rustic solitude. She hurls herself down until her bleeding "did all the flore imbrew" as she lies "long groveling, and deepe groning." Spenser's romance uses uncertain, vague imagery and the temporal dislocations of entrelacement to avoid limiting the social allegory of Turpine's castle to a particular attitude about one issue, in this case the one raised by Serena's pregnancy. Serena's condition offers a specific but morally unnecessary reason why she and Calepine are not allowed inside Turpine's castle. The point is that the society of Turpine's castle, whatever one thinks of it, finds them unfit.

Spenser criticism is still reeling from the picture in Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* of a poet participating in the cruder moments of colonization, repressing his sexual instincts in the name of a false civility, and helping himself to the wealth of a nation whose presence and practices provoked Spenser's deepest fears about his own stability. But the darkening of Spenser's world has the paradoxical effect of keeping his poem alive. For if Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland* and parts of Book V, the legend of justice, show us a man willing to starve a population or threaten it with the sword, Spenser's thought in *The Faerie Queene* depends on the narrative mode of romance.

The custom of the castle topos offered Spenser's romance a way to present social solutions without promoting specific programs. Arbitrary rules characterize the artificial castles where custom demands one's beard or locks or upper garments of travelers. Such rules also characterize the pastoral world that Sir Calidor enters in canto 9, where Calidor attempts to win Pastorella's love by his considerate treatment of his rival *Coridon*. Calidor gives *Coridon* a garland that he had himself obtained from Pastorella: "Then *Coridon* woxe frolicke, that earst seemed dead." Despite *Coridon's* delight, the garland seems like the sign of a loser, for Calidor gives *Coridon* another one after he throws him in wrestling. Boccaccio's *Filocolo* questions what it means for a lady to give someone a garland: is it a mark of favor, or a sign that the receiver is too poor to provide for himself? Boccaccio suggests that the meaning of the action can only be interpreted in terms of the customary behavior of lovers.

Such ambiguous images and courtly love games provided romances with materials to symbolize larger questions of how to conform to social customs: how to talk, eat, get ahead, or survive. Puttenham gives a nice example of how one must tailor one's actions to what others are doing when he discusses the trope of *hysteron proteron*. What he calls "the preposterous" occurs "when ye misplace your words or clauses and set that before which should be behind, & è converso, we call it in Englishe proverbe, the cart before the horse." Whether the sentence "I kist her cherry lip and took my leave" is a figure of speech depends on whether it is the custom to kiss first and then bid farewell, or to first take your leave and then kiss, thereby "knitting up the farewell," in which case the order of events is reversed. He wryly advises to "let yong Courtiers decide this controversie."

Spenser relies on romance images of arbitrary and symbolic behavior—bearding knights, denying hospitality, stripping upper garments—because he seeks a nonspecific picture of courtesy, conceived as a struggle to promote civic welfare. "Vertues seat," Spenser says, "is deepe within the mynd, / And not in outward shows, but inward thoughts defynd." A virtue that lies deep within the mind would create a problem for a mimetic poet precisely because the virtue cannot be seen. But nothing Spenser shows us in his non-mimetic mirror of chivalry need be courtesy itself.

When Spenser makes courtesy a mental phenomenon, he parts from Renaissance theorists like Erasmus and Bacon and Montaigne, who almost invariably defined custom as a form of pedagogy, the training of the individual to perform or to endure. Bacon's essay on custom amounts to a program based on the idea that one can get used to anything. His real subject is habit, which has a notable power of persuasion, as when Hamlet tells his mother she can overcome the "monster custom" to develop a taste for abstinence in her relations with his uncle. The first half of Montaigne's essay "Of Custom" is similar to Bacon's essay. It is about how habits developed since childhood create one's character. In the second half, Montaigne switches to public usages, which a strong educational system helps one adopt as personal habits.

In terms of fashioning a gentleman, Spenser's retreat to generality answers a paradox that Jacques Derrida identified in Rousseau's *Emile*: "Pedagogy cannot help but encounter the problem of imitation. What is example? Should the teacher make an example of himself and not interfere any further, or pile lesson upon exhortation? And is there virtue in being virtuous by imitation?" A measure of humility for the teacher is also involved, since as Descartes observed, "those who take the responsibility of giving precepts must think themselves more knowledgeable than those to whom they give them, and, if they make the slightest mistake, they are blameworthy." Descartes suggests a practical solution: a historical account or a fable may be allowed to contain examples one may follow as well as "others which it would be right not to copy." Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poetry* recommends fables over history for one who seeks to create role models. Spenser avoids the problem of constructing role models by adopting the form of non-imitative romance.

Vagueness, or generality, fittingly attends to the three goddesses who dance on Mt. Alcidale, near the end of the legend of courtesy. They are said to be the source of all civility, but they are not models for imitation. Euphrosyne, Aglaia, and Thalia offer no specific instruction in the general fields of "comely carriage, entertainment kynde, / Sweete semblaunt, friendly offices that bynde, / And all the complements of curtesie." Another hundred graces circle them to the tune played by Colin Clout, who represents Spenser in his role of inspired poet. They are said to be the "complements" (specific ceremonies) of courtesy, but Spenser does not name their qualities. The omission seems deliberate in a poem capable of listing every river in England and Ireland. The name of the goddess whom Colin calls the mother of the graces reinforces Spenser's representation of a wide picture of courtesy rather than a list of rules: She is Eurynome, and her name combines a suffix for laws, custom, or organization (-nomy, perhaps from *nomos*) with a modifier (*eury*) meaning broad. Her presence on Mt. Alcidale indicates that courtesy requires a wider ability than that of mastering rubrics in a handbook. Aladine and Calepine and Tristram, knights whose names come from books, never reach the standard of behavior of Calidor, whose generic name says that good conduct is a gift.

Spenser's fascination with transcending customs sets his romance beyond the clash of English and Irish cultures or the skeptical acceptance of a Montaigne or More or any of the Renaissance thinkers (Bacon is often cited) who realized that customs were a suitable instrument of social control. The mode of the poem mirrors the poet's mode of life. Spenser always operated with an eye to the future, conceiving plans for his career, organizing the vast project of *The Faerie Queene*, and eagerly participating in property speculation in Ireland. This latter activity gives us a clue to his imaginative association of courtesy and the spacious ways of romance as a literary form.

The Munster settlement in which Spenser participated in the late 1580s, as he finished the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*, raised the issue of any large entrepreneurial enterprise, how to plan when tomorrow

brings change. The English resettlements gave this issue unprecedented scope. Elizabeth's privy council under Lord Burghley promoted settlement not under color of military conquest, though soldiers and their attendant violence were common, but through the subtler procedures of property development and social engineering. The result was a keen awareness of the difficulty of planning, of allowing for delays, disappointments, and competition. This activity gave Spenser a felt need for modes of conduct that would be both widely applicable and flexible.

The experience of the undertakers reinforced an axiom of anticipation that applies today. Where the future is uncertain, an employer, or undertaker, will find his or her interests best served not by constructing laws for his employees but by guidelines full of vague references to fairness and best efforts, to following standards according to the customs of others in similar enterprises, to duty and loyalty—in short, to equity and values. Equity is a judgment that depends on a total context, not strict rules. It offers open-ended flexibility. The drawback is that it courts uncertainty, especially in costs. Trying to account for activity in Ireland, the government regularly inquired into the exact numbers of English settlers transported to Ireland. Significantly, Sir Walter Raleigh was probably the most successful at settling large numbers of English tenants. But Raleigh's "short, rather vague, and detached" responses to the crown's 1592 inquiry were too imprecise to satisfy Burghley. According to MacCarthy-Morrogh, "Back came a letter demanding amplification upon a number of points including the English population: 'whose those be, or to what number, is not expressed, as the articles of the instructions did require.'" In fact, Raleigh raised working capital by offering land to Londoners whose goal was to profit by resale, not settlement.

The undertakers resorted to vagueness precisely because they bore the onus of day-to-day management and accountability, which belied the numbers Burghley might conjure up, sitting before his maps in his London chamber. Spenser must have felt the weakness of the settlement scheme as he wrote or revised Book VI during the 1590s. There should have been 1,575 armed settlers according to Burghley's covenants; in fact, there were hardly that many Englishmen in Munster, of whom perhaps three hundred were ready to fight, and there was lack of provision for enclosures or defensive buildings. In 1598, for reasons still obscure, the authorities suppressed publication of Spenser's analysis of what was wrong with the laws, customs, and religion of Ireland. The settlement plans failed completely that year, when the local Irish rebelled, and Spenser's castle at Kilcolman was burned. Spenser had become sheriff of Cork, but died in 1599 after sailing to London, paradoxically, to petition for help in controlling a society whose ways he knew as well as any man alive.

As romance versions of the Irish Other, Crudor and Turpine, Briana and Blandina base judgments on their own provincial terms, twisting the good intentions of Calidor, Calepine, and Prince Arthur. Turpine's detraction, in particular, stands for a "can't do" attitude, which must have been anathema to the poet who wrote the most mellifluous rhymed epic in English. Such an attitude never dies, but must be ignored by the successful undertaker, just as Turpine is not eliminated, only baffled, probably temporarily, like the Blattant Beast. That the conflict between another's views and one's own may seem preposterous (the key notion of Puttenham's definitions of *asteismus* and *hysteron proteron*) finds expression in the outcries of Briana and Blandina, in Serena's belated labor (after Calepine gives away a baby), and in Arthur's inability to punish Turpine because of slander that has always already occurred. The successful person, planning for tomorrow, learns to tolerate carping. The ultimate failure of Spenser's own career may disprove his message in particular but does not lessen the general power of courtesy conveyed by his chivalric romance.

IV

Prince Arthur offers an ambiguous solution to the problem of the uncivil social other when he confronts Turpine in the middle of the legend of courtesy. The ambiguity arises because, if Turpine represents society's judgment of others, Arthur is not only judged but discriminates too. The narrative raises the question of Arthur's opinion in a subtle way, by sending him to Turpine's castle not by chance but to "avenge th'abuses" that Serena complains of. Elsewhere in Arthurian romance, knights errant do not usually witness foul customs

in operation before personally confronting them. In Spenser's poem, however, Calidor finds a squire tied to a tree and sees Maleffort tearing the hair from a maiden's head before he takes action. Serena suffers from Turpine's discourteous custom and then tells her story to Prince Arthur. The pattern continues when the narrator of *The Faerie Queene* mentions that Calidor once met Turpine ("that proud Knight, the which whileare/Wrought to Sir Calidore so foule despight"). Since we only see Calepine and Arthur, not Calidor, meet Turpine, this reference may be a misprint or a mistake. If "Calidor" is correct, however, it underscores the structural principle of the scene of Turpine's confrontation with Prince Arthur, who, it turns out, has heard yet another story about Turpine before he reaches his castle.

For Arthur accuses Turpine of despoiling knights and ladies of their arms or upper garments, although this practice is mentioned nowhere else in the poem. Turpine's counterpart in the *Morte Darthur* on this matter is Sir Turquin, or Tarquin, who beats his prisoners "with thorns all naked" as he goes about capturing King Arthur's knights during his search for Lancelot. Prince Arthur has such an act of public shaming in mind when he accuses Turpine of stripping his victims (also the practice of Ariosto's Marganorre, who short skirts ladies, and Malory's King Ryence, who collects beards and serves as a model for Sir Crudor). The public aspect that connects Turpine to Malory's Turquin is slightly roundabout, because we must consider the entire context of Turquin's story, but clear enough if we remember that the Turquin episode represents Lancelot's first appearance in the *Morte Darthur* and that Lancelot's reputation instantly becomes an issue. Because Lancelot rejects the sexual favors of four queens (Morgan, the queen of Northgales, the queen of Eastland, and the queen of the Out Isles) public speculation becomes so intense that "it is noised" that Lancelot loves Queen Guenevere. Lancelot denies the allegation but at the same time recognizes the logic of public infamy—"I may not warn people to speak of me what it pleaseth them". Public gossip makes it difficult for characters like Calepine, Serena, or Timias to alter the way of the world that Turpine represents.

Spenser added the motif of public opinion to the traditional topos of the custom of the castle to make Arthur's encounter with Turpine not a confrontation between right and wrong but a conflict between different opinions. That Arthur's own reputation may also be at stake at Turpine's castle helps explain his strange behavior there, for the strategy Arthur employs in attacking Turpine owes something to a trick Lancelot uses to defeat Sir Peris de Forest Savage, someone closely associated with Turquin in Malory's story ("For like as Sir Turquin watched to destroy knights, so did this knight attend to destroy and distress ladies, damosels, and gentlewomen"). In an unusual and seemingly ungallant maneuver, Lancelot sends a damsel before him while he keeps himself "in covert." When Sir Peris knocks the damsel from her horse, Lancelot rebukes him and cuts his throat. In *The Faerie Queene*, Prince Arthur easily passes through Turpine's gates, then, like Lancelot, he dissimulates. Arthur feigns distress to give Turpine's porter an opportunity to deny him hospitality, the usual foul custom of romance, just as Lancelot exposes Sir Peris by hiding while Sir Peris makes a damsel his victim.

Arthur's reformation of Turpine is inconclusive, as was Calidor's victory over Sir Crudor's custom early in Book VI, because in both cases the violence of the heroes distorts their intent. The savage man who accompanies Arthur tears Turpine's porter to pieces, while his attack on a biblical quantity of "forty" yeomen causes Turpine, like Briana, to blame Arthur for killing his people. Even though Turpine then attacks Arthur from behind and flees from room to room through his castle, he survives because he has used the issue of violence to cloud the moral certainty of Arthur's position. Arthur's sword twists in his hands, as happens in romances whenever the author wants to spare someone from the overwhelming force of a hero ("Yet whether thwart or flatly it did lyte, / The tempred steele did not into his braynepan byte"), while Arthur refrains from a second stroke because Blandina shrieks, shrouds Turpine, and entreats Arthur on her knees to spare him. Arthur calls Turpine a "vile cowheard dogge," then lectures him on social courtesy instead of killing him.

The prince of magnificence finds himself in a strangely unsettling situation—such as a foreign culture might offer—where he must abandon traditional notions of right and wrong as he instructs this allegorical figure of social detraction. Arthur accuses Turpine of cowardice, but at the same time, he oddly voices respect for

Turpine's right to live as he pleases. We hardly believe Arthur when he informs Turpine that bravery in a bad cause is no vice ("for oft it falles, that strong / And valiant knights doe rashly enterprize, / Either for fame, or else for exercize / A wrongfull quarrell to maintaine by fight"). Turpine need not provide lodging for the wounded, Arthur says, as long as he does not attack secretly or from the back, since, even when defending bad causes, knights have "through prowesse and their brave emprize / Gotten great worship in this worldes sight. / For greater force there needs to maintaine wrong, then right" (my emphasis). Arthur means to persuade Turpine that it takes little pain to maintain what is right and that Arthur's own violent entry to the castle was of small moment compared to what it might have been had Arthur been in the wrong. Yet his message seems overly casuistic, ironically not forceful enough, since Arthur seems to praise the "greater force" needed to maintain wrong while he also he gives Turpine a choice how to behave. He seems to be saying, "your country, right or wrong," as long as you are strong. It is the colonizer's creed.

We recognize what is happening to Arthur from other examples of foul customs in chivalric romances. Normally a knight errant is trapped into upholding local law by the pressure of the population, a provision of the custom itself, or a double bind. Arthur succumbs to this literary tradition by agreeing to Turpine's practice of keeping people out. He ceases to reform the local inhabitants, an act figured by his calling off the savage, who kills yeomen downstairs while Arthur spares Turpine upstairs. Finally he settles down to a "goodly feast" and entertainment provided by Blandina, Turpine's wife, who hides her true aversion to his reform. At Malory's Weeping Castle, Tristram and Galahalt find a way to "fordo" the foul custom when they submit to each other under the guise of sparing one another the shame of defeat. Arthur spends the night at Turpine's castle after seeming to achieve a similar resolution.

But it is not clear that Arthur makes the correct choice when he yields to Blandina's persuasions and spends the night, although two examples of the custom of the castle topos in Malory's *Morte Darthur* show that a knight may ignore the behavior of others and depart without fully reforming their foul ways: Sir Dinadan refuses to lodge where the custom of the castle is to joust for bed space, and Galahad rightly forsakes to kill the seven brothers who maintain the foul custom of the Castle of Maidens. Here, however, Arthur's reformation proves useless because it depends on a sense of shame that Turpine does not feel. The next morning Arthur leaves Turpine's castle intact, and Turpine continues his attacks.

According to the narrator, Turpine's problem lies in his "vile donghill mind." Using his wits, he convinces two knights to kill Arthur by telling them that Arthur ravished his lady, which distorts but does not totally falsify Arthur's sojourn with Blandina. Arthur's response depends on both prowess and deception. He kills one knight and forces the other, Sir Enias, to bring Sir Turpine to him. Then, in a ploy that seems designed to attack not just Turpine's practice but his mental attitude, Arthur falls asleep—and his savage page wanders off in the woods—as Sir Enias, whose name recalls the medieval reputation of Aeneas as the betrayer of Troy, fetches Turpine by tricking him into thinking Prince Arthur is dead. The ruse works, and when the prince wakes and grabs his sword, Turpine falls on the ground and holds up his hands for mercy.

All values need to be examined. Nothing Arthur does eliminates the social power that Turpine represents and that finds its cause in Turpine's intractable attitude. Arthur sets his foot on Turpine's neck "in signe / Of servile yoke, that nobler harts repine," but since Turpine's heart is not noble, he cannot "repine" or feel shame. The gesture is lost on him and once again Arthur fails to reform his ways. Arthur calls Turpine names and strips him of his "knightly bannerall," but he did essentially the same thing earlier in the castle, when he forbade him to bear arms and call himself a knight. Arthur's final act is to hang Turpine by his heels as a warning to others, but what warning can counter detraction? Puttenham translates what the Greeks called *asteismus* into English as the "merry scoff" or the "civil jest." He gives the example of one who knocked Cato on the head with a long piece of timber, then bade him beware. "What (quoth Cato) wilt thou strike me again?" The humor, Puttenham explains, arises because a warning should be given before, not after. Turpine's punishment is always too late because it comes after the fact: after his slander is already circulating. The "civil jest" reminds us that detraction is not just a court foible, but a deeply rooted confrontation with the Other, because

reputations depend on someone else's point of view. Arthur's encounter with Turpine shows a poet concerned about reforming society for a better future but in no sense an idealistic dreamer of utopias.

Source: Charles Ross, "Spenser's Customs of Courtesy," in *The Custom of the Castle: From Malory to Macbeth*, University of California Press, 1997, pp. 83-103.

Essays and Criticism: Genre and the Repeal of Queenship in The Faerie Queen

To begin his discussion of the allegory of *The Faerie Queene's* Book V, A. C. Hamilton voices the private opinion of even Spenser's greatest admirers, that "Spencer's fiction seems to break down in Book V. Probably for this reason the book is the least popular." A few pages later, however, Hamilton slightly revises his assessment of what happens to the poem's fiction in Spenser's Legend of Justice: not that the fiction has broken down, like some neglected machine in the garden, but that the fiction has been suppressed and restricted by Book V's adherence to a nonfictional point of reference: "Throughout Book V the reader is aware of fact pressing down upon the fiction." As it turns out, "fact" for Hamilton, as for most readers, exerts its greatest pressure not on the whole of Book V, but rather on the last five cantos, where the poem turns for the first time into a series of barely allegorized events in recent English history: the defeat of the Souldan (read Philip II and his Armada); the trial of Duessa (Mary Queen of Scots); Arthur's liberation of Belge; Burbon's fight for Flourdelis; and Artegall's rescue of Irena and subsequent slander by the Blatant Beast (read the adventures of Spenser's patron in Ireland, Lord Gray). One of the most difficult tasks for critics attempting a traditional explication of Book V's allegory has been to prove Hamilton wrong, and to demonstrate that even if fact seems to subsume fiction in these episodes, the reverse is actually the case, and history remains in the service of mythmaking and idealization. The trouble comes in contradicting centuries of readers' first and even second impressions to argue that what looks like mere fact is not mere fact, that history does not press down on fiction, but liberates it.

Of course "fact" in Spenser has, since Hamilton's complaint, enjoyed something of a critical renaissance. Insofar as Cantos 8 through 12 of Book V engage recent events, and especially in their interplay with the repressive and violent policies advocated in Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland*, they have recently attracted historicist commentary. At the same time, the episode of Book V featured just before the poem's turn to fact has increasingly drawn the attention of feminist critics—not because fiction is repressed, but because feminine authority is repressed. In this episode Britomart, the female knight who has been the intermittent focus of *The Faerie Queene* since the beginning of Book III, rescues her fiancé Artegall by decapitating the Amazon queen Radigund, then rules Radigund's city-state for a time only to turn sovereignty over to Artegall. But little work has been done in either the New Historicist or the feminist mode to bridge the gap between the central and final sections of Book V, to describe the killing of the Amazon queen and the turn to historical allegory as parts of versions of the same process or impulse. The discontinuous structure of Book V—its sudden, unexplained, and unsatisfying shift in mode from fiction to fact—is replicated by a criticism that takes up Book V only in piecemeal fashion.

In my view, neither the traditionalist desire to paper over Book V's structural shift nor the current tendency to treat Book V merely episodically does justice to a Book whose concern from the beginning is transformations of kind. The Proem to Book V not only dolefully announces that "the world ... being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse" (5.Pr.1), but also thinks of that decay in terms of materials once, but no longer, put to use:

And men themselues, the which at first
were framed
Of earthly mould, and form'd of flesh and bone, Are now transformed into hardest stone:

Such as behind their backs (so backward bred) Were throwne by Pyrrha and Deucalione: And
if then those may any worse be red,
They into that ere long will be degenerated.

Breeding backward is the problem: it is also the solution. If humans have degenerated rather than evolved in kind, then a heroic poem must look backward for models and materials of literary types: "I doe not forme them to the common line/Of present dayes, which are corrupted sore." But Spenser's chronology deserves some examination here. In the second installment of *The Faerie Queene* the "present day" of the poem, the moment in which "form" has become so corrupt, has already been identified as the present in which the poem is invented, and in which the poem is therefore complicit: the "rugged forehead" of the Proem to Book IV "[m]y looser rimes (I wote) doth sharply wite, / For praising loue, as I haue done of late" (my emphasis). In light of the rugged forehead's attack, Book V's notoriously "tight" structure—especially, and especially in its last five cantos, its dispensing with the lush or knotty language, the odd twists of plot and identity beloved of Spenserians—seems a response to the "looseness" that *The Faerie Queene* has continued to perpetuate throughout Book IV. Book V begins with the degeneration of form through a history that turns out to be not only of humankind, but of the poem's production.

By using the word "degended" rather than "degenerated" to describe the sorry pass to which form has and will come, Spenser not only easily catches a post-structuralist critic's eye, but also recasts the problem of form in the terms in which it will appear in Book V: the problem of feminine authority. The Proem's stony men look forward to Artegall's subjection to hint that Book V might illustrate Freud's Medusa effect, where men are no longer men because they are "degended" stones, castrated by the phallic woman. By the 1611 folio of Spenser's complete works, "degended" in this stanza had become the more purely francophonic "degenerated," a substitution that encourages us to make a more explicit connection between the end of feminine rule showcased in Book V and the shift in literary form that immediately follows. To reverse the effect of men becoming "degended," enthralled by the Medusa or the Amazon, *The Faerie Queene* must confront the perception that the poem itself has become "degenerated," debased in literary kind from its original epic intent. Book V's repeal of feminine authority becomes both the motivation and the prerequisite for its turn toward the bleak new genre of historical allegory. If, as Fredric Jameson has contended, innovations in literary genre come about to address potentially discomfiting changes in politics and socioeconomics, then we should not be surprised that in this most self-conscious of poems, a shift in genre is baldly signalled by a shift in the gender of political regime. Britomart's returning the Amazons "to mens subjection" is an accomplishment labelled as "changing all that forme of common weale"; immediately thereafter, *The Faerie Queene* itself "changes all that form."

The genre in question for Jameson is romance, which expresses a nostalgia for "an organic social order in the process of penetration and subversion, reorganization and rationalization, by nascent capitalism, yet still, for another long moment, coexisting with the latter." But as Harry Berger reminds us, with *The Faerie Queene* matters of form are more complicated: if Spenser's poem expresses nostalgia for an earlier order, it does so with a canny awareness of the uses to which nostalgia can be put. As it turns out, romance in the poem is not itself a nostalgic mode, but rather an experimental mode that induces nostalgia—the poem's own display of nostalgia for a genre it occupied before, and other than, romance.

In *The Faerie Queene* order's "penetration and subversion" are laid explicitly at the feet not of Jameson's nascent capitalism, but rather of authoritative women. And implicitly, as Patricia Parker has demonstrated, order's penetration and subversion are laid at the feet of the genre of romance, which in Books III through V of the poem is intimately associated with those authoritative female figures and their characteristic modes of thought and action. Parker identifies romance and its failure to close off narrative as the foremost source of tension in *The Faerie Queene*, more recently, in a reading of Book II of the poem, she has identified that failure of closure with Acrasia's (and by extension any powerful woman's) ability to "suspend male instruments," holding men in thrall. Guyon's destruction of Acrasia's Bower has the effect of restoring

narrative progress: "In Spenser, the 'suspended instruments' of Acrasia's male captives are recovered as the Bower itself is overcome, and as Guyon and his Mosaic guide move forward to the narrative 'point' or end of a Book of the Governor in which both a threatening female ruler and her suspect lyricism are finally mastered and surpassed." The genre of romance, the beauty of lush poetry, the power of a queen: all three elements that make the Bower so dangerously seductive are cancelled in Guyon's immoderate rampage toward conclusions. But as many critics have noticed, all three of these elements reemerge in Book III, hold sway in Book IV, and linger stubbornly into the central cantos of Book V. It is therefore Book V's turn toward history, not romance, that carries the force of nostalgia: nostalgia for Guyon's antiromantic narrative thrust, which managed in its "rigour pitiless" to conquer the effeminacy induced by both a desiring queen and an arrested, uncloseable poetics.

II

My first task, then, is briefly to track the history of the alliances between poetry and femininity proposed in Books III and IV, alliances that eventually necessitate Book V's generic shifts. Because Book V's attachment to history arises just as soon as its attachment to Britomart ends, it is worth remembering that Britomart's entry into *The Faerie Queene* came hard upon the heels of a gap in history. Near the end of Book II, Arthur, in the castle of Alma, finds himself reading a chronicle of Britain, a chronicle that ends just after the name of Uther Pendragon, Arthur's father. Of course Arthur's name cannot be added to the chronicle because, in the time scheme of *The Faerie Queene*, he has not yet embarked upon the sequence of events that will lead him to the throne. Nevertheless, as Elizabeth Bellamy has pointed out, the chronicle's abrupt ending reveals that Arthur himself exists in an arrested moment, in a state of history that is not yet. Britomart's adventures, which commence as Book II ends and which inaugurate the poem's fullest experiment with the genre of Ariostan romance, therefore come to occupy that suspension of history, the breach made by Arthur's hesitation on the brink of his future.

Furthermore, Book III of the poem begins by taking the radical step of associating poetic power with feminine power, no matter how emasculating that power might be, no matter how it may dismay rather than fashion a gentleman. This extraordinary proposition is first voiced in the Proem to Book III, which describes the "ravishing" power of Walter Raleigh's poem "The Ocean to Cynthia":

But if in liuing colours, and right hew, Your selfe you couet to see pictured, Who can it doe more liuely, or more trew, Then that sweet verse, with Nectar sprinckeled, In which a gracious seruant pictured His Cynthia, his heauens fairest light? That with his melting sweetnesse rauished, And with the wonder of her beames bright, My senses lulled are in slomber of delight.

The dangling "that" clause of line 7 initially makes it possible that line 6's Cynthia, and not line 9's reader, is the one ravished by the poem. Yet Raleigh's verse ravishes by means of its "melting sweetnesse," a phrase that makes poetry a suspiciously liquid and hence potentially feminized medium. And the ravished receptor of that sweetness turns out to be not Cynthia at all, but instead the presumably male possessor of the "senses" in line 9 that "lulled are in slomber of delight." Feminized by a poetry that itself is feminine, Raleigh's reader rests passively in delightful "slomber." Book III here seems willingly to model itself after those moments in Books I and II that are most dangerous to the masculine integrity of both the adventuring knights and the male reader, as poetry becomes its most lush and enchanting exactly when it depicts an authoritative, seductive female and her hapless victim—Acrasia unmanning Verdant in her Bower, Duessa pleasuring and enfeebling Redcrosse at the fountain, false Una seducing Redcrosse in his dream. As a result Book III's substantial investment of both moral virtue and poetic narrative in its female knight Britomart raises the stakes of assigning gender to poetic success. Can *The Faerie Queene* invest authority, moral or poetic, in the feminine without suspending heroic progress?

With Britomart, Spenser's narrative at first displays some easiness with the associations between feminine and poetic authority, partly because Britomart's ultimate fate is indeed a progressive one, to accomplish Spenser's aim of revivifying masculine epic in the modern world. As Merlin tells her:

from thy wombe a famous Progenie Shall spring, out of the auncient Troian blood, Which shall reuiue the sleeping memorie Of those same antique Peres, the heauens brood, Which Greeke and Asian riuers stained with their blood.

Although the woman is the bearer of epic destiny, in Merlin's prophecy she does not taint it with her femininity; rather, she reproduces epic as it ought to be. Moreover, Britomart's quest is prompted not by a desire to dominate or incapacitate men, but rather by a vision of her intended spouse that takes the form of a mental pregnancy, "To her reuealed in a mirrhour plaine,/Whereof did grow her first engrafted paine;/... That but the fruit more sweetnesse did containe,/Her wretched dayes in dolour she mote wast." With this visionary lying-in Britomart is allied with Spenser himself, who in the letter to Raleigh writes of having "laboured" to "conceiue" the person of Arthur and the shape of his adventures throughout *The Faerie Queene*. Her fate is also Spenser's project: to produce a succession of heroes, which when complete will end in Elizabeth—*The Faerie Queene*. This version of authorial conception and birth, however, is altered by the abrupt end of Merlin's narrative, which halts as Arthur's history does, with no end in sight. "But yet the end is not," says Merlin. This cut-off marks both the suspension of future male enterprise, which "yet ... is not," and the beginning of Britomart's adventures, which immediately take the form of narrative digression, not lineal progression. As Britomart rides along she forges her own idea of her lover, one that departs from Merlin's prophecies: "A thousand thoughts she fashioned in her mind,/ And in her feigning fancie did pourtray/Him such, as fittest she for loue could find." Britomart's "image" of her goal becomes one that she authorially invents not as a singular heroic purpose, but as a set of multiple and interchangeably pleasurable possibilities. And from this moment, Book III's narration itself begins its digressive turns, as if it too wished to fashion "a thousand thoughts." Unlike the severed genealogies of both Arthur's ancestors and Britomart's descendants, the romance adventures of Book III invest their energies not in the hope for a singular conclusion, but rather in potentially endless revisions of chase, discovery, reverie, and flight. By taking full advantage of Merlin's "but yet the end is not," Book III fully exploits as poetic form the feminized qualities attributed to Raleigh's verse. On the level not only of lyric but also of narrative structure, poetry in Book III becomes liquid, shifting, and diffuse, and these are the qualities meant to afford readerly delight.

Whether these qualities of a feminized poetic form do finally afford delight is quite another question, one that has recently engaged several Spenser critics in their evaluations of fulfillment and loss in Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene*. Maureen Quilligan and Lauren Silberman both read Book III's Garden of Adonis, despite its elements of chaos, decay, and lamentation, as a privileged site of feminine production—of earthly forms, of chaste love and marital fecundity, and of a female reader's access to understanding. For them, Book III's center celebrates a satisfying feminine poetic power. By contrast, in a turn that slightly predates Quilligan's and Silberman's gendered readings, Jonathan Goldberg draws from Derrida, Barthes, and Lacan to contend that the poetic pleasure offered by Books III and IV is a writerly delight in castration and loss, in an excess of always-unfinished production. As Goldberg describes it, Book III's revised 1596 ending, in omitting Amoret's reunion with Scudamour and thus emphasizing Britomart's unconcluded quest for her mate, acts as a template for the continued deferrals of Book IV. For Goldberg, the pleasure of the writerly text of the entire *Faerie Queene*, but particularly of Book IV, arises from its failure to engage in unitary poetic ending. It is instead "an 'endlesse worke' of substitution, sequences of names in place of other names, structures of difference, deferred identities. It plays upon a void; it occupies the place of loss—where Britomart's wound is extended to Amoret, where Amoret is 'perfect hole.'"

Although Goldberg does not otherwise share a critical agenda with Quilligan and Silberman, all three focus on the delight afforded by these Books' feminized (or at least effeminized) constructions. My own view is quite different. Beginning with its exit from the Garden of Adonis (and perhaps even within the Garden itself, as

Harry Berger has pointed out) *The Faerie Queene* starts to expose its own feminized poetics as eminently unsatisfying, whether those poetics produce a full harvest of invention or whether they disjunctively cut off those inventions. And once again, that dissatisfaction is bound up with the fortunes of the poem's authoritative women.

We must remember that most of the primary female characters of Books III and IV are in fact driving toward a particular conclusion, marriage. But as Books III and IV progress, both the desirability and the conclusiveness of marriage become deeply compromised, and weddings are largely either delayed or evaded. The narrative therefore finds itself in a double bind. In order fully to exploit the female knighthood that, beginning with Britomart, the poem has delineated, marriage must be acknowledged as a legitimate ending to a heroic story. But in the view of the male characters who are the necessary partners in this enterprise, marriage seems largely to replicate the dangers to heroism embodied in Acrasia's bower: marriage does not sharpen knightly instruments, it suspends them. Aside from some marginal or deflected weddings (the curiously quadrangular union of Cambell, Cambina, Triamond, and Canacee; the morally suspect Poena's wedding to the Squire of Low Degree; and the unnarrated vows of purely allegorical rivers), Book IV's narrative effort is spent eluding rather than concluding wedlock. This avoidance is jumpstarted, as Goldberg points out, by the 1596 revision of Book III, which assigns not only Britomart but also Amoret to the category of frustrated brides. The abortion of Amoret's "conceiued" hope to find her husband rewrites her as a duplicate of the unhappy Britomart, who in the 1590 ending to Book III witnessed Scudamour's embrace of Amoret only to be reminded of her own incompleteness: "In vaine she wisht, that fate n'ould let her yet possesse."

Considering that Britomart's quest was prompted by her conception of an envisioned Artegall, the 1590 ending's disjuncture of the "fate" of narrative from Britomart's wishful thinking signals the imminent demise of the feminine poetics that Britomart initially embodied. Although the 1596 ending leaves both Amoret and Britomart to "wend at will" while the narrator takes his breather, the female wanderings of Book IV have little to do with women exercising will. Rather, women's thought and desires in Book IV seem largely to be displaced by happenstance and mistake. Britomart carelessly misplaces Amoret and untowardly jousts for the false Florimell; Belphoebe "misdeems" Timias' attentions to Amoret. And more significantly, Book IV's "middest," the analogue point to Book III's superproductive, female-ruled Garden, seems pointedly to cancel Britomart's desired fulfillment. Britomart's encounter with Artegall in Canto 6 instead evades a permanent union of heroine and hero as Artegall immediately sues to leave upon his initial quest, "To follow that, which he did long propound." Artegall's ability to "propound," from *proponere* ("to put forward"), establishes him as the opponent of postponement and delay, even though it is he who is postponing their marriage. But in the prevailing opinion of *The Faerie Queene's* second half, marriage itself postpones rather than embodies masculine endings. What is a "conceiued" hope for Amoret or Britomart is, for Artegall, a return to Acrasia's bower. From the bridegroom's point of view marital union as the joining of man and woman—not as the barely mentioned preface to Book II's patrilineal genealogies—is a kind of suspended animation. And a male hero's safe response in Book IV is either to flee marriage (as in Canto 6's comic argument, where "Both Scudamour and Arthegall/Doe fight with Britomart,/He sees her face; doth fall in loue,/and soone from her depart") or to contemplate it only from several heavily mediated removes, as in the Temple of Venus, which hides its hermaphroditic goddess from view precisely because—as with man and wife become one flesh—she unites both sexes in one being:

The cause why she was couered with a vele,
Was hard to know, for that her Priests the same
From peoples knowledge labour' d to concele ... But for, they say, she hath both kinds in one,
Both male and female, both vnder one name.

What must be covered up (and oddly so, in the Book that contains *The Faerie Queen's* most famous union, the rivers' wedding) is the very definition of marriage: "Both male and female, both vnder one name." Wedlock and its results are threatening enough that Venus is thrice removed from direct experience, not only by her veil, but also by the pains her priests take to mystify the truth of her form, and finally by the narrative's

revelation of her only indirectly, through Scudamour's tale of finding Amoret at Venus' feet. Meanwhile Amoret herself has mysteriously disappeared from the scene, as if the allegory of marriage can be recounted only when actual marriage has once again become impossible.

In my view, this revulsion from the feminine endings imagined by female authority accounts for the inconclusive structure of Book IV—its turns and returns, engagements and disengagements. Having devolved so much of its action upon anticipated wedlock, Book IV's ultimate evasions of marriage leave the poem confronting its own heroic void; notoriously lacking a unitary hero, a Guyon to break the Bower's thrall, Book IV is seeded with ever-increasing narrative guilt for not properly ending things. The kinds of conclusions that Book IV does feature are necessarily strained—not naturally arrived at, but arbitrarily imposed by the narrative voice. Canto 10, for example, reaches for completion by flatfootedly ending both Scudamour's tale and the canto that contains it with the word end ("So ended he this tale, where I this Canto end"). Elsewhere Book IV begins to ask forgiveness for the cliff-hanger technique that *The Faerie Queene* has employed since Book I. Canto II opens by apologizing that Florimell has been left "languishing in payne" since 3.8. And Book IV itself ends on a hasty promissory note, a one-line uncompleted completion like the one Artegall effects by leaving Britomart: the marriage of Marinell and Florimell, "Which," says the narrative voice, "to another place I leaue to be perfected."

III

That "other place," that place of perfection, is Book V, which in fact begins by once again shunting aside Florimell's and Marinell's wedding in favor of Artegall's mission to rescue Irena. Hence Book V's narrative asserts openly what Book IV's indirections implied: that marriage is not perfection at all, and that it is at best a mere footnote to the glories of the heroic quest. Artegall attends the promised nuptials only as a brief stopover on his way to "his first adventure." The firstness, the originality, of that quest, as well as Artegall's often-repeated intent to continue upon that first quest despite minor skirmishes along the way, is a new emphasis for a knight of *The Faerie Queene*, and one that leads us to examine what is (literally) being prioritized in Book V: what is the first intent to which both Artegall and the narrative must insistently refer? Artegall's task is to restore originary justice but in the reiterated word that describes Artegall's judiciary pronouncements, the word doome, we hear how that "first adventure" is dependent for its achievement of this restoration on a sense of ending, of final, irrevocable closure. And as we will see, the opening pretexts of Book V firmly disenfranchise feminine authority from this return to finality.

Of all the proems in *The Faerie Queene*, Book V's features the most cursory and oblique reference to Spenser's queen. After declaring that God's justice, delegated to earthly rulers, allows princes "To sit in his owne seate, his cause to end," the proem addresses Elizabeth in only one stanza, as the "Dread Souerayne Goddess" who initially seems to have the apocalyptic power of bringing about that doomsday:

Dread Souerayne Goddess, that doest highest sit In seate of iudgement, in th'Almighties stead, And with magnificke might and wondrous wit Doest to thy people righteous doome aread. (5.Pr.II)

Given Spenser's cunning hubris throughout *The Faerie Queene*, it is difficult not to read ahead punningly: Elizabeth areads "righteous doome" not by discerning or pronouncing it herself, but by her act of a-reading Spenser's poem, which dispenses its own inspired judgments. The main action of Book V similarly weaves into its narrative structure a determination to achieve closure by substituting male for female authority. Just as the Proem addresses Elizabeth in the person of Astraea, a goddess whose naming here is prefaced on her absence from the poem and from the world, so too does Canto I go on to delineate Astraea's departure as the precondition for heroic action: only once she is reft from earthly sight can her foster child Artegall begin his career. Her removal from the poem therefore at last delivers narrative into the safekeeping of the masculine. As a substitute for herself Astraea leaves Artegall the iron man Talus, "And willed him with Artegall to wend,/And doe what euer thing he did intend." This absolute fulfillment of male intent seems a dream of narrative progress after the feminine postponements and beguilements of Books III and IV. Talus is never

delayed or diverted on the way to a goal. Once he sets out after Sir Sanglier, for instance, he requires only three stanzas to find and bind his prey—a remarkable contrast to the pursuits in Books III and IV, some of which never end. Talus acts as an external manifestation of doome, with its connotations of finality as well as of certain judgment. In Cantos I-4 Artegall's doome extends even to narrative itself, as with the end of each canto an episode in his travels is firmly and finally concluded.

That conclusiveness, however, itself comes to an end as Book V approaches its center, a center we have learned in Books III and IV to associate with realized or potential feminine arrestiveness, with marriage and feminine (re)production. Cantos 5 through 7 of Book V in fact stage in small the extensive, interwoven problematics of marriage and of a feminine poetics mounted at length through Books III and IV. Radigund's capture of Artegall externalizes what might be Artegall's nightmare of marriage to Britomart: not only do Radigund and Britomart resemble each other in looks and actions, as many critics have noticed, but Artegall crucially consents to his bondage, "to her yeilded of his owne accord." Moreover, Radigund catalyzes at the precise moment of Artegall's quasi-marital oath a regression to Book III's literary model, in which a feminine poem equally effeminizes its reader. We witness this regression in a complex moment of reader-response that goes beyond the earlier instances of feminine ravishment it resembles, as Artegall unhelms Radigund and sees her features for the first time.

But when as he discouered had her face,
He saw his senses straunge astonishment,
A miracle
of natures goodly grace,
In her faire visage.

When he looks at her, he sees himself—and more than himself, his arrested self: "He saw his senses straunge astonishment." That reading of his own plight, of himself as Verdant in Acrasia's bower, causes him further to be emasculated, and finally further to emasculate himself by disarming: "At sight thereof his cruell minded hart/ Empierced was with pittifull regard,/That his sharpe sword he threw from him apart." At this point the doome that he has wielded until now returns upon himself, enforcing not masculine completion but effeminized thrall:

So was he ouercome, not ouercome,
But to her yeilded of his owne accord;
Yet was he iustly damned by the doome
Of his owne mouth, that spake so warelesse word,
To be her thrall, and seruice her afford.

The effeminization of the knightly reader is accompanied by a similar regression to the effeminized narrative of Books III and IV. Unlike Cantos I through 4 of Book V, Canto 5 ends with no ending; Artegall remains in bondage, and his release is postponed until another place, "Which in an other Canto will be best contayned." Worse yet, Canto 6 in fact fails to free Artegall, and he remains with knightly instruments suspended while Britomart makes her way to him. Thus, like Books III and IV, Book V has feminine authority at its heart. Significantly, Britomart in Book V's "middest" Canto 6 rearms herself.

The dilemma of the arrested text begins to be resolved as Book V works its way out of this feminine center, a process encapsulated in Britomart's stay in the Temple of Isis. The Isis Church episode has proven especially troubling for critics trying to assert a unity of purpose in Book V; as Clare Kinney has put it, the episode is one of those "exemplary union[s] of Justice and Mercy" that "seems oddly irrelevant to the actual narrative progress of Artegall and his automaton-slave Talus from one victory of force majeure to another." T. K. Dunseath, in contrast, has identified Isis Church as a necessary passageway to Britomart's restoration of Artegall's progress: "Once Britomart submits herself to Divine Providence in the Church of Isis, she discovers the true nature of her mission and is able to free her lover from woman's slavery." Chafing though Dunseath's condemnation of "woman's slavery" may now be, it is a condemnation shared by the poem at this point, and Isis Church becomes the site of the reiteration and recuperation of Artegall's stasis. This episode at first recalls

and extends the state of overwhelming feminine power in which Artegall still lies languishing: Isis, as goddess of the moon, reminds us not only of Radigund, whose face was revealed "Like as the Moone in foggie winters night", but also of Britomart herself, whose own visage has borne the same comparison and whose chastity allies her with the moon-goddess. Moreover, the dream that comes to Britomart as she sleeps at Isis' feet consistently confuses her with Isis, using only "she" and "her," not a proper name, to describe the marvelous queen that subdues the crocodile. But unlike the close of Book III, where Britomart's state of feminine dismay and incompleteness bled over into the state of the narrative, this moment of feminine governance and of feminine conception is safely framed. At first Britomart's dream seems to rediscover her former authorial mode: whereas in Book III she set out fashioning "a thousand thoughts" of her lover, here as she awakens "long while she musing lay,/With thousand thoughts feeding her fantasie." The dream's aftermath of interpretation, however, reduces those thousand thoughts to orthodoxy. First of all, the ambiguous or oscillating gender identities inherent in the temple sort themselves out. Not only do the priests, once of uncertain gender, now become in the person of their spokesman an unambiguous "he," but the crocodile of Britomart's dreaming—which had been given both feminine and masculine pronouns, as well as variously hermaphroditic powers of tumescence, pregnancy, engulfment, and impregnation—is now unquestionably male, a figure of both Osiris and Artegall himself. And even though in the dream Isis/Britomart exerts phallic authority over that crocodile, "turning all his pride to humblesse meeke," Isis' priest rereads this episode for her as pointing not toward Britomart's subjection of men but toward her eventual marriage and male offspring. The priest thus reincorporates feminine power into masculine heroics as Merlin did when he traced the careers of Britomart's male descendants. But signally unlike Merlin's vision, the priest's explication runs without interruption, "vnto the end." From this point Britomart will step, not into a maze of digressive, self-made visions, but toward a certain closure of masculine heroics that she must internalize and enforce. As critics have often noticed, in Britomart's subsequent defeat of Radigund the two women warriors are scarcely distinguishable: the fray is described as a challenge between a tigress and a lioness. Britomart's task is evidently to subdue herself.

We can see in Britomart's subsequent reconstitution of Radigund's city-state the full consequences of Spenser's reading of Plutarch's "Of Isis and Osiris," although Book V does not explicitly refer to Isis' reconstitution of her dismembered husband. Unable to find Osiris' penis, Plutarch's Isis replaces it with a consecrated replica; and so too does Britomart reerect her husband's phallic power. She not only rearms him and restores the Amazons "to mens subiection"; she also establishes Artegall's thralldom as but a holiday aberration: "Ah my deare Lord, what sight is this (quoth she)/What May-game hath misfortune made of you?" All of a sudden, and quite improbably, Artegall metamorphoses from an embarrassed, foolish Hercules to an epic Odysseus returning to his patient, waiting wife: "Not so great wonder and astonishment/Did the most chaste Penelope possesse,/To see her Lord, that was reported drent." With Artegall's promotion to head of state, Book V's curious catalogue of ways to abuse the human head—its elaborately grisly panoply of hangings, beheadings, scalplings, and even haircuts—begins to make sense: all these illegitimate mishandlings of the head are cancelled in one stroke, Britomart's decapitation of Radigund. From this moment, too, the narrative itself seems to know where it is heading. Artegall ventures forth once again with purpose upon his hitherto delayed quest: "He purposd to proceed, what so be fall,/ Vppon his first aduventure, which him forth did call." And he leaves Britomart behind.

We have heard Artegall's rededication to his "first adventure" before the end of Canto 7: significantly, this resolution is repeated three times in quick succession in the brief interval between his attendance at Florimell's and Marinell's marriage, and his encounter with Radigund's crew. If first intent prevails only in the respite between weddings and Amazons, how could it hold up if Artegall stayed to marry his own Amazon-like fiancée? Artegall's second separation from Britomart in fact becomes an extended meditation upon the high stakes of avoiding feminine digression, both for Artegall and for the forward movement of narrative. After his announced departure at Canto 7's end, Canto 8 surprisingly begins not by portraying Artegall on his way, but by worrying again at the issue of female dominance:

Nought vnder heauen so strongly doth allure The sence of man, and all his minde possesse,
As beauties louely baite, that doth procure Great warriours oft their rigour to repressse, And
mighty hands forget their manlinesse.

A comment on Artegall's recent imprisonment, it would seem—but as it turns out, the "louely baite" in question is not Radigund but Artegall's intended wife. Despite her recent role in suppressing female sway, Britomart still represents the "allure" that Artegall must resist if he is to escape the fate (says the narrator) of Samson, Hercules, and Mark Antony. Feminine rule of body and mind must be cut off, beheaded, as a way of propelling Artegall back upon his and the narrative's "first intent," the rescue of Irena.

IV

As Artegall's earlier dismissal of Britomart in Book IV taught us, however, rejecting one version of feminine rule is not enough to restore with certainty either masculine heroics or a masculine model of poetic effect. More drastic measures are called for. To return to Goldberg's formulation: if Book IV conforms to the poetics of castration—of excess compensation for loss—then in keeping with its obsessive decapitations of illegitimate authorities, Book V castrates the castrators, proposing a thoroughgoing revision of literary construction that ought for good and all to sever the poem from feminine influence. Feminine rule and feminized poetics are repealed in favor of the most straightforward mode that *The Faerie Queene* will ever assume, historical allegory. At this point the poem assumes a new literary mode as a way of galvanizing the sense of an ending, the doome that Artegall's adventures first promised before his digression into serving a queen.

I earlier suggested that Book V's revision of form reaches back nostalgically for the completed heroic endeavors of Books I and II; if Books I and II can legitimately (if broadly) be described as the epic segments of *The Faerie Queene*, then the nostalgia that Book V expresses is for epic over romance. But Book V in its last five cantos also audaciously construes itself as more uniformly heroic than even those earlier books of epic (not to mention than the Aeneid and the Odyssey, if not also the Iliad), since it thoroughly discounts feminine otium as holding any allure whatsoever, either for the poem or for its hero. None of the women of these cantos poses any sensual danger for Artegall or for the late-arriving Arthur. Adicia's malfeasance is described as sexual only ex post facto, once she has been banished "farre from resort of men." The female monster of the Inquisition's dual appearance of foul and fair briefly recalls Duessa's ("For of a Mayd she had the outward face,/To hide the horreur, which did lurke behinde,/The better to beguile, whom she so fond did finde"); but her implied weapon of seduction is never put to use. Even Duessa's sexual transgressions are described with extreme economy, not with either the seductive or the repulsive flourishes of Book I. The prosecuting attorney at her trial, Zele, simply mentions "many a knight,/By her beguyled, and confounded quight." As well, these cantos decline to seduce their reader: their refusal of sensual appeal extends to their poetry, which Angus Fletcher may be alone in praising as "aesthetically lean and muscle-bound." Fletcher's personification of verse as a male warrior physique draws together precisely, if unintentionally, the aim of these cantos' poetic reformation, their expurgation of what Dunseath has called the poetic "suggestibility" we expect from Spenserian poetry.

I would argue that these cantos do not mean to be suggestive. Instead of dense wordplay and multiple allusiveness, their verse offers only a limited field of interpretation, a tunnel vision meant to afford narrative progress. Whereas *The Faerie Queene's* poetry typically engages its reader by withholding conclusions—or as Fletcher puts it, by holding the ear "captive in the chains of suspense"—these cantos eagerly draw toward singular conclusions both poetic and narrative. When Canto 11 repeats the word "shield" thirteen times, for example (as Hamilton notes with irritation), not only do we get the message that a knight must never discard his shield, but we also get no other message. And when Canto 8 sketches Arthur's triumphal march upon defeating the Sultan in only seven parsimonious lines, the reader is also reminded not to wallow in celebratory glee. Arthur, Artegall, and the reader all move on to the next adventure "hauing stayd not long" (my emphasis). Book 5's last reiteration of Artegall's recall to his "first aduventure" clearly navigates where he and

the poem are going: "on his first aduerture [he] forward forth did ride" (my emphasis).

What minimal figurative language and swift narrative conclusions do for these cantos in small, historical allegory does writ large; the first attachment of these cantos to easily recognizable political and military events serves to cordon off all but the most straitened avenues of interpretation. We might be allowed a bit of wiggle room in the form of some referents that are not merely unitary. As David Norbrook points out, for example, we must hear in the rescue of Irena a reference not only to Ireland, but also to the French philosopher of absolutism Jean Bodin, who "used the term [eirene] to describe the highest kind of justice." Kenneth Borris strenuously argues, too, that these cantos not only depict such said-and-done events as the Armada's defeat and Mary Queen of Scots's sentencing, but also voice a Protestant rewriting of history into the approach of the apocalypse. For Borris, Spenser "transforms the particulars of history into vehicles for the ostensibly prophetic revelation of cultural destiny." But Norbrook goes on to remind us that for Spenser as for others with more radical religious leanings, Protestant apocalypics (like Bodin's political theory) were also a matter of historical event and analysis. If Book V's Battle of Belge is seeded with allusions to radical Protestant apocalyptic commentary, it is because Spenser's hero Leicester sympathized with those Protestant factions, seeing his expedition in Belgium as a religious war as well as a containment of Spanish imperial ambitions. Spenser's portrayal of the battle for Belge as a resounding success runs counter to fact not because its eye is on the final victory at world's end, but arguably because Spenser was propagandizing in favor of continued military effort in the Low Countries, in hopes that Essex would be allowed to take up where Leicester had left off. Protestant messianics, far from being supra-historical, circle back around into realpolitik, into strategic militarism and jurisprudence.

The relentlessly optimistic depiction of Belge's fate, however, like the redemption of Irena in Canto 12, finally uncovers the pitfall of these cantos' dependence on diachronic historical allegory. These two episodes patently do not depict accomplished historical victories at all, but rather revise past English engagements, some of them not at all successful, into future triumph. When Arthur recovers a city that looks suspiciously like Antwerp, we are asked to acquiesce in an event that in 1596 has not yet taken place (and in fact never took place). In the same way, Irena's rescue comes about as elegantly as a challenge to single combat—truly a kind of wishful thinking, on the order of Hal's flyting of Hotspur on the eve of Shrewsbury. Even in the poem (not to mention in late sixteenth-century Ireland) matters are not really so easy, for like Hal's England, Irena's realm sees considerable bloodshed before single combat is undertaken. Artegall's prosthetic Talus manages to massacre most of the barbaric hordes before Artegall calls him back, claiming a bit belatedly "that not for such slaughters sake/ He thether came." These intrusive details, these shadowy reminders that current uncompleted missions are not as neatly sewn up as famous past victories, expose the danger of engaging upon a historical allegory that extends from past to future. Standing in the road between past and future is the ineluctable present, where history's certain endings give way to the muddled and inconclusive status of recent current events, events that curtail any story of doome. Still the end is not.

In the end Book V's historical episodes make the case that even when barren and driven poetry replaces seductive lyric, masculine heroism is still subject to an undirected feminine authority. The liberation of Belge and of Irena, both fantasies that expose their own frustration, are framed (and hence, in *The Faerie Queene's* juxtapositional logic, arguably caused) by two dilatory queens and their tactics of diversion. In the first case, Mercilla's waffling pity for Duessa in Canto 9 is seemingly closed off by Artegall, whose judgment is accompanied by his usual epithet of first intent ("But Artegall with constant firme intent,/For zeale of Iustice was against her bent"). But Mercilla's wavering in a certain sense still carries the day, since the pronouncement of Duessa's final sentence is delayed until the beginning of the next canto, and even then her actual punishment is elided. Surprisingly enough in this book of beheadings, the poem remains silent on whether Duessa's means of demise also doubles Mary Queen of Scots's: most readers assume that Duessa is beheaded, but in fact the poem tells us only that Mercilla, having delayed judgment "Till strong constraint did her thereto enforce," then "yeeld[ed] the last honour to [Duessa's] wretched corse." In this light, Artegall's oddly gentle decapitation of Grantorto ("Whom when he saw prostrated on the plaine,/He lightly reft his head,

to ease him of his paine") is better read not as a somewhat extraneous detail, but as a displaced dropping of Duessa's unenacted deathstroke, as if Artegall must carry out somehow, anyhow, what Mercilla has postponed. If he finishes off Grantorto with unwonted mercy, it is because he is momentarily usurping Mercilla's role. The point is minor enough, except that this queenly stay of execution recurs when Artegall tries to conclude his final task. His mission is the same as Britomart's in Amazonia, "How to reforme that ragged common-weale," but "ere he could reforme it thoroughly" he is recalled to Gloriana's Faerie Court, "that of necessity/His course of Iustice he was forst to stay." Blocked in the course of first intent, Artegall turns aside toward his queen's command with a final reiteration of straightforwardness that is by now entirely ironic: "he for nought would swerue/From his right course, but still the way did hold/To Faery Court, where what him fell shall else be told." This promise of narrative closure is never kept. No doome, no end for Artegall; back to the demanding, static embrace of Venus, or Britomart, or Radigund, or Gloriana.

Gloriana's whim serves further to highlight the difficulty of constructing historical allegory as heroic accomplishment. Although depending on current events to endow narrative closure would be futile enough in any era, events in late sixteenth-century England seemed to many observers, especially those sympathetic to militant Protestantism, particularly recalcitrant to fostering masculine endeavor and its fruition. By the mid-1590s Spenser's queen had been perceived for several years as hindering a Protestant crusade on the Continent; in her canny ambivalence Elizabeth was never willing to commit the funds or the manpower for a full-scale effort against Spain. R. B. Wernham details "a secret agreement" in the Triple Alliance among England, France, and the United Provinces that "limited the English military contribution [to the Netherlands] to 2,000 men ... In fact, after 1594 England practically withdrew from the continental war, except for [these] forces in the Netherlands." Although Burleigh was partially if not primarily responsible for this policy, the Queen herself was blamed for womanish inconstancy and lack of will. J. E. Neale reports a story that circulated about the Queen's endless changes of mind: "the story of the carter who, on being informed for the third time that the Queen had altered her plans and did not intend to move on that day, slapped his thigh and said, 'Now I see that the Queen is a woman as well as my wife.'" Throughout her reign Elizabeth had used to her advantage the figuration of herself as her country's bride; in the 1590s certain factions within England found themselves wishing that, like Artegall upon his reunion with Britomart, they might simply ride away from the inaction their wife enforces. Such was the wish expressed by the Lincolnshire rector Henry Hooke, whose short manuscript treatise of 1601 or 1602 entitled "Of the succession to the Crowne of England" digresses from praising Elizabeth into desiring her replacement by a king whose "first intent" would overgo his predecessor's feminine stasis on the question of religious reform: "so the brightnes of [Queen Elizabeth's] daye ... shineth still: and more & more may it shine vnto the perfect daye: that what corruptions in iustice, what blemishes in religion, the infirmitie, and inconueniency of woemanhead, would not permitt to discouer and discerne, the vigor, and conueniency of man sytting as king in the throne of auctoritie; maye diligently search out, and speedylie reforme." Hooke's remarks couple a desire for the repeal of female authority with a hope for a new mode of monarchical endeavor entirely, one that brings heretofore unenacted intents to fruition.

But as Artegall's recall to Gloriana's court demonstrates, such a hope for reform in 1596 remains suspended, both in terms of English politics, where the anticipation of a king's succession only added to the internecine wrangling of Elizabeth's court, and in terms of *The Faerie Queene's* ambitions as an activist poem. Book V's revision of literary form might take the poem out of the realm of romance, but it cannot repeal the rule of queens, either of Elizabeth or of Gloriana. In this way Book V debunks the misogynist fallacy of *The Faerie Queene's* earlier scenes of seduction and of wedlock: Artegall's recall reveals that heroic expeditions are delayed not in the private female world—not in the illicit bower or the sanctioned bridal chamber—but rather in the public world of political aspiration. And if the poem's opposition between romance (to which that feminized private world corresponds) and masculine heroism is shown to be a false opposition, then the nostalgia for an epic form that predated romance no longer holds any attraction.

Instead *The Faerie Queene* overpasses the uncompleted ending of Book V by engaging upon yet another generic experiment. Book VI's pastoral stands in contrast to Book V not only as a conspicuously anti-epic form, but also as a conspicuously and innovatively masculine anti-epic form. Although Book VI seems to accept with pleasure poetry's suspension of experience—as does the narrative voice, which in the Proem admits itself "nigh rauisht with rare thoughts delight" in Faery land's delightful ways—it does so in a way untainted by the interruptive demands of feminine authority. Queen Elizabeth's appearance in this Book is a pointed non-appearance, as on the revelatory Mount Acidale Colin Clout eliminates Gloriana from his configuration of the graces' dance, replacing her instead with "certes but a countrey lasse." In contrast to *The Shepherdes Calender's* April eclogue, where Colin confidently fashioned his queen as an appropriate object for poetry, here Spenser's poetic alter ego apologetically but firmly defines poetry as that which takes shape when female rule is out of the way. Even more than splintering Elizabeth into "mirrhours more than one," displacing her entirely from consideration leaves room for poetic accomplishment.

Not that Book VI is therefore marked by triumphant poetic closure. The "untimely breach" of Arthur's rent chronicle not only recurs as Calidore's comically blundering "luckelesse breach" in Colin's perfect vision, but also might be taken as the model for Book VI's narrative, which is hardly famous for its seamless conclusions. And Book VI's end is similarly not one of perfection, either promised or fulfilled. Like Artegall's recall to Gloriana's court, the Blatant Beast's present-tense rampage at the end of Book VI wrenches poetry from the domain of the past(oral) to the unnatural shocks of the present day, so that conclusion once again is disrupted by uncertainty—in this case, uncertainty imposed by readers more willing to slander poetry than to be melted into sweetness by it: "Ne spareth [the Beast] the gentle Poets rime,/But rends without regard of person or of time". Books V and VI, although drastically different experiments in poetic form, thus share a mode of inconclusion. Both books play out fantasies of freeing politics and poetry from feminine rule; both envision a newly masculine poetics. And in the end both acknowledge those fantasies as fantasies, enacting the futility of imagining that a male-gendered mode, either of monarchy or of poetry, will bring about the wished-for consummation.

V

I come to this conclusion (or to *The Faerie Queene's* non-conclusion), however, with my ear still cocked to Berger's warning: what we hear in Spenser's magnum opus as argument—as assertion, refutation, judgment, revelation, demonstration, or any other of those rhetorical certainties we so often attribute to Spenser's poetry—cannot be taken as "Spenser's" or even "the poem's" settled opinion, but rather must be viewed skeptically as one of the discourses that, like dummies at a ventriloquists' contest, voice the competing desires that prompt their speaking. In his challenge to Paul Alpers' thesis that Spenser's stanzas are "modes of address by the poet to the reader," Berger argues that "Alpers misdescribes the transaction as an empirical one between the author and actual readers, whereas I take it to be a virtual or fictive transaction, one that the poem actively represents and subtly criticizes, and therefore one that constitutes a rhetorical scene of reading from which actual readers can dissociate themselves." Hence we can undertake "an ideological reading of *The Faerie Queene* as a critique of the cultural discourses it represents." Berger's subtle argument describes *The Faerie Queene* as radical in ways that all its Elizabethan source materials and cultural commonplaces, rampant as they are in Spenser's poetic field, could never countenance. I would like to make use of his insights to examine the radical critique ultimately disclosed by the generic experiment of Book V; not a critique of attempting closure by way of masculinized poetic form, but rather a critique of desiring closure in poetry at all. In particular, the failures of Book V's final cantos unsettle the impulse toward closure that is, or at least can be, the impulse toward allegory. Allegory proposes that we can metonymically replace what is troublesome and undefinable by something that looks hermetically sealed: not sexuality, but Immoral Lust or Wedded Love; not savage massacres in Ireland, but a gratefully free Irena; not Elizabeth, but Gloriana. The problem of obtaining allegorical closure, however, is akin to the difficulties critics have had in plotting out Book V's structural, mythical, or moral unity. To create a transcendent order, one must repress the messy and conflicting nature of the facts or events that are transcended. In this clunkiest portion of *The Faerie Queene*, then, Spenser anticipates how ballasted allegoresis of his poem can become, by showing how ballasted his

own poetry can be when it succumbs to a fully allegorizing impulse. For that reason I think we should see Book V's historical allegory not so much as a failed experiment, but as an experiment whose failure is allowed to stand for all failures to impose univocal meanings upon complicated poems. Like the nostalgia for an unsullied genre before romance, Book V shows us, so too is the desire for unsullied truth based on false premises. Just as the "problem" of female authority precedes and enwraps and even motivates *The Faerie Queene*, and hence is not to be "solved" by backward glances to some golden age, so too are Spenserian irresolutions not to be wished away.

Book V's demonstrated failure forewarns of the dangers of excess complacency toward the *Mutabilitie* Cantos, which most critics describe as the consummate enactment of allegorical closure. A. C. Hamilton's edition of the poem approvingly quotes a number of these judgments, including William Blissett's that the cantos are "a detached retrospective commentary on the poem as a whole, forming as they do a satisfactory conclusion to a foreshortened draft, a stopping place at which, after a seriatim reading, can be made a pleasing analysis of all." But as Gordon Teskey has recently pointed out, Blissett's essay also addresses the ways in which *Mutabilitie*, not so detached from its historical moment as it seems, in fact troubles itself again with the problematics of late-Elizabethan female rule. As Teskey paraphrases Blissett, *Mutabilitie* undertakes "the shocking representation, in the late 1590's, of Cynthia dethroned by *Mutabilitie*"; and Teskey adds the comment that "[c]riticism has yet to grapple with *Mutabilitie's* being not only unpublished in Spenser's lifetime but unpublishable in Elizabeth's." In a brilliant analysis Teskey goes on to suggest that *Mutabilitie* does not transcend political struggle, but rather exposes that struggle by means of yet another Spenserian gap: in this case the gap is *Mutabilitie's* omission of a Tudor-style myth of genealogical precedence, which we expect to be brought to bear against *Mutabilitie's* titanistic blood-claim to Jove's throne. Omitting that myth causes us to remember, rather than forget, the fact that Jove's rule, like Henry VII's, was brought about only by faction and bloodshed; and to remember, rather than forget, that the placid cycles of seasonal recurrence paraded in *Mutabilitie* were brought about only by Jove's thunderbolt. Teskey describes the thunderbolt's trajectory as the "least allegorical" moment of the myth: "it unmask[s] the foundation of world order in an absolute violence the forgetting of which is that foundation." Allegory's violent begetting, so easily passed over in *Mutabilitie's* lovely pageant of times, is laid much more bare in Book V's stark poetic reformation into historical allegory, which can be put into motion only by the "dreadfull sight" of Radigund's headless corpse.

No wonder, then, that *Mutabilitie's* last stanzas admit a powerfully subversive reading. Most readers hear the narrator's declaration that *Mutabilitie's* argument "makes me loath this state of life so tickle,/And loue of things so vaine to cast away" as reaching toward the transcendence that allegory seems to offer. But Berger has given us an alternate cast to these lines that resists the allegorical temper: "I am loath to cast away this state of life and this love of things." The compounding in *Mutabilitie's* final lines of Sabbath and Sabaoth—of peaceful rest and armed hosts—gives us reason to refuse what Susanne Wofford has called "figurative compulsion" in the poem, to evade allegorical conclusions for the "vain and tickle" present. Elizabeth Bellamy has pointed out that the prayer in these lines to "that great Sabbaoth God" disfigures Elizabeth's own name (Eli-sabbath, God's rest). That truncation, I would add, in turn enforces the "trunk-ation" of queens—Radigund's beheading, Britomart's abandonment—as the principle behind *Mutabilitie's* downfall and hence behind eternal rest. But if apocalyptic allegorical conclusions require the grim armed forces that brought about Book V's historic ends, then the final downstroke of that "Sabbaoth God" to whom the narrator prays might show us that we have shaken off the powerful embrace of *The Faerie Queene's* last seductive queen only to lie down with Talus, Artegall's right-hand iron man.

Source: Katherine Eggert, "'Changing all that forme of common weale': Genre and the Repeal of Queenship in *The Faerie Queen*, Book 5," in *English Literary Renaissance*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Spring, 1996, pp. 259-90.

Essays and Criticism: Eterne in Mutabilite: The Unified World of The Faerie Queene

To give unity to so complex a poem as *The Faerie Queene* would seem a formidable task, and it was a task which Spenser left unfinished. Our loss, in the six unwritten books, is great; and all the greater because of the cumulative method by which the poem's meaning is revealed. The later books enrich the content of those which have gone before, so that from the first book to the fragmentary seventh the reader becomes increasingly aware of a clear and comprehensive vision, and of a steady purpose which impels him, through a mass of significant detail, towards a final unity.

That unity, at the court of Glory herself, was never reached, and without the unwritten books our appreciation of those we have must be incomplete. But even as it stands, half-finished and culminating in the fragment of the presumed seventh book, the poem is a unified whole. For the kind of unity which Spenser achieves, though cumulative, is not architectural; he works not by adding section to section so that the structure is meaningless until it is finished, but by revealing new levels of a structure which we thought complete at our first sight of it. Faeryland is only partially revealed, but it is unified and consistent as far as we know it, though if the poem had been completed it would be seen as only part of a greater unity and a fuller truth. The first book of *The Faerie Queene* has a simplicity which is proper both to its theme and to the plan of the poem; Spenser begins at the centre of his universe, with the proper conduct of man in relation to God, and the link which still exists between the world of mortality and the realm of eternal truth. Book II shows, almost as simply, the control which is a necessary part of the good life. Themes so essential must be firmly and directly established, but in later books the concern is less exclusively with man, and the natural world too plays its part. Around the centre other and related themes appear, making a richer and more complex whole.

Yet Spenser's method is not a matter only of decorum or deliberate choice. As with any great poet writing seriously about the nature of man and of the universe, his method arises directly out of his vision. An eighteenth century poet, like Pope, will find it natural to write in contrasts, extremes whose balance will produce a truth more central than either. Spenser too sometimes uses a set framework of the Aristotelian mean and its two corresponding extremes, and finds it on occasion a useful piece of machinery; but it is not, as with Pope, his most natural way of seeing things. The living world of *The Faerie Queene* is not one of contrast and balance, but of analogy and parallel, with many kinds of life each complete in itself yet only fully comprehended when seen in relation to the rest. The full poetic effect cannot be contained in Spenser's own statement to Raleigh, "The generall end therefore of all the book is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." Man holds a place of prime importance in Spenser's vision of the world, but the conduct proper to mankind cannot be divined by looking at man alone. The other planes of existence must be comprehended too. So Spenser's is not a simple allegorical world of black and white, concerned only with the "twelve morall vertues as Aristotle hath devised." There are degrees and kinds of goodness, and these can be seen only when all the parallels are drawn, all the analogies completed. Allegory may present an ideal of moral or political conduct, but beyond a certain point the reader must, to apprehend all of Spenser's vision, yield to the deepening effect of the poem as a whole. The Aristotelian framework and the allegory of the virtues, the vices, the parts of the mind, form a pattern; one may fit together into a satisfying unity the various kinds of chastity as shown in Belphebe, Britomart, Amoret, and Florimell. But there is another and more organic pattern, resulting from the inevitable ordering of the material in accordance with Spenser's way of seeing the world, and developing from book to book to a temporary culmination in the Cantos of Mutability. In this pattern, the shape of the poem is part of its meaning, while characters like Belphebe and Florimell are symbols which release certain aspects of Spenser's apprehension of life, and cast about them "shadows of an indefinable wisdom."

Much of the significance of *The Faerie Queene* is conveyed in the correspondences and parallels which are gradually established throughout the poem, and of course in the choice of symbol; and in both it is the

Platonic rather than the Aristotelian influence on Spenser's mind which is most noticeable. For a poet so much in tune with Neoplatonism it is natural to express not personal reactions only but an interpretation of the universe by means of symbol. "All things that are above are here below also," and material things which more or less embody the Ideas are themselves already latent symbols of those Ideas. Spenser is always conscious of things as deriving from, and partially embodying, their heavenly counterparts, and as bound together by their common derivation, their common if varying possession of ideal truth. Chastity lives in heaven, but is embodied and displayed in each chaste woman. Shamefastness exists as the fountain of Guyon's modesty, and is not a mere abstraction formed by generalising the modesty of many individuals, as so often in the personifications of later ages. Courtesy, like all virtues, grows on Parnassus, but its "heavenly seedes" were planted on earth, while as a copy among men of this heavenly process the Queen is an ocean of courtesy, from whom all virtues proceed to those who surround her, and to whom they return as rivers to the sea.

Such an outlook enables the poet to see about him a multiple unity which is embodied in the development of his poem. There is no division between literal and symbolic truth, for things exist in an order of precedence which is valid in itself, but they have at the same time a symbolic validity as imperfect copies of the world of spirit from which they take their source. In *The Faerie Queene* events are never merely events; they partially show forth something beyond themselves. Spenser's battles, it has often been remarked, have less variety of incident and less actuality than Ariosto's or Tasso's, but Spenser is interested in something else. Tasso's Duden strives three times to raise himself before he dies, and there is a gain in suspense and dramatic climax, but when Red Crosse falls three times to rise again during his fight with the dragon Spenser is concerned less with the dramatic effect of the particular event than with the greater struggle of which it is a shadow. The four-fold repetition of "So downe he fell," at the death of the dragon is again not only dramatic, it is a solemn ritual repetition meant to emphasize not the size of a dragon but the terror of sin even at the moment of its defeat: The knight himself even trembled at his fall. Symbol and allegory, often difficult to separate, are especially so in Spenser's case, for he often uses the same figure now as part of a moral or political allegory, now as a symbol of an indefinable truth. His characters move freely from one plane to another, or exist simultaneously on more planes than one, and that existence is at once both a means of unifying the poem and a symbol of the multiple unity of the world which—among other things—the poem expresses.

Occasionally Spenser makes use of incidents or figures which might support the definition of allegory quoted by W. B. Yeats: "Symbolism said things which could not be said so perfectly in any other way, and needed but a right instinct for its understanding, while Allegory said things which could be said as well, or better, in another way, and needed a right knowledge for its understanding." The giant of false justice, in Canto II, of Book V, is such a contrived and limited figure, fitting one occasion, but not suggesting others. But the Giant, and those like him, serve to throw into relief the far greater number of creatures in *The Faerie Queene* who, like Wordsworth's monumental shepherds and travellers, hint at the terrible greatness of the events of this world. Nothing exists in isolation, but draws with it an immense but controlled suggestion of other occasions which are yet the same. Another of the figures of Book V, the deceitful Malengin who harries Mercilla's kingdom, may refer to the guerilla warfare and treacherous behaviour of the Irish, but this falsity is a part of, and a symbol of, all deceit. The chase and the traditional beast transformations suggest the old menace of the covens, and even the primal deceit of the devil; for Malengin is killed as he changes into a snake, and his dwelling goes down to hell.

Malengin is one of the representatives of that evil which devil and man have brought into the world, and evil is shown here, as so often in Spenser, as deceit. Like the giant Orgoglio, who vanishes when Prince Arthur kills him, it is based upon nothingness, upon a false view of things. It tries to break the unity and shatter the truth of the universe, but it is doomed to defeat, for "Truth is One in All," and against that solid truth, present in some degree throughout the created world, evil can have no lasting force. It is seen as an alien intruder into the world of reality, and is embodied in the evil spirits which are used to make the false images of Una and Florimell, or in the devilish Malengin, Despair, and Archimago. To the clear sight of complete virtue it is irrelevant, but to a lesser goodness it is formidable indeed, for it is part of man's inheritance, making

impossible for him the innocence of the natural world, and present in man alone. Nature may be involved in the fall and the suffering of man, but not through its own fault. It is only through the presence of a fallen angel that the snow which makes the false Florimell is corrupted.

The world of *The Faerie Queene* is one in which the values of Neoplatonism and of Christianity are familiarly blended, and of course it is very far from being peculiar to Spenser; but it is expressed in his poetry with a particular vitality. What other poets must show in the flash of an image, Spenser develops through the six Books of *The Faerie Queene* into a living and consistent universe. Through the growing pattern of the poem can be traced levels of being which extend from pure intelligences to inanimate nature, distinct but related by their common reference to the guiding and informing spirit which gives unity and order to a multiple world. It is not a dual world of pointless change contrasting with eternal changelessness; the changing world derives from, and returns to, unity, and each of its levels is good in its degree, being a reflection of the eternal. In ascending scale, created things are more beautiful because more pure—clearer manifestations of the spirit which informs them;

Still as everything doth upward tend, And further is from earth, so still more cleare And faire
it growes, till to his perfect end Of purest beautie, it at last ascend.

But though distance from the home of pure spirit, and involvement in matter, must lessen the purity and beauty of the creatures at certain levels, all have their beauty and in Spenser's symbolism their goodness:

All are made with wondrous wise respect,
And all with admirable beautie deckt,

and in no part of Spenser's universe is the hand of God absent. His providence sustains and guides even the apparently lawless world of the beasts and the apparently aimless world of inanimate nature, but in this orderly universe springing from and guided by God the disruptive and unruly element is man. Spenser writes in Book V of the:

impotent desire of men to raine, Whom neither dread of God, that devils bindes, Nor lawes of
men, that common weales containe, Nor bands of nature, that wilde beastes restraine, Can
keepe from outrage, and from doing wrong.

Other created things are restrained by the laws proper to their being, and when Spenser considers evil the emphasis is, here as in *An Hymne of Heavenly Love*, on the sin of man, rather than on any sinfulness inherent in the whole material world. Our "sinfull mire," in which we endure fleshly corruption and mortal pain, is part of the inherited frailty of fallen humanity:

We all are subject to that curse, And death in stead of life have sucked from our Nurse.

Amavia, telling Sir Guyon the story of her husband's submission to Acrasia, accepts it as part of the weakness of man when faced by temptation through fleshly lusts:

For he was flesh: (all flesh doth frailtie breed).

The same emphasis appears in the myth of Chrysogone and her two children. In the world of humanity, conception is involved in the "loathly crime" of the fall; but Chrysogone conceives in all the lustless innocence of the natural world, without sin and without pain:

Unwares she them conceived, unwares she bore: She bore withouten paine, that she
conceived Withouten pleasure.

Her children are born of sunshine and moisture, sharing the purity which characterises all the natural world when uncontaminated by the inherited sin of human flesh. Belpheobe is:

Pure and unspotted from all loathly crime, That is ingenerate in fleshly slime,

but Amoret too shares in the innocent birth, and the fruitful Garden of Adonis in which she is reared is presumably as much a symbol of primal innocence as are the cool chaste forests through which Belpheobe ranges.

The innocence and even holiness of nature, when considered without reference to the contamination of sin in the case of humanity, is one of the most noticeable features of Spenser's world, but there is nothing of that sentimental idealisation of the "natural" to which a later age was to fall victim. Spenser's clear vision of the ascending planes of existence prevents any loss of proportion, any concentration on a part of life to the detriment of the rest. The satyrs of Book I are innocent and, in their degree, good. Only the sacredness of the old religious rites is shown in their worship of Una, and they are an instrument of "eternall Providence exceeding thought," an example, like the noble lion of natural law who is killed by Sansloy, of the guidance of God even in the non-human world. But this is not the whole truth about the satyrs, for there is a parallel picture in Canto 10 of Book III, where Hellenore, garlanded like Una, is escorted by a similar band of dancing satyrs. Here the word used is not, as in Una's case, "queen," but "Maylady," and in the scenes which follow the license of the old nature cults, which the word suggests, is fully revealed. The satyrs have not changed; they are still charming, innocent, a "lovely fellowship," but Spenser is looking at them from a different point of view, and drawing an exact parallel with Una's story to make clear both the likeness and the difference in their good and our own. Hellenore is capable, as a human being, of a higher and more conscious goodness than that of the innocent brute world, and in entering that world she misuses it just as, with Paridell, she had misused the natural goodness and the sacred symbolism of wine.

There are many of these lesser planes in *The Faerie Queene*, and Spenser shows them in themselves and in relation to man. In forests and above all in the sea, we are shown kinds of being which, good in themselves, are not proper to mankind. The seas and forests are unknown, lacking by human standards in morality and in spirit. They can contain creatures of non-human goodness, like Belpheobe, but those who go there from man's world—Hellenore, the forester who pursues Florimell, the fisherman who attacks her—become brutalised. But nature, even at its most remote from man, has its share of the spirit which is the meaning of Spenser's world. The mutable is not necessarily the meaningless, but can "work its own perfection so by fate." What is meaningless and dead is the work of sin, of pride and distorted values, the places of Mammon or of Malecasta, where the lifeless glitter of gold and jewels is shown up in all its emptiness by the sudden reference to the stars in their order, reflections of mind and symbols of the steady life of the spirit,

th' eternall lampes, wherewith high Jove Doth light the lower world.

It is, then, a universe with varying degrees of good, and evil which is a distortion, or sometimes a subtly distorted copy, of the good: the unnaturalness of Argante, Ollyphant, and the "damned souls" who capture Serena, or the magic and deceit of Acrasia, Duessa, and the false Florimell; and it is revealed partly by the gradual accumulation of correspondences between one kind of life and another. There are parallels between Una and Hellenore, Mercilla and Lucifera, the Garden of Adonis and the Bower of Bliss, Cleopolis and the New Jerusalem, the veiled Venus of Book IV, and the goddess Nature of Book VII. The virtues are seen, more and more, as various aspects of the same heavenly good, embodied in different ways in different kinds of life. "Truth is one in All," or to put it in another way, "O goodly golden chaine, wherewith yfere The vertues linked are in lovely wize." It is not a matter only of interlinked stories or of characters overlapping from one book into another. It is a linking, by symbol and allegory, of Justice with Constancy, Love with Courtesy; a deepening of content by reference to earlier themes so that nothing is lost, and so that certain passages, preeminently the Mutability Cantos, can call up by the briefest of references the more detailed treatment of

earlier books, drawing all their diversity into unity.

One of the most far reaching of Spenser's series of inter-linked and expanding symbols is that of Florimell and Marinell, which stretches through three books and embraces many meanings and many characters. In the moral allegory, it is a story which displays Spenser's knowledge of humanity, and of the various temptations to which different natures will be subject. Florimell is one kind of chastity, the kind which maintains itself not by the awe which Belpheobe and Britomart inspire, but by fear and flight. Her temptation is not, like Amoret's, passion, but a timorous softness and gratitude. She escapes from her brutal pursuers by instinctive flight, but is disarmed by the protective kindness of Proteus, to be imprisoned by him as Amoret is imprisoned by Busyrane. On the same level of moral allegory, Marinell's is the nature which refuses to commit itself, and lives remote and self-sufficient, fearing the harm which may come to its own completeness by contact with others. But they are, both of them, more than this, for they play an important part in the network of symbol. Both seem to be creatures of the natural world which stands apart from the life of men but which yet, such is the unity of things, has its relevance to that life as it has to the life of pure spirit. The sea which is so intimate a part of their story is the remotest of all things from man, home of hydras and "sea-shouldring whales," and yet it is the most perfect of all symbols for the whole multiple, changing, but unified world, "eterne in mutabilitie." The sea can symbolize the character and meaning of the universe and so embodies a truth beyond itself, but it stands also, in its own right, for nature at its least formed and most nearly chaotic. It can show the thoughtless, blameless cruelty of nature, its blind suffering, and also the justice which works through it as through all creation. Such meanings play through the story of Marinell and Florimell, and the other stories which surround it, drawing even the Fifth Book, in which the justification of one man and one policy plays so large a part, into the scheme of the whole.

We meet first Florimell, "beautie excellent" and of a kind which delights the world,

For none alive but joy'd in Florimell,

but apparently of a lesser order of being than that to which the great champions of virtue belong. Britomart, usually so prompt to relieve distress, refuses to join in the pursuit of Florimell, and she is clearly right. Britomart's

constant mind,
Would not so lightly follow beauties chace.

She remains faithful to her search for Justice and noble deeds, one aspect of that quest for ideal goodness to which her companions also, Guyon, Arthur, and Arthur's squire Timias, are in their various ways committed. In abandoning their quest, these others are leaving their proper sphere of spiritual endeavour, constancy to an unchanging truth, to pursue the fleeting charm of a mutable world. As a result, even the steadfast Prince Arthur finds himself at the mercy of passing events and emotions, and is perceptibly a lesser figure during this period of pursuit. Forgetting for the moment his vision of Gloriana, the true object of his quest, he gives way to confused fancies, wishing that Florimell were the Faerie Queene:

And thousand fancies bet his idle braine With their light wings, the sights of
semblants vaine:
Oft did he wish, that Lady faire mote bee His Faery Queene, for whom he did complaine: Or
that his Faery Queene were such, as shee: And ever hastie Night he blamed bitterlie.

After a night of sleepless irritation, Magnificence itself becomes almost petulant:

So forth he went,
With heavie looke and lumpish pace, that plaine

In him bewraid great grudge and maltalent.

Florimell's innocent beauty is too nearly empty of meaning for man to be other than harmful to high endeavour. She has little understanding of what is happening to her, but flies instinctively and suffers blindly, with the infinite uncomprehending pathos of nature. She has no place with the knights and ladies who represent human virtues but encounters, rather, creatures of nature like Satyrane and Proteus, and brutalized human beings who try to make use of her for their own ends. Yet this pathetic, fugitive creature, embodiment of transitory beauty, has her own element of constancy; her desire for union with Marinell, who is born of the sea, symbol of the source and home of all changing things. Her long flight and her suffering begin and end in her love for Marinell, and her story has its meaning, though to the world of men, of Arthur and of Britomart, it may seem to have none. Florimell's story is a parallel to that of Amoret, and their fates are compared at the beginning of Book IV, while Amoret alone can wear the girdle Florimell has lost. Both are held captive, and the tapestries portraying Jove's metamorphoses in the House of Busyrane are an echo and reminder of the transformations which Proteus undergoes earlier in the same book in his attempts to win Florimell.

It may be that in trying to define the meaning of such myths as these one can only rob them of their power. "Symbols are the only things free enough from all bonds to speak of perfection," and to limit them to a definable meaning is to bind them. Yet one may perhaps suggest, if only as one possible meaning among the many meanings which Spenser's myths contain, that Florimell is the prototype, in the world of inanimate nature, of the steadfast womanliness of Amoret. Both are saved by truth to the nobler and more constant elements of their own being, for Amoret overcomes enslavement to physical passion by the power of chaste and enduring love, while through her love for Marinell Florimell escapes from the mutable Proteus and so finds safety and the unchanging peace at the heart of a changing world. The two may be remote from one another, but they embody the same truth: that escape from bondage to what is fleeting and inessential can be achieved by a steadfast attention to eternal values, and that so we may work our own perfection. Man and nature both, apparently bound by the physical, subject to chance and change, have none the less their share in lasting truth. So Florimell's world and Marinell's can shadow the things above them, just as Cymoent's bower of hollow waves imitates the home of the gods, being vaulted

like to the sky

In which the Gods do dwell eternally.

Contemplating their life, we may "in those weaker glories spy Some shadows of eternity."

But it is a blind and innocent life, striving only for survival and self-protection through avoidance of danger, and unable to comprehend the decrees of fate and justice which work through it. Cymoent and Proteus have only faint inklings of the true meaning of the prophecy which Proteus himself makes. Yet justice works even by means of that blindness, and the sea, which is its instrument in ending the troubles of Florimell, forms a background still to the adventures of Artegall in Book V. Artegall himself enters the story of Florimell and Marinell when he deals justice at their wedding in the affair of the false Florimell, and the Book of Justice draws together some of the themes of earlier books. The Proem is another version of the theme which appears in so many guises in *The Faerie Queene*, and is hinted at in Florimell's story; that of change and constancy. Mutability in the natural world is paralleled by inconstancy and a lack of proper values in man, but beyond this instability Justice, the "most sacred vertue," lives unchanged,

Resembling God in his imperiall might.

Artegall's reply to the giant in Canto II continues the theme, with its echoes of the Garden of Adonis and of Concord who holds the parts of the universe together

As their Almightye Maker first ordained.

Concord persists even through the hostility of the world, and Providence works through apparent change and loss in the interests of a wider justice.

What though the sea with waves continuall Doe eate the earth, it is no more at all: Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth ought, For whatsoever from one place doth fall, Is with the tide unto an other brought: For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought.

Likewise the earth is not augmented more, By all that dying into it doe fade. For of the earth they formed were of yore, How ever gay their blossome or their blade Doe flourish now, they into dust shall vade. What wrong then is it, if that when they die, They turne to that, whereof they first were made? All in the powre of their great Maker lie; All creatures must obey the voice of the most hie.

The giant's notion of justice is presented as false not only in the case of human institutions but in relation to the whole of the created world, and it is the sea, symbol of ultimate unity and of the justice present in all things, which swallows the giant and all his works. The "mighty sea" is again the instrument of Providence in the episode of Amidas and Bracidas, for its "imperiall might" is a manifestation of the power which disposes of things justly for nature and man alike.

Spenser's interlinked themes are now so well established that in Book VI he is able to add to his symbols, but here too he writes much of nature, and of the exchanges of courtesy proper to it, for the charm of courtesy in man has its counterpart in the poetry of a pastoral world. Florimell has her place here too, for she was reared by the Graces on that same Acidalian mount on which they appear to Colin, where nature is at its loveliest and most fruitful, the heightened but still truthful nature of poetry. Spenser indicates the importance of the passage by his almost reverent preparation for it; and part of its importance may lie in the impression it gives of the order and unity of things as they appear to the shaping mind of the poet. The double circle of the dancing ladies moves, to Colin's piping, around his "countrey lasse," poetic symbol of all grace and virtue, while the imagery suggests earlier, related themes. The treatment of nature contrasts with that of the Bower of Bliss, the bridal imagery of Ariadne is a reminder of the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus, and Florimell, child of the Graces, is also part of this ceremonious world of love, poetry, and natural grace. The passage is almost a copy in little of the widening circles of the poem and its meaning.

But the latest and fullest of such unifying passages as these is to be found in the fragment *Of Mutability*, a more explicit statement of the great theme which earlier books express chiefly by symbol and by arrangement of material. These two cantos, and the two final stanzas, are the culmination of the poem as it now stands, both unifying and illuminating it. Spenser's description of Nature, and Mutability's address to her, show her as the source—or rather as nearest to that source which man may know—of the conceptions in other books. She embodies Justice and Concord, she is veiled like Venus, and by her likeness to the transfigured Christ she suggests the Holiness of Book I. Mutability, on the other hand, is Corruption, sin, or the consequences of sin as seen in our world:

For she the face of earthly things so changed, That all which nature had establish first In good estate, and in meet order ranged, She did pervert, and all their statutes burst: And all the worlds faire frame (which none yet durst Of Gods or men to alter or misguide) She alter'd quite, and made them all accurst That God had blest; and did at first provide In that still happy state for ever to abide.

She is of mortal race, for it is this which saves her from the anger of Jove, and it is she who

death for life exchanged foolishlie;
Since which, all living wights have learned to die.

In her pride she has distorted what God had left in good order, has broken the laws of nature, justice, and policy, and has brought death into the world. She is a composite creature, for in her beauty can be seen the charm of Florimell's world of innocent partakers in the sorrows of man, but in her too is the guilt of man himself. The story of Faunus and Molanna is a pathetic and absurd parallel to the high seriousness of Mutability's trial and its theme of the effects of sin upon the world. Through the stupid presumption of Faunus the sacred Arlo hill, once the haunt of Diana and the setting chosen for Nature's court, becomes a place of desolation.

The issue of the trial is made clear. Mutability's claim to rule over the earth is allowed, but Jove retains his sway over "Heaven's empire," and is "confirm'd in his imperiall see." Indeed, once the realm of earth is left behind, and the higher places of the Universe are approached, Mutability's arguments lose much of their force. Her struggle with Cynthia in the sphere of the moon, traditionally the border of the regions of decay, is left unresolved, and her answer to Jove's claim that the gods control time and change is hardly conclusive. She begins with a flat denial:

What we see not, who shall us perswade?

and continues with a description of the changes of the moon and the motions of the planets which Nature has no difficulty in answering. The moon may have its phases, and the spheres move, but they return again to themselves.

They are not changed from their first estate,

for time and change are, as Jove has claimed, part of God's plan. But Nature's reply presumably deals with the whole of Mutability's case, including her claim to earth, and one may suppose that even there, where through sin and death she does now rule, the guidance of Providence is not absent. Even there things "by their change their being doe dilate," and are being led to

that same time when no more Change shall be, But stedfast rest of all things, firmly stay'd
Upon the pillours of Eternity.

On earth, the calm and orderly process through which the universe works its own perfection has been disrupted by sin, and is more difficult to perceive; but heaven can make use even of the disasters which sin has brought, and will at last bring the earth "to itselfe again," resolving change and death in eternal rest.

It is the world through which all the characters of *The Faerie Queene* can be seen to move, a world in which the linked orders of created things range from the least conscious and least spiritual upwards to the ranked angels

Singing before th' eternall majesty, In their trinall triplicities on hye,

and in which God has ordained for each creature a steady movement towards its own perfection. Even in the life of man and of the hapless creatures which share in his fall, the remnant of this joyous order may still be seen in the justice and love which Spenser shows us at work in so many spheres and embodies in myth and symbol. Even now, if he is steadfast in devotion to truth, man may experience directly some part of the glory of eternity. Red Crosse, his quest over, delights in the company of Una,

Yet swimming in that sea of blisful joy,

and hears for a moment the songs of the angels themselves. All the virtues have their home in that Sabaoth, and on earth they are all—Holiness, Chastity, Temperance—made manifest by a constant attention to the unchanging truth. It is this proper movement of all the richness of created things towards the unity which produced them and works through them that the poem expresses, and by one of the fortunate chances of poetry it ends, as we have it, with the two great stanzas which sum up the Spenserian universe:

For, all that moveth, doth in Change delight: But thence-forth all shall rest eternally With
Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight: O that great Sabbaoth God, grant me that Sabaoths
sight.

At the end of the poem, "the total life has suddenly displayed its source."

Source: Kathleen Williams, "'Eterne in Mutabilite': The Unified World of *The Faerie Queene*," in *ELH*, Vol. 19, No. 2, June, 1952, pp. 115-130.

The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser: Introduction

The Faerie Queene Edmund Spenser

This entry represents criticism of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*.

Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96), an allegorical romance designed to glorify Queen Elizabeth I of England, is celebrated as one of the greatest and most important works of English verse. Spenser's aim in writing *The Faerie Queene* was to create a great national literature for England, equal to the classic epic poems of Homer and Virgil. *The Faerie Queene* is divided into Books I through VI, each focusing on the adventures of a different hero or heroine and a different virtue, including Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy. To suit his literary purposes, Spenser invented a verse form that has come to be known as the Spenserian stanza. Spenser was celebrated as a great national poet in his lifetime, and has since been recognized as a major influence on later writers, particularly the nineteenth-century Romantic poets. Critics have long recognized *The Faerie Queene* as an allegorical tale, including within its many subplots a variety of political, social, psychological, and religious allegories. Critics in the twentieth century and beyond have explored other aspects of *The Faerie Queene*, reading Spenser's representations of political figures, religious conflicts, and national politics in the historical and cultural context of Elizabethan England and the Protestant Reformation. Critics since the 1980s have taken a particular interest in Spenser's depictions of Queen Elizabeth I, offering a variety of analyses of *The Faerie Queene* concerned with representations of gender and power.

Biographical Information

By 1590, Spenser had published a collection of poetry, *The Shepheardes Calendar* (1579), and a volume of personal correspondence, *Three Proper, and Wittie, Familiar Letters* (1580), but was not yet considered a major literary figure of the day. In 1588 or 1589 he acquired a large plantation in Kilcolman, Ireland. There, as a minor British official, he became acquainted with the poet Sir Walter Raleigh, a neighboring landowner. Raleigh convinced Spenser to travel with him to London and present to Queen Elizabeth I the completed portions of *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser and his poetry were well received by the Queen, who approved the publication of Books I, II, and III of *The Faerie Queene* in 1590. This publication included an appendix reprinting Spenser's letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, in which he explains his original intention in writing *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser wished to write a specifically English epic poem, thereby creating a great national literature to glorify both England and the Queen. His stated purpose was to emulate the accomplishments of such classic epic writers as Homer and Virgil. In 1591 the Queen rewarded Spenser for his literary success

with a small lifetime pension. Books IV, V, and VI of *The Faerie Queene* were published in 1596. Spenser included a reference to his own marriage to his second wife, Elizabeth Boyle, in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*, representing himself as the shepherd Colin Clout (a reference to his earlier, pastoral poetry), who plays his pipes in celebration of the woman he loves. Spenser's allegorical treatment of the political conflicts in Ireland in Book V may have been motivated by his own experiences as a representative of the British monarchy who lived for some twenty years in Ireland. Spenser remained in Ireland until 1598, when an Irish rebellion resulted in the burning of his estate. He then fled to London, carrying official letters about the state of affairs in Ireland, and died soon afterward, in 1599. Spenser's status in England is indicated by his burial in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, near the grave of Geoffrey Chaucer. Spenser continues to be celebrated as one of England's greatest and most influential poets.

Plot and Major Characters

The Faerie Queene is set in the fictional Faerie Land, ruled by the Queen Gloriana, an allegorical figure for Queen Elizabeth I, representing the quality of Glory. Spenser's original plan for *The Faerie Queene* was to write twelve books, each narrating the adventures of a different knight and focused on a particular virtue. In the beginning of the epic, these twelve knights were to be gathered at the annual feast of the Faerie Queene, where each was to be assigned a quest. Spenser's intention was to make Prince Arthur, representing the quality of Magnificence, the central character running throughout all twelve books, although critics agree that Arthur's role in the narrative of *The Faerie Queene* does not fulfill this plan. Scholars confirm that Spenser certainly intended for Gloriana and Arthur to be married in Book XII. By the time of Spenser's death, he had published Books I through VI, and left a fragment that was published posthumously as "The Mutability Cantos" (1609). Many of the same characters and storylines recur throughout *The Faerie Queene*. This complex narrative scheme is known as *intrelacement*, or interlacing narratives. Each book within *The Faerie Queene* is further subdivided into cantos. While the canto was a traditional Italian literary device, Spenser was the first English poet to use it effectively. For his epic tale, Spenser invented his own stanza form, now known as the Spenserian stanza. It consists of nine iambic lines, the first eight lines having five stresses each and the last line having six stresses. The rhyme pattern of the Spenserian stanza is *ababbcbcc*. The slow build-up created by this arrangement of lines, leading up to the final line, has been described as that of a wave swelling and breaking onto shore. The hero of Book I is the Red Cross Knight, also referred to as St. George, the patron saint of England. During the course of his adventures, the Red Cross Knight acquires the virtue of Holiness. Una, a young woman, travels to the court of the Faerie Queene to ask for help in defeating a dragon that threatens her parents. Una there obtains the aid of the Red Cross Knight. Temporarily held captive by the villainess Duessa, the Red Cross Knight is rescued by King Arthur and goes on to defeat the dragon. At the end of Book I, Una and the Red Cross Knight are married. Book II features the hero Guyon, who represents the virtue of Temperance. After being rescued by Arthur, Guyon travels to the Bower of Bliss, a garden of delight representing the temptations of sensual pleasure. There, Guyon defeats the villainess Acrasia, who seduces men and turns them into beasts. Book III tells of the adventures of Britomart, a female knight, who represents the virtue of Chastity. Britomart has seen an image in a magic mirror of Artegall, the knight who is destined to be her beloved. She has also been told by Merlin that England will one day be ruled by her descendents. Thus, Britomart is on a quest to find Artegall, whom she has never met. Skilled in the art of battle, Britomart rescues the Red Cross Knight from a villain and goes on to rescue Amoret, a young bride held prisoner in a castle. Book IV concerns the virtue of Friendship, exemplified by the characters Cambel and Triamond. Critics have noted, however, that these two friends and the theme of friendship are not actually central to the actions related in Book IV. Rather, the continued adventures of Britomart and other secondary characters occupy the central narrative of this book. During a tournament, Britomart, disguised as a man, defeats the knight Artegall. Later, Artegall wins over Britomart in a fight, but when he discovers that she is a woman, the two fall immediately in love. Artegall is the hero of Book V, known as the Book of Justice. He sets out on a quest to rescue Irena from the villain Grantorto. In the course of his adventures, Artegall is held captive by Radigund, a villainous Amazonian queen who is in love with him. When Britomart learns of his imprisonment, she rescues Artegall by defeating Radigund in a fight and cutting off her head. In Book VI, the

hero, Calidore, demonstrates the virtue of Courtesy. Calidore goes on a quest to subdue the Blatant Beast. Along the way, he falls in love with and becomes engaged to Pastorella, a shepherd girl. When Pastorella is abducted and held captive on an island by a band of outlaws, Calidore rescues her. He then goes on to subdue the Blatant Beast. “The Mutability Cantos” include two cantos of what critics sometimes refer to as Book VII. The tale related in these cantos concerns the goddess Mutability, who rebels against the rule of Jove and wreaks havoc on the universe. For her offense, Mutability is put on trial in a court over which the goddess Nature presides as judge. During this trial, the status of Mutability (the force of change) in the universe is debated among the gods.

Major Themes

The major themes of *The Faerie Queene* may be determined by the subject of each of the six books: Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy. These themes are expressed through the allegorical meanings of the many plots and subplots in *The Faerie Queene*. Critics have seen in Spenser's epic poem a variety of types of allegory, including social, political, historical, religious, moral, philosophical, and psychological. Allegorical meanings and thematic focus within the six books of the *Faerie Queene* are in part a matter of interpretation and therefore tend to vary with any given critic. However, there are some generally accepted interpretations. Both religious and political allegory are central to the long, complex plot structure and diverse characterization of *The Faerie Queene*. *The Faerie Queene* is understood to be a political allegory concerning the domestic and international status of Elizabethan England. Spenser explicitly stated that both the Faerie Queene and Britomart represent Queen Elizabeth I. Critics have concluded that several other female characters within the story, for example Una and Belpheobe, also stand as allegorical figures for the Queen. Specific historical events and political circumstances during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I are thus addressed through Spenser's use of allegory. Book V is understood as an allegory about the conflict in Ireland between the forces of British rule and various rebellious local factions. Artegall's quest to rescue Irena from the clutches of Grantorto represents England's efforts to wrest Ireland from the sway of Catholicism. The political turmoil surrounding Mary Stuart (also known as Mary Queen of Scots) is represented through the characters Radigund and Duessa; the trial and execution of Duessa on charges of conspiracy in Book V is thus an allegory for the fate of Mary Stuart under the rule of Elizabeth I. The relationship between Elizabeth I and Sir Walter Raleigh, a poet, political figure, and one-time favorite of the Queen, is allegorically represented in the relationship between Belpheobe and Timias, who appear in Books III and V. *The Faerie Queene* also includes major elements of religious allegory. Book I is generally interpreted as a religious allegory concerning the split between the Catholic Church and the Church of England during the era of the English Reformation. The adventures of the Red Cross Knight are an allegory for the struggle of the individual between the forces of sin and holiness, as well as the struggles of England to assert itself as a Protestant nation against the threat of Catholic countries, particularly Spain. In the course of Book I, The Red Cross Knight moves from the House of Pride, a den of sin, to the House of Holiness, where his Christian virtues are revitalized. The religious allegory of Book I may additionally be seen in the designation of Una's parents as the King and Queen of Eden (Adam and Eve), whose home is under the thrall of a dragon, representing Satan. Critics have further interpreted Una as representative of the Church of England and the Red Cross Knight as the nation of England. Thus, their union at the end of Book I is an allegory for the union of the Anglican Church with the English monarchy and citizenry. Other major religious themes addressed in *The Faerie Queene* may be seen in Book II, in which the hero must learn to overcome the temptations of sensual pleasure and excess in order to develop the virtue of Temperance, or moderation and restraint. The theme of Chastity in Book III centers on the hero Britomart. Britomart's chastity may be interpreted not in terms of the modern sense of chastity as sexual abstinence, since Britomart does fall in love during the course of her adventures, but chastity as a more general moral purity as well as social and religious virtue. *The Faerie Queene* additionally addresses themes of social virtue on the part of the individual through the focus of Book IV on the virtue of Friendship and Book VI on the virtue of Courtesy. For example, the Blatant Beast in Book VI represents the maliciousness of false appearances and public slander. Spenser explicitly stated in his letter accompanying the first published edition of *The Faerie Queene* that he wished through this tale to improve the social graces of the reader, “to

fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline.” This statement indicates that Spenser's tale is in part concerned with the theme of proper social behavior among individuals in society. “The Mutability Cantos” address the theme of change, transformation, and decay as a natural force in the universe. Spenser here concludes that all change is a part of God's larger plan, and must be accepted as a natural element of life.

Critical Reception

Upon initial publication, *The Faerie Queene* was recognized by both the Queen of England and prominent literary figures of the day as the greatest work of English verse to be written by a poet of Spenser's generation. Over the centuries since Spenser's death, critical response to *The Faerie Queene* has varied. Certainly, Spenser has exerted tremendous influence over generations of poets and has rightly been called “a poet's poet.” Spenser was recognized as an important influence on major English poets of the seventeenth century, most notably John Milton. Spenser's tremendous influence on writers of the eighteenth century is indicated by the countless imitations of *The Faerie Queene* to be produced by a broad range of poets throughout that century. In the nineteenth century, critics generally dismissed *The Faerie Queene*, criticizing Spenser for his didactic use of moral and religious allegory. For the Romantic poets of the nineteenth century, however, Spenser's influence was crucial. All of the major English Romantic poets considered Spenser a primary influence on their writing, including William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Lord Byron. These poets regarded Spenser as an inspiration and model, admiring his poetic form, particularly the Spenserian stanza, use of language, and rich sensual imagery, as well as his use of the traditional romantic epic style in medieval fantasy settings. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* was less influential, but drew increasing interest from literary scholars. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, scholars of the New Criticism devoted much critical attention to Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. These critics focused on close analysis of formal elements of Spenser's epic poem, a type of analysis to which *The Faerie Queene* readily lends itself. Beginning in the 1980s, critical response to *The Faerie Queene* has been informed by theoretical developments such as post-structuralism and cultural criticism. Current approaches to Spenser include semiotics, Marxist cultural theory, feminist criticism, and the New Historicism. Critics have increasingly interpreted Spenser's epic within the cultural and historical context of Elizabethan England during the era of the English Protestant Reformation. During the past couple of decades, critics have taken a particular interest in analyzing Spenser's representations of Queen Elizabeth I in terms of the dynamics of gender and power in Elizabethan England.

The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser: Principal Works

The Shepheardes Calendar: Conteyning Twelve Æglogues Proportionable to the Twelve Monethes 1579

**The Faerie Queene, Disposed into Twelve Bookes Fashioning XII Morall Vertues* [Books I-III] 1590

Complaints: Containing Sundrie Small Poemes of the Worlds Vanitie 1591

Amoretti and Epithalamion 1595

Colin Clouts Come Home Againe 1595

†*The Faerie Queene, Disposed into Twelve Bookes Fashioning XII Moral Vertues: The Second Part of the Faerie Queene, Containing the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Bookes* 1596

Fowre Hymnes 1596

Prothalamion; or, A Spousall Verse 1596

‡*Three Proper, and Wittie, Familiar Letters Lately Passed between Two Universitie Men: Touching the Earthquake in Aprill Last, and Our English Reformed Versifying* (letters) 1580

The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Varorium Edition [11 vols.] (poetry and prose) 1932-57

*This work was not published in its entirety until 1609, when the two “Cantos of Mutabilitie” were added.

†This work includes a revision of the earlier *The Faerie Queene, Disposed into Twelve Bookes Fashioning XII Morall Vertues* [Books I-III]

‡This work also includes letters written by Gabriel Harvey.

Criticism: John Hughes (essay date 1715)

SOURCE: Hughes, John. “Remarks on *The Fairy Queen*.” In *Spenser's Critics: Changing Currents in Literary Taste*, edited by William R. Mueller, pp. 18-27. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1959.

[In the following excerpt, originally published in 1715, Hughes points out significant flaws in *The Faerie Queene* but also demonstrates its beauty.]

The chief Merit of this Poem consists in that surprizing Vein of fabulous Invention, which runs thro it, and enriches it every where with Imagery and Descriptions more than we meet with in any other modern Poem. The Author seems to be possess'd of a kind of Poetical Magick; and the Figures he calls up to our View rise so thick upon us, that we are at once pleased and distracted by the exhaustless Variety of them; so that his Faults may in a manner be imputed to his Excellencies: His Abundance betrays him into Excess, and his Judgment is overborne by the Torrent of his Imagination.

That which seems the most liable to Exception in this Work, is the Model of it, and the Choice the Author has made of so romantick a Story. The several Books appear rather like so many several Poems, than one entire Fable: Each of them has its peculiar Knight, and is independent of the rest; and tho some of the Persons make their Appearance in different Books, yet this has very little Effect in connecting them. Prince *Arthur* is indeed the principal Person, and has therefore a share given him in every Legend; but his Part is not considerable enough in any one of them: He appears and vanishes again like a Spirit; and we lose sight of him too soon, to consider him as the Hero of the Poem.

These are the most obvious Defects in the Fable of the *Fairy Queen*. The want of Unity in the Story makes it difficult for the Reader to carry it in his Mind, and distracts too much his Attention to the several Parts of it; and indeed the whole Frame of it wou'd appear monstrous, if it were to be examin'd by the Rules of Epick Poetry, as they have been drawn from the Practice of *Homer* and *Virgil*. But as it is plain the Author never design'd it by those Rules, I think it ought rather to be consider'd as a Poem of a particular kind, describing in a Series of Allegorical Adventures or Episodes the most noted Virtues and Vices: to compare it therefore with the Models of Antiquity, wou'd be like drawing a Parallel between the *Roman* and the *Gothick* Architecture. In the first there is doubtless a more natural Grandeur and Simplicity: in the latter, we find great Mixtures of Beauty and Barbarism, yet assisted by the Invention of a Variety of inferior Ornaments; and tho the former is more majestick in the whole, the latter may be very surprizing and agreeable in its Parts.

It may seem strange indeed, since *Spenser* appears to have been well acquainted with the best Writers of Antiquity, that he has not imitated them in the Structure of his Story. Two Reasons may be given for this: The

first is, That at the time when he wrote, the *Italian* Poets, whom he has chiefly imitated, and who were the first Revivers of this Art among the Moderns, were in the highest vogue, and were universally read and admir'd. But the chief Reason was probably, that he chose to frame his Fable after a Model which might give the greatest Scope to that Range of Fancy which was so remarkably his Talent. There is a Bent in Nature, which is apt to determine Men that particular way in which they are most capable of excelling; and tho it is certain he might have form'd a better Plan, it is to be question'd whether he cou'd have executed any other so well.

It is probably for the same reason, that among the *Italian* Poets, he rather follow'd *Ariosto*, whom he found more agreeable to his Genius, than *Tasso*, who had form'd a better Plan, and from whom he has only borrow'd some particular Ornaments; yet it is but Justice to say, that his Plan is much more regular than that of *Ariosto*. In the *Orlando Furioso*, we every where meet with an exuberant Invention, join'd with great Liveliness and Facility of Description, yet debas'd by frequent Mixtures of the comick Genius, as well as many shocking Indecorums. Besides, in the Huddle and Distraction of the Adventures, we are for the most part only amus'd with extravagant Stories, without being instructed in any Moral. On the other hand, *Spenser's* Fable, tho often wild, is, as I have observ'd, always emblematical: And this may very much excuse likewise that Air of Romance in which he has follow'd the *Italian* Author. The perpetual Stories of Knights, Giants, Castles, and Enchantments, and all that Train of Legendary Adventures, wou'd indeed appear very trifling, if *Spenser* had not found a way to turn them all into Allegory, or if a less masterly Hand had fill'd up his Draught. But it is surprizing to observe how much the Strength of the Painting is superior to the Design. It ought to be consider'd too, that at the time when our Author wrote, the Remains of the old *Gothick* Chivalry were not quite abolish'd: It was not many Years before, that the famous Earl of *Surry*, remarkable for his Wit and Poetry in the Reign of King *Henry* the Eighth, took a romantick Journey to *Florence*, the Place of his Mistress's Birth, and publish'd there a Challenge against all Nations in Defence of her Beauty. Justs and Turnaments were held in *England* in the Time of Queen *Elizabeth*. Sir *Philip Sidney* tilted at one of these Entertainments, which was made for the *French* Ambassador, when the Treaty of Marriage was on foot with the Duke of *Anjou*: and some of our Historians have given us a very particular and formal Account of Preparations, by marking out Lists, and appointing Judges, for a Tryal by Combat, in the same Reign, which was to have decided the Title to a considerable Estate; and in which the whole Ceremony was perfectly agreeable to the fabulous Descriptions in Books of Knight-Errantry. This might render his Story more familiar to his first Readers; tho Knights in Armour, and Ladies Errant are as antiquated Figures to us, as the Court of that time wou'd appear, if we cou'd see them now in their Ruffs and Fardingales.

There are two other Objections to the Plan of the *Fairy Queen*, which, I confess, I am more at a loss to answer. I need not, I think, be scrupulous in mentioning freely the Defects of a Poem, which, tho it was never suppos'd to be perfect, has always been allow'd to be admirable.

The first is, that the Scene is laid in *Fairy-Land*, and the chief Actors are *Fairies*. The Reader may see their imaginary Race and History in the Second Book, at the end of the Tenth Canto: but if he is not prepar'd before-hand, he may expect to find them acting agreeably to the common Stories and Traditions about such fancy'd Beings. Thus *Shakespear*, who has introduc'd them in his *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, has made them speak and act in a manner perfectly adapted to their suppos'd Characters; but the *Fairies* in this Poem are not distinguish'd from other Persons. There is this Misfortune likewise attends the Choice of such Actors, that having been accustom'd to conceive of them in a diminutive way, we find it difficult to raise our Ideas, and to imagine a *Fairy* encountering with a Monster or a Giant. *Homer* has pursu'd a contrary Method, and represented his Heroes above the Size and Strength of ordinary Men; and it is certain that the Actions of the *Iliad* wou'd have appear'd but ill proportion'd to the Characters, if we were to have imagin'd them all perform'd by Pigmies.

But as the Actors our Author has chosen, are only fancy'd Beings, he might possibly think himself at liberty to give them what Stature, Customs and Manners he pleas'd. I will not say he was in the right in this: but it is

plain that by the literal Sense of *Fairy-Land*, he only design'd an *Utopia*, an imaginary Place; and by his *Fairies*, Persons of whom he might invent any Action proper to human Kind, without being restrain'd, as he must have been, if he had chosen a real Scene and historical Characters. As for the mystical Sense, it appears both by the Work it self, and by the Author's¹ Explanation of it, that his *Fairy-Land* is *England*, and his *Fairy-Queen*, *Queen Elizabeth*; at whose Command the Adventure of every Legend is suppos'd to be undertaken.

The other Objection is, that having chosen an historical Person, Prince *Arthur*, for his principal Hero; who is no *Fairy*, yet is mingled with them: he has not however represented any part of his History. He appears here indeed only in his Minority, and performs his Exercises in *Fairy-Land*, as a private Gentleman; but we might at least have expected, that the fabulous Accounts of him, and of his Victories over the *Saxons*, shou'd have been work'd into some beautiful Vision or Prophecy: and I cannot think *Spenser* wou'd wholly omit this, but am apt to believe he had done it in some of the following Books which were lost.

In the moral Introductions to every Book, many of which have a great Propriety and Elegance, the Author has follow'd the Example of *Ariosto*. I will only beg leave to point out some of the principal Beauties in each Book, which may yet more particularly discover the Genius of the Author.

If we consider the First Book as an entire Work of it self, we shall find it to be no irregular Contrivance: There is one principal Action, which is compleated in the Twelfth Canto; and the several Incidents or Episodes are proper, as they tend either to obstruct or promote it. The same may be said of some other of the following Books, tho I think they are not so regular as this. The Author has shewn Judgment in making his Knight of the *Red Cross*, or *St. George*, no perfect Character; without which, many of the Incidents cou'd not have been represented. The Character of *Una*, or *Truth*, is very properly oppos'd by those of *Duessa*, or *Falshood*, and *Archimago*, or *Fraud*. *Spenser's* particular manner, which (if it may be allow'd) I wou'd call his Painter-like Genius, immediately shews it self in the Figure of *Error*, who is drawn as a Monster, and that of *Hypocrisy*, as a Hermit. The Description of the former of these, in the mix'd Shape of a Woman and a Serpent, surrounded with her Offspring, and especially that Circumstance of their creeping into her Mouth on the sudden Light which glanced upon them from the Knight's Armour, incline one to think that our Great *Milton* had it in his eye when he wrote his famous Episode of Sin and Death. The Artifices of *Archimago* and *Duessa*, to separate the Knight from *Una*, are well invented, and intermingled with beautiful Strokes of Poetry; particularly in that Episode where the Magician sends one of his Spirits to fetch a false Dream from the House of *Morpheus*:

Amid the Bowels of the Earth full steep
And low, where dawning Day does never peep,
His Dwelling is—

Mr. Rhimer, as I remember, has, by way of Comparison, collected from most of the antient and modern Poets, the finest Descriptions of the Night; among all which, he gives the Preference to the *English* Poets: This of *Morpheus*, or Sleep, being a Poetical Subject of the same kind, might be subjected to a like Trial; and the Reader may particularly compare it with that in the Eleventh Book of *Ovid's Metamorphoses*; to which, I believe, he will not think it inferior.

The miraculous Incident of a Tree shedding Drops of Blood, and a Voice speaking from the Trunk of it, is borrow'd from that of *Polidorus* in the Third Book of *Virgil's Æneis*. *Ariosto* and *Tasso* have both copy'd the same Story, tho in a different manner. It was impossible that the modern Poets, who have run so much into the Taste of Romance, should let a Fiction of this kind escape their Imitation.

The Adventures which befall *Una*, after she is forsaken by the Knight; her coming to the House of *Abessa*, or *Superstition*; the Consternation occasion'd by that Visit; her Reception among the Savages; and her civilizing them, are all very fine Emblems. The Education of *Satyrane*, a young Satyr, is describ'd on this Occasion with

an agreeable Wildness of Fancy.

But there is one Episode in this Book, which I cannot but particularly admire; I mean that in the Fifth Canto, where *Duessa* the Witch seeks the Assistance of *Night*, to convey the Body of the wounded *Pagan* to be cured by *Æsculapius* in the Regions below. The Author here rises above himself, and is got into a Track of imitating the Antients, different from the greatest part of his Poem. The Speech in which *Duessa* addresses *Night*, is wonderfully great, and stained with that impious Flattery, which is the Character of *Falshood*, who is the Speaker:

O thou most antient Grandmother of all,
More old than Jove, whom thou at first didst breed,
Or that Great House of Gods Cælestial,
Which was't begot in Dæmogorgon's Hall,
And saw'st the Secrets of the World unmade!

As *Duessa* came away hastily on this Expedition, and forgot to put off the Shape of Truth, which she had assum'd a little before, *Night* does not know her: This Circumstance, and the Discovery afterwards, when she owns her for her Daughter, are finely emblematical. The Images of *Horror* are rais'd in a very masterly manner; *Night* takes the Witch into her Chariot; and being arriv'd where the Body lay, they alight.

And all the while she stood upon the Ground,
The wakeful Dogs did never cease to bay,
As giving warning of th' unusual Sound
With which her Iron Wheels did them affray,
And her dark grisly Look them much dismay.
The Messenger of Death, the ghastly Owl,
With dreary Shrieks did also her bewray,
And hungry Wolves continually did howl
At her abhorred Face, so filthy and so foul.

They steal away the Body, and carry it down thro the Cave *Avernus*, to the Realms of *Pluto*. What Strength of Painting is there in the following Lines!

—On every side them stood
The trembling Ghosts, with sad amazed Mood
Chattring their Iron Teeth, and staring wide
With stony Eyes; and all the hellish Brood
Of Fiends infernal flock'd on every side
To gaze on earthly Wight, that with the Night durst ride.

Longinus commending a Description in *Euripides* of *Phaeton's* Journey thro the Heavens, in which the Turnings and Windings are mark'd out in a very lively manner, says, That the Soul of the Poet seems to mount the Chariot with him, and to share all his Dangers. The Reader will find himself in a like manner transported throughout this whole Episode; which shews that it has in it the Force and Spirit of the most sublime Poetry.

The first Appearance of Prince *Arthur* in this Book is represented to great Advantage, and gives occasion to a very finish'd Description of a martial Figure. How sprightly is that Image and Simile in the following Lines!

Upon the Top of all his lofty Crest
A Bunch of Hairs, discolour'd diversly
With sprinkled Pearl, and Gold full richly drest,
Did shake, and seem'd to dance for Jollity,
Like to an Almond-Tree ymounted high
On Top of green Selinis all alone,
With Blossoms brave bedecked daintily;
Whose tender Locks do tremble every one

At every little Blast that under Heav'n is blown.

I must not omit mentioning the House of *Pride*, and that of *Holiness*, which are beautiful Allegories in different Parts of this Book. In the former of these there is a minute Circumstance which is very artificial; for the Reader may observe, that the six Counsellors which attend *Pride* in her Progress, and ride on the Beasts which draw her Chariot, are plac'd in that Order in which the Vices they represent, naturally produce and follow each other. In the Dungeon among the Captives of *Pride*, the Poet has represented *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Cræsus*, *Antiochus*, *Alexander*, and several other eminent Persons, in Circumstances of the utmost Ignominy. The Moral is truly noble; for upon the sight of so many illustrious Slaves, the Knight hastens from the Place, and makes his Escape.

The Description of *Despair* in the Ninth Canto, is that which is said to have been taken notice of by Sir *Philip Sidney*. But I think the Speech of *Despair*, in which the distemper'd Reasonings, that are apt to agitate the Heart of a Man abandon'd to this Passion, are so pathetically represented, is much superior to the Description.

Among the Allegories in the Tenth Canto, it is impossible not to distinguish that venerable Figure of Contemplation, in his Hermitage on the Top of a Hill, represented as an old Man almost wasted away in Study:

With snowy Locks adown his Shoulders spread,
As hoary Frost with Spangles doth attire
The mossy Branches of an Oak half dead.

The Knight and his Companion enquire of him:

Is not from hence the way that leadeth right
To that most glorious House that glistereth bright
With burning Stars, and ever-living Fire?

This is extremely noble, as well as the old Man's shewing him from the Top of the Hill, the heavenly Jerusalem; which was proper to animate the Hero against the Combat, in which he is presently after engag'd: His Success in that Combat, and his marrying Una, are a very just Conclusion of this Book, and of its chief Allegory.

It wou'd be easy to point out many Instances, besides those I have mention'd, of the Beauties in this Book; yet these few will give the Reader a Taste of that Poetical Spirit and Genius for Allegory, which every where shine in this Author. It wou'd be endless to take notice of the more minute Beauties of his Epithets, his Figures, and his Similes, which occur in almost every Page. I shall only mention one or two as a Specimen. That Image of *Strength*, in striking a Club into the Ground, which is illustrated by the following Simile, is very great.

As when Almighty Jove, in wrathful Mood
To wreak the Guilt of mortal Sins is bent,
Hurls forth his thundring Dart with deadly Food,
Enroll'd in Flames and smouldring Dreariment,
Thro riven Clouds and molten Firmament
The fierce three-forked Engine making way,
Both lofty Tow'rs and highest Trees hath rent,
And all that might his angry Passage stay,
And shooting in the Earth, casts up a Mount of Clay.
His boistrous Club so bury'd in the Ground,
He could not rearen up again, & c.

As also that of a Giant's Fall,

That down he tumbled as an aged Tree.
High growing on the Top of rocky Clift;
Whose Heart-Strings with keen Steel nigh hewen be:
The mighty Trunk, half rent with ragged Rift,
Doth roll adown the Rocks, and fall with fearful Drift.

These are such Passages as we may imagine our excellent *Milton* to have study'd in this Author. And here by the way it is remarkable that as *Spenser* abounds with such Thoughts as are truly sublime, so he is almost every where free from the Mixture of little Conceits, and that low Affectation of Wit which so much infected both our Verse and Prose afterwards; and from which scarce any Writer of his own Time, besides himself, was free. ...

I have not yet said any thing concerning *Spenser's* Versification; in which, tho he is not always equal to himself, it may be affirm'd, that he is superior to all his Cotemporaries, and even to those that follow'd him for some time, except *Fairfax*, the applauded Translator of *Tasso*. In this he commendably study'd the *Italians*, and must be allow'd to have been a great Improver of our *English* Numbers: Before his time, Musick seems to have been so much a Stranger to our Poetry, that, excepting the Earl of *Surry's* Lyricks, we have very few Examples of Verses that had any tolerable Cadence. In *Chaucer* there is so little of this, that many of his Lines are not even restrain'd to a certain Number of Syllables. Instances of this loose Verse are likewise to be found in our Author, but it is only in such Places where he has purposely imitated *Chaucer*, as in the second Eclogue, and some others. This great Defect of Harmony put the Wits in Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign upon a Design of totally changing our Numbers, not only by banishing Rhime, but by new moulding our Language into the Feet and Measures of the *Latin* Poetry. Sir *Philip Sidney* was at the Head of this Project, and has accordingly given us some Hexameter and Pentameter Verses in his *Arcadia*. But the Experiment soon fail'd; and tho our Author, by some Passages in his Letters to Mr. *Harvey*, seems not to have disapprov'd it, yet it does not appear by those Poems of his, which are preserv'd, that he gave it any Authority by his Example.

As to the Stanza in which the *Fairy Queen* is written, tho the Author cannot be commended for his Choice of it, yet it is much more harmonious in its kind than the Heroick Verse of that Age. It is almost the same with what the *Italians* call their *Ottave Rime*, which is us'd both by *Ariosto* and *Tasso*, but improv'd by *Spenser*, with the Addition of a Line more in the Close, of the Length of our Alexandrines. The Defect of it, in long or narrative Poems, is apparent. The same Measure, closed always by a full Stop, in the same Place, by which every Stanza is made as it were a distinct Paragraph, grows tiresom by continual Repetition, and frequently breaks the Sense, when it ought to be carry'd on without Interruption. With this Exception, the Reader will however find it harmonious, full of well-sounding Epithets, and of such elegant Turns on the Thought and Words, that *Dryden*² himself owns he learn'd these Graces of Verse chiefly from our Author; and does not scruple to say, that in this Particular *only Virgil surpass'd him among the Romans, and only Mr. Waller among the English*.

Notes

1. Vid. Letter to Sir W. Raleigh.
2. Dedication to Juvenal.

Criticism: C. S. Lewis (essay date 1936)

SOURCE: Lewis, C. S. "The Faerie Queene." In *Spenser's Critics: Changing Currents in Literary Taste*, edited by William R. Mueller, pp. 206-32. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1959.

[In the following excerpt, originally published in 1936, Lewis discusses the various levels of moral and philosophical allegory in *The Faerie Queene*.]

Let us return to the Knight and the Lady in the opening stanzas [of *The Faerie Queene*.] The knight has a red cross on a silver shield; the lady is leading a lamb. The lamb has puzzled many readers; but we now know¹ that it had a real function in earlier versions of the legend of St. George, and (what is much more important) we know that the lady was commonly represented leading her lamb in the pageants of St. George and the dragon. In other words, the two figures which meet us at the beginning of *The Faerie Queene* were instantly recognized by Spenser's first readers, and were clothed for them not in literary or courtly associations, but in popular, homely, patriotic associations. They spoke immediately to what was most universal and childlike in gentle and simple alike. This at once suggests an aspect of Spenser's poetry which it will be fatal for us to neglect, and which is abundantly illustrated in the First Book. The angels who sing at Una's wedding probably come from the same pageant source as the lamb.² The well in which St. George is refreshed during his fight with the dragon comes from *Bevis of Southampton*.³ The whole similarity between his allegory and that of Bunyan, which has exercised many scholars, is best explained by the fact that they have a common source—the old-fashioned sermon in the village church still continuing the allegorical tradition of the medieval pulpit.⁴ Innumerable details come from the Bible, and specially from those books of the Bible which have meant much to Protestantism—the Pauline epistles and the Revelation. His antipapal allegories strike the very note of popular, even of rustic, Protestant aversion; they can be understood, and enjoyed by the modern reader (whatever his religion) only if he remembers that Roman Catholicism was in Spenser's day simply the most potent contemporary symbol for something much more primitive—the sheer Bogey, who often changes his name but never wholly retires from the popular mind. Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* was in every one's hands; horrible stories of the Inquisition and the galleys came from overseas; and every nervous child must have heard tales of a panel slid back at twilight in a seeming innocent manor house to reveal the pale face and thin, black body of a Jesuit. The ghosts crying from beneath the altar in Orgoglio's chapel, and the mystery of iniquity beneath that other altar of Gerioneo are accurate embodiments of popular contemporary horror at these things.⁵ Gerioneo himself, who

Laught so loud that all his teeth wide bare
 One might have seene enraungd disorderly
 Like to a rancke of piles that pitched are awry(6)

is the genuine raw-head and bloody-bones of our remembered night nurseries. A dragon's mouth is the “griesly mouth of hell” as in medieval drama.⁷ Mammon is the gold-hoarding earthman of immemorial tradition, the gnome. The witcheries of Duessa, when she rides in Night's chariot and “hungry wolves continually did howle,”⁸ or of the hag with whom Florimel guested, are almost incomparably closer to the world of real superstition than any of the Italian enchantments. We have long looked for the origins of *The Faerie Queene* in Renaissance palaces and Platonic academies, and forgotten that it has humbler origins of at least equal importance in the Lord Mayor's show, the chap-book, the bedtime story, the family Bible, and the village church. What lies next beneath the surface in Spenser's poem is the world of popular imagination: almost, a popular mythology.

And this world is not called up, as Ariosto may call up a fragment of folk lore, in order to amuse us. On the contrary, it is used for the sake of something yet deeper which it brings up with it and which is Spenser's real concern; the primitive or instinctive mind, with all its terrors and ecstasies—that part in the mind of each of us which we should never dream of showing to a man of the world like Ariosto. Archimago and Una, in their opposite ways, are true creations of that mind. When we first meet them we seem to have known them long before; and so in a sense we have, but only the poet could have clothed them for us in form and colour. The same may be said of Despair and Malengin, of Busirane's appalling house, and of the garden of Adonis. For all of these are translations into the visible of feelings else blind and inarticulate; and they are translations made with singular accuracy, with singularly little loss. The secret of this accuracy in which, to my mind, Spenser excels nearly all poets, is partly to be sought in his humble fidelity to the popular symbols which he found ready made to his hand; but much more in his profound sympathy with that which makes the symbols, with the fundamental tendencies of human imagination as such. Like the writers of the New Testament (to

whom, in the character of his symbolism, he is the closest of all English poets) he is endlessly preoccupied with such ultimate antitheses as Light and Darkness or Life and Death. It has not often been noticed—and, indeed, save for a special purpose it ought not to be noticed—that Night is hardly even mentioned by Spenser without aversion. His story leads him to describe innumerable night-falls, and his feeling about them is always the same:

So soone as Night had with her pallid hew
Defaste the beautie of the shyning skye,
And refte from men the worldes desired vew(9)

or,

whenas chearelesse Night ycovered had
Fayre heaven with an universall cloud,
That every wight dismayed with darkenes sad(10)

or, again,

when as daies faire shinie-beame, yclouded
With fearefull shadowes of deformed night,
Warnd man and beast in quiet rest be shrowded(11)

And, answering to this, in his descriptions of morning we have a never failing rapture: mere light is as sweet to Spenser as if it were a new creation. Such passages are too numerous and too widely scattered (often at unimportant places in the story) to be the result of any conscious plan: they are spontaneous and the better proof of the flawless health, the paradisaical naïveté, of his imagination. They form a background, hardly noticed at a first reading, to those great passages where the conflict of light and dark becomes explicit. Such is the sleepless night of Prince Arthur in the third book, where the old description of lover's insomnia is heightened and spiritualized into a “statement” (as the musicians say) of one of Spenser's main themes;

Dayes dearest children be the blessed seed
Which darknesse shall subdue and heaven win:
Truth is his daughter; he her first did breed
Most sacred virgin without spot of sinne.(12)

It is no accident that Truth, or Una, should be mentioned here, for she is indeed the daughter of Light, and through the whole First Book runs the antithesis between her father as emperor of the East and Duessa as queen of the West¹³—a conception possibly borrowed from *Reason and Sensuality*—and in the Fifth canto of that book we meet Night face to face. The contrast between her “visage deadly sad” as she comes forth from her “darksome mew” and Duessa

sunny bright
Adornd with gold and jewels shining cleare,(14)

(though Duessa is but pretended, reflected light!) is, of course, a familiar example of that pictorial quality which critics have often praised in Spenser—but praised without a full understanding of those very unpictorial, unpicturable, depths from which it rises. Spenser is no dilettante, and has a low opinion of the painter's art as compared with his own.¹⁵ He is not playing mere tricks with light and shade; and few speeches in our poetry are more serious than Night's sad sentence (the very accent of a creature *dréame bedœled*)

The sonnes of Day he favoureth, I see(16)

And yet it is characteristic of him that the constant pressure of this day and night antithesis on his imagination never tempts him into dualism. He is impressed, more perhaps than any other poet, with the conflict of two

mighty opposites—aware that our world is dualistic for all practical purposes, dualistic in all but the very last resort: but from the final heresy he abstains, drawing back from the verge of dualism to remind us by delicate allegories that though the conflict seems ultimate yet one of the opposites really contains, and is not contained by, the other. Truth and falsehood are opposed; but truth is the norm not of truth only but of falsehood also. That is why we find that Una's father, King of the East and enemy of the West, is yet *de jure* King of the West as well as of the East.¹⁷ That is why Love and Hatred, whom the poet borrows no doubt from Empedocles, are opposites but not, as in Empedocles, mere opposites: they are both the sons of Concord.¹⁸ And that, again, in the passage we were discussing, is why Aesculapius, a creature of Night's party, asks Night the formidable question,

The wrath of thundring Jove that rules both night and day?(19)

The other antithesis—that of Life and Death, or, in its inferior degrees, of Health and Sickness—enables Spenser to avoid the insipidity of representing good as arbitrary law and evil as spontaneity. His evils are all dead or dying things. Each of his deadly sins has a mortal disease.²⁰ Aesculapius sits in the bowels of the earth endlessly seeking remedies for an incurable fever.²¹ Archimago makes Guyon “the object of his spight, and *deadly food*.”²² Despair is an immortal suicide,²³ Malbecco lives transfixed with “deaths eternall dart.”²⁴ The porter of the garden of intemperance, the evil genius, is the *foe of life*,²⁵ and so are the violent passions, red-headed and adjust, who attack Guyon in the earlier stages of his pilgrimage.²⁶ Over against these mortal shapes are set forces of life and health and fecundity. St. George, in combat with the beast who

was deadly made

And al that life preserved did detest (27)

is refreshed with water from the well of life and saved by the shadow of the tree of life. Babies cluster at Charissa's breasts:²⁸ Belpheobe's *lilly handës twaine* crush virtuous herbs for the healing of wounds:²⁹ in the garden of Adonis,

Ne needs there Gardiner to sett or sow,
To plant or prune: for of their owne accord
All things, as they created were, doe grow,
And yet remember well the mighty word
Which first was spoken by th' Almighty Lord,
That bad them to increase and multiply (30)

and throughout the whole garden “franckly each paramor his leman knowes.”³¹ The love of Britomart is enobled by prophecies of famous offspring. The poem is full of marriages. Una's face unveiled shines “as the great eye of heaven,”³² and Cambina carries a cup of Nepenthe.³³ The whole shining company of Spenser's vital shapes make up such a picture of “life's golden tree” that it is difficult not to fancy that our bodily, no less than our mental, health is refreshed by reading him. ...

In considering *The Faerie Queene* as a consciously allegorical poem I shall neglect entirely its political allegory. My qualifications as an historian are not such as would enable me to unravel it; and my critical principles hardly encourage me even to make the attempt. By his political allegory Spenser doubtless intended to give to his poem a certain topical attraction. Time never forgives such concessions to “the glistening of this present,” and what acted as a bait to unpoetic readers for some decades has become a stumbling-block to poetic readers ever since. The contemporary allusions in *The Faerie Queene* are now of interest to the critic chiefly in so far as they explain how some bad passages came to be bad; but since this does not make them good—since to explain by causes is not to justify by reasons—we shall not lose very much by ignoring the matter. My concern is with the moral or philosophical allegory.

In approaching this latter, the modern reader needs a little encouragement. He has been told that the *significacio* of *The Faerie Queene* is not worth looking for. Critics have talked as if there were a fatal discrepancy between Spenser's spiritual pretensions and the actual content of his poetry. He has been represented as a man who preached Protestantism while his imagination remained on the side of Rome; or again, as a poet entirely dominated by the senses who believed himself to be an austere moralist. These are profound misunderstandings.

The first—that of unconscious or involuntary Roman Catholicism—may be answered pretty shortly. It is quite true that Una is dressed (in her exile) like a nun, that the House of Holinesse is like a conventual house, that Penance dwells there with a whip, and that Contemplation, like the hermit of Book Six,³⁴ resembles a Catholic recluse. It is equally true that we can find similarly Catholic imagery in Bunyan; and I know a man in our own time who wrote what he intended to be a general apologetic allegory for “all who profess and call themselves Christians,” and was surprised to find it both praised and blamed as a defence of Rome. It would appear that all allegories whatever are likely to seem Catholic to the general reader, and this phenomenon is worth investigation. In part, no doubt, it is to be explained by the fact that the visible and tangible aspects of Catholicism are medieval, and therefore steeped in literary suggestion. But is this all? Do Protestant allegorists continue as in a dream to use imagery so likely to mislead their readers without noticing the danger or without better motive than laziness for incurring it? By no means. The truth is not that allegory is Catholic, but that Catholicism is allegorical. Allegory consists in giving an imagined body to the immaterial; but if, in each case, Catholicism claims already to have given it a material body, then the allegorist's symbol will naturally resemble that material body. The whip of Penance is an excellent example. No Christian ever doubted that repentance involved “penance” and “whips” on the spiritual plane: it is when you come to material whips—to Tartuffe's *discipline* in his closet—that the controversy begins. It is the same with the “House” of Holinesse. No Christian doubts that those who have offered themselves to God are cut off *as if* by a wall from the World, are placed under a *regula vitae*, and “laid in easy bed” by “meek Obedience”; but when the wall becomes one of real bricks and mortar, and the Rule one in real ink, superintended by disciplinary officials and reinforced (at times) by the power of the State, then we have reached that sort of actuality which Catholics aim at and Protestants deliberately avoid. Indeed, this difference is the root out of which all other differences between the two religions grow. The one suspects that all spiritual gifts are falsely claimed if they cannot be embodied in bricks and mortar, or official positions, or institutions: the other, that nothing retains its spirituality if incarnation is pushed to that degree and in that way. The difference about Papal infallibility is simply a form of this. The proper corruptions of each Church tell the same tale. When Catholicism goes bad it becomes the world-old, world-wide *religio* of amulets and holy places and priestcraft: Protestantism, in its corresponding decay, becomes a vague mist of ethical platitudes. Catholicism is accused of being much too like all the other religions; Protestantism of being insufficiently like a religion at all. Hence Plato, with his transcendent Forms, is the doctor of Protestants; Aristotle, with his immanent Forms, the doctor of Catholics. Now allegory exists, so to speak, in that region of the mind where the bifurcation has not yet occurred; for it occurs only when we reach the material world. In the world of matter, Catholics and Protestants disagree as to the kind and degree of incarnation or embodiment which we can safely try to give to the spiritual; but in the world of imagination, where allegory exists, unlimited embodiment is equally approved by both. Imagined buildings and institutions which have a strong resemblance to the actual buildings and institutions of the Church of Rome, will therefore appear, and ought to appear, in any Protestant allegory. If the allegorist knows his business their prevalence will rather mean that the allegory is not Catholic than that it is. For allegory is *idem in alio*. Only a bungler, like Deguileville, would introduce a monastery into his poem if he were really writing about monasticism. When Spenser writes about Protestant sanctity he gives us something like a convent: when he is really talking about the conventual life he gives us Abessa and Corceca. If I might, without irreverence, twist the words of an important (and very relevant) Protestant article, I would say that a Catholic interpretation of *The Faerie Queene*, “overthoweth the nature of an allegory.” Certainly, a Catholic reader anxious to do justice to this great Protestant poem, would be very ill advised to read it in that way. Here, as in more important matters, frontier courtesies do not help; it is at their fiery cores that the two faiths are most nearly in sympathy.

The charge of actual sensuality and theoretical austerity cannot be answered so briefly. The spear-head of this attack is usually directed against the Bower of Bliss, and it is sometimes strengthened by the statement that the Garden of Adonis is not sufficiently distinguished from it; and an analysis of these two places is as good a method as any other of beginning a study of Spenser's allegory. The home of Acrasia is first shown to us in the fifth canto of Book Two, when Atin finds Cymochles there asleep. The very first words of the description are

And over him art, striving to compare
With nature, did an Arber greene dispred. (35)

This explicit statement that Acrasia's garden is art not nature can be paralleled in Tasso, and would be unimportant if it stood alone. But the interesting thing is that when the Bower of Bliss reappears seven cantos later, there again the very first stanza of description tells us that it was

goodly beautifide

With all the ornaments of Floraes pride,
Wherewith her mother Art, as halfe in scorne
Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride
Did decke her, and too lavishly adorne. (36)

In order to be perfectly fair to Spenser's hostile critics, I am prepared to assume that this repetition of the antithesis between art and nature is accidental. But I think the hardest sceptic will hesitate when he reads, eight stanzas further,

And that which all faire workes doth most aggrace,
The art which all that wrought appeared in no place. (37)

And if this does not satisfy him let him read on to the sixty-first stanza where we find the imitation ivy in metal which adorns Acrasia's bathing-pool. Whether those who think that Spenser is secretly on Acrasia's side, themselves approve of metal vegetation as a garden ornament, or whether they regard this passage as a proof of Spenser's abominable bad taste, I do not know; but this is how the poet describes it,

And over all of purest gold was spred
A trayle of yvie in his native hew;
For the rich metall was so coloured
That wight who did not well avis'd it vew
Would surely deeme it to bee yvie trew. (38)

Is it possible now to resist the conviction that Spenser's hostile critics are precisely such wights who have viewed the Bower "not well avis'd" and therefore erroneously deemed it to be true? Let us suppose, however, that the reader is still unconvinced: let us even help him by pointing out stanza fifty-nine where the antithesis is blurred. But we have still to deal with the garden of Adonis; and surely all suspicion that the insistence on Acrasia's artificiality is accidental must disappear if we find throughout the description of the garden of Adonis an equal insistence on its natural spontaneity. And this is just what we do find. Here, as in the description of the Bower, the very first stanza gives us the key-note: the garden of Adonis is

So faire a place as Nature can devize. (39)

A few stanzas later, in lines which I have already quoted, we are told that it needs no Gardiner because all its plants grow "of their owne accord" in virtue of the divine word that works within them. It even needs no water, because these plants have eternal moisture "in themselves."⁴⁰ Like the Bower, the Garden has an arbour, but it is an arbour

not by art

But of the trees owne inclination made.(41)

and the ivy in this arbour is living ivy not painted metal. Finally, the Bower has the story of a false love depicted by art on its gate,⁴² and the Garden has faithful lovers growing as live flowers out of its soil.⁴³ When these facts have once been pointed out, only prejudice can continue to deny the deliberate differentiation between the Bower and the Garden. The one is artifice, sterility, death: the other, nature, fecundity, life. The similarity between them is just that similarity which exists between the two gardens in Jean de Meun;⁴⁴ the similarity of the real to the pretended and of the archetype to the imitation. *Diabolus simius Dei*. ...

The reader may well be excused if he has, by this, forgotten that the whole subject of nature and art arose out of our analysis of the Bower of Bliss and the Garden of Adonis. But the Bower and the Garden (the very names, I trust, have now become significant) are so important that we have still not exhausted them. We have dealt only with their contrast of nature and art. It still remains to consider the equally careful, and even more important, contrast between the explicitly erotic imagery of the one and the other. We here approach a subject on which Spenser has been much misunderstood. He is full of pictures of virtuous and vicious love, and they are, in fact, exquisitely contrasted. Most readers seem to approach him with the vulgar expectation that his distinction between them is going to be a quantitative one; that the vicious loves are going to be warmly painted and the virtuous tepidly—the sacred draped and the profane nude. It must be stated at once that in so far as Spenser's distinction is quantitative at all, the quantities are the other way round. He is at the opposite pole from the scholastic philosophers. For him, intensity of passion purifies: cold pleasure, such as the scholastics seem to approve, is corruption. But in reality the distinction has very little to do with degree or quantity.

The reader who wishes to understand Spenser in this matter may begin with one of his most elementary contrasts—that between the naked damsels in Acrasia's fountain and the equally naked (in fact rather more naked) damsels who dance round Colin Clout.⁴⁵ Here, I presume, no one can be confused. Acrasia's two young women (their names are obviously Cissie and Flossie) are ducking and giggling in a bathing-pool for the benefit of a passer-by: a man does not need to go to fairie land to meet them. The Graces are engaged in doing something worth doing—namely, dancing in a ring “in order excellent.” They are, at first, much too busy to notice Calidore's arrival, and when they do notice him they vanish. The contrast here is almost too simple to be worth mentioning; and it is only marginal to our immediate subject, for the Graces symbolize no sexual experience at all. Let us proceed to something a little less obvious and more relevant: let us compare the pictures Venus and Adonis in the house of Malecasta with the real Venus and Adonis in the Garden. We find at once that the latter (the good and real) are a picture of actual fruition. Venus, in defiance of the forces of death, the Stygian gods,

Possesseth him and of his sweetnesse takes her fill.(46)

Nothing could be franker; a dainty reader might even object that the phrase “takes her fill” brings us too close to other and more prosaic appetites. But daintiness will be rebuked (as Spenser is always ready to rebuke it) if any one tries to prefer the pictured Venus on Malecasta's wall. For she is not in the arms of Adonis: she is merely looking at him,

And whilst he bath'd, with her two crafty spyes
She secretly would search each daintie lim.(47)

The words “crafty,” “spies,” and “secretly” warn us sufficiently well where we have arrived. The good Venus is a picture of fruition: the bad Venus is a picture not of “lust in action” but of lust suspended—lust turning into what would now be called *skeptophilia*. The contrast is just as clear as that in the previous example, and incalculably more important. Thus armed, we may now return to the Bower. The very first person we meet there is Cymochles. He has come there for pleasure and he is surrounded by a flock of wanton nymphs. But

the wretched creature does not approach one of them: instead, he lies in the grass (“like an Adder lurking in the weedes”) and

Sometimes he falsely faines himselfe to sleepe
Whiles through their lids his wanton eies do peepe. (48)

The word “peepe” is the danger signal, and once again we know where we are. If we turn to the Garden of Adonis we shall find a very different state of affairs. There “all plenty and all pleasure flowes”: the garden is full of lovers and “Franckly each Paramor his leman knowes.”⁴⁹ And when we have noticed this it ought to dawn upon us that the Bower of Bliss is not a place even of healthy animalism, or indeed of activity of any kind. Acrasia herself *does* nothing: she is merely “discovered,” posed on a sofa beside a sleeping young man, in suitably semitransparent raiment. It is hardly necessary to add that her breast is “bare to ready spoyle of hungry eies,”⁵⁰ for eyes, greedy eyes (“which n'ote therewith be fild”) are the tyrants of that whole region. The Bower of Bliss is not a picture of lawless, that is, unwedded, love as opposed to lawful love. It is a picture, one of the most powerful ever painted, of the whole sexual nature in disease. There is not a kiss or an embrace in the island: only male prurience and female provocation. Against it we should set not only the Garden of Adonis, but the rapturous reunion of Scudamour with Amoret,⁵¹ or the singularly fresh and frank account of Arthur's meeting with Gloriana.⁵² It is not to be supposed of course that Spenser wrote as a scientific “sexologist” or consciously designed his Bower of Bliss as a picture of sexual perversion. Acrasia indeed does not represent sexual vice in particular, but vicious pleasure in general.⁵³ Spenser's conscious intention, no doubt, was merely to produce a picture which should do justice both to the pleasantness and to the vice. He has done this in the only way possible—namely, by filling his Bower of Bliss with sweetness showered upon sweetness and yet contriving that there should be something subtly wrong throughout. But perhaps “contriving” is a bad word. When he wishes to paint disease, the exquisite health of his own imagination shows him what images to exclude. ...

For the purposes of our particular study the third and fourth books of *The Faerie Queene* are by far the most important, for in them Spenser, as I promised, becomes our collaborator and tells the final stages of the history of courtly love. I do not mean, of course, that he would have understood the phrase “history of courtly love,” nor that he knew he was ending a story. But it is in his mind, none the less, that the last phase of the long process becomes conscious.

The subjects of these two books are respectively Chastity and Friendship, but we are justified in treating them as a single book on the subject of love. Chastity, in the person of Britomart, turns out to mean not virginity but virtuous love: and friends are found to be merely “another sort of lovers”⁵⁴ in the Temple of Venus. The Proem to the legend of Friendship deals entirely with “lovers deare debate,”⁵⁵ and its story is equally concerned with friendship, reconciliation and marriage. In the ninth canto Spenser explicitly classifies Eros, Storgē, and Philia as “three kinds of love.”⁵⁶ Finally, his conception of love is enlarged so as to include even the harmonies of the inanimate world, and we have the wedding of Thames and Medway. For this all-embracing interpretation of love Spenser, of course, has precedent in ancient philosophy, and specially in the *Symposium*. His subject-matter in these two books is therefore extremely complex: and as, in these same books, the non-allegorical fringe becomes wider and more brilliant than ever, there is some excuse for the bewilderment of those critics (too quick despairers!) who suppose that Spenser has abandoned his original design. But those who have learned to look for the allegorical centres will not go astray.

A few pages ago we were considering the difference between the Bower of Bliss and the Garden of Adonis. While we did so I carefully excluded a much more interesting question—that of the difference between the Bower of Bliss and the Houses of Malecasta and Busirane. It is now time to rectify this omission. The Bower, it will be remembered, turned out to be a place not of lawless loves or even lawless lusts, but of disease and paralysis in appetite itself. It will be remembered that the Bower is the home not of vicious sexuality in particular, but of vicious Pleasure in general.⁵⁷ The poet has selected one kind of pleasure chiefly because it is

the only kind that can be treated at length in serious poetry. The Bower is connected with sex at all only through the medium of Pleasure. And this is borne out by the fact—very remarkable to any one well read in previous allegory—that Cupid is never mentioned in the Bower, a clear indication that we are not yet dealing with love. The Bower is not the foe of Chastity but of Continnence—of that elementary psychic integration which is presupposed even in unlawful loves. To find the real foe of Chastity, the real portrait of false love, we must turn to Malecasta and Busirane. The moment we do so, we find that Malecasta and Busirane are nothing else than the main subject of this study—Courtly Love; and that Courtly Love is in Spenser's view the chief opponent of Chastity. But Chastity for him means Britomart, married love. The story he tells is therefore part of my story: the final struggle between the romance of marriage and the romance of adultery.

Malecasta lives in Castle Joyeous amid the “courteous and comely glee” of gracious ladies and gentle knights.⁵⁸ Somebody must be paying for it all, but one cannot find out who. The Venus in her tapestries entices Adonis “as well that art she knew”:⁵⁹ we are back in the world of the Vekke and the commandments of Love. In the rooms of the castle there is “dauncing and reveling both day and night,” and “Cupid still emongst them kindles lustfull fyres.”⁶⁰ The six knights with whom Britomart contends at its gate (Gardante, Parlante, and the rest) might have stepped straight out of the *Roman de la Rose*, and in the very next stanza the simile of the rose itself occurs.⁶¹ The place is dangerous to spirits who would have gone through the Bower of Bliss without noticing its existence. Britomart gets a flesh wound there,⁶² and Holiness himself is glad to be helped in his fight against Malecasta's champions by Britomart; by which the honest poet intends, no doubt, to let us know that even a religious man need not disdain the support which a happy marriage will give him against fashionable gallantry. For Britomart is married love.

Malecasta clearly represents the dangerous attractions of courtly love—the attractions that drew a Surrey or a Sydney. Hers is the face that it shows to us at first. But the House of Busirane is the bitter ending of it. In these vast, silent rooms, dazzling with snake-like gold, and endlessly pictured with “Cupid's warres and cruell batailles,”⁶³ scrawled over with “a thousand monstrous formes”⁶⁴ of false love, where Britomart awaits her hidden enemy for a day and a night, shut in, entombed, cut off from the dawn which comes outside “calling men to their daily exercize,”⁶⁵ Spenser has painted for us an unforgettable picture not of lust but of love—love as understood by the traditional French novel or by Guillaume de Lorris—in all its heartbreaking glitter, its sterility, its suffocating monotony. And when at last the ominous door opens and the Mask of Cupid comes out, what is this but a picture of the deep human suffering which underlies such loves?

Unquiet care and fond Unthriftyhead;
Lewd Losse of Time, and Sorrow seeming dead,
Inconstant Change, and false Disloyalty;
Consuming Riotise, and guilty Dread
Of heavenly vengeance: faint Infirmitie;
Vile Poverty; and, lastly, Death with infamy.(66)

The Mask, in fact embodies all the sorrows of Isoud among the lepers, and Launcelot mad in the woods, of Guinevere at the stake or Guinevere made nun and penitent, of Troilus waiting on the wall, of Petrarch writing *vergogna è'l frutto* and Sydney rejecting the love that reaches but to dust; or of Donne writing his fierce poems *from* the house of Busirane soon after Spenser had written *of* it. When Britomart rescues Amoret from this place of death she is ending some five centuries of human experience, predominantly painful. The only thing Spenser does not know is that Britomart is the daughter of Busirane—that his ideal of married love grew out of courtly love.

Who, then, is Amoret? She is the twin sister of Belpheobe and both were begotten by the Sun,

pure and unspotted from all loathly crime
That is ingenerate in fleshly slime(67)

The meaning of which is best understood by comparison with Spenser's sonnet,

More then most faire, full of the living fire,
Kindled above unto the maker neare. (68)

And we know that the Sun is an image of the Good for Plato,⁶⁹ and therefore of God for Spenser. The first important event in the life of these twins was their adoption by Venus and Diana: Diana the goddess of virginity, and Venus from whose house “all the world derives the glorious features of beautie.”⁷⁰ Now the circumstances which led up to this adoption are related in one of the most medieval passages in the whole *Faerie Queene*—a *débat* between Venus and Diana;⁷¹ but this *débat* has two remarkable features. In the first place, the Venus who takes part in it is a Venus severed from Cupid, and Cupid, as we have already seen, is associated with courtly love. I say “associated” because we are dealing with what was merely a feeling in Spenser's mind, not a piece of intellectual and historical knowledge, as it is to us. There is therefore no consistent and conscious identification of Cupid with courtly love, but Cupid tends to appear in one kind of context and to be absent from another kind. And when he does appear in contexts approved by our domestic poet, he usually appears with some kind of reservation. He is allowed into the Garden of Adonis on condition of his “laying his sad dartes asyde”:⁷² in the Temple of Venus it is only his younger brothers who flutter round the neck of the goddess.⁷³ We are therefore fully justified in stressing the fact that Venus finds Amoret only because she has lost Cupid, and finally adopts Amoret *instead of* Cupid.⁷⁴ The other important novelty is that this *débat* ends with a reconciliation; Spenser is claiming to have settled the old quarrel between Venus and Diana, and that after a singularly frank statement of the claims of each. And when the two goddesses have agreed, their young wards

twixt them two did share

The heritage of all celestiall grace;
That all the rest it seemd they robbed bare, (75)

and one of them, Amoret, became

th'ensample of true love alone
And Lodestarre of all chaste affection. (76)

She was taken by Venus to be reared in the Garden of Adonis, guarded by Genius the lord of generation, among happy lovers and flowers (the two are here indistinguishable) whose fecundity never ceases to obey the Divine Command. This was her nursery: her school or university was the Temple of Venus. This is a region neither purely natural, like the Garden, nor artificial in the bad sense, like the Bower of Bliss: a region where,

all that nature d

Art, playing second natures part, supplied it. (77)

Here Amoret no longer grows like a plant, but is committed to the care of Womanhood; the innocent sensuousness of the garden is replaced by “sober Modestie,” “comely Curtesie,”

Soft Silence and submissee Obedience,

which are gifts of God and protect His saints “against their foes offence.”⁷⁸ Indeed the whole island is strongly protected, partly by Nature,⁷⁹ and partly by such immemorial champions of maidenhead in the Rose tradition, as Doubt, Delay, and Daunger.⁸⁰ But when the lover comes he defeats all these and plucks Amoret from her place among the modest virtues. The struggle in his own mind before he does so, his sense of “Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear,” is a beautiful gift made by the humilities of medieval love poetry to Spenser at the very moment of his victory over the medieval tradition:

my hart gan throb

And wade in doubt what best were to be donne;
For sacrilege me seem'd the Church to rob,
And folly seem'd to leave the thing undonne. (81)

Amoret, however, cannot withdraw her hand, and the conclusion of the adventure may be given in the words of the poet who has studied most deeply this part of *The Faerie Queene*:

And with obsequious Majestie approv'd
My pleaded reason. she what was Honour knew,

The natural conclusion is marriage, but Busirane for centuries has stood in the way. That is why it is from the marriage feast that Busirane carries Amoret away,⁸² to pine for an indefinite period in his tomblike house. When once Britomart has rescued her thence, the two lovers become one flesh—for that is the meaning of the daring simile of the Hermaphrodite in the original conclusion of Book III.⁸³ But even after this, Amoret is in danger if she strays from Britomart's side; she will then fall into a world of wild beasts where she has no comfort or guide,⁸⁴ and may even become the victim of monsters who live on the “spoile of women.”⁸⁵

If it is difficult to write down in prose the *significacio* of all this, the difficulty arises from the fact that the poetic version has almost too much meaning for prose to overtake. Thus, in general, it is plain that Amoret is simply love—begotten by heaven, raised to its natural perfection in the Garden and to its civil and spiritual perfections in the Temple, wrongly separated from marriage by the ideals of courtly gallantry, and at last restored to it by Chastity—as Spenser conceives chastity. But the danger of such analysis is that some stupid person will ask us “Who, then, is Scudamour? And if Chastity means (for Spenser) married love, and that is Britomart, then what is the difference between Britomart and Amoret?” Now, if we must, we can of course answer such questions. We can say that while Scudamour and Amoret united by Britomart are a picture of one thing—Marriage—yet Scudamour, taken by himself, is hardly a personification at all; he is the lover, the husband, any husband, or even *homo* in search of love. Or we can say that while Britomart represents Chastity attained—the triumphant union of romantic passion with Christian monogamy—Amoret, in isolation, represents the romantic passion which Chastity must so unite. We can even go on to say that whereas Amoret is the passion, Florimel is the object of the passion, The Beautiful or Loveable, and that her sufferings illustrate the miseries to which this object is exposed outside marriage: that the false Florimel is the false Loveable grasped by Courtly Love: and we might point out that the girdle which will fit only the true Florimel (and Amoret)⁸⁶ was made for Venus, but for Venus, once more, carefully dissociated from courtly love.⁸⁷ But I have no intention of following this plan. The very speed and ease with which the “false secondary power” produces these interpretations, warns us that if once we give it its head we shall never be done. The more concrete and vital the poetry is, the more hopelessly complicated it will become in analysis: but the imagination receives it as a simple—in both senses of the word. Oddly as it may sound, I conceive that it is the chief duty of the interpreter to begin analyses and to leave them unfinished. They are not meant as substitutes for the imaginative apprehension of the poem. Their only use is to awaken, first of all, the reader's conscious knowledge of life and books in so far as it is relevant, and then to stir those less conscious elements in him which alone can fully respond to the poem. And perhaps I have already done too much. Perhaps all we need to know is that the twins Amoret and Belpheobe represent Spenser's view that there are two kinds of chastity, both heaven-born.

The less allegorical parts group themselves easily enough round this core. The swashbucklers—the Paridells and Blandamours—are an almost literal picture of court life. In Book IV they are the enemies of true friendship; they are the young men, described by Aristotle, who change their friends several times in the same day.⁸⁸ In Book III, Paridell wooing Hellenore, is a picture of courtly love in action: he is the *learned* lover and knows all the Ovidian tricks.⁸⁹ That is why the one constant element in him is his hatred of Scudamour.⁹⁰ Marinell is a sort of pendant to Belpheobe: she represents virginity as an ideal, while he avoids love on prudential grounds, which Spenser disapproves. His marriage with Florimel probably expresses no allegorical

relation; it comes in, like the wedding of the rivers, or Arthur's reconciliation of Poena and Amyas, to illustrate the general theme of the book, which is Reconciliation rather than what we should call Friendship. Concord is for Spenser the resolution of discord: her two sons are Hate and Love, and Hate is the elder.⁹¹ That is why we meet Ate, and her works, long before we meet Concord, and also why the titular heroes of the book are friends who were once foes; and the same theme of reconciliation connects Arthur's activities with the main subject.

In addition to such merely typical adventures, we have, as usual, passages that are quite free from allegory. Such are the beautiful "episode" of Timias and Belphoebe, and the prophecies of Merlin. We also have, so to speak, "islands" of pure allegory such as that of Malbecco or the House of Care, which are not closely connected with the central allegorical action. The two books, taken together, are a kind of central *massif* in *The Faerie Queene*, in which the poet's originality is at its highest and his command (for his own purposes) of the Italian art of interweaving is most perfect. It is very unfortunate that they also contain some of his worst writing; but this must not be taken as proof that he is tiring of his design. It comes mainly from the very simple cause, that in these books Spenser is facing the necessity, incumbent on a professed disciple of Ariosto, of giving us some big, set battlepieces, and Spenser, like all the Elizabethans, does this kind of thing very badly. It is idle to seek deep spiritual causes for literary phenomena which mere incompetence can explain. If a man who cannot draw horses is illustrating a book, the pictures that involve horses will be the bad pictures, let his spiritual condition be what it may. ...

The sixth book is distinguished from its predecessors by distinct traces of the influence of Malory (a welcome novelty) and by the high proportion of unallegorical, or faintly allegorical, scenes. This last feature easily gives rise to the impression that Spenser is losing grip on the original conception of his poem; and it suggests a grave structural fault in *The Faerie Queene* in so far as the poem begins with its loftiest and most solemn book and thence, after a gradual descent, sinks away into its loosest and most idyllic. But this criticism overlooks the fact that the poem is unfinished. The proportion of allegoric core to typical, or purely fictional, fringe has varied all along from book to book; and the loose texture of the sixth is a suitable relief after the very high proportion of pure allegory in the fifth. The only fragment of any succeeding book which we have proves that the poem was to rise from the valley of humiliation into allegory as vast and august as that of the first book.

In the poem as a whole our understanding is limited by the absence of the allegorical centre, the union of Arthur and Gloriana. In the Mutabilitie cantos the opposite difficulty occurs—we have there the core of a book without the fringe. The fact that this should be so is interesting because it suggests (what is likely enough *a priori*) that Spenser was in the habit of writing his "cores" first and then draping the rest round them. But we lose much by not seeing the theme of change and permanence played out on the lower levels of chivalrous adventure. It is obvious, of course, that the adventures would have illustrated the theme of constancy and inconstancy, and that the mighty opposites would have appeared in the form of Mutabilitie and the Gods only at the central allegorical gable of the book—which is the bit we have. It is obvious too, that the Titaness, despite her beauty, is an evil force. Her very name "bold Alteration,"⁹² and the fact that she rises against the gods, put her at once among the enemies for any reader who understands Spenser's conceptions of health, concord, and subordination. The state of affairs which she would fain upset in heaven and has already upset in earth, is precisely that state which Spenser (or Aristotle) would have described as just and harmonious,

all which Nature had establisht first
In good estate, and in meet order ranged
She did pervert. (93)

She is, in fact, Corruption, and since corruption, "subjecting the creature to vanity," came in with the Fall, Spenser practically identifies his Titaness with sin, or makes her the force behind the sin of Adam. She it is

who

Wrong of right, and bad of good did make
And death for life exchanged foolishly:
Since which all living wights have learn'd to die,
And all the world is woxen daily worse.
O pittious worke of Mutability,
By which we all are subject to that curse,
And death, instead of life, have sucked from our Nurse!(94)

The full impact of that last line can be felt only when we have read the whole *Faerie Queene*. The enemies of Mutability are, first, the gods, and then *Nature*. Taken together they represent the Divine order in the universe—the concord, the health, the justice, the harmony, the Life, which, under many names, is the real heroine of the whole poem. If we take them apart, however, then the gods represent precisely what we should call “nature,” the laws of the phenomenal universe. That is why the Titaness so far prevails with them—they are that world over which, even in the highest regions, she asserts some claim. But *Nature*, taken apart, is the ground of the phenomenal world. The reverence with which Spenser approaches this symbol contrasts favourably with the hardier attempts of Tasso and Milton to bring God, undisguised, upon the stage—and indeed it would be a pleasant task, if this chapter were not already too long, to show how much more religious a poem *The Faerie Queene* is than the *Paradise Lost*. Mutability's appeal, it should be noticed, is not in the first instance to Nature at all, but

to the highest him, that is behight
Father of Gods and men of equall might,
To weete the God of Nature.(95)

Yet when this appeal is answered it is the goddess *Natura* who appears, as in Claudian, Bernardus, Alanus, and Jean de Meun,

This great Grandmother of all creatures bred,
Great Nature, ever young, yet full of eld;
Still mooving, yet unmoved from her sted,
Unseene of any, yet of all beheld.(96)

The woody pavilion (unlike those fashioned by the “idle skill” of craftsmen)⁹⁷ which rises up to receive her, the “flowers that voluntary grow” beneath her feet, and the homage of the river-god, are all in the same tradition. Yet at the same time Spenser can compare her garments to those of Our Lord on the mount of Transfiguration, and even put into the mouth of Mutability words that separate *Nature* by a great gulf from the mere gods:

Sith heaven and earth are both alike to thee,
And gods no more then men thou doest esteeme;
For even the gods to thee, as men to gods, do seeme.(98)

The modern reader is tempted to inquire whether Spenser, then, equates God with Nature: to which the answer is, “Of course not. He was a Christian, not a pantheist.” His procedure in this passage would have been well understood by all his contemporaries: the practice of using mythological forms to hint theological truths was well established and lasted as late as the composition of *Comus*. It is, for most poets and in most poems, by far the best method of writing poetry which is religious without being devotional—that is, without being an act of worship to the reader. In the medieval allegories and the renaissance mask, God, if we may say so without irreverence, appears frequently, but always *incognito*. Every one understood what was happening, but the occasion remained an imaginative, not a devotional, one. The poet thus retains liberties which would be denied him if he removed the veil. For even Spenser, daring though he is in such matters, could hardly have descended so suddenly and delightfully as he does from the high court of the universe to the grotesque

antimask of Faunus (“A foolish Faune indeed”),⁹⁹ if he had placed the Almighty undisguised instead of “Nature” on the bench of that high court; though in the long run this intermeddling of the high and low—the poet’s eye glancing not only from earth to heaven but from the shapeless, funny gambollings of instinct to the heights of contemplation—is as grave, perhaps even as religious, as the decorum that would, in a different convention, have forbidden it.

I find the significance of the whole *débat* hard to determine with precision because of the deep obscurity of the lines in which Nature gives her sentence; but the general outlines of the meaning I think I have grasped. It is a magnificent instance of Spenser’s last-moment withdrawal from dualism. The universe is a battlefield in which Change and Permanence contend. And these are evil and good—the gods, the divine order, stand for Permanence; Change is rebellion and corruption. But behind this endless contention arises the deeper truth—that Change is but the mode in which Permanence expresses itself, that Reality (like Adonis) “is eterne in mutabilitie,”¹⁰⁰ and that the more Mutability succeeds the more she fails, even here and now—not to speak of her more ultimate ruin when we reach the

rest of all things, firmly stayd
Upon the pillars of Eternity. (101)

To praise this fragment seems almost an impertinence. In it all the powers of the poet are more happily united than ever before; the sublime and the ridiculous, the rarified beauties of august mythology and the homely glimpses of daily life in the procession of the months, combine to give us an unsurpassed impression of the harmonious complexity of the world. And in these cantos Spenser seems to have soared above all the usual infirmities of his style. His verse has never been more musical, his language never so strong and so sweet. Such poetry, coming at the very end of the six books, serves to remind us that the existing *Faerie Queene* is unfinished, and that the poet broke off, perhaps, with many of his greatest triumphs still ahead. Our loss is incalculable; at least as great as that we sustained by the early death of Keats.

If this chapter is not radically erroneous, then the history of Spenserian criticism, with one or perhaps two honourable exceptions, is a history of gross underestimation. I have not tried to conceal his faults; on some of them I have spoken more severely than most of his professed admirers. His prosaic, and even prosy, tendencies I almost claim to have set for the first time in their true light. I have exposed, without extenuation, those unpleasing passages where he becomes a bad poet because he is, in certain respects, a bad man. But they must be set beside the barbarity of Homer, the hatreds of Dante, the pride of Milton—and perhaps we may add, Shakespeare’s apparently contented acquiescence in the ethical tomfoolery of honour and revenge. I do not mention these things with the absurd intention of exalting Spenser by depreciating others. I wish merely to indicate the level on which Spenser stands, the poets with whom he is to be compared.

My claim for Spenser may take the form of the old eulogy—*totam vitae imaginem expressit*; but perhaps my meaning will be clearer if we omit the word *totam*, if we say simply *vitae imaginem*. Certainly this will help to clear up a common misunderstanding. People find a “likeness” or “truth” to life in Shakespeare because the persons, passions and events which we meet in his plays are like those which we meet in our own lives: he excels, in fact, in what the old critics called “nature,” or the probable. When they find nothing of the sort in Spenser, they are apt to conclude that he has nothing to do with “life”—that he writes that poetry of escape or recreation which (for some reason or other) is so intensely hated at present. But they do not notice that *The Faerie Queene* is “like life” in a different sense, in a much more literal sense. When I say that it is like life, I do not mean that the places and people in it are like those which life produces. I mean precisely what I say—that it is like life itself, not like the products of life. It is an image of the *natura naturans*, not of the *natura naturata*. The things we read about in it are not like life, but the experience of reading it is like living. The clashing antitheses which meet and resolve themselves into higher unities, the lights streaming out from the great allegorical *foci* to turn into a hundred different colours as they reach the lower levels of complex adventure, the adventures gathering themselves together and revealing their true nature as we draw near the

foci, the constant reappearance of certain basic ideas, which transform themselves without end and yet ever remain the same (eternally in mutability), the unwearied variety and seamless continuity of the whole—all this is Spenser's true likeness to life. It is this which gives us, while we read him, a sensation akin to that which Hegelians are said to get from Hegel—a feeling that we have before us not so much an image as a sublime instance of the universal process—that this is not so much a poet writing about the fundamental forms of life as those forms themselves spontaneously displaying their activities to us through the imagination of a poet. The invocation of the Muse hardly seems to be a convention in Spenser. We feel that his poetry has really tapped sources not easily accessible to discursive thought. He makes imaginable inner realities so vast and simple that they ordinarily escape us as the largely printed names of continents escape us on the map—too big for our notice, too visible for sight. Milton has well selected wisdom as his peculiar excellence—wisdom of that kind which rarely penetrates into literature because it exists most often in inarticulate people. It is this that has kept children and poets true to him for three centuries, while the intellectuals (on whom the office of criticism naturally devolves) have been baffled even to irritation by a spell which they could not explain. To our own troubled and inquiring age this wisdom will perhaps show its most welcome aspect in the complete integration, the harmony, of Spenser's mind. His work is one, like a growing thing, a tree; like the world-ash-tree itself, with branches reaching to heaven and roots to hell. It reaches up to the songs of angels or the vision of the New Jerusalem and admits among its shining ones the veiled image of God Himself: it reaches down to the horror of fertile chaos beneath the Garden of Adonis and to the grotesque satyrs who protect Una or debauch Hellenore with equal truth to their nature. And between these two extremes comes all the multiplicity of human life, transmuted but not falsified by the conventions of chivalrous romance. The “great golden chain of Concord” has united the whole of his world. What he feels on one level, he feels on all. When the good and fair appear to him, the whole man responds; the satyrs gambol, the lances splinter, the shining ones rise up. There is a place for everything and everything is in its place. Nothing is repressed; nothing is insubordinate. To read him is to grow in mental health.

With Spenser my story comes to an end. His chivalrous and allegorical poem was already a little out of date when it first appeared, as great poems not infrequently are. Its literary influence is much more important for the student of Milton and the Romantics than for the student of the Elizabethans. There is a history of great literature which has a slower rhythm than that of literature in general, and which goes on in a higher region. The biggest things do not work quickly. It is only after centuries that Spenser's position becomes apparent; and then he appears as the great mediator between the Middle Ages and the modern poets, the man who saved us from the catastrophe of too thorough a renaissance. To Hurd and the Wartons and Scott he appeared chiefly as a medieval poet, to Keats and Shelley as the poet of the marvellous. What the romantics learned from him was something different from allegory; but perhaps he could not have taught it unless he had been an allegorist. In the history of sentiment he is the greatest among the founders of that romantic conception of marriage which is the basis of all our love literature from Shakespeare to Meredith. The synthesis which he helped to effect was so successful that this aspect of his work escaped notice in the last century: all that Britomart stands for was platitude to our fathers. It is platitude no longer. The whole conception is now being attacked. Feminism in politics, reviving asceticism in religion, animalism in imaginative literature, and, above all, the discoveries of the psychoanalysts, have undermined that monogamic idealism about sex which served us for three centuries. Whether society will gain or lose by the revolution, I need not try to predict; but Spenser ought to gain. What once was platitude should now have for some the brave appeal of a cause nearly lost, and for others the interest of a highly specialized historical phenomenon—the peculiar flower of a peculiar civilization, important whether for good or ill and well worth our understanding.

Notes

1. See Greenlaw, Osgood, Padelford, *Works of Spenser*, vol. i, Baltimore, 1932, p. 389.
2. Op. cit., *ibid.*
3. Op. cit., p. 395.
4. V. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, specially cap. 2.

5. *F.Q.* I. viii. 36, and V. xi. 19, 20.
6. *Ibid.* V. xi. 9.
7. *Ibid.* I. xi. 12.
8. *Ibid.* I. v. 30.
9. *Ibid.* III. ii. 28.
10. *Ibid.* xii. I.
11. *Ibid.* V. iv. 45.
12. *Ibid.* III. iv. 59.
13. *Ibid.* I. ii. 22, vii. 43, xii. 26.
14. *Ibid.* v. 21.
15. *Ibid.* III, Proem 2.
16. *Ibid.* I. v. 25.
17. *Ibid.* i. 5.
18. *Ibid.* IV. x. 34.
19. *Ibid.* I. v. 42.
20. *Ibid.* iv. 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 35.
21. *Ibid.* v. 40.
22. *Ibid.* II. i. 3.
23. *Ibid.* I. ix. 54.
24. *Ibid.* III. x. 59.
25. *Ibid.* II. xii. 48.
26. *Ibid.* vi. I.
27. *Ibid.* I. xi. 49.
28. *Ibid.* I. x. 30.
29. *Ibid.* III. v. 33.
30. *Ibid.* vi. 34.
31. *Ibid.* vi. 41.
32. *Ibid.* I. iii. 4.
33. *Ibid.* IV. iii. 43.
34. *Ibid.* VI. v, vi.
35. *Ibid.* II. v. 29.
36. *Ibid.* xii. 50.
37. *Ibid.* II. xii. 58.
38. *Ibid.* xii. 61.
39. *Ibid.* III. vi. 29.
40. *Ibid.* III. vi. 34.
41. *Ibid.* vi. 44.
42. *Ibid.* II. xii. 44, 45.
43. *Ibid.* III. vi. 45.
44. *v. supra*, p. 151 [of Professor Lewis' book]. The fact that all the references to Art in the Bower are copied from Tasso does not invalidate my argument: the opposite passages in the Garden are not.
45. *F.Q.* II. xii. 63 et seq.; VI. x. II et seq.
46. *Ibid.* III. vi. 46.
47. *Ibid.* i. 36.
48. *Ibid.* II. v. 34.
49. *Ibid.* III. vi. 41.
50. *Ibid.* II. xii. 78.
51. *Ibid.* III. xii (First Version), 43-7.
52. *Ibid.* I. ix. 9-15.
53. *Ibid.* II. xii. I.
54. *Ibid.* IV. x. 26.

55. Ibid. IV, Proem. I.
56. Ibid. IV. ix. I.
57. Ibid. II. xii. I.
58. Ibid. III. i. 31.
59. Ibid. III. i. 35.
60. Ibid. III. i. 39.
61. Ibid. III. i. 45, 46.
62. Ibid. III. i. 65.
63. Ibid. III. xi. 29.
64. Ibid. III. xi. 51.
65. Ibid. III. xii. 28.
66. Ibid. III. xii. 25.
67. Ibid. III. vi. 3.
68. *Amoretti*, viii.
69. *Republic*, 507 D et seq.
70. Ibid. III. vi. 12.
71. Ibid. III. vi. 11-25.
72. Ibid. III. vi. 49.
73. Ibid. IV. x. 42.
74. Ibid. III. vi. 28.
75. Ibid. III. vi. 4.
76. Ibid. III. vi. 52.
77. Ibid. IV. x. 21.
78. Ibid. IV. x. 51.
79. Ibid. IV. x. 6.
80. Ibid. IV. x. 12, 13, 17.
81. Ibid. IV. x. 53.
82. Ibid. IV. i. 3.
83. Ibid. III. xii (1st version), 46.
84. Ibid. IV. vii. 2.
85. Ibid. IV. vii. 12.
86. Ibid. IV. v. 19.
87. Ibid. IV. v. 3-6.
88. *Ethics*, 1156 B.
89. *F.Q.* III. ix. 28, 29, 30: x. 6, 7, 8.
90. Ibid. IV. i. 39.
91. Ibid. IV. x. 32.
92. Ibid. *Mut.* vii, Argument. On the influence of Giordano Bruno, see B. E. C. Davis, *Edmund Spenser*, pp. 232 et seq.
93. *F.Q.* *Mut.* vi. 5.
94. Ibid. *Mut.* vi. 6.
95. Ibid. *Mut.* vi. 35.
96. Ibid. *Mut.* vii. 13.
97. Ibid. *Mut.* vii. 8.
98. Ibid. *Mut.* vii. 15.
99. Ibid. vi. 46.
100. Ibid. III. vi. 47.
101. Ibid. *Mut.* viii. 2.

Criticism: Leicester Bradner (essay date 1948)

SOURCE: Bradner, Leicester. "The Narrative Poet (*Faerie Queene*, III-V)." In *Edmund Spenser and The Faerie Queene*, pp. 70-103. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

[In the following excerpt, Bradner provides an overview of the multiple storylines and the central themes in Books III, IV, and V of *The Faerie Queene*.]

When Gabriel Harvey read the specimen of the *Faerie Queene* sent him by Spenser in 1580, he could not decide what kind of work it was. In his perplexity he resorted to a characteristically sixteenth-century simile. He said it was "Hobgoblin run away with the garland from Apollo." It is very unlikely that he saw what is now Book I; in fact, his second comment, that Spenser seemed to be trying to outdo Ariosto, the most amusing of Renaissance poets, points rather clearly to an early version of some part of Book III or Book IV. The implications of the whole passage on the poem in Harvey's letter are fascinating but must not now detain us. The essential facts which come out of it are that the work was even then called the *Faerie Queene* (and therefore aimed at Queen Elizabeth as a patron), that it was an imitation of Ariosto, and that it was not sufficiently dignified and classical. The combination of Hobgoblin with Apollo suggests that mixture of medieval romance with classical myth which is so characteristic of the completed poem as we have it.

Harvey's comment was made on the first portion of Spenser's new poetical project. This project must, however, have languished for some time thereafter, for the author's two years of service as secretary to Lord Grey would have been a serious interruption. When he took it up again, some of his ideas had changed. He was no longer the bookish former secretary of a bishop but a man who had followed campaigns in the field and sat at council tables. His purely personal gratitude to the earl of Leicester had been in large part replaced by admiration for the sterner qualities of the warrior, Lord Grey. His youthful complaint that all swords were rusting unused gave way to hero-worship in the face of his Irish experiences. He would not give up the figure of Elizabeth as the fairy queen, but he would show that true and valiant knights were doing her work. Consequently the idea of an order of Maidenhead, whose knights perform quests assigned by the queen, was adopted to accommodate Spenser's desire for a number of heroes. That this was done can be shown not only by the arrangement of the poem itself but also by the letter to Sir Walter Raleigh printed with the first three books of the poem in 1590. In this famous document he says that Arthur represents magnificence, which contains all the virtues in itself, and that the other knights represent the individual virtues.

By this time many modern readers have lost patience. Why bring in the virtues? they ask. Why does not Spenser tell us his story without preaching; and, furthermore, why does he bore us by putting the action in an imaginary fairyland? To these objections the scholar has ample enough reply. He can show that the whole tone of English education and literature in the sixteenth century was moral and religious; he can also show that the writing of a strictly historical epic was in those days so loaded with political dynamite that a remote and imaginary setting was needed. There are, however, better reasons than these. As Spenser grew to a realization of his own powers, he took for his aim the creation of a great epic for the English people, which, as he put it in the dedication to Queen Elizabeth, was to "live with the eternity of her fame." By basing his poem on the fundamental virtues of mankind he saved his heroes from the fate of being local and contemporary. Whether Sir Calidore was meant to be Sidney or Essex does not concern us much today, but as the knight of courtesy struggling with the forces of cruelty and slander in the world he is of perennial interest—and never more so than at the present moment. With Britomart's dynastical position as ancestress of Queen Elizabeth we have even less concern, but Britomart's troubles in the pursuit of true and honorable love come home with fresh force to every generation of readers.

It may be said, too, that the events of the past few years have done much to restore an interest in the open treatment of moral values in literature. We have seen with terrible clarity that evil forces of tremendous power

exist in this world and cannot be subdued without heroic virtues. Archimago, Grantorto, and the Soldan do not seem so absurd to those whose dreams Hitler has haunted, nor will the Cave of Mammon seem an idle temptation to those who once thought they could buy immunity from war. These things were gruesome realities in Spenser's time as in ours, and the description of England by a statesman of his youth as "shaken by the terrible thunder of God" (*terribili fulmine tacta dei*) would apply even better to 1940. It is significant to remember that during the writing of all the early parts of the *Faerie Queene* England lived under the threat of invasion, while the argument went on at court between the interventionists and the isolationists. It was a time when men had forced upon them a re-examination of the real basis of their beliefs, traditions, and ideals. Spenser's poem deals, in narrative form, with all these things.

This concept of a great epic on the active virtues of mankind and of Englishmen in particular drove Spenser to the creation of a new form. The simple linear plot of the classical epics would not serve to express the complexities of life as he saw it; on the other hand, Ariosto's gay disregard of a central story offered no help toward the erecting of a structure which would carry the weight of serious thought. Luckily Ariosto had popularized one idea which was essential to Spenser's purpose: the presence of a number of different heroes in the same long poem. It is probable that Arthur, whether king or prince, had nothing to do with the early idea in Spenser's mind of a poem in praise of the queen; but after the scheme of multiple heroic virtues was adopted, he must have realized that the legend of Arthur's Round Table and the great deeds of his knights formed an ideal solution to his problem. Here was a story, familiar to all readers and forming the core of British patriotism, which provided for variety of heroes and unity of purpose in one and the same framework. The fact that the sovereign of England was a queen necessitated supplanting Arthur by Gloriana, and the order of the Round Table became the order of Maidenhead; otherwise it was unchanged. Once you thought of it, it was ridiculously simple. How Spenser brought Arthur in again we shall see later.

What the structure of the poem is, will appear as we go along. What the completed whole would have been, we shall never know. Spenser evidently changed his mind about it more than once, and his announced plan for concluding it, as found in the letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, seems to present insuperable difficulties. Like the *Canterbury Tales*, it is only half finished, but we need not be disturbed about that. In the six books we have there is, as Dryden said of Chaucer, God's plenty. And the books are complete as they stand, each dealing with the quest of a single knight in which his peculiar virtue finds a field for action. Red Cross and Guyon go their separate ways in the first two books. Then, as if to provide variety, the next three books carry the same group of characters through a long series of actions. There are separate heroes assigned to the quests of these books, but all the main characters appear in all three books. The sixth book starts us on a new group of characters who were probably intended to provide continuing interest in a new succession of books, for although the hero achieves his quest there is much unfinished business among the minor characters. Almost as an afterthought the figure of Prince Arthur, a quite unhistorical Arthur, was added as the sum of all the virtues and assigned the task of rescuing such of the heroes as get into difficulties too great for their powers. Thus in Spenser's design were classic regularity and the single hero combined with the wandering profusion of medieval chivalric romance. Truly, Hobgoblin has run away with the garland of Apollo, but the garland is undamaged and Apollo did not refuse to look indulgently on the theft.

To the modern reader, particularly to one living in a monarchless democracy, the place of Queen Elizabeth in the poem and the compliments paid to her seem unduly great, but I think that they did not seem so to an Elizabethan Englishman. By him the sovereign was not regarded primarily as an individual but as the symbol of the nation. Praise of the prince was a form of patriotism and was quite as often a sincere expression of love of country as it was personal flattery. Too frequently our modern cynical attitude toward passages of this sort does not take that into account. Also we forget that Elizabeth was a truly great queen, one of the greatest rulers in English history. Of this her subjects were well aware, and they praised her with that unstinted exuberance so characteristic of the period. To believe that Spenser's attribution to her of the virtues celebrated in his poem was mercenary flattery is to misunderstand him entirely and to misunderstand the place which the queen occupies in it. Gloriana is the dispenser of true fame and glory in fairyland. But Elizabeth, we are told

by the poet, is Gloriana. She is the earthly embodiment of the eternal idea for which Gloriana stands. It is for her to bestow glory upon those of her subjects who truly deserve it, and in so doing she shares her own glory with them.

With this general idea of the artistic form and ethical theme of the poem in mind, let us see what rewards the *Faerie Queene* has to offer us. At the outset let us frankly face the fact that modern readers do not know the poem, outside the first book or fragments of that book in anthologies. Therefore the story must be told before it can be discussed. If there is danger in summarizing briefly what a great poet has devoted many pages to, there is even greater danger in talking about something of which readers are entirely ignorant. The narrative core of the *Faerie Queene* is the group of continued stories in Books III, IV, and V, and I propose to break with tradition by discussing this portion first. We shall then return to Books I and II to examine Spenser's allegory, and finally we shall end with Book VI and the fragment of Book VII.

Britomart, the female knight, is the heroine of Book III, plays an important part in Book IV, and becomes the betrothed of Arthegal, the hero of Book V. She therefore forms the most important connecting link between these three books. Second to her in importance is Florimel, a timorous maiden who flies like a frightened fawn through all of Book III, meets her true love Marinel at the end of Book IV, and marries him in the third canto of Book V. Around these two main characters a number of minor knights and ladies appear and reappear from time to time. Chief of these are Arthegal, Scudamour, Satyrane, Marinel, and the boastful but cowardly Braggadochio among the men and Amoret, Belpheobe, and the false Florimel among the women. Arthur, of course, appears occasionally to rescue or assist the heroes.

In the beginning of Book III Arthur, Guyon, and Britomart, who is disguised as a man, are riding along when Florimel comes dashing past on a white palfrey, hotly pursued by a villainous forester. The two men, by no means immune to the charms of beauty in distress, fly off to rescue her, leaving Britomart to her own adventures. These are not slow in coming. Finding the Red Cross Knight attacked by six opponents outside a place called Castle Joyous, she helps him subdue them and they both enter the castle to spend the night. The nature of the proprietress is given away by her name, Malecasta, and we are not surprised to find her stealing into Britomart's bed, since the latter has refused to disarm and still passes for a man. Britomart and Red Cross leave the castle in disgust, ending the first canto. As her sex has been revealed by this incident, she finds it incumbent upon her to explain her martial career to her companion. It seems that she had seen her destined lover, Arthegal, in a magic mirror and heard a prediction from Merlin that her descendants will rule England. Being a maid who loves action, she has started out on a quest to find the man whose image has aroused her love. A magic spear, which overthrows all opponents, prevents her from coming to any harm. Leaving Red Cross after this recital, Britomart comes upon Marinel, a brave youth who has unfortunately been brought up by his mother to fear both love and women. Since he refuses her passage across his land, she strikes him down and passes on her way.

The story now returns to the pursuit of Florimel by the two knights. Guyon soon drops out of the picture, but Arthur finally comes across Florimel's dwarf, who tells him the story of her love for Marinel, a love hitherto fruitless because of his mother's training. In the meantime Arthur's squire, Timias, has killed the wicked forester but in turn has been ambushed and left for dead by the latter's brothers. He is nursed back to life by Belpheobe, with whom he falls desperately in love. The introduction of Belpheobe into the story causes Spenser to put in one of his apparent digressions, an elaborate description of the Garden of Adonis, where Belpheobe and her twin sister Amoret were brought up. Viewed in the larger scheme of Spenser's whole poem and its interpretation, this description is too important to be called a digression, but it will naturally appear as such on the first reading. Belpheobe, after leaving the Garden of Adonis, had become a favorite of Diana and was insensible to the power of love, whereas Amoret, of whom we shall hear more later, was adopted by Venus.

Florimel's adventures are next taken up. After many dangers she reaches the sea and pushes off in a boat to escape the beast who at that moment is pursuing her. In the boat, unfortunately for her, is an old but lecherous fisherman, and Florimel is saved only by the opportune arrival of Proteus, who takes her as an honored guest to his cave under the sea. He repeatedly makes love to her, but she remains faithful to Marinel. While this is going on, an old witch, whose son has fallen in love with Florimel, complicates matters by fashioning a false Florimel out of snow. In spite of her icy nature this false Florimel is a great flirt and causes a lot of trouble in Book IV.

Cantos 9 and 10 deal with the case history of Hellenore, a young wife whose husband's miserliness and frigidity lead her to welcome seduction by Sir Paridel. When he deserts her, she becomes the common paramour of a flock of satyrs and seems to be enjoying the situation.

Book III ends with Britomart's rescue of the young bride, Amoret, from the castle of the enchanter Busirane, who had stolen her from her lover Scudamour on their wedding day. Busirane is torturing her inside the castle, while Scudamour, who has traced her thus far, is unable to force his way in through the curtain of fire which guards the entrance. Britomart is able to do this because the magic fire has no power against her chastity and complete purity of heart. This exploit, though introduced so late, must be considered her quest as heroine of the book, for her search after Arthegal is not completed until the middle of the fourth book.

Before continuing the story through the next two books let us pause for a moment to consider the significance of the narrative. In doing so we will be putting ourselves in the position of Spenser's readers in 1590, since only the first three books were published at that time. The third book is entitled the "Legend of Chastity" as a special compliment to Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen. That this title does not mean virginity alone is shown by the action itself and by Spenser's statement in the first canto that Britomart represents chaste affection, that is, true and honorable love. The heroine's first act is to fall in love, and her purpose thereafter is to find her lover, exchange vows with him, and, when it becomes necessary, rescue him from shameful captivity. Thus her adventures consist of incidents illustrative of the power of love. Her pure affection is contrasted with the lust of Malecasta, which Spenser unreservedly condemns, and the illicit outburst of Hellenore's natural instincts, for which Spenser provides a psychological excuse. The climax of the book is her generous undertaking of a hazardous rescue in order to reunite two faithful lovers. Britomart owes her enduring charm to the fact that she is chaste love *in action*. She is a dynamic force sweeping vigorously across the scene and spilling unceremoniously out of her way all those who, like Malecasta, are merely libidinous or who, like Marinel, are afraid of sexual love. On her very first appearance she delights us by bowling over Sir Guyon, the rather priggish hero of Temperance in Book II. Poor Guyon has just been through some very disturbing temptations of the flesh in rescuing a young knight from the clutches of a particularly luscious enchantress and is inclined to think that all love is evil. Spenser tells us that the palmer, who stands for Reason, and Arthur, the embodiment of all the virtues, soon reconciled the two and points the moral that there is no justification for a quarrel between "goodly temperance" and "affection chaste." In one way the passage is an anticipation of Milton's defense of the honest enjoyment of sexual intercourse in a marriage of true lovers. C. S. Lewis is right when he points out in his *Allegory of Love* that Spenser was the first great poet to treat love as an idealistic state of the emotions leading to marriage.

Britomart is not only contrasted with bad or deficient characters; she is also contrasted with two characters who may be called subsidiary heroines. These are Florimel and Belphoebe. Florimel, like Britomart, is already in love with her appointed mate; but, unlike Britomart, she is not a dynamic force. Instead she is the embodiment of female timidity. She is always seen flying from some man, and, like the heroines of the old movie serials, she never escapes one pursuer without falling into the clutches of another. Spenser emphasizes the fact that this behavior, along with her beauty, appeals to the protective and amorous instincts of every male in the story. Even Arthur is tempted to give up his pursuit of his unseen ideal, the fairy queen, and pursue Florimel instead. Belphoebe, on the other hand, has all the courage and martial success of Britomart but is completely lacking in the emotion of love. Her beauty is reserved and unapproachable. She has no

objection to the devotion of Timias, and is even annoyed when she thinks he is guilty of transferring it to another lady, but she is quite incapable of returning it. In the introduction to the third book Spenser directly invites Elizabeth—who as queen demanded that her courtiers make love to her but could not, for political reasons, marry any of them—to see in Belphoebe an example of her chastity, as in Gloriana she was to see an example of her power and majesty. The parallel was perfect.

Britomart's major quest is the search for her lover Arthegal, a quest which is given a national as well as a personal importance by Merlin's prophecy that her descendants will rule England. This apparently seemed to Spenser too large a theme to be disposed of in a single book, so he provided a minor quest in the rescue of Amoret, a quest which specifically illustrates the power of chastity. This adventure provides several problems for the student of Spenser which are interesting enough to be mentioned here. The first problem is to answer the question: whose quest is the rescue of Amoret? As the story is told, it appears that Scudamour has pursued the enchanter Busirane to his castle but cannot penetrate the wall of flame which protects the gate. Britomart finds that the fire divides to let her pass, and she eventually conquers Busirane. The incident of the fire and Busirane's fear of a virgin knight make it clear that the quest can be performed only by the representative of chastity—Britomart. Yet in the letter to Sir Walter Raleigh we are told that Scudamour was at Gloriana's court when the news of Amoret's plight was brought in by a groom and that he, being her lover, then undertook the quest. This version of the origin of the quest is inconsistent with the narrative in the *Faerie Queene*, both here and in later passages in Book IV. It can best be explained either as a lapse of memory or as part of a new plan linking the stories more closely to Gloriana's court. The presence of a similar discrepancy in the letter to Raleigh in regard to the quest of Book II suggests the latter alternative. It also suggests that the letter is not an adequate guide to the poem as we have it.

The second problem is more difficult. What was to be the ultimate importance of Amoret and Scudamour in the weaving of the great tapestry of the *Faerie Queene*? And what was to be the occasion of their reunion? In all the editions of the poem since 1590 Scudamour, believing that Britomart has failed, finally leaves the castle of Busirane and begins a series of disconsolate wanderings which we occasionally witness in Books IV and V. But the first text of Book III, as it appeared in 1590, contained a different ending. The return of Britomart with the rescued Amoret finds Scudamour still stretched upon the ground in grief. At the sound of her voice he starts up:

There did he see, that most on earth him joyd,
His dearest love, the comfort of his dayes,
Whose too long absence him had sore annoyd
And wearied his life with dull delays:
Straight he upstarted from the loathed layes,
And to her ran with hasty egerness,
Like as a deare, that greedily embayes
In the coole soile, after long thirstinesse,
Which he in chace endured hath, now nigh breathlesse.

Lightly he clipt her twixt his armes twaine,
And streightly did embrace her body bright,
Her body, late the prison of sad paine,
Now the sweet lodge of love and deare delight:
But she faire lady overcommen quight
Of huge affection, did in pleasure melt,
And in sweet ravishment poud out her spright:
No word they spake, nor earthly thing they felt,
But like two senceless stocks in long embracement dwelt.

This passage shows that Spenser's original intention was to reunite the lovers immediately, after which they doubtless would have disappeared from the rest of the story. When he set about continuing the poem, he realized that such a definite stop at the end of Book III might seem too conclusive, especially as he intended to

continue all the other plots started in that book. The puzzling thing is that these are all concluded by the end of Book V, but Amoret and Scudamour still seek sorrowfully for each other over the unmapped ways of fairyland.

The third problem is to determine whether there is any allegorical meaning in the separation of Scudamour and Amoret and the torture of the latter by a vile enchanter. This involves a consideration of the general method of allegory in Book III and of the previous history of the two lovers. The allegory of love in this book is presented by a series of contrasted case histories rather than built up as a progressive argument. Examples of different situations in love are given, many minor ones being added to those mentioned in our brief summary. Different degrees of unchaste love are exemplified, on the one hand, and different situations in chaste love, on the other. Britomart, Florimel, and Amoret are all chaste lovers, but their fortunes differ as do their characters. Only Britomart lives a full and satisfactory life in which all her powers are utilized as well as disciplined. If this be true, what then is the interpretation of Britomart's rescue of Amoret? Amoret, imprisoned and tortured by Busirane, is a martyr to her faithful love for Scudamour. Why is she a martyr? Is it only for the sake of the plot, to provide a sympathetic character for Britomart to rescue, or is there some reason in her own character? To settle this question, we need to examine Spenser's account of her birth and upbringing.

Belpheobe and Amoret, although described as twins conceived in spotless purity by parthenogenesis, must certainly represent opposites. Belpheobe, adopted by Diana, is too cold and lacks the power to love. Amoret, adopted by Venus, should therefore be characterized by an excess of love and a corresponding lack of cool restraint; but, since she is called by Spenser an example of true love and the lodestar of chaste affection, it is obvious that this excess cannot extend to any unchaste actions. It is perhaps significant that we are told rather pointedly that she was brought up as the companion of Cupid's daughter, Pleasure. There is no harm in this, but it fits in with the whole picture of Amoret's background. Under the tutelage of Venus she has grown up without spiritual discipline. Her inborn purity keeps her perfectly loyal to her chosen lover, but the weakness of her character puts her at the mercy of Busirane. She cannot resist capture by the forces of the lustful magician; she can only suffer gallantly under his torture and refuse to surrender her will. That Scudamour, who bears the image of Cupid on his shield, shares the same weakness is shown by his inability to rescue her. Spenser was well aware that the innocent suffer in this world, and he was always interested in looking for the reasons.

The rescue of Amoret can now be seen in its real importance. In spite of its late introduction into the narrative of Book III it is not just another adventure, thrown in to bring the book to a dramatic close. In her other adventures Britomart has merely been contrasted with vice or timidity. Here she appears in her full capacity as chaste love in action. Only a knight whose heart was disciplined in chastity was able to enter the castle and survive its dangers unharmed, but it is equally true that only one with a heart full of generous love would have undertaken to pass through those perilous flames for the sake of another's sufferings. Britomart is not, like Red Cross, saving her own soul nor has she, like Guyon, a guide and mentor at hand to keep her from spiritual danger; she is not even engaged in a solemnly accepted mission. She comes across human need and suffering quite by chance, and on the instant her overflowing love offers itself without reserve in service.

I will with prooffe of last extremity
Deliver her from thence, or with you for her die

she says to Scudamour. It is this lively spontaneity which makes her so attractive. That she has always been the most popular of Spenser's characters is a tribute to his triumphant solution of that most difficult of all the problems of fiction, the problem of how to make a thoroughly good character interesting.

Book IV is the most confusing book in the *Faerie Queene*. Not only do the knights announced as the prototypes of friendship, the virtue assigned to this book, fail to perform any significant action, but it is also

unfortunately true that Britomart and Florimel continue to steal the show and leave the new characters in the background. The book has no unity of plot, and it alone of all the books in the poem contains no quest to be performed. Nevertheless, it has an important function in binding together the third and fifth books. The treatment of the theme of friendship, such as it is, follows the episodic method of Book III. A number of incidents occur which illustrate true friendship, on the one hand, and false or pretended friendship, on the other. Unfortunately none of these incidents is memorable. What one retains out of the rather confusing experience of reading Book IV is all related to love, not friendship: Britomart's discovery of her destined lover, Belphoebe's strange jealousy at finding Timias tenderly caring for the wounded Amoret, and the dismay of the knights infatuated by the false Florimel when she deserts them for the cowardly Braggadochio. The action begins by the introduction of Ate (Discord) as the opposite of true friendship. With her are characters already introduced in Book III, Blandamour and Paridell. They are joined first by Scudamour, who is persuaded by Ate's slander that Amoret has been unfaithful to him, and later by the false Florimel whom the witch had made out of snow. She immediately exposes the shallowness of the professed friendship of the two knights by causing a quarrel between them. Eventually the party arrives at a pavilion where Satyrane is about to hold a tournament to determine who shall possess the famous girdle of the true Florimel, which she had dropped on the shore when escaping into the fisherman's boat. Tournaments were not Spenser's strong point—he lacked Malory's hearty enjoyment of broken spears and bones—but in this case he at least worked hard to provide variety. The jolly Satyrane, who is secretly the favorite knight of most readers, overthrows all comers until a “salvage knight”—that darling of medieval romance—arrives to topple him down in his turn. This strange knight's triumph is short-lived, for Britomart, still disguised as a man, comes dashing in at the last minute with her magic spear to upset everything and win the prize.

The ladies' part in the program now begins, for the most beautiful lady was to receive the girdle, and she in turn was to be awarded to the knight who won the tournament. This beauty contest is one of Spenser's rare ironical passages. In spite of all the genuine beauties presented to view, it is the false Florimel who receives the most acclaim; yet when she tries on the girdle, which we have been told is symbolic of chastity, it refuses to stay on her:

Then many other ladies likewise tried
About their tender loins to knit the same;
But it would not on none of them abide,
But when they thought it fast, eftsoones it was untied.

Which when that scornful Squire of Dames did view,
He loudly gan to laugh and thus to jest:
Alas for pity that so fair a crew,
As like cannot be seen from east to west,
Cannot find one this girdle to invest,
Fie on the man that did it first invent,
To shame us all with this, Ungirt unblest.
Let never lady to his love assent
That hath this day so many so unmanly shent.

The laughter of the cynical squire, in which all the other knights join heartily in spite of their ladies' disapproval, is not the end of this satirical scene. False Florimel, having been adjudged the most beautiful is awarded to the disguised Britomart. She refuses the award by saying that Amoret, who has been with her since the end of Book III, is her ladylove. Ate then stirs up all the knights to quarrel over the disposal of the prize until finally Satyrane settles the matter by leaving the choice to the lady herself. The disturbance ceases, and each knight gazes wishfully on the false flirt. She, says Spenser, looks long upon each one as though she wishes to please them all, and then chooses—the cowardly boaster, Braggadochio! Thus at one stroke the knights are paid off for having admired false rather than true beauty, and the false beauty herself, who is all the time not a real woman at all but a snow image made by a witch, receives a fitting mate in the very model of unknighthly conduct.

The next scene gives us one of the plot climaxes of the *Faerie Queene*, Britomart's discovery of Arthegal. The salvage knight at the tournament had been Arthegal in disguise. Angered at his discomfiture by Britomart, he is waiting for a chance to encounter her again when he meets Scudamour. The latter also is enraged against Britomart because he thinks that she (whom he and Arthegal believe to be a man) has stolen Amoret from him. No sooner have they learned that each is seeking her than she herself appears. Striking down Scudamour with a single blow of her lance, she turns her attention to Arthegal. Although unhorsed at the first encounter, he recovers himself and soon injures Britomart's horse so severely that she in turn dismounts. Finally Arthegal hacks her helmet apart, revealing her face and her golden hair. Stupefied at this discovery, he is soon overwhelmed with admiration and love. Britomart now recognizes him as the hero seen in her vision, and a mutual plighting of faith takes place. The revelation of Britomart's sex having removed all of Scudamour's unfounded anger, he inquires of her what she has done with Amoret. Britomart replies that while she was sleeping one day her fair charge disappeared and could not be found again.

The continuation of Amoret's story brings us to the third memorable scene in Book IV. We must remember that Timias, Arthur's squire, had fallen in love with Amoret's sister Belpheobe and is following her with dog-like devotion in spite of her disdain of such feelings. Now Amoret, upon leaving Britomart for a short walk in the woods, fell into the clutches of a wild man of monstrous appearance. Timias turns up just in time to engage her captor in combat. The latter, however, is getting rather the better of it when Belpheobe joins the fray and finally kills him with an arrow as he flees from her. While this is going on, Timias is giving tender attention to the unconscious girl. Belpheobe, returning, witnesses his caresses and finds that she is capable of jealousy even if not of love:

Which when she saw, with sudden glancing eye,
Her noble heart with sight thereof was filled
With deep disdain and great indignity,
That in her wrath she thought them both have thrilled
With that selfe arrow which the carle had killed:
Yet held her wrathful hand from vengeance sore,
But drawing nigh ere he her well beheld;
"Is this the faith?" she said, and said no more,
But turned her face, and fled away for evermore.

This humanizing of the icily aloof Belpheobe is one of the most satisfying things in the whole poem.

The rest of the fourth book is miscellaneous. Arthur takes charge of Amoret but does not succeed in restoring her to Scudamour. The last two cantos bring us back to the story of Florimel, who has been imprisoned by Proteus because she will not accept his love. Marinel, whom she loves, attends a great feast given by Proteus to celebrate the marriage of the Thames and Medway rivers. Passing beneath her prison window, he hears her bewailing her fate and telling of her love for him. This leads Marinel to entreat his mother, a sea nymph, to effect the rescue of Florimel by appealing to Neptune. The appeal is successful, and at last we witness the end of Florimel's long flight from pursuing males. The objections of Marinel's mother are overridden, and the pair are happily married early in the fifth book.

It is now time to return to the question raised at the beginning of this account of Book IV: why is the virtue of friendship not made central to the plot instead of being left to minor incidents? The answer lies partly in the history of the composition of the poem and partly in Spenser's conception of the relation between the three virtues of love, friendship, and justice.

In a recent book on the evolution of the *Faerie Queene*, Mrs. Josephine W. Bennett has made it clear that Spenser did not write the poem in the order in which it now stands and that the idea of arranging it according to the virtues was a later imposition upon much of the earlier narrative. The poet obviously had on hand material relating to the continued stories of Britomart and Florimel which he wished to use in order to keep

those stories moving toward their conclusions in Book V. On the other hand, his final scheme, which named this the book of friendship, made it necessary for him to introduce new material which would illustrate that virtue. This set a problem in construction which certainly was not successfully solved. We can easily observe the attempts which Spenser made to introduce the theme of friendship into the narrative. First of all, we must note that the heading of the book, whether supplied by the publisher in ignorance or by Spenser in haste, is quite inaccurate. Cambel and Triamond (wrongly given as Telamond in the heading) are neither the best examples of friendship nor the principal characters. They represent Spenser's attempt to continue Chaucer's "Squire's Tale" and are played up strongly in the second and third cantos. After this, one expects to find them dominating the action, but they appear again only in the tournament in the fourth canto, which, by the way, they do not win. Their friendship is stressed, it is true, but they do not perform any important action illustrating that virtue, and they have no place in the plot.

The most consistent attempt to develop the theme of the book occurs in Cantos 7, 8, and 9, where it is linked with the important figure of Arthur. When Belpheobe, by killing the lustful wild man, rescued Amoret, she also rescued a girl named Aemylia who had been a captive of the same man. Aemylia's lover, a young squire named Amyas, and his friend Placidus provide the best illustration of the titular virtue. Placidus voluntarily accepts imprisonment in order to help his friend. Escaping later on, he is pursued by his giant captor, Corflambo, who is about to kill him when Arthur arrives. Arthur kills the giant, forces an entry into the castle, and reunites the friends. While the whole party is recuperating, he tactfully straightens out their love affairs. Here we have, as Mrs. Bennett has pointed out, a miniature book of friendship, which is given further prominence by its association with the figure of Arthur. In the first and second books Arthur had performed a rescue of the hero in the eighth canto; consequently, by analogy, we should regard Placidus and not Triamond as the hero of the fourth book.

Another, though less striking, attempt to illustrate the operation of friendship is found in Britomart's relation to Amoret in the first half of Book IV. This one at least has the merit of being attached to the main plot. We must remember that Amoret, when first rescued by Britomart, mistakes her for a man. This causes her to be very fearful of her rescuer until a situation arises in a castle they are visiting which causes Britomart to reveal her sex. From that time on their intimacy grows until in Canto 6 (stanza 46) we are told that Britomart's relation to Amoret expresses the power of faithful friendship just as her relation to Arthegal expresses the power of true love, both being grounded in virtue. Consequently we may say that Book IV illustrates friendship between members of the female sex as well as the male. It is possible that the incident of Timias and Amoret is meant to suggest the dangers that may lie in attempts at friendship, rather than love, between members of opposite sexes.

The realization that Britomart in Book IV illustrates both love and friendship brings us to the consideration of the connection between these two virtues and justice, the virtue exemplified by Arthegal in Book V. Spenser's use of one continuous plot, centered in Britomart and Arthegal, for the three books shows clearly enough his desire to make us think about the connections between them. Actually, all these virtues are included in the Christian conception of love itself, and the three linked books portray the three manifestations of love: love between man and woman (sexual love), love between man and man or woman and woman (friendship), and love in the whole human community (justice). Britomart is a type of the first and second (perhaps even of the third, as we shall see in Book V), Arthegal of the first and third; there is no major character who typifies the second and third together. Had there been a real hero for Book IV, he might have exemplified this combination. From the logical and ethical point of view this lack is doubtless serious. Friendship is necessary to true and lasting love between man and woman and is also fundamental to justice in society. The ideal of justice is that each citizen shall receive such treatment as one would give one's friend or, as the Bible says, one's self. However this may be, Spenser was not simply writing moral allegory; he was creating characters and telling a story. The story of these three books is primarily the story of Britomart's love for Arthegal and secondarily Florimel's love for Marinel. Evidently he did not wish a third pair—or even a third individual—to share this interest.

If in Book IV narrative is stressed at the expense of allegory, in Book V it is the latter which triumphs over narrative. Unfortunately it is allegory of a very wooden and unconvincing type in most places. Whereas in Book III the situations were of real interest as typical examples of love as we know it, in Book V not only do most of the examples of justice seem forced and unnatural but they seem to happen to a number of extremely uninteresting people. The parts of the book which have to do with the continued plot of these three books are told with undiminished vigor, but the incidents illustrating Arthegal's career as champion of justice rather than as the lover of Britomart are uninspired and give the impression of having been ground out by a flagging invention under the necessity of finishing a task.

Whether this was actually so, we have no means of knowing. It is easy enough to show, however, that portions of it were written in a depressed and pessimistic mood. The prologue states with some bitterness that not only men but even nature's works have sadly degenerated since the beginning:

For that which all men then did vertue call
Is now called vice; and that which vice was hight
Is now hight vertue, and so us'd of all:
Right now is wrong, and wrong that was, is right,
As all things else in time are changed quight.
Ne wonder, for the heaven's revolution
Is wandred far from where it first was pight,
And so do make contrarie constitution
Of this lower world, toward his dissolution.

And this is followed up with some very interesting astronomical proof. Again, in the concluding cantos, where one might expect an expression of faith in the power of justice, Spenser falters where he firmly trod. The incident of Burbon, with his discarded shield of faith and his unwilling lady, was obviously meant to leave a bad taste in the mouth; and the last we see of Arthegal is a man recalled from his quest with his work only half done and his fame already under attack by envy and detraction. Nothing could illustrate better than these two passages the danger of introducing contemporary history into an epic. The scheme of the *Faerie Queene* called for a series of books in which each individual hero must successfully achieve a quest. In the first three books this is done wholeheartedly; the forces opposing the hero are completely routed. In the fourth book, where there is no single hero, all the forces of evil have been overcome and the book ends with a happy solution to the love problem of Florimel and Marinel. In Book V the quest of Arthegal is the rescue of Irena (Ireland) from Grantorto (Spain and the Roman church). As a freely imagined character in an allegorical narrative he should not only rescue the lady, which he does, but also remain a glorious and triumphant figure to the end. Had Arthegal remained a mythical ancestor of British kings (his function in Books III and IV) purveying justice to the Ireland of Arthurian legend, he would undoubtedly have enjoyed the type of grand finale accorded to the Red Cross Knight in Book I, to whose career his own is somewhat similar. Unfortunately Spenser decided to take the concluding incidents of his story from contemporary history in the Low Countries, France, and Ireland. In these countries the Protestant cause, although in most respects holding its own, was not markedly triumphant in the 1590's. The unsatisfactory ending of the Irena affair probably represents the recall of Lord Grey in 1582, but the failure of Arthegal to establish permanent justice typifies the consistent failure of Elizabeth's halfhearted Irish policy throughout Spenser's life. This is the only place in the whole poem where the representation of contemporary events exercises a controlling influence on the plot. The result is an artistic failure. Arthegal has not really completed his quest.

The narrative of Book V breaks into three parts: the marriage of Florimel and Marinel, the continuation of the Britomart and Arthegal love story, and the deeds of Arthegal exemplifying justice. The marriage and its accompanying tournament were reserved for Book V in order to strengthen the linking-up of plot structure throughout the three books we have been discussing. Here for the last time we see gathered together most of the company of knights and ladies with whom we are familiar. The festivities are linked to the theme of justice by the fact that Arthegal wins the tournament and by two pieces of enforced restitution. Braggadochio

is made to restore Guyon's horse, which he had stolen in Book II; and Florimel's girdle, which the false Florimel has been carrying around even though it does not fit her, is given back to its rightful owner. This latter event is part of a highly dramatic scene done in Spenser's best style. Since Arthegal had borrowed Braggadochio's shield for disguise, Braggadochio is publicly congratulated by the bride, in whose honor the tournament was held. With characteristic boorishness he rejects her thanks and announces that his own lady, the false Florimel, excels her and all others in beauty. At this rude shock poor Florimel leaves the hall in dismay:

Then forth he brought his snowy Florimele,
Whom Trompart had in keeping there beside,
Covered from people's gazement with a vele;
Whom when discovered they had throughly eyed,
With great amazement they were stupefied,
And said that surely Florimell it was,
Or if it were not Florimell so tried,
That Florimell herselfe she then did pas.
So feeble skill of perfect things the vulgar has.

Which whenas Marinell beheld likewise,
He was therewith exceedingly dismayd;
Ne wist he what to thinke, or to devise,
But like as one whom feends have made affrayd,
He long astonisht stood, ne ought he sayd,
Ne ought he did, but with fast fixed eyes
He gazed still upon that snowy mayd;
Whom ever as he did the more avize,
The more to be the true Florimell he did surmize.

Arthegal breaks in upon the bridegroom's dilemma by proving that Braggadochio was not the real winner of the tournament. If he is a false knight, Arthegal continues, doubtless the lady is a false lady too:

This lady which he showeth here
Is not, I wager, Florimell at all,
But some fayre franion, fit for such a fere,
That by misfortune in his hand did fall.
For prooffe whereof he bade them Florimell forth call.
So forth the noble ladie was ybrought,
Adorn'd with honor and all comely grace:
Whereto her bashfull shamefastness ywrought
A great increase in her fayre blushing face,
As roses did with lillies interlace.
For of those words, the which the boaster threw,
She inly yet conceived great disgrace.
Whom whenas all the people such did view,
They shouted loud, and signes of gladnesse all did shew.

Then did he set her by that snowy one,
Like the true saint by the image set,
Of both their beauties to make paragone,
And triall, whether should the honor get.
Straightway so soone as both together met,
Th'enchanted damzell vanisht into nought:
Her snowy substance melted as with heat,
No of that goodly hue remained ought
But th'emptie girdle which about her waste was wrought.

This recalls the scene in Book IV where the false Florimel did win the beauty contest, the true Florimel being absent. It is part of the vigor of Spenser's character creation that he makes his false beauty blind men's eyes

and carry away the admiration of everyone until faced with the original. We should also notice the characteristic behavior of Florimel. Timorous throughout the poem, she shrinks away from Braggadochio's insults. Britomart would have behaved quite differently.

In fact, Britomart does behave quite differently not long after this. Florimel's wedding occurs in Canto 3; in Cantos 4-6 we have the story of Arthegal's strange submission to the monstrous regiment of women in the person of Radegund and his rescue by Britomart. This is one of the most striking pieces of narrative in the *Faerie Queene* and merits close attention. Arthegal, after some rather dull exploits in the opening cantos, returns to the stage in Canto 4. Here he meets a knight named Turpine being led ignominiously off to execution by a group of women. Finding that they are followers of Radegund, who has set up a sort of Amazonian state under her dictatorship, he proceeds to her town and challenges her to combat in order to avenge the male sex. Radegund, furious at the rescue of her prisoner, puts up a strong fight but is finally knocked senseless by Arthegal. As he is unlacing her helmet in order to cut off her head, he is overwhelmed by the beauty of her face, even though it was, as Spenser says, bathed in blood and sweat. Struck with compassion at the thought of having hurt such a fair creature, he throws away his sword and refuses to fight any longer. Radegund comes out of her swoon and promptly captures him. The result of this ill-advised softness is doubly disastrous. Not only is Arthegal sentenced to hard labor and the wearing of women's clothing, but the unfortunate Turpine, whom he had set out to save, is executed after all. To make his position worse, Radegund falls in love with him and has no intention of ever releasing him unless he will return her love. In the meantime Talus, Arthegal's groom, makes his way back to Britomart, who has been suffering the pangs of jealousy at her lover's failure to return from his mission. The scene of her interview with Talus is too long to quote. Suffice it to say that her eager questioning extracts the answer that Arthegal is vanquished and lies in wretched bondage. She is full of sympathy and concern until she learns that his conqueror is a woman. "The rest myself too readily can spell," she cries and retires to her room in angry tears. Made to understand at last what has really happened, she transfers her rage to Radegund, throws on her armor, and sets out to wreak vengeance on the woman who would take her lord away from her.

On her way to this rescue Britomart has a narrow escape from treachery one night at the hands of Dolon, who thinks she is Arthegal because Talus is with her. The next day she overthrows Dolon's sons at the Perilous Bridge and proceeds to the Temple of Isis, where she spends the next night. Here she has a remarkable vision concerning a crocodile, interpreted by the priests of Isis as a prophecy of her union with Arthegal. This visit to the temple is symbolic, since Osiris, husband of Isis in Egyptian mythology, was the god of justice and his symbol is said by the priests to be the crocodile. But Isis herself was "that part of justice which is equity." In this way Britomart, as the prospective wife of Arthegal, is made to appear as a champion of justice also. At the moment, indeed, justice is badly in need of a champion to rescue her own knight from his self-imposed defeat and imprisonment. Britomart therefore hastens on to challenge Radegund to single combat. She is wounded in the ensuing fight but rallies her strength to fell her opponent with a mighty stroke. Unlike Arthegal, instead of waiting for Radegund to come to herself again, she cuts off head and helmet both with one blow. With only a brief reproach to her unfortunate lover that the force of strength and courage is nought when the mind can be seduced, she has him reclathed in manly raiment and establishes him as king of the city, thus reversing the female rule of his predecessor. Spenser makes a strong point of this and emphasizes the fact that Britomart did not take the government of the country upon herself but gave it to a man.

With this act of love and self-restraint Britomart passes out of the *Faerie Queene*. Almost certainly she would have appeared again if Spenser had finished the poem; one can hardly doubt that he was planning one of his most splendid pageants for her wedding to Arthegal. Even as it is, she remains the most human and the most memorable person among his knights and ladies. Her warmth of emotion, her generosity to others, her dynamic conception of chastity, even her fits of jealousy, make her a really living and lovable figure. To those who object that she is not feminine because she wears heavy armor and knocks down several male knights in rather boisterous fashion I recommend the dainty Florimel, who I am sure carried a scented lace handkerchief. There is food for all tastes in the *Faerie Queene*.

In Canto 8 Arthegal, who now resumes his long-delayed rescue of Irena, meets Prince Arthur in the act of saving a maiden named Samient from two paynim knights, followers of the Soldan. From her they learn of the great enmity between this soldan and her mistress, the maiden queen Mercilla. The two knights immediately undertake the overthrow of this tyrant, and after his death they ride to Mercilla's court. Now Mercilla is obviously Elizabeth in her capacity of merciful judge, and we find her surrounded by three virgins whose names signify justice, law, and peace. When Arthur and Arthegal arrive, Mercilla receives them with great dignity. Since she is at that moment engaged in the trial of Duessa (whom all readers of Book I will remember to stand for Mary of Scotland), she invites her distinguished guests to sit beside her and hear the evidence. Duessa is accused of conspiring against the person and throne of Mercilla and of being an enemy of true morality and religion, but Pity, Nobility, Regard of Womanhood, and other special pleaders make such an appeal on her behalf that Arthur "woxe much enclined to her part through sad terror of so dreadful fate." Seeing this, the prosecuting attorney, Zeal, calls to the stand Murder, Sedition, Adultery, and Impiety. Arthegal, on the other hand, has been cured of sentimental sympathy by his experience with Rade Gund and sets his mind with constant firmness against all interference with strict justice. All finally condemn Duessa, and she is executed, even though Mercilla's compassion delays the carrying-out of the sentence for some time.

The Belge, Burbon, and Irena episodes, which occupy the last three cantos, are less interesting than this one. The inconclusiveness and pessimism of the last two have already been pointed out. The trial Duessa is actually the high point of the allegory of justice. Duessa's crimes were notorious and are familiar to all readers who have gone through the poem up to this point. They now see a dangerous enemy of right and truth brought to the bar and tried with all the dignity and impartiality which should characterize what Spenser calls the most sacred of all virtues. Duessa is allowed her defense and even wins the sympathy of many people, yet she is inexorably given the reward of her past deeds. Here Spenser used contemporary history to better effect than in the cantos which follow. The event of Mary's trial and execution was one of the great decisive actions of Elizabeth's reign, as compared with the continuing problems of war in France and the Low Countries and the ever recurring uprisings in Ireland, and it illustrated the triumph of justice. The only criticism one can make is that it has nothing to do with Arthegal. By tying his hero up with a contemporary general, whether Grey, Norris, or both of them, Spenser lost the power to proceed with a free hand in making the plot carry out the meaning of the allegory. The extent of his failure may be seen by comparing the action of this book with the similar allegorical action of Book I, where every event simultaneously carries on the story of the hero and the importance of holiness in the life of man.

We may well question, too, whether Arthegal is a satisfactory hero for Book V. In the first place he is a relatively inactive hero. Spenser saw fit to give him as a groom the iron man, Talus, with his irresistible flail. Since Talus, because of his metal construction (which to modern readers is unfortunately reminiscent of their childhood friend, the Tin Woodman of Oz), cannot suffer wounds, he rides roughshod over all the opponents of Arthegal. So convenient is this method of disposing of troublesome enemies, particularly if they are too numerous for comfort, that we find Arthegal relying more and more on his invincible groom and less and less on his own strong right arm. Here allegory and narrative again are not well adjusted. Spenser wished to show that theoretical justice requires the aid of an efficient police force if it is to make its decisions operative, but he has carried the illustration of this point so far that it destroys the appeal of his hero as a brave man. It is noteworthy by contrast that Britomart scorns the assistance of Talus in the affair at the Perilous Bridge. The objection that Arthegal is too unstable temperamentally for the prototype of justice may be hypercritical, but some evidence exists to support it. At the end of the argument with Braggadochio about Guyon's stolen horse Arthegal becomes so furious that he is about to kill the false boaster on the spot until he is pacified by Guyon himself. And his completely irrational submission to Rade Gund sacrifices the life of the man he was trying to save and would have sacrificed Irena too if Britomart had not come to the rescue. Such a fatal weakness for female beauty may be human enough, but it seems out of place in one who is symbolizing justice. Now it may be that the answer to this criticism is that Arthegal, like the Red Cross Knight in Book I, represents a man striving to achieve the titular virtue rather than a man already completely possessing it. If so, we miss in Book V the arduous process of rehabilitation by which the hero of Book I reaches his goal. We might also say that

Guyon's attendant palmer (Reason) would have been a better companion for Arthegal than the robot Talus. Finally, we return to the point already made that Arthegal is not shown carrying out successfully any great triumph of justice.

To the Elizabethans the spice of contemporary reference was enough. The last five cantos contain in allegorical form a commentary on the history of England in the decade preceding 1595. This decade had seen England forced out of the cautious neutrality favored by Burghley and into open war with Spain and with the Catholic party in France. The patriotic war party, led in earlier days by the earl of Leicester and now led by the earl of Essex, had come into their own at last, and Spenser rejoiced with them. The first step had been armed intervention in the Netherlands in support of the Dutch rebels in 1585. Then had come the defeat of the Grand Armada in 1588 and the expedition to aid Henry IV of France in 1590-93. Indecisive as some of these actions were—the campaign in Brittany was a failure—they constituted a complete change of policy. What Book V celebrates in the execution of Duessa, the rescue of Samient and Belge, and the incident of Sir Burbon is the decision to cease temporizing and fight openly for the Protestant cause. When Spenser thinks of justice in this second half of the book, it is international justice he is thinking of, and what inspires him is the sight of England taking at last the place in international affairs which he had always hoped she would take.

It would be possible, if one wished, to consider the continued block of narrative in Books III, IV, and V as a separate poem. As such it could claim in its own right a high place in its class. Its bulk, somewhere around fifteen thousand lines, is much greater than that of *Paradise Lost*, and much more of it is good reading. Starting out as an imitation of the episodic method of Ariosto—we know this from Harvey's comment in 1580—it was strengthened by the imposition upon it of the controlling theme of the threefold allegory of love. This control is not evenly exercised nor does it always produce results of the highest order, but for better or worse it gives the work a depth and significance which the gay pageant of *Orlando Furioso* lacks. In Britomart, Florimel, Belpheobe, and Amoret it provides a colorful and highly interesting variety of heroines whose traits are played off against each other very effectively. If the men seem not quite so good, it is only because the women set an extremely high standard. Arthegal, with all his faults, is a striking personality and the genial Satyrane an unusually likable one. Braggadochio is handled with great skill to serve both as a comic character and as a controlling figure in what may be called the anti-plot, that is, the activities of a group of false knights and ladies who serve as a contrast to the noble characters. If Spenser had never written more of the *Faerie Queene* than these three books, he would not be so great a poet as he is, but he would still take very high rank.

Criticism: M. Pauline Parker (essay date 1960)

SOURCE: Parker, M. Pauline. "Justice and Equity." In *The Allegory of The Faerie Queene*, pp. 202-27. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.

[In the following excerpt, Parker discusses Book V of *The Faerie Queene* as an allegory about justice and equity.]

Book Five of *The Faerie Queen* belongs on the whole, to the knight it is assigned to, Artegall; a severe figure, of character akin to Guyon's, but lacking the sweetness which is one of Guyon's qualities. Was Spenser simply writing as a psychologist, or should we read an allegorical significance into Britomart's lack of sure confidence in Artegall's fidelity? As a theologian, the poet might have remembered that justice was precisely the virtue specially attacked by the original sin of man; and he may well have thought it the one most to seek in human, social, political, relations as he knew them by experience. It is true also that Artegall shadows Lord Grey of Wilton, and that Lord Grey was credited with an early sympathy for Mary Queen of Scots, which is figured in Artegall's captivity to Radigund.¹ In the whole of this book the historical allegory is much more evident and continuous than in any of the others, thus of course influencing the course of the story. Yet,

allowing for this, and in spite of Talus, Artegall appears less strong in his aim, less single-minded in his purpose, than Guyon is. Were it not for Britomart he would not have achieved his quest, and he needs Arthur's help as well.

There remains a possible explanation. Guyon's virtue resides primarily in the will. Of course, since virtue is a habit formed by repeated acts, if not there would be no meaning in Spenser's narratives, reason and will must co-operate; reason to propose the act as good, will thereupon to perform it. But Guyon's virtue of self-discipline requires one original act of reason, and then that the will should persist in its decision without ever flagging. The palmer's office is to recognize temptation as such, and to procure help at the moment of extreme physical weakness and depression. Guyon's battles are fought in the field of emotion and sense, and his last enemies are all illusions, phantasms of the imagination, the strange visions which rise from that deep sea underneath man's conscious self, where Acrasia has her secret dwelling. Artegall is in another position. His office takes the task of Temperance for granted, for if self mastery were not attained, his price might be found; but it is primarily an intellectual function: his problem is not to do what is right, he has Talus for that, but to know what is right. Justice, says the definition, is that virtue which gives to each his due; it derives from an act of judgement. But if its decrees are not to remain merely abstract, academic, decisions, without influence on the real course of events, there must also exist a physical force sufficient to bring them to effect. That force is typified by Talus the iron man, well did Spenser know his necessity, and the decrees themselves are represented by Chrysaor, the sword with which kings are girded, which cannot be broken or lose its edge. But as the danger of the will is that it may be weak, so the danger of the judgement is that it may be deceived. Artegall's subjection to Radigund is an instance of this, when the bewildered judgement is turned back upon itself, and, in Lancelot's paradox:

His honour rooted in dishonour stood
And faith unfaithful made him falsely true. (2)

And then Britomart herself, who rescues Artegall from this entanglement in a legal mesh by sheer forthrightness, is she to be regarded as precisely the Britomart of Book Three? Spenser takes a great deal of pains to make it clear that Artegall's fault, if fault at all, and not merely a disastrous error of judgement, is not one that affects the virtue of chastity; and Radigund, whom Britomart overcomes, represents, it is fairly evident, Tyranny³ who only by guile has made herself gaoler of Justice, and tyranny is no enemy of Britomart in her original character.

It might be that Spenser, now that Britomart's personal quest has been achieved, and her other care, Amoret and Scudamour, both mysteriously removed from the scene, no longer regards her as an allegorical figure, but simply as the personage of the story to whom it would naturally fall to rescue Artegall. But this would be to disregard Arthur's role as the general deliverer. Moreover, her adventures on the journey seem to show her as still a person in an allegory. It is now that Dolon, Guile, seeks to betray her. Perhaps the poet has expanded his view. If he regards chastity as a supernatural grace it must appertain to the soul even more than to the body, and chastity, perfected by exercise, will become only one aspect of a more comprehensive virtue, purity of heart. Then Britomart will represent, on a higher plane than Burke's, that 'chastity of honour which feels a stain,—that is, a sin—like a wound'. It is thus that like a lightning flash, she blasts the two sons of Dolon, and thus, that like a thunderbolt, she falls upon Radigund and by sheer straightness, consumes the bewilderments of Artegall's reason. Artegall's pauses and deviations on his quests, and these are nearly disastrous, form another proof that it is the guiding judgement which has to be perfected.

Yet neither is Artegall regarded as entirely a creature of earth. Justice, perfect justice is in heaven, teaches Spenser, using for this purpose the old myth of Astraea; it is not achieved by any clumsy, human reasoning of sharing alike, that crude, schoolboy equity of equal parts, which would seem to have dictated such a recent communistic experiment as that of Robert Kett in East Anglia, and which must have circulated much, if vaguely, before producing such an effect. As the emissary of heaven, there is about Artegall something of the

remoteness and clear hardness of the angel who led the Israelites: 'Take notice of him and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned: for he will not forgive when thou hast sinned, and my name is in him' (Exod. xxiii. 21).

Also, and perhaps because of his very simplicity, there is, except at moments, less of human attraction in Artegall than even in Guyon. From this point of view it may be rather his misfortune to be associated so closely with the warm, breathing, figure of Britomart, whose reception of the bad news of his captivity, is narrated by Spenser with so much psychological observation. It was possibly with a recognition of this that Spenser never leaves them long together, and also insists so much on his bringing up, so remote from family affection or even natural human kindness.

Like all the knights closely associated with a figure of Queen Elizabeth I, Artegall is not of faerie birth or, from the allegorical point of view, can he be, for fayerye is the realm of glamour, of illusion. Yet that his task will lie mainly in Faerie land is equally apparent, since it is those very illusions, as they relate to justice, that his task is to destroy. The communistic giant, or Malengin with his shape-shifting, or the tricked-out wickedness of Munera, are illusions more dangerous than many realities. But this analysis must not be pressed too far. Faerie land, historically considered, is also Gloriana-Elizabeth's kingdom, which to treat as illusory might hold some peril. And of all the knightly counsellors who stand round Gloriana's throne, Sophy and Artegall are the highest in place. Wisdom and Justice are Gloriana's guardians, and Guyon, himself not unimportant in that hierarchy, can imagine nothing higher for Arthur himself than that he should be as they are (II. ix. 6).

Artegall, therefore, is first mentioned as far back as Book Two. But the first description of him is in Book Three, where Britomart sees his face in the magic mirror. Perhaps there is something symbolic in this suggestion that Justice in full and lovable beauty can be seen on earth only in vision. Artegall's personal beauty is more dwelt upon than that of any other of the knightly heroes, not only here, but also in Book Four when Britomart sees him for the first time in the flesh. This beauty is indeed a sort of outward symbol or sacramental form of the virtue within. For it is becoming that he who must deal to all others what is due, should have himself received an appearance without fault. At the first seeing of him, he looks out of the mirror 'like Phoebus from the east', and Spenser refers at other times to the beauty of his countenance, 'Virtue in her face how lovely.' But yet an air of sadness hangs over this conquering knight with his golden sword and his iron man, a sadness arising perhaps from Spenser's own public experience, and proper to him in whom he had seen the embodiment of justice, Lord Grey de Wilton. To Artegall is granted no such complete, lasting, success as the others achieve. He does what he has to do; strikes down the oppressor and sets up a just authority. But it will not remain long when once his face is turned, and, called away prematurely, he will see the Blatant Beast as he goes. It is true that in this Spenser was shadowing what he had seen in Ireland when Grey was governor. But he would not have used this material if he had not believed that the fate of the justice he was considering in a more universal context, was really concretely illustrated in it. And, in Spenser's version, a cloud of melancholy mystery hangs over both the beginning and the end of the story. Merlin tells Glauce and Britomart that Artegall, though believed a faerie knight, is really a son of Gorlois King of Cornwall—hence related to Arthur through his mother—'by false faries stolne away' while yet in his cradle, so that he himself does not know who he is. When Britomart brings him back to his native land, so the wizard continues, he will defend it gloriously. But he will die young, treacherously murdered. True, that here again, Merlin is prophesying future history, and Spenser is playing the British Virgil. But again, he would not have used this material in this context if it had not been congruous with his conception of justice. Brief and rare are the visitations of perfect justice in the affairs of men. In his short sojourn he will do all things well, and leave behind a true model, but none of the other knights is a stranger and sojourner as Artegall is.

The Red Cross Knight, himself a changeling, has been brought up to the soil, and is at home in his English patronage. Guyon is 'An Elfin borne of noble state, and mickle worship in his native land': he also has his own place and people. Britomart is the daughter of the king of South Wales; we know the castle which is her

home, and she has lived there like any other young princess, except for her love of arms. Cambell and Triamond are securely established amid wife and sister, brother and friend; Calidore is loving and beloved wherever he goes. But Artegall, like and unlike Rousseau's 'Emile', has been brought up by Astraea in solitude, carried off a second time even from his faerie companions:

... So thence him farre she brought
Into a cave from comapnie exilde,
In which she noursled him till yeares he raught,
And all the discipline of justice there him taught.

There she him taught to weigh both right and wrong
In equall ballance with due recompence,
And equitee to measure out along,
According to the line of conscience
When so it needs with rigour to dispense ...

Thus she him trayned and thus she him taught
In all the skill of deeming wrong and right,
Until the ripeness of man's yeares he raught;
That euen wild beasts did feare his awfull sight
And men admyred his ouerruling might.

(v. i. 6, 7, 8)

Spenser's reason for this isolation is evident. Artegall is to be excluded from such ties, or unties, as might affect his judgement. His virtue is understood in the strictest sense of its definition. Exiled, orphaned, without home, family, friends, country, he has ridden on his way abandoned even by Astraea now set in heaven, known to the world by his golden sword and his iron man; but, till he met Britomart, known to no one by 'his louely face'. Such is Spenser's conception of the Knight of Justice; such only can be his character and his mission in this fayerye land, or land of glamour, which stands for the world as it is.

Spenser's change from the usual pattern of his narratives, in which we are first shown the knight travelling on his quest, and are then by some opportunity, told his earlier history, is more apparent than real. It is true that Book Five begins with the story of Astraea adopting and training 'the gentle child', procuring him the sword with which Jove had smitten the Titans, and then quitting the earth, leaving him her task and her iron man. But Artegall, without Talus, has already played some considerable part in the narrative, and has already found, in Britomart, the law of purity within, the complement of himself. The third, fourth and fifth books have been woven together with such care that Artegall's thread has been worked into the general pattern some time before its colour is due to predominate. But he is now for the first time the principal actor on the stage.

Why Artegall, who had been already appointed to Irena's quest before he met Britomart, should not then have been attended by Talus, and where the iron man has now appeared from, seem questions that might indicate a want of smoothness in the narrative. But the leading knights when they appear in contests not their own, are usually found without the special appanages of their virtue; not that they cease to represent it; but that these adjuncts are not called for except in their own quests. So Guyon, appearing in Books Three and Five, is without the palmer; Britomart, fighting for Artegall, is without the enchanted spear.

Artegall's story is taken up at a point apparently some time after his parting from Britomart, and we see him exercising the various functions of his virtue.

The tasks that fall to him usually have one of two characters: either to break the power of the evil-doer, or to make some difficult decision between contending parties. In the first episode, both these functions are combined. Sir Sanglier is a criminal who has murdered his own lady, and carried off another from a

defenceless squire. At Satyrane's tournament Artegall, then disguised as the Salvage Knight, had not disdained to joust with Sir Sanglier. But he does not touch him now. It is Talus, irresistible strength at the service of law, who holds him a helpless captive, while Artegall, having recourse to Solomon's famous stratagem, convicts him of his evil deed, and dismisses him to his punishment 'like a rated Spaniard'.

Since Spenser has left various threads hanging from previous stories, at this point he works these ends into the pattern by inserting here the festival of Florimell's wedding. In particular, the strange adventure of false Florimell is now to be concluded, and here Artegall's wisdom will be needed. Even he will turn aside for the happy ending of true Florimell's adventures for, if 'all the world rejoiced in Florimell', so too did he.

The allegory of the knight's various encounters on the way is simple enough. In fact, Artegall's story is, on many counts, the simplest of all, even simpler than Guyon's, and is certainly a marked contrast with the two books immediately preceding. His virtue is a straightforward eye for eye and tooth for tooth activity; but the poet takes the opportunity, possible not without some risk, of attacking not only Sir Sanglier, the private lawbreaker, but also those who do their evil under form of law. His next enemy represents those who use their official position to enrich themselves and oppress the weak, typified in the given case by Florimell's dwarf, Dony. In fact, the poet has made a good collection of villains at this first bridge; the 'groom of evil guise', the little jack in office who avenges his own servitude on those still weaker, and Pollente, strong enough 'upon the rich to tyrannize', a tyrant, and also a cheat, as shown by the traps in his bridge.

In the background, more fatal than all with her golden hands and her silver feet, lurks Bribery, Munera, daughter of Pollente, corruption deriving from abuse of power. Spenser is thinking here of those who corruptly take, not of those who give what in the case posed, they dare not deny. If St. Thomas More's integrity as a judge had not been exceptional, it would not have impressed his contemporaries so much, and that the evil custom had continued is proved by Bacon's later case.

Why does the poet use the somewhat bizarre device of making Artegall and Pollente leap down the oubliette on the bridge and fight in the water? The river is named at stanza 19, 'His corps was carried down along the Lee', and there is a very vivid, if gruesome, touch where Spenser tells how the head, struck off at one blow by Artegall,

... tumbling on the strand
It bit the earth for very fell despight,
And gnashed with his teeth ...

(v. ii. 18)

Doubtless Spenser's contemporaries in Ireland easily guessed what fight it was that had taken place at the fords of the Lee, and whose head was 'pitched upon a pole' by the stern justice of Lord Grey de Wilton. However, critics have identified Pollente with Charles IX of France, and his evil doings as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, in which case the 'groom of evil guise' would be the Duke of Guise. But in that case, why mention the river Lee? Moreover there is no resemblance between the episodes.

Those who do evil under form of law are not fought with but punished; it is Talus, the rigour of the law, unshaken by offered bribes, who first makes way into the castle of Munera, and Talus who, able to scent evil like a hound his quarry, drags out that figure of corruption and destroys her, her treasures, and her castle; Artegall is here only the judge.

The next encounter (v. ii. 30) has a special interest in the twentieth century. It is not now a question of crime; but of the imposition, presumably by force, of a new social order, a savage egalitarianism which insists that all should have less, to prevent any having more. Artegall's line of argument against the giant of communism,

who wants to deal out earth and sea, riches and rank, in equal shares by weight, is interesting. He first asserts the superiority of the existing order of nature as being the one ordained by God according to heavenly justice, in which all know their place and their part. This divinely decreed order of nature, order as law, and order as arrangement, was indeed the world scheme as the Elizabethans still saw it.⁴ Artegall has no notion of the upheaval which the popularization of the Copernican system would give to the securely walled-in Ptolemaic universe he himself describes. But even had he known that the planet Earth was the centre neither of the universe nor of the solar system, Artegall-Spenser was too good a Platonist to give such superabundant importance to the material arrangements of the world of the senses. Indeed, his argument would need but little change to fit it to the entire universe, rather than the earth only to which he applies it:

In vaine therefore doest thou now take in hand,
To call to count or weight his workes anew,
Whose counsels depths thou canst not vnderstand,
Sith of things subject to thy daily vew
Thou doest not know the causes, nor their courses dew.

(v. ii. 42)

The inequalities in the existing order are therefore included in the divine appointment from which it is wrong to diverge. The force of the further series of experiments in using the giant's balance seems to be directed to show that, in the first place, material and moral values are not subject to the same scale of measurement, and they cannot be calculated against each other. But, if we confine ourselves to moral values, wrong and falsehood, which are negative, cannot be compared with truth and right in which being resides. Aristotle too had taught that virtue and vice are incommensurable like truth and falsehood. However, if wrong be weighed against wrong, right will be found poised between. Here is Spenser's old principle of Book Two; virtue is in the mean and the opposite of a vice is not therefore a virtue. But, significant fact, the discomfited giant is not really seeking the right, he wants to be able to destroy the one extreme, to benefit the other, and if that is not right, so much the worse for right. And now another curious fact. This huge giant who has gathered all the peoples about him in expectation of their gain when he has succeeded in levelling everything down, has in himself so little of real substance that the mere pressure of contact with rightful law and order flings him off his height to wreckage down below. Be it noted that this is a righteous law and order, subject to true, heaven-inspired justice, an ideal order, free from weakness or corruption.

But now the peoples, misled, disappointed of their hoped-for riches, prepare for violence. These Talus disperses with his flail like a swarm of flies. They rush into hiding as ducks, startled by a falcon, scatter among the reeds. Spenser often delights us with these vivid thumbnail sketches. There he leaves the problem; he had seen social extremes enough in Ireland and in England; for it was Elizabeth I herself who introduced legislation to deal with the indigent poor, and yet such immense mansions as Knowle were being erected by her ministers. Probably too, he had heard of the wild attempts of the Anabaptists at Munster. He could not foresee how grisly a spectre would rise from the giant's 'timbered bones', and how much less effective would be the flail of Talus after that early death of Artegall which Merlin had foretold.

So far the Knight of Justice has used the sword Chrysaor only against Pollente, Oppression armed with a robber baron's power; the iron hand of Talus, the ordinary force of law, had dealt with all the other cases of evil-doers, whether private or public, or of turbulent enthusiasts whose crazy theories thrust inconsiderately into practice, endanger public peace. But Artegall is now going to honour the wedding tournament of Florimell. This is a private occasion, and the police, though not absent, will be left outside the door.

Elizabeth's courtiers probably amused themselves for an evening in identifying of the six knights who with Marinell undertake to uphold the peerless beauty of Florimell. Marinell himself has often been identified with Lord Howard of Effingham, the High Admiral, who defended that rich strand, the shore of England. But this is of less interest now than the bearing of the whole episode on the general course and purpose of the poem. It

serves as a kind of provisional climax, disposing of many lesser threads of narrative which could not be carried further without cluttering up the flow of the poem and impeding the new train of events, allegorical and actual, which were to exemplify the qualities of justice and courtesy.

Of the story of Marinell and Florimell it is only requisite here to recall how the first confronting of the true and false Florimell results in the immediate destruction of falsehood 'Truth is a touchstone'. Spenser had already glanced at this favourite thought, when the giant with all his strength could not put falsehood into the opposite scale to truth. Perhaps false Florimell and her going from knight to knight, did stand for Mary of Scotland, her much publicized intrigues, and her possible French or Spanish marriage: that Braggadochio and Trompart were originally Anjou and the ambassador Simier is fairly evident. But Spenser was a brave man if, in a poem to be laid before Queen Elizabeth, he so insisted on the beauty and charm of her rival, still more so if the true Florimell is meant for Mary 'on her good side', as some have suggested. That he had the necessary courage is shown by his steadfast support of the unpopular Grey, and of Leicester, in spite of Burleigh's hostility. But that for no reason of honour or loyalty, and contradictory to his perfectly sincere cult of the great Queen, he should thus have flown in her face, seems much less credible.

It is more to the present purpose to examine Artegall's doings. In his character as knight errant he enters the tournament in disguise; but later we find him functioning like an embodied principle of equity, as arbiter of problems that the law cannot touch.

He begins by rushing to the aid of the weaker, Marinell, victorious till now, and only overcome by numbers. He overcomes a hundred knights—no one but Love fights at such odds as Justice—but when the victors are proclaimed he withdraws, as though in penance for his behaviour at the first tournament, and at first allows Braggadochio, whose shield he had borrowed, to claim his prize. It is only when the boaster attacks Florimell and advances his own false companion, that Artegall, to authorize his intervention on her behalf, makes good his own claim to be victor.

Justice, like Holiness, is allied to Humility and, still more, to Disinterestedness; it does not seek its own reputation, and will not struggle for its own rights, until those of others are involved. But Justice is then both swift and practical. Evidence is quickly brought to prove Braggadochio's imposture, and then Artegall approaches the more important matter at issue by proposing that the two Florimells should be confronted. When the innocent is placed beside the shameless, no doubt remains where true beauty is. Artegall shows the same practical wisdom in the matter of Guyon's horse, now at last to be returned to his owner in a pretty recognition scene. But fiery Justice needs the restraint of Temperance when his verdict is disputed. Justice and Temperance, these Elizabeth herself had claimed as the chief virtues of a governor.⁵ Thus exposed, Braggadochio and Trompart become a mere police affair, and Talus, who has remained behind the scenes till now, deals with them. It is one of Spenser's special points that justice is to be proclaimed only where there is power to enforce it. Idealist as he shows himself, he was still too much of a practical man of affairs, and had seen there is power to enforce it. Idealist as he shows himself, he too much in Ireland, to suppose that people would be moved from their own interests by the mere abstract statement of what is just:

Who so vpon himselfe will take the skill
True Iustice vnto people to diuide,
Had neede haue mightie hands, for to fulfill
That, which he doth with righteous doome decide,
And for to maister wrong and puissant pride.
For vaine it is to deeme of things aright,
And makes wrong doers iustice to deride,
Vnlesse it be performed with dreadlesse might,
For powre is the right hand of Justice truely hight.

(v. iv. i)

If politicians were as realistic as poets, some pages of recent history might have been written in ink less red.

Artegall's next encounter, the problems of the islands and the treasure, seems to illustrate the folk wisdom of the old proverb, that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. It is, moreover, a warning requisite at that time, that the judge's decision must not be affected by any consideration of wealth or power in the disputants. However, Gough quotes legal authority, both in English and Roman law for Artégall's decision.⁶

It must be noted that Artégall does not fight his way like the other knights. Only when he has to do with Tyranny above, or against, the law, does he draw his own sword. This next occurs when his meeting with Terpine leads to his unlucky fight with Radigund, in whom, it may be, Lord Grey encountered Mary Queen of Scots, though in view of the slightness of connexion with her and the unlikelihood that Spenser would stress it; it seems probable that the historical allegory may be in abeyance at this moment. But Artégall in any case encountered Tyranny itself, irresponsible Power, to Justice, most deadly enemy.

It is in fighting Radigund that Artégall encounters his first serious temptation, and suffers that one moment of weakness from which so few of Spenser's knights are altogether exempt. Indeed, it is only Britomart who can never yield at all, since in her virtue, what is once lost is wholly lost, not indeed, without remedy, but without recall.

Artegall's weakness is compassion, which a just judge may and should feel, but not so that emotion should make him fail in his duty. No doubt Grey's Irish difficulties are hinted at here, for Spenser certainly supported his severe policy and regarded the conciliatory one of his opponents as fatal.⁷ Artégall's fall is the most disastrous of all the knights'; the most shameful to himself, the most fatal to others; for the fault of the Red Cross Knight, or Guyon, or Calidore if fault it were, hurts no one but themselves, whereas that of Artégall brings to shameful death the knight who had trusted him, and whom he had undertaken to save. Not only so, but the one false step, however pardonable in itself, for compassion is a noble quality, and more excusable in excess than in defect, carries with it inevitable consequences, a blurring of the moral judgement, till now so clear; so that Artégall believes his knightly honour binds him to keep his pledge to Radigund however treacherous had been her means of gaining it, forgetting that no pledge can bind him to what is wrong in itself. His first error, owing perhaps to overconfidence, had been making the pledge at all. However, this said, all is said. Artégall in defeat is dignified, patient, ready to use honourable means to gain his freedom; but firm in his private faith to Britomart. 'Absolute power corrupts absolutely.' Spenser is insisting on the evil of Radigund's irresponsible power, and on the basic necessity of unshakeable justice, when he draws such serious consequences from the momentary yielding of the reason of the judge to the heart of a man.

Spenser's portrait of Britomart fretting over Artégall's prolonged absence is full of life, truth, and even of humour, and so is his narrative of her reception of the news that Talus brings her; her too-hasty believing of the worst; her returning to Talus for a fuller account when her emotion has exhausted itself, and her setting forth to the rescue, all her wrath concentrated on Radigund. But in what character is she riding when she meets Dolon?

Britomart's old quality of chastity as deliverer, hardly suits the present occasion even in the wider sense I have suggested for it. Artégall is already admirably exercising this virtue and, if that could save him, would already be free. Moreover, Dolon's plot is formed in the belief that the wandering knight is Artégall, and that he may thus avenge the death of Guizor his son. In fact Britomart, having escaped the first snare, meets and destroys the two remaining brothers on the very bridge where Artégall had fought Pollente and, as he believed, had destroyed the evil customs. Further, Isis, in the Temple which Britomart now visits, represents, the poet tells us, 'that part of Justice which is Equity', though the priests indeed must serve in chastity, and by Britomart's dream there she is confirmed in her trust in Artégall, who is symbolized by the crocodile of Osiris, god of justice; for so the chief priest affirms. Britomart, then, would correspond to Isis herself, Equity, and this interpretation is supported by her subsequent conduct. For the principle of equity enables even law to be set

aside when, by some circumstance, it becomes clear that slavish insistence on the literal legal position would defeat the ends of real justice. Artegall, like the other knights who fought Radigund, is bound by a contract though, actually, he was cheated. Britomart refuses the bargain proposed—a princess may refuse a queen when a knight cannot—and will not be held but by the bonds of common law. In the fight she uses a sword, not the enchanted spear for, though still deriving her strength from her purity, it is not a combat of chastity as such. Thus fights the common reason of humanity, the source of equity, against the selfish predominance of irresponsible tyranny, with all the system that Radigund typifies. Britomart victoriously kills Radigund. Spenser was too wise to kill a woman, even a Radigund, by other than a woman, and proceeds to the release of the captives, restraining, ‘for very ruth’, equity can be allowed to pity when the law is over severe, the ferocious retributions of Talus. Now follows a natural touch; when she sees Artegall in his trouble she sets aside jealous suspicion and thinks only of comforting him, while he receives her help as generously as it is given.

And now Britomart, since this Amazon state is organized legally but not justly, ‘did true Justice deale’, redressing injuries and restoring order. But Britomart too has learned something, and when Artegall proposes to set out again on his original quest, she does not repeat her attempt to delay him; she acknowledges his obligation, and she restrains her grief. She has come close enough to justice now to know that there are times when personal interests, the highest and purest, must yield to duty.

It may be worth noting in passing the singular restraint and relative austerity of Spenser's style in this book, even in such a passage as the description of the temple of Isis; the flow of his music remains; but the diction is sobered to suit a sober theme.

Perhaps it is poetic justice that Artegall, whose habit of disguise, still characteristic of his virtue, had originally caused his first meeting with Britomart to be a fight, should now be mistakenly assaulted by Arthur, who has long been left in obscurity, when both are seeking to save Samient from her enemies. But one of the most charming qualities of Spenser's knights is their readiness to own their mistakes. Arthur and Artegall are soon friends, and with this encounter, Arthur comes back to his position as the proudest knight of all the world, and the great deliverer he in whom all good qualities are at the heroic level.

Mercilla, the royal mistress of Samient,⁸ is the figure of Elizabeth in this part of the book, and is seen in a more gentle and feminine aspect than she has usually appeared in either in the character of Britomart or of Belpheobe. The political allegory, however, hardly becomes prominent till the trial scene; the next encounter, though undertaken to help Mercilla indirectly, is a conflict with an abstract evil, Adicia, Injustice, companion and guide of ‘a mighty man and Souldan’, Philip II presumably, on the historical plane, but, on the universal, the supreme enemy whom Artegall must encounter as the Red Cross Knight encountered Pride, Guyon, Passion, and Britomart, Busyrane, Arthur's challenge to the Souldan ‘in behalfe or wronged weake’, alludes to the Netherlands attempt, historically, Arthur is here Leicester, but the actual history is modified to suit the moral allegory in which justice must triumph. In reality Elizabeth's armed intervention in the Netherlands was by no means wholly successful although the poet seems to include the Armada victory with it, if Upton and others are right in associating Arthur's contest with the Souldan fighting from a chariot in which the prince cannot reach him, with that battle. Yet not by human means does Arthur vanquish the Soldan, the political and military power of Spain, standing for those material forces which in this world seem to support the rule of the unjust. Only the unveiling of the shield, the symbol in Arthur's own case, of supernatural aid, gives him the victory, and even then it is not he who slays his enemy, but the bolting horses that dash the chariot to pieces, i.e. the fortunate wind that scattered the Spanish fleet. This is all the victory the poet can dwell on since, though the Protestant regions of the Netherlands did gain their freedom eventually, it was not by means of Leicester's expedition, or Elizabeth. On the moral plane this conflict is represented by the encounter of Artegall, who has got by stratagem into the castle of Injustice, and Adicia. The latter escapes, and by her furious despair is transformed into a tigress; but Artegall succeeds in defeating all those who had submitted to her. Spenser is well aware that injustice in itself cannot be destroyed, until all evil is no more. In fact, he is distinguishing rather carefully between those concrete wrongs which can be done away with, such as

Radigund, Tyranny, or the giant Communism, and the ideal evils, Injustice, Intemperance, which can only be denied activity and remedied in their effects.

Perhaps in the encounter with Guile, Malengin, Spenser on the factual plane, had in mind the plots, real and concocted, against Elizabeth and her power in Ireland and elsewhere, though it is Maleger in Book Two who more precisely represents the kernes. In Dolon's attack on Britomart, he seems to have been also glancing at French intrigue more particularly; but, in the moral allegory, Malengin, though a pair to Dolon, is not his duplicate. Spenser never repeats exactly. Dolon, an old man of respectable and even dignified appearance, living with all the outward semblance of honour and prosperity, invites Britomart to his house with apparent kindness, and then would have murdered her. This is the treachery in the intimacy of family and social life, of which the Psalmist speaks: 'For if an enemy had done this I might have borne it but it was thou, my familiar friend in whom I trusted: we took sweet counsel together: we walked in the house of God as friends.' In that era of Renaissance statesmanship, there were enough politicians to fill the character whether on the one side or the other, and Spenser may also have had in mind the English plots against Elizabeth; Dolon being a figure for conspiracy. The Homeric Dolon was a spy who betrayed his own side, but this may be coincidence.

Malengin in the moral allegory is an Ishmael, a savage preying on society like a wolf, unscrupulous, ready to murder, or steal, or commit any other crime, a gangster, admitting no law but his own interest, an adept at all the tricks whereby fools are deceived, a professional criminal, living in hiding, and thence pouncing on his victims:

Als at his backe a great wyde net he bore,
With which he seldom fished at the brooke,
But vsd to fish for fooles on the dry shore
Of which he in faire weather, wont to take great store

(v. ix. 11)

And now, justice guards the ways, but Talus, all the material means which a state can use to enforce its laws, hunts down the criminal through flight and disguise, until the capture is made. But Spenser tells this in language straight from folk-lore, the old tales of the wicked wizard who changes his form and must be gripped in each until he has finished the sequence and his power is exhausted. Through such a series Tamlane passes before he can be rescued and restored to human living. Even then, Artegall cannot hold Malengin. It is Talus who beats the life out of one who, as Spenser shrewdly says, was primarily a self-deceiver who thought he would always get away with it; other criminals might betray themselves, but not he: 'So did deceive the self-deceiver fayle.' Granted Spenser's religious sympathies he might have been alluding to the devices and disguises of the recusants. But the 'View' does not show Spenser as holding extreme views about the Catholics as individuals, the Sydney entourage in Ireland does not seem to have done so, Campion lived peacefully among them, and he may also have been referring to, or including, the whole crew of political cum religious informers and spies of which the correspondence of the time reveals so many everywhere, and who so often mingled their betrayals with lofty professions of faith and loyalty.

Now Injustice has been driven away, and treacherous crime destroyed, the palace of Mercy may be approached, for mercy is then only possible to the ruler when leniency is not dangerous to the innocent. This palace is guarded by moral force, not physical. Awe is sentinel at the gate, and Order controls the crowd within. Warlike array is 'straunge there to se', where peace, fostered by just judgement reigned. Yet this idyllic scene includes the figure of a poet⁹ who for attacking 'Mercilla-Elizabeth', has been nailed by the tongue to a post. Perhaps to none of Spenser's first readers did this seem an incongruous piece of savagery. Yet the twentieth century can hardly reproach the sixteenth, for 'those who live in glass houses should not throw stones'.

One may well suppose that in a narrative here so closely corresponding to the contemporary scene, Spenser did not insist so much on the long peace of Mercilla's domains without adverting to the lines ascribed to Elizabeth herself about Mary Queen of Scots:

The daughter of debate
That eke discord did sow,
Shall reap no gain where former rule
Hath taught still peace to grow ...

In this book the trial of Duessa-Mary is about to be represented before Mercilla-Elizabeth; and in Book Four, Duessa was shown riding in company with Ate, and doing her best to foment quarrels, in particular between Britomart and Scudamour. Those who have remarked the different light which recent historical research has thrown upon the Babington plot in particular, and the figures of Burleigh and Walsingham in general,¹⁰ might be inclined to quarrel with Spenser for the view he clearly takes in this Book, as elsewhere. But, in his position, he could not be wiser than his contemporaries, and even if he had had his suspicions, of the parts played by agent provocateurs—Mary accused Walsingham in Burleigh's presence of rigging Babington's plot, this poem was not the place for them.

The description of Mercilla in state, which may be contrasted with that of Lucifera in Book One, is one of the few highly wrought passages in a book otherwise singularly austere; the canopy above her throne seems to reach the clouds of heaven, and angels are seen clustering about it; while others are grouped round her throne itself, and she herself is angel-like, Spenser's favourite compliment to a woman. On the steps of the throne are ranged, under the image of a 'beuie of faire Virgins clad in white', the Ideas of those attributes which should attend sovereignty. That they are universals is seen in the fact that justice is shown among them, and temperance also. They are all powers of conciliation and clemency:

And often treat for pardon and remission
For suppliant, through frayltie which offend.

(v. ix. 32)

Is it too fanciful to suggest that Spenser's insistence on mercy as the primary attribute of the righteous sovereign whom he pictures surrounded by angels, was remembered by Shakespeare when he composed Portia's famous oration about the mercy which droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven from such clouds as canopied Mercilla's throne, which becomes the throned monarch better than his crown, and which is enthroned in the hearts of kings? Had not Spenser already written:

... in th' Almightyes euerlasting seat
She first was bred, and borne of heauenly race,
From thence poured downe on men, by influence of grace.

(v. x. 1)

Too many parallels can be traced between Shakespeare and Spenser for it not to be apparent that the dramatist well knew the *Faerie Queene*. Indeed, how should it be otherwise? It would be impossible that such a poem could be published by a poet of the reputation Spenser already had and Shakespeare not read it, were it only to see what plots he could get from it. Two ideas the two poets certainly had in common; this belief in mercy and conciliation as the wisest and most worthy policy of kings; and the hatred for war in itself. As to this, there are passages in Book Four and elsewhere, as, for example, in this description of Mercilla, which might be set beside Shakespeare's principal reference in *Henry V*.

But in the trial about to be continued, the merciful Queen places pure justice beside her, 'and neare them

none'. That a trial should be one of the central scenes of the Book of Justice is clearly appropriate, and if so, granted the persons and the circumstances, it was inevitable that it should be Queen Mary's. Spenser had been already preparing for this when he associated Paridell and Blandamour with Ate and Duessa in the quarrel scene of Book Four; since these two are generally accepted to stand for Westmorland and Northumberland, Lords both implicated with Mary. Besides, Lord Grey really was one of the Commission against Mary.

But, also, the theme of the book required that Spenser should set forth his conception of a just trial, nor had signs been wanting that such a lesson might be needed. Doubtless Spenser did believe Mary as guilty as Duessa; doubtless there were others of another opinion, whom he might have been concerned to convince; the whole truth was certainly not known then, and has hardly been fully revealed now. The description shows the trial as it should have been rather than as it actually was. Spenser's ideal trial is public, impartial, with full liberty to witnesses and advocates on either side, with no sign of violence of any kind, and with judges exact to determine guilt, but slow to punish it, and reluctant to go to extremes. With his usual tact the poet refrains from describing, or even mentioning, except by implication, the unhappy scene of Fotheringay. Indeed, from the point of view of the moral allegory, he cannot describe it, for Duessa in that represents Falsehood, and falsehood cannot be eliminated from the human combat any more than injustice; Duessa can no more die now than when Una spared her in the first book. Had Spenser continued his poem to the length originally proposed, how would he have managed without this personage who has been more active through five books than the chief villain Archimago? Perhaps, like Adicia, she would have been transformed into an animal; certainly the poet must and would have found another symbolic form, moral and historical. Intrigue did not die with Mary, and Falsehood can take as many forms as Malengin. Meanwhile, the narrative returns to Arthur.

Even when Arthur is not required to act as deliverer, he must in each book approve himself by some great symbolic action, except, indeed, in that part of the narrative where Britomart assumes his role. To Philip Sidney, the Netherlands war had been a high adventure; such an expedition as an Arthur-Leicester might fairly lead, and illustrate thereby why, and how, a just war might be fought in defence of the weak and oppressed, at their invitation, and without harm to non-combatants. Moreover, such a war will not be ended by a mere destruction of the enemy, the deaths of the seneschal and the *gyant* himself, but the institutions set up by the invaders, through which their oppression was exercised, must also be done away with, and this is seen in the destruction of the monster. Readers of the life of St. Teresa of Avila, a generation older than Spenser, will know what a dread the Inquisition, in the time of Philip II, inspired even in Spaniards themselves, of whose orthodoxy there could be no question. At a later age, Spenser's inquisition dragon would still have represented the subtle inner tyranny which seeks to control the liberty of mind and will, but its material counterpart would be found, many times multiplied, in the various political, economic, national, international, organizations which now lay their heavy yoke on the necks of their members.

Thus does Arthur-Leicester liberate Belge and her seven sons, and the soul, from the fear of interior or exterior restraint of just liberty. Despite the retained name of Belge, Spenser has dropped the historical allegory here; he only needs literal facts when they illustrate moral and spiritual truth; when they cannot be interpreted as he wants, he abandons them. Arthur, ever triumphant, can never rest, the soul, even perfected, must always go forward in this world. Gloriana's knights, who have come from Cleopolis, could presumably have instructed Arthur, their benefactor, how to reach it. But Cleopolis still has its character of an enchanted dwelling, the stranger cannot enter it, or even find it, except at the appointed time. Arthur, therefore, goes his way.

Artegall, after his various obstacles and delays, is now approaching the end of his personal quest, in which he can be helped neither by Arthur nor by Britomart. For whatever part Spenser gives to the deliverers, and sometimes it may seem greater than that of the protagonists, the last and decisive act each must perform alone. True, Guyon is helped, even at the last, by his palmer guide. But he is a projection of his own reason and moral judgement, from which he cannot now be separated, and which must be instrumental to the final conquest, since reason, not merely force, must subdue rebellious desire.

Artegall's delay, that fatal confusion of his faith with Radigund has gravely compromised the success of his quest, and has caused Irena to fall a prisoner to Grantorto. I surmise that by this name, Irena, which Spenser also uses in his *View of the Present State of Ireland*, he intended a double meaning, one the object of the historical allegory, the other of the moral. Lord Grey, indeed, was to drive the Spanish out of Ireland, but the Knight of Justice must destroy that evil which is the enemy of public peace. Peace is the good which the just queen, Mercilla, has obtained for her kingdom; peace, Spenser held, was the one essential requisite for Ireland, without which nothing else would avail; peace was a principal object of Elizabeth's tortuous policy; and, where there is perfect justice, there should be perfect peace. A little later than Spenser, another poet, Vaughan, of mind not altogether unlike, would write of the City which the Red Cross Knight saw from the Mount of Contemplation, and would say of it that the plant of peace grew there. What greater wrong can an enemy from without do a country, or a false and selfish faction from within, or both together, as Spenser supposes it, than subvert by violence and intrigue, that 'tranquillity of order' which is the definition of peace? Philip II as Gerioneo was doing more powerfully and thoroughly, because more powerful and thorough, what every sovereign more or less at that time, was striving to do, namely, impose his will on dominions he regarded as his. He had pressed his right beyond the limits permitted to man, therefore just war might be waged against him; but that there had been in the first instance, a right, the thought of the age, and of the people who still lamented Calais, could not well deny.

But Philip II, as Grantorto, or alternatively, the Papacy as a political power, was in another position. Here he was intervening by intrigue and conspiracy in a country where he had no trace of sovereign claim, and the purpose of those intrigues, of that conspiracy, was war. That there might be a parallel between Protestant Gloriana intervening in the Netherlands on behalf of her co-religionists, and Catholic Grantorto intervening in Ireland on behalf of his coreligionists, was a possibility that no servant of Elizabeth, himself a protestant, could be expected to perceive. Spenser, planter at Kilcolman, with his wife and young family there, was certain that peace was what the country needed above all. Those who broke it, for whatever reason, were those who wronged her, but he who wronged her most was he who thrust in from without, careless of peasant or cottage, house or farmland, to destroy that peace as a mere incident in a larger policy. Such was Grantorto, Artegall's enemy.

Before this last combat, however, Artegall meets Burbon, Henry IV, ready to buy Paris with a Mass, fighting for his throne, Flourdelis, France. Artegall admits his legitimate claim, but reproves the policy of crooked means:

Fie on such forgerie (said Artegall),
Vnder one hood to shelter faces twaine,
Knights ought be true, and truth is one in all:
Of all things to dissemble fouly may befall

(v. xi. 56)

The admonition might be just; but it applied to the policies of Walsingham and Burleigh quite enough to explain the poet's unpopularity in that quarter.

In describing the last fight between Artegall and Grantorto, the poet spares no pains to give the Knight of Justice a worthy opponent. Grantorto is not only of giant strength, but a skilled and courageous fighter. And it is true that material wrong is often so heavy, as it were, so well established, that it is hard to find where to strike it without seeming to do more harm than good, armoured as it is in vested interests, and disposing apparently, of endless resources. Artegall defends himself with skill; but it is not by skill or policy, but by sheer straightforward hitting, that he defeats Grantorto.

This is the first, the destructive phase, of the work of Justice. Historically, Lord Grey could not proceed much

further in the time allowed him; but Spenser cannot let Artegall stop at this point; he gives him time:

... that he did there remaine
His studie was true justice how to deale.
And day and night employed his busie paine
How to reforme that ragged commonweale:

(v. xii. 26)

In spite of the name Artegall-Grey acquired for severity, he is shown by Spenser here as in the *View*, as often checking the rigour of Talus, the material force of the law.

In ending this book, Spenser was treading on thin ice. The course of his narrative was perfectly clear, much clearer to his first readers perhaps, but not obscure even to us, so that it seems that Queen Elizabeth and Burleigh are rather to be praised for magnanimity than blamed for parsimony, when one considers that the poet got away with his outspoken criticism of Grey's withdrawal from Ireland 'ere he could reforme it thoroughly', his virtue obscured by 'enuie's cloude', and his homeward path troubled by the two hags Enuie and Detraction, painted with the whole power of Spenser's descriptive genius:

The one of them that elder did appeare,
With her dull eyes does seeme to looke askew,
That her mis-shape much helpt; and her foule heare
Hung loose and loathsomely: thereto her hew
Was wan and leane, that all her teeth arew,
And all her bones might through her cheekes be red:
Her lips were like raw lether, pale and blew,
And as she spake, therewith she slauered:
Yet spake she seldom but thought more the lesse she sed.

(v. xii. 29)

Probably both queen and minister realized that to show anger would be to admit the force of the criticism, and Elizabeth herself could hardly be too severe with the section of the whole poem in which she appeared as Mercilla. Indeed, Spenser's outspokenness gave a value to his compliments which nothing else could have conferred upon them, and the queen could well appreciate this.

Friendship might have led Spenser to introduce his vivid portraits of Envy and Detraction at this point; but he was too much of an artist not to work them neatly into the pattern. Calumny is the enemy of the next book, the book of Calidore and the Blatant Beast, and the two hideous figures he has now created, are the very ones to bring this last monster appropriately on the scene; where envy and detraction are, calumny will not be far behind. This makes the structural contact with the next book, where, according to his usual method, the poet brings the new protagonist into contact with the one just passing off the scene.

The cordial greetings and felicitations of Calidore, sincere as doubtless they were, do not dissipate the air of sadness that clings round the figure of Artegall, his triumph not complete, the shadow of his early death already upon him. It is true that his legend is conditioned by the historical mould in which, more than in any other of the narratives, Spenser chose to cast it. But it still remains true that the historical allegory is secondary. Spenser took what seemed to him to exemplify his moral theme, and he would not have used those events to illustrate the perfecting of justice, if he had not recognized that, in the world as it is, he could not truly represent any human institution as being permanently administered according to perfect justice. Adverse circumstances, human ill will, human frailty, all these will enter, and whether it be Plato's Republic, or More's Utopia, or the City of the Sun, or the new Atlantis, or any other attempt at a perfect state upon earth, the writing is already on the wall: 'Here we have no abiding city.' But still, it is demanded of the steward that he

be found faithful, and in the hurly burly amid which the virtue of justice must be exercised, it will be much if the ruler, though not succeeding as he desires, yet retains his personal virtue. This Artegall does; he has done justice and shown mercy, and after the brief encounter with Calidore, in which he proves himself not embittered, he passes away into the forest from which at first he had mysteriously appeared:

A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?

Notes

1. J. C. Smith and De Selincourt, *Poetical Works*, p. iii. Froude gives Ridolfi's list *Reign of Eliz. IV*, p. 158.
2. Radigund having cheated, Artegall was no longer bound in *justice*, only by a legal scruple: it is the situation where law does not do justice which therefore equity is called in to redress.
3. It is suggested (cf. A. B. Gough: Introd. V. iv) that Radigund more especially represents 'the monstrous regiment of women'. But a poem so largely honouring a Queen, and in which so many good queens appear, can hardly condemn female sovereignty as such, but only if usurped.
4. No doubt Spenser's attention had been drawn to these social problems by the communistic doctrines and experiments which were a powerful element in the revolutionary movement in Germany from 1525 onwards: cf. *Camb. Mod. History*, i. 62.
5. Cf. *Letter to Leycester* quoted in Chap. IV.
6. A. B. Gough ed. Bk. V: notes to Canto IV.
7. Cf. *View of the Present State of Ireland*, passim.
8. The critics are not agreed in their identification of this figure.
9. Identified by Gough with one Fulwell a political satirist who had attacked Elizabeth.
10. Cf. Devlin, *Life of Robert Southwell*, Longmans, 1956.

Criticism: James P. Bednarz (essay date 1984)

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[In the following essay, Bednarz discusses the historical context of *The Faerie Queene* and focuses on representations of the relationship between Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Walter Raleigh in the poem.]

The allegory of Timias and Belphoebe in *The Faerie Queene* documents two distinct periods in the ongoing relationship between Sir Walter Raleigh and Queen Elizabeth. The first describes an early era of mixed fortune in which Raleigh's preeminence was being undermined by the earl of Essex, and the second alludes to a later time of disgrace, occasioned by his clandestine marriage to Elizabeth Throckmorton in 1592. The 1590 and 1596 installments of *The Faerie Queene*, considered together, trace a historical pattern that moves from Raleigh's participation in the quelling of the Desmond Rebellion, through which he gained the queen's attention, to their first meeting, his rejection, and later reconciliation with her. The 1590 edition of the poem shows Raleigh engaged in acts of war (III.v.12-26) and love (III.v.27-55). The 1596 sequel continues this allegory, but shifts its interest to the more pressing issue of whether or not Raleigh had broken faith with the queen by violating her trust. In detailing the court history of Elizabeth and Raleigh, Spenser inevitably found himself in a difficult social situation, when the two principal patrons of his poem became engaged in a bitter feud that he recreates—as a “biographical fiction”—in the pages of *The Faerie Queene*.

In the summer of 1589, Spenser had the good fortune to be visited by Raleigh on his Kilcolman estate. Raleigh and Spenser, who may have met in the earl of Leicester's service or on military maneuvers with Lord Grey in

Ireland, were landholding neighbors in Munster County. And in November of the same year, Raleigh, acting as Spenser's patron, accompanied him back to London for the purpose of publishing the first three books of *The Faerie Queene* and enjoying an audience with Queen Elizabeth. Spenser evidently saw the acquisition of Raleigh's patronage as one of the great turning points of his career, since Raleigh's prominent position at court assured him a fitting reception. Spenser's joy upon receiving this golden opportunity for advancement must have been considerable—especially if we agree with Edwin Greenlaw's persuasive theory that the poet had brought exile upon himself in 1579 for attacking Lord Burghley and the duke of Alençon in the caustic farce of *Mother Hubberds Tale*.¹ Spenser's outspoken objection to the French match had placed him at the outskirts of empire, in the “waste” of Ireland, that “savadge soyle, far from Parnasso mount.”² The arrangement of this audience with the queen would be the most important of the “singular favours and sundrie good turnes” for which he vows an “infinite debt” to Raleigh in the dedicatory epistle of *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*.

But even though Raleigh's patronage came as a propitious event, it drew Spenser into a potentially dangerous position at court. He would arrive in London with a patron whose status was tensely ambiguous. In 1589, at the age of thirty-seven, Raleigh saw his role as the queen's favorite unexpectedly upset by the rising star of the twenty-three-year-old earl of Essex. Before 1587, the year in which the earl of Leicester introduced his red-haired stepson to the queen, Raleigh's meteoric rise to power had been unhampered. From the time of his first appearance before the queen in 1582, Raleigh had been showered with honors.³ After 1587, however, he would never again enjoy Elizabeth's undivided attention. Spenser must have been aware of the precariousness of his patron's situation at court, which had deteriorated to the point where Essex could disdainfully reproach Raleigh by reminding the queen of Raleigh's humbler days, of “what he has been and what he was.”⁴ Indeed, the arrogant, erratic Essex even had the audacity to “disdain his competition of love” and ferociously taunted Raleigh by asking Elizabeth, “What comfort can I have to give myself over to a mistress that [is] in awe of such a man?”⁵

We do not know if Spenser was aware that Essex had challenged Raleigh to a duel, prevented only by the intervention of the Privy Council.⁶ Nor can we be sure whether he heard gossip that his patron's excursion to Munster was a concession to Lord Essex, who, in Sir Francis Allen's words, “hath chased Mr. Raleigh from the court, and hath confined him in Ireland.”⁷ We do know, however, that as early as 1589 Spenser had heard poetry by Raleigh complaining of his mistreatment at court, since he writes in *Colin Clout* that he and Raleigh had recited verses to each other, and that Raleigh's

song was all a lamentable lay,
Of great unkindnesse, and of usage hard,
Of Cynthia the Ladie of the sea,
Which from her presence faultlesse him debared.

(164-67)

One of the extraordinary features of Spenser's comment on Raleigh's poetry is the fact that he wrote it in the crossrimed quatrains that his patron often employed. Spenser also picked up another characteristic element in Raleigh's poetry—the “undersong” or refrain. Spenser states that while the queen's besieged favorite recited his verse,

He cryed out, to make his undersong
Ah my loves queene, and goddesse of my life,
Who shall me pittie, when thou doest me wrong?

(169-71)

After suffering his great disgrace of 1592, in “The 11th: and last book of the Ocean to Scinthia,” Raleigh repeats the undersong—“Of all which past the sorrow only staves”—from his complaint “A Farewell to the

Court,” and notes that the refrain was written in his previous period of mixed fortune:

Of all which past the sorrow only stayes.

So wrate I once, and my mishapp fortolde,
My minde still feelinge sorrowfull success
Yeuen as before a storme the marbell colde
Douth by moyste teares tempestious tymes express.

So fealt my heavy minde my harmes att hande
Which my vayne thought in vayne sought to recure;
At midel day my soonn seemde under land
When any littel cloude did it obscure. (8)

In this explicitly autobiographical passage we hear of two periods of crisis in Raleigh's service to the queen. Plunged into a far greater disgrace, buffeted by the “storme” that sweeps through *The Ocean's Love to Cynthia*, he remembers the oxymoronic season of “sorrowfull success.” This was the period before 1592—while the marble still gently wept—which probably occasioned the composition of a short complaint that begins: “Fortune hath taken the away my love / my lives soule and my soules heaven above / fortune hath taken the away my princes.” Recent scholarship has uncovered the fact that the queen wrote a reply to this poem which encourages Raleigh to “Revive againe & live without all drede, / the lesse afraid the better thou shalt spede.”⁹ But what modern scholarship has uncovered Spenser must have known, for in *Colin Clout* he has the Irish shepherd Marin attest to the mollifying effect that Raleigh's complaints had upon the queen:

Right well he sure did plaine:
That could great Cynthiaes sore displeasure breake:
And move to take him to her grace againe.

(*CCCHA* 173-75)

Before Spenser arrived in London at the end of 1589, he seems to have been vividly aware of his patron's difficulties at court. He had heard the “lamentable lay” of his fellow courtier-poet, whom he names “the sommers Nightingale” in his dedicatory sonnet to Raleigh in the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene*, recalling the mournful strains of his Philomela-like poetry from the summer of their friendship.

Spenser embedded Raleigh's complaint in the Book of Chastity. But he prefaces his depiction of the grieving Timias with an example of Raleigh's martial prowess, in a portion of the poem that has escaped detailed analysis by critics. At the beginning of the Book of Chastity, Arthur, his squire Timias, Guyon, and Britomart are outraged at the sight of “A goodly Ladie” (III.i.15), fiercely pursued by “a griesly Foster ... Breathing out beastly lust her to defile” (III.i.17). Arthur and Guyon instantly race after the frightened Florimel, while Timias spurs onward to punish her beastly assailant. Timias reappears in the fifth canto, where he continues to follow him, “To bene avenged of the shame, he did / To that faire Damzell” (III.v.13). But the villain soon outdistances him, “through swiftnesse of his speedy beast, / Or knowledge of those woods, where he did dwell” (III.v.14), and enlists the aid of his two brothers. Armed with “sad instruments / Of spoyle and murder,” vowing that “never he alive, / Out of that forest should escape their might” (III.v.16), they wait in ambush for Timias, in “a covert glade, / Foreby a narrow foord” (III.v.17). Once he comes into sight, they spring from cover and launch an attack, during which the brothers are swiftly dispatched by Arthur's valiant squire.

This brief martial episode, which precedes Timias's initial encounter with Belphoebe, seems at first to be little more than one of the hundreds of anonymous battles in *The Faerie Queene*. Upon closer examination, however, it turns out to be a glorified account of the part Raleigh played in suppressing the Desmond Rebellion, which ripped through Munster County, Ireland, from 1579 to 1583.¹⁰ The allegory conflates two

distinct (but related) historical events: the ambush Raleigh weathered on the road from Youghall to Cork in February 1581 and the service he rendered in the execution of the revolt's instigators: the earl of Desmond and his brothers John and James.

Spenser is quite specific about the place where the “fosters” [foresters] lie in ambush for Timias. He writes that within the forest they inhabit

there was a covert glade,
Foreby a narrow foord, to them well knowne,
Through which it was uneath for wight to wade;
And now by fortune it was overflowne:
By that same way they knew that Squire unknowne
Mote algates passe; for thy themselves they set
There in await, with thicke woods overgrowne,
And all the while their malice they did whet
With cruell threats, his passage through the ford to let.

(III.v.17)

This incident at the ford transformed Raleigh into an English hero, who was first recorded as such in the 1586 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*. There, in John Hooker's addition to the *Chronicles of Ireland*, the historian describes the outstanding valor that Raleigh exhibited when, as a captain delivering dispatches, he was suddenly attacked by a band of Irish rebels. Hooker relates:

This capteine making his returne from Dubline, & the same well knowne unto the seneschall of Imokellie, through whose countrie he was to passe, laie in ambush for him to have intrapped him between Youghall and Corke, lieing at a foord, which the said capteine must passe over. ... The capteine little mistrusting anie such matter, had in his companie onelie two horssemen and foure shot on horssebacke, which was too small a force in so doubtfull and dangerous times.¹¹

Hooker then proceeds to describe how Raleigh, riding slightly ahead of his troop, singlehandedly routs the entire gang of rebels led by the seneschal of Imokelly (Eustace Fitz Edmond) and saves the life of his fellow Devonshireman, Henry Moile. In a paragraph that must have particularly pleased Raleigh, we read:

The Captaine being come toward the foord, the seneschall had espied him alone, his companie being scattered behind, and verie fiercelie pursued him, and crossed him as he was to ride over the water, but yet he recovered the foord and was passed over. ... The captaine being thus over the water, Henry Moile, riding alone about a bowes shoot before the rest of the companie, when he was in the midel of the foord, his horsse foundered and cast him downe; and being afraid that the seneschals men would have folowed him and have killed him, cried out to the captaine to come and save his life; who not respecting the danger he himselfe was in, came unto him, and recovered both him and his horsse.

Raleigh's courage so impresses his adversaries that they soon abandon their siege and slink back into the woods whence they came:

The capteine nevertheless staid still, and did abide for the coming of the residue of his companie ... sat upon his horsse in the meane while, having his staffe in one hand, and his pistoll charged in the other hand. The seneschall, who had so fiercelie folowed him upon spur, when he saw him to stand and tarrie as it were for his coming, notwithstanding he was counted a man (as he was indeed) of great service, and having also a new supplie of twelve

horsesmen and sundrie shot come unto him; yet neither he nor anie one of them, being twentie to one, durst to give the onset upon him, but onelie railed and used hard speeches unto him, untill his men behind him had recovered and were come unto him, and then without anie further harme departed.¹²

In his superb history of English colonialism in sixteenth-century Ireland, *The Twilight Lords*, Richard Berleth writes that through this act of bravery, Raleigh became “the talk of the army” early in 1581. “This gallant action was to shape his future,” Berleth notes. Because of it “Elizabeth would hear of his heroism from Burghley.”¹³ Less than three years after Holinshed’s *Chronicles* made the occurrence general knowledge, Spenser could count on the fact that his readers would have little trouble in pinpointing the actual historical event he was alluding to, when he sends Timias headlong into the trap set by the “fosters.” The incident at the ford would immediately come to mind, when they read how

The gentle Squire came ryding that same way,
Unweeting of their wile and treason bad,
And through the ford to passen did assay;
But that fierce foster, which late fled away,
Stoutly forth stepping on the further shore,
Him boldly bad his passage there to stay,
Till he had made amends, and full restore

For all the damage, which he had him doen afore.

(III.v.18)

Spenser highlights Raleigh’s courage at the ford, however, by fusing the incident with the execution of the principal leaders of that “treason bad,” those “three / Ungratious children of one graceless sire” (III.v.15): the Desmonds.

Timias’s destruction of the “fosters” is narrated with unusually acerbic wit. After the squire painfully fights his way to the opposite bank, he spears “the third brother” through “both his sides” (III.v.21). As this “foster” dies, Spenser writes:

He tombling downe, with gnashing teeth did bite
The bitter earth, and bad to let him in
Into the balefull house of endlesse night,
Where wicked ghosts do waile their former sin.

(III.v.22)

The next brother to feel Timias’s wrath, the one who attempted to assault Florimel, is struck on the skull “so rudely ... That to the chin he cleft his head in twaine” (III.v.23). But the full thrust of Spenser’s black humor surfaces in the stanza illustrating the last brother’s brutal death. The remaining “foster” tries to escape the vengeful Timias, after his two siblings have been butchered:

With that he would have fled into the wood;
But Timias him lightly overhent,
Right as he entring was into the flood,
And strooke at him with force so violent,
That headlesse him into the foord he sent:
The carkas with the streame was carried downe,
But th’ head fell backward on the Continent.
So mischief fel upon the meaners crowne;
They three be dead with shame, the Squire lives with renowne.

(III.v.25)

When Spenser states that the last brother's head fell “backward on the Continent,” causing “mischief” to fall “upon the meaners crowne,” he subtly traces the full political thrust of his allegory. Here, Spenser, using remarkable linguistic compression, spices his sardonic commentary with three wry puns on the words: “Continent,” “meaner,” and “crowne.” The capitalized noun “Continent” refers to the land adjoining Spenser's fictional ford, but it also undoubtedly stands for the European mainland, from which Philip II of Spain incited the Irish to rise against British rule. The slain “foster” is the “meaner” or plotter, who unsuccessfully plans Timias's ambush and is also more debased or “meaner” in spirit than his intended victim. He suffers the effects of retributive justice. However, Spenser's allegory looks beyond the Desmonds and, with brilliant wordplay, implicates Philip II in their treachery. Philip II—in Spenser's elaborate system of puns—is the “meaner” or prime instigator behind the Desmond revolt, who is “meaner” in birth and nobility than Elizabeth of England. According to Spenser, the treasonous “mischief” promoted by the king of Spain, which was thwarted by the Desmonds' execution, has redounded upon his tarnished “crowne.” This reading is verified by the facts of a struggle in which both Raleigh and Spenser played active roles.

The ill-fated Desmond Rebellion erupted in 1580, after an army of Spanish and Italian mercenaries, financed by Philip II, had landed in Dingle Bay. The landing signaled a general insurrection against English control of Ireland that constituted the greatest threat to British security before the Armada of 1588. The revolution, led by the Desmonds, was viciously crushed by an English state that feared the expansionist ambitions of Spain, ambitions that would lead to an attempted invasion of the British mainland only eight years later. English power was first released in the wholesale massacre of all mercenaries captured at Smerwick. Approximately 500 soldiers were hacked apart in a single day. As Latin secretary to Lord Grey, who engineered the assault, Spenser probably witnessed the massacre.¹⁴ Raleigh was one of three captains directly responsible for the annihilation of this invading force that hoisted their white flag of surrender in vain.¹⁵ The continued exercise of English power led to the vindictive executions of the three rebel leaders who collaborated with Spain—the Desmonds. Thus James was hunted down in 1580, John in 1582, and Gerald, the earl, in 1583, at which point the conflict was terminated. Raleigh was closely connected with the first two of these executions. After James was captured by the sheriff of Cork, he was imprisoned for several months, and then, as Berleth records, “he was hanged, drawn, and quartered under the supervision of Sir Warham St. Leger and Raleigh.”¹⁶ Raleigh was also present at the garrison in Cork, when Captains Zouch and Dowdall returned with the body of Sir John, who was shot in the neck and bled to death soon after being apprehended.¹⁷

Raleigh's thorough familiarity with the Desmonds' fate is evident in his introduction to *A Report of the Fight about the Iles of the Açores*, published in 1591. There he recalls how “one Morice Fitz John, sonne of old John of Desmond, a notable traitor,” tried to rally English sailors to the cause of Catholic Spain. When John of Desmond's son promises them good fortune under a Spanish flag, Raleigh ironically adds: “If he had withall vaunted of this successe of his owne house, no doubt the argument woulde have moved much, and wrought great effect; which because he for that present forgot, I thought it good to remember in his behalfe.” The “successe” of Morice's father and two uncles was well known to Raleigh, who summarizes the demise of the ancient house of Desmond for the edification of his crew. He had the story by heart and repeats it at length:

For the Earle his cosen being one of the greatest subjects of *Ireland*, having almost whole contries in his possession; so many goodly manners, Castles, and Lordships; the Count Palatine of *Kerry*, five hundred gentlemen of his owne name and familie to follow him, besides others. All which he possessed in peace for three or foure hundred yeares: was in lesse then three yeares after his adhering to the Spaniards and rebellion, beaten from all his holdes, and not so many as ten gentlemen of his name left living, him selfe taken and beheaded by a soldiour of his owne nation, and his land given by a Parliament to her Majestie, and possessed by the English. His other Cosen, *Sir John of Desmond* taken by *M. John Zouch*, and his body hanged over the gates of his native citie to bee devoured by Ravens: the third brother of *Sir James* hanged, drawne, and quartered in the same place.¹⁸

In *The Faerie Queene*, Timias brings the Desmonds to ruin. When the Squire chases the “foster” who menaces Florimel, Spenser may be recalling Gerald Desmond's reputation for lechery, which would then thematically unite the preservation of chastity, the titular virtue of the third book, with the historical allegory of the fifth canto.¹⁹ The depiction of the Desmonds as forest dwellers who wage guerilla warfare against their foes is remarkably accurate. As traitors to the English crown, they die “with shame” in Spenser's narrative, deprived of proper names that would perpetuate their identities. The decapitation of the last brother to feel Timias's power is a vivid emblem of the Desmonds' overthrow that had specific relevance for Elizabeth. When Gerald, the earl, was finally captured, they cut off his head on the spot and forwarded it to the queen. Berleth provocatively observes that, according to legend, “she spent the morning sitting quietly and looking at it, before having it impaled on London Bridge.”²⁰

Both Raleigh and Spenser had reason to rejoice over the Desmonds' cruel fate. Each acquired possession of an Irish estate that had been confiscated by the Crown from Sir John of Desmond. In all, Raleigh received the bulk of his 42,000-acre estate from territory carved out of the rebel's holdings, while Spenser's Kilcolman castle and its surrounding 3,028 acres of ploughland and forest came from the same confiscation.²¹ Spenser must have especially appreciated Raleigh's help in securing an audience with the queen in 1589, because in that year he faced the possibility of losing some or all of the land on which he had just settled. At that time, Lord Roche, Viscount Fermoy, who had joined in the revolt led by the Desmonds but later recanted, was seeking the restoration of his inheritance—title to land in Munster given to English settlers after its seizure by the queen. On October 12, 1589, Lord Roche complained bitterly to the queen and Sir Francis Walsingham that Spenser was depriving him of his rightful property and molesting his servants. In his letter to Walsingham, Roche enclosed a list of specific grievances, which included the allegation that “one Edmund Spenser, clerk of the council in Munster, by color of his office, and by taking their cattle pasturing upon his lordship's own inheritance, and by refusing and beating of his lordship's servants and bailiffs, hath made waste six other ploughlands of his lordship's inheritance to his no small undoing.”²² The prominence of the Desmonds in *The Faerie Queene's* historical allegory can then be attributed to the fact that Spenser had not yet received complete and undisputed title to the Kilcolman estate and was struggling for control of the land on which he had settled. By reminding the queen of the Desmonds' treachery, he implicitly strengthened his own claim. On October 26, 1590, due in part perhaps to the queen's acceptance of the poem, Spenser was granted full title to the Kilcolman estate. When he returned to Ireland several months later, the lease he had obtained from the Crown, symbolizing his victory, displayed the name of the castle's former tenant—Sir John of Desmond.²³

But if the destruction of the “fosters” is meant to demonstrate Timias's power, it is also paradoxically intended to show his complete dependence on the queen. At the moment when he has finally achieved mastery over the “fosters,” Timias is suddenly leveled by a wound he received in combat. With alarming rapidity, he slips into a “deadly swowne,” only to be revived by the virgin huntress Belphoebe, who accidentally discovers his bleeding body. Upon awakening, he utters a short prayer of thanksgiving, in a stanza that expresses immense gratitude for her extraordinary kindness:

Mercy deare Lord (said he) what grace is this,
 That thou hast shewed to me sinfull wight,
 To send thine Angell from her bowre of blis,
 To comfort me in my distressed plight?
 Angell, or Goddesses do I call thee right?
 What service may I do unto thee meete,
 That hast from darknesse me returned to light,
 And with thy heavenly slaves and med'cines sweete,
 Hast drest my sinfull wounds? I kisse thy blessed feete.

(III.v.35)

Timias's prayer humbly acknowledges Belpheobe to be an instrument of grace extended to "sinfull" humanity. He realizes that her "heavenly slaves" have delivered him from death and requests to be of service to her, in recompense for the love she has manifested. Among these "med'cines sweete," Spenser includes "divine Tobacco" (III.v.32)—which Raleigh had introduced to the English nation.²⁴

It is important to remember that Spenser's name for the fictional character representing Elizabeth in his allegory—"Belpheobe"—was coined in response to Raleigh's poetic name for the queen. In his letter to Raleigh, Spenser notes that she is sometimes portrayed under the appellation "*Belpheobe*," which he has fashioned "*according to your owne excellent conceipt of Cynthia, (Phoebe and Cynthia being both names of Diana.)*" Years later, in "The 11th booke of the Ocean," Raleigh would repeat Spenser's variation to recall the period in his life when *The Faerie Queene* entertained Elizabeth with an allegory inspired by his own mythological name for the queen. Remembering an earlier and happier period of his career, Raleigh laments that "Bellphebe's course is now observed no more, / That faire resemblance weareth out of date" (271-72). Spenser created the Timias-Belpheobe allegory during the period of Raleigh's "sorrowfull success," and so his narrative demonstrates the queen's double influence on her "gracious servant" (III.Pr. 4). She cures Timias of a thigh wound received in battle that continues to afflict him. Without intending to cause him pain, stirred with "soft passion" (III.v.30), Belpheobe is true to her name, when her Diana-like visage overpowers Timias, even as she attempts to cure him. While gazing at Belpheobe, Timias is again wounded by an "unwary dart" from her eyes that strikes "his hart." This wounding can be construed as an allegorical distillation of the pain that Raleigh endured in his era of mixed fortune—pain that would appear insignificant in the ensuing years of disgrace.

Soon after the publication of the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene*, Raleigh suffered a major fall from power. In 1592, the Queen discovered that Raleigh, who was then captain of the guard, responsible for her personal welfare, had conceived a child with Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of her maids-in-waiting. The most accurate information we possess on the chronology of events leading to Raleigh's fall is recorded in the diary kept by Arthur Throckmorton, Elizabeth's brother. Arthur confides that he first heard of his sister's secret marriage to Walter Raleigh on November 19, 1591. On March 29, 1592, he reveals, "My sister was delivered of a boy between 2 and 3 in the afternoon." This notation is followed by the words: "I writ to Sir Walter Raleigh."²⁵ The child, named Damerei, was sent to nurse at Enfield, and Lady Raleigh quietly resumed her neglected position as personal attendant to the queen after a long absence. But in less than three months news reached the queen and the Raleighs were promptly incarcerated. Sir Edward Stafford caustically wrote to Anthony Bacon in August of that year: "If you have anything to do with Sir Walter Raleigh, or any love to make to Mistress Throckmorton, at the Tower tomorrow you may speak with them."²⁶ Elizabeth was always angered by the marriage of her favorites. After the earl of Leicester secretly married Lettice Knollys, he was temporarily banished from court, as was the earl of Essex, after he wed Sir Philip Sidney's widow. In Raleigh's case, the queen evidently believed that he had betrayed her trust and had made her demonstration of affection seem ridiculous.²⁷ He had, after all, used his privileged position as her personal servant to seduce one of her handmaids.

Even before Damerei's birth (and short life—he died months later), rumors of Raleigh's secret marriage had reached the son of the queen's closest counselor. When Robert Cecil, Lord Treasurer Burghley's son, wrote to Raleigh concerning the affair, Raleigh adamantly denied everything, evidently terrified that his union would be discovered. In a letter dated March 10—almost five months after Arthur Throckmorton heard of his sister's marriage and just a few days before the birth of her son—Raleigh denied reports of his personal alliance. He responded to Cecil with a bold lie, claiming that news of his marriage was a slander meant to discredit him at court: "I mean not to cume away, as they say I will, for feare of a marriage, and I know not what. If any such thing weare, I would have imparted it unto yourself before any man living, and therefore, I pray believe it not, and I beseich you to surpress, what you can, any such malicious report. For I protest before God, there is none on the face of the yearth, that I would be fastened to."²⁸ Raleigh's letter illustrates the cultivation of the art of deceit. Faced with imminent exposure, he even dares to invoke his Creator's name to bluff his way through a

scandal that was becoming increasingly more volatile. His strategy, at this point, was simply to refute the charge and to attribute it to his enemies' spite. His first impulse was to "give the lie" (in the terms of his famous poem) to all those who were telling the truth, albeit maliciously. The queen, however, was not impressed with these protestations of innocence and imprisoned him and his wife in the Tower at the end of July.

Raleigh's first, temporary reprieve was hastened by a matter of expediency. On September 7, the huge East Indian carrack, *Madre de Dios*, which his ships had captured off the Azores, was brought into Dartmouth harbor. Since Raleigh was the person most familiar with the intricate financial arrangements behind this act of piracy (from which the Crown received a substantial portion), he was set free. Robert Cecil, in whose charge he was placed, sensed his eagerness to atone for his indiscretion and wrote that he found Raleigh "marvelous greedy to do anything to recover the conceit of his brutish offense."²⁹ Although the Raleighs were released in the autumn of that year, the stigma lingered on. Indeed, Raleigh was still brooding on his fall from favor in November 1596; he wrote to Cecil, describing new enterprises he had been devising in the queen's service, troubled that "because of [his] disgrace all men feare to adventure with [him]."³⁰

The difficulty of interpreting Spenser's treatment of Raleigh's public dishonor stems from the fact that Spenser creates an allegorical narrative that can be construed either as a vindication or as a condemnation of his patron's conduct.³¹ The complexity of Spenser's depiction of this crucial event in Raleigh's career can, in part, be attributed to the peculiar situation regarding patronage that Spenser occupied after 1592, when the two major sponsors of his poem were at odds with each other. Equidistant from the moral perspectives of Elizabeth and Raleigh, the historical allegory of the fourth and sixth books of *The Faerie Queene* is a point of convergence for conflicting versions of the same event. Here Spenser's generous moral understanding embraces a comprehensive vision which is, as a result, fundamentally ambiguous. The pivotal moment in Spenser's allegory, in the second installment of *The Faerie Queene*, when he first reflects on the Throckmorton affair, occurs when Belphoebe returns from her execution of Lust only to find Timias comforting Amoret in what she deems to be a highly improper manner.³² Angered by the attention Timias has lavished on Amoret, Belphoebe first thinks of killing him and his "new lovely mate" and then rebukes the squire, before forsaking him. Returning from her conquest:

There she him found by that new lovely mate,
Who lay the whiles in swoune, full sadly set,
From her faire eyes wiping the deawy wet,
Which softly stild, and kissing them atweene,
And handling soft the hurts, which she did get.
For of that Carle she sorely bruz'd had beene,
Als of his own rash hand one wound was to be seene.

Which when she saw, with sodaine glauncing eye,
Her noble heart with sight thereof was fild
With deepe disdaine, and great indignity,
That in her wrath she thought them both have thild,
With that selfe arrow, which the Carle had kild:
Yet held her wrathfull hand from vengeance sore,
But drawing nigh, ere he her well beheld;
Is this the faith, she said, and said no more,
But turnd her face, and fled away for evermore.

(IV.vii.35-36)

The poised tendencies of Spenser's thought, evident in this episode, lead analysis in opposing directions. On the one hand, Timias seems innocent of all wrongdoing, victimized by a jealous Belphoebe, who acts unadvisedly and in wrath. Spenser had previously presented Belphoebe's rescue of the wounded Timias as a paradigm of virtuous action. When Belphoebe aids the unconscious Timias, she administers grace that is

freely bestowed upon victimized humanity. In the third book, the virgin huntress pursues the chase with a company of followers and comes upon the injured squire. In the fourth book, Timias is part of her retinue and repeats her kindness when he cares for Amoret. These acts of mercy are thus analogous in this regard. But, on the other hand, even though there are basic similarities shared by these two actions, significant differences also exist, which question Timias's integrity in manifesting love for Amoret.

It is the voice of the *poet* and not that of a possibly mistaken Belphoebe which informs us of the sudden emotional bond uniting Timias and “his new lovely mate.” The adjective “lovely” is a pun on Amoret's name; the word “new” suggests that Timias has abandoned Belphoebe, his “old” mistress. The term “mate” stresses the special attachment of “that lovely boy” (IV.vii.23) with the “lovely” Amoret, the allegorical figure of desire. Spenser had previously hinted at this union in his quatrain introducing the seventh canto, where he outlines this episode:

Amoret rapt by greedie lust
 Belphoebe saves from dread,
The Squire her loves, and being blam'd
 his dayes in dole doth lead.

The statement that “*The Squire her loves*” is a marvelous example of Spenser's use of ambiguous pronouns. If the antecedent for “her” is “Belphoebe,” then the squire has been unjustly accused of betrayal. But if, instead, it refers to “Amoret,” then Belphoebe's charge is again validated by the narrator. Furthermore, Timias's ministrations to Amoret's wounds is related in a tone that insinuates a sexual dimension, but with immense subtlety. After he wipes “the deawy wet” from “her faire eyes,” he ventures past the bounds of discretion and courtesy by “kissing atween” her eyes and “handling soft” her “hurts.” With these phrases an act of salvation is transformed into an act of foreplay. Belphoebe recognizes this erotic motivation instantly and considers killing both lovers with the same weapon with which she dispatched Lust. Through this impulse we are prompted to identify Timias and Amoret—Raleigh and his wife—with the inordinate desire they were unable to resist.³³

Criticism of Raleigh is also implied in Timias's wounding of Amoret. As the squire comforts his “new lovely mate,” Spenser tells us that “of his own rash hand one wound was to be seene.” This line recalls an event that immediately precedes Belphoebe's destruction of Lust and her rebuke of Timias. As soon as Amoret drifts away from her protector, Britomart, she is captured by “a wilde and salvage man” (IV.vii.5), from whose dungeon she escapes. The savage, described at the beginning of the canto as “greedie lust,” pursues her past Timias, who is now Belphoebe's hunting companion. But Timias, who accosts the villain, is unable to overcome him and, indeed, adds to Amoret's torment; Lust defends himself by using her as a shield, which he repeatedly strikes:

Thereto the villaine used craft in fight;
 For ever when the Squire his javelin shooke,
 He held the Lady forth before him right,
 And with her body, as a buckler, broke
 The puissance of his intended stroke.
 And if it chaunst (as needs it must in fight)
 Whilest he on him was greedy to be wroke,
 That any little blow on her did light,
Then would he laugh aloud, and gather great delight.

(IV.vii.26)

Timias's desire to overcome Lust works a contrary effect, adding to Amoret's ravishment and degradation. The pain she suffers is a consequence of his unintended collaboration with unchecked sexual desire. To make certain that this point does not go unnoticed, Spenser mentions Timias's part in Amoret's misfortune on two

other occasions outside the context of this incident. First, the poet discusses Timias's culpability, as we have seen, when the squire soothes the injured Amoret in IV.vii.35. And he repeats this observation again, when Prince Arthur comes across Amoret in “sad and sorrowful estate,” only to find her still suffering, “Through her late hurts, and through that hapless wound / With which the Squire in her defence her sore astound” (IV.viii.19). Timias does manage to wound Lust, but the poet uses this action to further emphasize Amoret's connection with the vice: “A streame of coleblacke bloud thence gusht amaine / That all her silken garments did with bloud bestaine” (IV.vii.27). Amoret and Lust are pressed together so closely that an assailant cannot attack one without affecting the other. Bathed in Lust's blood, Amoret, like Timias, becomes associated with excessive desire. Only Belpheobe is powerful and pure enough to drive off the villain, who is terrified by the sight of the virgin huntress, “Well knowing her to be his deaths sole instrument” (IV.vii.29). She soon defeats him by shooting an arrow through his “greedy throte” (IV.vii.31), destroying this archetype of consuming passion. After Belpheobe rejects Timias, he wanders wildly through the forest, like the mad Orlando forsaken by Angelica. But he does not blame the virgin huntress for his plight; instead, he rebukes himself for his disgrace, seeking only “on him selfe to wreake his follies owne despight” (IV.vii.39).³⁴

However, a reader sympathetic to Raleigh's plight can readily locate elements in the 1596 edition of the poem that absolve Raleigh of guilt—that prove he is innocent of any transgression—even as Raleigh had protested in his letter to Cecil. One could argue, for instance, that Timias, being Lust's adversary, is thereby aligned with virtue. He attacks Lust for the same reason that he challenges the beastly “foster”: to interrupt an attempted rape and punish the assailant. Spenser even manages to generate pity for Timias by making him Lust's victim rather than his ally. This qualification certainly mitigates the severity of the fourth book's allegory. As the tale continues toward its conclusion, the poet becomes much more emphatic in supporting Raleigh and emphasizing the case against the queen. When they meet again, in the next canto, he accuses her of having misjudged him. She at first does not recognize her former companion in his present state of neglect and asks him to explain the reason for his agonizing self-abuse. Timias then replies with a scathing rebuke:

Ne any but your selfe, O dearest dred,
 Hath done this wrong, to wreake on worthlesse wight
 Your high displeasure, through misdeeming bred:
 That when your pleasure is to deeme aright,
 Ye may redresse, and me restore to light.

After Timias blames her for misunderstanding his actions, Belpheobe has a sudden change of heart, based on his complaint:

 Which sory words her mightie hart did mate
 With mild regard, to see his ruefull plight,
 That her inburning wrath she gan abate,
 And him receiv'd againe to former favours state.

(IV.viii.17)

Timias's innocence is predicated on Belpheobe's guilt. He charges her with having caused his distress and the narrator supplies the reason for her mistake—“inburning wrath.” According to this pattern of vindication, a strong passion colored her judgment when she rejected Timias and thought of killing the pair “in her wrath.” She is temporarily blinded with rage and only later comes to recognize her error. The historical allegory, viewed from this perspective, proves that “the displeasure of the mighty is / Then [than] death it selfe more dread and desperate” (IV.viii.1). The shifting attitudes of monarchs cause them to abuse their subjects, when this “displeasure” is melded to a failure to “deeme aright.”

Commenting on Timias's reproach, Allan Gilbert asserts that the squire's alleged faithlessness is here shown to be an inaccurate perception. “This breach is not real,” he argues, “for as Timias explains, Belpheobe's

inference is incorrect.”³⁵ But Gilbert simply overlooks the extensive pattern of incrimination that I have previously suggested, against which we are meant to balance Timias's protestations of innocence. He forgets that Timias's “rash hand” has played a part in his catastrophe. Belpheobe's bitter taunt—“Is this the faith?”—and the squire's later retort—that her “misdeeming” has produced “this wrong” she has perpetrated—compel us to consider the Throckmorton affair from the divergent perspectives of Spenser's quarreling patrons. Spenser incorporates *both* perspectives in his narrative, and thus remained faithful to both Raleigh and Elizabeth in his historical allegory.

The incident that brings Belpheobe and Timias together includes yet another reconstruction of a historical event. She is drawn to Timias through the mediation of a turtle dove that steals a jewel from the squire with which to lure her to his side. The jewel is described as “a Ruby of right perfect hew, / Shap'd like a heart, yet bleeding of the wound, / And with a litle golden chaine about it bound” (IV.viii.6). In January 1595, Arthur Throckmorton wrote to Robert Cecil asking to be numbered among the masquers celebrating the wedding of Elizabeth Vere to the earl of Derby. Sir John Davies had composed the “Epithalamion of the Nine Muses” to commemorate the event, and Throckmorton hoped that during this masque he might be allowed to prostrate himself before the queen and then arise to give her “a ring made for a wedding ring set round with diamonds, and with a ruby like a heart placed in a coronet, with the inscription *Elizabetha potest*.”³⁶ It is likely that Spenser introduces the heart-shaped ruby into his narrative as a historical detail symbolizing Raleigh's hopes for reconciliation with his sovereign. Arthur Throckmorton construed his offering as an attempt to “modify the easy softened mind of her Majesty as both I and mine may find mercy.” He certainly included the fate of his sister and his brother-in-law in this wish for benevolent treatment. The reconciliation of Timias and Belpheobe, however, does not distribute blame equally between Raleigh and Elizabeth. Instead, it contradicts the imputation of guilt leveled against Raleigh and criticizes the queen for her rashness.

In the final book of *The Faerie Queene*, the Legend of Courtesy, Raleigh and his wife appear for the last time. Spenser tactfully omits any mention of their misfortune in the Book of Justice, where his advocacy of severe justice culminates with the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, under the guise of Duessa. Walter still retains his identity as Timias, but his companion is now called “Serena,” which was Raleigh's poetic name for his wife.³⁷ The three Desmond brothers are here replaced by the three masters of the Blatant Beast: Despetto, Decetto, and Defetto, who ambush Timias in “a woody glade” and “gan him to invade” (VI.v.14). The vindication of Raleigh in the sixth book utilizes the method of circular composition in *The Faerie Queene*, through which narrative patterns are made to echo, by analogy, previous events in the poem. A sense of Raleigh's virtue is affirmed by this recreation of the incident at the ford in which he overcame treason and lust. The 1590 and 1596 editions of *The Faerie Queene* are symmetrically balanced; in the fifth canto of the last book of each installment, Timias triumphs over ignominious foes. As masters of the Blatant Beast, Raleigh's new adversaries are manipulators of slander. Despite (“Despetto”) defines the attitude of Timias's rivals, while deceit (“Decetto”) signifies the method they employ to ensnare him “in treasons subtill traine” (VI.v.14). Their plan to use the Blatant Beast “To worke his utter shame, and thoroughly him confound” (VI.v.14) is a result of their own defective natures—the “Defetto” that represents the state of inadequacy which engenders evil. This link between the traitors of the third book and the slanderers of the sixth parallels the treason of the Desmonds with the malice of Raleigh's unnamed rivals at court.

But Timias is by no means completely absolved of error in the narrative of the sixth book. After he and Serena are bitten by the Blatant Beast and seek to be cured by a “carefull Hermite” (VI.vi.2), we are paradoxically told that the wounds they have received were internally induced. The hermit enjoins the couple to be vigilant in resisting “fraile affection”—the source of their distress:

First learne your outward sences to refraine
From things, that stirre up fraile affection;
Your eies, your eares, your tongue, your talk restraine
From that they most affect, and in due termes containe.

For from those outward sences ill affected,
 The seede of all this evill first doth spring,
 Which at the first before it had infected,
 Mote easie be supprest with little thing:
 But being growen strong, it forth doth bring
 Sorrow, and anguish, and impatient paine
 In th' inner parts, and lastly scattering
 Contagious poyson close through every vaine,
 It never rests, till it have wrought his finall bane.

(VI.vi.7-8)

Through the hermit, Spenser acknowledges that the Raleghs' indulgence in “this evill” has brought about their ruin. In the hermit's homily, we are again confronted with the issue of Timias's guilt, as the poem reinforces Belphoebe's suspicion that he has been unfaithful. The hermit's comforting of Timias and Serena provides the third and final example of this motif of compassion in Spenser's historical allegory. Having been cured of the Blatant Beast's venomous bite, the characters of this fiction again lose their identities as analogues to contemporary political figures.

The historical allegory of Timias and Belphoebe is both a chronicle of court events and a vital part of their development. Spenser filled a dual role as both spectator to and actor in the incidents he commemorates. As a vehicle for social aspiration, the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene* unfolds an allegory of power wherein Raleigh defeats the queen's Irish opponents and then submits himself, in turn, to her authority. As a historical commentary, it continues the depiction of Raleigh's early career beyond the limit of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, in a bipartisan narrative that dramatizes Raleigh's sudden rise and subsequent misfortune. Unlike Dante in exile or Milton in retirement, Spenser composed his epic during a period of political involvement. Perhaps the most poignant aspect of his “biographical fiction” resides in the courage that he demonstrates in sympathetically responding to Raleigh's fate even during the years of his disgrace. In the fourth and sixth books, Spenser at times concedes that Raleigh was guilty of betraying his sovereign's trust. The case against him was strong and the evidence remains irrefutable. In seducing Elizabeth Throckmorton, Raleigh's unchecked desire had compelled him to violate what was regarded as a sacred confidence. But Spenser also realizes that this “crime” was clearly not commensurate with the “inburning wrath” that it engendered, or the imprisonment and calumny that were its consequences. Raleigh had, after all, remedied his lapse of judgment by marrying his “Serena.” Continued vindictiveness toward him could surely be termed a vice. These competing sympathies moved Spenser to create a complex meditation that combines the conflicting interpretations of his embittered patrons.

While outlining his “*whole intention in the course of this worke*” in the letter to Raleigh appended to the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser, referring to himself as “a Poet historical,” notes that he has chosen to write an Arthurian legend—set far back in the past—because it is “*furthest from the daunger of envy, and suspition of present time.*” Having decided to incorporate analogues to the activities of Elizabeth and Raleigh in his poem, he was nevertheless fully aware of the fact that he was again exposing himself to the Blatant Beast's “venomous despite,” just as he had in 1579, the year of his self-exile. It was then that he first suffered for his “former writs, all were they clearest / From blamefull blot” (VI.xii.41), which he recalls in the poem's final stanza. In mirroring contemporary court politics, however, Spenser decided to risk the bite of slander to repay a debt of gratitude and to reunite Raleigh and the queen.

Notes

1. See Edwin Greenlaw, “Spenser and the Earl of Leicester,” *PMLA* 25 (1910), 535-61; Greenlaw maintains that Spenser embarrassed Leicester, in whose service he was temporarily employed in 1579, by writing *Mother Hubberds Tale*, and was quickly shipped off to the wilds of Ireland.

2. From the dedicatory sonnet in *The Faerie Queene* addressed to Lord Grey, line 12. All quotations are taken from *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw et al., 11 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1932-57).
3. See Kathrine Koller, "Spenser and Raleigh," *ELH* 1 (1934), 39, for a list of the gifts and grants heaped upon Raleigh before 1587.
4. Quoted in Walter Oakeshott, *The Queen and the Poet* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), p. 28.
5. *Ibid.*
6. From an account of the Pomeranian traveler Leopold von Wedel, in W. B. Rye, *England as Seen by Foreigners* (London, 1865; rpt. New York: B. Bloom, 1967), p. 113.
7. Oakeshott, *The Queen and the Poet*, p. 36.
8. Sir Walter Raleigh, "The 11th: and last book of the Ocean to Scinthia," 123-31. All quotations from Raleigh's poetry are taken from *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh*, ed. Agnes Latham (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1951), unless otherwise cited.
9. Oakeshott includes late seventeenth-century versions of these verses in *The Queen and the Poet*, pp. 217-19, from MS 3602 of the Phillips collection. Sixteenth-century copies of both poems have subsequently been located: Raleigh's in Archbishop Marsh Library (MS 2.3.5.21. f. 30^v); and the queen's in the Petyt collection of the Inner Temple Library (MS Petyt 538, vol. 10).
10. This correspondence is cited by R. W. Church, *Spenser* (London: Macmillan, 1906), pp. 88-90. Church writes that "the *Faerie Queene* might also be called the Epic of the English wars in Ireland under Elizabeth" (p. 89). See also Philo Buck, "On the Political Allegory of *The Faerie Queene*," *Nebraska University Studies* 11 (1911), 184-85; and Koller, "Spenser and Raleigh," p. 46.
11. John Hooker, *The Supplie of the Irish Chronicles* (London, 1586), p. 173.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Richard Berleth, *The Twilight Lords* (New York: Knopf, 1978), p. 180.
14. In August 1580, Spenser was appointed to be Lord Grey's private secretary. He records the Smerwick massacre in his *View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. W. L. Renwick (London: Partridge, 1934), pp. 139-40.
15. Hooker, *Irish Chronicles*, p. 171; Berleth, *The Twilight Lords*, pp. 167 ff.
16. Berleth, *The Twilight Lords*, p. 147.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-90; Hooker, *Irish Chronicles*, p. 175.
18. Sir Walter Raleigh, *A Report of the Truth of the fight about the Iles of Açores* (London, 1591), C4^r-C4^v.
19. Hooker, *Irish Chronicles*, p. 144, writes in a marginal note of how Gerald "putteth away his wife and married another mans wife." However, Berleth, *The Twilight Lords*, pp. 80-82, tempers this opinion of the earl's imputed vice.
20. Berleth, *The Twilight Lords*, p. 204.
21. See Fredric Carpenter, *A Reference Guide to Edmund Spenser* (New York: Kraus, 1969), p. 32, for grant 5473 to Spenser.
22. Quoted from Alexander Judson, *The Life of Edmund Spenser*, Var. 11.23.
23. It seems likely that Spenser read either part or all of the Timias-Belphoebe episode, when he entertained the queen, with selections from *The Faerie Queene*, "at timely houres" (CCCHA 362). One could hardly imagine a more apposite excerpt.
24. Thomas Roche, ed., *The Faerie Queene* (Bungay, Suffolk: Penguin, 1978) comments of III.v.32 that "this is the first reference to tobacco in English literature" (p. 1151).
25. Arthur's diary notations can be found in A. L. Rowse, *Sir Walter Raleigh, His Family and Private Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 160; Raleigh's child is mentioned on pp. 159-60.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
27. Fred Sorenson, "Sir Walter Raleigh's Marriage," *SP* 33 (1936), 182-202.
28. Edward Edwards, *Life of Raleigh* (London: Macmillan, 1868), vol. 2, p. 46.
29. Rowse, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, p. 167.
30. Oakeshott, *The Queen and the Poet*, p. 50.

31. Thomas Roche, *The Kindly Flame* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University 1964), pp. 142-49, offers a different reading of this episode, which defines it as an “allegory of honor” wherein Timias is first accepted and then wrongfully rejected by Belphoebe, who temporarily misprizes his virtue. I state that the poem exhibits two opposing strands of argumentation: one that shows Timias being victimized by Belphoebe's error and another, no less significant, that hints at Timias's misconduct, thereby justifying Belphoebe's wrath.
32. This generally accepted allusion can be found in Allan Gilbert, “Belphoebe's Mischeance of Timias,” *PMLA* 62 (1947), 627-28; and E. M. English, “Spenser's Accommodation of Allegory to History in the Story of Timias and Belphoebe,” *JEGP* 59 (1960), 418 ff.
33. I agree with William Oram, whose essay in this volume argues that the poet's “fictional distortion” of history “seizes on the problematic.” Yet I fear that his final assessment of Amoret as being “essentially blameless”—“only unlucky”—is not successfully reconciled with Oram's previous remark that “the text suggests that her seizure by Lust is not simply bad luck.” Since Oram's analysis is attuned to the subtle suggestion at IV.vii.4 that Amoret contributes to her own ravishment, that she is not merely the victim of bad luck, his closing remark unduly simplifies Spenser's complex treatment of Amoret, in distinguishing her from Aemylia. Using Oram's terminology, we might maintain that the character of Amoret has been “fragmented” and “reshaped ... as a question.”
34. Arthur Gorges identifies Raleigh with the mad Orlando in a letter to Cecil, dated 9 August 1592 (Oakeshott, *The Queen and the Poet*, p. 46). During this same period, Raleigh also writes to Cecil, admitting his guilt and lamenting that “once amiss hath bereaved me of all” (*ibid.*, p. 47).
35. Gilbert, “Belphoebe's Mischeance,” p. 634.
36. The foregoing commentary is indebted to J. R. Brink, “The Masque of the Nine Muses: Sir John Davies's Unpublished ‘Epithalamion’ and the ‘Belphoebe-Ruby’ Episode in *The Faerie Queene*,” *RES* 23 (1972), 445-47.
37. See J. H. Adamson and H. F. Folland, *The Shepherd of the Ocean: An Account of Sir Walter Raleigh and His Times* (Boston: Gambit, 1969), pp. 200-06; Oakeshott, *The Queen and the Poet*, p. 46; and Agnes Latham, ed., *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 118-19, in her gloss on “Now Serena bee not coy.”

Criticism: Pamela Joseph Benson (essay date 1985)

SOURCE: Benson, Pamela Joseph. “Rule, Virginia: Protestant Theories of Female Regiment in *The Faerie Queene*.” *English Literary Renaissance* 15, no. 3 (autumn 1985): 277-92.

[In the following essay, Benson discusses Spenser's depiction of female monarchy in Books III and V of *The Faerie Queene* noting what it reflects about Spenser's own attitude toward Elizabeth I.]

Elizabeth I's sex posed a problem for Edmund Spenser in his attempt to praise her in *The Faerie Queene*. Her unmarried state and chastity offered opportunities for enthusiastic praise of her personal virtue, but her sex itself was an obstacle to his celebration of her public character as a ruler because the natural right of women to rule was not universally accepted in Elizabethan England. Spenser's two major treatments of this controversial issue seem to contradict each other. Book III is dedicated to epic praise of the Queen's ancestry and a pair of encomia of her celebrate great women of the past (ii.1-3, iv.1-3). In Book V Britomart deposes the Amazon queen Radigund and installs a male ruler. These passages generally are not examined together because of the tendency of critics to work with single books or with either the first three or the second three books. Those who have worked on Book III see it as pro-feminist, those who have discussed Book V have seen it as extremely conservative. The distance between the passages is not as great as it seems, however: Book III is more moderate than Book V, but not incompatible with it at all.

The handling of the issue of rule by women in Books III and V can only be understood accurately when set in the context of the contemporary debate about the legitimacy of rule by women, the debate from which Spenser drew his rhetoric. Two views of the subject of rule by women predominated in Spenser's day, each one allied with a major political-religious faction. The Anglicans asserted the near equality of the sexes and the propriety of rule by women; the Calvinists argued that women as a group were unsuited to rule and that only women specially raised by God to office ought to rule. The major difference between these opinions lies in their assessment of the moral and intellectual abilities of the *ordinary* woman. Both believed that her strengths and primary responsibilities lay in domestic economy and piety, but the Anglicans considered her able to equal men's intellectual and moral accomplishments and worthy of the opportunity to do so, whereas the Genevans considered her an inferior creature whose abilities and duties could be clearly distinguished from man's. In vying for Elizabeth's favor these groups used the evidence of history to prove opposite conclusions about women's abilities and about Elizabeth's relationship to other women.

The Anglican party based its arguments on and drew its examples from the work of Italian and English humanist educators and social thinkers—Bruni, Castiglione, More, and Elyot, among others.¹ These writers argued that women were intellectually, morally, and physically equal to men and ought to be given many if not all the opportunities open to men. The Anglicans' main premise was that rule by women does not go against nature or God. John Aylmer, their first spokesman on the subject, set out the grounds of their argument in his response to John Knox's famous condemnation of rule by any and all women, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of Women*. “We see by many examples that by the wholle consent of nations, by the ordinaunce of God and order of lawe, wemen have reigned and those not a fewe, and as it was thoughte not againste nature: therefore it canne not bee saide, that by a generale disposition of nature, it hath bene, and is denyed them to rule.”²

Although the most conservative proponents of the Anglican theory accepted the propriety of women's secondary social role as a general rule, all Anglicans argue, as George Whetstone does in his *English Myrror*, that this role is imposed by tradition not nature and that “there have been women, that in all manner of artes, qualities, and vertues which have equalled the perfitest of men.”³ The naturalness of the accomplishments of these women is essential to the Anglican theory. Aylmer and his successors prove their premise with analysis of scripture, law, and history and rely heavily on examples of women—Semiramis, Thomiris, Artemisia, Joanna of Naples, to name but a few—whose successful reigns demonstrate rule by women to be in harmony with nature, law, and God's will. They present Elizabeth as a kind of woman that has always existed in substantial numbers, and they assume that the best way to prove her right to rule is by proving that women in general have the right to rule.

The most influential opponent of both the humanist and the Anglican view of rule by women was Calvin himself. He perceived female government as a disruption of the order of nature visited on man by God as a reprimand. In a letter to Cecil defending his attitude toward rule by women he maintained

that as it was a deviation from the original and proper order of nature, it was to be ranked, no less than slavery, among the punishments consequent upon the fall of man; but that there were occasionally women so endowed, that the singular good qualities which shone forth in them, made it evident that they were raised up by divine authority; either that God designed by such examples to condemn the inactivity of men, or for the better setting forth his own glory.⁴

The main effect of this statement is to isolate the approved woman ruler from other women. It prevents the quality of her reign from proving that women in general are able to govern. For good or ill, a queen is a divinely imposed exception to the general rule of inferior status for women. According to Calvin, women hold power by God's mandate alone and not by virtue of their excellence. To be ruled by a woman is an exceptional condition to be tolerated—the individual queen may even be celebrated, as was Deborah—but the situation is not desirable. As one might imagine, Calvin's very limited approval of rule by women was not well received

by Elizabeth, but it did indicate to his followers a way of praising the Queen and remaining true to his doctrine.

The story of Radigund in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* is clearly Calvinistic in orientation.⁵ Britomart deposes the Amazon ruler and installs a male governor over the women. She “them restoring / To mens subjection, did true Iustice deale.”⁶ Because Radigund had conquered Arthegal, the hero of the book, and required him to dress in women's clothes and do women's work, Britomart's action frees him from his humiliation and is welcomed by the reader. In its immediate dramatic context her action is clearly desirable, but the negative representation of the Amazon queen and the disestablishment of female rule by a woman are more than narrative amusements. The episode is a demonstration of the importance of the traditional social hierarchy that forbids rule by women. So strong is the sense of revulsion for female rule in this episode that Spenser's concession to Elizabeth's right to rule seems almost an afterthought:

Such is the crueltie of womenkynd,
When they haue shaken off the shamefast band,
With which wise Nature did them strongly bynd,
T'obay the heasts of mans well ruling hand,
That then all rule and reason they withstand,
To purchase a licentious libertie.
But vertuous women wisely vnderstand,
That they were borne to base humilitie,
Vnlesse the heauens them lift to lawfull soueraintie.

(V.v.25)

This emphasis on the need for divine authority for female rule is Calvinist. The relationship of the entire episode and this stanza in particular to Calvin's doctrine was expertly explicated by James Phillips in his set of articles on Spenser's attitude toward female rulers. Phillips concludes,

Because she demonstrates her ability to administer justice by forcing women into the “base humilitie” to which they were born under “mans well ruling hand,” Britomart clearly identifies herself as one of those exceptional women, instruments of divine justice, whom the heavens “lift to lawfull soueraintie.” The episode of Radigund and Britomart, therefore, not only exemplifies Spenser's own expressed theory of gynecocracy, but also reaffirms our conviction that his position is precisely that of the moderate Calvinists. For it is with reference to the latter that we can most consistently explain his selection of a woman to overthrow the unnatural institution of female government.⁷

Britomart uses her sovereignty to divest herself of power; her action shows that proven excellence in women—Radigund's and even her own—does not justify reversing the natural hierarchy of the sexes. The basic principle enunciated, Spenser does not hesitate to praise extraordinary women. Mercilla and Britomart, both tributes to Elizabeth, are celebrated extensively for their accomplishments, justice, and regal conduct. Indeed, if Spenser differs from Calvin, it is in his active appreciation of the abilities of women, as long as their talents do not lead them to aspire to a place above their proper one in the social hierarchy.

Generous as it is, praise of women in Book V is always overshadowed by the severity of the Radigund episode. Book III is very different in tone. It has the epic purpose of celebrating the poet's sovereign's lineage and the role Britomart plays in founding the line, and as nothing in the book is as straightforwardly Calvinist as the Radigund section was, it is tempting to see it as fundamentally different from Book V and to attribute the difference to a darkening of Spenser's humor in his later years. In the case of the topic of rule by women, however, this is not true. The Calvinist tendencies are present in Book III, but their expression is more guarded. In Book V Spenser does not seem afraid to show his hand and declare Calvin's essential principle,

that women may rule only when raised to their position by God; in Book III he veils this assertion and only careful analysis of his argument and comparison of it with Anglican models can reveal the ultimate consonance of his position with the Calvinist one.

Spenser's study of Elizabeth's ancestry presented in Merlin's prophecy at first seems completely incompatible with Calvin's theory. It establishes her natural as well as her divine right to the throne and thus fits with Anglican proofs of the legitimacy of female rule. This topos, however, is presented in the most conservative form possible. As Kathleen Williams demonstrates, Merlin's prophecy "stresses the workings of the divine will which deals with the Britons as did Jehovah with the Hebrews, supporting, checking, punishing to bring about its own purposes. For any one of the human links in the chain of divine causation these purposes could not have been easy to see. God's ways are slow. But overall direction is visible, as much in human error as in human goodness."⁸ What appears random to man is actually planned, and what seems an Anglican argument is consonant with Calvin's conclusions.

Like the celebration of Elizabeth's lineage, the encomia that link her to great women of the past in cantos ii and iv appear more liberal and Anglican than they are. Both passages are reworkings of an encomium of modern women in the first three stanzas of the twentieth canto of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and most critics who discuss Spenser's approach to the topic of women assume that Spenser, like Ariosto, was a defender of all women. Robert Durling, in his astute but brief comparison of the passages with their originals in the *Furioso*, takes it for granted that they are defenses of "the glory of women."⁹ Harry Berger Jr. goes much further; he offers the passages as proof that Spenser is attempting to "redress the balance in a culture whose images of women and love, whose institutions affecting women and love were products of male imagination."¹⁰ These interpretations portray Spenser as assuming an extreme pro-feminist stance that is at variance with Book V, of course, but also with his handling of Merlin's prophecy and with internal evidence in the encomia themselves. These passages are extremely complex examples of Spenser's ability to make other people's material his own. In this case he creates an unconventional synthesis of Ariosto, Anglican defenses of woman rule, and Calvin in keeping with his own sense of order, history, and woman's place.

The encomium of Elizabeth in canto ii begins on what seems to be a pro-feminist note; the poet complains that male historians do not give women their proper share of praise.

Here haue I cause, in men iust blame to find,
That in their proper prayse too partiall bee,
And not indifferent to woman kind,
To whom no share in armes and cheualrie
They do impart, ne maken memorie
Of their braue gestes and prowesse martiall;
Scarse do they spare to one or two or three,
Rowme in their writs; yet the same writing small
Does all their deeds deface, and dims their glories all.

(III.ii.1)

This stanza is entirely consonant with Anglican and humanist accounts of women's abilities, although in its exclusive attention to military prowess it differs from the broad claims for equality in all fields made by pro-feminist writers. The stanza removes one barrier to female rule: it is not against nature for women to bear arms. The assertion that women's deeds have been deliberately ignored and obscured by men is also a common humanist and Anglican explanation for the fact that written history does not give much importance to the deeds of women.

Spenser's probable source of this idea is the encomium in the *Furioso* in which the Italian poet blames male ignorance or envy for the many years of history in which women's military and intellectual accomplishments

are unrecorded, but it occurs frequently in pro-feminist writings where the author usually distinguishes himself from his predecessors by listing examples of accomplished women. Whetstone, after asserting that women have equalled men “in all maner of artes, qualities and vertues,” cites among others the queens and champions Theodosia, Dido, the Amazons, and Zenobia.¹¹ Ariosto lists Sappho and Corinna as well as the military Camilla and Artemisia. Like Whetstone and Ariosto, Spenser sets himself off from the mass of men by assuming a critical tone about attempts to obscure women's glory. By taking this stance and by assessing women's abilities as do Anglican apologists, Spenser creates in the reader the expectation that he will go on in good courtly-humanist style to record women's share in history with a series of examples and a celebration of Elizabeth as the culmination of a line of great women and the guardian of their greatness.

The second stanza begins by seeming to do just this. The poet, like all participants in the controversy about women, turns to “true writers of histories” for information.¹² Although he does not give the names of famous women as pro-feminists usually do, he does argue the superiority of women in the past and the excellence of present-day women:

But by record of antique times I find,
That women wont in warres to beare most sway,
And to all great exploits them selues inclind:
Of which they still the girlond bore away,
Till enuious Men fearing their rules decay,
Gan coyne streight lawes to curb their liberty;
Yet sith they warlike armes haue layd away:
They haue exceld in artes and pollicy,
That now we foolish men that prayse gin eke t'enuy.

(III.ii.2)

As a defense of women this stanza has one striking peculiarity. It accepts the rule of men over women as a fact of life and although it expresses regret for the state of things, it does not urge rebellion. The traditional sexual hierarchy prevails: men make the laws and write the histories and therefore can restrict the liberty of women and create their image for posterity.

As presented in this stanza the past provides a sad forecast of the future. The stanza moves through time in stages and in each stage the liberty of women is restricted. Lines 1-4 evoke a Golden Age in which military achievement was the standard by which excellence was judged and the poet asserts nostalgically that women were then superior to men. Lines 5-6 describe the decline from this Golden Age caused by male envy which suppressed female military activity. Lines 7-8 suggest that women's excellence then showed itself in the fields remaining to it, arts and policy, and line 9 ostensibly proves the quality of female action by saying it is so good men envy it. The last three lines suggest an equivalence between modern women's practice of arts and policy and ancient women's practice of arms, but their image of the present is conditional and restrictive; it contrasts with the feelings of freedom and power the first four lines evoke. There the verbs are active and aggressive: women were wont to “beare sway,” they “inclined” to “great exploits,” and they “bore away” the victory. Here their action is to lay away, a negative gesture, and to excel, a vague word with no specific relation to arts and policy. The ninth line seems also to carry a negative burden and threatens that male envy will soon cause a radical displacement of female energy into another still more narrow field. If men—whom Spenser believed to be weaker physically—were able to repress women's military activity when moved by envy to do so, it follows that men's envy of political accomplishments in the modern age, while certainly a tribute to women's talents, is a sign of trouble to come.

Pro-feminist writers do not usually admit envy of women's accomplishments to be an element of the modern male's make-up. Ariosto, in a passage Spenser is imitating here, distinguishes his age from all past ages as one in which men are anxious to celebrate women's successes.

Ben mi par di veder ch'al secol nostro
tanta virtù fra belle donne emerga,
che può dare opra a carte et ad inchiostro,
perché nei futuri anni si disperga,
e perché, odiose lingue, il mal dir vostro
con vostra eterna infamia si sommerga:
e le lor lode appariranno in guisa,
che di gran lunga avvanzeran Marfisa.

(XX.iii)

Such talent in this century, I think,
Is seen in women lovely to behold,
That there will be much work for pen and ink
Ere chroniclers the full account unfold,
And envious calumny at last shall sink,
With lies which evil tongues so long have told;
Such praises will be sung as to surpass
Marfisa's fame, when this has come to pass. (13)

Like Spenser, Ariosto suggests that the women of his time excel, but he also suggests that they will be given their fair share of attention. In a later encomium of women Ariosto even goes on to name the writers of his time who have written tributes to the excellence of women.

His acceptance of the decline in women's status sets Spenser off from both the humanist tradition supporting women and the Anglican one. Many humanists and most Anglicans attempted to counter the general low opinion of women by citing a continuous series of examples of great women from the past to the present to prove that great women have always existed. John Aylmer uses this tactic in his *An Harborowe for Faithful and Trewe Subjects*. Others invent legendary events to account for women's low social position, as Spenser does, but they always argue that in modern times this distortion of the proper order is being or ought to be corrected. For example, Agrippa von Nettesheim, in his influential *Of the Nobilitie and Excellencie of Womankynde*, complains that

God commanded women to prophesie and preache, but the unworthy dealyng of the later lawe makers is so great, that breakyng goddes commandmente, to stablysse theyr owne traditions, they have pronounced openlye, that women otherwyse in excellency of nature, dignitie, and honour most noble, be in condition more vyle than all men: And thus by these lawes, the women being subdewed as it were by force of armes, are constrained to give place to men, and to obeye theyr subdewers, not by no naturall, no divyne necessitie or reason, but by custome, education, fortune, and certayne tyrannicall occasion.¹⁴

Agrippa saw this situation as an insupportable indignity and argued for opportunities for womankind.

Like Agrippa, Spenser asserts the natural ability of women to excel in the same fields as men, but he also admits the irreversible power, if not the right, of law to restrict their actions. His positive assessment of women's abilities is undermined by his pessimism. Whatever their method of dealing with the past, Anglican and humanist writers celebrate the modern age as a great period for women. In contrast, Spenser's historical chronicle is at best extremely mild in its praise of the present and may even hold a threat of repression. The Golden Age existed, and women were men's superiors once, but they are now the weaker sex.

Spenser's final stanza continues the comparison of historical and modern women; Britomart, the primary representative of the accomplishments of ancient women, is bested by Elizabeth.

Of warlike puissaunce in ages spent,

Be thou faire Britomart, whose prayse I write,
 But of all wisdom be thou precedent,
 O soueraigne Queene, whose prayse I would endite,
 Endite I would as dewtie doth excite;
 But ah my rimes too rude and rugged arre,
 When in so high an object they do lye,
 And struing, fit to make, I feare do marre:
 Thy selfe thy prayses tell, and make them knowen farre.

(III.ii.3)

Despite their praise of Elizabeth, these lines do not reverse the sense of historical decline established in the previous stanza. They simply exempt Elizabeth from the process by asserting that she, unlike other women, is not threatened by the power of male envy to tarnish reputations or restrict action. “Thy selfe thy prayses tell, and make them knowen farre.”

The device by which Spenser introduces the topic of Elizabeth's imperviousness to male envy is the disclaimer of his own ability to praise her adequately. This theme is an integral and constant element of Spenser's praise for Elizabeth. In the Proems to each of the first three books Spenser uses it as an explanation of his poetic method; his use of “colored shewes” is necessitated by his inability to represent her directly (III Proem) and his audience's inability to look on her directly (II Proem). The topic usually serves the dual purpose of praising the Queen and making the reader aware of Spenser as the poet praising her. This is especially clear in the Proem to the entire poem in which the poet appeals to Elizabeth for inspiration and guidance.

And with them eke, ô Goddess heauenly bright,
 Mirrour of grace and Maiestie diuine,
 Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light
 Like Phoebus lampe throughout the world doth shine,
 Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
 And raise my thoughts too humble and too vile,
 To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
 The argument of mine afflicted stile:
 The which to heare, vouchsafe, ô dearest dread a-while.

(st. 4)

The epithets by which Spenser describes Elizabeth in this stanza are literary rather than historical and the scale of the comparison is divine rather than human. Elizabeth is compared not with real women but with forces of nature. She is a goddess and she illuminates the world like the sun. With these neoplatonic and Petrarchan terms, Spenser exploits the opportunities Elizabeth's sex offers for inflated praise even as he elevates the Queen far beyond other women.

In the passage we examined from Book III Spenser never claimed that Elizabeth was more than a woman; his point was that she was very much a woman, but a woman whose character and status freed her from the usual limits of women. His final proof of this contention was the inability topos—he avows his own superfluousness as recorder of her fame. Here in the Proem Spenser's claims of inability are contradicted by the last line in which he describes his poem, the work for which he has been invoking assistance, as completed. Thomas Cain describes the complex function of the inability topos in this stanza as follows:

The last two lines bring the paradox into the open, the eighth with its “argument of my afflicted style” still bespeaking inability and the passive poet's dependence on inspiration from the potentially creative goddess if the poem is to come into existence, while the alexandrine—“The which to heare, vouchsafe, o dearest dread a-while”—presents the poem as

fait accompli and the poet as active creator, with the queen now the passive receptor. Because the queen is a goddess the poem is made possible, but the articulation of her true glorious type depends on the hymnic powers of the English Orpheus.¹⁵

The marked shift of focus back to the poet that Cain notes in I Proem does not occur in the encomium in Book III. The last image there is of Elizabeth independently arousing esteem for her virtues; the poet's immediate role is ignored. The omission of the usual last step of the inability topos puts the male poet in the background and keeps the reader's attention on Elizabeth's superiority to the other members of her sex. The praise the topos offers Elizabeth that at first seems so conventional really operates as the last stage of Spenser's argument that Elizabeth is extraordinary. The inability topos reminds us of her status as Queen and suggests her excellence in all things as a catalogue of virtues, necessarily exclusive, could not.

Spenser was not the first to suggest that Elizabeth's conspicuous greatness effectively countered the effects of male envy of female accomplishments. In his defense of woman's rule, George Whetstone suggests that "if the envy of men would suppress and murder the worthiness of women, yet the divine virtues of our sovereigne Queene Elizabeth, doth and will alwaies keepe alive their divine memorie."¹⁶ Before making this statement, Whetstone argues that women have a natural aptitude for rule, and after it he goes on to prove that laws against female government are against nature. He is concerned with the general principle that women can and should rule. Elizabeth is presented as a representative of womankind; in her we can see what women are capable of. The effect of the passage in Whetstone is to create indignation at the restrictions placed on women by male envy.

Like Whetstone, Spenser uses envy as a means to account for the roles women play in his society, but when he comes to the topic of Elizabeth's invulnerability to male envy in stanza 3 he does not present her as a lodestone for the "divine memorie" of ancient women or suggest that she is a force that will reverse the current trend as Whetstone does. The comparison between Britomart and Elizabeth turns on the word "precedent" which suggests that Elizabeth can be taken as a model worthy of imitation, yet its primary meaning—and the only one that works for Britomart as well—is first in rank or estimation. Elizabeth is the best: nothing in the context suggests that she can be equalled or that she is typical of her times; everything works to prove her exceptional. As a celebration of Elizabeth this passage is enormously effective, but it celebrates her at the expense of contemporary womankind. Unlike Whetstone, other Anglican defenders of rule by women, and his literary model, Ariosto, the poet makes no protest against the repression of women, no attempt to rally their forces to a renaissance. He does not call on ancient law and custom to justify Elizabeth's rule.

By treating Elizabeth as exceptional, Spenser would seem to be in line with Calvin who, as we saw, allowed that her extraordinary qualities showed her to be raised up by God to rule. But Spenser's belief in a Golden Age differentiates him from Calvin. For Spenser the Golden Age is gone, never to return; however it did exist. As applied to women, this means that in the ancient past women developed to the fullest their innate potentiality for greatness. Calvin does not admit this potentiality in women; for him great women are always exceptions and the ordinary woman does not have the natural abilities that would qualify her for rule. In this passage Spenser reaches a conclusion that reinforces contemporary Calvinist doctrine, but his method of reasoning is his own.

In the next encomium of Elizabeth, the first three stanzas of canto iv, Spenser approaches the controversy very differently. The topic is restricted to military women and the passage is organized as a series of rhetorical questions that compare unfavorably the present with the past and lament past glory. The narrator's voice is indignant and engaged rather than authoritative and rational as it was in the first. The opening stanza uses a series of terse questions to create a sense of social crisis caused by the disjunction between ancient and modern times. The poet loudly laments the lack of military valor among modern women and hopes that it will re-manifest itself soon.

Where is the Antique glory now become,
 That whilome wont in women to appeare?
 Where be the braue atchieuements doen by some?
 Where be the battels, where the shield and speare,
 And all the conquests, which them high did reare,
 That matter made for famous Poets verse,
 And boastfull men so oft abasht to heare?
 Bene they all dead, and laid in dolefull herse?
 Or doen they onely sleepe, and shall againe reuerse?

(III.iv.1)

Because he clearly believes that women are capable of military greatness and because he expresses such passionate hope for the reawakening of feminine valor here, the poet sounds like the humanist and Anglican writers for whom such abilities are natural. What would logically follow would be praise of Elizabeth as the sign of the beginning of a new great age for womankind, or at least as an isolated equivalent to these great women as she was in canto ii. But this kind of praise is not forthcoming. The second stanza expands on the contrast between modern and antique times without going into causes or antidotes, and the third praises Elizabeth from an entirely different point of view.

In stanza 2 Spenser uses one of the quintessential tools of the Anglicans, the list of accomplished women, to achieve an effect that is the reverse of theirs. He increases our sense of the distance between ancient women and their feeble modern sisters rather than making us appreciate the possibility for women's equal achievement.

If they be dead, then woe is me therefore:
 But if they sleepe, ô let them soone awake:
 For all too long I burne with enuy sore,
 To heare the warlike feates, which Homere spake
 Of bold Penthesilee, which made a lake
 Of Greekish bloud so oft in Troian plaine;
 But when I read, how stout Debora strake
 Proud Sisera, and how Camill' hath slaine
 The huge Orsilochus, I swell with great disdaine.

(III.iv.2)

Spenser's use of this list asserts the natural ability of women to succeed in "warlike feates," but its tone of intense nostalgia for past times reinforces the sense of a lost Golden Age established in the earlier canto. In order for Penthesilea, Deborah, and Camilla to demonstrate women's capacity to perform if given the opportunity, their names must be followed, as they are in Anglican defenses of female rule, by the mention of some modern women who overcame the odds. Spenser avoids this tactic and employs them as a standard to show that womanhood is in decline.

By leaving the question of the reawakening of the brave achievements of women unanswered at the end of this stanza, however, Spenser keeps alive the sense that he, Elizabeth's Homer and Vergil, is going to praise at least her as a modern heroine. The very women cited in the stanza contribute to our expectation of such praise. As Cain points out, two of the women on the list were figures for Elizabeth in contemporary writing or in *The Fairie Queene* itself: the "Amazon Penthesilea, earlier compared to Belpheobe" and "the Old Testament heroine Deborah, a favorite cult-name for Elizabeth" (123-24).¹⁷ Deborah is an especially important name to find here because she was the queen cited by Calvin as an example of an excellent and legitimate, divinely selected, female ruler. Consequently, even a Calvinist could celebrate Elizabeth as being in the tradition of Deborah.

Despite the expectation he develops, Spenser does not praise Elizabeth as a new Deborah in the third stanza. Instead, he compares Britomart with the ancient ladies and Elizabeth only with Britomart.

Yet these, and all that else had puissance,
Cannot with noble Britomart compare,
Aswell for glory of great valiaunce,
As for pure chastitie and vertue rare,
That all her goodly deeds do well declare.
Well worthy stock, from which the branches sprong,
That in late yeares so faire a blossome bare,
As thee, ô Queene, the matter of my song,
Whose lignage from this Lady I deriue along.

(III.iv.3)

This stanza is entirely different in tone and approach from the previous two. Cain explains the logical mechanism behind it. “The idea of the blossom that validates the stock rearranges categories of importance so that Britomart now derives her meaning from her offspring, an arrangement of values that descends in order of worth from Elizabeth to Britomart to Penthesilea, Deborah, and Camilla.”¹⁸ In other words, this trick of logic makes Elizabeth superior to the greatest women of the past, and it makes her so by virtue of qualities only she among modern women can claim, her descent from Britomart and her status as Queen.

If this stanza is examined in the context of the attitude toward women expressed in the first two stanzas, it becomes clear that Spenser is doing more here than changing his priorities from achievement to genealogy, although this is an important change. He also suggests a new set of values by which women may be judged. On a logical level the superiority of Britomart to classical heroines established in the first five lines does not resolve the question of whether the brave achievements of women are dead or asleep. Britomart is an ancient woman and her accomplishments tell us nothing about the abilities of modern women. Yet Spenser's tone suggests that Britomart in some way does solve the problem. The poet's impatience is gone and the brutal images that characterized the women of the second stanza are replaced with non-visual, inflated circumlocutions.

Penthesilea was “bold” and Deborah “stout”; Britomart is “noble.” Penthesilea's “warlike feates” resulted in more than one “lake of Greekish bloud” and Camilla “hath slaine huge Orsilochus”; no verb of action and no violent image describe the “goodly deeds” Britomart has done in order to be worthy of glory. She is the superior of the ancient heroines in their field of endeavor, but she also excels in qualities Spenser does not mention, “pure chastity and vertue rare.” They are all presented as Amazons; she is a lady and, although she herself is not modern, in her balance of accomplishments and virtue she anticipates the kind of woman acceptable to sixteenth-century moralists. In her, virtue and chastity are added to the standard for female excellence, and when Spenser finally turns to praise the non-military Elizabeth, Britomart and not the ancient ladies is the ideal immediately in view; she provides a transition between “antique glory” and Elizabeth. By means of her character, as well as by the logical trick Cain identified, our expectations of women are modified, and the Queen is placed in a position superior to the greatest women of history, although none of her accomplishments is cited and her existence does not answer the questions raised in the first stanza in any logical way. This last stanza reveals that the whole passage is not as engaged as the first was in the issue of women's abilities. Its object is flattery and reinforcement of the complimentary analogy between Britomart's knighthood and Elizabeth's queenship. The controversy offers amusing material.

The relationship between Britomart and Elizabeth is the key to this encomium and, indeed, is the immediate occasion for the presence of both passages in Book III. This relationship is an invention of Spenser's and is not revealed until the canto following the first encomium, the canto in which Britomart visits Merlin's cave and learns of her descendants. These two passages frame the genealogy explained in the third canto and they

go beyond the genetic link between the women to establish a relationship in kind as well as kin. Elizabeth is the same kind of woman as Britomart, although she is not adept at military matters.

The analogy established in these two passages between Elizabeth's and Britomart's conduct and that of the greatest heroines of history and legend is essential to the encomiastic success of Book III. As Spenser states in the Proem, Gloriana and Belphoebe are mirrors or allegories of the Queen; Britomart is not, yet she is the major heroine of the book and is obviously intended to flatter Elizabeth I. The two encomia indicate a major way in which Britomart's actions can be applied to Elizabeth's and then be superseded: only Elizabeth is accomplished in a fashion entirely appropriate to her own times. As a result of these two encomia Elizabeth appears as a solitary representative of the glory of womankind; she is "precedent" without setting a precedent. The passages create admiration for the Queen at the same time they defeat Anglican and humanist arguments in favor of her rule. Their method of argument and attitude toward history are peculiar to Spenser; their conclusion is harmonious with Calvin's diplomatically astute but unsuccessful theory of the exceptional woman raised to power by the wisdom of God and with Spenser's own statement of it in Book V. Spenser develops the theory's full possibility for flattery and praised his queen as the exception that proves the rule.

Notes

1. See for example: Castiglione, *The Courtier*, Book III; Lionardo Bruni, "De Studiis et Literis," in *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators* (1897; rpt. New York, 1963); Thomas Elyot, *The Defence of Good Women* (1545); Sir Thomas More, *Correspondence*, ed. E. F. Rogers (1947), No. 63, Letter to William Gonell, 1518(?).
2. John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithful and Trewe Subjects ...* (Strassbourg, 1559), sig. C3v.
3. George Whetstone, *The English Myrror* (1586), p. 136.
4. John Calvin, letter to Sir William Cecil dated at Geneva (after January 29, 1559), letter XV in *The Zurich Letters* (second series), trans. Rev. Hastings Robinson (Cambridge, Eng., 1845), pp. 34-35.
5. Kirby Neill argues that "In the Radigund episode Spenser treats of the overthrow of Mary Stuart (Radigund) by Elizabeth (Britomart)" and also points out the Calvinist orientation of the episode. "Spenser on the Regiment of Women: A Note on the Faerie Queene, V.v.25," *Studies in Philology* 34, 134-37.
6. V.vii.42. All quotations from *The Faerie Queene* are from Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. (New Haven, Conn., 1981).
7. James E. Phillips, Jr., "The Woman Ruler in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 5 (1941), 233-34. See also "The Background of Spenser's Attitude Toward Women Rulers," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 5 (1941), 5-32.
8. Kathleen Williams, *Spenser's World of Glass* (Berkeley, Cal., 1966), p. 95.
9. Robert Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 217.
10. Harry Berger Jr., "The *Faerie Queene*, Book III: A General Description" in *Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser* (Hamden, Conn., 1972), p. 397.
11. Whetstone, *Myrror*, p. 136.
12. Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Of the Nobilitie and Excellencie of Womankynde*, trans. David Clapham (1542), sig. F7.
13. XXXVII, viii-xiii. All citations of the *Furioso* are to Ludovico Ariosto, *L'Orlando Furioso* ed. Lanfranco Caretti (Milan and Naples, 1954). The translation is by Barbara Reynolds (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1975).
14. Agrippa, sig. G1.
15. Thomas H. Cain, *Praise in the Faerie Queene* (Lincoln, Neb., 1978), p. 54.
16. Whetstone, *Myrror*, p. 136.
17. Cain, pp. 123-24.
18. Cain, p. 124.

Criticism: Shormishtha Panja (essay date 1985)

SOURCE: Panja, Shormishtha. "A Self-Reflexive Parable of Narration: *The Faerie Queene* VI." *Journal of Narrative Technique* 15, no. 3 (fall 1985): 277-88.

[In the following essay, Panja applies structuralist and poststructuralist critical theories to an analysis of Spenser's narrative in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*, emphasizing how the text of the poem comments on itself and on the nature of storytelling.]

The charm of applying structuralist and post-structuralist narratology to a "classic" text like Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* lies not only in the confidence of sounding modish and polemical; today scholars and critics have the freedom to analyze certain "occurrences" in the text and admit that they do not have to be wound into a watertight, perfectly closed argument. Critics can present it "like it is" and admit that they are occasionally baffled. Not only that, they can thereby avoid the pitfall of an easy and fallacious attribution of excessive unity to a text that has little intention of having it. This does not mean that twentieth-century narratology is a boon to the lazy critic. On the contrary. As soon as critical closure ceases to be of prime importance, he may discover worlds upon worlds of knowledge opening before his eyes; no longer does his study have to remain exclusively historical or textual or generic.

In this paper I shall be deliberately pluralistic in my approach to both Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* VI and the critical theories that I shall call upon, namely those expressed in Roland Barthes's *S/Z*, Umberto Eco's *The Role of the Reader*, Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Tzvetan Todorov's *The Poetics of Prose*, M. M. Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* and Frank Kermode's *The Genesis of Secrecy*. I choose these particular texts not merely because time and usage have proved their validity. These critics provide valuable new terms and subdivisions in formerly broad categories of narrative technique, thereby making possible a rather minute analysis of a poem as large and amorphous as *The Faerie Queene*.¹ I shall be examining the various problems or discontents of the narrative of Book VI and testing the validity of the critical theories I draw upon in the application to a specific text. I wish to prove that Spenser employed different narrative voices and techniques like lack of closure, deferral, repetition, multiple focalization, paralepsis and paralipsis to create in *The Faerie Queene* VI a complex "open" text, incorporating within itself both "writerly" and "readerly" elements; a text which is, unlike the preceding five books, mainly about the act of narration. In the Letter to Raleigh, Spenser said his intention in *The Faerie Queene* was to "fashion a gentleman." This gentleman is not only the Elizabethan reader, and the "fashioning" is not just a lesson in deportment or morality. The epic is a lesson on insightful reading.² As this paper will demonstrate, the reader undergoes a process of education in Book VI, a process whose degree of success can only be gauged with regard to his penetration of the text's secrets.

WHAT SORT OF A TEXT IS THIS?

Eco invents the terms "open" and "closed" texts in *The Role of the Reader* while Barthes in *S/Z* uses the similar terms *scriptible* and *lisible* (translated by Richard Miller as "writerly" and "readerly" respectively). According to Eco, the text that is "inordinately open to any kind of interpretation" (he uses detective fiction as an example) is a "closed" text, while a text that invites the reader's active and disciplined collaboration is an "open" text. The "open" text does not extend a universal invitation to anarchic participation: "You cannot use the text as you want but only as the text wants you to use it," says Eco.³ The first thing that strikes one here is that Eco's example of detective fiction does not work. One cannot, for example, read Agatha Christie's *The Body in the Library* as a subverted Marxist interpretation of the fall of the Roman empire. Thus "closed" texts are what their name suggests: texts that have "closed" or finite interpretations. Eco's definition of "closed," though clever, is not convincing, yet his term "open" text is useful and applicable to *The Faerie Queene*. The description of the poem as "a continued allegory or darke conceit" by Spenser in his letter to Raleigh

immediately makes the poem open to at least four different levels of interpretation, levels which often work simultaneously. If we read the proems we also find that there is an explicit invitation extended to the reader to figure the narrative out for himself. As early as the proem to Book II we are told:

Of Faerie lond yet if he more inquire,
By certaine signes here set in sundry place
He may it find: ne let him them admire,
But yield his sence to be too blunt and bace,
That no'te without an hound fine footing trace.

(II Pro 4)

The text is presented as a semiotic maze here, puzzling and frustrating on the first reading, which the reader must gradually unravel. The secret “certaine signes” are set almost erratically: “in sundry place.” The reader must have the assiduity of a hound to follow the scent, and be wary of being misled, for the traces are “fine.”⁴

Barthes's terms, “writerly” and “readerly” are probably more helpful in the context of *The Faerie Queene* than Eco's. The closest parallels I can find to Barthes's terms are Plato's concepts of the idea and imitation. The “writerly” text, in its purest form, exists only in the mind of God or the writer. It is the idea of the thing, not the thing itself, which is merely an imitation. A text is “writerly” only at the time of writing, as long as that act is not completed. Only “readerly” texts may be bought at a bookstore. “Writerly” texts, which make “producers” rather than “consumers” out of their readers, are not sold in the marketplace.⁵ So far so good. However, Barthes does not make two important qualifications. He does not admit that a text may have both “writerly” and “readerly” elements, and perhaps only a text that has more of the former may be termed a “classic.” He merely equates the classic and the “readerly,” without making a hierarchical distinction: “We call any readerly text a classic text.”⁶ *The Faerie Queene* has certainly established itself as a classic in the old-fashioned use of the term. It also incorporates within itself both “writerly” and “readerly” elements, as we shall discover, thereby earning the title of a classic in the new sense. In fact, perhaps one may say that all classics earn that appellation only through the incorporation of both “readerly” and “writerly” elements, the more “writerly,” the more “open,” the more classic.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE NARRATIVE?

One of the aspects of Book VI that puts the burden of interpretation on the reader's shoulders and thereby “opens” the text is the unreliability of the supposed guides, be they the narrator or the protagonist. The naive reader is sure to be misled if he expects to find a reliable guide in the forest. But before we go into that we must determine the identity of the narrator. This is a puzzle that forms part of what Barthes terms the “hermeneutic code” or the code of enigmas in a narrative.⁷ Twentieth century narratology has demonstrated the importance of distinguishing between the narrator and the author, but it has not made the task of identifying the narrator any easier. Is Book VI an Example of “homodiegetic narrative,” i.e. a narrative like *Wuthering Heights* where a character or characters other than the protagonist tells the story? Or is it an example of “autodiegetic narrative,” a narrative where the hero is the narrator, as in *David Copperfield*? Or is it a “heterodiegetic,” i.e. an omniscient narrative?⁸

To the naive reader, the book seems to be a confusing mixture of all three. The narrative seems to be “homodiegetic” because the narrator appears to be a character in the poem, threading the paths of Faerielond and suggesting that the land is created by someone other than himself. The narrator also seems to grow and develop in the course of the epic. While he begins the epic on a note of adventurous excitement, as expressed in the use of the ship simile (I xii 1), by the time Book VI is reached, probably after a gap of twelve odd years (1582-1596),⁹ the same simile is used in a tone of defensive weariness:¹⁰

Like as a ship that through the Ocean wyde

Directs her course unto one certaine cost,
 Is met of many a counter wind and tyde,
 With which her winged speed is let and crost,
 And she her selfe in stormie surges tost ...
 Right so it fares with me in this long way,
 Whose course is often stayd, yet neuer is astray.

(VI xii 1)¹¹

Subject to external decrees of the Queen, the Muse or the poet, the narrator appears at times to be a mere scribe of the higher powers. However, he probably bears some relation to Colin Clout, a persona that the contemporary reader associated with Spenser¹² after the publication of *The Shepheardes Calender* in 1579 and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* in 1591. Since Colin is so crucial to the vision on Mt. Acidale, which is the core of Book VI, he seems to be, at least temporarily, the true hero of the book, making it an “autodiegetic narrative.”

What about the book as an example of “heterodiegetic” narrative? There are problems here too for, in incidents like the Mirabella episode (VI vi-viii), we can see, using Genette's subdivisions, that the “mood” (who sees) and the “voice” (who speaks) of this narrative are not identical.¹³ Let us look at the episode a little more closely. We first learn of Mirabella's “stubborn stiffness” and her “hard hart” from the narrator. We are told of her lovers' accusations and the punishment decreed by an enraged Cupid (VI vi-vii). Finally, we hear the story from Mirabella's own lips, and hurriedly qualify our former opinion of her as a reprobate (VI viii). She admits with disarming frankness that she had learned to love herself in school and compassionately begs Disdaine, her constant companion, to free Timias, suggesting that the view of her former implacability has been somewhat exaggerated. It is certainly not criminal to refuse lovers. As a result of these confusions and anomalies, it is perhaps best to term the narrative not “autodiegetic,” “homodiegetic” or “heterodiegetic” but “pseudodiegetic,” for it is a mixture of different voices rather than any one, consistent, unwavering point of view.¹⁴ It appears that not only the reader, but the narrator too, is fashioned by what the narrative discovers.

THE SELF-CONSCIOUS NARRATOR

Whatever be the identity of the narrator, he is certainly divided, self-conscious and unreliable. As we have just observed in the Mirabella episode, not all of what he says may be taken at face value. There is a division not only between the different narrative voices but also within the single voice of the narrator. If we examine the proems to the various books, we see enough evidence of this inner division. There is a peculiar mixture of insolence and abjectness in his attitude to his readers and even, occasionally, to the Queen. Book II begins with a humble apology to the “most mighty Soveraine” for writing what can only be termed “th'abundance of an idle braine ... and painted forgery”; but two stanzas later the narrator's tone changes to one of contemptuous chastisement of the “witlesse man (who) so much misweene(s)” to think “that nothing is, but that which he hath seene” (II Pro 1-4). In the proem to Book VI the narrator tells us that Faerielond both wearies and delights him. Perhaps he refers here to the delight of creation, the pleasure of the “writerly,” and to the “tedious travell” of communication, of fixing the “writerly” in the mold of the merely “readerly.”

The narrator also shows a division in his attitude towards the alleged protagonist, Calidore. First of all, Calidore hardly appears to be what the narrator says he is, the most “courteous Knight,” “beloued ouer all” (VI i 2). Calidore commits a number of faux-pas, lies to Priscilla's father (VI iii 18), offers money to Melibee and is roundly chastised for his “ill display” (VI ix 33). His condescension to his rival in love, Coridon, seems almost insulting (VI ix 41-44). He apologizes with hilarious inappropriateness to Calepine and Serena for breaking in on their lovemaking and then proceeds to talk in a leisurely way about his various adventures (VI iii 21-23). His blithe apology to Colin Clout after dispersing the vision of the Graces on Mt. Acidale is equally jarring:

Haile iolly shepheard, which thy ioyous dayes
Here leadest in this goodly merry make,
Frequented of these gentle Nymphes alwayes,
Which to thee flocke, to heare thy louely layes;
Tell me, what mote these dainty Damzels be ...

(VI x 19)

Someone who has just broken his pipe in exasperation as Colin Clout has done can hardly be addressed as a “iolly shepheard.” Neither is “dainty Damzels” an appropriate description of the Graces. What is more disturbing is that even after Colin Clout has gruffly corrected Calidore's perspective (“Not I so happy ... As thou unhappy”) and pointed out the extent of the damage, the knight is still not ruffled in the least by his misdemeanor, but coolly proceeds to accuse his favorite scapegoat, Fortune, for a boorish act that has been entirely of his own volition: “right sorry I ... That my ill fortune did them hence displace” (VI x 20). If this is the epitome of courtesy, can we really trust anything the narrator tells us? The unreliability of the narrator puts the reader on his guard. It creates both the “wary” reader and gives evidence of the text's “openness.” A “naive” reader would be as unconscious as Calidore of the irony of the knight's apology.¹⁵

THE MAKING AND BREAKING OF THE CODES

One betrayal of the unreliability of the narrator is that he is definitely acting with self-conscious deliberation in these cases. Barthes speaks of the “hermeneutic code” or the code of puzzles and enigmas, the “proairetic code” or the code of actions and the “connotative code” or the issues of a narrative (which, when they gather around a proper name, become a character).¹⁶ If we examine these codes in Book VI we shall find that the text becomes a classic precisely through the ease with which it breaks these codes rather than the rigidity with which it adheres to them.

With regard to the connotative code or the code of issues (in this case, courtesy), it is when Calidore breaks out of the model of the perfect gentleman of courtesy and becomes a comically flawed and realistically imperfect human being that Spenser's characterization appears to succeed.

With regard to the “hermeneutic code,” Spenser's narrative does not always answer the reader's questions, particularly the naive reader's questions, about the fabula.¹⁷ Occasionally, the narrative will give us partial or disguised answers, and the naive reader is educated to ask the right questions and to comprehend partial answers. For example, if one asked whether Pastorella and Calidore were finally united, the narrator would probably answer, “Remember Britomart's adventures in the Castle of Isis?” If the reader recognizes this as an answer and a gentle rebuke for his naivete in believing that such a union, even when accomplished, is eternal or an end in itself, then he is well on his way to becoming a wary, even a “model” reader. Thus it is not so much the answers to the hermeneutic code that are important as the reader's education. The “naive” reader is, of course, naive only in certain respects, for example, in his expectations of closure and satiety, in his fumbling concern for the fabula over the *suzjet*. The reader has to have a certain amount of orientation to be able to qualify even as a “naive” reader. “Naive” thus definitely does not mean invincibly ignorant. In fact, “naive” readers already display a potential for wariness in their particular type of naivete.

DISCOURSE AS ACTION

As regards the proairetic code, the syntagmatic code of actions in a narrative that come into being as we name them (as in a mental synopsis of the plot) we see that there are hardly any actions at all in Book VI. Discourse is the main activity of Book VI. This is why the ruling virtue of the book, courtesy, dealing as it does with verbal interaction, is so appropriate. Apart from the killing of Maleffort, the punishment of Crudor and Briana, and the rescue of Pastorella from the brigands, Calidore spends all his time pretending to follow the Blatant Beast but in actuality either talking or listening, hanging on the “melting mouths” of either Tristram, Melibee

or Colin Clout with “greedy eare” as the narrator describes it (VI ix 26). The book is full of a series of “narrative-men,” to use Todorov’s description of the characters in *The Arabian Nights* who live to tell the story of their lives. The lack of action contrasts with most romances and the earlier books of *The Faerie Queene*. For example, the death of the “headless knight” is accomplished within two lines: “But ere he (Calidore) came in place, that youth had kild / That armed knight” (VI ii 4). This is all we see directly of the event. However, the report of the knight’s misdemeanors continues intermittently from VI ii 7 to VI ii 19, a unique case of prolonged “multiple focalization”¹⁸ in *The Faerie Queene*. Thus the reader’s expectations regarding the fabula are destroyed quite rapidly. In fact, we grow so accustomed to a lack of events that when anything *does* happen it appears infinitely disappointing. We feel no excitement when Calidore finally captures the Blatant Beast (VI xii 36), but when the Beast frees himself within a few lines, our interest is rekindled (VI xii 38).

A NARRATION OF NARRATION

In Book VI we can see a number of important techniques used by the narrator or the pseudo-narrator (Spenser, his persona, the other “narrative-men”) which focus our attention on the act of narration. Deferral, repetition, “multiple focalization” (one incident seen from varying points of view), lack of closure, “paralipsis” (inadequate information) and “paralepsis” (excessive information) are the most notable ones and almost all of them help exasperate the naive reader. Let us examine a few examples of these techniques and then try to account for their employment.¹⁹

Deferral is quite a common technique for romance. Like Ariosto, the narrator of *The Faerie Queene* occasionally ends a particular incident by saying “the end whereof I’ll keepe untill another cast.” In some cases, the “end” never does in fact appear (VI viii 51). A lack of closure can be seen in individual incidents, as in the story of Calepine and Serena (which ends with the fateful words just quoted) or the story of Calidore and Pastorella, and in the fact that the whole poem remains incomplete. Multiple focalization can be seen in the Mirabella episode, which we have already discussed, and in the headless knight episode which we shall now examine. Besides relating to the theme of discourse, this episode is also an interesting use of the technique of repetition.

We hear the story of the headless knight’s savagery no less than four times, first from Tristram (VI ii), then from the headless knight’s lady (VI ii), then from Priscilla (VI ii) and, finally, from Aladine (VI iii). Significantly, the knight remains nameless. He is speechless, since Tristram kills him almost as soon as we glimpse him (VI ii 4); and he is headless, since Calidore decapitates him as “the signe of shame” (VI iii 17). The knight seems to be a “certaine signe” of the end of discourse, which is equivalent to death in a narrative, as Todorov²⁰ perceptively points out in his examination of *The Arabian Nights*. It is almost as if the characters know that as soon as they stop talking they will have ceased to exist, and that is why they are so loquacious. Repetition is thus used to defer closure or death, as Peter Brooks points out (in another context) in his essay “Freud’s Masterplot.”²¹ If, as Todorov says, loquacity equals life,²² then the unfinished state of the entire *Faerie Queene* may be one of the ways in which Spenser denies the poem closure or death. The text, like the Blatant Beast, seems to be both rumor and mythical beast, eluding capture as closure. All attempts to grasp the text, like Calidore’s capture of the beast, remain evanescent. We have seen the rhythm of temporary capture or closure followed by unbonding earlier in the altered ending of Book III. Originally, in the 1593 version, Spenser ended the story of Scudamour and Amoret with the lovers clasped in a close embrace like “that faire Hermaphrodite.” This closure was loosened in the 1596 edition, with Amoret disappearing, in order to make a better transition to the later books. Just so the Beast is captured and set free, loosening forever the ending of Book VI and the entire poem.

We have seen how the techniques we have examined so far in Book VI serve higher purposes than that of merely thwarting the naive reader. They show the reader the pitfalls of a blind subservience to the narrator’s or the characters’ discourse; they are instrumental in recalling the potentially wary reader, schooling him to ask

the correct questions and to understand the partial or disguised answers; they deny closure and thereby defer the death of the poem; they leave certain questions perpetually unanswered and force the reader to make what Eco terms “inferential walks” and compose “ghost cantos” (I adapt Eco's term “ghost chapters”) in order to create a closure that fulfills all his desires; they focus our attention on the act of narration itself, rather than what is being narrated.²³ In short, these techniques are instrumental in “opening” the text, in giving us evidence, albeit covert and disguised, of the text's “writerly” elements. They help make Book VI a classic.

ACIDALE: THE HEARTH OF DENOTATION

The incident that provides the most conclusive proof for the above arguments is the interrupted vision on Mt. Acidale (VI x). Barthes speaks in *S/Z* of the “hearth of denotation” around which all the meanings of a text gather.²⁴ Mt. Acidale forms just such a round hearth as well as being the traditional *locus amoenus* of pastoral. The circle was the popular Renaissance and Neo-Platonic image for order, hierarchy, ascent and perfection. It is not surprising that we are faced with a number of concentric circles as we approach Acidale. The mount is surrounded by a plain which “round about was bordered with a wood” (VI x 6). On the mountain we encounter further concentric circles—the dancing “troupe of ladies” surrounding the smaller circle of the three Graces surrounding the lass of “diuine resemblaunce” and Colin Clout. These circles are a mimesis of a number of things. First of all, they give us the impression of moving closer and closer to the very heart of creation, which lies not in “outward shewes” but “deepe within the minde” as the narrator tells us in the poem to Book VI. The appearance of Acidale and then the sudden way in which the vision disappears both suggest a magical place, a place outside space and time as we know them.²⁵

The circles can also represent what Todorov terms “embedded narrative,”²⁶ the inclusion of one story in another, something we encounter time and again in Book VI. Perhaps the circles might also be termed a mimesis of “embedded interpretation,” for the vision is protected by layers and layers of cotton wool voices. Here we have an example of what Bakhtin terms “heteroglossia,” the interaction between different narrative voices.²⁷ Is it the narrator who speaks, is it Colin Clout, or is it Spenser? Or do the different voices finally coalesce? Do we see through the eyes of Calidore or through our own imaginative insight? If through the latter, then we have probably reached that point in the narrative where the naive reader comes of age, much as Calidore does.²⁸ Is this the point at which the text, which might have appeared “closed” on a first reading, finally becomes “open,” only to shut the door on our faces, saying “This is all ye need to know?”²⁹ Just as Kermode finds “something irreducible, therefore perpetually to be interpreted; not secrets to be found out one by one, but Secrecy” in the Gospels,³⁰ so in this vision we find some of our questions answered, but not all. There is a redundant incompleteness in Colin Clout's exposition of the vision. It is both paraleptic and paralipic. We do not need to be told that the women are the Graces, for the narrator has already hinted at the possibility of their appearance:

They say that Venus, when she did dispose
Her selfe to pleasaunce, vsed to resort
Vnto this place ...
Or with the Graces there to play and sport;

(VI x 9)

However, we *do* want to know who the lass in the center of the circle is, and why, if she is a mere human, she should disappear along with the Graces. We also desire a more detailed description of the vision, but we are merely told that the “sundry parts were here too long to tell” (VI x 14). This seems to be one way of making the vision inviolate and of suggesting that the reader, like Calidore, has been an interloper too long.

A PARABLE OF INTERPRETATION

We can read a parable in this ultimate recalcitrance of the narrative. We have noted the sense of disappointment that follows the fulfillment of expectations derived from the fabula (as in the capture of the Blatant Beast); thus, in their silence, Colin Clout and the narrator may be granting us both “desire and its object.”³¹ If all our questions were answered, there would be little left to spark our desires or to kindle our imagination. The fact that Colin's words are paradoxically excessive and inadequate is an example of the pitfall every interpretation must face and few avoid. Colin and the reader are separated by a barrier which is akin to the “Shadow” that T.S. Eliot speaks of in “The Hollow Men” that falls “Between the idea / And the reality ... Between the conception / And the creation,” between vision and utterance, between what Barthes would term the “writerly” and the “readerly.” Acidale is a vision of the creator's innermost source of inspiration. It is the source of the poem, the “idea” or the “writerly” text of which the poem is an “imitation.” Ironically, it is *not* the description by the interpretation of Colin Clout and the narrator's interjection (VI x 14) that sets up a barrier between the reader and the text. This creation of barriers is what Todorov terms one of the “risks of narration.”³² At the very moment when one is most pressed to communicate, these barriers arise. The threat of ultimate inchoateness is another danger. While initially separating the reader and the narrative, these perils, which exist for readers and writers alike, ultimately unite them.

Book VI of *The Faerie Queene* is an intriguing combination of loquaciousness and terseness. An “open” text, containing both “writerly” and “readerly” elements, it demands the reader's wary attention and disciplined collaboration. It talks about itself, and about the reader's relation to the text; but, like a good conversationalist, it knows when to hold its peace.

Notes

1. Jonathan Goldberg, in his illuminating study of Book IV, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* has proved how the poststructuralist and the deconstructionist narratologists help one renounce the formalist dependence on closure and transcendence in literary texts.
2. See Walter Davis's article “Arthur, Partial Exegesis and the Reader” *TSSL* xviii (1977), pp. 556-558, to see how the reader is educated in the art of allegorical reading in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*.
3. *Role*, p. 9.
4. All quotations are from *Spenser: Poetical Works*, ed. Smith & Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1912, rpt. 1975).
5. *S/Z*, pp. 3-7.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-21.
8. The three terms are Genette's. “Diegesis” is Genette's term for a condition opposite to “mimesis” where we have a maximum of what he terms the “informer” and a minimum of information. *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 162-70, 245. The examples are my own.
9. In 1582 Spenser wrote that he was “well entered upon” the epic (Selincourt, p. xlii) and in 1596 the last three complete books were published.
10. See Jerome S. Dees, “The Use of the Ship Conceit in *The Faerie Queene*,” *SP* lxxii (1975), pp. 208-225.
11. The very fact that the narrator can say something like “Yet neuer is astray” should immediately make us question the validity of the narrative voice. Is this a blatant lie, given all the digressions in the poem, or is the narrator justified in believing that even when he seems to stray, he is still being true to a deeper motive, the motive of educating the reader? I examine this problem in greater detail later in the paper.
12. Certain commendatory verses written after the publication of *The Faerie Queene* “To the learned Shepheard” by an unknown admirer who calls himself “Hobynoll” describe Spenser as a “iolly Shepheard,” a title Calidore later uses to address Colin Clout (VI x 19).
13. *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 30-32.

14. Ibid., pp. 236-237. Genette speaks of an “oust(ing)” of narrators and different narrative levels in his definition of “pseudodiegetic.”
15. Eco invents the terms “naive” and “model” reader (*Role*, pp. 7-11). Though I prefer the adjectives “innocent” and “wary” the metaphor is probably the same: the pleasures and frustrations of unravelling the text, are akin to those of an emotional involvement: one makes up (in more senses than one) and breaks up with *The Faerie Queene* as with people.
16. For example, an issue in Book VI is courtesy and Calidore is the character around whom this issue revolves.
17. Here, I use the Russian formalist distinction between *fabula* (sequence of events in a story as they would happen in life) and *suzjet* or plot (the author's ordering of these events) as put forward by Vladimir Propp in *Morphology of the Folktale*.
18. Genette's term for one story seen from varying points of view as in Browning's *The Ring and the Book*.
19. The terms in quotation marks are Genette's. *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 189-94, 205.
20. “Narrative equals life, the absence of narrative, death.” *Poetics of Prose*, p. 74.
21. *Yale French Studies*, 55-56 (1977), pp. 280-300.
22. *Poetics of Prose*, p. 75.
23. *Role*, pp. 32, 214.
24. *S/Z*, p. 7. Barthes equates the hearth with the “centre, guardian, refuge, light of truth.”
25. See Harry Berger, “A Secret Discipline: *The Faerie Queene* VI” in *English Institute Essays* 1961, pp. 35-75. Berger, in what is probably the finest piece of criticism on Book VI, sees the book as an example of the Hellenistic rhetorical term *Poeta* because the problems which the poet faces in organizing his material form part of his theme. Berger notes the sameness of the characters, their homonymous names (Calidore-Calepine-Coridon), the repetition of set romance motifs (“the aristocratic and foundling motifs; the nursery, withdrawal and retirement motifs; the motifs of love, of holiday and diversion, of being caught off guard, turning inward”) and calls them “dim prefigurations of Acidale” in that they symbolize the conflict between the “idea or foreconceit” (I borrow Sidney's terms) within the mind of the poet and his actual creation. It is the tension between the two that dissolves the vision on Mt. Acidale and leaves the poem, in a way, incomplete (Berger, p. 72).
26. *Poetics of Prose*, p. 71.
27. “Epic and Novel,” p. 11. “Heteroglossia” and “polyglossia” are two complex terms used interchangeably by Bakhtin without any proper definition. They appear to mean an “interanimation of languages” in the discourse of the novel. This may range from a mixture of dialects or styles varying from the language of folklore to the elevation of classical invocation, or it may mean a shift of tone or emphasis within a relatively uniform style. The latter meaning is suggested by Bakhtin's examples from Pushkin's *Onegin* (p. 47). The intention of this play is to prevent the style from congealing and to preserve the open-ended, realistic character of novelistic discourse. As we see, this can be present in romantic epics like *The Faerie Queene* as well. For example, when the narrator begins VI ix with an affected self-address to the “iolly swaine,” this signals a change from the heroic tone of the preceding cantos to the pastoral tone of the following cantos. Bakhtin does, in fact, overstate the simplicity of the epic in order to prove his arguments about the novel, but that is too broad a topic to discuss here.
28. The knight shows a commendable strength of purpose in the succeeding cantos.
29. I use Kermode's adaptation of the situation in Kafka's *The Trial*. *The Genesis of Secrecy*, p. 145ff.
30. *The Genesis of Secrecy*, p. 145.
31. As Todorov puts it in *The Poetics of Prose*, p. 105.
32. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

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Criticism: Ann E. Imbrie (essay date 1987)

SOURCE: Imbrie, Ann E. "'Playing Legerdemaine with the Scripture': Parodic Sermons in *The Faerie Queene*." *English Literary Renaissance* 17, no. 2 (spring 1987): 142-55.

[In the following essay, Imbrie discusses the characters in *The Faerie Queene* who emerge as "false preachers," delivering sermons that represent perversions of biblical rhetoric.]

Guyon's encounter with Mammon, however we judge his success in that episode from Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, has long been recognized as a parody of Christ's temptation in the wilderness. Patrick Cullen has discovered a similar scriptural parody in Redcrosse's encounter with Despayre in Book I.¹ In fact, the poet frequently shows an evil character producing holy witness with a smiling cheek in order to dissuade a hero

from moral action. It is not surprising that Spenser's villains will often pervert rhetorical power, even language itself, to evil ends; this is a fairly standard means of characterizing evil, familiar to all readers of such Renaissance figures as Iago, Cassius, or Milton's Satan. That the language of Spenser's villains is so often biblical, however, casts these characters much more specifically. They are not simply false rhetoricians, but rather false preachers. Such characters as Despayre, Phaedria, and the Giant with the Scales deliver parodic sermons on biblical texts, and their speeches register Spenser's concept of the right use and interpretation of Scripture. The proper context in which to examine these characters, then, is Renaissance hermeneutics: theory of interpretation found often in sermons and sermon manuals of the period, whose emphasis, like the poet's, is rhetorical.

II

Among sixteenth-century preachers and commentators, Christ's temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4) provides a popular text for exploring issues of interpretation itself. This particular text attracted hermeneutic interest for good reason: because the central verses of the text represent an actual exchange of scriptural quotation, the passage illustrates at once both faulty and correct use of Scripture in argument. Taking advantage of Christ's argument that man lives by "euerie worde that proceadeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4.4; Deut. 8.3), Satan cites God's word filtered through the experience of the psalmist (Psalm 91) to encourage Christ to cast himself down from the pinnacle: "for it is written, that that he wil giue his Angels charge ouer thee, and with their hands they shal lifte thee vp, lest at anie time ye shuldest dash thy fote against a stone" (Ps. 91.11-12; Matt. 4.6). In this scriptural argument, however, as the Geneva commentator notes, Satan "alldgeth but halfe the sentence to deceiue thereby the rather, and cloke his crafty purpose."² Christ repulses the temptation—at least in part a temptation to misinterpret God's word—with another biblical quotation: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord your God. . . . Thou shalt feare the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serue" (Deut. 6.16, 13; Matt. 4.7, 10). Again, according to the Geneva commentary, "the worde of God is the sworde of the spirit, wherewith Satan is ouercome." This text, then, provides models of both devious and faithful uses of scriptural evidence. The double model, explicated in Protestant hermeneutics, furnishes Spenser's literary imagination with material for various temptation scenes.

In their commentaries on this text Protestant hermeneuts identify Satan as the prototype of the false preacher, abusing the word of God for his own purposes, demonstrating the heresies of scriptural interpretation with which moderate Protestants charged their adversaries: quoting out of context, deleting verses, and reading too literally or too allegorically. First, as Henry Bullinger explains, "It is requisite in expounding the scriptures, and searching out the true sense of God's word, that we mark upon what occasion everything is spoken, what goeth before, what followeth after." By ignoring context, Bullinger continues, the expositors act as "heretics, and not men of the right faith, which draw some odd things out of the scripture for their own purpose."³ The association of such misreading with heresy itself suggests a judgment much stronger than simple wrongheadedness. Second, to delete verses not conducive to one's argument constitutes a perverse use of Scripture. To do so, writes John Bale, is to "wrast it all amys."⁴ In this case, according to Perkins, we see "Satans fraud and craft that can so cunningly leave out that which makes not for his purpose, and so peruert the true meaning of the scripture; this is his usual practise, in enmity against the word, to deprau the true meaning by cutting off some part. . . . The like is the dealing of all hereticks, who by cutting off and leaving out, play legerdemaine with the scriptures."⁵ Finally, reading either too literally (as Satan also does in the text from Matthew) or too allegorically will insure an insidious reading. In Spenser's parodies of sermons, we see his villains abusing Scripture in one of these three ways.

In addition to providing a model of the faulty use and interpretation of Scripture, the text of Matthew appealed to reformers because there Christ himself repulses Satan's argument with scriptural passages. In the simplicity of Christ's language the Tudor preacher found a model for his own style.⁶ In the apparent ease with which he dismissed Satan's argument, Christ provided as well a particular model of the proper exposition of Scripture, exemplifying the use of scriptural evidence which preserved the spiritual sense while allowing its direct moral

application to personal and immediate circumstance. Identifying Christ's victory over Satan, William Perkins argued that even the devil “knowes that scripture *truly understood* and *well applied*, is the only engine for the battling of his kingdom”; by showing Christ applying Scripture effectively to his own circumstances, the text provided a vivid example of the moral application of Scripture to people trying to lead Christly lives.⁷ Similarly, John Bale, speaking as prolocutor in his didactic interlude based on Christ's temptation, explains that “Sathan assaulteth hym, with many a subtile dryft. / So wyll he do us, if we take Christes part.”⁸ Christ's response to temptation, then, provided an extension of the Christly model to appropriate use of scriptural rebuttal in argument, demonstrating the values of literal reading and tropological application, the two “senses” of Scripture most important to early Protestant hermeneutics.⁹ In this reading of the text of Matthew, Christ's victory over Satan is literally the victory of God over evil, and morally the potentially universal triumph of human will over temptation. In turn, this general moral application becomes the basis of Spenser's taking the Matthew text as a literary model.

Parodies of sermons in *The Faerie Queene* show an evil character abusing Scripture in one of the ways identified by Protestant commentators on Satan's misuses of biblical argument in the text of Matthew (quoting out of context, deleting significant verses, reading too literally or too allegorically). In addition, Spenser's parodies show the Protestant's dual interest in spiritual understanding and moral application of Scripture. Finally, Spenser seems to agree with Protestant commentators who insist that the proper understanding of Scripture is a product not only of faith but also of proper instruction. Fidelia appears in Book I, Canto x holding a “booke, that was both signd and seald with blood, / Wherein darke things were writ, hard to be vnderstood” (I.x.13, 8-9). Spenser implies that the Bible is not open to every person, and must be carefully interpreted; Fidelia “heauenly documents thereout did preach, / That weaker wit of man could neuer reach” (I.x.19, 4-5). Thus we find in Spenser's parodic sermons more than simple allusiveness; rather, these parodic forms have a broadly topical base, contributing specifically to the ecclesiastical satire in the poem by identifying such characters with faulty hermeneutic practice. Although in the examples to follow, the faults are not assigned discretely by character, in general we can identify quoting out of context with Despayre; omission of verses with Phaedria; and improper application with the Giant in Book V.

III

John Knox's description of Satan's method of temptation provides an uncanny parallel to Despayre's treacherous art of preaching.

The cheif craft of Sathan is to trubill thois that begin to declyne from [God's] obedience ... with dyvers assaltis; the end whairof is always ane, that is, to put variance betuix thame and God into thair conscience, that thai shld not repois and rest themselves in his assurit promissis.¹⁰

In the same manner, Despayre's words in the knight's “conscience made a secret breach” (48, 3). Redcrosse's own awareness of his “declyne from God's obedience,” sharpened by Despayre's rhetoric, makes the knight tremble before the “righteous sentence of th' Almightyes law” (50, 4). Along these general lines, Despayre makes specific assaults. Like Knox's Satan, Despayre “useth and inventeth dyvers argumentis. Sumtymes he calleth the sins of thair youth, and whilk thaie half commitit in the tyme of blindness, to thair remembrance.” Despayre taunts Redcrosse with memories of former sins: “Is not enough that to this Ladie Milde / Thou falsed hast thy faith with periurie, / And sold thyself to serue Duessa vilde” (46, 6-8). “Verie oft,” Knox continues, “[Satan] objecteth thair unthankfulness towardis God and present imperfections.” While Despayre does not explicitly play on the knight's ingratitude, his list of present imperfections is almost endless. Among them, “Feare, sicknesse, age, losse, labour, sorrow, strife, / Paine, hunger, cold that makes the hart to quake; / And euer fickle fortune rageth rife. / All which, and thousands mo do make a loathsome life” (44, 6-9). This, Despayre claims, is the world from which he would rescue the Knight of Holiness. Knox defines many more of the devil's devices, but in all of them “he wolde dryve Godis children to desperation, and by infinit meanis

mo, goeth he about seiking like a roaring lyon to undermyne and destroye our faithe.” Despayre himself nearly succeeds in undermining Redcrosse's faith, and securing his eternal damnation. The analogy between this character and the Satan of Matthew 4 is unmistakable. Una herself recognizes it when she chastizes the Knight for being spiritually dismayed by “diuelish thoughts” (53, 3). A despairing character, of course, will naturally locate his experience beyond the reach of grace. So direct is the comparison between Despayre and Satan, however, that we must assume Despayre's argument is actively devious, and not simply a function of the character's passive expression of his allegorical identity.

Despayre's false preaching, as Patrick Cullen has argued, is based in subtle and erroneous use of Scripture. More specifically, Despayre's false sermon reveals the fault of quoting out of context in his scriptural argument. William Perkins admonishes that in using any piece of Scripture we should “be careful ... that the same be fit and pertinent; for to wrest the same from the proper meaning of the holy ghost to serve [one's] owne conceit is the practise of Satan, which every servant of God must be far from, and therefore must not do it hand over head.”¹¹ Despayre errs in this direction, not once but repeatedly piling up biblical references taken from context to confound Redcrosse. Admittedly, the references are brief and veiled, but, as John Bale argues, even a minor twist of God's word destroys the authority and integrity of the whole.¹²

After lamenting the pain of life (sts. 39-40), Despayre tries to convince Redcrosse that his suicide would hasten the fulfillment of God's design, which has decreed the death of all men (42). He cites Psalm 31.15, in which the psalmist recognizes that man's time is in God's hands, recorded in his fateful book, but conveniently obscures the context; for the psalmist, even awareness of God's rule is cause for joy: “But I trusted in thee, O Lorde; I said, thou art my God. / My times are in thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemys, and from them that persecute me ... Let the lying lips be dumme; which cruelly, proudly, and spitefully speak against the righteous” (Psalm 31.14-15, 18). Had the Knight of Holiness the faith to recognize Despayre's devious argument, he might have cited these very lines to silence his adversary.

Again, asserting God's justice in punishing wickedness, Despayre cites several Old Testament passages to seduce Redcrosse to suicide. In each instance the contexts of the Old Testament passages reveal implications of the Christian vision of mercy, against which the Christian must evaluate the concept of divine retribution. In stanza 46, 3-5, for example, Despayre alludes to Job 2. 27-28: “Is not the measure of thy sinful hire / High heaped up with huge iniquitie / Against the day of wrath to burden thee?” He echoes the words of Zophar, the false friend, who cynically explains Job's afflictions as signs of God's wrath heaped up against man's sinfulness. Immediately before the passage Despayre cites, Job acknowledges that his Redeemer lives, a line seized upon by Renaissance commentators as a typological reference to Christ's salvation. Again in 47, 1-2, Despayre claims for God: “Is not he iust, that all this doth behold / From highest heauen, and beares an equall eye?” For the speaker of Psalm 145.9 from which this passage comes, however, the “equall eye” of God is one which looks benevolently, not mercilessly, on all. The psalmist's conception of justice is one significantly tempered by compassion, which works, according to the Geneva gloss, “not only in pardoning the sinnes of his elect, but in doing good even to the reprobate, albeit they cannot feele the sweet comfort of the same.”

Throughout Despayre's argument, in fact, he consistently ignores the idea of the New Covenant, without reference to which any Old Testament passage is essentially quoted out of context. To emphasize this point, Spenser has Despayre allude to Ezekiel 18.4, in which the prophet pronounces the proverbial visitation of punishment on the child for the sins of the father, only to reverse his reader's expectations with reference to Jehovah's new covenant with the people of Israel. Despayre, however, jumps to a false conclusion from this passage in insisting that all flesh shall die. Here his fault is doubly emphasized because even the Old Testament passage provides an example of God's revision of his own law.

Significantly, the first New Testament reference in the passage occurs after Despayre's speech when the narrator describes Redcrosse's reaction: “The knight was much enmoued with his speach, / That as a swords point through his hart did perse” (48, 1-2; Luke 2.35). “Swords point,” or similar phrases—like “sworde of the

spirit," cited above from the Geneva commentary—were common sixteenth-century epithets for the word of God. That the knight's heart was pierced by Despayre's words may indicate a certain sensitivity on his part to scriptural material; but responding as he does to the abuse of Scripture actually shows that his sensitivity is dulled to the true meaning of the texts cited. More important, however, is the context from which this allusion comes. The passage in Luke refers to Simeon's recognition that the infant Christ is the Messiah, and that Mary would suffer from Israel's rejection of her son. The reference, then, refutes for the reader Despayre's Old Testament argument. Spenser of course uses the allusion ironically; Redcrosse himself suffers under the blows of Despayre's false preaching because he, like Israel, does not recognize the Redeeming Christ. This is Despayre's desired effect. Seeing Redcrosse "wauer weake and fraile, / Whiles trembling horror did his conscience dant," (49, 2-3), Despayre seizes the opportunity to drive his victim to desperation with images of hell's torment.

In taking the text from Matthew as his model, Spenser is able to show convincingly the source of Redcrosse's failure to follow the Christly example in this scene. It must be noted that in none of Redcrosse's retorts does he ever use Scripture himself. Renaissance commentators recognized through the text of Matthew that the only way to counter a faulty biblical argument was with a good one. Perkins, for example, comments on Christ's use of Scripture: "The written word of God, rightly wielded by the hand of faith, is the most sufficient weapon for the repelling of Satan and vanquishing him in all temptations."¹³ Redcrosse's hand of faith is too weak to toss back at his tormentor the proper refutations. Again, Christ's repulsion of Satan in the temptation scene provides the model for this action, as Knox explains: "Thus are we taught, I say, by Chryst Jesus, to repulse Sathan and his assaltis by the word of God, and to apply exempillis of [God's] mercies, whilk he hath schewit to utheris befor us, to oure awn souls in the hour of tentatioun, and in the tyme of oure trubils."¹⁴ Redcrosse fails here as well. It takes Una to remind him forcibly that he too has a part in God's mercies:

Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art?
 Where iustice growes, there grows eke greater grace,
 Thee which doth quench the brond of hellish smart,
 And that accurst hand-writing doth deface

(53. 5-8).

Because Despayre's argument offers a parody of biblical interpretation, we see even more clearly the knight's failing virtue, and the necessity of his training in the House of Holiness in the next canto. Redcrosse's failure results from his inability to bring faith and Scripture to his own defense. To be seduced by Despayre's rhetoric as Redcrosse nearly is, is to deny faith not only in redemption but in Scripture itself. Redcrosse could have refuted Despayre's arguments by citing the very texts Despayre uses against him. Spenser uses the knight's inability to see through Despayre's false preaching to indicate his faithless misunderstanding of Scripture. As Henry Bullinger tells us, "whosoever is ignorant what the word of God and the meaning of the word of God is, he seemeth to be as one blind, deaf, and without wit, in the temple of the Lord, in the school of Christ, ... in the reading of the very sacred scriptures."¹⁵ Presumably these are the lessons Redcrosse will learn from Fidelia's "sacred Booke, with bloud ywrit, / That none could read, except she did them teach, / [Who] unto him disclosed euery whit ... / Of God, of grace, of iustice, of free will" (I.x.19. 1-3, 6).

IV

In the constellation of biblical references in the Despayre scene, then, we read Spenser's implicit directions for both the proper preaching and hearing of God's word. Here, where the hero's quest depends entirely upon his spiritual understanding, hermeneutic parody is used cogently and purposefully toward defining the central character and his experience. Similarly, the complex of sermon parodies in Book II defines more accurately Guyon's mission, arguing strongly against the secular definition of temperance. In fact, the greatest concentration of these parodies occurs in Book II, as if Spenser himself were aware of the possible

misinterpretations of this virtue. The sins of Acrasia and her cohorts, and the errors of her captives, are given a spiritual dimension by the abuse of Scripture associated with them.

Besides the Mammon episode, the most obvious biblical abuse occurs in Canto vi, stanzas 15-17, in which Phaedria lulls Cymochles to sleep with a parodic sermon on Matthew 6.25. Here the speaker most closely resembles a preacher, offering a concentrated exposition of a particular biblical text. By his easy capitulation to Phaedria's seduction, Cymochles indicates his own moral and spiritual depravity. The dissuasion from the active life to one of sleepy idleness becomes tantamount to ignoring the kingdom of heaven.

Phaedria's error in part, as Virgil Whitaker has noted, is in deleting the most necessary verse of the original passage, an omission which allows a too-literal interpretation of what she does cite.¹⁶ Such omission has already been noted as one of the principal devices of the false preacher. In addition, Phaedria's tropological application is faulty. Renaissance commentators on this particular passage readily assert that reading it strictly by the letter will kill the spirit. The Geneva gloss claims that the admonition to ignore worldly cares indicates only that "mans trauel nothing avaieth where God giveth not increase." William Perkins denies vehemently that the passage condemns "diligent labour in a man's vocation," the interpretation Phaedria attaches to it.¹⁷ Luther also supplies a long list of activities not covered by Christ's supposed invitation to ease.¹⁸ Where Cymochles fails to understand the spiritual meaning of the passage, Guyon succeeds. Although Phaedria used on him "her former stile," "Her dalliance he despised, and follies did forsake ... He was wise and warie of her will" (21.9;26.1). Temporarily waylaid on Phaedria's isle, Guyon does not give in to the spiritual sleep Phaedria induces. His resistance witnesses his spiritual as well as moral temperance; the general implication is that he began his earthly quest seeking first the kingdom of God.

Significantly, the Geneva gloss introducing the text Phaedria perverts reads: "If the concupiscence & wicked affections ouercome reason, we must not marueile though men be blinded, and be like unto beasts." Those who fall victim to Phaedria's enchanting sermon have denied in themselves the combination of reason and faith required for a right interpretation of Scripture. Cymochles, lulled by Phaedria's song, and blind drunk on her "liquors strong," falls into bestial torpor. Acrasia, too, lulls her victims into a "creeping slomber" (V.30, 8) of moral and spiritual forgetfulness. She "does charm her louers, and the feeble sprightes / Can call out of the bodies of fraile wightes: / Whom then she does transforme to monstrous hewes, / And horribly misshapes with ugly sightes" (V.27, 4-7). By depriving men of their spiritual faculties, Acrasia destroys the distinction between men and beasts, denying men the access by which they respond to God's higher purpose for their lives. Not surprisingly, then, Acrasia allows the perversion of Scripture in her garden, another indication of the spiritual dangers of the Bowre of Bliss.

In his unremitting march through the Bowre, Guyon hears some unknown singer chant this lovely lay:

Ah, see, who so faire thing doest faine to see,
In springing flowre the image of thy day;
Ah, see the Virgin Rose, how sweetly shee
Doth first peepe forth with bashfull modestee,
That fairer seemes, the less ye see her may;
Lo see soone after, how more bold and free
Her bared bosome she doth broad display;
Lo see soone after, how she fades and falles away.

So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortall life the leafe, the bud, the flower,
Ne more doth flourish after first decay,
That earst was sought to decke both bed and bowre,
Of many a Ladie, and many a Paramowre;
Gather therefore the Rose, whilst yet is prime,
For soone comes age, that will her pride deflowre:
Gather the Rose of Loue, whilst yet is time,

Whilist louing thou mayst loued be with equall crime.

(II, xii, sts. 74-75)

The argument is familiar enough to any reader of *Comus* or Renaissance *carpe diem* lyrics. Spenser's use of the *topos* here indicates his ready accommodation of Christian and classical sources. In addition to its Ovidian heritage, the passage points to various biblical sources. "All flesh is grasse, and all the grace thereof is as the floure of the field. The grasse withereth, the floure fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth vpon it: surely the people is grasse" (Is.40. 6-7). The tropological application made of this text in Acrasia's Bowre by the unknown singer suggests the work of a false preacher in a gross parody of the Holy Spirit's meaning. A favorite idea in both Testaments, similar passages occur throughout the Psalms, Job, James, and 1 Peter, where the biblical writers use the brief duration of human life as an exhortation, not to wanton pleasure but to trust in God and the "good life" (see especially Psalms 37.1-3, Psalms 102.11-12; James 1.10 and 17; 1 Peter 1.24; see also Herbert's lyrics "Life" and "Virtue," based on similar texts). The seductive power of the Bowre of Bliss demonstrates the weakness of man's flesh. The grace of men, glossed in the Geneva Bible as "al man's wisdom & natural powers," fades as the flower of the field. Early in Book II, Amavia explains the destruction of Mordant in similar terms: "My liefest lord she thus beguiled had / For he was flesh: (all flesh doth frailtie breed)" (II.i.52, 5-6). That the unknown singer in the Bowre can so persuasively pervert the sense of the passage suggests that among depraved men the word of the Lord may not endure forever; only the abused word is preached among them. Ironically, however, the true word of God has the last word. Acrasia's Bowre, so often described as young growth, is cut down by Guyon's "rigour pittillesse," at least in part because of the spiritual depravity of its queen.

V

In Book II, then, Spenser brings out a spiritual dimension to the allegory of temperance through his use of parodies of sermons. A similar instance, only briefly noted here, occurs in Book V in the debate between Artegall and the Giant with the Scales. Here Spenser bases the entire passage on texts from Isaiah 40 and II Esdras 4. The parody is as much Spenser's as the characters': the allusions provide a general frame for the debate in which the characters of both the Giant and the knight are revealed through juxtaposition with the original passages from Scripture. In addition, by presenting conflicting scriptural arguments, the passage identifies the clash between Artegall, who understands Scripture, and the Giant, who understands scriptural metaphor too literally, in part as the confrontation of true and false preaching. The use of biblical material here, then, has a cumulative effect. Where Redcrosse fails to bring Scripture to his defense and Guyon responds to scriptural abuse with definitive action, Artegall adds Guyon's moral strength to his own correction of Redcrosse's error. It is as if Artegall has learned from the earlier heroes. Perhaps for this reason, Spenser can afford the distinctly comic tones with which he colors Artegall's encounter with the Giant.

We first meet the Giant with the Scales through the description of the narrator who introduces Artegall's adversary with references to II Esdras 4 (Apochrypha). In this tale, an angel of God rebukes and teases Esdras because he thought himself capable of comprehending the ways of the Highest. Sent to humble him, the angel poses impossible riddles and asks Esdras for definitive answers. At first, Esdras is commanded to "weigh me the weight of fyre, or measure me the blast of winde, or call me againe the day that is past" (4.5). The command of course is similar to that which Artegall gives the Giant. Later, the angel asks Esdras to adjudicate in a dispute between the land and the sea: "I came to a forest in the plaine where the trees helde a counsel, and said, Come, let vs go fight against the sea, that it may giue place to vs, and that we may make vs more woods. Likewise the floods of the sea toke counsel and said, Come let vs go vp and fight against the trees of the wood, that we may get another country for vs" (4.13-15). These are precisely the questions we find the Giant puzzling over in V.ii, 31. The Giant, too, tries to judge in the dispute between sea and land. Because Spenser places the Giant's folly against the biblical context, we recognize even more readily the poet's ironic comment. Esdras at least had the sense to see his own foolishness: "What man is borne, that can do that' which thou

requirest me, concerning these things? O lord, lord, we are all euen full of sinne” (4.6, 38). The Giant, however, persists in attempting the impossible, and for his efforts ends in a pile of broken, rumbling bones.

In his defense of heavenly justice, Artegall, significantly called the “righteous,” acts the part of the Archangel Jeremiel who says to Esdras: “They that dwell vpon earth, can vnderstand nothing, but that which is vpon earth ... [God] hathe weighed the worlde in the balance. The measure of the times is measured: the ages are counted by nomber, and they shal not be moued or shaken, til the measure thereof be fulfilled” (4.21, 36-37). His words also echo those of Isaiah in 40.12 (“Who hathe measured the waters in his sift?”). The contrast between the Giant and Artegall here suggests that reasonable self-knowledge is the basis of the spiritual understanding needed to interpret Scripture properly. The Giant, vainglorious if not in fact stupid, counters with another biblical argument: “Therefore I will throw downe these mountaines hie” (see st. 38), in a parody of the passage from Isaiah (“Every valley shall be exalted and every mountaine and hill shall be made lowe”)—a passage the Geneva gloss interprets as a metaphor for the deliverance promised by the coming of Christ. By turning the passage into a kind of Robin Hood's manifesto to comfort the people, the Giant develops a faulty allegorical reading, applying the meaning of Scripture too literally to present circumstances.

Hence the Giant becomes a false preacher, and a parodic prophet. He cries peace where there is no peace, and comforts the people with false assurances. Speaking as a true preacher and prophet, however, Artegall defends and explicates heavenly justice rightly, emphasizing the power and wisdom of the divine planner. By parodying biblical interpretation, Spenser not only ridicules the Giant's innovations, but he also gives majestic power to Artegall's words and perceptions. The biblical references, first falsely argued, then accurately interpreted, link Artegall with the Old Testament concept of justice. It remains for Britomart to temper and chasten his understanding.

We still have much to learn about the application of biblical hermeneutics to Renaissance literary values, its influence on both creative activity and practical criticism. Establishing the connection between hermeneutic commentary and Spenser's use of Scripture will detect just such an influence, insuring more attentive readings of Spenser's characterization and themes—in fact, fuller understanding of his aesthetic values. That *The Faerie Queene* partly represents a conversion of biblical material has long been recognized; but studies of his use of Scripture have been too narrowly prescribed.¹⁹ The recent interest in “Protestant poetics” has demonstrated convincingly the variety of ways in which the Bible served as a literary model for Protestant poets and prose writers in the Renaissance.²⁰ Of much more compelling interest than ascertaining precisely the definition of Spenser's Protestantism in this more general contribution to biblical poetics. If in creating these temptation scenes Spenser turned, as many others did, to the temptation of Christ in Matthew 4 as a model, he greatly expanded Protestant theory of interpretation by giving it a specifically literary life, suggesting in his characterization of Despayre, Phaedria and the Giant with the Scales literary portraits of false preachers who play legerdemaine with the Scriptures.

Notes

1. For a review of the many discussions of the biblical parody in the Mammon episode, see Patrick Cullen, *Infernal Triad: The Flesh, the World, and the Devil in Spenser and Milton* (Princeton, N.J., 1974), pp. 68-70. Because so much expert commentary on this scene in Spenser can be found elsewhere, I have omitted discussion of the Mammon episode here. Cullen also analyzes Despayre's abuse of Scripture in some detail, and I am generally indebted to his discussion. The effort here to identify parallels between Spenser's characterization of Despayre and Protestant hermeneutic theory confirms and extends Cullen's argument. That Spenser was directly acquainted with the hermeneutic literature is of course conjectural, although his familiarity with John Bale's interlude based on the Matthew text is likely. Knowledge of these issues of interpretation, however, was widely disseminated through the books of homilies (1547, 1563) issued by the state and required reading in local parishes. See also Note 3. All quotations from *The Faerie Queene* are taken from the Variorum

- edition, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, et. al. (Baltimore, 1932 *et seq.*).
2. All biblical quotations are taken from the Geneva Bible. Many arguments about Spenser's use of the Scriptures have tried to demonstrate his familiarity with one bible or another in order to assess his Anglican or Puritan leanings. Such arguments seem to me unnecessarily narrow. Clear distinctions between Anglican and Puritan as early as Spenser's time are difficult to draw; the argument here, however, may suggest that Spenser's hermeneutics tended toward those of the "lower" Protestants. Although the evidence is inconclusive, it seems likely that Spenser was familiar with the Geneva Bible; certainly, in drawing on the text of Matthew, he would have found the Geneva commentary compatible with his literary interests.
 3. Henry Bullinger, *Decades*, Vol. I-II (First Decade, third sermon), ed. Thomas Harding (Cambridge, 1849), p. 78. Although a foreign reformer, Bullinger is cited for his influence over English clergy. In 1586 Archbishop Whitgift made it mandatory that all English preachers read at least one Bullinger sermon a week.
 4. John Bale, *A Breve Comedy or enterlude concernynge the temptacyon of our Lorde and saver, Jesus Chryst, by Sathan in the desart* (1538), Old English Drama Series, Student Facsimile Edition, 1909.
 5. William Perkins, *The Combat Between Christ and the Deuell Displayed: or A Commentary upon the Temptations of Christ*, etc. (1609), p. 30.
 6. J. W. Blench, *Preaching in England in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1964), p. 142. General evidence of the Protestant confidence in Scripture as a moral and spiritual aid abounds in this literature. For arguments particularly relevant to that I am advancing here, see, for example, John Jewel, "A Treatise of the Holy Scriptures," in *Works*, Vol. IV, ed. John Ayre (Cambridge, 1850), and Richard Hooker, *Of The Laws of Ecclesiastical Politie* (1617), p. 73.
 7. Perkins, p. 30.
 8. John Bale, *Baleus Prolocutor*.
 9. John R. Wall has demonstrated that the Tudor *Book of Homilies* (1547) articulated for early Protestants the Erasmian *philosophia Christi*, a program which intended the study of Scripture to lead to an application of Christ's model of charity to the active Christian life. Protestant commentary on Christ's temptation in the wilderness would suggest that his model extended as well to the appropriate use of Scripture in argument. See John R. Wall, "The *Book of Homilies* of 1547," in *Anglican Theological Review* (1976), pp. 75-87, who identifies this text as a major repository of Christian humanism in the mid-sixteenth century, and argues the influence of its style on didactic and controversial prose in this period. My argument suggests the influence of the hermeneutic theory in this text and others of its kind, and on imaginative literature as well. A good example of the application of these principles in a literary setting (although more obviously didactic than Spenser's use of them) is John Bradford's instructional dialogue, "A Dialogue of Communication between Satan and our Conscience," in *Writings*, ed. Aubry Townsend (Cambridge, 1848), I, pp. 210ff. Here Conscience responds to Satan's rebukes, citing Scripture according to Christ's model.
 10. John Knox, "An Exposition upon Matthew IV, concerning the Temptation of Chryst in the wilderness" (1556), in *Works*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh, 1855), IV, pp. 113-14. Quotations in this discussion are taken from this text.
 11. Perkins, p. 31.
 12. John Bale, *Christus Interlocutor*. Bale's Christ rebukes Satan for omitting only four words of the text, "whych if ye put out of syght / Ye shall neuer take that place of scripture ryght." Christ here insists "In no wyse ye ought the scripture to depraue, / But as they lye whole, so ought ye them to haue."
 13. Perkins, p. 19.
 14. Knox, p. 113.
 15. Bullinger, First Sermon, First Decade, p. 36.
 16. See Virgil Whitaker, *The Religious Basis Of Spenser's Thought* (Stanford, Cal., 1950), p. 26. Earlier Jortin and Upton, eighteenth-century annotators of Spenser, had disagreed on the effect of this passage. Recognizing its basis in the "sacred words" of Scripture, Jortin judged bluntly: "The Poet ought not to have placed them where he has." Upton, however, saw the parodic value of the passage,

an example of “Spenser's favorite iteration of letters ... to shew how the best sayings may be perverted to the worst meanings.” See *Variorum*, II, p. 246.

17. William Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition of Christ's Sermon on the Mount* (1608), p. 1.
18. Martin Luther, “Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount,” in *Works XXI*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis, Mo., 1956), XXI, pp. 193-94.
19. See, for example, Grace W. Landrum, “Spenser's Use of the Bible and his Alleged Puritanism,” *PMLA* 41 (1926), 517-44; Anthea Hume, “Spenser, Puritanism, and the May Eclogue,” *Review of English Studies* 20 (1969), 155-67; Naseeb Shaheen, “Spenser and the New Testament,” *American Notes and Queries*, 10 (1971), 4-5.
20. The first major study of Protestant poetics is Barbara Lewalski's *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Lyric* (Princeton, N.J., 1979). A study of similar literary values in the early Tudor period is provided by John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, N.J., 1982).

Criticism: Maureen Quilligan (essay date 1987)

SOURCE: Quilligan, Maureen. “The Comedy of Female Authority in *The Faerie Queene*.” *English Literary Renaissance* 17, no. 2 (spring 1987): 156-71.

[In the following essay, Quilligan discusses Spenser's use of humor in writing about Queen Elizabeth I in *The Faerie Queene*.]

Basing his argument on Anthony Munday's recasting of an Italian play acted before Queen Elizabeth in 1585, Albert Baugh reasoned some time ago that “it would seem the Queen's taste was for the braggadocchio of Captain Crackstone, who adds malapropism to his other absurdities of the miles gloriosus.”¹ Baugh's shrewd guess not only shows how Spenser's coinages have entered the language, but also supports the notion that Spenser's decision to present Belphoebe on her first appearance in *The Faerie Queene* in the company of Braggadocchio and Trompart may owe something to his sense of what the Queen might herself have found amusing. If she liked to laugh at braggadocio captains—a taste further exhibited by her affection for Falstaff—the conspicuously irrelevant scene of Book II, canto iii may have been a subtle hint that Spenser deliberately aimed to please by shadowing his dread sovereign's chastity and womanly beauty in the figure of Belphoebe.²

Readers' responses are generically central to allegory, and the response of Elizabeth, Spenser's first reader and the imperial dedicatrix of the entire epic, is more central than most.³ We know that Elizabeth's regime was very careful about pictorial representations of her physical person—and that if she disliked what an author published about her marriage program, for example, she could have his hand cut off (as she did of the too-aptly named John Stubbs).⁴ Spenser had to tread very delicately in his portrayal of Belphoebe, having named her as explicitly as he does, one of the “mirrors more than one” in which Elizabeth could “chuse” “her selfe to see” (III, Proem, 5). We of course never see the other mirror in which Elizabeth's rule, as opposed to her chastity, is “fashioned”—and it is significant that the closest we come to Gloriana's presence in the text in Arthur's dream is also a moment, when viewed intertextually, that is interestingly occluded by comic elements. As a replay of Chaucer's Tale of Sir Topas, Arthur's dream of “The Faerie Queene” is wildly disjunct in its high, heroic, and romantic seriousness from the banal, bumping prolixity of the pilgrim Chaucer's first effort at a story in *The Canterbury Tales*; justly, Harry Baily remarks, the “drasty rhyming is not worth a tord!” Spenser's apparent deafness to Chaucer's wonderful joke on himself is, however, most interesting for the way Chaucer's Sir Topas prepares for another stumbling knight's comic interaction with a noble exemplar of the faerie queene in Spenser's text. Having rewritten Chaucer's comedy out of Arthur's dream in Book I, Spenser uses it to frame his first direct representation of Elizabeth's female authority in the character of Belphoebe in Book II. There is something funny going on in Spenser's representations of

Elizabeth in *The Faerie Queene* and it may be useful to question what the prevalence of comedy says about Spenser's attitudes toward Elizabeth's gynocratic rule.⁵

The scene with Braggadocchio is not only one of the most comic moments in the epic, it has—if I am correct in my assumption of further generic background—a cultural connection to the Renaissance problem of female authority, if authority is thought to name in part that power by which a female might speak in public. Braggadocchio and Trompart are characters whose names suggest that if they are not taken directly from, then at least they are coherent with, the masks of the Captain and his wily servant in the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. While it has proved impossible for scholars to trace the specifics of the presence of *commedia dell'arte* companies in England, they were known to have played there during the last decades of the century and caused much comment, especially about the presence of women in their troupes. E. K. Chambers and K. M. Lea both guess that a group of players who performed for the court at Windsor in 1574 were “probably those who provoked” Thomas Norton's objections against the “unchaste, shamelesse & unnaturall tomblings of the Italian Woemen.”⁶ Englishmen who traveled abroad had, perhaps not surprisingly, a more cosmopolitan approach to professional women actresses, but they also register cultural shock at public female performance: thus Thomas Coryat reports his visit to a Venetian theater:

Here I observed certain things that I never saw before. For I saw women acte, a thing that I never saw before, though I have heard that it hath sometimes been used in London, & they performed it with as good a grace, action, gesture & whatsoever convenient for a Player, as ever I saw any masculine actor. Also their noble and famous Cortezans came to this comedy, but so disguised that a man cannot perceive them.⁷

Coryat's observation indicates quite neatly, I think, the distinct if subtle boundary between public and private realms that organized for an Elizabethan Englishman a woman's proper place in society. Here it is disorganized by the surprising public self presentation of the professional Italian actress, and the equally odd private appearance in the audience of the “famous Cortezans” or already public women.⁸ Another English traveler to Florence, Fynes Moryson, also specifically noted the skill of Italian actresses in speaking extempore:

... in Florence they have a house where all yeere long a comedy was played by professed players once in the weeke ..., and the partes of wemen were played by wemen, and the cheefe actours had not their partes fully penned, but speak much extempory or upon agreement between themselves, especially the wemen, whose speches were full of wantonnes, though not grosse baudry. ... And one Lucinia a woman player, was so liked of the Florentines, as when shee dyed they made her a monument with an Epitaphe.⁹

If, as I would like to suggest, Spenser is specifically signalling his readers to think of a *commedia dell'arte* generic framework for his scene with Braggadocchio and Belpheobe, he is also marking the scene as a moment where the cultural line is drawn between a woman's licit private sphere and a culturally suspect public arena. This signalling is done for the most part by a humor more grossly physical than we find anywhere else in the epic. As in Norton's objection to the Italian women's “tombling,” the physical action of the mime-like movement of the *commedia* was, from an English perspective, all the more striking because performed by women. The action in canto iii, Book II is quickened to a slapstick pace not only by Braggadocchio's terrified fall from his horse and his diving into a bush, but by the earlier set-up of Braggadocchio's and Trompart's fear at having seen Archimago flap away to get Arthur's sword:

He stayd not for more bidding, but away
Was suddein vanished out of his sight:
The Northerne wind his wings did broad display
At his command, and reared him vp light
From off the earth to take his aerie flight.

They lookt about, but no where could espie
 Tract of his foot: then dead through great affright
 They both nigh were, and each bad other flie:
 Both fled attonce, ne euer backe returned eie.

(II.iii.19)¹⁰

The Magician was a legitimate mask in and of itself in the *commedia dell'arte*, and one Archimago distinctly and comically wears. We not only see Archimago transform himself into a winged creature in the presence of Braggadocchio and Trompart, we see him transformed into a comic figure, tricked by the transparent swagger of Braggadocchio's bluster.

In a tradition later made much of by Shakespeare, the *commedia dell'arte* often functioned in its improvisational methods to produce laughs by the juxtaposition of dialects—in Italy the braggart Captain usually spoke Spanish, for instance—and much of the humor as well as verbal wit of the action derived from the literal idiocy of the characters: they often simply misunderstood each other. Similarly, the usually acute Archimago takes Braggadocchio at face value, and the conversation between Belpheobe and Braggadocchio is a virtual set piece of verbal misunderstandings. Their mutual misprision is prepared for, however, by the physical comedy of Belpheobe's mistaking Braggadocchio's rustlings in the underbrush for her stricken deer so that she “gan a deadly shaft aduauance,” only to be stopped by Trompart. The pure slapstick peaks when Braggadocchio makes his appearance on hands and knees, crawling out of the bush into which he had dived at the sound of Belpheobe's approach:

with that he crauld out of his nest,
 Forth creeping on his caitiue hands and thies,
 And standing stoutly vp, his loftie crest
 Did fiercly shake, and rowze, as comming late from rest.

(II.iii.35)

The stanza-long simile that compares Braggadocchio to a “fearefull fowle” who has hidden herself from a hawk reverses gender in a comedic way that is neatly matched by Belpheobe's answer to Braggadocchio's question about who she is:

But what art thou ô ladie, which doest range
 In this wilde forrest, where no pleasure is,
 And doest not it for ioyous court exchange
 Amongst thine equall peres, where happie blis
 And all delight does raigne, much more then this?
The wood is fit for beasts, the court is fit for thee.

(II.iii.39)

For her part, Belpheobe does not answer why she, a *lady*, dwells in the woods but instead discourses on why anyone—a man, say—would wish to avoid the court.

Who so in pompe of proud estate (quoth she)
 Does swim, and bathe himselfe in courtly blis,
 Does waste his dayes in darke obscuritee,
 And in obliuion euer buried is:
 Abroad in arnes, at home in studious kind
 Who seekes with painfull toile, shall honor soonest find.

(II.iii.40)

Such a dialogue about abstractions like “honor” and the moral problems of life at court could have been heard in the *commedia dell'arte*; but Belpheobe's problem in answering why *she* is in the woods has to do with the constraints imposed by a different genre altogether—the genre of narrative allegory. As in the *commedia*, however, the generic problem has to do with the question of appropriate gender: may a female *act*? In narrative allegory, figures of authority are traditionally feminine. One thinks of Lady Philosophy, Lady Nature, Lady Holy Church, Reason (in *Roman de la Rose*)—the list could go on.

The reason for this tradition is essentially grammatical. To take a specifically significant example, the particular noun *auctor*, *auctoris*, or “author” in Latin is, like the people it has traditionally designated, masculine; then, in order to turn this noun into an abstract general, the class and gender need to be transformed. The word for “authority” itself is, in Latin, *auctoritas*, *auctoritatis*, noun feminine. Because of the generic linguistic interests of allegory, with its parades of personifications and its need to animate nouns, we are given landscapes filled with important female speakers. The striking resistance of medieval literary figures of authority to take on masculine gender is neatly displayed in the controversy Jean Gerson and Christine de Pizan carried on in the so-called “Querelle de la Rose”; in a debate of no small interest to students of the reception of the *Roman de la Rose*, of allegory, and of the history of feminist polemic, Christine had objected to Jean de Meun's obscene language and misogyny. Gerson, a distinguished medieval humanist, had supported Christine's position, in the process creating a male-gendered figure of authority, Theological Eloquence, to argue his points in the case. In Gerson's text this personification takes masculine pronouns. However, in Christine's text and in the texts of other parties to the debate, the grammar follows the gender of Latin *eloquentia*, noun feminine.¹¹

In her function as a figure of authority in Spenser's text, Belpheobe, like Boethius' Lady Philosophy for instance, begins a brief disquisition on “honor”—“In woods, in waues, in warres *she* wents to dwell / And will be found with perill and with paine, / Ne can the man, that moulds in idle cell, / Vnto her happy mansion attaine” (II.iii.41 [my italics]). Belpheobe is not only out in the woods to win honor, she is in some sense herself honor, not only because of her gender, which insists she be taken allegorically as a figure of *auctoritas*, but also because she historically represents Elizabeth, the cultural source of honors in Spenser's society. (This designation Spenser makes clear when he gives her Timias as a lover; *time* = honor.) There is, however, another counter-pressure in the narrative that compels us to see Belpheobe as herself a protagonist, freely ranging about the landscape, capable of experiencing her own history in the text. The potential fissure that begins to open between these twin forces is solved by Braggadocchio's comic blindness to the problem: before Spenser's presentation of Belpheobe as both a protagonist in a chivalric narrative and also an allegorical figure of authority can entirely split apart, Braggadocchio makes his move, thereby interrupting her disquisition on the evils of life at court.

In Princes court, The rest she would haue said,
But that the foolish man, fild with delight
Of her sweet words, that all his sence dismaid,
And with her wondrous beautie rauisht quight,
Gan burne in filthy lust, and leaping light,
Thought in his bastard armes her to embrace.

(II.iii.42)

Braggadocchio's lewd action is completely out of keeping with the way allegorical authorities are traditionally treated. One cannot imagine even the libidinous lover of the *Roman de la Rose* making a grab at Lady Reason, much less Chaucer's erotically defunct narrator in the *Parlement of Foules* making a pass at Lady Nature. Braggadocchio's lunge stops the discourse cold and reassigns Belpheobe her role as a character of romance. Had Belpheobe's authoritative critique become fuller, Spenser would have been in the precarious predicament of having the named representation of Elizabeth roundly criticize the sloth and decadence of Elizabeth's own court. (With a similar comic abruptness in Book III, Spenser evades direct reference to the succession problem

by having Merlin fall into his fainting fit before finishing his prognostications.) Here, easily outmaneuvering Braggadocchio, Belphoebe menaces him with her javelin, turns on her heels, and flees—not to re-enter the poem for another fourteen cantos.

Harry Berger, Jr., has pointed to the problem Belphoebe's conspicuously irrelevant position poses in an interpretation of the third canto: "Consciously [Belphoebe] bespeaks honor, rejects love and passion; unconsciously she is an object of sexual no less than divine and royal devotion."¹² Another way of drawing the distinction that does not require us to posit a novelistic psyche for Belphoebe is to notice the generic conflict. Females in allegory may be figures of authority because they have the appropriate gender for moral or immoral abstractions; they usually counsel, or seduce, the male protagonist whose adventures carry the process of "fashioning." To make a female an actor in an allegory is to complicate an already complicated set of gender distinctions in an already complicated genre of narrative. As Berger comments, "There is a shade of the sinister about" Belphoebe because she "mysteriously combines ... two different women," essentially Diana, an innocent unselfaware goddess, and Penthesilea, a self-conscious female warrior (p. 140). The relationship between Diana and Penthesilea becomes equally if not more problematic in Book V, as we shall see; what seems immediately interesting about Berger's heroic struggles to make sense of Belphoebe's troublesomely sinister appearance in the midst of comedy in Book II, is to note the contrast she embodies, between a speaking subject and a desired object. The subject / object split in the representation of a female character may become a problem for any male author, but it is potentially more troubling for an allegorist who works in a genre that already assigns a great deal of authority to female characters. Spenser's problem in the character of Belphoebe is further compounded, of course, by the historically anomalous political authority held by a female in his culture, especially because Spenser is attempting to represent in his narrative that figure's femaleness (her chastity) as opposed to her political sovereignty.¹³

Spenser's solution to the problem of shadowing Elizabeth is to bring in the clowns. In comedy, the male cultural response to the doubled erotic and political power of a female may legitimately include laughter. His specific signalling of the *commedia dell'arte* in the character of Braggadocchio implicitly indicates the already achieved transgression of usual cultural limits that was inherent in Elizabeth's female rulership: her presence as a female, capable of acting in public, continues to remain a shock to the patriarchal system; it is constantly in need of recuperation through the ideological functioning of what we call Elizabethan literature.¹⁴

Spenser approaches the same generic and cultural problems in his presentation of Britomart, exemplar of chastity and also the narrative protagonist of Book III. He answers the problem not only by having her cross-dressed, but by surrounding her with comedy. Again Spenser makes the humor absolutely explicit. When laughter explodes in this narrative, it is Merlin, "brusting forth in laughter" at Glauce's lame lies, but the whole scene between Glauce and Britomart is in itself also wonderfully comic, not only in Britomart's exaggerated petrarchist sufferings but also when the old nurse in her useless spells chants to her charge. "Come daughter come, come; spit vpon my face, / Spit thrise vpon me, thrise vpon me spit; / Th'üneuen number for this business is most fit" (III.ii.50). (Indeed, Glauce's bustling ability to get the plot of Book III going after Merlin's magico-prophetic ineffectiveness may also recall the plot-business of the zanies in the *commedia*, but I do not at all wish to press the point.) Earlier in Book III, the virtual bedroom farce between Britomart and Malecasta (although it ends with Gardante's wounding of the heroine) is another case in point. Spenser gives us in this episode a mockery of female fear of sexual violation that he elsewhere treats seriously.

Britomart and Belphoebe are, of course, not always comic. However, the double authority granted to these two females, both as actors in the narrative and representations of the same authoritative abstraction (chastity), grants them too much cultural power. Autonomous subjects as well as erotically desirable objects, their sexual allure is first presented in comic scenes, where the inappropriateness of sexually desiring them is represented in both cases by a character whose lust is comically ineffectual (Braggadocchio and Malecasta).

Spenser makes Belpheobe's desirability very explicit in the blazon he inserts into the comic interlude of canto iii of Book II. The blazon itself, being the most conspicuously irrelevant part of the canto, is beautifully analyzed by Berger (pp. 120-49). Feminist criticism has recently taught us to see in the genre of blazon, however, a subversive movement against female erotic power as well as a celebration of it. Nancy J. Vickers has argued most persuasively that the piecemeal anatomy of female beauty in conventional Petrarchan blazon not only praises each individual body part but also enacts a dismemberment of the female corpus so celebrated.¹⁵ In Spenser's blazon Belpheobe has a conspicuous "ham," and the folk festival that bedecks the pillars that are like her legs has a hint of the carnivalesque, a comic cultural moment that allows for many reversals of hierarchy, including those of gender. In these ways, the blazon so conspicuously arresting the forward movement of the narrative, while it presents Belpheobe's beauty as a hieratic vision of female perfection, is qualified by its comic context. To use Vickers' understanding of the blazon—that Diana so described is Diana dismembered—is to see how Spenser's blazon functions as a further movement against Diana / Belpheobe's (and Elizabeth's) power to dismember those mortal males who would look upon her; such a display therefore reinforces the qualification of female power by exposing the female body to an anatomizing gaze.

The epic simile that rightly troubled Berger compares Belpheobe to the divine Diana as well as to the mortal Penthesilea. And Diana, of course, as the goddess of chastity (and mentor of Belpheobe) has a peculiar power throughout Spenser's epic. Significantly, she, too, often appears in comic contexts. In Book III, for example, we see Venus invade her realm in a grand trespass on her territory (though not a dangerous one, as it would have been, tradition teaches us, had a mortal male done the same). Spenser's comedic treatment of the Actaeon myth (for Venus comes upon Diana at her bath) reverses the tragic tone of his precursor text, just as his serious treatment of Chaucer's joke in Arthur's dream of the Faerie Queene turns comedy to heroics. It is not so much that Spenser presents the Diana-Venus episode with overt humor, as that, by suppressing mention of Actaeon, he conspicuously rewrites tragedy out of the famous moment by removing the potential for sexual violation. Diana, having hung up her bow and quiver on a tree bough, is bathing in a fountain:

And her lancke loynes vngirt, and breasts vnbraste,
 After her heat the breathing cold to taste;
 Her golden lockes, that late in tresses bright
 Embreaded were for hindring of her haste,
 Now loose about her shoulders hong vndight,
 And were with sweet Ambrosia all besprinkled light.

Soon as she Venus saw behind her backe,
 She was asham'd to be so loose surprized,
 And woxe half wroth against her damzels slacke,
 That had not her thereof before auized,
 But suffred her so carelesly disguised
 Be ouertaken.

(III.vi.18-19)

Venus is out hunting not for stags but for her wayward son Cupid; eyeing Diana's nymphs with great and comic care, she notes that he could easily have hidden himself among them (III.vi.23).

For he is faire and fresh in face and guize,
 As any Nymph (let not it be enuyde.)
 So saying euery Nymph full narrowly she eyde.

(III.vi.23)

Later, of course, in the Mutabilitie Cantos, and in another comic rewriting of the Actaeon myth, Spenser treats

Diana herself to an epic simile that compares her to a housewife, busy with her dairy, while silly Faunus is compared to a beast who had kicked over all the creaming pans (VII.vi.48). Unlike Venus, who may without danger interrupt Diana at her bath, Faunus, having arranged with the pliable Molanna the same Actaeon-like transgression, makes a mistake: he laughs out loud.

There Faunus saw that pleased much his eye,
And made his hart to tickle in his brest,
That for great ioy of some-what he did spy,
He could him not containe in silent rest;
But breaking forth in laughter, loud profest
His foolish thought. A foolish Faune indeed,
That couldst not hold thy selfe so hidden blest,
But wouldest needs thine owne conceit areed.
Babblers vnworthy been of so diuine a meed.

(VII.vi.46)

This laughter at female nakedness has its part in the larger comedic vision played out in the Mutabilitie Cantos—where Spenser, no babler, keeps silent about the anatomy of another powerful female figure of authority, Dame Nature. The second rewrite of the Actaeon story, in this setting, insists more forcefully than the Venus episode that the power of Diana can be contained. Though some of her nymphs suggest gelding Faunus, his punishment is neither castration, nor a displaced version of it, such as being transformed into a stag and hunted to death by dogs. Faunus is merely draped with a redundant deer's skin and chased by the nymphs in a humorous parody of the murderous rout of Actaeon. The story, however, does end in a tragedy of sorts, for Ireland, if not for Faunus. Spenser reveals that Ireland is itself dismembered. Diana's curse on the spot where Faunus glimpsed her “somewhat” leaves Ireland prey to wolves and thieves so that they “all those Woods deface” (VII.vi.55). The real Diana whose neglect has “defaced” Ireland, is, of course, Elizabeth herself.

The goddess Diana has the authority to cause a tragedy no matter how comically she is presented in the poem, no matter how mocked her power to dismember may be. If Diana can threaten in Book III to clip Cupid's wanton wings “that he no more shall fly” (III.vi.24), and must be mollified by the sweet flattery of Venus; if Diana can comedically harass an unmetamorphosed Faunus, these comic representations indicate very real power. It should not be forgotten that what is shadowed here is the ability to cause not only metamorphic wounds, as in Belpheobe's wounding of Timias, or Britomart's unhorsing of Guyon, but also real ones. Stubbs and his awfully apt name may leap to mind. The power an absolute sovereign has is a capital authority. She may not only cut off hands, but also heads.

In the blazon in canto iii of Book II, Belpheobe is also compared to an Amazon queen as well as to Diana. An Amazon appears again in the poem in the guise of Radigund in Book V (a book in which Braggadocchio has a further set of scenes). Radigund defeats Artegall (the hero who almost manages to save Ireland before being called back to Gloriana's court) and dresses him in women's weeds (which males are not loath to do themselves for the purposes of dramatic representation). In that attire, he toils at women's work until saved by his lady-love, the now not-so-comic Britomart. Artegall succumbs to Radigund in a very specific manner, one which is echoed and repeated in other parts of the text, as if to call attention to its significant presentation of a particular female body part—the head:

He to her lept with deadly dreadfull looke,
And her sunshynie helmet soone vnaced,
Thinking at once both head and helmet to haue raced.

But when as he discovered had her face,
He saw his sences straunge astonishment,
At sight thereof his cruell minded hart

Empierced was with pittifull regard

(V.v.11-13)

In almost all its details an exact replica of Artegall's first encounter with Britomart, this scene also echoes an earlier battle between Artegall and Radigund which contains some bizarre rhyming wit and which Spenser may have intended to be comic: Radigund has Sir Terpin at her mercy, but she is pausing much like a she-bear standing over "the carkasse of some beast too weak," when Artegall attacks her:

Whom when as Artegall in that distresse
By chaunce beheld, he left the bloody slaughter,
In which he swam, and ranne to his redresse.
There her assayling fiercely fresh, he raught her
Such an huge stroke, that it of sence distraught her:
And had she not it warded warily,
It had depriu'd her mother of a daughter.

(V.iv.41)

Such distinctively "feminine" rhymes are unusual in *The Faerie Queene*, especially so in the major rhyme of the stanza, repeated four times (at lines 2, 4, 5, and 7). With the "feminine" stress of the internal rhyme between "mother" and "daughter" of line 7, Spenser is obviously signalling the gender of the rhyme scheme, here exaggerated to the point of humor. Though the comedy of rhyming "daughter" with "slaughter" is grisly enough, it works to defuse the power Radigund here displays. Spenser is having the same kind of fun, I suspect, that Sidney has when he analyzes the differences between Italian, French, and English and their various possibilities for rhyme.

Lastly, even the very ryme it selfe, the Italian cannot put in the last silable, by the French named the Masculine ryme, but still in the next to last, which the French call the Female; or the next before that, which the Italians term *Sdrucchiola*. The example of the former is, *Buono, Suono*, of the *Sdrucchiola, Femina, Semina*. The French, of the other side, hath both the Male, as *Bon, Son*, and the Female, as *Plaise, Taise*. But the *Sdrucchiola* hee hath not: where the English hath all three, as *Due, True, Father, Rather, Motion, Potion*; with much more which might be sayde, but that I find already, the triflingnes of this discourse, is too much enlarged.¹⁶

Sidney is intrigued by the gendered French labels for the different kinds of rhymes, and provides in his examples a witty commentary on appropriate cultural roles for the different genders. Good / sound is male in French; the "sliding" rhyme in Italian is woman / seed; the feminine rhyme in French turns out to be please / silence. Patriarchy writes the English examples as well: Due, True, Father, Rather (as if what one might think of rather than a father is motion / potion).

In like manner, Spenser doubtless expected his readers to sense the wittiness of the rhymes on daughter / slaughter, and to have the comedy of the bizarre music call attention to the transgression of gender roles in Radigund's Amazon kingdom, a transgression deserving the text's violent laughter. When violence makes its appearance in this narrative, it is, of course, another female that deprives Radigund's mother of her daughter—and there is no obvious comedy involved. That it is an Amazonian *head* which goes rolling when Britomart vanquishes Radigund, rather than, as in Homer an arm, or as in Vergil, an unspecified limb, or another body part, is significant for the interest the episode specifically has in female sovereignty.¹⁷

She her so rudely on the helmet smit,
That it empierced to the very braine,
And her proud person low prostrated on the plaine.

Where being layd, the wrothfull Britonesse
Stayd not, till she came to her selfe againe,
But in revenge both of her loues distresse,
And her late vile reproch, though vaunted vaine,
And also of her wound, which sore did paine,
She with one stroke both head and helmet cleft.

(V.vii.33-34)

In a book notable for the dismemberments Talus wreaks on the unruly inhabitants of faerieland, this capital punishment for the usurping female ruler silently testifies to the same cultural discomfort that lies hidden behind the “Etc.” in Elizabeth's title on the epic's dedication page. She may quite legitimately be “Defender of the Faith,” a title she inherited from her father. But she may not quite so easily be styled “Head of the Church” as he had named himself. (The first parliament decided upon the more abstract “governor” and we read the “Etc.” everywhere.)¹⁸ A female head to a male body politic poses the problem of monstrosity Knox trumpeted so impolitically months before Elizabeth ascended the throne, and she was continually forced to remind her Parliaments, in exactly those terms, of her authority: “I will deal therein for your safety, and offer it to you as your Prince and head without request; for it is monstrous that the feet should direct the head.”¹⁹

When Britomart goes to rescue Artegall from his dungeon, where his punishment is not only to wear women's garments, but to sew clothes (for wages, no less), Britomart's single remark does not so much make a joke as drain a festival of its comedy: she says to the cross-dressed Artegall, “What May-game hath misfortune made of you?” Maid Marian in May games, as Natalie Zemon Davis points out, was often a disguised male: “when it came to the Morris Dance with Robin, the Hobby Horse, the dragon, and the rest, the Marian was a man.”²⁰ Such comic and festive cross-dressing, anthropologically speaking, promotes fecundity as well as the momentary loosening of hierarchical order necessary in a rigid social structure. Yet, as Davis concludes in her study of the gender reversals of festival occasions, “The holiday role of the woman-on-top confirmed subjection throughout society, but it also promoted resistance to it.” That Spenser is concerned with the real political facts of the powerful cultural misrule at work in his own society is manifest in the Britomart/Radigund episode. In reinstating masculine rule over Radigund's Amazon empire, Britomart reinstates a governing structure that obtains everywhere but in England under Elizabeth. The May-game comedy is a personal tragedy for Artegall. Its disorder is only righted when Britomart reasserts a hierarchy that uniquely does not hold in Spenser's own culture. Female authority here is not funny, because it is real.

Belphoebe, Braggadocchio, and Spenser's blazon may go on feeling conspicuously irrelevant to the program of temperance a rather humorless Guyon pursues in Book II, but the comedy of that moment cues the representation of female authority Spenser stages throughout the epic he titled *The Faerie Queene*. If he seems to have risked a lot, we must remember that the strain of humor he used may have been already authorized by Elizabeth. What she may have found funny about a Falstaff, enhorned and mocked by a society of women, may have been different from what the male political nation found comic in Braggadocchio or Faunus. But we all know what a relief it is to laugh at our terrors. If Queen Elizabeth could laugh at the kind of fears that became all too real with the braggadocio of an Essex, Spenser's readers could laugh at the power that was real enough, finally, to cut off the Earl's head.

Notes

1. *A Literary History of English*, ed. Albert C. Baugh, (New York, 1948), p. 450.
2. A tradition dateable by John Dennis' 1702 dedication to his reworking of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as *The Comical Gallant* has it that Shakespeare's play “was written at [Queen Elizabeth's] command, and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it acted that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days; and was afterward, as tradition tells us, very well pleased at the representation.” Cited in G. B. Harrison, *Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (New York, 1948), p. 937.

3. Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore, Md., 1981), ch. 3; see also Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1983), ch. 4.
4. See Roy Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 1963); for discussion of the debacle of Stubbs' punishment, see Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton, N.J., 1981), pp. 256-62.
5. That Spenser chose to present Gloriana through a serious rewrite of Chaucer's most self-deprecatingly comic tale in *The Canterbury Tales* should perhaps alert us to the other problem of "authority" Spenser confronts in writing his epic, not only Elizabeth's as sovereign political power, but Chaucer's as most influential English precursor. The two, at least at their first appearance in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, seem to be closely connected. For a discussion of Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, arguing its fundamental support of the complicated ideologies of the Elizabethan regime, and to which the present argument is offered as a partial qualification, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), ch. 4.
6. K. M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte, 1560-1620 with Special Reference to the English Stage* (1934; rpt. New York, 1962), p. 354.
7. Lea, p. 345.
8. On the public/private dichotomy see Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston, 1977), pp. 139-64; for a discussion of the culturally transgressive rhetoric at the center of the "public" courtesan's role in Italy, see Ann R. Jones, "City Women and Their Audiences," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago, 1986), pp. 299-316.
9. Cited Lea, p. 343.
10. Citations of *The Faerie Queene* are *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, eds. J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt, (1912; rpt. London, 1960).
11. Christine, for her part, has some witty play with the figure of Raison in the *Livre de la Cite des Dames*; her Lady Raison explains to Christine as interlocutor that all those who wrote against women in the past did so without her authority, i.e., misogyny is irrational. It is a superficially gentle but profoundly subversive joke. That Spenser may have known *The Booke of the Cytte of Ladyes* in Brian Anslay's translation (1521) is a distinct possibility (rpt. *Distaves and Dames: Renaissance Treatises for and about Women*, ed. Diane Bornstein (New York, 1978). For the documents in the "querelle," see *La Querelle de la Rose: Letters and Documents*, ed. Joseph L. Baird and John R. Kane (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1978). The *Cite* is available in French only in manuscript, and in "The 'Livre de la Cite des Dames,' : A Critical Edition," ed. Maureen Curnow, (Ph.D. Diss. Vanderbilt, 1975). For the modern English translation, see *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards, (New York, 1982).
12. Harry Berger, Jr., *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's Faerie Queene* (1957; rpt. Hamden, Conn., 1967), p. 140.
13. Elizabeth's authority was absolutist and therefore differed radically from the power of any queen reigning in England after the Constitutional changes of 1688.
14. Louis Montrose argues for the close interplay between sexual and monarchical politics in "A *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Shaping Fantasies of Elizabethan Culture: Gender, Power, Form," in *Rewriting the Renaissance*, pp. 65-87: "the woman to whom *all* Elizabethan men were vulnerable was Queen Elizabeth herself. Within legal and fiscal limits, she held the power of life and death over every Englishman, the power to advance or frustrate the worldly desires of all her subjects" (p. 77).
15. Nancy J. Vickers, "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme," *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1981), 265-79.
16. Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie* in *Criticism*, ed. Mark Schorer, Josephine Miles, and Gordon MacKenzie (New York, 1948), p. 430.

17. This significant head may also pinpoint Spenser's rewriting of another female authority. In Christine de Pisan's *Book of the City of Ladies*, Penthesilea meets her death by a blow to the brain: "they smashed through all her armor and struck off a large quarter of her helmet. Pyrrhus was there, and seeing her bare head with its blond hair, dealt her such a great blow that he split open her head and brain. So died the brave Penthesilea, a terrible loss to the Trojans and a profound sorrow for all her land which went into deep mourning, and rightly so, for afterward a woman of her caliber never again ruled over the Amazons" (Richards, trans., p. 51). Spenser may be rewriting Christine when he gives Artegall a very different response to shearing off Britomart's helmet:

The wicked stroke vpon her helmet chaunst,
 And with the force, which in it selfe it bore,
 Her ventayle shard away, and thence forth glaunst
 A down in vaine, ne harm'd her any more.
 With that her angels face, vnseene afore,
 Like to the ruddie morne appeard in sight
And round about the same, her yellow heare
 Hauing through stirring loosd their wonted band,
 Like to a golden border did appeare,
And as his hand hevp againe did reare,
 Thinking to worke on her his vtmost wracke,
 His powrelesse arme benumbd with secret feare
 From his reuengefull purpose shronke abacke.
And he himselfe long gazing thereupon,
 At last fell humbly down vpon his knee,
 And of his wonder made religion.

(IV.vi.19-22)

18. Norman L. Jones, *Faith by Statute: Parliament and the Settlement of Religion, 1559* (London, 1982): "The opposition by all parties to the idea of a female head of the church must have been an important factor in the Queen's decision to seek the governorship" (p.130). The debate in Parliament reflected a far milder version of Knox's statement: "And no less monstrous is the bodie of that common welth, where a woman beareth empire. For either doth it lack a lawfull heade (as in very deed it doth) or els there is an idol exalted in the place of a true head," *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1878), p. 27.
19. Neville Williams, *Elizabeth I, Queen of England* (London, 1971), p. 139.
20. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, ch. 5, "Women on Top," (Stanford, Cal., 1965), p. 151.

Criticism: Richard Mallette (essay date 1987)

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[In the following essay, Mallette examines Book I of *The Faerie Queene* in the context of English Reformation ideas about Protestant preachers and preaching.]

At a pivotal point in Spenser's Legend of Holiness, with Redcross cast into Orgoglio's dungeon and Una's spirits languishing, Arthur makes his ceremonious entrance into the poem. The scene in which he consoles Una and volunteers as her champion deserves closer attention than it has usually received, because the method Arthur employs "in saving Una from despair" (to quote a recent editor)¹ is firmly bound to Reformation ideas about the role of the preacher in the Protestant *ordo salutis*. The scene can therefore serve as the gateway to the wider implications of the art of preaching in Book One. More broadly speaking, I would like to

demonstrate how an awareness of English Reformation homiletics casts a bright light on a signal dimension of the Book's artistry, how Spenser's preoccupation with "words of wondrous might" (I. x. 24) merges with the Protestant preacher's mindfulness of "how we heare Gods word, that it may be effectual to our salvation."²

After Arthur approaches Una decorously and reticently, he learns of the "secret sorrow" afflicting her heart and resolves to "allay, and calme her storming paine" by encouraging her with "[f]aire feeling words" to express her misery. She responds with "bleeding words" (I. vii. 38) but resists his offer to give vent to grief: "My last left comfort," she says, is "my woes to weepe and waile" (I. vii. 39). Arthur entreats again, urging her to "vnfold the anguish of your hart," because, he says,

Mishaps are maistred by aduice discrete,
And counsell mittigates the greatest smart;
Found never helpe, who never would his hurts impart.

(I. vii. 40)

In his role as the giver of "counsell" Arthur makes an intriguing distinction between the emotional condition he discerns in Una (the "anguish of [her] hart") and such external adversities as Redcross's imprisonment, her abandonment, and so forth, which may have prompted her misery. He makes it plain that, quite apart from any physical assistance he may be able to provide, his immediate purpose is to administer a spiritual balm to her "greatest smart," her emotional wretchedness. The distinction matters because it helps to underline Arthur's particular duty as the primary spiritual, as well as martial, champion of the Book. His rescue of Una, entirely verbal and resonant of theological commonplace, has an important pastoral component, which centers on his quelling her despair with "faith":

O but (quoth she) great griefe will not be tould,
And can more easily be thought, then said.
Right so; (quoth he) but he, that neuer would,
Could neuer: will to might giues greatest aid.
But griefe (quoth she) does greater grow displaid,
If then it find not helpe, and breedes despaire.
Despaire breedes not (quoth he) where faith is staid.
No faith so fast (quoth he) but flesh does paire.
Flesh may empaire (quoth he) but reason can repaire.

(I. vii. 41)

Their stichomythy rises above repartee or even exchange of opinion: Arthur *corrects* Una's feelings. His verbal prowess—rational, proverbial, in fact homiletic—not only consoles but also has the affective power to induce "faith," perhaps the key word of the Book:

His goodly reason, and well guided speach
So deepe did settle in her gracious thought,
That her perswaded to disclose the breach,
Which loue and fortune in her heart had wrought.

(I. vii. 42)

Healed of this much of her anguish, Una can now recount her story in full. At the conclusion of her recitation Arthur responds with these words, and the canto ends on an unequivocally hopeful note:

But be of cheare, and comfort to you take:
For till I have acquit your captiue knight,
Assure your selfe, I will you not forsake.

His chearefull words reuiu'd her chearelesse spright,
So forth they went, the Dwarfe them guiding euer right.

(I. vii. 52)

Two words in this passage call for attention: “comfort” (repeated three times in the scene) and “assure.” The theology of assurance and the preaching of comfort comprise a fundamental feature of the Protestant ministry and reflect a spirit of hope and perseverance heard across the spectrum of Reformation theology.³ “Show diligence,” says Richard Hooker, “to the full assurance of hope unto the end.”⁴ “Our dutie,” says Perkins, “is, to labour to bee settled and assured in our conscience that God is our God: for first in this assurance is the foundation of all true comfort” (II, 520). Responding to Paul's injunction that the preacher “speaketh unto men to edifying, and, to exhortacion, and to comfort” (I Cor. 14.3)⁵, Protestant commentators asked implicitly and repeatedly with John Downname “what peace can wee have, if wee be not assured of our election, but have our mindes racked between faith and doubting, hope and despaire?”⁶ It was a problem that dominated much religious discussion, particularly among the followers of Calvin: how can the elect be assured of their salvation and comforted in their doubt?⁷ It was a problem, moreover, not only to be thrashed out by theologians but also one that bore upon the everyday concerns of practical instruction and the guidance of souls. The duty of the pastor centered on the need to assure the flock of their salvation and to comfort them in their spiritual distress. Hence we hear of Richard Greenham's noteworthy work as a soother of distraught souls, in a description that has strong similarities to Arthur's comforting of Una: “... his masterpiece was in comforting wounded consciences. For although Heaven's hand can only set a broken heart yet God used him herein as an instrument of good to many, who came to him with weeping eyes and went from him with cheerful souls.”⁸ While Una's conscience has of course no cause for recrimination, she takes comfort and assurance and cheer from her new champion, a figure associated with Heavenly Grace, of the kind sought by the faithful at every stage of the order of salvation.

The preacher's words of assurance comprised of course only one aspect of his duties, words reflecting a more powerful Word which it was his more general mission to promulgate. As a bringer of comfort as well as a diviner of scripture, the preacher had as his goal to move his hearers to an emotional grasp of the truth—in Erasmus's words “to kindle fervent hearts.”⁹ As Perkins sums it up: “the word preached must pearce into the heart” (I, 200) to arouse feelings and inspire devotion. The emotional power of “the word preached” preoccupied Reformation writing, and was acknowledged by all Protestants and especially by Calvinists, as God's means of illuminating the darkened mind, softening the hardened heart, quelling doubt, and saving souls. All looked to Paul's words, from a text quoted tirelessly throughout the period: “How shal they heare without a preacher? And how shal they preache except they be sent? ... For faith is by hearing, and hearing by the worde of God” (Rom. 10.14-17). Calvin's response to these words resounds across Reformation writing: “Because among so manie excellent gifts wherewith God hath garnished mankinde: this is a singular prerogatiue, that he vouchsaueth to consecrate the mouthes and tongues of men to himselfe, that his owne voice shoulde sounde in them.” He notes that the “Church is not otherwise builded but by outwarde preaching” and that “with God remaineth his power to saue, but (as the same Paul witnesseth) he vttereth and displayeth the same in the preaching of the Gospell.”¹⁰ Bullinger's adage sums up the thought: *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei*.¹¹

The English Reformation affirmed the Calvinist predisposition towards preaching, especially among Puritans but also across the spectrum.¹² Hooker, for example, calls sermons the “blessed ordinance of God” that serve “unto the sound and healthie as food, as physicke unto diseased mindes.”¹³ For the Puritan writer preaching was life, quite literally; Greenham states the situation baldly: “so it is that preaching brings hearing, hearing breeds beleaving, and by beleaving we are saved.”¹⁴ As an inherent part of the order of salvation preaching assumes central importance. Perkins states it clearly:

The preaching of the Gospell is the key of the kingdome of heauen: so that look how necessary it is for a man to haue his soule and to enter into Heauen, so behooouefull it is for him to heare Sermons: for that is the turning of the key whereby we enter into this kingdome. ... *He that is of God, heareth Gods word: and hee that heareth it not, is not of God.*

I John 4:6 (III, 305)

Formulations such as this make clear why preaching assumed the urgency it did among Reformation writers. What William Haller has termed a “vital rage for utterance”¹⁵ lies behind the predominance of preaching in the scale of values in the age. While historians of the English Reformation have investigated the social, political, ecclesiastical, and liturgical impact of preaching,¹⁶ in literary studies preaching remains neglected, a situation not greatly improved from the one Haller complained about nearly fifty years ago when he noted that “preachers exercised an incalculable influence on the development of popular literary taste and expression, an influence no less great for having been ignored by critics and historians.”¹⁷

This influence is evident in Spenser's *Legend of Holiness*, and it would be a surprise if it were not, given the virtue of the Book and the primacy of preaching in the age. Arthur's remedying of Una's distress belongs clearly to the realm of the preacher's duties. When Una asks that Arthur's “wisdom will direct my thought” (I. vii. 42) she asks for the guiding spiritual power reserved in the literature of the age for the skill of the preacher. It is worth looking more closely at how Reformation writers formulated the role of the preacher in the drama of his listener's spiritual life, because we will see that their conception of that role bears closely on the remarkable amount of advice-giving we find in Book One. The various pieces of counsel offered over the course of the Book, mostly directed at Redcross, form a pattern worth examining in Protestant homiletic texts.

The function of the sermon changes radically in the Reformation.¹⁸ It now focuses more squarely on teaching and exhortation. The medieval homiletic tradition, which customarily teaches by anecdote and *exemplum*, gives way to a sermon whose chief purpose is more often reproof and amendment. In the new homiletics, the sermon frequently serves as an ethical function, perhaps as a kind of substitute for the pre-Reformation sacrament of penance.¹⁹ Richard Greenham summarizes the changes in his discussion of how the preacher is to “apply” his wisdom: “All application of doctrine must be referred to one of these heads: 1. To teach and establish true opinions; 2. Or to confute false opinions; 3. Or to correct evil manners; 4. Or to frame good manners; 5. Or to comfort the will.”²⁰ This bias toward the ethical function of the sermon is echoed by Rogers when he says that the “Word is the first and principall” means and help to “strengthen the beleever and settle him in a good life.”²¹ And nowhere does one find a clearer ethical thrust than in the Book of Homilies, the collection designed and legislated to be read in lieu of weekly sermons in virtually every parish of the realm. The Homilies are preponderately didactic and straightforward, clearly intending to encompass the chief subjects upon which a clergyman ought to address his flock by way of instruction and admonition.²²

II

We can look to the first canto of Book One as a miniature of patterns about advice-giving developed throughout. The first words of dialogue are Una's, admonishing Redcross as he stands before the cave of Error:

Be well aware, quoth then that Ladie milde,
Least suddaine mischief ye too rash prouoke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubts: oft fire is without smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your stroke
Sir knight with-hold, till further triall made.

(I. i. 12)

The proverbial formulation of this common sense may disguise the nature of Una's authority. Certainly Redcross easily dismisses it with foolhardy self-righteousness: "Vertue giues her selfe light," he says, "through darknesse for to wade" (I. i. 12). And so Una advances a higher form of interpretation, as it were, and attempts on his behalf to "read" the language of the Wood, one obscured for the knight in the pun of Error's cave (Lat: *cave*). This language Una translates for him when she calls out that "wisedome warnes" caution: "Therefore I read beware" (I. i. 13). Redcross's failure to heed Una's authority compels her to demonstrate it more directly a perilous moment later. Her famous and perplexing counsel—"Add faith vnto your force, and be not faint / Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee" (I. i. 19)—rallies the knight, but neither here nor in subsequent episodes is there any evidence that he responds to or even actually hears the first of Una's two lines of admonition.

One way of approaching this scene and others that deepen Redcross's inadequacies is to suggest, with a metaphorical turn borne out by the text, that Redcross knows neither how to hear nor to read properly. He is spiritually illiterate and hard of hearing. In this episode, as later adventures will show only too clearly, he hears only the second half of Una's warning. As Greenham puts it, "we must know that there are two hearings. There is a hearing of the eare, and there is a hearing of the heart: there is a speaking to the eare and there is a speaking to the heart."²³ While Redcross saves himself in Error's cave, he does so only physically ("of the eare") and not at all spiritually ("of the heart"). Perkins states the matter similarly when he warns that "the hearers ought not to ascribe their faith to the gifts of men but to the power of Gods word" (II, 670). We are saved, after all, not by our own efforts, but by faith.

The second half of Canto One presents another scene of advice-giving and hearkens back ironically to the motifs sketched in the first episode. Chancing to meet Archimago, disguised as an "aged Sire," soberly clad, carrying a book, and knocking his breast "as one that did repent" (I. i. 29), Una and Redcross might well anticipate from his "sagely sad" figure some sort of higher counsel. In fact, however, everything about him suggests the antithesis of the godly Protestant preacher, a suggestion which holds true throughout the episode. His self-description, offered when Redcross asks him for direction to "straunge aduentures," would immediately suggest to Spenser's Protestant audience the stereotypical portrait of a Roman Catholic monk, withdrawn silently from the world:

... how should, alas,

Silly old man, that liues in hidden cell,
 Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,
 Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
 With holy father sits not with such things to mell.

(I. i. 30)

Far from offering the help of the "preachers of God's gospel, as messengers, as servants, as ministers of Christ," in Bishop Jewel's words, "God's messengers appointed to lead the guide,"²⁴ Archimago's initial pose of severe monastic detachment would invite a hostile response from an audience conditioned to the newly developed image of an active clergy, living in the world.²⁵

Archimago presently discards his detachment and, when it is in his interests to do so, joins Una in giving advice to Redcross. The knight's response is revealing. Una advises him to take rest at Archimago's dwelling, and the old man quickly confirms her words: "Right well Sir knight ye haue aduised bin" (I. i. 33). Earlier Redcross had rashly ignored her advice (about "stay[ing] the steppe" (I. i. 13) at Error's cave); here he accepts it, to their detriment. Redcross is unable, here and elsewhere, to discriminate between good and bad advice; he was not, in Perkins's metaphor, developed a "saving hearing" (III, 280). Hence he is unable to discern the diabolical in Archimago's speech, even when the old man displays it for them in terms none of Spenser's audience could mis-hear—or would have heard, for that matter, from any of its godly divines:

With faire discourse the euening so they pas:
For that old man of pleasing words had store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as
glas;
He told of Saintes and Popes, and euermore
He strowd an Aue - Mary after and before.

(I. i. 35)

And if these hints are not enough, Archimago soon “choos[es] out few wordes most horrible,” the satanic negation of the preacher's Word:

He bad awake blacke Plutoes griesly Dame,
And cursed heauen, and spake reproachfull shame
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light.

(I. i. 37)

Of the “Sprights” Archimago summons up, he fashions one in the image and likeness of Una and sends her to seduce Redcross during the night. The encounter between them is especially noteworthy because it anticipates the one we have already examined between Arthur and Una at the end of Canto Seven, exactly half a book later. Like Una, the spright begins tearfully and then pauses:

Her swollen hart her speach seemd to bereaue,
And then againe begun, My weaker yeares
Captiu'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
Fly to your faith for succour and sure ayde.

(I. i. 52)

Key words such as “speach,” “faith,” and “sure ayde” heighten the correspondence between the two scenes. And in a parodic foreshadowing of Arthur's later charge, Redcross assumes the role here of the comforter. “Assure your selfe,” he tells the imposter, “I deeme your love, and hold me to you bound” (I. i. 54); he thus ironically anticipates Arthur's later words to Una: “Assure your self, I will you not foresake” (I. vii. 52). Though the spright's “doubtfull words made that redoubted knight / Suspect her truth” (I. i. 53), he nonetheless misreads, “fed with words, that could not chuse but please” (I. i. 54), misplaces his faith, and betrays Una. A selection from Perkins's catechism, “The Foundation of Christian Religion,” serves as an appropriate gloss upon this scene and throughout: “Q. How must we hear Gods word, that it may be effectual to our saluation? A. We must come to it with hunger-bitten hearts, hauing an appetite to the word; we must marke it with attention, receive it by faith, submit ourselves unto it with feare and trembling, euen then when our faults our reprooved. Lastly, we must hide it in the corners of our hearts, that we may frame our lives and conversations by it” (I, 7).

In the following episodes, as Redcross's errors deepen into sins, the patterns limned in the first canto continue to unfold. Spenser continually draws our attention over the course of the narrative to the power of words (in Perkins's phrase) to “pearce the heart”—or, in Redcross's declining spiritual state, to fail to do so. In the second canto, to choose a crucial example, Redcross succumbs to Duessa disguised as Fidessa. As she recounts her story, riddled with inconsistencies, Redcross responds in this fashion:

He in great passion all this while did dwell,
More busying his quicke eyes, her face to view,
Then his dull eares, to heare what she did tell.

(I. ii. 26)

His ears have been “dull” from the beginning; he listens only with what Perkins calls the “bodily eare,” neglecting the “sauing hearing which bringeth eternal life: all other hearing doth increase our sins to our further condemnation” (III, 280). Relying on that “other hearing” he makes a rash promise, one that we have heard now in two other contexts: “Henceforth,” he tells Duessa, “in safe assurance may ye rest” (I. ii. 27).

Oddly enough, however, even though he is spiritually hard of hearing, Redcross does in fact recognize that some words can deceive. No sooner has he given assurance to Duessa than Fradubio's “piteous yelling voyce was heard” (I. ii. 31). The knight at this point is still sufficiently aware of his own frailty to ask

What voyce of damned Ghost from Limbo lake,
Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire,
Both which fraile men do oftentimes mistake,
Sends to my doubtfull eares these speaches rare?

(I. ii. 32)

Despite his claims to alertness, his ears are not “doubtfull” in any morally useful sense (although perhaps they are full of doubt, in a theologically harmful sense). He not only fails to recognize that he has already been victimized by his dull ears, but he fails to recognize that Fradubio's words apply to his own situation. Whatever other literary precedents lie behind Fradubio's compelling tale, it is also a derivative of the medieval homiletic *exemplum*, perhaps one drawn from “natural phenomena, especially the life of plants,” still current in the sixteenth century, despite changes in the Reformation sermon.²⁶ The auditor, in this case, conspicuously fails to make the desired personal application. In failing to heed Fradubio's warning, Redcross's story becomes in turn an *exemplum* for the reader, as the narrator makes explicit when he later resumes the knight's tale and exhorts us to “beware of fraud, beware of fickleness”: “That doth this *Redcrosse* knights ensample plainly proue” (I. iv. i).

That proof is perhaps most effective in the House of Pride, where Spenser's narrative technique underscores Redcross's widening separation from the saving power of the word (and the Word). The episode up until the joust has relatively little dialogue; we hear nothing directly, for example, of what Lucifera says. And of course the procession of the Seven Deadly Sins is an exclusively visual event;²⁷ we hear nobody speak until Sansjoy makes his rude entrance. Redcross's ominous response to the Saracen's accusations confirms his deepening insensitivity to the power of language: “He neuer meant with words, but swords to plead his right” (I. iv. 42). No wonder, then, that Redcross so easily misinterprets Duessa's famous words in the ensuing joust. When she cries out from the stands to Sansjoy on what appears to be the verge of his triumph “Thine the shield, and I, and all” (I. v. 11), Redcross mis-hears, mistakenly applies her words to himself, and ironically rises to the danger. His interpretive powers have been crippled. In these cantos it is Duessa and Sansjoy who communicate accurately and profoundly. In their secret colloquy she approaches him “with speaches seeming fit” (I. iv. 45), and he in turn “[w]ith gentle wordes he can hear fairely greet / And bad say on the secret of her hart” (I. iv. 46).

The profundity of Redcross's spiritual illiteracy and deafness deepens by Spenser's juxtaposing to his trials Una's wanderings in separate cantos. Already vulnerable without Redcross's protection, she is reduced to helplessness by the incomprehension of the characters she encounters. Corceca can neither “heare, nor speake, nor understand” (I. iii. 3) and is hardly bettered by her mother, whose speech is limited to “nine hundred Pater nosters every day / And thrise nine hundred *Aues* she was wont to say” (I. iii. 13). They swing to the opposite extreme, equally ineffective, after the death of Kirkrapine. They “loudly bray” at Una “with hollow howling, and lamenting cry / Shamefully at her rayling all the way” (I. iii. 23). Una's plights in the midst of this inarticulacy reenforces Spenser's insistence on the necessity of the salvific power of language as a way out of the wilderness. Hence Una's stay among the savage nation adds a further dimension to the pattern, while also reflecting implicitly upon Redcross's parallel sojourn in the House of Pride. In the forest Una herself now

becomes miserably speechless (“Such fearefull fit assaid her trembling hart / Ne word to speake no ioynt to moue she had,” (I. vi. 11)); and yet she is understood more clearly, one suspects, by others than by Redcross: “The saluage nation feele her secret smarte, / And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad” and “comfort her” (I. vi. 11). Despite their superior powers as readers, the satyrs are nonetheless incapable (though perhaps no more so than Redcross, at this point) of comprehending the Word:

During which time her gentle wit she plyes,
To teach them truth, which worshipt her in vaine,
And made her th'Image of Idolytryes. ...

(I. vi. 19)

III

In the second half of Book One, two crucial episodes rely upon the art of preaching: that in which Despaire exhorts Redcross to suicide and that in the House of Holiness where Redcross learns about mercy and salvation. Both episodes have been the focus of considerable attention, from both theological and rhetorical perspectives. These scenes now need to be placed more specifically in the context of Protestant preaching. When we do so we find that the advice Redcross receives from Despaire constitutes what Perkins calls “unprofitable hearing” (a danger which Perkins in fact associates with despair in his scheme of “tentations to the godly”) and that what the knight finds in the House of Holiness is “effectual preaching and hearing” (a benefit Perkins lists among the “causes of salvation”).²⁸ Or to state the matter in the way one contemporary sermon manual puts it, in the last part of the Book Redcross hears two of the major categories of sermons: from Despaire he hears a “chidinge” sermon; from Contemplation he hears a “perswasible” sermon.²⁹ The two, we shall see, are closely linked.

Critics have analysed Despaire's great speech with considerable skill and have traced its origins in a number of traditions.³⁰ Two recent treatments are especially relevant here. Patrick Cullen extends earlier perceptions that Despaire's rhetorical strategy is to segregate the Covenants of Justice and Mercy by pointing out that Despaire delivers an “infernal sermon” based on distortion of scripture, particularly of Pauline texts. By “parodying New Testament doctrine” Despaire's speech becomes a “prophanation of divine [Pauline] metaphor.”³¹ More recently, Ann Imbrie has demonstrated how Despaire's rhetoric is based on a parody of biblical interpretation and that his method relies on the “fault of quoting out of context,” condemned in Reformation hermeneutics.³² Both of these valuable examinations rely on showing how Despaire distorts scripture. I would like to enhance this understanding by showing that Despaire parodies not only scripture but also Reformation sermons, especially (though not exclusively) those based on Calvinist understandings of the depravity of human nature.

If regarded as a distorted form of the Reformation preacher, Despaire fulfills the role of what came to be called (after the figure from Revelation) a “false prophet,” in a particularly sinister counterfeit:

There are three kinds of false prophets. The first teacheth false doctrine. The second teacheth true doctrine but applieth it falsely. The third teacheth and applieth it well, but liue ill.³³

Despaire embodies in varying degrees all three aberrations. And Redcross (in keeping with the constellation of admonitions the book unfolds) gets ample warning of the methods by which Despaire “teacheth false doctrine.” Trevisan, the young knight who directs Redcross to Despaire's cave, cautions against the “wounding words and termes of foule reprehensive” by which Despaire plucks “from vs all hope of due reliefe” (I. ix. 29). Trevisan re-iterates the point when Redcross naively asks how “idle speach” could harm a man. “His subtil tongue,” says Trevisan, “like dropping honny, mealt'h / Into the heart” (I. ix. 31). Despaire employs, that is, rhetorical techniques (conveyed in similar terms of *words-heart-hope*) which are the diabolical

counterpart to those Arthur has employed to console Una. Redcross, however, has become so deafened to wholesome advice that he ignores this warning and of course quickly proves vulnerable to the kinds of deceit Despaire employs.

Despaire's distortion of the Reformation sermon parallels his distortion of scripture noted by other critics: he suppresses half of his text. The Reformation sermon had two functions of equal importance: on the one hand to preach repentance, on the other to teach the forgiveness of sins. One sermon manual stresses the parity of the two functions by noting that the congregation must be convinced not only of their wickedness but also that "God will pardon and forgive their sins and that he will withdraw his anger and punishment."³⁴ The conclusion and culmination of Despaire's speech skillfully mimics the preacher's message of repentance:

Is not he iust, that all this doth behold
From highest heauen, and beares an equall eye?
Shall he thy sins vp in his knowledge fold,
And guiltie be of thine impietie?
Is not his law, Let euery sinner die:
Die shall all flesh?

(I. ix. 47)

By ending here Despaire truncates the preacher's obligation to balance the sermon about penitence with the sermon about forgiveness. Or as Hemmingsen puts it in his sermon manual, *The Preacher*, translated into English in 1574, the "chidinge sermon," used to reprimand and correct "the loytring or the offendinge, or the stubburne and disobediente hearer," has an inherent danger, strictly to be avoided. "Conditions of repentance," he says, ought to "be mingled, least any being discouraged, with somewhat more rougher chidinges, should fall into desparation or wilfullye kill himselfe."³⁵

Despair's speech is yet another kind of parody, one becoming commoner during the Reformation—the sermon on the depravity of human nature. Here one need only compare Despaire's final words with those of an immensely popular preacher of Elizabethan England, Henry Smith. In one sermon, "Trumpet, of the Soule sounding to Judgement" Smith preaches on the text "Rejoyce, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart bee merry in thy young days, follow the ways of thine owne heart and the lusts of thine eyes. But remember for all these things then must come to judgement. (Eccles. 1.9)"³⁶ In another sermon he has this to say on the consequences of sin:

An Arrow is swift, the Sun is swifter, but Sin is swiftest of all: for in a moment it is committed on earth, it comes before God in heaven, and is condemned to hell. ... For the wrath of God taketh up up on high, and throweth us down low upon the rocks of shame and contempt, and terrour of conscience: and so having crushed us with double death, the grave devouring us, hell swallowing us.³⁷

Smith's words have their visual counterpart in the tableau Despaire shows Redcross at the end of his speech:

He shew'd him painted in a table plaine,
The damned ghosts, that doe in torments waile,
And thousand feends that doe them endlesse paine
With fire and brimstone, which for euer shall remaine

(I. ix. 49)

Despair's performance, then, parodies sermons of the age not so much by distorting them (he actually mirrors them—or an element of them—quite accurately) as by simply omitting what normally followed fulminations against sin, namely the assurance of salvation for the righteous.

The effect of Despaire's speech on Redcross is equally parodic—in this case, a parody of the congregation's response, summed up in Perkins's notion that the “word preached must pearce into the heart”:³⁸

The Knight was much enmoued with his speach
That as a swords point through his hart did perse,
And in his conscience made a secret breach. ...

(I. ix. 48)

Though Redcross appears to respond to Despaire's words with his heart (Spenser's choice of a simile is telling), in fact he hears this sermon only with a “bodily ear.” Despaire's sermon may heighten his listener's awareness of sin, but it does not encourage another kind of hearing, one that brings with it “faith, conversion, and obedience. ... This is that saving hearing which bringeth eternal life: all other hearing doth increase our sins to our further condemnation” (Perkins, III, 280). As the narrator points out, Redcross has been “charmed with inchaunted rimes” (I. ix. 49), different only in degree from the “mighty charmes” and curses of Archimago (I. i. 36-37). To be spared suicide he needs Una's “saving” words about mercy.

Her succinct speech with its mordant questions (“In heauenly mercies hast thou not a part?” [I. ix. 53]), indebted as it is to Protestant commonplace and scriptural reminders of “greater grace,” needs to be understood in connection with two other relevant homiletic passages. The first is the narrator's, with the fervent Reformation generalizations and its high hortatory tone, at the beginning of the next canto:

Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That thorough grace hath gained victory.
If any strength we have, it is to ill,
But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will.

(I. x. 1)

The centrifugal force of these words, expanding those of Una to Redcross in order to encompass the human condition, prepare for yet another homily, that of Caelia in the House of Holiness:

That chose the narrow path, or seeke the right:
All keepe the broad high way, and take delight
With many other for to go astray,
And be partakers of their euill plight,
Then with a few to walke the rightest way;
O foolish men, why haste ye to your owne decay?

... So few there be

(I. x. 10)

All three homilies occur at the time when Redcross's heart has been sufficiently bruised and humbled for him to respond to their truths. As Una recognizes, he is ready to enroll in Fidelia's “schoolehouse” so “that of her heauenly learning he might taste, / And heare the wisdom of her words diuine” (I. x. 18). At last Redcross will learn how to hear, how to develop that “sauing hearing which bringeth eternal life” (Perkins, III, 280). Perkins notes that those who are hard of heart “must know that Gods judgement is on them; and if they would be saued, they must labour to come out of this estate, and endeauor to hear with their hearts, that they may be turned unto God both in minde, heart, and life. ... We must use all good meanes to become good hearers of Gods word, bringing not only the bodily eares which wee have by creation, but the spiritual eares of the heart, which we have by regeneration” (III, 280).

This is exactly the condition Redcross is now in and hence can respond to the Word offered by Fidelia's preaching:

And that her sacred Booke, with bloud ywrit,
That none could read, except she did them teach,
She unto him disclosed euery whit,
And heauenly documents thereout did preach
That weaker wit of man could neuer reach,
Of God, of grace, of justice, of free will,
That wonder was to hear her goodly speach:
For she was able, with her words to kill,
And raise againe to life the hart, that she did thrill.

(I. x. 19; emphasis added).

At last Redcross is taught how to “read,” a skill he has lacked since the Cave of Error. And he learns at last how to “hear her goodly speach,” a hearing different in kind from that of his “bodily eares.” “So it is,” says Greenham, “that preaching brings hearing, hearing breeds beleaving, and by beleaving we are saved.”³⁹ Redcross has now become what Perkins calls a “hearing hearer,” one of those who have “eares pierced in their hearts by the spirit of grace, whereby they do not only heare the word outwardly, but their hearts are also affected with it, and made pliable unto it” (III, 280).

His heart revived by this new hearing, Redcross can profit from the instruction offered to him. “If we do heare the Lord,” says Greenham, “he will heare us and communicate unto us the graces of his holy spirit and whatsoever is needful for our salvation.”⁴⁰ Rogers suggests that those “who have had weake beginnings in the Church of God” are able through preaching to “cast off that which would hinder them, their inward corruptions especially; they prepare themselves to follow the rules which lead and guide them to their duty: by this they espy their weaknesses, and how they are hidden backe when they have fallen, and which is the right way of proceeding.”⁴¹ The various ministrations Redcross receives have exactly this purpose. The surgeon Patience, for instance, applies not only “salues and med'cines” to “that soule-diseased knight” but also “added words of wondrous might” (I. x. 24).

While all of these figures “instruct ... him with great industree” (I. x. 45) none does so more effectually than the hermit Contemplation, who reveals to Redcross the vision of the New Jerusalem as well as his destiny as a man of knightly action and as a saint. Contemplation observes the various homiletic postures we have been at pains to identify throughout the narrative; moreover, his intricate role as both advice-giver to Redcross and his larger public role as spokesman of a communal vision mirror the shifts of the poet's focus in this episode. Something of the complexity of Contemplation's role is suggested in the multivalent structure of the episode: after an introduction by Mercie, he presents to Redcross the vision of the New Jerusalem (Stanzas 55-56); he then interprets the vision (57); there follows a debate on the meaning of the vision for Redcross's career (58-63), in which exchange Contemplation functions as ethicist and teacher; the episode concludes with the hermit's revelation of Redcross's identity and of his public role as Saint George (64-68).

Contemplation assumes his part as spiritual counsellor from Mercie. When she escorts Redcross to him, he instantly recognizes that she “doth lead / And shewes the way his sinfull soule to saue” and that (in the metaphor we have seen since the first episode) she “can the way to heauen aread” (I. x. 51). Contemplation's duties as Redcross's spiritual counsellor take two forms. First, like any good preacher he explicitly points the way to salvation: “Then seeke this path, that I do thee presage, / Which after all to heauen shall send / ... Where is for thee ordained a blessed end” (I. x. 61). Second, he acts as a specifically ethical guide. He enjoins Redcross to complete his worldly chores, temporarily to “forgo” (I. x. 63) a desire to renounce his calling as a knight. In this hortatory capacity Contemplation's advice has close affinities with what Spenser's audience would recognize as a “perswasible” sermon, “whereby wee perswade the hearers, either to due, to suffer, or to

forsake some thinge”;⁴² his advice in this respect is true, then, to the exhortative pronouncements directed toward Redcross from the beginning of the narrative. The difference here, of course, is that Redcross follows the advice.

In addition to what might be called this private counsel, Contemplation functions in a more broadly public posture. His vision of the New Jerusalem and his thoughts about the value of “*Cleopolis* for earthly fame” (I. x. 59) serve to expand the frame of reference of both the episode and the poem as a whole. The focus of this crucial episode moves from the individual to the community, as John N. Wall, Jr. has recently argued,⁴³ a shift corresponding to Redcross's enlarged role as the future patron saint of the English nation. In this expanding arena Contemplation assumes not merely the commission of Redcross's spiritual counsellor but also takes on the mantle of the apocalyptic preacher. Recent investigation of Tudor apocalypticism has brought vividly to light the prominent role of this kind of preaching, particularly for our purposes by those preachers who found a ready audience as the confident, post-Armada fervor coincided with the cult of Elizabeth.⁴⁴ Contemplation's vision would have been recognized by Spenser's audience for its close affinities with those sermons on political themes envisioning a triumphant England, presided over by a radiant monarch.⁴⁵ Hence Contemplation's praise of both Cleopolis “the fairest piece, that eye beholden” and of its “soueraigne Dame” (I. x. 59).

The final dimension of Contemplation's homiletic vocation which we need to consider will return us to the opening of this essay, and that is his office as the bringer of assurance and comfort. Indeed, it can be safely said that his chief purpose in the narrative is to assure Redcross of his future victory, both temporal and spiritual. In this respect Contemplation has a strong affiliation with Arthur, with whom he shares the responsibility for conveying many of the Book's chief spiritual values. The stichomythy in which Arthur rescues Una from despair (I. vii. 41) has its counterpart in the stichomythy between Redcross and Contemplation (I. x. 62-63), in which the hermit predicts Redcross's destiny as a saint:

Vnworthy wretch (quoth he [Redcross]) of so great grace,
How dare I thinke such glory to attaine?
These that haue it attained, were in like cace
(Quoth he) as wretched, and liu'd in like paine.
But deeds of armes must I at last be faine,
And Ladies loue to leaue so dearely bought?
What need of armes, where peace doth ay remaine,
(Said he) and battailes none are to be fought?
As for loose loues are vaine, and vanish into nought.

(I. x. 62)

The terms of the debate here, however, differ significantly from those which motivated the dialogue between Arthur and Una. The focus of the earlier dialogue was “faith,” and that focus corresponds to the early stage of the Protestant *ordo salutis* known as Justification, wherein the individual first comprehends that he has been saved by his faith. The exchange between Redcross and Contemplation corresponds to a later stage of the *ordo* (Redcross having already understood Justification from his experiences in the House of Holiness). Here attention centers on the later prospect of how Redcross will “suche glory to attaine.” Contemplation's insistence on the ultimate redundancy of good works, imaged as “deeds of armes” and “Ladies loue,” corresponds to that stage of the *ordo* known as Sanctification. Moreover, he directs Redcross to the final stage of the *ordo* known as Glorification, the life eternal,

Where is for thee ordained a blessed end:
For thou amongst those Saints, whom thou doest see,
Shalt be a Saint. ...

(I. x. 61)

The assurance Contemplation offers Redcross of his ultimate triumph fulfills the preacher's highest goal of kindling fervent hearts in the hope of salvation. Comforted by Contemplation's counsel of assurance Redcross can now go forth to slay the dragon and liberate Eden.

Notes

1. *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London and New York: Longman, 1977), p. 104. All references to Spenser are from this edition and noted in the text.
2. William Perkins, *The Workes*, 3 vols. (London, 1626-31). All references to Perkins are from this edition and noted in the text.
3. See, for example, Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology 1525-1695* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 45-52. The labored question of deciding where Spenser's sectarian allegiances lie may be helped by referring to historians of the era. The most distinguished, Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 26, has referred to "differences of degree, of theological temperature" among English Protestants of the era, alluding to anachronistic and indecisive attempts to distinguish between "Anglican" and "Puritan." See Anthea Hume, *Edmund Spenser: Protestant Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 2-10, for a sensible discussion of Spenser's religious affiliations.
4. See H. C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 333. Hooker, of course, is referring to Heb. VI. 11.
5. All quotations from scripture are from The Geneva Bible.
6. John Downname, *The Christian Warfare* (London, 1612), p. 191.
7. R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), *passim*.
8. Quoted by Porter, *Reformation and Reaction*, p. 217; See also William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), pp. 26-28.
9. Quoted in John S. Chamberlin, *Increase and Multiply: Arts-of-Discourse Procedure in the Preaching of Donne* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1976), p. 71.
10. John Calvin, *The Institvition of Christian Religion*, trans. Thomas Norton (London, 1582), fols. 338^v-339^r.
11. See Heiko Obermann, "Preaching and the Word in the Reformation," *Theology Today*, 18 (1961), 26.
12. A wide variety of scholarship documents this. Notable examples include: Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England From Cranmer to Hooker 1534-1603* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 227-254, 294-324; Charles H. George and Katherine George, *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation 1570-1640* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 335-343; Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, *passim*.
13. Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Book V*, edited by W. Speed Hill (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 87.
14. Richard Greenham, *Works* (London, 1605), p. 356.
15. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, p. 258.
16. See especially Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), pp. 30-79; Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 232, 257-259; Irvonwy Morgan, *The Godly Preachers of the Elizabethan Church* (London: The Epworth Press, 1965).
17. Haller p. 21; A recent authoritative study redressing this neglect is John N. King's, *English Reformation Literature: the Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).
18. See Joachim Dyck, "The First German Treatise on Homiletics: Erasmus Sarcer's *Pastorale and Classical Rhetoric*," in *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric*, edited by James J. Murphy (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 221-237; J. W. Blench, *Preaching in England in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*

- (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), especially pp. 228-320.
19. Obermann, "Preaching and the Word," p. 17.
 20. Greenham, *Works*, p. 420.
 21. Richard Rogers, *Seven Treatises* (London, 1630) p. 283.
 22. See John N. Wall, Jr., "Goodly and Fruitful Lessons: The English Bible, Erasmus' Paraphrases, and the Book of Homilies," in *The Godly Kingdom of Tudor England: Great Books of the English Reformation*, edited by John E. Booty (Wilton, Conn: Morehouse-Barlow Co., Inc., 1981), pp. 47-138.
 23. Greenham, *Works*, p. 357.
 24. John Jewel, *Works*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Parker Society, 1845-50), II, 1048.
 25. See Davies, *Worship and Theology*, p. 237.
 26. Blench, *Preaching in England*, pp. 131-132; see also pp. 171-172.
 27. For a discussion of Spenser's reliance on the medieval homiletic tradition in this episode see Joan Heiges Blythe, "Spenser and the Seven Deadly Sins: Book I, Cantos IV and V," *ELH*, 39 (1972), 342-352.
 28. Perkins's table of the *ordo salutis* is included in his *Works*, edited by Ian Breward (Abingdon: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), p. 169. It is cogently discussed by Andrew D. Weiner, "'Fierce Warres and Faithful Loues': Pattern as Structure in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 37 (1973), 33-58.
 29. Niels Hemmingsen, *The Preacher* (Menston: The Scholar Press, 1972), fols. 64^r, 53^r.
 30. See especially Ernest Sirluck, "A Note on the Rhetoric of Spenser's 'Despair,'" *Modern Philology*, 47 (1949), 8-11; Katherine Koller, "Art, Rhetoric, and Holy Dying in the *Faerie Queene* with Special Reference to the Despair Canto," *Studies in Philology*, 61 (1964), 128-139; Harold Skulsky, "Spenser's Despair Episode and the Theology of Doubt," *Modern Philology*, 78 (1981), 227-242.
 31. Patrick Cullen, *Infernal Triad: The Flesh, the World, and the Devil in Spenser and Milton* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 57-63.
 32. Ann Imbrie, "'Playing Legerdemaine with the Scripture': Sermon parody in *The Faerie Queene*," *English Literary Renaissance* (forthcoming). Professor Imbrie kindly sent me a typescript of her article.
 33. Greenham, *Works*, p. 418.
 34. Dyck, "First German Treatise," p. 234.
 35. Fols. 64^r-65^r.
 36. Henry Smith, *Twelve Sermons* (London, 1632), sig. M7^r.
 37. Smith, *Twelve Sermons*, signs. G6^{r-v}.
 38. See Imbrie on Reformation uses of this metaphor.
 39. Greenham, *Works*, p. 356.
 40. Greenham, *Works*, p. 356.
 41. Rogers, *Works*, p. 285.
 42. Hemmingsen, *The Preacher*, fol. 53^v.
 43. John N. Wall, Jr., "The English Reformation and the Recovery of Christian Community in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*," *Studies in Philology*, 80 (1983), 142-162.
 44. See Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Bernard Capp, "The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought," in *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents, and Repercussions*, edited by C. A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 93-124.
 45. See, for example, *Tudor Apocalypse*, edited by Richard Bauckham (Abingdon: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978).

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Criticism: Mary R. Bowman (essay date 1990)

SOURCE: Bowman, Mary R. "‘She there as Princess rained’: Spenser's Figure of Elizabeth." *Renaissance Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (autumn 1990): 509-28.

[In the following essay, Bowman discusses Spenser's treatment of Queen Elizabeth I in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*.]

“The woman who has the prerogative of a goddess, who is authorized to be out of place, can best justify her authority by putting other women in their places”: so concludes Louis Montrose with equal reference to Raleigh's vision of Elizabeth in the *Discovery of Guiana* and Spenser's reflection of her in Britomart in the Radigund episode in the fifth book of *The Faerie Queene*.¹ In the case of Spenser at least that conclusion is an insightful one, suggesting that Britomart's actions can in part be explained in terms of the political and ideological constraints faced by the queen. It is an insight that I hope to pursue in this essay, for I find it leads to a better understanding of a rather bewildering episode.

On a simple narrative level, of course, the episode is straightforward enough: Artegall leaves Britomart, shortly after the two are betrothed, to continue on his mission; on the way, he encounters Radigund and her woman-ruled city of Radegone, where he loses a joust with her. While she keeps him imprisoned and dressed in women's clothing, and gradually falls in love with him, his servant Talus returns to tell Britomart what has happened; she follows him back, challenges Radigund, and, defeating her, frees her prisoners. So far, nothing is very surprising. But Britomart's victory produces an awkward moment. When she frees the captive Artegall, she does more than merely liberate him and the other knights; she completely alters the structure of the Amazon society, reinstating male authority:

... she there as Princess rained,
And changing all that forme of common weale,
The liberty of women did repeale,
Which they had long usurpt; and them restoring
To men's subiection, did true Iustice deale.

(V.vii.42)²

Though it is her own martial prowess that enables the reallocation of authority, and though she is the sole actor in that restructuring, she assigns the ultimate authority in the society to Artegall, making the knights, now the “magistrates of all that city,” “swear fealty” to him (V.vii.43). We can, of course, simply call this the establishment of Justice as the final authority of government, but to do so would be to ignore the complicating fact that Spenser assigns this task to a woman. She is not merely a knight exercising her abilities in the service of a higher authority, as knights frequently do for their sovereigns; she is, rather, effacing her own power. Her authority, won with her own sword, is employed to reinstate a hierarchy that calls female possession of “liberty” usurpation, and female “subiection” to men “true Iustice,” a hierarchy that men and women alike welcome and attribute to “wisdom” (V.vii.42); neither Britomart's transmutation, during the course of stanza 42, from “Princess” (line 3) to “Goddess” (line 8)—from figure of female authority paradoxically outlawing itself to supernatural figure exempt from the laws she establishes for humanity—nor the curiously parenthetical exemption of the divinely ordained from an earlier denunciation of female “liberty” (V.v.25) succeeds in negating the paradox of Britomart's action. This is not to say, however, that the episode is inexplicable; I shall argue that Britomart's actions *do* make sense—first, within the context of Britomart and Artegall's relationship, and particularly in the intertextual context evoked by Spenser's use of Ariosto; and

second, within the context of Elizabeth's reign. The result will be an appreciation of Britomart, in this episode at least, as a sophisticated and frank figuration of the queen, one more intricate—and hence potentially more critical—than simple praise, for it looks beyond the surface of the queen's public image to explore the processes behind it.

What is most troubling about Britomart's rejection of female rule in Radegone is that it seems to contradict her attitude toward herself. Until now she has been confident of her own capabilities and has shown no reluctance to utilize them. She is, moreover, destined to rule in her home country, and as her father's heir she has been accustomed to as much “liberty” as any crown prince: “nothing he from her reserv'd apart, / Being his onely daughter and his hayre” (III.ii.22). She is also well aware that she is a woman, and she never gives any indication that she sees anything inherently wrong in her own knightly activities, in her defeats of male knights, or in her expectation of rule. In Radegone, however, other considerations make a rejection of female power advantageous. Montrose is right in calling Radigund “Britomart's double, split off from her as an allegorical personification of everything in Artegall's beloved that threatens him.”³ There is an identification between the two women that presents a significant challenge for Britomart.

When Artegall concedes victory to Radigund, it is not the first time he has met defeat at the hands of a woman. Britomart has already mastered him twice in book four, at the tournament in canto 4, and again in canto 6, where the conquest also becomes an amorous one. This second encounter is remarkably similar to Artegall's battle with Radigund. After a period of fighting in which Britomart and Artegall seem equally matched, Artegall is at last able to strike an especially heavy blow, a blow that does not kill her but rather exposes her face:

The wicked stroke upon her helmet chaunst,
And with the force, which in it selfe it bore,
Her ventayle shard away, and thence forth glaunst
A downe in vaine, ne harm'd her any more.
With that her angels face, unseene afore,
Like to the ruddie morne appeard in sight.

(IV.vi.19)

Dazzled by her beauty, Artegall does not pursue his advantage, but instead kneels before her to ask pardon for “his error frayle, / That had done outrage in so high degree” (IV.vi.22). Britomart would keep fighting; she consents to stop only when Glauce persuades her to a truce and she learns that the man she is battling is the man she loves. Scudamour, who has witnessed the encounter, taunts Artegall with the indignity of having become “a Ladies thrall” (IV.vi.28).

The outcome of Artegall's fight with Radigund follows a similar pattern. After a period of inconclusive fighting, Artegall gains an advantage by destroying Radigund's shield and gives her a powerful blow to the head. This time the blow strikes home, knocking his opponent unconscious. But when he removes her helmet, in order to finish her off by decapitating her, he sees her face, and he is again disarmed by beauty:

At sight thereof his cruell minded hart
Empierced was with pittifull regard,
That his sharpe sword he threw from him apart,
Cursing his hand that had that visage mard.

(V.v.13)

Like Britomart, Radigund, when she comes to, continues fighting, but this time there is no aged nurse to propose a truce and, what is more important, no love of Artegall to stay Radigund's hand. She defeats the now unresisting Artegall, and he becomes in fact what Scudamour called him in jest: “a Ladies thrall.”

The similarity between these two battles compels us to see some sort of relationship between the two women, and the parallels doubtless strike Britomart herself when she hears the fight with Radigund recounted by Talus. It is significant that the similarity between the two episodes arises from Artegall's identical reaction to the two beautiful faces: the loving and chivalrous Britomart is also different in important ways from the woman who imprisons and kills men, yet Artegall makes no discrimination between the two in the way he responds to them; the very different outcomes of the two encounters depend upon the different attitudes of the two women themselves.⁴ When Britomart comes to rescue Artegall, therefore, she is caught in a dilemma: it has become clear that her powers are, to Artegall, indistinguishable from Radigund's. The beauty that wins his love can also entrap him; the martial force that conquers Radigund to set him free can equally be employed to enslave him. Radigund embodies an aspect of Britomart that now seems threatening to Artegall; how then can she avoid instilling fear in the man she loves, when her very ability to free him threatens him? Inverting the Amazon society enables her to respond to this dilemma. By reversing Radigund's social hierarchy Britomart asserts her difference from Radigund in a way that even Artegall can recognize; Britomart employs the power gained in her victory at arms ostentatiously in his service, the very paradox of her action emphasizing her submission to him. By this public show of deference she is able to allay the fear her autonomous power calls forth in Artegall. This seemingly strange action, then, is one that her love for Artegall can make appealing to her.

Other dynamics of the Radigund episode serve to increase that appeal, dynamics that become evident when we explore the episode's relation to the *Orlando Furioso*. It is always tempting to compare Spenser's Britomart with Ariosto's Bradamante, who is so clearly one of the models for the later character, and in this episode echoes of the *Furioso* are richly evocative, suggesting even subtler relationships between Britomart and her adversary.

The most obvious antecedent for Radigund and her realm is the Amazon city of Alessandretta. Beyond the gross characteristics of female rule and the imprisonment of men, the two cities share similar motivations for their existence and for the ways they treat men. Ariosto's Amazons, abandoned by the men who had earlier seduced them to desert their families, determine to establish their own society and to set about taking revenge on all men; every man who arrives at their shore is to be put to death. After a time, the need for propagation—abetted, no doubt, by frustrated sexual desire—moves the Amazons to alter their system, permitting a small number of men to survive, each to be the husband to ten women. Later, one of the men marked for death proves so attractive to the daughter of Orontea, the Amazon leader, that she pleads for a new adjustment of the law that will permit Elbanio to become her husband, and a new custom is instituted of giving each new arrival the choice of facing first ten knights in arms and then ten women in bed; this is the practice in force when Marfisa and her companions arrive.

Radigund's decrees are similarly influenced by romantic and erotic consideration. She too was rejected by the man "To whom she bore most fervent love" (V.iv.30), and in her anger at this rejection she determines to change "her love to hatred manifold," taking revenge against all men who come her way. Some, like Terpene, are put to death; most are kept in the captivity Artegall experiences. But Radigund, too, is affected by her captive: her "wandring fancie after lust did raunge," and she began to "cast a secret liking to this captive straunge" (V.v.26). Her attraction prompts her to entertain the possibility of lessening the severity of Artegall's captivity, of keeping him

Bound unto me, but not with such hard bands
Of strong compulsion, and streight violence,
As now in miserable state he stands.

(V.v.33)

Radigund's love turns again to anger and vengefulness when her messenger Clarinda, who herself falls in love with Artegall, lies about his receptiveness to Radigund's wooing, but it is clear that this temporary softening and the latest law of Alessandretta are similar and similarly motivated.

A more interesting counterpart for Radigund is Marfisa. This identification is not made as routinely as the other, but there are a number of parallels that suggest it. When Talus first brings the news of Artegall's imprisonment to Britomart, who is already anxious at Artegall's long absence, she falls into a fit of jealousy patterned after a similar moment in the *Orlando Furioso*:

There she began to make her monefull plaint
Against her Knight, for being so untrew; ...
A while she walkt, and chauft; a while she threw
Her selfe upon her bed, and did lament. ...
Like as a wayward childe, whose sounder sleepe
Is broken with some fearfull dreames affright,
With froward will doth set him selfe to weepe;
Ne can be stild for all his nurses might,
But kicks, and squals, and shriekes for fell despight:
Now scratching her, and her loose locks misusing;
Now seeking darknesse, and now seeking light;
Then craving sucke, and then the sucke refusing.
Such was this Ladies fit, in her loves fond accusing.

(V.vi.12-14)

After a while she becomes calmer and, her “troubled wits” not eased by this emotional outpouring, she returns to Talus “And gan enquire of him, with mylder mood, / The certaine cause of *Artegals* detaine; / And what he did, and in what state he stood” (V.vi.15). Having recovered her self-control enough to act, she sets out to meet Radigund in battle and to wrest Artegall from her. This sequence has long been recognized as modeled after Bradamante's bout with jealousy in canto 32.⁵ When Ruggiero does not return at the promised time, she too grows anxious and fearful that he has deserted her. A stranger's report of the prevalent rumor in the Saracen camp—that Ruggiero and Marfisa are to be married—sends her into a fit of anger, jealousy, and misery that closely resembles Britomart's. A suicidal mood gives way to a plan for meeting Ruggiero in battle, so that she may either punish him for his faithlessness or die at his hands—a thought Britomart also entertains—and hopes that she may also “avenge [her]self on Marfisa” (XXXII.46).⁶

It is Marfisa, moreover, and not Ruggiero, with whom she ends up fighting. The fight between Marfisa and Bradamante is unusually vicious, even for the *Furioso*. Bradamante, filled with fury at her supposed rival, and Marfisa, equally enraged by the ease with which she has been unseated, are both unconcerned with chivalric courtesy at this moment; at an early stage they “grappled in a frenzy” (XXXVI.48);⁷ after Ruggiero disarms them their fight descends to an undignified grapple “with punches and kicks” (XXXVI.50)⁸ evocative of a schoolyard brawl.

Britomart's combat with Radigund remains on the level of a sword battle and ends rather typically with a blow to the head, but Spenser nevertheless takes pains to make it as lawless and as irrational with fury as that of Bradamante and Marfisa:

Ne either sought the others strokes to shun,
But through great fury both their skill forgot,
And practicke use in armes. ...

(V.vii.29)

Though they fight with swords, they are compared to beasts fighting tooth and claw over a meal:

As when a Tygre and a Lionesse
Are met at spoyling of some hungry pray,
Both challenge it with equal greedinesse:
But first the Tygre clawes thereon did lay;
And therefore loth to loose her right away,
Doth in defence thereof full stoutly stonde:
To which the Lion strongly doth gainsay,
That she to hunt the beast first tooke in hond;
And therefore ought it have, where ever she it fond.

(V.vii.30)

Their fight descends, as one critic describes it, to a “heroic cat-fight,”⁹ and the Lion's claim sounds uncomfortably like a schoolyard cry of “finders, keepers.” It is clear that Spenser's contest recalls Ariosto's.

Recognizing this connection encourages us to regard the contest between Britomart and Radigund as Spenser's reenactment of the fight between Bradamante and Marfisa and to look to that earlier fight for guidance in interpreting the later. Two features of Ariosto's fight are relevant to Spenser's version. The more obvious is that Ariosto's is explicitly Bradamante's fight to keep Ruggiero. The comparison, then, leads us to see Britomart less as rescuing Artegall than as winning him back from a rival. This suggestion is reinforced by Radigund's actual attempt to woo Artegall—a change from the situation in the *Furioso*—and by the sexual undertones of Artegall's capitulation and his willingness to entertain her suit, albeit only as a tactic to escape. This interpretation serves also to explain the peculiar focus of their blows, which are aimed quite specifically below the belt:

... ne spared not
Their dainty parts, which nature had created
So faire and tender, without staine or spot,
For other uses, then they them translated;
Which now they hackt and hewd, as if such use they hated.

(V.vii.29)

Sexual rivals, they vent their fury onto one another's genitals.

In giving greater weight to the erotic dynamics of Spenser's episode, the comparison with the *Furioso* supports the reading of the episode already offered: that Britomart's actions in Radegone are motivated by her need to allay Artegall's fear of her own autonomous powers. It also suggests a different motivation for Britomart's treatment of the other Amazons: defense against their threat, not to Artegall, but to Britomart herself. Followers of Radigund and lesser copies of her—and, therefore, bearing some resemblance to Britomart herself—these women are, like Radigund, potential rivals;¹⁰ their suppression serves to make them more unlike both Britomart and Radigund, to make Britomart distinctive among them, and to place them firmly under control.

The other feature of Ariosto's battle that has relevance here is the symbolic weight of the encounter between the two *guerriere*. By the time of their confrontation in the thirty sixth canto, the two women have come to embody two different female roles—two models of behavior and attitudes—available to the woman who wishes to achieve autonomy, self-definition, and authority in a world of exclusively male control.¹¹ Both are effective characters in the world, but their stances in relation to it are quite different ones: Bradamante, bound in loyalty to family, sovereign, and lover, and aspiring to marriage, is the figure of community, cooperation, and generosity; Marfisa embraces isolation, self-reliance, and self-centeredness. The way they function as competing possibilities in the poem's presentation of women has been reflected even in the criticism of the poem, especially feminist criticism, which is divided on the question of which woman is more heroic,

commands a greater share of Ariosto's admiration, and ought to win the greater share of ours.¹² Ariosto, characteristically, does not make this decision easy; when the two maidens meet in combat, their contest is indecisive, their quarrel diffused when Atlante, Ruggiero's guardian, reveals that Ruggiero and Marfisa are siblings. But when Spenser rewrites the encounter, his figure of strength combined with the vulnerability necessary to admit true love decisively defeats the figure who combines Marfisa's forbidding independence with the vengeful cruelty of the Amazons of Alessandretta. The meeting of Britomart and Radigund becomes a psychomachia, a struggle between the two possible avenues of response that confront Britomart when she has cause to believe that Artegall has betrayed her; and she chooses the more vulnerable but ultimately more rewarding path of trusting and supporting love. Restructuring Radigund's city as she does, then, can be seen as an outgrowth of that choice. It places her, as we have already seen in another context, in unmistakable opposition to Radigund, minimizing and discrediting their similarities; it also serves as a demonstration of her attitude to Artegall. Her insistence that all women be under "mens subiection" displays her intention of not becoming independent of him, much less dominant over him, and she could give no clearer token of her willingness to be vulnerable to him than her final handing over to his authority of all she has won with her own strength. The very peculiarity of the self-effacing gesture that we remarked earlier serves to call attention to the offer of submissive trust she is making.

We have identified, then, much of the complex tangle of emotions that Britomart experiences when faced with the situation in which she finds Artegall, and have seen how the apparently bizarre and self-contradictory action of imposing the traditional social hierarchy on Radegone can answer the associated complex of needs. I turn now to put the episode in a specifically Elizabethan context, and to suggest that the insights gained by discussing it on a psychological level will serve to illuminate its political meaning. The passage itself invokes one particular historical context, that of the debate that raged during the sixteenth century over the validity of rule by women, when the narrative voice denounces Radigund's rule in very general terms, excepting only the divinely appointed:

Such is the crueltie of womenkynd,
When they have shaken off the shamefast band,
With which wise Nature did them strongly bynd,
T'obay the heasts of mans well ruling hand,
That then all rule and reason they withstand,
To purchase a licentious libertie.
But vertuous women wisely understand,
That they were born to base humilitie,
Unlesse the heauens them lift to lawfull soveraintie.

(V.v.25)

The debate over women's rule has been favored as a context for discussing Radigund by critics who analyze this episode to comment on Spenser's opinion about the issue.¹³ While the debate must always be borne in mind as a background to the poem, my approach will be different: the episode also reveals a great deal about Spenser's view of the particular female monarch that he had to deal with, in one way or another, with or without a general theory about female rule.

Associating Britomart with Elizabeth is a possibility throughout *The Faerie Queene*; as the figure of Chastity, she inevitably suggests the Virgin Queen, and in the fiction of the poem she is an ancestor of Elizabeth and, like Elizabeth, heir to her father's British kingdom. The parallel continues in detail in this episode, helping us to understand Spenser's perception of some of the dynamics of Elizabeth's self-figuration. Britomart is said to reign as "Princess" over the Amazon city, so adored by the inhabitants that she acquires the status of a "Goddesse"; the adoration of England's prince, now routinely called a cult, replaced the cult of the Virgin Mary and seemed almost to be a religion in itself.¹⁴ Radigund, on the other hand, has been routinely identified as Mary Stuart by critics of the historical allegory in the poem. Without challenging this identification, I

would however suggest that it has implications beyond an objective depiction of contemporary events and an exposition of familiar ideas that has most often been seen in the episode.¹⁵

Reading the battle with Radigund as a psychomachia enables us to see it more generally, as embodying the motivational process of Elizabeth's image-making under the influence of Mary's quite different personal "style." Much of the image Elizabeth chose to project evokes a favorable contrast with the Scottish queen. The Virgin Queen of England against the sexually scandalous Queen of Scots, the peace-bringing "naturall mother" of the country against the divisive and politically awkward mother of James VI, the nun-like virtuous bride of her kingdom against the husband-murdering adulteress—all contribute to an increasingly stark contrast between the saintly image of Elizabeth and the witchlike image Mary developed in the loyal Elizabethan imagination, an image Spenser later reflects in choosing Duessa as his clearest stand-in for Mary.¹⁶ Just as Britomart rejects the model for female autonomy exemplified by Radigund/Marfisa, choosing instead to follow the Bradamantean example, and in so doing enables her relationship with Artegall to develop to its prophesied fruition, Elizabeth rejected the antagonistic character of Mary's politics and chose a style in marked contrast to it, the style that enabled her relatively peaceful reign.

Mary was not only a useful foil for Elizabeth, however; she had also presented a very real threat. She was a rival claimant to the throne and the focus of attempts to depose or assassinate Elizabeth, a threat Elizabeth understood only too well, having herself occupied a similar position relative to Mary Tudor. To a woman in power, other powerful women are dangerous. I have argued that that fact has much to do with the reason why Britomart kills Radigund and sanctions the oppression of Radigund's disciples; I would further suggest that understanding that dynamic helps us understand Spenser's view of Elizabeth's relationship with other women. From Elizabeth's point of view, Mary had to die. She dies in this poem, in the hiatus between the ninth and tenth cantos of this book, and she dies the same death that is visited on Radigund by Britomart, who "with one stroke both head and helmet cleft" (V.vii.34); in opening up the motivation of that murder, and in making Britomart herself the agent of it, the episode with Radigund arms us to read the silence of the later hiatus. In Mercilla Spenser seems to let Elizabeth hide behind a veil of "piteous ruth" (V.ix.50)—the stance Elizabeth chose to take publicly—but for the reader who has cared to see it, he has already, with Britomart, shown what went on behind that veil.

Like Britomart, Elizabeth also sanctioned rather than challenged the oppression of other women. Recent feminist scholarship has led us to see that Elizabeth, like many "outstanding" women in the Renaissance, through the way in which she was presented as an *exceptional* woman, acted more to reinforce than to challenge the attitudes and social structures that limited women's ability to act autonomously and effectively: "Women's subservience to laws made and interpreted by men presumably represented the natural order of things; Elizabeth's reign, considered a God-given exception, made no substantial difference in cultural attitudes or their theoretical justification."¹⁷ She might therefore be said to have done symbolically and ideologically precisely what Britomart does in a more literal way—restore women "to mens subiection," hail that subjection "true Iustice," and empower her own exemption from that hierarchy by rising above it as she changes from "Princess" to "Goddesse" (V.vii.42). With Britomart Spenser examines the psychological dynamics of that political stance.

In that endeavor Spenser employs one of the staples of Elizabethan mythography: Britomart conquers and dismantles a society that clearly draws on the Amazon tradition. The concept of the Amazon occupies an ambivalent position in Elizabethan figuration; Elizabeth is both like and unlike an Amazon. She is an independent and powerful ruler, but she chooses to project an image not violent but loving, not sexually predatory but celestial and virginal.¹⁸ Amazons, therefore, were used relatively little as figures of Elizabeth;¹⁹ they were far more useful as figures to oppose. Montrose describes Sir Walter Raleigh's use of the Amazon in the *Discovery of Guiana* as providing such a figure: "Raleigh's strategy for persuading the queen to advance his colonial enterprise is to insinuate that she is both like and unlike the Amazon, and that Elizabeth can definitely cleanse herself from contamination by the Amazons if she sanctions their subjugation."²⁰

The opposition that Raleigh is seen manipulating here does not serve only to empower Elizabeth by suppressing other women, however; another effect of an opposition to the Amazon figure is to allay the fears invited in men by a powerful woman. Amazons were not so much “the foremost ancient examples of feminism”²¹ as a nightmare fantasy of powerful women. Amazons killed, disfigured, and enslaved men, humiliating by feminizing them, and murdered their own male children.²² Elizabeth needed to distinguish herself from such a figure; the male fear of female power given frenzied expression in the Amazon myth was an inevitable force in the Elizabethan court. As female ruler of an otherwise male-dominated society, Elizabeth was a preternaturally threatening woman; female power, in most spheres of life kept under male control and even then the locus of fear and fantasy, was here linked to supreme temporal and religious authority. Figuring herself in *opposition* to the sexually predatory Amazon served in part to insulate Elizabeth against disloyalty born of fear by diffusing the anxiety her peculiar situation necessarily bred, suggesting that *this* powerful woman was somehow different from the ones that really presented a threat to men.

This opposition did not, however, adequately meet the need. Elizabeth's deliberate and ostentatious choice of perpetual virginity had the potential to diffuse the sexual threat she embodied, but it also increased her anomalousness, deprived her subjects of even the slight comfort her submission to a husband might provide, and added anxiety over the succession. One of Elizabeth's principal tools for making herself more acceptable, because less unusual and therefore less threatening, to her subjects was the Petrarchan style of her court. The queen imposed upon her dealings with her courtiers the form of courtly love, casting herself as a Petrarchan mistress, her courtiers as her idealizing suitors. The strategy worked, primarily because it was well-calculated to allay male uneasiness with a female monarch. The queen, while remaining powerful, assumed the guise of a more conventional female role, and permitted the courtiers one they could more easily tolerate; being a man whose fate is subject to the whims of a distant and indifferent mistress was a role more familiar, and hence more comfortable, when the arena was love, not politics. She also, while retaining her possession of ultimate control, subtly allowed her courtiers the comfort of imagining *themselves* in ultimate control. The Petrarchan love convention as it developed in Elizabethan England was—as its name reflects—a male construction, and for all his complaints of helplessness the male poet always got the last word. What Mariann S. Regan says of Petrarch's control over Laura is applicable also to such English figures as Sidney's Astrophel: “Because she is not there, he can take charge almost entirely of her image, its appearance and disappearance: he ‘designs’ her.”²³ In the English court, the mistress actually did the designing, but the use of such a predominantly male tradition kept that disturbing fact under the surface.

These strategies to pacify her possibly anxious male court—distinguishing herself from the Amazon, leaving patriarchy unchallenged, playing the coy mistress while still clearly the master—are, of course, precisely the strategies Britomart employs to ease Artegall's fears of *her* power. Thus, we are able to see that Spenser's depiction of Britomart in this episode analyzes, through its psychological allegory, the psychological dynamics of Elizabeth's court; he shows us why Elizabeth acted as she did. Such a tactic, while unconventional and certainly far from simple fulsome praise, would not necessarily be either laudatory or condemning, but here it does include some elements of criticism. One such element is Spenser's treatment of the court Petrarchanism. Britomart herself has throughout the poem embodied a critique of the Petrarchan tradition. Her feelings and her quest for Artegall are informed by an entire theory of love which is radically different from the one that controls Petrarchan love. As Lauren Silberman observes, “Britomart, who takes a very active role in a loving relationship, is an anti-Petrarchan heroine. Her warmth and vulnerability expose the essential sterility and self-absorption of Petrarchan lovesickness.”²⁴ In her expression of frustration by the sea in III.iv, she appropriates the repertoire of the Petrarchan lover, demonstrating simultaneously how fruitless it is as a permanent state and how artificial is its masculine exclusivity. In the figure of Timias, the Petrarchan lover of Belpheobe whose will is broken by her rejection of him, Spenser also demonstrates the destructive potential of Petrarchanism, particularly of the female side of it. Reed Way Dasenbrock, who has recently examined the anti-Petrarchan force of the four squires in books three and four, speculates that “critics have not seen Spenser as criticizing the form of love exemplified by the Timias-Belpheobe relationship ... [because] Belpheobe represents a type of chastity widely admired in Spenser's society and embodied in the

most powerful person in the realm.”²⁵ To take this suggestion a step farther, we remember that the Timias-Belpheobe relationship has for centuries been given a topical reading in which Belpheobe *is* Elizabeth, and Timias is Sir Walter Raleigh; Timias's plight operates, on this level, to illustrate how the misfortunes of Raleigh are the inevitable result of the Petrarchan form Elizabeth imposed on her court. Spenser is not merely criticizing someone *like* Elizabeth; he is criticizing Elizabeth herself.²⁶

When Britomart defeats Radigund, the anti-Petrarchan figure soundly defeats one whose own treatment of men is, while not actually Petrarchan, uncomfortably akin to it. Radigund compels her victims into her “service” (V.v.17)—a term well-worn in the discourse of Petrarchanism—and into an unhealthy and debilitating stasis. Artegall in particular is embroiled in a dialogue of wooing in which both parties experience the familiar denial of the relief they seek. When Britomart kills her and, for the sake of reciprocal love, eradicates all trace of the climate she created, Spenser's hero—and Elizabeth's image—institute “true Iustice” by rejecting the model of Elizabeth's court.

The queen's virginity, too, is subjected to Spenser's ironic scrutiny. Britomart, like her predecessor Bradamante, has every intention to marry; Elizabeth, like Marfisa, determines to die a virgin. Elizabeth created the problem of her status, but it was Spenser who chose to present the queen—and, indeed, Chastity itself—in the marriage-bound figure of Britomart, and while he blurs the contrast somewhat by replacing the celibate Marfisa with the merely unsuccessful Radigund, the choice must be significant, the contradiction deliberate. Elizabeth's closer similarity to Radigund than Britomart in this respect suggests that Elizabeth has more in common with the Amazon than she pretends; her anti-Amazon claims are, Spenser reminds us, fictions. Published in 1596, the episode with its pointed misrepresentation of the virgin Elizabeth could hardly have been intended to persuade the sixty-three-year-old queen to marry, but it could certainly have been meant to criticize her for never having done so. On one level, I think, it does this, but Spenser goes farther. In the dream in Isis Church Spenser symbolically suggests a connection between the death of Radigund/Mary and Elizabeth's ability to preside a virgin over a Petrarchan court.

The argument to canto 7 grammatically connects the dream with the battle that follows it, implying with its colon that the dream is in fact a vision of that fight:

Britomart comes to Isis Church,
Where she strange visions sees:
She fights with Radigund, her slaies,
And Artegall thence frees.

(V.vii.arg.)

The idol, as it is described when Britomart first enters the temple, itself seems to depict Britomart's victory over Radigund. Under Isis's foot is a crocodile whose subjugation, we are told, signifies Isis's suppression of “both forged guile, / And open force” (V.vii.7); Radigund, we have learned earlier, subdues knights “by force or guile” (V.iv.31). The crocodile, moreover, is female, not male as its identification with Osyris would dictate: she wraps “*her taile*” about Isis's waist (V.vii.6; my emphasis). The idol thus iconographically depicts Britomart's defeat of Radigund, and Britomart dreams what other successes can follow that victory. With this rival already symbolically subdued, Britomart is able to be figured in her dream, like Elizabeth, as both queen and goddess: she dreams that she wears a “robe of scarlet red,” a traditional royal symbol, and “a Crowne of gold,” a monarchial symbol but also the idol's symbol of “powre in things divine” (V.vii.13, 6).

The crocodile, the subdued Radigund, is transformed into a threatening and explicitly male figure that, having protected Britomart from a dangerous storm, turns his power against her as well: “swolne with pride of *his owne peerelesse power, / He gan to threaten her likewise to eat*” (V.vii.15; my emphasis). Again subdued, the crocodile engages in sexually suggestive and vaguely Petrarchan activity: “turning all his pride to humblesse

meeke, / Him selfe before her feete he lowly threw, / And gan for grace and love of her to seeke” (V.vii.16). An analogy with Artegall is certainly possible, but the crocodile in Britomart's dream is far more suggestive of the men of Elizabeth's court. Elizabeth, like Britomart in the dream, needs the male figure to resist outside forces—the celebrated defeat of the Armada, for example, could hardly have been achieved without masculine as well as meteorological assistance—but to protect herself from that same potentially threatening figure uses her power to control it, taming the men into a Petrarchan “game” (V.vii.16). In the dream this game leads, without any explicit consummation, to a birth. Reading the dream as a prophecy of Britomart's marriage, we can read the lion as a symbol of her illustrious progeny and attribute the absence of explicit sexual contact to Britomart's repression or inexperience; in an Elizabethan context, however, we would need another way to explain the production of an heir from a stylized Petrarchan game. The juxtaposition of the idol, depicting the defeat of Radigund, and the dream, predicting a fruitful future, suggests that the first event enables the later ones, as it does literally in the case of Britomart and Artegall; the implication for Elizabeth is that all the things Britomart's victory over Radigund signifies—including the death of Mary Stuart, the paradoxical reinforcement of patriarchal structures, and a fictional deferral to male power—are what enables Elizabeth's success. In particular, the death of Mary allows Elizabeth, without submitting herself to a man sexually or in marriage, to obtain, in a manner, a son—Mary's son James, the heir Elizabeth was reluctant to acknowledge in her lifetime but whom she addressed in maternal terms. The symbolism of the dream, then, suggests that Spenser saw the connection between Mary's demise and Elizabeth's control of the succession. The priests of the temple serve to protect Spenser from the potential retribution for such a suggestion by offering a more politically safe, nationalistic reading of the dream, but their explanation of Osyris, representing Justice and Artegall, tempered by Isis/Britomart/Equity, leaves untouched the specific Elizabethan application that remains silently available.

We can see, then, that in the Radigund sequence Britomart becomes a psychologically and politically accurate reflection of Spenser's queen. In her Spenser shows his keen understanding of the forces to which Elizabeth had to respond, the significance of the steps she took, and the truth behind her fictions. The triumph of Radegone is, of course, Britomart's last appearance in the poem, implying perhaps that her effort to suppress women but exempt herself is futile; even more, however, the disappearance suggests that this demystified, even critical, portrayal of the queen must be disclaimed by the poet haunted by the fate of Malfont; he disclaims her by removing her from the poem altogether. He disclaims her similarly in the *Letter to Raleigh*, where he names only Belpheobe and Gloriana as figures of Elizabeth. There are many shadows of Elizabeth absent here, but Britomart is by far the most conspicuous; she is more visible in the poem than the other two and, while none of the figures is entirely simple, Britomart presents the most subtle and complex picture. Why then is she so remarkably omitted from the poet's own description of the poem? The answer, I think, is this: the omission serves simultaneously as a pointer to the unmentioned but important figure and as a gesture of denial that this potentially critical portrait is in fact of Elizabeth at all. It is the technique of the poet who must be cautious, but wishes nevertheless to speak.

Notes

1. Louis A. Montrose, “A *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Shaping Fantasies of Elizabethan Culture,” in Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers, eds., *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago, 1986), 79.
2. All quotations from *The Faerie Queene* are taken from the edition by A. C. Hamilton (New York, 1977).
3. Montrose, 78.
4. Susanne Woods has also discussed the remarkable similarities and significant differences between the two fights in “Spenser and the Problem of Women's Rule,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 48 (1985): 141-58, esp. 153.
5. R. E. Neil Dodge records the parallel in his pioneering catalogue of such imitations; “Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto,” *PMLA* 12 (1897): 203.

6. "farai vendetta di quella Marfisa." All quotations from the *Orlando Furioso* are taken from the edition by Lanfranco Caretti (Milan, 1963); the English translation is that of Guido Waldman (Oxford, 1983).
7. "fan da disperate la battaglia."
8. "a pugni e a calci."
9. Elizabeth Bieman, "Britomart in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 37 (1967-68): 170.
10. We might also recall that Ruggiero sees the warrior Marfisa only as a comrade, and responds sexually to the "feminine" characters Alcina and Angelica, but it is Marfisa who, Bradamante suspects even before she hears rumors to the effect, will steal Ruggiero's heart.
11. Diana MacIntyre DeLuca also sees Bradamante and Marfisa, like other pairs of guerriere in Renaissance epics, as "two women warriors who represent rival traditions" and "two feminine possibilities"; *Forgetful of Her Yoke: The Woman Warrior in Three Renaissance Epics*, *DAI* 42.12 (June 1982): 5127A-5128A. The same understanding informs the discussion of the *Furioso's* women in Peter DeSa Wiggins, *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and Design in the Orlando Furioso* (Baltimore, 1986), 161-204. My reading is indebted to his.
12. For an example from each side of the debate, see Margaret Tomalin, "Bradamante and Marfisa: An Analysis of the 'Guerriere' of the 'Orlando Furioso,'" *Modern Language Review* 71 (1976): 540-52; and Pamela Joseph Benson, "A Defense of the Excellence of Bradamante," *Quaderni d'italianistica* 4 (1983): 135-53.
13. See esp. James E. Phillips, Jr., "The Background of Spenser's Attitude Toward Women Rulers," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 5 (1941-42): 5-32; and idem, "The Woman Ruler in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," *ibid.*, 211-34; Woods; and Benson, "Rule, Virginia: Protestant Theories of Female Regiment in *The Faerie Queene*," *ELR* 15 (1985): 277-92.
14. For a discussion of the quasi-religious nature of celebrations of Elizabeth, see Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London, 1977), esp. chap. 4, "November's Sacred Seventeenth Day," 117-28; also Robin Headlam Wells, *Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Cult of Elizabeth* (London, 1983), 18-21.
15. It has been argued, for example, that Spenser is here representing debates about Mary Stuart but without adding to them (Kerby Neill, "*The Faerie Queene* and the Mary Stuart Controversy," *ELH* 2 [1935]: 192-214), and that he is presenting the Protestant compromise position on the issue of female rulers which declared Elizabeth a divinely ordained exception to a general policy of disapproval (Benson, 1985).
16. These features of Elizabeth's mythography are discussed by Allison Heisch, "Queen Elizabeth I and the Persistence of Patriarchy," *Feminist Review* 4 (February 1980): 45-56.
17. Woods, 144. Also see Heisch; and Sheila ffolliott's discussion of another powerful woman's image-making ("Catherine de' Medici as Artemesia: Figuring the Powerful Widow," in Ferguson, et al., 227-41) where she argues that much of Catherine's ability to take power derived from her tacit claim to be acting not in her own right but as a voice of her dead husband and servant of her young son.
18. For a discussion of the image of the Amazon in the Elizabethan mind, see Montrose, esp. 77-80, and Celeste Turner Wright, "The Amazon in Elizabethan Literature," *Studies in Philology* 37 (1940): 443-56.
19. Winfried Schleiner, "*Divina virago*: Queen Elizabeth as an Amazon," *Studies in Philology* 75 (1978): 163-80, discusses Amazonian figurations of the queen, but other types of figures are far more numerous; the Amazon imagery that is used emphasizes martial prowess and plays down other elements of the Amazon mystique.
20. Montrose, 78.
21. Wright, 433.
22. See idem, 449-54. Gabrielle Bernhard Jackson has recently discussed the complexity of Amazon figures in this period and the ambivalent attitudes held toward them at greater length in "Topical Ideology: Witches, Amazons, and Shakespeare's Joan of Arc," *ELR* 18 (1988): 40-65.

23. Mariann S. Regan, *Love Words: The Self and the Text in Medieval and Renaissance Poetry* (Ithaca, NY, 1982), 192.
24. Lauren Silberman, "Singing Unsung Heroines: Androgynous Discourse in Book 3 of *The Faerie Queene*," in Ferguson, et al., 259-71, esp. 260.
25. Reed Way Dasenbrock, "Escaping the Squires' Double Bind in Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene*," *SEL* 26 (1986): 25-45, esp. 32.
26. This is not to deny that Belphoebe, and Elizabeth through her, are also praised, but since that praise has received a share of critical attention it seems to me to be important to acknowledge the more bitter aspect of the episode: while Belphoebe cures Timias' wound, she also makes him suffer, and while Raleigh may have deserved Elizabeth's displeasure, Spenser can hardly have approved unambiguously of his patron's disgrace; and Elizabeth, unlike Belphoebe, never restored *her* Raleigh to favor.

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Criticism: Donald V. Stump (essay date 1991)

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[In the following essay, Stump discusses the role of Mary Stuart (also known as Mary Queen of Scots) in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*.]

Scholars seem to have reached a consensus on Spenser's treatment of Mary Queen of Scots in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*. The prevailing view is that she is represented twice: first as Radigund in Cantos iv-vii and then again as Duessa in Cantos ix-x.¹ This is, I think, a useful insight. As it has usually been presented, however, the theory leads to at least one embarrassment: it requires Mary to die twice, once when Britomart cleaves her helmet in Canto vii and again when Mercilla sends her to be executed after Canto ix. It seems bizarre that Spenser should present the death of Mary in some detail and then, only two cantos later, circle back to the same event all over again. The problem is further compounded by major discrepancies between the two accounts. In Canto vii the character representing Queen Elizabeth is seeking revenge and strikes furiously:

Stayd not, till she came to her selfe againe,

The wrothful Britonesse

But in revenge both of her loves distresse,
And her late vile reproch, though vaunted vaine,
And also of her wound, which sore did paine,
She with one stroke both head and helmet cleft.

(vii.34)²

In Canto ix, however, the character who stands for Elizabeth is not furious but full of pity. Although she permits the execution to take place, she acts reluctantly, and her reasons have nothing to do with love-rivalry, reproaches, or wounds, but with her divine role as a just and merciful ruler:

But she, whose Princely breast was touched nere
With piteous ruth of her so wretched plight,
Though plaine she saw by all, that she did heare,
That she of death was guiltie found by right,
Yet would not let just vengeance on her light;
But rather let in stead thereof to fall
Few perling drops from her faire lampes of light ...

(ix.50)

The discrepancies between the two accounts have never been satisfactorily explained. The best attempt has come from Thomas Cain, who suggests that Mercilla's course of action represents what Elizabeth actually did and Britomart's behavior represents what Elizabeth ought to have done. Cain writes, "Britomart acts with clearheaded correctness, while Marcilla bumbles and temporizes."³ This interpretation is ingenious, but it also raises difficulties, for Mercilla is so thoroughly idealized in Cantos ix-x that it is hard to believe she is acting in direct opposition to Spenser's own views.⁴

The failure of critics to reconcile the two accounts is related to a second difficulty: the vagueness of current historical interpretations of the Radigund episode. Although scholars have supplied very full accounts of the relationship between the trial of Duessa and that of Mary Stuart, they have not examined in comparable detail the earlier material on the Amazons. No one has looked into the historical background of Artegall's rescue of Terpine, his skirmishes with Radigund in the city gate and in the lists, his subsequent imprisonment and dealings with Clarinda, or Britomart's battle to save him. In short, scholars have treated the episode as a historical allegory without demonstrating that its incidents are historical.

Of course, it is conceivable that most of the incidents are not historical. Spenser may have alluded to Mary only in the death of Radigund. Yet it is hard to think of a reason that he should be so erratic, writing all but the final moments of an episode without any topical reference and then suddenly calling to mind the most notorious and dramatic execution of his era. Since he was writing about the virtue of justice, one would expect him to have taken primary interest in the crimes committed and the just response to them, not in the bare fact of an execution.

In light of the difficulties raised by current interpretations, it seems worthwhile to reexamine the entire episode. I begin with the simplest hypothesis that seems plausible to me: that Spenser saw in the career of Mary Stuart an illustration of key principles of justice; that he set out to weave into his allegory an account of her injustices and the trial to which they led; and that he worked in more or less chronological order. What incidents in Mary's life, then, would have been most pertinent to his aims? What were the main phases in her relations with the English? How do these relate to the allegory of Mary's trial and execution in the later episode at the Palace of Mercilla? To find answers to these questions, we must step back for a moment to review Mary's career.

I

From the point of view of an Englishman loyal to Queen Elizabeth, Mary's first injustice was committed in 1558. After the death of Mary Tudor, Henry II of France claimed the crown of England for his teenage daughter-in-law, Mary Stuart, and this claim led to serious legal, diplomatic, and military struggles with Elizabeth. Although Mary actually wore the English royal insignia only briefly, she never formally renounced her right to it, and until her execution in 1587, she was repeatedly involved in schemes to gain the crown.

The first phase of Mary's struggle with the English began in earnest in 1559. In August, her mother, Mary of Guise—who was acting as Regent of Scotland during Mary's minority—brought in French troops to suppress a rebellion among the Scottish Protestants. The ostensible purpose of this move was to restore civil order, but the English feared that it was part of a long-range plot to supplant Elizabeth by a French invasion from the North. Consequently, in the winter of 1559-60, Elizabeth ordered an invasion of Scotland. By the following summer she had driven Mary's troops back to France and installed a Protestant government in Edinburgh. At about the same time, Mary's husband, Francis II, died and the young queen left France to take up active rule in Scotland.

The second phase of Elizabeth's struggle with Mary occupied the period 1560-68. It was not a time of military confrontation but of personal diplomacy, which was conducted with outward appearances of amity. Elizabeth tried to lure Mary into marrying an Englishman who could be trusted to look after Elizabeth's interests, and Mary responded by choosing one who could not: Lord Darnley. When the marriage went sour and the Scottish lords assassinated Darnley, Mary was implicated and her support began to wane. In 1567 she was forced to resign her crown, and in the following year she fled into England.

With her exile began the third phase of her quarrel with Elizabeth. For the first time she met the English face to face. In the autumn following her arrival, they tried her before a special commission for her part in the Darnley affair and for her conduct as the Scottish queen. At the same time, she became involved in various schemes to woo the English aristocracy to her side. She entertained many prominent lords and gentlemen and pursued a plan to marry the most highly titled peer in the realm, the Duke of Norfolk. He went along with the scheme, and in 1569 several Catholic lords in northern England rose in rebellion against Elizabeth, hoping to place Norfolk and Mary on the throne. Elizabeth responded dramatically, crushing the rebellion, depriving Mary of the means to regain power in Scotland, and placing her under indefinite house arrest.

The final phase of Mary's struggle lasted from 1571 until her death and consisted largely of a series of plots to assassinate Elizabeth. For the last of these, the Babington plot, Mary was tried and executed.

With this summary of the main events of Mary's career in mind, we may begin to perceive the outlines of Spenser's allegory. The Radigund episode follows the same course as the first three phases in Elizabeth's struggle with Mary. First, Artegall intervenes to save Sir Terpine, who is about to be hung by Amazons, just as Elizabeth intervened to save the Scottish protestants from the French. The Amazons represent the women who held sway in France and Scotland in this period: Mary Stuart, Mary of Guise, and Catherine de Medici. After a full-scale battle corresponding with the English invasion of Scotland in the winter of 1560, Artegall and Radigund begin a second phase of the struggle by exchanging gifts and emissaries and engaging in private combat in the lists. This matches well the period from 1560-68 when Anglo-Scottish relations were outwardly amicable and Elizabeth was dueling privately with Mary over the all-important marriage issue. Then comes the moment when Artegall has Radigund in his power, removes her helmet to kill her, and unexpectedly yields to her instead. This incident parallels the early days of Mary's captivity in England, when the English aristocracy first beheld her face to face, sought to try her for murder, and, at least in the case of Norfolk and the Northern Earls, fell under her power instead. After Radigund has mastered Artegall, she falls in love with him and makes amorous approaches, just as Mary courted Norfolk from 1568 to 1571. At this point Artegall's first love, Britomart, defeats Radigund decisively, ending her rule of the Amazons and releasing Artegall. Leaving aside for the moment the fact that Radigund dies and Mary lived on, this stage in the allegory corresponds well with the third phase of Elizabeth's struggle with the Queen of Scots. In 1569-71, Elizabeth

suppressed the rebellion of Mary's most powerful supporters in England, ended forever her power as a queen, and established a Protestant government in Scotland that became England's closest ally.

Laid out in this fashion, the correspondences between the Radigund episode and the career of Mary Stuart are promising. Yet questions remain. How detailed is the allegory? Are there, for example, specific events corresponding to each skirmish between Artegall and the Amazons? Are there historical counterparts for characters such as Sir Terpine, Clarinda, and the mysterious Bellodant? Is there any reason for Spenser to portray the first three phases of Mary's career in the character of Radigund, and then to switch in the last phase to portray Elizabeth's rival as Duessa? And finally, what are we to make of the problem with which we began, the two deaths of Mary? To answer these questions, and to reveal the extraordinary richness of Spenser's allegory of Mary Stuart, we need to examine the episode in more detail.⁵

II

Artegall first encounters the Amazons in Canto iv when he discovers them attempting to hang Sir Terpine. As he draws near the gallows, the women begin to threaten him as well, and he is forced to employ his servant Talus to disperse them. Afterwards, the grateful Terpine tells the story of their Queen—how she had fallen in love with a knight named Bellodant and, when he rejected her, had turned her bitterness against all men, particularly the Knights of Maidenhead. In response to a challenge from Terpine, she had fought and overpowered him, giving him two choices: to exchange his armor for “womens weedes” and do domestic chores, or else to be hanged. Terpine stoutly chose the latter. Once Artegall has heard this story, he resolves to avenge the Knights of Maidenhead and, with Terpine by his side, fights a pitched battle in the gates of Radigone in which he rescues Terpine a second time and forces the Amazons to call a cease-fire.

The beginning of Radigund's vendetta against the Knights of Maidenhead has a clear analogue in the experience of Mary Stuart. She, too, lost the first love of her heart, the sickly boy-king Francis II, and with this loss came a stinging personal rejection that did indeed turn her toward a course of open struggle with Elizabeth and her court (the Knights of Maidenhead). From her girlhood, when Mary was first betrothed to the young Dauphin, she had set her heart on being Queen of France, and when he died in 1560, she failed to win the support of the de Medici faction at court. Consequently, she was forced to make a tearful and humiliating retreat to Scotland.⁶ Once there, she seems to have consoled herself for the loss of France by turning her attention toward England. Thus, as Spenser's allegory suggests, the jilting of the young queen by the French made her rivalry with Elizabeth a major preoccupation. This interpretation is supported by the name of Radigund's lover. “Bellodant” means “one who makes a war,” and from the death of Henry VIII until the conflict with Spain began to brew in the 1570's England's chief military opponent was France. The two nations engaged in open hostilities in Scotland and France in 1548-49, in France in 1557-58 and 1562-63, in Scotland in 1560, and again in the Netherlands in 1572.

Several details of the incident with Sir Terpine confirm the view that it refers to events in the same period. When Mary of Guise sought to suppress the Protestant rebellion of 1559-60, her daughter, Mary Stuart, was not in Scotland but in France, and her absence may account for the fact that Radigund is not with the Amazons when Artegall first encounters them. His rescue of Sir Terpine also has a precise analogue in Elizabeth's intervention on behalf of the Scottish faction known as the Lords of the Congregation. During the rebellion of 1559, Elizabeth cultivated close ties with the leaders of this group, most notably with Mary's illegitimate half-brother, James Stuart. If Spenser meant Terpine to represent a particular person, it was probably Lord James. The knight's name means “thrice sorrowful,” and Stuart did indeed suffer three major defeats that are represented in Spenser's allegory.

The first calamity for Lord James came in late summer of 1559. From May through July, Stuart's rebels managed to control most of Fife and to occupy Edinburgh, but their volunteers soon lost their will to fight, and the Lords of the Congregation were forced to call a truce with the Regent and disperse. In July, on the

death of Henry II, Mary Stuart became Queen Consort of France, and this emboldened her mother to bring in French reinforcements in August and September. Thoroughly out-manned and outmaneuvered, the Protestants then appealed to Queen Elizabeth for help. They received it in two forms: money to provision and pay their troops, and diplomatic aid to spirit the son of one of their most powerful potential allies, Châtelherault, out of France so that his father could safely join the rebellion. With money and Châtelherault, the Protestants were able in October to regain control of Edinburgh.⁷

These incidents are portrayed in Artegall's initial intervention to save Terpine. Like the English government in this period, Artegall hesitates to become directly involved; he regards it as "shame on womankind / His mighty hand to shend" (V.iv.24). Yet, just as England was forced to reconsider its neutrality when French forces began to swarm into Scotland and occupied the strategic fortress at Leith, so Artegall is forced to defend himself against the sudden hostility of the Amazons. He sends Talus, his executive arm, to help disperse the crowd.

The second defeat and rescue of Terpine corresponds with the events of November 1559 through January 1560. In November, after a disastrous attempt to overrun the French garrison at Leith, the Protestants were again forced to withdraw from Edinburgh. By January, most of their strongholds in Fife had been retaken by the French, and the Protestants' plight was desperate. Elizabeth could not afford to remain on the sidelines any longer, and in January 1560 she sent Admiral Winter with a contingent of the English fleet into the Firth of Forth. Although Winter denied any military involvement—claiming instead that he was in search of pirates—he nonetheless managed to distract the French troops until Elizabeth could arrange a more forceful strategy. In February her representatives concluded the Treaty of Berwick, in which Elizabeth promised to defend the Lords of the Congregation, and in March an English army invaded Scotland under the command of Lord William Grey, the father of Spenser's friend Arthur Grey. The English directed their attack against the French stronghold at Leith, but after a number of bloody French forays, in one of which Arthur Grey was wounded, the troops were forced to settle in for a prolonged siege. In June, Mary of Guise died, leaving Mary Stuart without the means to prosecute the war from a distance. Consequently, in July 1560, France hastily concluded the Treaty of Edinburgh, which required that all foreign forces leave Scotland and that Mary Stuart cease wearing the English royal insignia. For a time, the Lords of the Congregation were finally in control. They assembled a Parliament, renounced the authority of the Pope, abolished the Mass, and adopted a Protestant confession of faith.⁸

Against this historical background, certain details of Spenser's allegory take on special meaning. For example, the hostilities take place in the gateway to the city and involve a preliminary verbal exchange between Artegall and the porter, surely because Leith is the "sea-gate" that controls access to Edinburgh from the Firth of Forth, and English diplomats protested loudly against the French presence there.⁹ After the first day of fighting, Radigund's women separate the chief combatants and cast their troops "far asunder," probably because the end of the brief war of 1560 saw the English withdraw over their northern border and the French return to the Continent. Once Artegall has drawn back from Radigone, he leaves his servant Talus near the city "to keepe a nightly watch for dread of treachery" (iv.46). This I take to be a reference to the English forces left in Berwick after the Treaty of Edinburgh to keep an eye on the Scottish border.

III

The second day of Artegall's battle and his subsequent period of subjection to Radigund represent the next phase in Anglo-Scottish relations: the period of mingled enmity and rapprochement from 1560 to 1568. Spenser signals a change in the allegory by having Radigund propose a "single fight" with Artegall, which is not to take place on the open battlefield, as before, but in lists that are "closed fast, to barre the rout" (v.5). At the outset, there is an elaborate show of courtesy between the two combatants, Radigund sending "wine and juncates" with her messenger Clarinda, and Artegall responding with "curt'sies meete" and "gifts and things of deare delight" (iv.49, 51). Such civilities also characterized relations between Elizabeth and Mary in the

early 1560s, when Scottish ambassadors were warmly greeted in London and returned with sisterly letters and tokens of affection from Elizabeth to their mistress. The man responsible for Mary's relations with England was William Maitland of Lethington, a man of whom I shall say more when we come to the sections on Clarinda later in the episode. He was committed, above all else, to promoting an alliance between Scotland and England. In September 1561 he brought Mary's first amiable overtures to the English court, and in early 1562 he became the prime mover in negotiations to arrange a personal meeting between the two monarchs.¹⁰

Under the surface of amity, however, a serious struggle for power was in progress. As Radigund suggests in setting the conditions for the tournament, the outcome of the battle was to decide who governed the British Isles. She says of Artegall, "if I vanquishe him, he shall obay / My law, and ever to my lore be bound, / And so will I, if me he vanquish may" (iv.49). The relevance of this compact to Mary is obvious. Although her agents had negotiated the Treaty of Edinburgh, she had never ratified the document and had therefore retained her right to claim the titles and insignia of the Queen of England. In the decade after 1560, her negotiations with England came to turn on this point, for Elizabeth interpreted her adversary's refusal as a sign that Mary still intended to supplant her.¹¹ Of course, the terms of Radigund's challenge also apply to Elizabeth, for Henry VIII and Protector Somerset had recently made war on Scotland to enforce a claim of suzerainty over that country,¹² and though Elizabeth did not openly assert her father's claim, she was certainly eager to extend her power. She particularly wanted to control Mary's policy toward the Protestant Lords at home and toward the Catholic opposition abroad.

To this end, Elizabeth made a bold but curious proposal that deeply offended Mary and began their struggle in earnest: she put forward her own favorite, Robert Dudley, as a prospective match for Mary. Obviously, Dudley was too low in station for a queen, but Elizabeth thought to overcome this objection by advancing him to the Earldom of Leicester. The advantage of the plan was that, even if Mary ultimately refused, the marriage negotiations would set back the day when she turned to Catholic princes on the Continent for a husband. And if Mary accepted, Leicester would help to draw the realms into a firm alliance.

That the private combat between Artegall and Radigund is an allegory of marriage negotiations is suggested in Radigund's attire and in the language of love used to describe the joust. The Amazon enters the lists dressed, not in the gear of battle, but in the delicate fashions of a coquette. She wears a light dress of "sattin white as milke," probably because Mary was fond of white and had become so well known for splendid gowns in this color that, for a time, she was called "the lily of France."¹³ Over Radigund's white dress, with its associations of purity, there is a quilting of "purple silke" (v.2), with suggestions of royalty but also, perhaps, of amorous passion. The latter connotation is reinforced in Spenser's statement that her dress was "short tucked for light motion / Up to her ham" (v.2). There may also be amorous overtones in the way she first approaches Artegall, "as if she had intended / Out of his breast the very heart have rended" (v.6). Not even the exposed "ham" and her "light motion" can win Artegall's heart, however, for the poet tells us that he "from that first flaw him selfe right well defended" (v.6). Once again, the point is historically accurate, for Leicester never succumbed to Mary's attractions or to the lure of a Scottish crown. Although publicly he "gan fiercely her pursew," privately he was cool to the entire scheme.¹⁴

In the stanzas that follow, the poet continues the allegory of marriage negotiations by incorporating a series of double-entendres:

Like as a Smith that to his cunning feat
The stubborne mettall seeketh to subdew,
Soone as he feeles it mollifide with heat,
With his great yron sledge doth strongly on it beat.

So did Sir Artegall upon her lay,
As if she had an yron andvile beene,
That flakes of fire, bright as the sunny ray,

Out of her steely armes were flashing seene,
That all on fire ye would her surely weene.
But with her shield so well her selfe she warded,
From the dread daunger of his weapon keene,
That all that while her life she safely garded ...

(v. 7-8)

In light of the earlier descriptions of Radigund's attire, Spenser's repeated references to heat carry inevitable overtones. The key point is that, although Radigund seemed at first to be "mollified with heat" and "all on fire," she was never really so. She was all along guarding herself from "the dread daunger of his weapon keene." The point is historically apt, for, although Mary was outwardly receptive to the idea of marriage with Leicester, she was inwardly offended by the very idea of marrying a commoner of Elizabeth's choosing, and set herself resolutely against the match.

Artegall then shears away half of Radigund's shield, leaving her "naked" on one side. She counters by striking his thigh and letting forth "purple blood," and he responds by shattering the other half of her shield and removing her helmet in order to slay her. It is tempting to associate the wound to Artgall's thigh with the act in which Mary's enemies insisted that she had shed the purple blood of English royalty: the murder of Darnley, who was high in the English line of succession.¹⁵ More certain, however, is the historical significance in the destruction of Radigund's last defences and the removal of her golden helmet. After the murder of Darnley, Mary made the mistake of marrying James Bothwell, the chief agent in the plot to assassinate the King. The Scots were outraged and rose in rebellion, driving Bothwell from the country and imprisoning Mary in Loch Leven Castle. There, in the summer of 1567, James Stuart demanded that she resign her crown to her infant son and, upon her compliance, assumed control of Scotland as the new Regent.¹⁶ This train of events is neatly represented in the the removal of Radigund's golden helmet, which is linked by the adjective "sunshynie" with the traditional symbolism of royalty.

IV

The removal of Radigund's helmet is, of course, a turning point in the action, for the sight of the Queen's beauty arouses pity in Artgall. After beholding her face for the first time, he cannot bring himself to harm her and casts aside the sword of justice. At this point, she revives and attacks him ruthlessly, constraining him to accept the subservience and the women's chores that Terpine had previously refused. In consequence, Terpine suffers the third sorrow suggested by his name: Radigund puts him to death. Then a new period of wooing begins, brought on when Radigund unexpectedly falls in love with Artgall. Without understanding her motives, he agrees to sue for her favor in order to gain his freedom. Clarinda then comes to the fore again as a deceitful intermediary, seeming to act on behalf of Radigund but lying to her and to Artgall out of a newly conceived infatuation with the knight.

In these events the career of Mary Stuart continues to govern the action. In 1568, she escaped from Loch Leven, gathered a small army, and after a disastrous encounter with the superior forces of Lord James, fled over the southern border. When the English first beheld her, they were, like Artgall, moved to pity. She and her small band of adherents arrived in a state of exhaustion, without funds, baggage, or even clean linen. In Spenser's words, she was "voide of ornament, / But bath'd in bloud and sweat" (v.12). Although Elizabeth retained her under house arrest until she could be cleared of the Darnley murder, the English queen was genuinely appalled at Mary's destitute state. She undertook the maintenance of Mary's household and laid plans for her restoration as Queen of Scotland. More significant for the allegory, however, is the pity shown by Elizabeth's subjects. Important officials soon began to pay their respects, won by Mary's charm, or perhaps by the possibility that she might one day be their queen.

Not the slowest of those who courted Mary was Elizabeth's own Earl of Leicester. As Master of the Queen's Horse, he had reason to be in contact with the Scottish queen, for he was placed in charge of her stable.¹⁷ It was not long before rumors began to circulate that he had revived the old scheme to marry her—though this time the plotting was more dangerous because it was done behind Elizabeth's back. Apparently, he did not encourage such rumors himself, but he was eager to ingratiate himself with Mary and sent her several costly gifts, including gold and silver boxes containing prized antidotes for poison and a piece of what was sold to him as the horn of a unicorn.¹⁸ Of course, we cannot know how much Spenser knew of Leicester's life in the 1560s, but he may have heard scraps of the story while he was employed at Leicester House in 1579-80. In any case, there is an amusing parallel between the demeaning chores performed by Artegall in Radigone and Leicester's subservience to the Queen of Scots.

A more dangerous development in the English courtship of Mary was the scheme conceived in November 1568 to marry her to the Duke of Norfolk. In his ambition, Leicester so far forgot himself that, urged on by the Spanish ambassador, he became a prime mover in the plot. Other members of Elizabeth's council, including Cecil, knew of it too and gave it at least the sanction of their silence.¹⁹ It may be that Leicester and the others hoped that Elizabeth would welcome the arrangement. After all, she herself had once suggested Norfolk as a match for Mary in the early 1560s, and the points that recommended him then had not changed: he was a Protestant of rank and considerable power, and he could be expected to look after English interests in Scotland. All the same, the plan was self-serving and encouraged a dangerous division of loyalties. Leicester and the others tacitly admitted as much by keeping it secret for nearly a year.

The scheme was all the more unsavory because, when Norfolk first began to pursue it in earnest, he was the chief English commissioner in Mary's trial for the murder of Darnley, and Leicester later served on the same judicial panel. The proceedings took place in York and Westminster in the fall and early winter of 1568-69 and concluded without arriving at a judgment against the Scottish Queen, even though letters extremely damaging to her had been introduced in evidence. In fairness to Norfolk and Leicester, it should be added that Elizabeth herself intervened to dissuade the commission from rendering a judgment. Yet the marriage negotiations certainly compromised the proceedings and opened them to charges of partiality.²⁰

To Spenser it must have seemed that Norfolk, Leicester, and the other commissioners had relinquished their just responsibility to condemn Mary for the murder of Darnley and, by their foolish subservience, had set the stage for the most disastrous act in the entire drama of Mary's imprisonment in England: the Rebellion of the Northern Earls, which took place in the following year. The poet gives numerous suggestions of his opinion, but the most obvious is that, upon seeing Radigund's countenance, Artegall throws away his sword, which here and elsewhere in Book V symbolizes retributive justice. The Amazon then awakens and resumes her former cruelty and "greedy vengeance," just as Mary did after her trial. Immediately after the commission decided not to render a judgment, she sent out secret messages urging her allies in England and Spain to provide troops to release her. In Scotland her supporters responded with renewed violence against the government of James Stuart, and in England the powerful Earl of Northumberland began to plot with the Spanish ambassador to overthrow the English queen.²¹

The ceremony in which Radigund breaks Artegall's sword and takes him as her vassal is, then, an apt (if exaggerated) representation of Mary's effect on a key segment of the English nobility. As Cecil noted at the time, Mary's "cunning and sugared entertainment of all men" was surprisingly successful. Spenser makes the same point in describing Artegall's first impression as he enters Radigund's chamber to begin his servitude: he beholds there "Many brave knights, whose names right well he knew" (v.22). England's failure to render judgment against Mary at the end of her trial in 1568 had left the nation vulnerable, and it is a nice irony that, in portraying this period of Mary's imprisonment, Spenser suggests that it was Artegall—the character representing the English—who was beaten and in bondage.

The first consequence of Artegall's failure to bring justice upon Radigund is the death of Terpine. This has its historical analogue in the assassination of James Stuart in January 1570, less than a year after Mary had begun to stir up the Scottish Catholics against him. He was gunned down by an assassin hired by the Hamiltons, one of the Catholic families most loyal to Mary, and she personally granted the murderer a pension for the deed.²²

A second consequence is that Radigund unexpectedly falls in love with Artegall. This infatuation probably refers to Mary's own overtures to Norfolk, which were revealed during his later trial for treason in January 1572. In the period from 1569 to 1571, Mary corresponded with Norfolk in openly amorous terms. When, for instance, she presented him with a pillow that she had embroidered, and he responded with a costly diamond, she pledged to wear it at her neck "until I give it again to the owner of it and me both."²³ Other details of the allegory also suggest Mary's involvement with Norfolk. Radigund employs her emissary Clarinda to communicate with Artegall, and for this purpose she must supply a ring to bring Clarinda past a prison guard, Eumenias. Similarly, Mary had to devise ways for William Maitland and others to convey messages past her warder, the Earl of Shrewsbury.²⁴

Finally, the role of the double-dealing emissary Clarinda in the love negotiations corresponds neatly with Maitland's activities during this period. While he was serving as one of the Scottish commissioners at Mary's trial in 1568, he played an extraordinary game of diplomatic deceit. Like Clarinda, who unexpectedly falls in love with Artegall, Maitland seems to have been motivated by a personal desire to arrange an alliance with England. Moreover, like Clarinda, he played a key role both as a matchmaker and as an obstacle to the very match he was supposed to be arranging. It was Maitland who first approached the Duke of Norfolk with the idea of a marriage with the Queen of Scots. Yet, as one of the Scottish commissioners, Maitland also did something that helped to drive the English away from Mary, and thereby made the Norfolk scheme all the more difficult to support. During the trial he actually helped to make the case against Mary, bearing witness to the authenticity of the incriminating letters to Bothwell that turned the English commissioners against her. Throughout this double-dealing, he was also sending Mary messages, assuring her of his loyalty and warning her in advance that damaging evidence would be presented at the trial.²⁵

Against this background, Spenser's description of the duplicity of Clarinda is very much to the point:

Ne ever did deceitfull Clarin find
In her false hart, his bondage to unbind;
But rather how she mote him faster tye.
Therefore unto her mistresse most unkind
She daily told, her love he did defye,
And him she told, her Dame his freedome did denye.

(v.56)

Maitland certainly did intend to keep those involved in the Norfolk scheme in "bondage" to Mary, but he also exploited Mary's fears of rejection, and all the while he was pursuing his own private aim: an alliance with England.

V

In the autumn of 1569, the secret scheming involving Mary came at last into the open. Elizabeth heard the full extent of Norfolk's involvement, and within a few weeks the Duke was imprisoned in the Tower and the Catholic Lords Northumberland and Westmoreland took arms in the North. After months of legal and diplomatic maneuvering, Elizabeth was finally forced to take military measures against the Marian Catholics in England and Scotland. Her initial deliberations and her ultimate victory are portrayed in Cantos vi and vii. From Talus Britomart learns of Artegall's surrender, and though she is deeply jealous, she nonetheless sets out to release him. After episodes at the House of Dolon and Isis Church (which, because they are tangential to

the story of the Amazons, cannot occupy us here), she meets Radigund in battle, beheads her, releases Artegall, and restores male supremacy in the city of Radigone.

Even before she hears Talus's news, Britomart's first reaction is to fear that Artegall has found "some new love" or that his foe Grantorto has entrapped him, and this concern has an important basis in fact. Before Elizabeth had hard evidence of a conspiracy, she was shrewd enough to perceive that something was awry with Norfolk and Mary, and she was also deeply concerned about Philip II, whom Spenser allegorizes in Grantorto. In 1569, tensions were running high between England and Spain, and war seemed imminent. Moreover, the Spanish ambassador was at the heart of the treasonous plotting that Northumberland and his friends carried out behind the more honorable maneuvering of Leicester and Norfolk. It was widely—and correctly—rumored that, if the English Catholics had risen in force against their queen, the Spanish would have backed them using Alva's forces in the Netherlands.²⁶

Britomart's next reaction, after hearing Talus's report that Artegall is in prison, is also important in the historical allegory, for it reveals one of Spenser's purposes in writing this section of the poem: to exonerate Leicester and his cabal. In judging Artegall's actions, the main question that Britomart considers is "whether he did woo, or whether he were woo'd" (vi.15). Talus's reply—that Artegall was "not the while in state to woo" because he was in "thraldome"—is more to the point than may at first appear. It was not the English but Mary's supporters, particularly Maitland, who had initiated the marriage talks, and Leicester and his faction seem to have played along mainly in order to stay in Mary's good graces. Of course, in light of the disastrous consequences of this maneuvering, Spenser could not very well let Leicester's error in judgment pass without condemnation. He could, however, paint it out as entirely human and understandable by citing the example of other men from the past who had been beguiled by women. This excuse, though flimsy, may well have been adequate to the occasion, for, like Britomart, Elizabeth seems to have been more interested in assuring herself that Leicester had remained loyal than in punishing him for his part in the fiasco. After subjecting him to a brief period of disgrace, she forgave him and turned to face her Catholic enemies in the North.

In Canto vii, after an eventful trip to the city of the Amazons, Britomart spreads her pavilion close by and prepares for battle. Radigund's first reaction, besides "joyous glee" at the prospect of battle, is the hope "that she the face of her new foe might see" (vii.25), and this detail may refer to Mary's well-known desire throughout this period to meet Elizabeth in personal interview.²⁷ Like Mary, however, Radigund fails in this desire. Trumpets sound the battle, and Radigund sees only the hard exterior of her opponent's armaments.

Before she engages Britomart, the Amazon propounds the same conditions under which she fought with Artegall. This time, however, her opponent refuses to accept any law but that of chivalry. This point is worth noting because it corresponds with a crucial change in Elizabeth's policy in the years 1569-71. Previously, her ambassadors had been willing to offer, as one term of a comprehensive settlement with Mary, a clause granting the Scottish Queen the right to succeed to the English throne should she outlive Elizabeth and her heirs. However, once Mary's Catholic forces had attempted to overthrow the English government in the Rebellion of 1569 and in the Ridolfi Plot of 1571, Elizabeth changed her policy and never again offered to confirm Mary's right of succession.²⁸ Like Britomart, Elizabeth was now "fully bent / To fierce avengement" of her opponent's pride (vi.18).

Spenser describes the ensuing battle as cruel and unseemly:

And practicke use in armes: ne spared not
Their dainty parts, which nature had created
So faire and tender, without staine or spot,
For other uses ...

through great fury both their skill forgot,

(vii.29)

The reference to blows against one another's "dainty parts" may have to do with charges of sexual immorality that passed between the two queens during this period. In 1571, Elizabeth allowed the publication of the incriminating letters that had been introduced in Mary's trial, and they were bound together with George Buchanan's *Detectio Mariae Reginae Scotorum*, which alleged that Mary had committed flagrant acts of adultery with James Bothwell. In return, Mary sniped at Elizabeth, on one occasion demanding that a proposed treaty allowing Elizabeth's heirs to precede Mary in the English succession include the requirement that they be "lawful issue."²⁹

Equally pointed is Spenser's assertion that "both their skill forgot," for both sides fought badly in the Rebellion of 1569. The Earl of Sussex, who commanded Elizabeth's Northern troops, declined to engage the rebels for more than five weeks and was derided at court for failing to act sooner. When at last reinforcements from the south arrived, the army scattered the rebels and pursued them over the border into Scotland. Then it took terrible vengeance on the English villages that had supported the uprising, hanging more than six hundred suspects without due process of law. This excess is probably reflected in the depredations of Talus, who drives the enemy pell mell "into the towne" and then begins a "piteous slaughter" (vii.35). Similar reprisals took place the following spring, when the English army again invaded Scotland to punish Mary's supporters.³⁰

We come, finally, to the point with which we began: the beheading of Radigund; and it should now be clear that it can have nothing to do with the actual execution of Mary Stuart. The dates and circumstances are wrong. As we have seen, the fall of Radigund represents events in the period 1569-71, when Mary had been a rival for the affections of several of Elizabeth's own noblemen and when she had cast reproaches against the honor of the English queen and had struck a painful blow against her in the Rebellion of the Northern Earls. Elizabeth's response had been angry and violent, just as Spenser suggests in describing Britomart's final attack on Radigund (vii.34). It was not until 1587, however, that Mary was finally sent to the block, and Elizabeth's attitude then was quite different. She took extraordinary steps to insure that Mary's second trial was scrupulously legal (at least by the standards of the day), and so reluctant was she to allow the death sentence to be carried out that she seriously alienated Parliament and her own Privy Council.³¹ Clearly, these circumstances correspond with Spenser's description of the trial and execution of Duessa in Cantos ix-x, but not with the events surrounding the slaying of Radigund.

It seems likely, therefore, that Radigund's death in Canto vii is merely symbolic. Like the dismemberment of Grantorto in Canto viii, which has nothing to do with the actual demise of Philip II in 1598 but only with the dispersal of his Armada ten years earlier, the slaying is not to be taken literally. Spenser hints at the true meaning when he writes that Britomart "with one stroke both head and helmet cleft" (v.34). As we saw earlier, the poet employs Radigund's golden helmet as a symbol for the crown of Scotland, and the head is, of course, a symbol of supremacy. I would suggest that Spenser has in mind, not Mary's death, but the final and irreparable loss of her right and her power to govern Scotland. In 1571, after Mary was implicated in the Ridolfi plot, Elizabeth sent word to the government in Edinburgh that Mary would never be allowed to resume her throne. Although the English queen had long hoped that Mary might somehow be restored and had therefore declined to recognize the government of Mary's young son, James VI, she now granted that recognition. From 1571 on, the ascendancy of the King's party was virtually assured.³²

Once we recognize the true meaning of the blow to Radigund's head, then the remainder of the allegory falls neatly into place. Britomart's release of Artegall from prison corresponds with a new mood at court after the Ridolfi Plot. Never again were Elizabeth's chief courtiers involved in Mary's schemes, and Parliament went so far as to pass a bill removing her from the English succession and authorizing her execution without trial should any further insurrection be mounted on her behalf.³³ Britomart's personal reign in Radigone and her reestablishment of male supremacy there reflect the role of English troops in maintaining order in Scotland after 1569. In 1570 and again in 1573, they crossed the border to aid the Protestant party, successfully defending them until a strong new Regent, the Earl of Morton, could take measures to repress Marian dissent

and consolidate his power.³⁴ Finally, the oath of fealty that the magistrates of Radigone swear to Artegall accurately represents the firm alliance between Scotland and England which was established during this period.

One question remains: why did Spenser risk misleading his readers by having Radigund killed, when he might simply have had her deposed? The answer must, of course, be speculative, but two reasons come to mind. In Book I, when the poet had been concerned with religion, he had alluded to Mary in the figure of Duessa. In Book V, where most of the allegory of Mary's reign explores issues of political justice rather than of religion, Spenser chose to recast Mary in the figure of Radigund. In the cantos after the death of the Amazon queen, however, there is once again a specifically religious point to be made. In 1571, the Pope issued his Bull of Excommunication against Elizabeth and thus transformed her political struggles with Mary into a religious conflict. Thereafter, all the chief Catholic powers of the Continent—Philip II of Spain, the Pope, the Guises—began machinations to depose the heretical English queen. I would argue that, in order to emphasize the terrible new danger posed by Mary after the Bull, Spenser chose to represent her once again in the figure of Duessa.

The shift also reflects a change in Mary's *modus operandi*. Before 1571, her struggle with Elizabeth was more or less open. It involved major diplomatic and military confrontations that lend themselves to the sort of heroic treatment that we see in the portrayal of Radigund. After 1571, however, Mary was reduced to scheming of the most ignoble sort, using empty beer barrels to smuggle letters to shady agents outside her prison and joining one murderous conspiracy after another. The suggestions of duplicity in the name “Duessa” become altogether appropriate again. The glamorous and proud Queen of Scots, figured forth so grandly in the armor of Radigund, did indeed die in 1571. Thereafter, all that remained was a bitter, aging woman, living out her life at Tutbury and Chartley in plots and empty dreams.

VI

The detailed depiction of Mary Stuart as Radigund raises important questions about the nature and the aims of the historical allegory in Book V. It is often assumed that Spenser handled topical material allusively and that it is altogether in the service of the moral and political allegory of the poem. Edwin Greenlaw once wrote that historical allegory is included only “by way of illustration or compliment or ornament, never sustained for long”³⁵ Albert Gough took a similar—though more radical—position when he wrote that “a complete and consistent allegory is not to be looked for. It is Spenser's habit to give a hint of a political meaning, and then to confuse the trail.”³⁶ The allegory of Mary Stuart offers at least one major counter-example to the generalizations of Greenlaw and Gough. It is sustained, coherent, and largely chronological. It can hardly be called “compliment” or “ornament,” and if it is confusing, the difficulty lies with our own lack of historical knowledge, not with the allegory itself.

Yet what of Greenlaw's third possibility: that the historical allegory serves as an “illustration” of the principles involved in the moral allegory? Though topical references undoubtedly act in this way throughout the poem, I would argue that they also have a second and more important function in Book V. There, the topical allegory is not intermittent or occasional but pervasive, and it lies at the very heart of the poet's intention. In Cantos iv through xii, Spenser portrays the reign of Queen Elizabeth as a single, momentous struggle against the Catholic forces of the world. In Radigund he presents the rivalry with Mary Stuart in the 1550s and '60s; in the Souldan and Duessa the battles against Philip of Spain and Mary in the 1570s and '80s; in Gerioneo and Grantorto the wars in the Netherlands and Ireland in the 1580s and '90s.³⁷ Far from being mere illustration, the historical allegory constitutes the main action of Book V. Moreover, the nature of this action is one of Spenser's most conspicuous innovations in the genre of the epic.

In the Letter to Raleigh, Spenser likens *The Faerie Queene* to the works of “Poets historicall” such as Homer, Virgil, and the Italians. In doing so, he is accepting a fundamental premise of classical epic: that the legendary

history of a nation is the matter best suited to educate its people. As Spenser goes on to explain, this is true, in part, because legend provides a store of moral and political *exempla*. Yet it is also true because history unites the nation in a common view of its origins and its social order, and—through the visions of its founders and heroes—provides a way to establish its claims for the future.

The contemporary references in the Radigund episode and throughout Book V fulfill this larger epic intention. They set forth the greatness of Elizabeth's achievement in preserving justice and Reformed religion in the British Isles and in establishing England as a major force in the Western world. They do so, however, by transforming the present reign of Elizabeth into the stuff of the mythic past. As the poet announces in the proem to Book III, he intends to fit "antique praises unto present persons." This transformation is Spenser's major innovation in the genre of the romantic epic. Earlier epic poets, such as Virgil and Dante, had alluded to current politics or brought it in by way of illustration, and Ariosto may have had it in mind in brief passages of allegory. Spenser, however, turns it into the main action of an entire book. In portraying Elizabeth and her ministers in the guise of legendary figures, he sets them in a heroic tradition reserved for the descendents of the gods. Their deeds are the beginning of a new destiny for England. Like Aeneas, they must carry on a great battle against an ancient civilization across the sea. Like him, they are destined to found a new and more glorious Troy. Prophetic passages throughout the poem confirm the English in this epic role. Their destiny is emphasized in the Briton Chronicles in Book II, in Merlin's prophecies and Britomart's account of the founding of Troynovant in Book III, and in Britomart's dream at Isis Church in Book V—which comes just before the decisive battle with Radigund.

As Spenser suggests after the death of Duessa, the ultimate significance of the episodes involving Mary Stuart lies in this epic pattern. For three decades, Mary was the single greatest threat to Elizabeth and to the new order that she sought to establish. After the allegorical portrayal of Mary's death, the poet can at last pause to celebrate a true epic victory. He sings of Elizabeth as if she were an ancient hero, honored by the gods, great in England's destiny, exemplary in the classical and Christian virtues. He writes of her (in the figure of Mercilla):

What heavenly Muse shall thy great honour rayse
Up to the skies, whence first deriv'd it was,
And now on earth it selfe enlarged has
From th'utmost brinke of the Armericke shore,
Unto the margent of the Molucas?
Those Nations farre thy justice doe adore:
But thine owne people do thy mercy prayse much more.

(x.3)

Spenser's adaptation of epic convention to allow this sort of glorification of a living ruler is bold almost to the point of presumption. Yet his words—at least those concerning Elizabeth's role in England's new destiny—were prophetic. By ensuring the survival of the Protestant Reformation, by consolidating a centralized government in England, and by laying the first foundations for the British Empire, Elizabeth did indeed alter the course of Western civilization.

As the Radigund episode reveals, the historical allegory of Book V is not simply a set of illustrations to support the moral allegory. It is also a new form of epic action, comparable in scope and global implications with Virgil's account of the founding of Rome.

Notes

1. See, among others, Albert B. Gough, *The Faerie Queene, Book V* (Oxford, 1918), cited in Edwin Greenlaw, et al., eds., *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, 11 vols. (Baltimore,

- 1932-57), V, 221 and 246; Edwin Greenlaw, *Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory* (Baltimore, 1932), pp. 142-47, cited in the *Variorum*, V, 304-306; H. S. V. Jones, *A Spenser Handbook* (New York, 1930), pp. 262-64, cited in the *Variorum*, V, 316-17; Thomas Cain, *Praise in "The Faerie Queene"* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1978), p. 152.
2. I cite the text of *The Faerie Queene* edited by A. C. Hamilton (London, 1977). Archaic spelling inverting i and j, u and v has been modernized.
 3. Cain, p. 152.
 4. See Donald V. Stump, "Isis Versus Mercilla: The Allegorical Shrines in Spenser's Legend of Justice," *Spenser Studies* 3 (1982), 87-98.
 5. Before beginning, one would like to be able to identify Spenser's sources of information. Unfortunately, however, Mary's case was the subject of countless tracts and histories, and we have no way of knowing which of them Spenser may have read. He could, moreover, have learned all that he needed without opening a book, for he served under two officials who knew the case intimately: the Earl of Leicester and Lord Arthur Grey. As I shall discuss below, Leicester was a principal figure in several of the incidents woven into Spenser's allegory, and Grey fought in one of its key battles and was also a commissioner at Mary's trial in 1586. I have, therefore, confined my documentation in sixteenth-century sources to two of the best known histories: George Buchanan's *History of Scotland* and Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Buchanan is useful because he shares Spenser's bitterly anti-Marian stance and often follows the official English line on Mary's conduct. Holinshed offers detailed accounts of military engagements. For further bibliography, see Kerby Neill, "The Faerie Queene and the Mary Stuart Controversy," *ELH* 2 (1935), 192-214, and James Emerson Phillips, *Images of a Queen: Mary Stuart in Sixteenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley, 1964).
 6. George Buchanan, *The History of Scotland*, tr. James Aikman, 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1827), II, 437.
 7. Buchanan, *History*, II, 406-420. See also Gordon Donaldson's concise history of the rebellion in *The Edinburgh History of Scotland*, edited by Gordon Donaldson, III: *Scotland: James V to James VII* (Edinburgh, 1965), pp. 85-106.
 8. See Buchanan, *History*, II, 420-34. A detailed account of day-by-day military operations and the terms of the subsequent treaty appears in Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 6 vols. (London, 1808), IV, 188-201.
 9. On the strategic importance of Leith, see Holinshed, *Chronicles*, IV, 189.
 10. See Buchanan, *History*, II, 441-48, and E. Russell, *Maitland of Lethington, the Minister of Mary Stuart: A Study of His Life and Times* (London, 1912), pp. 146-58.
 11. See J. E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth* (New York, 1934), pp. 106-113, 124, 151-52, 164.
 12. Donaldson, *Scotland: James V to James VII*, pp. 66-72, 76-79.
 13. See Antonia Fraser, *Mary Queen of Scots* (New York, 1969), pp. 48, 90.
 14. See Elizabeth Jenkins, *Elizabeth and Leicester* (New York, 1962), pp. 93-95, 134-35.
 15. Buchanan gives detailed accounts of Mary's quarrels with Darnley and charges her with complicity in his assassination. See *History*, II, 471-502, and *Detectio Mariae Reginae Scotorum*, in *The Tyrannous Reign of Mary Queen of Scots*, tr. and ed. W. A. Gatherer (Edinburgh, 1958), pp. 163-80.
 16. See Buchanan, *History*, II, 502-27.
 17. Jenkins, *Elizabeth and Leicester*, p. 154. Many critics simply equate Artegall with Leicester, but, as Artegall's connection with the actions of Elizabeth's other ministers shows, he represents no single person but rather the Queen's justice as it was carried out by all her agents. See Greenlaw, *Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory*, p. 101.
 18. Jenkins, pp. 154-66; Fraser, p. 420.
 19. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth*, pp. 179-82.
 20. As one of the Scottish commissioners, Buchanan had an insider's knowledge of Norfolk's involvement with Mary. See *History*, II, 540-44.
 21. Buchanan, *History*, II, 544-45, 552-54; Neale, p. 180.
 22. Buchanan, *History*, II, 569-71; Maurice Lee, Jr., *James Stewart. Earl of Moray: A Political Study of the Reformation in Scotland* (New York, 1953), pp. 273-74.

23. Fraser, *Mary Queen of Scots*, pp. 417-18.
24. Buchanan discusses Norfolk's secret arrangement to send letters to Mary through William Maitland and suggests that the marriage was first negotiated through the wife of Mary's earlier warder, Lord Scrope. See *History*, II, 543-44, 562.
25. See Buchanan, *History*, II, 543-44; Lee, *James Stewart*, pp. 237-41; Russell, *Maitland*, pp. 370-84. Lee and Russell have proposed plausible theories to explain Maitland's bizarre behavior in this incident, showing that it was neither self-serving nor intentionally destructive of Anglo-Scottish relations. To someone like Spenser, however, who knew less about the man and who had more intense feelings than we do about the disastrous results of the Norfolk marriage scheme, Maitland's maneuvering must have seemed plain treachery with but one plausible explanation: that Maitland was trying to curry favor with the English for his own personal advancement.
26. See Neale, *Queen Elizabeth*, pp. 185-86.
27. See Neale, pp. 161-64, 168.
28. Neale, pp. 195-96.
29. Neale, pp. 190, 196.
30. Holinshed's account of the rebellion reveals the bumbling and the excesses of both sides. See *Chronicles*, IV, 234-52. See also Neale, pp. 183-87.
31. See Neale, pp. 272-77.
32. See Neale, pp. 195-96.
33. Neale, pp. 198-201.
34. Donaldson, *Scotland: James V to James VII*, pp. 163-67.
35. Greenlaw, *Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory*, p. 96.
36. Gough, *Variorum*, V, 211. For arguments against these and other scholars with similar views, such as A. C. Hamilton and Graham Hough, see Frank Kermode, "The Faerie Queene, I and V," in *Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne* (New York, 1971), pp. 33-59.
37. See Jones, *A Spenser Handbook*, pp. 26-71.

Criticism: Julia M. Walker (essay date 1992)

SOURCE: Walker, Julia M. "Spenser's Elizabeth Portrait and the Fiction of Dynastic Epic." *Modern Philology* 90, no. 2 (November 1992): 172-99.

[In the following essay, Walker discusses Spenser's exposition of Queen Elizabeth I and her royal lineage through the epic narrative of *The Faerie Queene*.]

Suggesting that the royal houses of Renaissance Europe were "consciously ... intensifying the mystique of monarchy" because rulers were "assuming more and more of a messianic role in an age which had witnessed the breakdown of the universal church and the shattering of the old cosmology," Roy Strong argues for the consequent importance of images of the monarch.¹ Recent work on the "Siena/Sieve" portrait and the "Rainbow" portrait has established in impressive detail just how true this intensification had become for court artists in the last years of Elizabeth's reign.² Strong's assertion, I will argue, also holds true for the work of Edmund Spenser as he produced perhaps the greatest portrait of Elizabeth's reign: Britomart in *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser's Elizabeth portrait surpasses all the painted panels, however richly encoded with meanings, because through the force of epic narrative it can present a changing image, one confronted by physical and political realities and altered by those confrontations. Because the changing portrait of ink on paper is linear, it presents the identity of its central figure to the eye only gradually, as the veil of allegory is gradually withdrawn by the poem's narrative to reveal the image of a virgin whose motherhood is merely fictive.

Spenser introduces the analogy between poetic representation and painting in the proem to *book 3* by speaking of Elizabeth's virtue of chastity as "the pourtraict of her hart, / If pourtrayd it might be by any liuing art."³ In

the next three stanzas he develops the conceit of the poem as painting, making it the controlling principle of representation for the legend of Britomart.

But liuing art may not least part expresse,
Nor life-resembling pencill it can paint,
All were it Zeuxis or Praxiteles:
His daedale hand would faile, and greatly faint,
And her perfections with his error taint:
Ne Poets wit, that passeth Painter farre
In picturing the parts of beautie daint,
So hard a workmanship aduenture darre,
For feare through want of words her excellence to marre.

[Proem to 3, 2.10-18]

Protesting that no single image can represent Elizabeth, Spenser argues that since “choicest wit / Cannot your glorious pourtraict figure plain,” he himself cannot “shadow it” in “colured showes” by fitting “antique praises unto present persons” (proem to 3, 3.6-9); instead, he must seek alternative forms of representation. As David Lee Miller observes: “Poetry can cap the sequence of forms that are inadequate to their original while still leaving open a space for the emergence of *allegory* as an alternative to the poetics of sensuous realism.”⁴

Continuing the trope of displacement in stanza 4, Spenser offers first not his own but Raleigh's poetry. But by linking Raleigh's poetry to the painting of a specific image—its use, according to Spenser, of “liuing colours and right hew” to “picture” Elizabeth as Cynthia—Spenser prepares for the last stanza of the proem where he ultimately displaces the artistic achievement of Raleigh. Spenser overgoes Raleigh's with his own which offers not a single classical figure but a mirror, not a single mirror but “mirrours more then one” (proem to 3, 5.6) for Elizabeth to find in the single text which is Spenser's poem. This, then, is Spenser's revision of the episode in which Sir Christopher Hatton and another knight challenged each other's ability to present “the truest picture of hir Majestie to the Queene”; one offered a flattering picture, the other a mirror.⁵ According to Louis Adrian Montrose, what “the poet conventionally deprecates as his inability to produce an adequate reflection of the glorious royal image is [in the proem to *bk. 3*] the methodical process of fragmentation and refraction by which the text appropriates that image, imposing upon it its own specificity.”⁶ But surely Spenser's conventional deprecation here becomes the frame for a text which glorifies the very multiplicity of images Elizabeth generates, foregrounding her multivalency to enable his allegorical epic portrait. Thus Spenser can augment what Miller calls the “poetics of sensuous realism.”

The poetic story—the (hi)story of Elizabeth's “ancestor” Britomart—is foregrounded by the proem to book 3 and the generic expectations generated by Spenser's invocation of Ariosto's multiplot dynastic epic, only to be gradually erased by the narrative of *books 3, 4, and 5*. If the story and the narrative were consistent,⁷ we would find a wedding in *book 5*; instead we find Mercilla and lose sight of Britomart as she bids “farewell to fleshly force” (5.7.40.9) and the fiction of dynastic motherhood. Using the fiction of a dynastic epic as pigment and framing his portrait with allusions to two epic couples—thus overgoing also the painter of the “Sieve” portrait—Spenser offers the queen a text which mirrors her own multivalent image.⁸ The multiple nature of Elizabeth's image—monarch, virgin, mother, warrior, lover, goddess—is daunting enough to make any artist “fear through want of words her excellence to marre” by highlighting one aspect of this image at the expense or to the exclusion of another. I agree in part with Elizabeth J. Bellamy that one quest (but not the “ultimate quest”) of the poem is “the poet's unsuccessful effort to nominate Elizabeth”;⁹ I would argue, however, that the failure to name Elizabeth is a consequence of Spenser's success at representing her. The paradigm of dynasty becomes a fiction, a prop, an element of representation which enables the historical reality of the portrait. Monarchy and dynasty are complexly and inextricably linked, but to avoid any suggestion of dynastic failure on Elizabeth's part, Spenser must find a way to transcend this element of the paradigm. As he develops the complex metaphor of portraiture and mirroring, Spenser delineates the nature of

his delicate task. In the proem to *book 1* Spenser calls Elizabeth herself the “Mirroure of grace and Maiestie diuine”; in the proem to *book 3* he offers his own text as “mirrours more then one” in which Elizabeth can see herself. Naming Gloriana and Belpheobe as two of those mirrors, Spenser leaves unnamed his major representation of Elizabeth—unnamed in the proem, that is, but named in the title of the book: Britomart. Neither the perpetually deferred Gloriana nor the fatherless Belpheobe with her twin sister Amoret offers as accurate a reflection of Elizabeth as does Britomart, the heir of her father's kingdom and a figure of female power—not in Faerieland or on the lower slopes of Olympus but in a male-dominated society. No less graphically than the “Siena/Sieve” portrait in its depiction of Dido's love-inflamed death, Spenser—through Britomart's struggles with various manifestations of fleshly force—undertakes to depict the sexual as well as the political implications of Elizabeth's evolving transformation from queen and virgin to Virgin Queen.

I

Beginning very much “in the middle of things,” *book 3* opens the epic-within-an-epic which continues through *books 4* and *5*. Mirroring the structure of the *Aeneid*, Spenser presents us with one canto of present-tense action and two of history. The mirror scene and the rest of canto 2 and all of 3 are supposedly Britomart's means for explaining to Red Cross how she came to be as she is, but it is significant that these two cantos are narrated not in the first person, as Aeneas tells his story—and, indeed, as Odysseus tells his—but in the third. Spenser thus objectifies Britomart as a speaking picture, not a “character,” and depersonalizes her experience for the reader from enactment to representation. This shift jars with the story (Red Cross does, after all, inquire of Britomart directly, not a third party) and thereby heightens the tension between story and narrative already present in *book 3*. This tension results from Spenser's secret depiction of Elizabeth through the presentation of Britomart.

The word “secret,” as an adjective (often linked to “fear”) and as a noun, is associated with Britomart from her first appearance in the poem (bk. 3, canto 1) and reiterated through all her key episodes—the mirror vision, Merlin's cave, the House of Busirane, her first sight of Artegall, Isis Church—right up to her rescue of Artegall from Radigund and her disempowering of herself and all women rulers. “Secret” seems a dissonant note to sound in the presentation of so public a figure unless, perhaps, it is meant to suggest a secret kept from a figure even more public.¹⁰ The reader knows the secret of Britomart's identity but not her story, so her problems in Malacasta's castle do not initially seem as strange as they should. The trouble Britomart encounters in the first canto of book 3 springs from her failure to recognize the elements of sexual secrecy in Malacasta's castle. The tapestries which Britomart sees on Malacasta's walls are described in detail by the poet/narrator, who gives pride of place to the story of Venus leading Adonis to some “secret shade” (3.1.35.6) where she “secretly” (3.1.36.6) courts him and attempts to enjoy his love “in secret” (3.1.37.2). The repetition of “secret” in three consecutive stanzas is hard to ignore, and thus the reader is not greatly surprised by Britomart's failure to read the tapestries, for it might be argued that a secret knight of chastity has yet to confront openly the forces of antichastity. At any rate, after recognizing no threat, secret or otherwise, in the castle's decor, Britomart fails either to see the danger of the “secret darts” (3.1.51.8) Malacasta throws at her or to anticipate the danger of Malacasta's coming with “secret purpose” (3.1.57.8) toward her bed. Thus she receives her first wound.

The narrator speaks of secrets to the reader, not to Britomart. I think the purpose here is to sensitize the reader to the word “secret” and to its associations with sexuality as encountered by Britomart. Therefore, when we are finally given the details of Britomart's first encounter with sexuality in the second canto of book 3, we may be expected to remember and reflect upon this knight's failure to read properly the story of Venus and Adonis. The naive reader of the first canto of book 1 may not expect the Knight of Chastity to know the story of Venus's sex-denying lover. But when we realize that Britomart is familiar with such Ovidian oddities as Myrrha, Biblis, and Pasiphae (3.2.41.1-9), we must recognize Britomart's reading of the tapestry for what it is: a failure of awareness which amounts to suppression of knowledge. Britomart's secret fears, generated by the mirror vision of an Other in book 3, canto 2, have been neither assuaged nor displaced by her

transmogrification from a weak, sick girl into a successful knight; they have merely been placed below the level of her immediate consciousness. For although Britomart is an allegorical figure, she is a figure developed to represent both the physical and psychological elements of the female. Spenser figures forth Britomart's psychological confusion by playing on the immediate ignorance of the reader in canto 1. When we are given Britomart's history of secret fears about the secrets of sexuality, we remember the Malacasta episode and are forced to reread it.¹¹ Britomart herself misreads and is wounded because of her failure to remember the sexual lessons she has already learned.

This failure, a result of denial, goes far to explain the lies Britomart tells to Red Cross at the beginning of canto 2. Denying the reality of her own girlhood, she offers Red Cross a tale which conflates the childhoods of Virgil's Camilla and Tasso's Clorinda—significantly, two women who live and die not only as warriors but as virgins. And once again Spenser forces the naive reader into an inescapable misreading, offering no reason to disbelieve or even to question Britomart's tale of a martial childhood. Not until the end of canto 3 do we learn that Britomart's hands were “weake” and knew not the use of “dreadfull speare and shield” (3.3.53.3-4). As there seems to be no necessity for Britomart to tell this lie, we can read it as a rewriting of history. We also realize that, if her Amazon childhood is fictive, Britomart's desire for a male-defined identity was not a manifestation but an outgrowth of the mirror vision. As in the Malacasta episode, Spenser once more uses narrative placement to privilege the topos of reflected knowledge that is associated with mirrors in general and Britomart's mirror vision in particular. Britomart has still failed to externalize her own vision of sexuality beyond the oblique confines of the mirror vision.

It is not possible to separate Britomart's psychosexual reaction to the mirror from the artistic/historic context of the poem as Elizabeth's mirror, for the mirror into which Britomart gazes is presented to us in a double context.¹² It is first the mirror of romance and then the mirror of public policy. We initially hear from the narrator (in 3.1.8.9) of “*Venus* looking glas.” The next mention, of “a mirrhour plaine” (3.2.17.4), is quickly superseded by its description as a work of Merlin's “deepe science, and hell-dreaded might, / A looking glasse, right wondrously aguiz'd, / Whose vertues through the wyde world soone were solemniz'd” (3.2.18.7-10). This famous “world of glas” (3.2.19.9), given by Merlin to King Reynce so that the latter might never be surprised by an enemy attack, is now presented as an instrument of public policy, neither “plaine” nor having to do with Venus. Since this mirror had been “a famous Present for a Prince” (3.2.21.6) and strategically important to the Prince's kingdom, we must find it all the more strange that Britomart, Reynce's “onely daughter and his hayre” (3.2.22.4), seems to know nothing about it although she has access to it. If she had known its properties, she would not have expected to view herself in “that mirrhour fayre” (3.2.22.6). That she seeks for herself “in vaine” comes as no surprise to the reader, for the narrator's description of the mirror precedes Britomart's viewing by only three stanzas:

It vertue had, to shew in perfect sight,
What ever thing was in the world contaynd,
Betwixt the lowest earth and heauens hight,
So that it to the looker appertaynd;
What euer foe had wrought, or frend had faynd,
Therein discovered was.

[3.2.19.1-6]

If Britomart knew what the reader knows, fear of the mirror would not be an inappropriate response.

But does she know? After first vainly seeking her own face, Britomart, “auizing [generally glossed as ‘remembering’] of the vertues rare, / Which thereof spoken were” (3.2.22.7-8), looks once more for that which might “to her selfe pertaine” (3.2.22.9). According to the narrative of stanza 23, the particular “that” for which Britomart looks is a husband: “So thought this Mayd (as maydens use to done) / Whom fortune for her husband would allot” (3.2.23.5-6). What she sees is Artegall wearing the armor of Achilles. When Britomart

sees this image and acquires an external focus for her vague thoughts of marriage, the inscription linking Artegall to Achilles seems inappropriate at first. But the allusion to the dead Achilles suggests a pattern for reading Britomart's response to the vision. In book 11 of the *Odyssey* Odysseus learns from the shade of the dead Achilles that he should alter his goals and values; far from wanting to be the world's greatest hero among the dead, Odysseus should realize that it is better to be a slave and alive. As this speech of Achilles changes the way Odysseus looks at the rest of his life, so the vision of Artegall/Achilles changes Britomart.

We now must ask exactly how much Britomart remembers about the mirror. She recalls enough, albeit belatedly, to look for someone “that mote to her selfe pertaine,” but does she specifically remember that the mirror was devised to reveal the foe or the feigning friend? This question makes stanza 23 all the more problematic. Spenser's language there depicts quite vividly the psychological construct we now call the unconscious; Britomart is not actively seeking or thinking about a husband, but the idea is in her mind. If she remembers everything about the mirror's vision, does she therefore unconsciously see her destined husband as a foe? Is Spenser trying to show the workings of Britomart's mind or to plant ideas in the minds of his readers? Specifically, is he figuring forth a political situation in which any alliance would be somehow disempowering? Stanza 26 would seem to answer “both” (or “all”) to these questions. Britomart is seemingly unaffected—she viewed well, “liked well, ne further fastned not, / But went her way” (3.2.26.2-3)—yet she is simultaneously the unknowing victim of Cupid's secret arrows, which wound her in the arena of public policy, that is, the mirror. Here the reader is told that Britomart is unaware “that her vn lucky lot / Lay hidden in the bottome of the pot” (3.2.26.4-5). “Unlucky lot”? This phrase and the description of “the false Archer, which that arrow shot / So slyly” are the language which Virgil uses of Dido in order to evoke a male/female paradigm which features not Achilles, but Aeneas. Dido became “unlucky” when the gods placed her in a position where her private emotions became a threat to the public good. By searching the mirror, an instrument of public policy, for private (however heedless) pleasure, Britomart may have placed herself in a similar position—or her position as her father's (problematic) female heir may have so placed her.

After her mirror vision, Britomart falls ill and speaks “fearefully,” arguing with her nurse that she does not suffer from love, while describing equally negatively what she *has* seen in the mirror: “Nor Prince, nor pere it is” (3.2.37.8), “Nor man it is, nor other liuing wight,” but “th'only shade and semblant of a knight, / Whose shape or person yet I never saw” (3.2.38.1, 3-4). Tracing her misfortune to her “*fathers wondrous mirrhour*” (emphasis mine), Britomart goes on to detail its effects on her “bleeding bowels” in terms more sensuously realistic than allegorical:

Now ranckleth in this same fraile fleshly mould
That all mine entrailes flow with poysnous gore.

[3.2.39.2-4]

Although “ranckleth” is a key term for love wounds in the *Faerie Queene* (Arthur's in bk. 1, canto 9, and Marinell's in bk. 4, canto 12), Britomart's sufferings as described in these lines seem more symptomatic of severe discomforts of the menstrual cycle than the “ulcer” she diagnoses in herself. The vision of Artegall, which replaces the nonimage of herself, generates physiological and psychological reactions, both unpleasant to Britomart; the first, however, is necessarily and naturally linked to female sexuality, the second is a sign of conflict over that sexuality. Denial or lack of recognition of her private female self causes Britomart's public activities to suffer (stanza 27), and Glauce observes that she no longer “tastest Princes pleasures” (3.2.31.6). In addition to her physical diminution and pain, Britomart also becomes “Sad soleme, sowre, and full of fancies fraile” (3.2.27.5) and experiences both bad dreams and a loss of sleep.

Glauce tries to comfort Britomart by arguing that it *is* love from which she suffers; moreover, that this is a good and natural love. Her secondary claim compiles an interesting list of negative examples from Ovid to

argue that Britomart's love, despite its "strange beginning" (3.2.42.2), is really good. The implications of the negative examples are not lost on Britomart, however. Making the obvious comparison between herself and Narcissus, she concludes that she is worse off "than Cephisus foolish child" (3.2.44.6) whose mirror vision found a substantive correlative in his own face. Hereupon, Glauce's renewed offer of comfort shades again into sinister overtones, as she suggests that the object of Britomart's vision might be identified "by cyphers, or by Magicke might" (3.2.45.9) and vows "by wrong or right / To compasse thy desire, and find that loued knight" (3.2.46.8-9).

Accepting at face value Glauce's "chearefull words," the "sick virgin" is able to sleep (3.2.47.1,2). The next day Britomart and Glauce repair "Vnto the Church" for a religious exercise as odd and contradictory as the stanzas of comfort that precede it. They pray

With great deuotion, and with litle zeale:
For the faire Damzell from this holy herse
Her loue-sicke hart to other thoughts did steale;
And that old Dame said many an idle verse,
Out of her daughters hart fond fancies to reuerse.

[3.2.48.5-9]

Unsurprisingly, Britomart returns home only to relapse. Now, however, the narrator tells us outright that Britomart's problems are psychological, and that they stem from a lack of self-knowledge: "the royall Infant fell / Into her former fit; for why, no powre / Nor guidance of her self in her did dwell" (3.2.49.1-3). Abandoning both reason and religion, Glauce now tries a series of folk remedies which also prove unable to "slake the furie of her cruell flame" (3.2.52.2). At the end of the canto, Britomart is left to waste away from a "hart-burning breme"; she "like a pyned ghost became, / Which long hath waited by the Stygian strond" (3.2.52.5-6).

The word-picture of Britomart consumed by the cruel flames of a love that is somehow wrong again brings to mind Virgil's Dido.¹³ Britomart, shot by Cupid's arrow, has a series of physical responses to her vision of Artegall: she suffers from bad dreams, tells her female confidante of her pain, hears in return that what she feels is only natural—"No guilt in you, but in the tyranny of loue" (3.2.40.9)—is only temporarily relieved, seeks comfort in the Church, and remains the victim of burning love. In similar straits Dido turns for comfort to her sister, Anna; and both narrative and story in book 4 of the *Aeneid* form a pattern which Spenser's poem shadows. Anna argues that Dido's love should not be viewed as unnatural:

O luce magis dilecta sorori,
solane perpetua maerens carpere iuenta,
nec dulcis natos, Veneris nec praemia noris?(14)

Heartened by Anna's opinion, Dido goes to the temple to seek confirmation. But, as the narrator explains, her state of mind will not allow her to benefit from any possible religious consolation:

Heu vatum ignarae mentes! quid vota furentem,
quid delubra iuant? Est mollis flamma medullas
interea, et tacitum vivit sub pectore volnus.(15)

Unhappy Dido still burns with ill-fated love: "Uritur infelix Dido."¹⁶

If Spenser draws on the story of Dido to model Britomart's history, this may be a strategy for alleviating the conflict of erotic and dynastic discourses in his own poem. The problems raised by such a strategy, however, soon come to seem even more troubling than the conflict being addressed. But Spenser does not confine Britomart to the paradigm of Dido; he places her in the footsteps of Aeneas,¹⁷ and of other heroes—errant as

well: Odysseus, Dante the pilgrim, and Bradamante. Before she can go upward and outward in canto 3, Britomart must first go down and inward to learn the nature of her goal.¹⁸

Guided by Glauce, Britomart finds Merlin “low vnderneath the ground, / In a deep delue, farre from the vew of day” (3.3.7.6-7). Critics often link this scene to Bradamante's encounter with Merlin's ghost in *Orlando Furioso*. Except for the persona of Merlin, however, the episode is much closer to book 6 of the *Aeneid* than it is to Ariosto's poem.¹⁹ After hearing the dynastic history, Britomart, like Aeneas, is changed and pursues her destiny with vigor, while Bradamante is directed but not revitalized. Britomart arrives in Merlin's cave still shadowing Dido, for she is inflamed and weakened by a passion which she imperfectly understands. She leaves somewhat comforted, now possessed of a specific goal of public identity and reshaped after the model of Aeneas. Britomart's gender, however, does not conform to the pattern she must follow. Like the artist of the “Siena/Sieve” portrait of Elizabeth, Spenser makes allusion to the male Aeneas through a female figure, although the tradition of epic romance provides the poet with a solution unavailable to the painter. While the narrative seems to question the rightness of her actions—she acts at Glauce's “foolhardy” suggestion (3.3.52.1)—Britomart dons her father's armor and thus identifies herself with the figure presented in her father's magic mirror. That Glauce prefaces her suggestion with a catalog of women warriors is, I believe, less significant than her remarks about Britomart's person: Britomart can become “a mayd Martiall” (3.3.53.9) because she can be made to look and act like a man, like an Aeneas or an Achilles. But, in secret, she remains a woman, like Penthesilea or Camilla or Clorina, women who do not marry, but die. Of this secret, however, only the reader has full knowledge, for Britomart herself seems as confused as ever about her sexuality, just as the others will be when they see her in armor. Breaking with her literary antecedents, Britomart does not proclaim herself a woman warrior. Similarly, Elizabeth had declined to change the gender of the ideal ruler, choosing instead to find ways to speak of herself, legally and metaphorically, as a man. Indeed, as Belsey and Belsey remind us, Elizabeth's pose in portraits often constitutes a graphic reference to portraits of her father.²⁰ But however cleverly Elizabeth made reference to the tradition of male monarchy, she could do not more than invoke and revise its metaphors; the reality of her own sexuality remained immutable.

II

After concluding the flashback of both the mirror vision and the prophecy, the narrator returns the now-knowledgeable reader to the narrative present in the encounter with Red Cross, offering what seems at first to be an externalization of the vision and prophetic gloss: Britomart's apostrophe to the sea in book 3, canto 4, stanzas 7-10. Hamilton calls this speech an allegorical projection of “her inner emotional disorder into nature's disorder,”²¹ and so it appears as Britomart begins:

Huge sea of sorrow, and tempestuous grieffe,
Wherein my feeble barke is tossed long,
Far from the hoped hauen of relief,
Why do thy cruell billowes beat so strong,
And thy moyst mountaines each on others throng
Threatning to swallow up my feareful life?

[3.4.8.1-6]

As we read to the end of the stanza, however, we find that Britomart is not projecting her own emotions on the disorder of nature but, rather, internalizing (unsuccessfully) nature's disorder within her own body:

O do thy cruell wrath and spightfull wrong
At length allay, and stint thy stormy strife,
Which in these troubled bowels raignes, and rageth rife.

[3.4.8.7-9]

If Britomart were able to locate within her own “troubled bowels” the storm of which she “thus complaynd” (3.4.7.9), then she could allegorize and thus objectify her own troubles: the physical, sexual sea of troubles upon which she sees the “feeble vessell” (3.4.9.1) of her own identity tossed and manned by the “bold and blind” (3.4.9.9) figures of “Love my lewd Pilot” (3.4.9.6) and the “Boteswaine” Fortune (3.4.9.7)—the former with “a restlesse mind” (3.4.9.6) and the latter knowing “no assuraunce” (3.4.9.7). So that her “ship” may survive such irrational mastery, Britomart calls upon the “God of winds” (3.4.10.1), Aeolus, who—according to Comes—represents reason.²² If reason will rule Love and Fortune, she pleads, the storm will become “some gentle gale of ease, / The which may bring my ship, ere it be rent, / Vnto the gladsome port of her intent” (3.4.10.3-5) where “I shall my selfe in safety see” (3.4.10.6). Britomart's syntax places “selfe” between “I” and “see,” creating a verbal paradigm of identity both self-empowered and solitary; she is a figure in control, as the object of her own gaze.

But Britomart is not a text to be allegorized; as the representation of a complexly public and private woman, she cannot be so neatly dismembered, not even by her “self.” Britomart's fleeting attempt to allegorize her emotion foregrounds the impossibility of this mode of representation: a woman is not a sea, a ship, a storm—or a male monarch. Britomart can only describe herself in terms of what she is not, as Elizabeth does with sieves, suns, moons, and phoenix and pelican intaglios in her portraits.

At this point Glauce once again intervenes to remind Britomart that good is supposed to come of her sexuality, the public, dynastic good of those who will “fetch their being from the sacred mould / Of her immortall wombe, to be in heauen enrolld” (3.4.11.8-9). Glauce thus attempts to soothe Britomart's secret, private fears. Once again, also, we are presented with a conflict of narrative discourse and poetic action: after the narrator tells us that Glauce's elevated, dynastic interpretation of sexuality has “recomforted” Britomart (3.4.12.1), Marinell appears on the shore and Britomart promptly prepares to attack this pure young man (cantos 13-14), whom she hears “with deep disdain” (3.4.15.1). She smites with “so fierce furie and great puissance” (3.4.16.2) that she leaves him “tombled on an heape, and wallowd in his gore” (3.4.16.9). “The martiall Mayd stayd not . . . to lament” the hurt of the man who challenged her for trespassing; instead she rides onward over beaches strewn with gold, pearls, and other jewels, and “despised all; for all was in her powre” (3.4.18.1,9). A realistic reading of Britomart's dynastic future would include acknowledgment of the boundaries set for women. But Britomart cannot or will not acknowledge even the restraint imposed on her freedom of movement by an armed encounter.

We have here no Virgilian Camilla who will pause, even in battle, to seek for glittering treasure. She, along with “*Penthesilee*” and “*Debora*,” are mentioned by the narrator in the first two stanzas of this canto as examples of “Antique glory” who cannot compare with Britomart “Aswell for glory of great valiaunce, / As for pure chastitie and vertue rare” (3.4.3.3-4). Britomart is more brave, more pure, more chaste, and more virtuous than these women warrior/virgins, and—as we must understand from the implicit comparison with Camilla's specifically female love of plunder—less feminine.

In her “feigning fancie” Britomart “did portray” Artegall as “Wise, warlike, personable, curteous, and kind” (3.4.5.7,9), but these “selfe-pleasing thoughts” made “her wound” worse: “her smart was much more grieuous bred, / And the deepe wound more deepe engord her hart” (3.4.6.1,3-4). Fulfilling her apparent function in the poem, that of a “gloss” on Britomart's problems with sexuality,²³ Glauce offers comfort not by bringing Britomart to terms with the immediate reality of sexual difference but by displacing this into a lofty, future-tense vision of dynasty. The immediate result is that Britomart rises to attack yet another man, yet another version of her internalized mirror vision. Not until the House of Busirane does Britomart, who never sees the Garden of Adonis, see and begin to recognize external projections of her internal sexual fears.

Not to lose myself in the toils of Busirama (or the Busirane Tournament of Interpretation),²⁴ I would nevertheless point out that here, once again, the reader is given information whose significance is deferred. The Masque of Cupid can be read in terms of Britomart's fears, even though she herself does not seem to do

so. Not until book 4, canto 1, however, do we learn that this is the masque which generated in Amoret the sexual fears which manifest themselves as the figure of Busirane. So, in a sense, Britomart succeeds because she is unaware of the implications of what she sees—this being the same reason why she failed at Malacasta's. The reader is likewise unaware of the significance of her ultimate success with Busirane until the story of Amoret's wedding in book 4. But at the close of book 3, Britomart has more in common with most icons than she does with most women; this is also the case, again within Spenser's poem, for Elizabeth.²⁵ Britomart's private, female self has become a secret, placed outside the bounds of representation by circumstances, by other figures in the poem, and most of all by herself—just as Elizabeth's public image as nonvirginal female was displaced in lines that she herself wrote to Parliament in 1563: "Though I can think [that marriage is] best for a private woman, yet I do strive with myself to think it not meet for a prince."²⁶ In book 3, canto 12, Britomart is less a private woman than a prince, and every time she approaches a realization of her female self—as in her first encounter with Artegall—she is diminished, weakened by secrets, by fear, by "secret fear." And yet, the poem and the tradition imply, she must accept—nay, achieve—the realization of her private female identity. Maureen Quilligan observes that "Spenser may counsel his female readers to follow Belphoebe's example of virginity, but the chastity he truly extols is Amoret's; it is the chastity not of a virgin queen, but of a wedded wife."²⁷ If Quilligan is right to find Spenser exalting Amoret over Belphoebe, perhaps the figuring of Britomart as a conflation of the figures of Dido and Aeneas constitutes a middle ground which will keep Elizabeth—married to no man but to a nation—from taking offense at the "hail wedded love" theme.²⁸ Some such line of implication would explain why Britomart does not recognize Amoret's sexual fears as her own. It does not explain, however, how we are to read Britomart's sexuality.

As long as Britomart's sexuality is located within the paradigm of dynastic epic, we must read it realistically. If, however, we see the dynastic construct as a fiction, the poetic equivalent of an iconic symbol in a painting like the miniatures on the pillar in the "Siena/Sieve" portrait, we can look beyond this foregrounded icon to the main figure. The icon adds richness to the central figure, as the globe in the "Siena/Sieve" portrait adds a cosmic dimension to Elizabeth's monarchy, but the globe in the portrait does not suggest that Elizabeth rules the world. Neither does the fiction of dynasty mean that Britomart is going to marry and have children. As the eye moves beyond the globe in the portrait, so the reader moves beyond the fiction of dynasty within the poem. Throughout book 3 and also in books 4 and 5, Britomart's sexual image is reflected, deflected, refracted, and finally deferred. By choosing to begin Britomart's odyssey of self-knowledge with a literally untrue but metaphysically and psychologically significant mirror image, after calling attention to Elizabeth's mirror images in the proem, Spenser foregrounds the traditional topos of the mirror. By displacing Britomart's vision of herself, by reinscribing her changing identity again and again in Elizabeth's textual mirror, Spenser offers us a mirror image of multiple truths, a vision which by its inherent trope of exchanged positions, the chiasmus, enables multiple representations and dislocates truth from the world of pragmatic and psychosexual politics into the text. The image of the mirror becomes the portrait of a multivalent image: Elizabeth. How, then, can we read Elizabeth looking into the textual mirror/portrait of Britomart's quest? By watching Elizabeth watch Britomart transmute herself from a royal maid seeking a dynastic marriage and become an icon of the elements of just rule that will secure her immortality.

For the moment, let us suspend our acceptance of Spenser's formulaic references to the dynastic epics of Virgil, Tasso, and Ariosto, just as I have suggested we set aside the limitingly literal references to Gloriana and Belphoebe in the proem to book 3. If we no longer think of Britomart primarily as a future wife and mother, what does she then become? One answer is: an icon of female power beset by secret fear. True, Britomart endears herself to us as we follow the development of her private fears, because she seems more like a young woman of flesh and blood than does any other figure in the epic. But as the cantos proceed, she becomes more and more objectified and public; we are privy to fewer and finally none of her personal thoughts and reactions. In canto 2 of book 3 Britomart starts out with a full complement of psychological and physiological baggage. How, then, does she turn herself into an icon? By undergoing a perceptual exchange which turns her from an icon of the female into a female icon, from a reflection of psychosexual dynastic potential into a chiasmic portrait of public female power.

III

If Britomart is one of Elizabeth's mirrors, what happens when Britomart comes face-to-face with her own mirror vision? In book 4, canto 6, Britomart sees not a mirror vision but a flesh-and-blood Artegall. Significantly, much of this canto's vocabulary recalls the mirror scene in book 3. By reading book 4, canto 6, in the context of these mirror tricks of identity, we may uncover a more complex and possibly disturbing correspondence between Britomart and Artegall than is suggested by the conventions of dynastic marriage. We may also find a more direct correspondence between the dynastic pair and Elizabeth than is usually suggested by critics. We will certainly discover a most complex presentation of the convergence of sexuality with temporal power.²⁹

The confrontation and courtship of Artegall and Britomart once more presents us with a conflict between the story and the narrative of the poem; this conflict becomes a crucial element in Spenser's representation of Britomart in the remainder of book 4 and in book 5. In the confrontation scene, Glauce appeals to Britomart for a "truce," thus implying Britomart's control of the situation. But Glauce's three-stanza explication first individually addresses Artegall and thus ascribes the male knight the place of privilege. Artegall, who had been winning the battle when he was overcome by Britomart's beauty, is seen as at once gaining and relinquishing control. Britomart's initial control of the conflict by martial means is restored by her all-conquering beauty and further affirmed by Glauce's appeal for a truce. Having made such a complex presentation of the issue, Spenser is able to begin the actual courtship story leaving the balance of power in question. This is a question which he contrives to sustain rather than resolve by shaping the conflict between story and narrative into a crux that centers on empowerment.

As the narrative discourse of stanzas 40 and 41 suggests greater control on Britomart's part than does the story of those stanzas,³⁰ so the story of stanzas 42-46 conflicts with the traditional narrative situation of a lady loath to be parted from her lover. That language of romance is subverted by a story which presents Britomart as a knight involved in her own quest, not as an ultimate locus for male endeavor: "That all so soone as he by wit or art / Could that atchieve, where to he did aspire, / He vnto her would speedily reuert" (4.6.43.5-7). In fact, as the story speedily reminds us, Britomart will not be there to be reverted to; she will be off on her own adventure, which has not concluded with finding Artegall. As Britomart gazed into the mirror in book 3, canto 2, she began the chiasmic trajectory of her quest for identity, initially locating that identity in the figure of Artegall. Here, in book 4, canto 6, she makes contact with the tain of the mirror, the man himself, and is reflected back on another journey of re-imaging. This time the reflection will emerge as the face of Mercilla, the face of Elizabeth.

It is very important, I believe, that Scudamour's plaintive inquiry about Amoret intervenes between Artegall's and Britomart's dawning physical passion in the recognition scene and its extension in the conflicted wooing that commences with stanza 40. No mere comic incursion in a long-delayed love scene, this inquiry serves, I suggest, to remind the reader of a larger emergent pattern, for Scudamour's quest will take us to the Temple of Venus and the vision of the hermaphrodite relocated from the 1590 ending of book 3. That the Garden of Adonis episode is followed, not preceded, by that of the Temple of Venus makes a certain sense within the Scudamour/Armoret plot but is of the greatest importance for Britomart's quest. If she were going to fulfill the prophecy of Merlin on the literal, dynastic level by finding the man in the mirror and having children by him, would it not make better sense to follow up their meeting with a set piece on generative love rather than one of sexual ambiguity? Both the conventions of dynastic epic and society's conventional romantic endings for heroines—who marry princes (of one sort or another) and live happily ever after—gravitate against an easy recognition of Spenser's revisionist strategies. He works the reader's expectations like pigments applied to canvas, softening the contrast between his narrative and his story. As we can see by looking at Elizabeth's public portraits, there are no icons or patterns of representation which are immediately identifiable as those of a female monarch. Elizabeth's court painters had to rely on putting recognizable icons in new contexts: a phoenix intaglio, an ermine with a lacy crown around its neck, a sieve associated with an imperial crown, a

single pearl where a codpiece should be. Just as the court painters force us to reread these icons, so Spenser leads us through recognition into revision. In fact, the standard assumptions about reading Britomart as dynastic mother are made fourfold difficult by the Temple of Venus, by Isis Church, by her own actions at the end of book 5, canto 7, and by the appearance of Mercilla as the key figure of female power at the end of book 5. Might we not better question those assumptions than perform complex overreadings on the poem?

IV

I here raise more strongly my suggestion that we suspend our belief in Spenser's dynastic intentions, in what I call his dynastic fiction. If we look at the poem as Spenser has taught us to from book 1 on—treating structure and composition as functions of meaning—we can trace two patterns for the Britomart story, neither of which leads to the nursery. For the meaning of Britomart's chiasmic journey both within her own quest and within Spenser's dark conceit, we must look to Isis Church and to her dream where, as Kenneth Gross observes, “diverse levels of discourse . . . intersect within an almost obsessive construction of ambivalence.”³¹ Britomart's dream is a crucible that melds the major elements of her mirror vision, her victory in the House of Busirane, and the hermaphroditic Venus of book 4. What heats this crucible is the friction between two types of allegorical design: the dynastic design of English history and the iconographic design of Elizabeth's reign. In her dream, Britomart fuses the two; she becomes mother not of a dynasty of Englishmen but of a dynasty of virtues.³² Gross argues that it is the dream in Isis Church, “as opposed to her early mirror-vision,” which allows Britomart to find her “place within a mythic and political story.”³³ I agree, but would argue that it is the dream which allows the mirror vision to end.

That Isis Church is intricately related to Britomart's other significant adventures soon becomes clear. What she sees in the Isis statue forms an iconographical palimpsest with elements of other statues: the statue of Cupid, which she has seen, and the statue of Venus, which she has heard described. The text is the nature of her own sexuality which must be read within herself, and thus psychologically, in a dream.

This dream is a prophecy of what might be if Britomart continues to follow the path the poem has set for her; it is a warning. Britomart is happy though puzzled by her transfiguration in the red garments of sexuality, just as she has accepted, but not without doubts and fears, Merlin's foretelling of her role as Artegall's dynastic consort (an acceptance which also involves a change of clothing). When she is threatened with the onset of sexual desire, the flames, she sees Artegall—the reality of her mirror vision—as a possible source of rescue. Although the Crocodile devours the flames which threaten Britomart and the world of her dream, he himself becomes a threat as he turns “her likewise to eat” (5.7.15.8). Britomart is saved from the Crocodile by the Goddess who beats back the beast and humbles it³⁴—just as Radigund has done to Artegall. The Crocodile makes obeisance at Britomart's feet and seeks her love—just as Artegall did in book 4, canto 6. Britomart accepts his suit and becomes pregnant by him, bringing forth “a Lion of great might” (5.7.16.6)—just as Merlin tells Britomart she will do (3.3, stanzas 29-30).

In a sense, Britomart's dream tells her nothing which she did not already know. But it presents her with unavoidable connections between events which she has perceived separately and over a long time. Her reaction, therefore, becomes the most significant part of the entire episode. She awakes “full of fearefull fright, / And doubtfully dismayd through that so vncouth sight.”³⁵ She lies awake the rest of the night and thinks about what she has seen, but the result only adds “melancholy” to her doubt and fear. True, when the priest gives his dynastic reading of the dream, Britomart is “much eased in her troublous thought” (5.7.24.2), but the dream that the priest is reading is not the dream Britomart has. Britomart is not Isis in her dream; Isis is a force able to subdue the Crocodile to which Britomart submits. This “misreading” is not the priest's fault, for he can only read what he was told, told by Britomart “As well as to her minde it had recourse” (5.7.20.3). As the narrator presents her, Britomart does not or cannot tell the whole truth of her dream. Luce Irigaray observes that the dreamer awakened from a dream “restricts himself to reframing, remarking, or ‘analyzing’ its contours, re-stratifying its stages, so that order, good ‘conscious’ order, may prevail. Elsewhere.”³⁶

Likewise, Britomart denies the reality of what she has dreamed just as she denied the reality of what the mirror vision offered her. But her reaction to the sexual reality underlying the allegorized dream and overlaying the priest's reading does indeed appear elsewhere: in book 5, canto 7.

V

While it is possible to regard mirror visions, magic prophecies, and dreams as modes of representation which need not be privileged as “reality” within the world of the poem, actions and scenes presented in the present-tense narrative when Britomart goes forth “To seeke her loue” (5.7.24.7) cannot be similarly unprivileged. When Britomart fights and kills the Amazon Radigund, she subdues the aspect of female power which can, by its exclusionary nature, be read as a threat to male empowerment. Britomart is not, however, able to place herself within the male-dominated dynastic paradigm, because of the circumstances of her union with Artegall. Artegall, like the Crocodile of her dream, has been humbled by a woman. Britomart awoke from her dream “dismayd” by her “vncouth” coupling with just such a figure. Britomart must find a place for herself within the poem, but that place cannot be with Radigund, whose female power threatens the natural order and continuity of life, as did the rule of Mary Tudor. Nor can it be with Artegall, whose male power has been compromised by defeat at the hands of one woman and rescue at the hands of another. Like Elizabeth, Britomart, in the closing stanzas of canto 7, feels responsibility for the larger social order without being able to find any place for herself within that order. Spenser foregrounds this disordered order with a reference to the romantic climax of the *Odyssey*:

Not so great wonder and astonishment,
Did the most chaste Penelope possesse,
To see her Lord, that was reported drent,
And dead long since.

[5.7.39.1-4]

Britomart's wonder, astonishment, and uncertain fears must be reckoned greater than Penelope's, for—as Spenser here cleverly reminds us—it is Britomart who has been out having the adventures and remaining chaste while Artegall has donned woman's clothes and done exactly the woman's work of Penelope and her ladies, while displaying none of the Greek queen's strength or cleverness but only his own failure. Here, I suggest, Britomart is presented as at once greater than both Penelope and Odysseus at their best—as an androgynous image not unlike the Dido/Aeneas allusions of book 3—while Artegall is both less capable than Penelope and more wretched than the king disguised as a beggar.

What can Britomart do when she is confronted with such a vision? How can she honor—or even repair—such a society? Any action she takes will further violate the order of a male-dominated universe, an order already damaged by Radigund. To help this society, Britomart must place herself outside of it. All five of her questions in stanza 40 question the justice of a society which can both define roles of sex and power and then render those roles inaccessible to one who is placed by circumstances in an ambiguous role. As closely as he dares, Spenser is depicting the predicament facing Elizabeth when she ascended the throne. In stanzas 41-43 Britomart addresses her situation in much the same way that Elizabeth came to terms with hers; in stanzas 44-45 the poet, like Elizabeth, draws a rhetorical screen to prevent the radical action from threatening the sensibilities of the established order.

Britomart answers her five questions herself with the only solution available to her: “Then farewell fleshly force” (5.7.40.9). The literal, fleshly dynastic level of empowerment is no longer a possibility; there remains only the power of the icon. Now, in stanzas 41-43, Spenser presents his most carefully crafted conflict between narrative and story:

Thenceforth she streight into a bowre him brought,

And causd him those vncomely weedes vndight;
And in their steede for other rayment sought,
Whereof there was great store, and armors bright.

[5.7.41.1-5]

The story restores Artegall's masculine garments, outlaws female rule, and returns him to the action of the poem, leaving Britomart "sad and sorrowful." The narrative, on the other hand, shows us a Britomart who never relinquishes but, indeed, heightens her control of the action. In stanza 41, as Artegall is being doubly redressed, all of the active verbs belong to Britomart; Artegall is presented only in the passive. The complicated sequencing of stanza 42 mirrors the policy of Elizabeth when she found herself on the throne following the rule of a wrong-thinking woman:

So there a while they afterwards remained,
Him to refresh, and her late wounds to heale:
During which space she there as Princess rained,
And changing all that forme of common weale,
The liberty of women did repeale,
Which they had long vsurpt; and them restoring
To mens subiection, did true Iustice deale:
That all they as a Goddesses her adoring,
Her wisdom did admire, and hearkned to her loring.

[5.7.42.1-9]

This "she" must privilege her own position without changing the position of all women; she must privilege the male-dominated social order without relinquishing the means of her own empowerment. She must, as Spenser openly shows, be both Gloriana and Belpheobe, public queen and private virgin. But she must be both in one—Britomart, as she has been so complexly presented in books 3, 4, and 5. The female power which she "restores" to men's subjugation is the female power linked to physical force, to blood, and to the "secret feare" of sexuality, the female power in dynastic succession. Britomart is not such a female figure now, but a "Goddesses" (5.7.42.8) to be adored for her wisdom. She is far removed from her psychologized presentation in canto 2 of book 3 and very close to her final representation as Mercilla in book 5, canto 9. Britomart of book 5, canto 7, the narrator tells us, changes the "forme of common weale" by "restoring" women to "mens subiection"; and yet it is the men who needed to be "restored." Stanza 42 constitutes a double negative; the story and narration cancel each other out. In stanza 41 Britomart restores Artegall's private person to his place in the social order. In stanza 43 Britomart restores Artegall's public person to a position of control: she "did from thraldome free" the other captive knights and "Made them sweare fealty to Artegall" (5.7.43.2,6). But, just as if stanza 42 had not intervened, Britomart continues to give the orders. Her actions are still narrated in the active voice, the men's in the passive. At the end of stanza 43, Artegall leaves—ultimately still the object acted upon—"Vppon his first aduenture, which him forth did call" (5.7.43.9).

In stanza 44 the rhetoric of romance masks the actions of political power. Britomart recognizes that the social order depends upon establishing the honor of the Knight of Justice and, in turn, that "his honor, which she tendred chiefe, / Consisted much in that aduentures priefe" (5.7.44.4-5). Having cleared the way for Artegall to succeed when "he redeemed had that Lady thrall" (5.7.45.8)—that Lady who will be Belge and/or Irena, not Britomart—Britomart departs from the scene and from the poem. When she bids farewell to fleshly force she finally accomplishes that for which she has been striving since her first sight of Artegall in the mirror, a way "her anguish to appease" (5.7.45.5). She renounces the physical world and her place in it as a woman; by privileging the iconographic lessons of Busirane's House, the Temple of Venus, and Isis Church above the discourse of dynastic prophecy, Britomart leaves the poem as a flesh-and-blood figure so that she may reappear, Elizabeth-like, as an icon of justice.

VI

In the Isis Church dream, Spenser begins to depict Britomart as a dynastic mother; but the vision of that identity, compounded of past and present knowledge and of dynastic prophecy, is somehow wrong and leaves her “doubtfully dismayd.” The priest counsels her to tell him her troubles, using almost exactly the same words as Glauce in book 3, canto 2: “Say on,” he urges, “the secret of your hart” (5.7.19.6). Britomart leaves the dream world just as she left the mirror. She has dreamed of bringing forth the Lion of Merlin's prophecy but has gone forth from that dream to fight Radigund and be described as both a “Lionesse” and a “Lion” herself (5.7.30.1,7). She becomes not a mother through “fleshly force” but an icon. This icon has neither sex and both, figures both Dido and Aeneas, both Odysseus and Penelope. The offspring of an icon must be an abstraction: not of flesh and blood but of public policy, of Justice which will overcome all secret fear.

As for the larger pattern of the poem, this iconic representation explains why, when we look for an end-of-book set piece featuring Britomart, we find instead Mercilla's court. The book 5 representation of Mercilla is another iconographical palimpsest of Britomart's mirror vision and quest, a surface as densely inscribed as any of the later presentations: the House of Busirane, the statue of Venus which so suggestively mirrors the “faire *Hermaphrodite*” of Britomart herself in the 1590 ending of book 3, the statue of Isis, Britomart's dream, and Britomart's final battle with Radigund. Indeed, the presentation of Mercilla's court overgoes both the Isis Church dream and Britomart's final actions in the poem. In stanzas 27-34 of book 5, canto 9, Spenser offers us Mercilla as a compounding of the high points of Britomart's iconographic encounters: the statue of Cupid in Busirane's House, the figure of Venus as drawn for Britomart and the reader in the words of Scudamore, the Isis Idol, and the Isis Church dream. Mercilla represents a state of permanence, of peace; she alone of all these iconic presentations is seated, specifically on a royal throne. She is clothed not with “a slender veile” (4.10.40.7) nor in “garments made of line” trimmed with silver fringe (5.7.6.4), “Nor of ought else, that may be richest red” (5.9.28.3), but she wears “a cloth of state” which is “like a cloud” yet gives off light “with bright sunny beams, / Glistring like gold” and “shooting forth siluer streams” (5.9.28.1,6-7,8). These imperial coverings are made distinct from the earlier garments through their association with temporal power. Like Venus, Mercilla is surrounded by fluttering putti: “A flocke of litle loues ... With nimble wings of gold and purple hew ... Whose shapes seem'd ... like to Angels” (4.10.41.2-5), “those litle Angels” on “their purpled wings” (5.9.29.1-2). As with both Cupid and Venus, there are prostrate figures at Mercilla's feet; but rather than the lovers of the tapestries (3.11.49.3-5) or “great sorts of louers piteously complayning” (4.10.43.2), these are “kings and kesars” (5.9.29.9). Like the Isis statue, Mercilla holds a scepter; and like both the Idol and Britomart in her dream, she wears a crown. But the sword at Mercilla's feet is “rusted” by “long rest” (5.9.30.7), signifying the peaceful years of reign achieved by one who accepts herself as an icon. The animal at Mercilla's feet—in contrast to the wounded Dragon and the self-consuming regenerating snake and the seductive Crocodile—is a “huge great Lyon” (5.9.33.4), the symbol of royal power. Like the serpent on Elizabeth's sleeve in the “Rainbow” portrait, the Lion is a powerful symbol but one which must be both remembered and reread here, just as the “reader” of the “Rainbow” portrait must revise the artist's allusion to Eve, seeing a different relationship between woman and knowledge. This is the Lion of Britomart's dream, the Lion Britomart herself becomes in her fight with Radigund, the Lion of Merlin's prophecy, and hence even the ancestor of Una's Lion. Mercilla's Lion is the most physical, vital element of her iconographic presentation, and for that very reason it is kept chained and “coller bound” (5.9.33.6), lest its strength and courage overpower the abstract nature of Mercilla and the virtue which Mercilla represents.

The flesh-and-blood Britomart of book 3, canto 2, has become an icon of justice and has thus been reinscribed as the perfectly allegorical Mercilla, Mercilla who can clearly—not secretly—be read as a representation of Elizabeth. The cumulative iconography of Britomart's dream reenters the narrative of the poem through and in the figure of Mercilla/Elizabeth. The dream, then, is a gap in the poetic narrative, a gap refiguring the gap between the title and the poem to book 3. Through this gap Britomart exits as a dynastic heroine in order to reenter the poem as an icon of justice. As Spenser anoints the historical wounds left by Mary Stuart's

execution with the balm of Duessa's trial, he puts the finishing touches on his linear portrait, the Elizabethan mirror trick begun in book 3. We are faced with a poem which gives us not a dynasty of Englishmen but a dynasty of ideas, of virtues. Britomart and Artegall and their dynasty have become a fiction which is first deflected, then transcended, by the complex icon of political reality which is Spenser's portrait of Elizabeth in the last years of her reign.

There have been poets who would go to any lengths to slip something by at odds with tradition—men capable of ... imagining the woman who would hold out against oppression and constitute herself as a superb, equal, hence “impossible” subject, untenable in a real social framework. Such a woman the poet could desire only by breaking the codes that negate her. ... But only the poets—not the novelists, allies of representationalism. Because poetry involves gaining strength through the unconscious and because the unconscious, that other limitless country, is the place where the repressed manage to survive: women, or as Hoffmann would say, fairies.³⁷

Notes

1. Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (New York, 1987), p. 11. This revised edition of Strong's 1963 *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* constitutes the single most exhaustive study of the topic. See also Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Berkeley, Calif., 1977); Jonathan Goldberg's discussions of several Elizabeth portraits in *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore, 1981); and Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey, “Icons of Divinity: Portraits of Elizabeth I,” in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London, 1990), pp. 11-35.
2. Constance Jordan, “Representing Political Androgyny: More on the Siena Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I,” in *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, ed. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst, Mass., 1990), pp. 157-76. At the 1988 meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America, the late Joel Fineman discussed the “Rainbow” portrait, arguing that Elizabeth's dress is covered not only with eyes and ears but with vaginas. I use portions of this argument in “From Allegory to Icon: Teaching Britomart with the Elizabeth Portraits,” in *Approaches to Teaching “The Faerie Queene,”* ed. David Lee Miller and Alex Dunlop, MLA series (forthcoming).
3. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (New York, 1977), proem to 3, 1.8-9; all subsequent references are to book, canto, stanza, and lines in this edition (except proems, where references are to stanzas and lines only).
4. David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 “Faerie Queene”* (Princeton, N.J., 1988), p. 151. See pp. 147-53 on the etymology of “portrait” in Spenser's representation of Gloriana and Elizabeth.
5. *Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, and of Braddbourne, Kent, Barrister-At-Law, 1603-1608*, ed. John Bruce, intro. William Tite (Westminster, 1868). The entry for February 12, 1602, seems odd since Hatton died in 1591, but Manningham neither explains the time lag nor records which representation Elizabeth preferred.
6. Louis Adrian Montrose, “The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text,” in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore, 1986), p. 325. On this problem of representation, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), p. 192. For a very different reading of Britomart in relation to Elizabeth, see Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London, 1989), esp. pp. 163 ff.
7. Here I utilize the distinction developed in Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1980). I am indebted to the precedent of Mary Nyquist in “The Genesis of Gendered Subjectivity in the Divorce Tracts and in *Paradise Lost*,” in *Re-Membering Milton*, ed. Mary Nyquist and Margaret W.

- Ferguson (New York, 1987), pp. 99-127.
8. Analyzing a series of ten medallions on a column in the background of the “Siena/Sieve” portrait of Elizabeth, Frances Yates points out that one “shows an imperial crown” while the other nine “tell the story of Dido and Aeneas in little scenes” (*Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* [London, 1975], p. 115). See also Lucy Gent, *Picture and Poetry, 1560-1620: Relations between Literature and the Visual Arts in the English Renaissance* (Leamington Spa, 1981), pp. 45-46.
 9. Elizabeth J. Bellamy, “The Vocative and the Vocational: The Unreadability of Elizabeth in *The Faerie Queene*,” *ELH* 54 (1987): 1. Bellamy elaborates (p. 3): “Even as Arthur's search for Gloriana informs the structure of *The Faerie Queene*, we may surely go one step further and claim Spenser's parallel, and equally futile, search for Elizabeth as the epic's ultimate quest.” Bellamy rightly compares the two quests and provides an excellent discussion of the strategies by which Spenser avoids naming Elizabeth; I differ, however, with her judgment that these devices constitute a series of “futile” failures.
 10. When Britomart appears in bk. 3, canto 1, the narrator describes her spear's “secret power unseen” (3.1.7.8), a weapon whose “secret vertue” only the Palmer knows (3.1.10.5). Britomart—whose true identity is also a secret from all except the reader (thanks to the narrator) and Glauce—does not acknowledge the secret power of her weapons which she took from her father's church because they were “for her purpose fit” (3.3.60.9) and never otherwise explained. The appearance of Florimel, whose story at that point is a secret from the reader, suspends the immediate narrative, setting in action Guyon and those who witness his defeat by Britomart. Reiteration of “secret” sensitizes the reader to notice that the “secret feare” in Britomart mirrors the “secret feare” felt by Artegall when he sees her face for the first time. Although she has just acquitted herself honorably in anonymous battle, when Britomart meets Artegall face to face she immediately begins to manifest symptoms of feminine weakness as significant as those in canto 2 of bk. 3. Her symptoms are not merely girlish, however; when she “heard the name of *Artegall*, / Her hart did leape, and all her hart-strings tremble, / For sudden joy, and secret feare withall” (4.6.29.1-3). This “secret feare,” when discussed at all, is generally read as fear of sex, an interpretation which I do not discount but rather extend by suggesting that it may also be—for both Britomart and Artegall—fear of losing the male empowerment of knightly armor.
 11. On the narrative framing of this episode, see John B. Bender, *Spenser and Literary Pictorialism* (Princeton, N.J., 1972), pp. 98-100.
 12. On the mirror and its relation to Arthur's shield, see Kenneth Gross, *Spenserian Poetics: Idolatry, Iconoclasm, and Magic* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1985), pp. 145 ff.
 13. Barbara J. Bono, *Literary Transvaluation: From Vergilian Epic to Shakespearean Tragicomedy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984), pp. 61-77, discusses what she calls the Venus-within-Diana paradigm of Dido that Spenser used to represent Elizabeth. Regarding the “Siena/Sieve” portrait Goldberg argues: “Even though she [Elizabeth] is in the position of Dido in the painting, her destiny fulfills the model of Aeneas” ([n. 1 above], p. 156).
 14. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, ed. J. B. Greenough and G. L. Kittredge (Boston, 1895), bk. 4, lines 31-33.
 15. *Ibid.*, bk. 4, lines 65-67.
 16. *Ibid.*, bk. 4, line 68.
 17. On Spenser's use of Virgil in connection with the Britomart narrative, see Mihoko Suzuki, “‘Unfitly yokt together in one term’: Vergil and Ovid in *Faerie Queene*, III.ix,” *English Literary Renaissance* 17 (1987): 172-85; and Gross, p. 154.
 18. Thomas Greene implies that Britomart's descent into the underworld may be more complicated than the act of simple imitation would allow (*The Light in Troy* [New Haven, Conn., 1983], p. 237). Bono takes quite a different view; see p. 77.
 19. Bradamante does not seek Merlin; she arrives in his tomb because she has been lied to and tricked by another figure in the poem. Furthermore, she has no prior knowledge of her dynastic role or of the knight with whom she will fulfill it. While not so aware of her fate as Aeneas, Britomart deliberately seeks underworld counsel on a problem which she acutely recognizes. Finally, Spenser's Merlin, like

- Anchises, relates the entire dynastic story himself rather than resorting to another narrator as Ariosto's Merlin does with Melissa.
20. Belsey and Belsey (n. 1 above), pp. 12-18.
 21. Hamilton, ed. (n. 3 above), p. 337n.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 338n.
 23. The uncertain pronunciation of Glauce's name makes the saliency of a pun on "gloss" unclear. We know the name must be a disyllable, but is the *c* hard or soft? If it is soft, the resonance of the pun becomes inescapable. In *The Shepheardes Calender* epistle Spenser uses the term to mean "an accompanying explication": "I added a certain Glosse or scholion for the exposition of old wordes and harder phrases" (*Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt [Oxford, 1975], p. 418). In the "old wordes" of Chaucer, whom Spenser praises at length for his language, "glosse" and "Glauce" could be near homonyms.
 24. In avoiding a detailed reading of the House of Busirane, I align myself with those who argue that the episode has more to do with Amoret than with Britomart. For the most coherent reading of the episode, see Thomas P. Roche, Jr., *The Kindly Flame* (Princeton, N.J., 1964), pp. 72-88, which construes the House of Busirane "as ... an objectification of Amoret's fear of sexual love in marriage" (p. 77); this "explains why Scudamour cannot rescue her," while "Britomart, on the other hand, can attack these fears on both the moral and physical grounds. As a woman she understands Amoret's attitude toward the physical side of love, and as the exemplar of chastity she is able to make the moral distinction between marriage and adulterous love" (p. 83). On readings of the Busirane episode, see James W. Broaddus, "Renaissance Psychology and Britomart's Adventures in *Faerie Queene* III," *English Literary Renaissance* 17 (1987): 186-206; and James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton, N.J., 1976), pp. 471-91.
 25. The 1590 ending of bk. 3 provides an example of poetic *pentimento*, as Spenser gives us the image of Britomart "halfe enuyng" "that faire Hermaphrodite" (3.12, cancelled stanza 4), an image he later replaces with bks. 4 and 5. See Lauren Silberman, "The Hermaphrodite and the Metamorphosis of Spenserian Allegory," *English Literary Renaissance* 17 (1987): 221.
 26. Quoted in J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1559-1581* (New York, 1958), p. 127.
 27. Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1983), p. 197.
 28. See Louis Adrian Montrose, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), pp. 31-64, which discusses Elizabeth's reactions to marriages of her ladies and her wards.
 29. Although a detailed reading of bk. 4, canto 6, is beyond the scope of this argument, the elements of reflection and power associated with Britomart's vision in bk. 3, canto 2, are represented here as Britomart and Artegall fight, literally mirroring each other's actions in stanzas 21-29.
 30. The story of Artegall and Britomart as lovers follows very traditional lines. Artegall "with meeke seruice and much suit did lay / Continuall siege vnto her gentle hart" (4.6.40.3-4) while Britomart tries "with womanish art / To hide" her wound of love (4.6.40.7-8). The language is Petrarchan—e.g., the metaphor of the woman as a hunted thing brought "at the length vnto a bay" (4.6.41.3)—and it remains so until the woman's inevitable capitulation. Here, however, the narrative begins to undermine the story. Britomart's response to Artegall shifts from passive to active—she "was content ... to relent" and finally "yeelded her consent" to "take him for her Lord" (4.6.41.4, 5, 7, 8)—and the active verb forms ironize Britomart's seeming surrender.
 31. Gross (n. 12 above), p. 179.
 32. Arguing that Britomart's sexuality is not "constrained by her historic mission," Bono accepts the priest's version of the Isis Church dream. She adds: "Britomart then constructively employs her erotic energy as a chaste and faithful wife, rescuing her husband, tempering his justice with equity, securing their succession. Understanding this reciprocity through the dream vision enables her to free Artegall" ([n. 13 above], p. 78). I find it very difficult to reconcile Bono's summary with Spenser's poem. A contrasting but equally implausible position is taken by Susanne Woods in "Spenser and the Problem

of Women's Rule," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 48 (1985): 140-58. Woods argues that "Spenser's handling of Britomart, including setting her at the core of contradictory statements about women's rule, is genuinely subversive of patriarchal assumptions" (p. 156). Both Bono and Woods fail to consider that what Spenser is subverting in bk. 5 is the patriarchal narrative of the dynastic epic.

33. Gross, p. 179.

34. To say that Britomart identifies with or becomes the Isis statue is too easy. As her dream begins, Britomart is clearly separate from it: "Her seem'd, as she was doing sacrificize / To Isis" (5.7.13.1-2). "All sodainely," however, she sees herself "transfigured," her "linnen stole" becoming a "robe of scarlet red" and her "Moone-like Mitre ... a Crowne of gold" (5.7.13.4,5-6). While the Isis statue, as described in stanzas 5 and 7, does wear a golden crown, silver and gold are the only colors mentioned in connection with her linen garments. The red of Britomart's robe is the blood red of the psychosexual physical wounds she receives in cantos 1 and 12 of bk. 3, as well as the red of the flames which in stanza 14 soon threaten her self-generated "felicity." Britomart and the Isis statue do not become one. When in stanza 15 we are told that the Crocodile awakes from under "the Idols feete" (5.7.15.2), most critics concur with Hamilton in taking the female pronouns to refer to both Britomart and the Idol/Goddess she is becoming. This presents no serious problem up to the point where the Crocodile is beaten back by "the Goddesse with her rod" (5.7.15.9). Britomart, whose dream appearance is so carefully described in stanza 13, has no rod. Hence the two are two separate figures, and the separation is enforced by the grammar, in which all female subject pronouns refer to Britomart, whereas Isis is always called "Goddesse" or "Idole." The Crocodile is Artegall, seen first as a "she," just as Britomart first saw him when looking for her own image in the magic mirror. Iconographically linked to the twisted, fatally wounded dragon at Cupid's feet (3.11.48.1-9) and the snake "whose head and tail were fast combyned" (4.10.40.9) to constitute Venus's legs and feet, the dream Crocodile represents to Britomart a threat which she perceives as male, the threat of sexual difference that traps female sexuality within the dynastic paradigm. What we see in stanzas 15 and 16 is indeed prophecy, but not the dynastic prophecy of the priest's interpretation.

35. 5.7.16.8-9. The puns on "maid" (in its various spellings) and "dismaid" are another narrative means by which Spenser subverts the dynastic argument of his story. Red Cross conflates the two meanings when he asks "this Briton Mayd ... what ... Made her dissemble her disguised kind" (3.2.4.5-7); the pun subsequently becomes central to reading Britomart's adventures. In the Isis Church scene, Britomart is ultimately and permanently "dis-maid." After looking at the statue, "the warlike Maide" reposes beneath it (5.7.12.1); she awakes from her dream "doubtfully dismayd through that so vncouth sight" (5.7.16.9). Never thereafter is Britomart called "Maid." After she defeats Radigund and rescues Artegall, occurrences of "made" figure forth Britomart's empowerment: she asks Artegall, "What May-game hath misfortune made of you?" (5.7.40.2); she proceeds to free the other captive knights "And magistrates of all that city made" (5.7.43.3) and "Made them swear fealty to Artegall" (5.7.43.6). Britomart begins her journey as a "Maid," struggles with being "made" and "dismaid," and is "dismayd" by the Isis dream, to become at last a maker. By contrast, Radigund is never referred to as a "Maid," while Mercilla is called "a mayden Queene of high renowne" (5.8.17.2).

36. Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, N.Y., 1985), p. 138.

37. Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *Signs* 1 (1976): 879-80.

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Criticism: Jeffrey P. Fruen (essay date 1994)

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[In the following essay, Fruen discusses the place and significance of Queen Elizabeth I in the allegorical scheme of *The Faerie Queene*.]

In a previous essay I argued that Gloriana, despite appearances to the contrary, is indeed to be regarded as the unifying “argument” (I.Pr.4) of Spenser's narrative, her pivotal importance being obscured only by the “couert vele” (II.Pr.5) of an autonomous but quasi-biblical typology.¹ The question of her allegorical significance I left at that time for later consideration, and a comprehensive treatment I must still postpone, but the preliminary observations that follow point clearly, I think, to a decisive answer. For in what little Spenser does tell us about his elusive heroine we get at least five glimpses of an allegorical characterization that well befits both the poem's “generall end” of “fashion[ing] a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline” (“Letter to Raleigh”) and the scripture-like manner in which its title character is presented.

I. GLORIANA, WISDOM, AND THE ZURICH LATIN BIBLE

Naseeb Shaheen has all but exhaustively cataloged the wealth of biblical allusions in *The Faerie Queene* through comparisons with the various sixteenth-century English Bibles and the Vulgate.² Yet further research might serve to identify references to the various sixteenth-century Protestant Latin Bibles as well; certainly there is one twice-repeated allusion, bearing on the interpretation of the faery queen herself, that depends on such a text. For both of Spenser's accounts of the vision that inspired Arthur's quest for Gloriana seem distinctly reminiscent of a single verse from the Apocrypha of the Zurich Latin Bible of 1543, and so imply that she is to be associated with the personified Wisdom celebrated there.

Spenser mentions Arthur's vision in two places. In the “Letter to Raleigh” he writes:

... Arthure ... I conceiue ... to haue seene in a dream or vision the Faery Queen, with whose excellent beauty rauished, he awaking resolved to seeke her out. ...

The poem itself is slightly more expansive:

But whether dreames delude, or true it were,
Was neuer hart so rauisht with delight. ...
From that day forth I lou'd that face diuine;
From that day forth I cast in carefull mind,
To seeke her out with labour, and long tyne,
And neuer vow to rest, till I her find. ...

(I.ix.14-15)

Both of these texts are related to the apocryphal book the Wisdom of Solomon.³ In Wisdom 8:2, as part of an allegorical expansion of the vision described in 1 Kings 3, Solomon is presented as recounting how he came to go in quest of Wisdom, here personified as a visionary mistress. The Zurich version translates:

Hanc ego dilexi & a iuuentute mea quaesiui:
Hanc studui sponsam adiungere mihi,
& pulchritudinis eius amore captus sum.(4)
(Her I loved and from my youth sought out:
I bent my mind to make her my bride,
and with love of her beauty I was ravished.)

Before comparing the Latin text to Spenser's, we may seek to avoid tendentiousness by noting some of the definitions of its key words in Thomas Cooper's Latin dictionary of 1565, a work Spenser would have used

extensively at the Merchant Taylors' School.⁵

quaesiui: from *quaero* “to desire to haue: to seeke for ... to labour or trauayle to gette”

studui: from *studeo* “to applie the minde, or care for a thinge”; cf. *studiosus* “that setteth his minde to a thinge”; *studium* “An earnest bending of the minde to any thinge,” “care and studie”

pulchritudinis: from *pulcher* “beautiful ... excellent”

captus: “Rauished ... Delighted”

In the case of *dilexi*, on the other hand, Cooper's “To ... loue meanelly” does not give a very good idea of the intensity of feeling expressed by *diligo* in biblical Latin. When we are commanded to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind (Matt. 22:37), for example, the verb in the Vulgate, Zurich, and Tremellius-Junius versions is *Diliges*, and the bride's “welbeloued” in the Song of Songs is her *dilecte*; while in the Vulgate the love of bride and bridegroom that is “strong as death” (8:6) is not *amor* but *dilectio*.⁶ The word is thus well suited to suggest both profound moral commitment and passionate sexual love.

With these definitions in mind, we can observe the following instances in which Spenser's diction seems to reflect the Latin:

“Letter to Raleigh”:

with whose *excellent beauty rauished*, [*pulchritudinis, captus*]

he ... *resolved to seeke her out* ... [*studui, quaesiui*]

I.ix.14.6, 15.5-7:

Was neuer hart so *rauisht with delight*. ... [*captus*]

From that day forth I lou'd that face diuine; [*ego dilexi ... a*]

From that day forth I cast in carefull mind, [*a ... studui*]

To seeke her out with labour, and long tyne ... [*Hanc ... quaesiui*]

The close configuration of “excellent beauty” with “rauished,” “resolved,” and “seeke her out” in the “Letter to Raleigh,” or of “rauisht with delight” with “cast in carefull mind” and “seeke her out with labour and ... tyne” in the poem itself, would certainly seem to bespeak a connection with the expressions of the Bible text (*pulchritudinis, captus, studui, quaesiui*) as one who had learned Latin using Cooper's dictionary would translate them.

And there is ample reason to regard these parallels as more than a matter of coincidence. For one thing, the poet's invocation of Elizabeth as a “Mirroure of grace and Maiestie diuine” (I.Pr.4) has already been shown to establish her “true glorious type” as a counterpart of Wisdom, herself a “mirroure of the maiestie of God” (Wis. 7:26).⁷ And other, more general parallels with the account in I.ix.14-15 are at hand in other biblical Wisdom-quests:

Mine heart reioyced in her ... & from my youth vp soght I after her.

(Ecclus. 51.15)

Seke after her, and searche her. ...
For at the last thou shalt finde rest in her. ...

(Ecclus. 6:28-29)⁸

In addition to the direct parallels between Gloriana and scriptural Wisdom, we may also adduce the strong and long-noted resemblance between Gloriana and the Sapience of *An Hymne of Heauenly Beautie*, a figure herself known to be derived largely from biblical Wisdom allegories.⁹ Since Sapience recalls both biblical Wisdom and Gloriana, we should hardly be surprised to find that Gloriana herself is presented as a sapiential figure, even if two of the most striking allusions linking the faery queen to Wisdom do depend on expressions peculiar to the Zurich Latin Bible.

For Spenser was not the only Elizabethan on whose mind the Zurich reading of Wis. 8:2 left its imprint. Cicero had quoted Plato as saying that, if only we could behold the face of Virtue, “it would excite a wonderful love of Wisdom” (“*mirabiles amores ... excitaret sapientiae*”).¹⁰ But Sidney in the *Apologie*, as we now can see, has conflated Cicero's familiar phrasing with Solomon's “*pulchritudinis eius amore captus*,” leaving us with his own memorable formulation of “the saying of *Plato* and *Tullie*”: “who could see Vertue would be wonderfully *rauished with the loue of her beauty*.”¹¹ However neglected its readings may be in our day, Spenser apparently had good reason to think that his first readers would recognize an allusion to at least this one verse of the Zurich Latin Bible.

II. WISDOM AS THE LIGHT OF NATURE IN CALVIN AND MELANCHTHON

The primary objection to a simple identification of Gloriana's allegorical significance with that of Sapience in *An Hymne of Heauenly Beautie* has always been that Sapience is a heavenly figure whom “Both heauen and earth obey” (*HHB* 197), while Spenser's emphatic contrast of Gloriana's city Cleopolis with the New Jerusalem (*FQ* I.x.55-63) shows that, while Gloriana herself is “heauenly borne” (59), the scope of her rule and the values that she sponsors are earthly and secular.¹² Yet it is not so difficult as it may seem to reconcile this secular characterization of Gloriana's rule with the biblical allusions that characterize her as a sapiential figure; for biblical Wisdom also had a secular significance.

We can begin by clarifying the contrast of Cleopolis with the New Jerusalem, which would seem to be that drawn by A. S. P. Woodhouse between the orders of Nature and Grace,¹³ or by Calvin between “earthly” and “heavenly things”:

I call “earthly things” those which do not pertain to God or His Kingdom, to true justice, or to the blessedness of the future life; but which have their significance and relationship with regard to the present life and are, in a sense, confined within its bounds. I call “heavenly things” the pure knowledge of God, the nature of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom.

(*Institutes* II.ii.13)¹⁴

Concerning “the present life,” as Calvin goes on to say, “[t]here is nothing more common than for a man to be sufficiently instructed in a right standard of conduct by natural law” (ii.22), so that “[i]n every age there have been persons who, guided by nature, have striven toward virtue throughout life” (iii.3):

Indeed, I admit that the endowments resplendent in [such persons] were gifts of God and seem rightly commendable if judged in themselves. ...

... [Yet] anything in profane men that appears praiseworthy must be considered worthless. ... As for the virtues that deceive us with their vain show, they shall have their praise in the political assembly and in common renown among men; but before the heavenly judgment seat they shall be of no value to acquire salvation.

(iii.4)

Most Christians had long agreed that merely to follow “a right standard of conduct by natural law” was “of no value to acquire salvation,” and that to rest confident in natural virtues as if they had such value was positively damnable. But it was also widely agreed that, in Hooker's words, “[w]hen supernatural duties are ... exacted, natural are not rejected as needless”; on the contrary, “Scripture [itself] is fraught even with laws of Nature” (*Laws* I.xii.1).¹⁵ Thus even for Calvin the values we can discover through “the light of reason” have their place, and a place ordained by God, in “civic ... order” and “the arrangement of this life” (*Inst.* II.ii.13); but if considered as either a means or an alternative to “acquir[ing] salvation,” they must be repudiated with vehement contempt.

This relation between “earthly” and “heavenly” values accounts for the way Spenser's Hermit seems to endorse the values of Cleopolis heartily in their own right, while dismissing or even condemning them from the perspective of the New Jerusalem.¹⁶ What remains to be seen is why the same biblical figure who is the basis for Spenser's emphatically heavenly Sapience should also be reflected in his portrayal of Gloriana, whose reign is limited to the decidedly “earthly” Cleopolis.

That personified Wisdom in the Bible was commonly understood by Spenser's contemporaries to image the Logos or “eternal Sonne of God” (Geneva gloss on Prov. 8:22) has long been recognized;¹⁷ less familiar is the fact that other interpretations of the figure were also well-established. Of these, the Wisdom who presides over the “natural” values of “civil life” is presented with particular clarity by one of Gabriel Harvey's favorite theologians, Philip Melanchthon.¹⁸ In the 1555 vernacular edition of his *Loci Communes*, Melanchthon elucidates the authority of those laws of nature with which, as Hooker says, even the Scripture is “fraught”:

Many ask, what is natural law? The answer is that it is precisely the eternal unchangeable wisdom in God which he proclaimed in the Ten Commandments. ... God planted the glory of this, his own unchangeable wisdom, in men in the first creation. ...

... External civil life is to be regulated according to this natural light, and note well that this natural light and the Ten Commandments, when truly understood, are one single wisdom, doctrine, and law.

(Art. VII, p. 128)

“External civil life is to be regulated according to this natural light” or “law,” which is also “wisdom.” As we will see, Melanchthon was not alone in treating the “law” and “light” of nature as synonymous. More to the point here is that his “wisdom” is recognizably the personified Wisdom of the Apocrypha. For Melanchthon's identification of Wisdom with the Ten Commandments unmistakably derives from Eccclus. 24:26 and Bar. 4:1 (these will be quoted in due course); and that he is consciously thinking of Wisdom as personified there is confirmed by a number of less emphatic parallels, such as the imperative to “love ... this very beautiful wisdom,” which is given as our “light” (*Loci* 127-28; cf. Wis. 8:2, 7:29, 7:10).

Melanchthon's explicit identification of biblical Wisdom with the natural light might seem to be exceptional, but the same idea can be traced in Aquinas (*ST [Summa Theologica]* I-II.91.2 is a fitting gloss on Eccclus. 1:10), and in Calvin, who, after referring “the light of men” in John 1:4 to “the light of understanding,” goes on to draw a further connection:

And since this light, of which *the Speech* [i.e., the Logos] was the source, has been conveyed from him to us, it ought to serve as a mirror, in which we may clearly behold the divine power of *the Speech*.

(*Commentary on the Gospel According to John*)¹⁹

This is to say that, as Aquinas puts it, “the intellectual light itself which is in us is nothing other than a participated likeness of the uncreated light” (I.84.5), “wisdom created [being] a kind of participation of the uncreated Wisdom” which is the Logos (41.3). But what is most striking from our point of view is that Calvin’s image of the light of understanding as a mirror of divine power derives from the same verse in the Wisdom of Solomon to which Spenser alludes in making Gloriana the “type” of Elizabeth as a “Mirror of ... Maiestie diuine” (I.Pr.4)—though to be sure Calvin adopts the reading later reflected in the Authorized Version and takes Wisdom to mirror not the majesty but the “power” (Zurich “*virtutis*”) of God (Wis. 7:26). And, curiously enough, Calvin and Melancthon may well have been correct in identifying this goddess-like figure from the Wisdom of Solomon with the light of understanding or agent intellect.²⁰ For one thing, the *energeias* which the English translators render as “maiestie” or “power” corresponds to the *energeia* “activity” which Aristotle characterizes as the “essential nature” of the agent intellect or *nous poietikos* (*De Anima* III.5).²¹ Even more striking, the philosopher explains that the agent intellect “is what it is by virtue of making all things” in that it recreates them in the possible intellect; and so, as we learn from *A Discourse of Ciuill Life* by Spenser’s friend Lodowick Bryskett, “some haue said this ... agent vnderstanding to be the worker of all things” (p. 124).²² What makes this striking is that exactly the same phrase is used apropos of Wisdom:

And all things bothe secret and knowen do I knowe: for wisdom the worker of all things,
hath taught me it.

(Wis. 7:21)

If riches be a possession to be desired in this life, what is richer then wisdom, that worketh
all things?

(8:5)

It is with some justification, then, that Calvin, like Melancthon, recognizes in the Wisdom of the Apocrypha a symbol of the natural light; and he, like Melancthon, finds that “civic ... order” and “the arrangement of this life” are to be “regulated” in accordance with that very “light of reason” (*Inst.* II.ii.13), since by it human beings discern “the distinction between good and evil” and are “endued with prudence for regulating their lives” (*Comm. John* 1:5).

Here, then, is a scriptural Wisdom whose influence is emphatically limited to “earthly things.” Though represented as “the brightnes of the euerlasting light” and “mirroure of the maiestie of God” (Wis. 7:26), though “conveyed from [the Logos] to us” and serving as the “mirror” of his “power” (*Comm. John* 1:4), still it is only “[e]xternal civil life [that] is to be regulated according to this natural light” (*Loci* 128), which can avail us nothing with respect to “the mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom” (*Inst.* II.ii.13). The Gloriana who not only resembles heavenly Sapience but in her own right recalls the Wisdom of the Zurich Latin Bible, the Gloriana who is the “type” of Elizabeth as “Mirroure of ... Maiestie diuine” (I.Pr.4), who is “heauenly borne,” and yet who is “soueraigne” only in the “earthly frame” of Cleopolis (I.x.59) and sponsors only that “suit of earthly conquest” which the seeker of heaven must learn to “shonne” (60)—this Gloriana may very fittingly be seen as alluding to a Wisdom so conceived. And it may also readily be seen, given that this Wisdom is the “mirror” and “likeness” of the Logos, why her embodiment in Spenser’s poem should be made the focus of an “earthly” typology both distinct from and yet analogous to that which culminates in the Incarnate Logos,

Christ.

III. THE LIGHT OF NATURE AND THE QUEST FOR WISDOM

Yet, however fitting it might be in these respects for Gloriana to recall Wisdom as an image of the light of understanding, is it really plausible that a light which was, after all, understood to be a universal endowment, one integral to every human soul, should be imaged in a figure characterized predominantly by *absence*? For in the poem even her own knights can enjoy her “royall presence” (II.ii.44) only in memory and expectation, while for Arthur she is merely a tantalizing apparition “Whom that most most noble Briton Prince so long / Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill” (I.Pr.2), “Yet no where can her find” (II.ix.7, 38). Can this be an image of the light of nature as personified by Wisdom?

Yes; for the light personified by Wisdom, the “*vndefiled* mirroure of the maiestie of God” (Wis. 7:26), is not merely the light of nature as men and women commonly experience it. It is, more characteristically, an unusually pristine and radiant illumination, “aroused and ... fortified,” one by no means to be enjoyed universally or without intermission.

To a great extent this conception is reflected in the theologians. According to Melanchthon, it will be remembered, “God planted the glory of this, his own unchangeable wisdom, in men in the first creation”; yet “[i]n the wake of sin,” as he goes on to say, “the light in human reason was not as clear and bright as before” (*Loci* 128), and so it must be “strongly aroused and the sense of it fortified” by our own strivings (xxix).²³ Calvin, as might be expected, lays a greater emphasis on both the severity of its impairment and the necessity of grace for its restoration: “to begin with, God's image was visible in the light of the mind” and “in some part ... now is manifest in the elect, in so far as they have been reborn in the spirit” (*Inst.* I.xv.4); but for humankind in general, “in this corrupted and degenerate nature *light* has been turned into *darkness*,” albeit “not wholly extinguished” (*Comm. John* 1:5; cf. Wis. 7:10, 29-30). Yet Calvin would also seem to allow that the light of nature can shine with more than usual brightness even in those not “reborn.” For it is not only in the arts that the “impious” sometimes reveal an exceptional clarity of reason that serves “to display in common nature God's special grace” (*Inst.* II.ii.14, 17):

[Other] examples ... seem to warn us against adjudging man's nature wholly corrupted, because some men have by its prompting not only excelled in remarkable deeds, but conducted themselves most honorably throughout life. ...

... For either we must make Camillus equal to Cataline, or we shall have in Camillus an example proving that nature, if carefully cultivated, is not utterly devoid of goodness. ...

Here, however, is the surest and easiest solution to this question: these are not common gifts of nature, but special graces of God, which he bestows variously and in a certain measure upon men otherwise wicked.

(II.iii.3-4)

By clear implication, then, a light of the mind which exceeds the “common gifts of nature,” which goes beyond the “universal reason and understanding by nature implanted in men” (II.ii.14), would nonetheless seem to be available even to “men otherwise wicked.” And it is noteworthy that, between the “special grace” of Calvin and the personal striving called for by Melanchthon (Calvin's “nature ... carefully cultivated”), we have precisely the means by which Arthur takes Guyon to have won Gloriana's favor: “gracious lot, and they great valiaunce / Haue made thee soldier of that Princesse bright” (II.ix.5). Not that we are intended to see Gloriana or those who serve her as excluded from salvation: if the pathway to the New Jerusalem “neuer yet was seene of Faeries sonne” (I.x.52), that is simply because no one, insofar as he or she is “borne of the flesh”

and not of the spirit, can “see the kingdom of God,” much less “enter into” it (John 3:6, 3, 5).²⁴ Yet the fact that those who seek the New Jerusalem must come to “shonne” the “earthly conquest” she upholds (I.x.60) shows that the service of the faery queen has nothing to do with salvation as such, so that the natural light as she seems to image it, while it may be enhanced by God’s “special grace,” cannot be that which Calvin finds only in the elect.

With these distinctions in mind we can more readily identify the similar ones in the Bible’s Wisdom allegories, which likewise sometimes specify a “universal” and natural endowment—though, indeed, one so proportioned as to display “God’s special grace” in “common nature”—and sometimes one peculiar to the “pious” and “elect”:

He hathe powred her out vpon all his workes, and vpon all flesh, according to his gift, and giueth her abundantly vnto them that loue him. ...

... [She] was made with the faithful in the wombe. ...

(Ecclus. 1:10, 15)

Most commonly, however, Wisdom—particularly the Wisdom of those texts in which Calvin and Melancthon recognize her as a symbol of the light of nature—is imagined as the all-but-unattainable object of an effort which takes the form of an erotic quest, a quest in which her prospective lover must undergo the discipline and tribulation of living up to the moral law. For though she may take the initiative in making herself known, to find her again and win “possession” of her “light” (Ecclus. 4:16, Bar. 4:2) is not an easy matter:

For she goeth about, seeking suche as are mete for her, and sheweth her self cherefully vnto them. ...

For the most true desire of discipline is her beginning: and the care of discipline is loue;

And loue is the keping of her lawes. ...

(Wis. 6:16-18)

For first she wil walke with him by croked waies, and bring him vnto feare, and drede, and torment him with her discipline vntil she haue tryed his soule, and haue proued him by her judgements.

Then she wil returne the straight way vnto him, and comfort him, and shewe him her secrets, & heape vpon him the treasures of knowledge, and understanding of righteousness. =

(Ecclus. 4:17-18)

Seke after her, and searche her, & she shal be shewed thee; and when thou hast gotten her, forsake her not. ...

Let thy minde be vpon the ordinances of the Lord, and be continually occupied in his commandments: so shal he stablish thine heart, and giue thee wisdom at thine owne desire.

(6:28, 38)

Who hath gone ouer the sea, to finde her, and hath broght her, rather than fine golde? ...

This is the boke of the commandements of God, and the Law that endureth for euer ...

(Bar. 3:30, 4:1)

In this “unchangeable wisdom” which God “proclaimed in the Ten Commandments,” Melancthon recognized the natural light (for “this natural light and the Ten Commandments ... are one single wisdom, doctrine, and law”) (*Loci* 127-28). Yet, while the scripture tells us that Wisdom has been “powred ... vpon all flesh,” it also specifies that God, as Calvin says, “bestows [it] variously” (*Inst.* II.iii.4), “according to his gift” (Ecclus. 1:10). And certainly it is clear that the Wisdom of the passages we have just quoted is not effectively present in every person or at all times. Though she “may first shewe her self vnto ... such as are mete for her” (Wis. 6:13, 16), she will also abandon the man would follow her and leave him to wander in “feare, and drede, ... torment[ing] him with her discipline,” until she “returne[s] the straight way vnto him” (Ecclus. 4:17-18).²⁵

Such a Wisdom, who appears before her chosen lover long enough to let him know that “desire of discipline is her beginning” and “loue the keping of her lawes” (Wis. 6:17-18), then vanishes “vntil she haue tryed his soule” (Ecclus. 4:17), is scarcely less characterized by her absence from those who would serve her than is Gloriana. In effect, as our quotations from Calvin and Melancthon suggest, her disciples receive an intimation of what the sin-darkened light of nature was before the Fall, and what in some measure it can be again if enhanced by “special grace” or “aroused and ... fortified” by arduous discipline; but they are then left in humanity's accustomed “*light* [that] has been turned into *darkness*” to undertake precisely such discipline in the hope of enjoying her resplendent clarity again.²⁶ If the “vndefiled mirroure” that is the most characteristic sapiential version of the light of nature is so nearly inaccessible as this, the very fact that Gloriana's crusading knights do know her presence only in memory and expectation makes her a more fitting image of it. The fact that she appears to Arthur only long enough to entice him to wander “through the world” in quest of her serves not to cast doubt on her association with this sapiential light, but to confirm it. And the fact that Spenser's typology results in her near-total exclusion from his narrative proves to be even more in keeping with her allegorical significance.

IV. THE “IMPERIAL POWRE” OF THE AGENT INTELLECT

Gloriana is thus, with respect to those who have seen and hope to see again “the person of her Maiestie” (II.ii.41), the image of a sapiential light more resplendent than the norm. To Arthur she is

Which with her bounty and glad countenance
Doth blesse her seruaunts, and them high aduaunce,

(ix.5)

and as such recalls the Wisdom whose reward to her disciple is, in Coverdale's version, to “make him a glad man, ... and heape vpon him the treasures of knowledge” (Ecclus. 4:18),²⁷ or who in the Vulgate “[j]ucunditatem et exultationem thesaurizabit super illum” (Douay “shall heap upon him a treasure of joy and gladness”) (15:6). For Guyon, moreover, it would appear that the faery queen's “bountie,” in which he finds “the beautie of her mind,” is all but identical with her “imperial powre” (II.ix.3); and this recognition of “imperial powre” as a faculty of *mind* points us to three particular prerogatives of the intellectual light or agent intellect which Gloriana, like Wisdom, seems to exercise par excellence.²⁸

The role of the agent intellect in human understanding is conveniently explained by Bryskett. From sense impressions the common sense and fantasy abstract the immaterial species of things, which are then received

by the conscious or “possible” intellect; but those species would there remain “blind and obscure” if not for the light of the agent intellect, which “worketh the same effect towards things intelligible that the Sun doth towards things visible”:

... for it illumineth those kinds or formes which lie hidden in that part possible, dark and confused, deuoyde of place, time, and matter. ... And hence it commeth that some haue said this possible vnderstanding (as we may terme it) to be such a thing, as out of it all things should be made, as if it were in stead of matter; and the other agent vnderstanding to be the worker of all things. ... [For by its power] the [possible] vnderstanding, and things vnderstood, become ... properly and truly one selfe same thing. ...

(pp. 123-25)

In this respect, as Aristotle himself says, “the soul is in a way all existing things” (*De Anima* III.8): as we think of the world or any part of it, the agent intellect by its sun-like radiance “illumineth” and in that sense recreates it in our minds.²⁹

What does all this have to do with Gloriana or with Wisdom? We have already seen that such “work[ing]” is apparently the source of Wisdom’s intellectual bounty:

If riches be a possession to be desired in this life, what is richer then wisdom, that worketh all things?

(Wis. 8:5)

And the fact that Wisdom’s illuminating power encompasses the shaping of the entire world shows clearly how it might be taken as imperial:

She also reacheth from one end to another mightely, and comely doeth she order all things.

(8:1)

In each of these respects, accordingly, the imperial sway of the agent intellect over “all things” is reflected in the portrayal of Gloriana. The “Great guerdon” (II.ix.6) she bestows on her servants we have already seen. Spenser does not, of course, make her the creator of his world; she is, after all (or so I take it), not a mere personification but a feigned person, one who figures forth the light of the mind even as the historical Moses was held to figure forth the Law (2 Cor. 3:13 and gloss). The poet does contrive, however, through rapturous hyperbole to make her the *illuminator* of her world, and even to make her “soueraigne power” that which “sustene[s]” all faery land, just as the agent intellect presumably sustains the world which it creates:

Sunne of the world, great glory of the sky,
That all the earth does lighten with thy rayes,
Great Gloriana, greatest Maiesty, ...

(VI.x.28)

Whose glory shineth as the morning starre,
And with her light the earth enlumines cleare; ...

(II.ix.4)

Great and most glorious virgin Queene aliuie,

That with her soueraigne powre, and scepter shene
All Faery lond does peaceably sustene.

(ii.40)

In our first two quotations here, he has even described her in terms belonging more properly to the “euerlasting light” of which Wisdom is the “brightness” (Wis. 7:26):

And beholde, the glorie of the God of Israel came from out of the East, ... and the earth was made light with his glorie.

(Ezek. 43:2)

I Iesus ... am ... the bright morning starre [gloss: “that giueth light to euerie one that commeth into this worlde” (John 1:9)].

(Rev. 22:16)

As to the third quotation, Calvin reminds us that the Logos himself, by whom “*all things were created*,” is also “said to uphold all things” (Heb. 1:3)—and that the light of understanding is, as we have seen, the “mirror” in which we may behold his “divine power” (*Comm. John* 1:4).

It is thus the world-making capacity of the agent intellect, essential to all human understanding, which Spenser can most immediately be seen to hint at in the radiance and “imperiall powre” of his heroine, particularly if we identify the latter with her “bountie.” But this is not the only sense in which a capacity of the light of understanding could be called imperial, and certainly not the one most obviously relevant to our poet’s “vertuous and gentle discipline.” “External civil life,” as we saw earlier, “is to be regulated according to this natural light” (*Loci* 128), and so the contrast between Gloriana’s capital and the New Jerusalem points up the distinction between the values appertaining to “the arrangement of this life” and those belonging to “the mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom” (*Inst.* II.ii.13). In heeding these respective value-systems, we may now go on to observe, our objective was to be the attainment of “two distinct felicities” or “end[s]” (*Discourse* 22, *ST* I-II.62.1), both ordained by God;³⁰ and within human society, as Dante explains, “to direct the human race to temporal felicity” is particularly the function of the emperor:

[God’s] unutterable providence, then, has set two ends before man to be contemplated by him: the blessedness, to wit, of this life, ... and the blessedness of eternal life. ...

... [T]o the first we attain by the teachings of philosophy, following them by acting in accordance with the moral and intellectual virtues. ...

Wherefore man had need of a twofold directive power according to his twofold end, to wit, the supreme pontiff, to lead the human race, in accordance with things revealed, to eternal life; and the emperor, to direct the human race to temporal felicity in accordance with the teachings of philosophy.

(*De Monarchia* III.16)³¹

For the supreme pontiff, of course, Spenser had little use. But Dante was an authority of some standing in Elizabethan imperial theory,³² and his words make doubly clear another sense in which that light which is within us the “directive power” to “temporal felicity” can be called “imperiall”: it is both a faculty of mind which a succesful emperor must possess in eminence, and one which serves within every individual as a

microcosmic emperor, dictating how “civil life is to be regulated.” Presumably it is to this function of the agent intellect that Guyon is literally referring when he specifies of Gloriana that “the beautie of her mind” lies not only in her “bountie,” but in her “imperiall powre.”

The “imperiall powre” of the agent intellect therefore extends to the faculty by which an emperor is able to propose the laws which enlighten his subjects and hold his polity together (“By me, Kings reigne, and princes decree iustice,” as Wisdom tells us in Prov. 8:15); and in this respect, no less than in creating the world anew within our minds, it could no doubt be said, like Gloriana, “all the earth [to] lighten” and “Faery lond [to] peaceably sustene.” But it is not enough to say that this power enables an emperor to reign, or even that it holds an imperial position within each individual. Rather, just as Gloriana purports to be the “type” or original (I.Pr.4) of that “most royall Queene or Empresse” Elizabeth (“L.R.”), so the “imperiall powre” which ought to reign within each of us could be seen as in its own right “the first and originall mistris” of the world, the prototype of all lawgivers in history. On this view the directives of actual emperors are called for only because, as we have already seen, the light of the mind is for most of us all but “extinguished” (*Comm. John* 1:4) until it has been “aroused and ... fortified” (*Loci* xxix). As Pierre Charron explains (*Of Wisdom*, 1601):

[T]his law and light is naturall in vs, and therefore it is called Nature, and the law of nature. ... The law of *Moses* in his decalogue, is an outward and publicke copie, the law of the twelue tables, and the Romane law, the morall instructions of diuines and Philosophers, the aduisements and counsels of lawyers, the edicts and ordinances of Princes are no other but petie and particular pourtrai[t]es thereof. ... [Of this] first and originall mistris ... all the lawes of the world, are not other but copies and abstracts[;] ... [thou] holdest hidden the original, and makest as if thou knewest it not, extinguishing as much as in thee lieth this light, which enlighteneth thee within. ...

(II.iii.6)³³

Doubtlesse, Nature in euery one of vs is sufficient, and a sweet Mistris and rule to all things, if we will hearken vnto her, employ and awaken her. ...

But we doe not only not hearken vnto it, ... we endeauour to auoid it, ... louing better ... to runne to studie and arte. ... [W]e esteeme only that which is bought, which is costly, and is brought from farre. ...

(8-9)

In this “sweet Mistris” (evidently she is both prince and paramour), then, we have a “law and light” of nature whose sway is in one sense universal—from her all lesser princes derive all their authority—but which is nonetheless, in its most effectual form, for all practical purposes absent; indeed, due to our suffocating neglect, it is now she who seemingly must be endeavored after and “brought from farre.” Wisdom, too, appears as such a mistress, frankly claiming to be rightful ruler of the world, yet now requiring to be sought out:

My dwelling is aboue in the height, and my throne is in the piller of the cloude. ...

I possessed the waues of the sea, and all the earth, and all people, and nacion,

Come vnto me all ye that be desirous of me ...

(Ecclus. 24:7, 9, 22)

This Wisdom is a mistress, moreover, of whom we find a “copie” in the Law of Moses:

All these things are ... the Law that Moyses

(26)

This is one of the texts that led Melanchthon, as we have seen, to recognize “this natural light and the Ten Commandments ... [as] one single wisdom, doctrine, and law” (*Loci* 128). Its significance for us, like that of the first passage from Charron, is more particular. Both serve to emphasize that, even though the agent intellect as a faculty of the soul exercises its world-making and life-directing powers within each of us individually, there was nonetheless a very cogent sense in which it could be regarded (in its most pristine form at least) as “the first and originall mistris” not of the individual microcosm, but of the external world at large.³⁴

In presenting Gloriana as a “soueraine Queene” and “mightie Emperesse” whose concern is with righting wrongs (V.i.4), as a monarch who “all the earth doe[s] lighten” (VI.x.28) and “Faery lond does peaceably sustene” (II.ii.40), and as one of whom “the beautie of her mind” lies in “her bountie, and imperiall powre” (ix.4), therefore, Spenser is merely reinforcing what we have already seen: the faery queen images the light of nature as it is portrayed in the Wisdom of the Bible. She represents an intellectual splendor which is “the worker of all things,” “[b]y [whom] Kings reigne,” and who once from her throne “possessed ... all the earth, and all people, and nacion.”

V. THE COMPASS OF SPENSERIAN GLORY

Gloriana as we have seen her thus far seems eminently suitable as the focal character of a work whose “generall end” is “to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline”; but much less clear is the basis on which the poet can claim that “In that Faery Queene I meane glory” (“Letter to Raleigh”). In this essay, accordingly, we need to elucidate Spenser's overall conception of glory as one in which the light of nature is by rights pre-eminent and pivotal. In many respects his conception simply reflects (and presumably derives from) that of Calvin, as a cluster of verbal echoes suggests; but in others he reverts to a view that helps to mark a sharp divergence from Calvin's viewpoint.

Before proceeding to Calvin's own conception of glory, therefore, we need to have some notion of three much earlier (indeed, ancient) developments which it presupposes. The first of these is the impact of the application of the word *glory* itself to God by the Bible's major prophets; for their usage led to a shift in the semantic ground covered by the word generally. Hebrew *kabod* had originally denoted “weight,” as Greek *doxa* had “opinion,” and Latin *gloria*, “fame”; but with the appearance of the Septuagint and Old Latin versions of scripture, the recurring prophetic conception of God's *kabod* as a dazzling theophanic splendor carried over to *doxa* and *gloria* as the words by which *kabod* was ordinarily translated. Each word came to have “light” or “splendor” as a key part of its meaning; and this connotation of radiance prevailed even outside of theophanic contexts.³⁵ Thus Paul uses *doxa* both of the insupportable radiance that manifests the power of God (e.g., 2 Cor. 3:7) and of the purely material splendor of the sun, moon, and stars (1 Cor. 15:41); while by the time of Aquinas “radiance” had come to seem the root meaning of *gloria* in every sense, including fame:

Glory means a kind of radiance, so that in Augustine's words *being the recipient of glory is the same as being radiant with light*. Now radiance implies both a certain beauty and its manifestation. So the term *glory* strictly connotes the manifestation by someone of a thing which in our eyes seems beautiful, whether it is a physical or a spiritual good.

(II-II.132.1)³⁶

“Glory” in the sense of a self-revelatory splendor, though initially attributed only to God himself, thus became the characteristic of any “physical or ... spiritual good” whose “beauty” is widely manifested by (or as if by) an inherent radiance. And, as a glance at the relevant entries in Osgood's *Concordance* will show, this conception was still very much alive in Spenser's time.³⁷

A second key development came with the recognition that examples of this kind of “glory” or splendor among created things could themselves be seen as theophanic: “For by the greatnesse & beuty of the creature, the maker therof maye playnely be knowne” (Wis. 13:5 [Cov.]). This doctrine is most explicitly developed in terms of glory by Sirach, who makes it the theme of several consecutive chapters of Ecclesiasticus. His initial emphasis is on the splendor of the heavenly bodies and other wonders of nature, but even fame is included among those glories of creation which he takes to manifest the glory of God:

The sunne that shineth, loketh vpon all things, and the worke thereof is ful of the glorie of the Lord. ...

Oh, how delectable are all his workes ...

The one commendeth the goodnes of the other, & who can be satisfied with beholding Gods glorie?

This high ornament the cleare firmament, the beautie of the heauen so glorious to beholde. ...

... [T]he Lord hathe made all things, and giuen wisdom to such as feare God.

Let us now commend the famous [Vulg., Trem. “*gloriosos*”] men. ...

The Lorde hathe gotten great glorie by them, and that by his great powre from the beginning.
...

(Ecclus. 42:16, 22, 25; 43:1, 33; 44:1-2)

In short, because the workmanship of all things is “ful of the glorie of the Lord,” to gaze upon “the beautie of the heauen so glorious to beholde” is in its own right a way of “beholding Gods glorie”; and even mere earthly fame, like the gift of “wisdome” that secures it, is one of the workings of his “great powre.”

The final development we need to consider before turning to Calvin also takes the splendors of creation to be revelatory of the creator, but emphasizes as specifically moral the content of their theophany. This view is glanced at as early as the Psalms:

The heauens declare his righteousness, and all the people se his glorie.

(97:6)

But it is most conspicuously argued, though without explicit reference to glory, in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Where Sirach had cited both the visible creation and the “wisdome” bestowed on the pious as revealing God's glory, the apostle instead names both the visible creation and the sense of right and wrong found even among Gentiles as revealing God's *law*:

For the inuisible things of him, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are sene by the creation of the worlde, being considered in *his* workes. ...

... [Thus even the Gentiles] knew the Law [gloss: “*Or, righteousness*”] of God. ... [Gloss: “Which Law God writ in their consciences, and the Philosophers called it the Law of nature. ...”]

(Rom. 1:20, 31)

Thus, as Melancthon was later to explain, all of nature is replete with “traces of God” (“*vestigia Dei*”), so that “everything in the universe testifies that there is a God, that there is wisdom, goodness, and justice”; yet the clearest such testimony is to be found in the human mind and in the knowledge of good and evil imprinted on it.³⁸ If this emphatically moral theophany-via-creation were to be put back into Sirachian terms (as theophany via created *glory*), we would clearly have a conception of glory which not only included the law or light of nature “written in [our] hearts” (Rom. 2:15), but actually recognized a moral force in all created splendors.

Calvin comes very close to formulating this conception. Usually, it is true, he reserves the word *glory* for the glory of God, declining to apply it directly to God's works. Yet his argument in *Institutes* I.v. is precisely that the glory of God *is* splendor, that in beholding created splendors we behold that glory, and that such splendors thereby promulgate the moral law. The emphasis on glory as light in the opening of the chapter is unrelenting:

[U]pon his individual works [God] has engraved unmistakable marks of his glory, so clear and so prominent ... [that] the prophet very aptly exclaims that he is “clad with light as with a garment” [Psalm 104:2]. It is as if he said: Thereafter the Lord began to show himself in the visible splendor of his apparel, ever since in the creation of the universe he brought forth those insignia whereby he shows his glory to us, whenever and wherever we turn our gaze. ... And since the glory of his power and wisdom shine more brightly above, heaven is often called his palace 39

(*Inst.* I.v.1)

And what we see “shining in heaven and earth,” as he explains elsewhere, extends even to God's “virtues” (Lat. *virtutes*, Fr. *vertus*): “kindness, goodness, justice, judgment, and truth” (x.2; cf. v.10).⁴⁰ Of course, this is not to say that creation's visible splendors afford moral guidance sufficient to direct our lives, since we know that “all mortals ‘became vain in their reasonings’

It is therefore in vain that so many burning lamps shine for us in the workmanship of the universe to show forth the glory of its Author. Although they bathe us wholly in their radiance, yet they can of themselves in no way lead us into the right path.

(14)

Calvin thus makes the point that the moral law is somehow implicit in the visible splendors of creation only to dismiss it as of little practical importance. On the other hand, as we have already seen, he recognizes that the natural light, in earthly matters, often does suffice to “lead us into the right path”: “There is nothing more common than for a man to be sufficiently instructed in a standard of right conduct by natural law” (II.ii.22), so that “[i]n every age there have been persons who, guided by nature, have striven toward virtue throughout life” (iii.3). We need hardly be surprised, then, to find that the natural light holds for Calvin a place of rare distinction among created manifestations of God's glory.

That both the physical and mental attributes of humanity manifest God's glory with unusual clarity is something Calvin more than once is at pains to emphasize. If the most impressive way “to look upon [God's] glory” is to consider the “innumerable and yet distinct and well-ordered variety of the heavenly host” (I.v.2),

he maintains, still man is the single work of God in which his glory shines most brightly, being in his own right a “microcosm” and “a rare example of God's power, goodness, and wisdom” (3). Indeed, “each one [of us] undoubtedly feels within the heavenly grace that quickens him,” so that the Psalmist, in praising “the admirable name and glory of God which shine everywhere,” emphasizes especially that “a clear mirror of God's works is in humankind,” while Paul stresses that “by adorning us with such great excellence [God] testifies that he is our father” (3, citing Psalm 8:2 and Acts 17:28). The obvious traces of divinity in man are even cited as evidence for the divine governance of the universe:

[Human beings] have within themselves a workshop graced with God's unnumbered works and, at the same time, a storehouse overflowing with inestimable riches. ... Do all the treasures of heavenly wisdom concur in ruling a five-foot worm while the whole universe lacks this privilege?

(4)

In short, as Calvin never tires of repeating, “in forming man and in adorning him with such goodly beauty, and with such great and numerous gifts, [God] put him forth as the most excellent example of his works” (xiv.20).

Yet the part of man in which Calvin finds glory to be most resplendent is precisely that which Spenser images in Gloriana. For while “the likeness of God extends to the whole excellence by which man's nature towers over all the kinds of living creatures” so that “God's glory shines forth in the outer man,” nevertheless from the time of Adam's creation “the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and heart, or in the soul and its powers” (xv.2-3). And of “those faculties in which man excels, and in which he ought to be thought the reflection of God's glory,” the light of understanding is pre-eminent:

[T]o begin with, God's image was visible in the light of the mind, in the uprightness of the heart, and in the soundness of all the parts. ... [Of these John singles out] “... the light of men”

(4)

Prior to the Fall, at least, “the light of the mind”—the same light which Scripture images in Wisdom, and Spenser in Gloriana—was thus for Calvin the single most striking “reflection of God's glory” in all creation. And even though it has been darkened by the Fall, that light remains such a resplendent gift that for once even Calvin is willing to designate a mere created splendor by the name of “glory”:

... God's wonderful goodness is displayed the more brightly in that so glorious a Creator, whose majesty shines resplendently in the heavens, graciously condescends to adorn a creature so miserable and so vile as man is with the greatest glory, and to enrich him with numerous blessings. ...

... [For the Psalmist] represents [men] as adorned with so many honours as to render their condition not far inferior to divine and celestial glory ... [chief among them] the distinguished endowments which clearly manifest that men were formed after the image of God. ... The reason with which they are endued, and by which they can distinguish between good and evil; the principle of religion which is planted in them; their intercourse with each other, which is preserved from being broken up by certain sacred bonds; the regard to what is becoming, and the sense of shame which guilt awakens in them, as well as their continuing to be governed by laws; all these things are clear indications of pre-eminent and celestial wisdom. David, therefore, not without good reason, exclaims that mankind are adorned with

glory and honor. *To be crowned* [Psalm 8:5], is here taken metaphorically, as if David had said, he is clothed and adorned with marks of honour, which are not far removed from the splendour of the divine majesty.

(*Comm. Ps. 8:4-5*)⁴¹

Obviously, “all these things”—these “indications of ... celestial wisdom” which are also the marks of that “greatest glory” with which humanity has been “adorned”—are the fruits or functions of the natural light, essential as it is to “the arrangement of this life” (*Inst. II.ii.13*). And if what Calvin takes to be the Psalmist's glorification of this light with its “sacred bonds” seems extravagant with regard to the darkened illumination most of us experience, it would surely have seemed fitting for the restored splendor to be enjoyed by one who has succeeded in the quest for Wisdom:

Then shal her fetters be a strong defence for thee, ... & her chaines a glorious raiment. ...

Thou shalt put her on as a robe of honour [Vulg., Trem. “*gloriae*”], & shalt put her vpon thee, as a crowne of ioye.

(*Ecclus. 6:30, 32*)

Thus Calvin has taken the ancient recognition of created splendors as theophanic “glories” and, while declining to describe most of them as “glorious” in their own right, has both singled out the intellectual light as supreme among such splendors and explicitly recognized in all of them a certain moral force. In so doing, he has prepared the way for Spenser to reintegrate these conceptions and so arrive at a generalized notion of glory which has the light of nature at its core.

For we are now clearly in a position to account for the fact that the faery queen, while said to represent glory, so forcefully recalls Wisdom as a symbol of the light of nature. Like Aquinas, it would appear, Spenser accepts any literal or figurative radiance as being “glorious”; like Sirach, he accepts all created glories as implicit theophanies; and like Paul or Melancthon or Calvin, he understands the main thrust of such natural theophanies to be the inculcation of the moral law. But the most resplendent of created glories, as Calvin makes clear, and by far the most efficacious in making plain to us the demands of a “vertuous and gentle discipline,” is the light of understanding. The glory imaged in the faery queen is thus simply glory in its most general sense as radiance or splendor, for any God-created splendor tends to promulgate the natural law;⁴² but the *ne plus ultra* of such glory is the natural light.

In Spenser's allegory, therefore, that quintessence of glory which is imaged in the very person of the faery queen seems to consist entirely of the light of understanding, while the lesser splendors encompassed by the term are presented as her garments. The scope of his conception is articulated in a single stanza:

In her the riches of all heauenly grace
In chiefe degree are heaped vp on hye:
And all that else this worlds enclosure bace
Hath great or glorious in mortall eye,
Adornes the person of her Maiestie;
That men beholding so great excellence,
And rare perfection in mortalitie,
Do her adore with sacred reuerence,
As th'Idole of her makers great magnificence.

(*II.ii.41*)

This stanza abounds with words or concepts we have seen Calvin use repeatedly in describing the glory manifested in humanity: “riches,” “(heavenly) grace,” “great,” “glory,” “adorns,” “majesty,” “excellence,” “rare,” “perfection”; so much so that I presume the recollection of Calvin to be deliberate, though Spenser’s application is often different.⁴³ Here, appropriately enough, “the riches of all heavenly grace” points to the plenitude of the natural light with which God “graciously condescends to adorn a creature so miserable and so vile as man” (*Comm. Ps.* 8:5), bestowing it even more generously on some by “special grace” (*Inst.* II.ii.17). That Gloriana’s person is “Adorne[d]” with all *visible* splendors, however, points to the function of that light as “the worker of all things” (*Wis.* 7:21). According to Calvin, after all, God as creator of the external world is invisible, yet “clad with light” (*Ps.* 104:2) in the sense that the “visible splendor” of his creation is the “apparel” in which he “show[s] himself” (*Inst.* I.v.1); by the same token, therefore, it might be said that the agent intellect is clad with the splendors of the universe which its radiance creates anew within the mind. (In that sense “this worlds enclosure bace” extends to “these heauens which here we see,” for even they are “bounded” and “corrupt” with respect to the supercelestial world [*An Hymne of Heauenly Beautie*, ll. 64-66]). Once it is thus appareled, however, we can see that the intellectual light (especially when enhanced by “special grace”) does indeed exhibit a “great excellence, / And rare perfection in mortalitie”; for in it we see not only the “excellence by which man’s nature towers over all the kinds of living creatures” (*Inst.* I.xv.3)—itself the result of “God’s singular grace”—but an approximation of “the perfect excellence ... which shone in Adam before his defection” (4). We may even recognize this light as worthy of our “sacred reuerence,” and not only for its “rare perfection,” nor even because it promulgates God’s law, so that Guyon can say “To her I homage and my seruice owe” (II.ii.42). Rather it may also be revered as constituting, in a dual sense, “th’Idole of her makers great magnificence”: for it is not merely the single most glorious work of God’s “great power” (*Ecclus.* 44:2; *Vulg.*, *Zur.* “*magnificentia*”), but is also in its own right a great maker, being the mirror of his “power” or “maiestie” (*Wis.* 7:26) and so “the worker of all things” (7:21) within the intellect, even as God himself is “the worker of all things” *tout court*.

Of course, Gloriana is also explicitly associated with glory in the sense of fame. Whether Spenser considered this to be a conspicuous part of the glory actually *imaged* in his heroine, however, seems to me uncertain. Sirach, as we have seen, does regard glory even in this sense as theophanic (*Ecclus.* 44:1-2); but in Spenser such glory is not something which the faery queen can be seen to represent, but something she bestows (I.x.59). In this respect, as in so many others, she has been made to resemble Wisdom:

Length of daies *is* in her right hand, & in her left hand riches and glorie.

(Prov. 3:16)

Exalt her, and she shal exalt thee: she shal bring thee to honour, if thou embrace her.

(4:8)

As Spenser’s contemporary Peter Muffet says in paraphrasing these verses, “wisdom, as a bountiful queen, giveth to those who obey her, not only long life, but worldly wealth, and earthly glory,” so that “if thou shalt exalt and entertain wisdom, she as a queen will make thee honourable, and as it were a knight” (*A Commentary on the Whole Book of Proverbs* [?1596]).⁴⁴ Such a figure is less suited to represent fame itself than to image the natural light, which fame is to be sought by heeding.⁴⁵

If the high regard for fame which he shares with Sirach further aligns Spenser with the Bible’s Wisdom allegories, however, it no less clearly marks his divergence from the thought of Calvin, whose nod to “common renown among men” is not so much grudging as disdainful (*Inst.* II.iii.4; cf. III.xiii.2, xiv.16). Up till now the reader may have felt that Calvin as he appears in this essay sounds suspiciously like Hooker in the respect he seemingly accords to the autonomy and dignity of human reason in the wake of the Fall. This is partly because the differences between Calvin and Hooker on this point are more a matter of emphasis than is

always recognized (least of all by Calvin's Elizabethan followers, who often seem determined to out-Herod Herod, as Hooker himself points out [*Laws* V.app.i.6]). Mostly, though, it is because I have been using Calvin to elucidate Spenser's thinking rather than his own. Spenser limits the denigration of Gloriana's values to a few stanzas (I.x.58-62) in a poem which is designed to celebrate them, and makes her the presiding spirit of all the "priuate morall vertues" ("Letter to Raleigh") while relegating "Holinesse" to a single (albeit pivotal) book; in Calvin the proportions are reversed. While Spenser may have relished the opportunity to turn Calvin's eloquence to his own purpose, then, he generally prefers to go like Melanchthon or Hooker on his own more or less Thomistic way.⁴⁶ "When supernatural laws are ... exacted," Hooker tells us, "natural are not rejected as needless" (I.xii.1), but rather "laws of nature ... are ... necessary also even in themselves" (V.app.i.7); and thus "when we extol the complete sufficiency of ... the Scripture, ... the benefit of nature's light [must] not be thought excluded as unnecessary" (I.xiv.4). In his exaltation of Gloriana, Spenser does more than merely anticipate Hooker's characteristic emphasis on the authority of reason. By making her the focus of a Bible-like typology, he in effect puts his poem forward as a complementary scripture in its own right, one dedicated to "the benefit of nature's light" just as the Bible is dedicated to "salvation through Christ" (ibid.). That nature's light is itself a "mirror" of the power of the Logos (*Comm. John* 1:4) would scarcely have seemed to Calvin to justify such huge audacity.

Even for Calvin, of course, the natural light and created splendor in general have their role in "the arrangement of this life." But not even Aquinas, Melanchthon, and Hooker, not even the Cambridge Platonists, go so far as Spenser in magnifying the autonomy and prestige of the light of nature and its attendant glories. What even the Bible's Wisdom allegories exult in over the space of only some dozen scattered pages, Spenser makes the "argument" of a vast heroic poem intended to rival Homer. What Charron aggrandizes in a few short chapters, what Melanchthon honors in a few short paragraphs, what Calvin enthuses over in the occasional odd sentence, Spenser makes the culmination of a laudatory typology like the biblical typology that culminates in Christ. Yet, if we remember how extraordinary were the prerogatives ascribed to the Bible's (and Melanchthon's) Wisdom, to Charron's "mistris," and even to Calvin's "greatest glory"—and if we remember that for Spenser this quintessential "glory" is enhanced by "special grace," as Gloriana's very name suggests⁴⁷—we may come to the view that his "generall intention" in the faery queen was not entirely unfitting.⁴⁸ We may come to the view that what the poet tells Burleigh concerning the apparently "ydle rimes" of *The Faerie Queene* in general is particularly true of those "rimes" pertaining to its heroine:

Vnfitly I these ydle rimes present,
The labor of lost time, and wit vnstayd:
Yet if their deeper sence be inly wayd,
And the dim vele, with which from common vew
Their fairer parts are hid, aside be layd,
Perhaps not vaine they may appeare to you.

(Ded. Son. to Burleigh)

When the veil is laid aside from his accounts of Gloriana, we find a life-directing glory truly integral, on Spenser's terms, to the poem's "generall end" of "fashion[ing]" its readers "in vertuous and gentle discipline."

Notes

1. Jeffrey P. Fruen, "'True Glorious Type': The Place of Gloriana in *The Faerie Queene*," *Spenser Studies*, VII (1987), 147-73; on the typological thrust of the "vele" with respect to Gloriana, see pp. 161-64. All quotations from Spenser are from the one-volume *Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912). My title also throws a cautionary sidelong glance at the overweening of "C" in "The 'Faerie Queene' Unveiled," *N & Q* ser. 3, 4 (1863): 21-22, 65-66, 101-103; partially reprinted in *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin

- Greenlaw, et al., I (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932), 451-52.
2. Naseeb Shaheen, *Biblical References in "The Faerie Queene"* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1976).
 3. All Latin and English Protestant Bibles of the sixteenth century included the Apocrypha. The Geneva Bible of 1560, while of course denying them canonical authority, does refer to them as "scriptures" (headnote to the Apocrypha) and even "Holy Scriptures" (general title page); and the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, which chiefly concern us here, are so frequently cross-referenced with the Old and New Testaments that the essential soundness of their theology can hardly have seemed doubtful. See *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, with an introduction by Lloyd E. Berry (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). Except where otherwise noted, all of my biblical references are to this edition. (In the Geneva translation of Ecclesiasticus, passages recognized as interpolations are included in square brackets; I change these to pointed brackets to distinguish them from my own alterations or additions.)
 4. The Zurich Latin Bible of 1543 was perhaps the most influential Protestant Latin Bible during Spenser's years at the Merchant Taylors' School and Cambridge (1561-76), being superseded only by the Tremellius-Junius version as it appeared (NT 1569, OT 1575-79). In 1545, Robert Estienne reprinted it, identified only as a "new" version, in parallel columns with his own critically restored text of the Vulgate. See *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. S. L. Greenslade, III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 65-66, 71; and *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967, s.v. "Bible," II, 455. My quotations are from Estienne's edition: *Biblia. Quid in hac editione praestitum sit, vide in ea quam / opere praeposuimus, ad lectorum epistola. / Lutetiae / ... Roberti Stephani ... / M.D. XLV*. In all of my quotations from sixteenth-century texts, contractions are expanded, long-*s* changed to *s*, and ligatures omitted. In this case, for clarity of reference, I have also restored the poetic verse-lineation ascribed to the text by modern scholars.
 5. Thomas Cooper, *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae*, 1565; facsimile reprint (Menston: Scholar Press, 1969). The definitions I cite come not only from Cooper's main entries, but also from the translations given with his contextual quotations. On the use of Cooper at Merchant Taylors', see T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Less Greeke* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944), I, 421.
 6. Often-reprinted versions such as the Vulgate I quote variously from whatever editions come first to hand (the Douay and Authorized Versions are also in this category). The Tremellius-Junius version is quoted from the London edition of 1585: *Testamenti Veteris / Biblia Sacra / Sive / Libri Canonici / Prisce Iudaeorum / Ecclesiae a Deo Traditi, / ... / ... Immaneuale / Tremellio & Francisco Junio / ... / Londini, / Excudebat Henricus Midletonus, / ... / M.D. LXXXV*.
 7. Thomas E. Maresca, *Three English Epics: Studies of "Troilus and Criseyde," "The Faerie Queene," and "Paradise Lost"* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), p. 62; see also Fruen, p. 158. In the sequence of the poem, Gloriana is the "type" of Elizabeth in the quasi-biblical sense that Elizabeth as addressed in the proems is "the first draught and purtrait" of Gloriana, "the liuelie paterne to come" (gloss on Heb 10:1)—"paterne" here being picked up from the last half of Heb. 8:5, where it translates "typon"; see Fruen, pp. 159-61.
 8. While the Wisdom allegories in the first nine chapters of Proverbs are also relevant, those in Wisdom (ch. 6-9) and Ecclesiasticus (ch. 1, 4, 6, 14-15, 24, 51) are particularly significant here. And Spenser may not have thought himself the first author to use these biblical materials in a faery mistress story. When Arthur of Little Britain tells his friends of the dream in which his own visionary mistress appeared to him in the form of an eagle, his phrasing comes almost as close to that of the biblical texts quoted here as it does to Spenser's:

And euer syth I woke my herte and loue hath ben so set on that egle that I can not draw my herte fro her. For I loue her so entyerly that as longe as I lyue I shall neuer cease to trauell & labour tyll I haue founde her.

See *Arthur of Brytayne: The hystory of the moost noble and valyaunt knyght Arthur of lytell brytayne*, trans. John Bouchier, Lord Berners (London: Robert Redborne, [ca. 1550]), cap. xvi, fol. xiii^v. The influence of this episode on Spenser was first noted by John Colin Dunlop, *History of Prose Fiction* (1814), rpt. as *History of Fiction* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1896), I, 260. Perhaps less striking in terms of verbal parallels is the encounter with the faery mistress in *Syr Lamwell*, the form in which Spenser presumably knew Marie de France's *Lanval*: "Lamwell behelde that lady bryght / Her loue hym rauysshed anone ryght." See the appendix of *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript: Ballads and Romances*, ed. John W. Hales and Frederick J. Furnivall (London: Trubner, 1867), I, 525. On the other hand, as the poet who treats "Medway" as a form of "Medua" (IV.xi.8, 45), Spenser may well have recognized that "Lamwell" is a form of "Lamuell," a name which in turn reflects the "Lamuel" of Prov. 31:1 in the Vulgate (see A. J. Bliss, "The Hero's Name in the Middle English Versions of *Lanval*," *MAE*, 27 [1958], 82 and n.); and that regal figure, according to the Geneva gloss, is really Solomon himself, the Bible's pre-eminent quester after Wisdom.

9. See especially *FQ* II.ii.41, ix.3, 5 and *HHB* 242-48, 253-59. The virtual identification of Gloriana with Sapience was first made by Jefferson B. Fletcher, "A Study in Renaissance Mysticism: Spenser's *Fowre Hymnes*," *PMLA*, 26 (1911), 474-75, and most recently restated by Douglas Brooks-Davies in his Introduction to Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: A Selection* (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, Everyman's Library, 1976), p. x. Especially intriguing applications of this view are those by Josephine Waters Bennett, "Spenser's Muse," *JEGP*, 31 (1932), 217, and Janet Spens, *Spenser's "Faerie Queene": An Interpretation* (London: Edward Arnold, 1934), pp. 50, 112, 113, 114. The biblical provenance of Sapience was first thoroughly (though not exhaustively) documented by Charles Grosvenor Osgood, "Spenser's Sapience," *SP*, 14 (1917), 167-77.
10. Latin quoted from Cicero, *De Officiis* I.v, trans. Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1913); alluding to Plato, *Phaedrus* 250d.
11. Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetry* (ca. 1583), in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), I, 179; emphasis added to the final phrase. Raleigh, in 1590 a confidante of Spenser's for a relatively short time, may intend this identification of Cicero's Virtue with the Bible's Wisdom in referring to "true vertues face" in his second commendatory poem (Spenser's *Poetical Works*, p. 409). For that matter, Spenser himself may be making the same identification in *FQ* III.iii.1, again reflecting Wis. 8:2, but taking *diligo* in its other sense as synonymous with *deligo* "to choose": "that doth true beautie loue, / And choseth vertue for his dearest dame" (cf. Zurich *pulchritudinis, amore, dilexi, sponsam*).
12. See Isabel E. Rathborne, *The Meaning of Spenser's Fairyland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), 17-19; and Robert Ellrodt, *Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1960), 50, 58. Also relevant in establishing the purely secular values of Cleopolis are Thomas P. Roche, Jr., *The Kindly Flame: A Study of the Third and Fourth Books of "The Faerie Queene,"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 38-43; and Carol V. Kaske, "Spenser's Pluralistic Universe: The View from the Mount of Contemplation (*F.Q.* I.x)," in *Contemporary Thought on Edmund Spenser*, ed. Richard C. Frushell and Bernard J. Vondersmith (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 130-41.
13. A. S. P. Woodhouse, "Nature and Grace in *The Faerie Queene*," *ELH*, 16 (1949): 194-228; "Nature and Grace in Spenser: A Rejoinder," *RES*, n.s. 6 (1955): 284-88; "Spenser, Nature and Grace: Mr. Gang's Mode of Argument Reviewed," *ELH*, 27 (1960): 1-15. I am indebted to the third essay for a number of my citations from Aquinas, Calvin, and Hooker. The unfortunate personal animus of this third essay may be what has kept it from being reprinted, but Woodhouse's impatience seems even more understandable in retrospect, for dismayingly few of the many who have offered to challenge or correct his original argument show much sign of having read it carefully. In her chapter "Nature and Grace Reconsidered," for instance, Anthea Hume is right to insist that Guyon is a Christian and so cannot be a "natural man" as Woodhouse defines the term, but this has virtually nothing to do with Woodhouse's overriding question of whether temperance as Guyon exemplifies it is natural or supernatural in its "motivation and sanction." See Anthea Hume, *Edmund Spenser: Protestant Poet*

- (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 59-71.
14. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, tr. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20-21 (London: SCM Press, 1960); henceforth cited in the text as *Inst.* Calvin's distinction (see also II.ii.12) is surprisingly close to that of Aquinas, as in *The "Summa Theologica" of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, revised by Daniel J. Sullivan, in *Great Books of the Western World*, vols. 19-20 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), I-II.62.1, 63.4; 109.2; II-II.23.7. Where not otherwise noted, all references to Aquinas are to this selection, cited in the text as *ST*.
 15. Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, in *The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker*, arranged by John Keble, revised by R. W. Church and F. Paget, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), vols. I-II.
 16. Kaske does an especially good job of bringing out this contrast, though it is hardly necessary to conclude that in drawing it Spenser "contradicts not only Christian tradition but himself" (p. 135). On the contrary, such ambivalence was an integral feature of Christian tradition, clearly reflected in the distinction between Nature and Grace which Woodhouse documents in figures ranging from Augustine to Aquinas to Calvin to Hooker ("Spenser, Nature and Grace," 3-6). The tension, indeed, had been built into Christianity by no less a figure than St. Paul. Having established that the moral content of the Mosaic law corresponds to what pagans call the law of nature (Rom. 1:31 and gloss, 2:14-15), the apostle repeatedly denounces trust in that law as a means of seeking salvation: it is merely "the strength of sinne" (1 Cor. 15:56) and serves us only "vnto death" (Rom. 7:10), bringing a spurious righteousness worth no more than "dongue" (Phil. 3:8). Yet, for all this, we must nonetheless strive to adhere to it: "Do we then make the Law of none effect through faith? God forbid: yea we establish the Law" (Rom. 3:31). (See also Rom. 3:20, 24, 27, 28; 6:14-15; 7:6; 10:3; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 2:16, 3:10-11; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 3:6). Adherence to the law thus corresponds to Spenser's "earthly conquest," which we are duty-bound to pursue in this life and yet must "shonne" altogether at the end of life when we can turn all our hopes to heaven (I.x.60).
 17. See the Spenser *Variorum*, VII (1943), 561, 564.
 18. On Harvey's esteem for Melanchthon, see Virgil K. Whitaker, *The Religious Basis of Spenser's Thought*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1950), 66. The influence of Melanchthon in Elizabethan England is also noted in H. S. V. Jones, "The *Faerie Queene* and the Mediaeval Aristotelian Tradition," *JEGP*, 25 (1926): 292-98, and in the preface to Philip Melanchthon, *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: "Locis Communes" 1555*, trans. Clyde L. Manschreck, introduction by Hans Engelland (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), xx-xxii. Except where otherwise noted, all quotations from Melanchthon will be from Manschreck's translation, cited in the text as *Loci*.
 19. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, trans. the Rev. William Pringle, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847); henceforth cited in the text as *Comm. John*.
 20. Spenser may have thought that Aristotle got the idea from the author of *Wisdom*, since there were purportedly at least thirty passages in which Plato could be seen to be "imitat[ing]," "paraphras[ing]," and "all but translating" texts from the Hebrew Scriptures; see Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), books XI-XIII, passim.
 21. Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. J. A. Smith, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941); the Greek is quoted from Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. R. D. Hicks (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1965).
 22. Lodowick Bryskett, *A Discourse of Ciuill Life* (1606); facsimile reprint in *Literary Works*, ed. J. H. P. Pafford (London: Gregg International Publishers, 1972); henceforth cited in the text as *Discourse*. See also chapter 4, below.
 23. The last phrase quoted is not from the 1555 *Loci*, but from the 1543 version as quoted in Hans Engelland's Introduction.
 24. For a different view, see Kaske, pp. 131-32.

25. I take it that “the straight way” here means “by the straight way,” as at 1 Sam. 6:12; cf. the Douay version. Whether Arthur and Gloriana would have been similarly reunited if the poem had been completed is something the Wisdom analogues do not enable us to decide, since many of them leave the love-quest still in progress. My own inclination is to agree with Rathborne (p. 233) that Arthur and Gloriana, like Redcrosse and Una, would have been allowed a brief time together before Arthur was summoned to manage the cares of his own kingdom; but it is certainly possible that our expectation of finally encountering the faery queen in Book XII was to be rewarded only with the recounted memory of her feast, which is all that the “Letter to Raleigh” promises.
26. Hence the thematic fitness of Arthur's tirade against Night at III.iv.55-60; stanza 58 is based in part on Job 24:13-17, where what the “*rebelles Lumini*” resist, according to Spenser's old schoolfellow Lancelot Andrewes, is the light of nature: see *A Preparation to Prayer* (1611), Sermon 2, p. 15; reprint appended to *The Morall Law Expounded* (London: Sparke, Milbourne, Cotes, and Crooke, 1642). Arthur himself is clearly subject here to the “vnreasonable affections” that “darken the light of reason” (Bryskett, *Discourse*, 190), though less so than some critics would have us believe: in an outlaw-infested wilderness where no unarmed person is safe without an armed escort, he is more than justified in trying to catch up to Florimell to offer his protection, as her own servant gratefully attests (v.10-11).
27. *The Holy Scriptures*, trans. Myles Coverdale (1535; rpt. London: Samuel Bagster, 1838). I have not been able to check the readings of the Great or Bishops versions.
28. On this “bountie” and “imperiall powre” as a political prerogative of Elizabeth, see David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 “Faerie Queene”* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 155-57. A fully-rounded critique of Gloriana would of course show how the poet accommodates his overriding “generall intention” in the faery queen to his “particular” intention to “shadow” Elizabeth (“Letter to Raleigh”), and vice versa; but this “generall intention” has been so generally neglected that for the moment it requires our full attention. We might also remember that even those aspects of Gloriana that seem to point directly to Elizabeth ultimately have a different origin:

[O]n those islands which I have called Fortunate there was a queen of surpassing beauty, adorned with costly garments and ever young, who still remained a virgin, not wishing for a husband, but well contented to be loved and sought. And to those who loved her more she gave a greater reward. . . .

This is not Spenser or Sidney or Lyly currying favor with Elizabeth, but Cardinal Bembo allegorizing the beauty of God. See Pietro Bembo, *Gli Asolani* (1505), trans. Rudolf B. Gottfried (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), 184-85; the passage is cited in connection with Gloriana by Merritt Y. Hughes, “The Arthurs of *The Faerie Queene*,” *EA*, 6 (1953): 195. Abetted by Leone Ebreo's identification of the divine beauty with Wisdom and the Logos (see Ellrodt, 183-93), Bembo's queen “adorned with costly garments” becomes Spenser's Sapience “Clad like a Queene in royall robes” (*HHB* 185); and since even Scripture is wont “in one text to speak of the Wisdom begotten and wisdom created” (*ST* I.41.3), the same imagery of a “virgin Queene” enthroned “in wifest Ocean” (*FQ* II.ii.40) can be applied with equal fitness to the light of nature.

29. That faery land is “enlumine[d]” (II.ix.4) by the faery queen may therefore suggest a putative etymology of *faery* from Gk. *phaeos* “light” and Fr. *faire* “to make.” That Gloriana images a supercelestial Neoplatonic sun of intelligibility is more or less clearly suggested by both Spens, p. 112, and Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's “Faerie Queene”: A Critical Commentary on Books I and II* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), 3, 127.
30. See Roche, pp. 39-43.
31. In *A Translation of the Latin Works of Dante Alighieri*, trans. A. G. Ferrers Howell and Philip H. Wicksteed (London: Dent, Temple Classics, 1904), 277-78.

32. See Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 41, 45-47.
33. Pierre Charron, *De la Sagesse* (1601, 1604); quoted from *Of Wisdom*, trans. Samson Lennard (before 1612); facsimile reprint (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, 1971).
34. The faery land Gloriana illumines is thus what Coleridge calls “mental space” only in that it represents the external world as experienced and dealt with by us internally as moral agents; I am not claiming that events in *The Faerie Queene* take place as psychomachia within an individual or typical personality.
35. Up to but not including the citation from Aquinas, this paragraph is based on A. J. Vermeulen, *The Semantic Development of Gloria in early-Christian Latin* (Nijmegen, Netherlands: Dekker and van de Vegt, 1956), pp. 5, 6, 9, 12-16, 18, 22-23, 26-27.
36. Quoted from *Summa Theologiae: Latin Text and English Translation*, vol. 41, trans. T. C. O'Brien (New York: Blackfriars with McGraw Hill, 1972).
37. Charles Grosvenor Osgood, ed., *A Concordance to the Poems of Edmund Spenser* (Washington: Carnegie Institute, 1915). The *OED* and the concordances to other Elizabethan authors tell a similar tale.
38. From the 1535 *Loci*, in *Corpus Reformatorum* 21:369; I follow the translation and paraphrase in Carl E. Maxcey, *Bona Opera: A Study in the Development of Philip Melancthon* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1980), 137.
39. That Spenser knew this chapter and was influenced by it in *An Hymne of Heauenly Beautie* has been recognized since 1914, when it was pointed out by F. M. Padelford; see *Variorum* VII, 555. I have changed the square brackets used by Calvin's editor or translator to pointed brackets in order to distinguish his inserted scriptural references from my own references, additions, and alterations.
40. In view of the attributes listed, Battle's translation of “*virtutes*” as “powers” seems rather beside the point. For the Latin and French I cite Iannis Calvini, *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (Berolini: Gustaum Eichler, 1834); and Jean Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrestienne* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1957), respectively.
41. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. the Rev. James Anderson, 5 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845-1849). Here “the principle of religion” refers of course to natural religion, not the true “mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom” (*Inst.* II.ii.13).
42. The qualification “God-created” is essential, for one of Spenser's recurring themes is the danger presented by fraudulent or disproportionate glories, seen with particular clarity in his accounts of Lucifera (I.iv.8-9) and Philotime (II.vii.44-46). On the other hand, the more vivid among God-created glories can justly be used to figure forth such purely intelligible splendors as might otherwise remain obscure, and the attempt to do so is a hallmark of Spenser's poetic practice. Compare Sidney's agenda for the poet in the *Apologie*, in Smith, I, 165, 179.
43. Similar language—along with “magnificence”—appears in Calvin's preface to the New Testament, in *Commentaries*, trans. Joseph Haroutunian with Louise Pettibone Smith, Library of Christian Classics, vol. 23 (London: SCM Press, 1958), 58-60. Jan Karel Kouwenhoven, *Apparent Narrative as Thematic Metaphor: The Organization of “The Faerie Queene”* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), offers a very different interpretation of Spenser's stanza (pp. 22-23) and of his notion of glory (*passim*), one avowedly Calvinist (p. 27) and yet not remarking any verbal parallels.
44. Peter Muffet, *A Commentary on the Whole Book of Proverbs* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1868), 19, 24. I rely on the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* for the date of 1596; this reprint purports to be from a second edition of 1594. For Muffet, personified Wisdom includes any of “the means and instruments which th[e] eternal Wisdom useth to lighten men by” (p. 8).
45. On the other hand, Petrarch's personified Glory in *Rime Sparse* 119 (Canzone 12 *in vita*) is clearly modeled on biblical Wisdom (cf. lines 1-21, 26-28 of the canzone with Wis. 7:29, 8:2, 6:16-17, 8:13, Eccus. 4:11, 17-18). This Glory (= Fame) makes vivid the nature of her invisible twin sister, Virtue—whom Cicero, as we saw, identifies with Wisdom. And Raleigh, at least, does take pains to evoke the *Rime Sparse* in connection with Gloriana, his commendatory sonnet (Spenser's *Poetical*

Works, p. 409) harking back to *RS* 186-87 (Sonnets 153-154 *in vita*).

46. That “Spenser emerges as the religious fellow of Hooker” is Whitaker's conclusion (p. 69), though it may be noted that to agree with Calvin against Hooker is not *necessarily* to swerve from a basically Thomistic viewpoint. For example, the distinction between natural and supernatural values seen in the contrast between Cleopolis and the New Jerusalem is less close to Hooker's version of that distinction than to that of either Calvin or Aquinas, both of whom explicitly distinguish natural values as those pertaining solely to human society on earth from supernatural as those proportioned to divine society in heaven (see chapter 2, above, and the citations in n. 14). Yet Spenser's emphasis on the *indispensability* of natural values even for those guided by the values of heaven is much closer to either Aquinas or Hooker than to Calvin.
47. How much Hebrew Spenser remembered from the Merchant Taylors' School is unclear, but the Geneva Bible's “Brief Table of the Interpretation of the Propre Names ... in the Olde Testament” makes plain that “Hanna” (listed *s.v.* “Anah”) means “gratious or merciful.” Since “Tannakin” was a nickname for “Ann” (see the *OED*), Gloriana's other name of Tanaquill may also suggest this secular grace; or *tana-* might be associated with Titan as a name for the sun (see C. Bowie Millican, “Spenser's and Drant's Poetic Names for Elizabeth: Tanaquil, Gloria, and Una,” *HLQ*, 2 [1939]: 255), or with Hebrew *tanna* “teaching.” Since the meaning of English *quill* “feather” was regularly extended to “wing” in one direction and “pen” in the other, the possible significances for *Tanaquill* become numerous: to name only two, it may point to the natural light as a gracious *sun* with *wings* (mirroring the divine sun of Mal. 4:2), or as the *pen* that inscribes the *teaching* of the law on our hearts (Rom. 2:15).
48. Harvey, despite initial misgivings, certainly seems to have come around to this view. The Commendatory Verses by H. B. (Spenser's *Poetical Works*, p. 409) show that their author had at least an inkling of Gloriana's sapiential significance, since the reference to “that most princely doome, / In whose sweete brest are all the Muses bredde,” recalls *The Teares of the Muses*, where those goddesses “in the bosome of all blis did sit” (308) as “the brood of blessed Sapience” (72), the latter phrase apparently being equivalent to “The golden brood of great *Apolloes* wit” (2). The link between this “Sapience” and Apollo is noteworthy in view of Harvey's complaint in 1579 that *The Faerie Queene* as it existed then was “*Hobgoblin* runne away with the Garland from *Apollo*” (Spenser's *Poetical Works*, p. 628). In his 1590 Commendatory Verses to the poem (p. 409), however, he not only picks up on the relation between Gloriana/“Sapience” and the Muses, but shows himself both knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the significance of her world-illuminating “imperiall powre” as we have explored it in chapter 4:

And fare befall that Faerie Queene of thine[:]
Subiect thy dome to her Empyring spright,
From whence thy Muse, and all the world takes light.

Since all identifications of the seemingly well-informed H. B. remain conjectural, a further conjecture may as well be added: that H. B. is either simply a misprint or a compositor's misreading of L. B., Lodowick Bryskett, *H* and *L* being quite similar in the secretary hand.

Note: Despite the coincidence of our titles, Francesco Perez's *La Beatrice Svelata* (Palermo, 1865) came to my attention too late to affect this essay. For him, it is Dante's heroine who recalls, partly by way of apocryphal Wisdom, that “eternal empress” the agent intellect; but he means the external, unitary agent intellect of the Arab Aristotelians.

Criticism: Andrew Hadfield (essay date 1996)

SOURCE: Hadfield, Andrew. “Another Look at Serena and Irena.” *Irish University Review* 26, no. 2 (autumn-winter 1996): 291-302.

[In the following essay, Hadfield explores the characterizations of Irena and Serena in *The Faerie Queene* in relation to Queen Elizabeth I and to Spenser's general attitude toward women.]

There has been much recent criticism of *The Faerie Queene* which has concentrated on Spenser's representation of gender. Sheila Cavanagh's attack on Spenser's misogyny and his masculinisation of concepts of virtue has been countered by Pamela Joseph Benson and Lauren Silberman, who have argued that Spenser was, in fact, a proto-feminist, keen to challenge the hierarchical assumptions underpinning gender roles.¹ Interestingly enough, the arguments of all three critics include most of the obviously eroticised women in the poem—Britomart, Amoret, Belpheobe, Florimell, Radigund. With the exception of Benson, they are more concerned with an understanding of sexual politics as a politicisation of sexual relations rather than the sexualisation of wider or more formal political relations. One should have no particular problem with this emphasis, as such an enterprise is long overdue; however, it is noticeable that in their readings of the poem, Benson, Silberman and Cavanagh pay little attention to the figures of Irena and Serena, or the very deliberate portrayal of Mutabilitie as a female figure in the remaining fragment of Book VII.² I would contend that such representations of women within the text significantly qualify the conclusions that the narrative might have appeared to have reached and endorsed. The poem is a self-consciously endless work, as Jonathan Goldberg argued.³ The allegory is never actually able to arrest the “skid” of meaning sideways and remain fixed at a final point.⁴ In fact, if the poem can be characterised as a battle between Orpheus and Proteus over the struggle to name and so bring the allegory to its conclusion, it needs to be taken into account that the transgressive figure of Proteus is tamed when he presides over the imperialistic marriage of the Thames and the Medway at the end of Book IV.⁵ His place as opponent of order is taken first by the ungendered Blatant Beast, the creature of the two hags, Envy and Detraction, and, in the posthumously published *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*, by Mutabilitie herself.

The poem can be read as an ever-more desperate attempt to impose an order on material which is always threatening to escape from the allegorist's grasp (although I think this problem is acknowledged from the start of the poem). Significantly, the representation of disorder acquires progressively strong associations with the feminine, culminating in the figure of Mutabilitie. This is a clear irony in a poem ostensibly concerned with the praise of a Queen.⁶ Much has been made of the multivalent portrayal of the Queen within the text, particularly in the light of Spenser's comment in the letter to Raleigh appended to the first edition of the poem that the figure of the Faerie Queene represented both a general idea of glory and Elizabeth herself. This letter also claims that within the poem Elizabeth was depicted as two bodies or figures, the one “a most royall Queene or Empresse, the other of a most vertuous and beautiful Lady”, Gloriana and Belpheobe, respectively.⁷ Pushed further, it can be contended that all the women in the poem are types of Elizabeth.⁸ To give two relevant examples, Book III opens with a confrontation between Britomart and Malecasta, the abuser of chastity who is labelled as “incontinent” by the narrator. Britomart has traditionally been read as a type of Elizabeth, who is urged to marry and preserve the bloodline of the dynasty. However, she can also be read as an antitype who performs the legitimate actions which Elizabeth neglects. There is therefore a suggestive hint that Elizabeth may really be more of a Malecasta.⁹ Such a reading is strengthened if one also bears in mind that the Red Cross Knight appears “halfe unarmed” (III.i.63) when Malecasta shrieks, evidently having fallen prey to the charms of Castle Joyeous and its “*Errant Damzell*” (III.i.24), neglecting his betrothed Una, a sign that all is not well in the state of England. Similarly, the conflict between Britomart and Radigund can be read less as a celebration of the Queen's triumph over false female government than as a battle about the forms and effects of female rule. Both of these views are plausible interpretations of Elizabeth's reign.¹⁰

In the same way, I want to suggest that Irena and Serena demand to be read as types of Elizabeth. Both are represented as inadequate and dangerous figures, unable to stem the tide of chaos which threatens to engulf the meaning of the poem; in effect, both prefigure the ultimately threatening female menace, Mutabilitie.¹¹

Book V opens with a description of the upbringing of Artegall, the Knight of Justice, by Astrea, the Goddess of Justice. Astrea teaches Artegall to separate right from wrong, using the example of the wild beasts found in

the forests as is appropriate for a savage knight.¹² However, Astrea eventually finds that it is no longer possible to remain on earth:

Now when the world with sinne gan to abound,
Astrea loathing lenger here to space
Mongst wicked men, in whom no truth she found,
Return'd to heuen, whence she deriu'd her race;
Where she hath now an euerlasting place

(V.i.11).

Thereafter, Astrea is significantly absent from the narrative of the book, unable to tolerate the devious and messy world where sorting the good from the bad is a fiendishly difficult task. The goddess deems herself too pure to perform the actions which will serve to implement justice; instead, she delegates responsibility to a male deputy.

Elizabeth's representation as Astrea is too well established to merit further comment here.¹³ It is important to note that Astrea is shown to be unable to sort out any problems herself, and, in fact, seeks to avoid them. Such criticism demands that the reader return to the Proem to the book and re-read the seeming praise to Elizabeth as “Dread Souerayne Goddess, that doest sit / In seat of iudgement, in th'Almighties stead” (V.Proem.11). These lines appear to portray Elizabeth as a deity, but, equally, they could be taken to represent her as an absent usurper of the true principles of justice. They demand that she and her advisers take heed of the unpleasant lessons Spenser is about to teach them in his poem. The Proem warns that the present time is not the golden age of Saturn when “all the world with goodness did abound: / All loved vertue, no man was affrayed / Of force, ne fraud in wight was to be found” (V.Proem.9), but the stony age where “simple Truth” (V.Proem.3) no longer reigns, but “that which all men then did vertue call, / Is now cald vice; and that which vice was hight, / Is now hight vertue” (V.Proem.4). In such a world, justice can only be maintained by the use of force and fraud, a dangerous policy which will always run the risk of transforming what it seeks to implement into what is supposedly opposed. Orpheus may turn into Proteus, or even Mutabilitie.¹⁴ Spenser's narrator equates the age of gold with the age of Saturn; ironically, Astrea gives Artegall the sword of Jove, Chrysaor (V.i.9), which he used to suppress the revolt of the Titans. She is seemingly unaware that Jove overthrew his father in classical legend, thus marking one of the crucial stages which caused the degeneration of the world. Astrea, it would seem, wants to live with the Gods, having little time for the world of men, yet she gives her Knight of Justice a weapon which symbolises the very process she wishes to pretend never happened.¹⁵

This legend assumes an even more important role within the unfolding allegory of the narrative in the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*, as does the symbolic action of the goddess/queen leaving the world for her male subjects to sort out. The specific quest which Artegall has to complete is the standard romance narrative motif of the knight having to rescue a damsel in distress. The tyrant, Grantorto, has laid a false claim to the land which should rightfully belong to Irena. She appeals to the Faerie Queene, “that mightie Emperesse, / Whose glorie is to aide all suppliants pore, / And of weake Princes to be Patronesse” (V.i.4). Irena promptly disappears from the narrative and only reappears in the last canto, in which Artegall duly defeats Grantorto, and restores Irena to her rightful rule. Her grateful subjects grant her an enthusiastic welcome on her return to sovereignty when Artegall finally kills Grantorto:

Which when the people round about him saw,
They shouted all for joy of his successe,
Glad to be quit from that proud Tyrants awe,
Which with strong powre did them long time oppress;
And runninge all with greedie ioyfulnesse
To faire Irena, at her feet did fall,
And her adored with due humblenesse,

As their true Leige and Princesse naturall;
And eke her champions glorie sounded ouer all

(V.xii.24).

With the kingdom restored to peace, Artegall and Talus set about reforming “the ragged commonweale”; the former studies “true Iustice how to deale”, the latter, is sent out to root out any opposition, “that usd to rob and steale, / Or did rebell gainst lawfull gouernment” (V.xii.26). However, before the land can be properly reformed, the Faerie Queene recalls Artegall to her court leaving Irena in a perilous position, and her land without a secure system of justice.¹⁶

The allegory is a veiled apologia for Lord Grey de Wilton's Deputyship in Ireland (1580-82), as has long been recognised.¹⁷ What is of interest for my purposes here is that the episode provides a clear defence of male action against female weaknesses, and, worse still, capricious vacillation. The Faerie Queene promises to save Irena from the tyranny which threatens her rule, but actually undermines that stability herself by her premature recall of the means of implementing justice. The move clearly mirrors Astrea's rather squeamish attitude to justice. The reason for the historical recall of Grey was the complaints generated by what was perceived to be his excessive use of violence, a point noted in a *View*.¹⁸ The women are seen to arrange matters, but it is the men who actually try to resolve them, only to be prevented by the further interventions of the women.

Who, after all, is Irena? Her name would seem to refer both to the classical name for Ireland, Erin, and to derive from the Greek for “peace”.¹⁹ Graham Hough once remarked, rather impatiently, “and heavens knows what Ireland his Irena signifies, for it seems to exclude the entire population of the land”.²⁰ Such a reading takes the book at face value and would appear to miss any of its ironic complexities; the actual verses reveal a more paradoxical situation than the mere propaganda which Hough's reading detects. On the one hand, those living in Ireland are seen to flock to Irena, delighted to be free from Grantorto's tyranny; on the other, Irena's land, Ireland, badly needs the services of Artegall and Talus to root out all subversive elements. When Artegall finally leaves, the narrator comments, “So hauing freed *Irena* from distresse, / He tooke his leaue of her, there left in heauinesse” (V.xii.27). It would seem odd if the author were not at least partly conscious of this problematic inconsistency, especially given the careful echoing of words and phrases throughout the narrative of the poem which continually force the reader to revise his or her judgements (e.g. the use of the word “sa(1)vage”).²¹ Those who flocked to Irena, glad of her restoration, are most likely to be the colonial class of the New English, to which Spenser belonged. These colonists and administrators generally felt undervalued by the crown for their efforts in governing Ireland and extending the English legal apparatus there. In the later years of Elizabeth's reign, they constantly demanded greater military intervention on her part so that a stable basis for such efforts could be established.²² This is precisely the case made in Spenser's own political writings on Ireland.²³ The New English are the subjects who saluted the vigorous suppression of the native Irish—and the displacement of the Old English—and who clearly feel most bereft, abandoned and insecure when the policy of a military reconquest was not fully carried through. It is no coincidence that Lord Grey seems to have been as popular among the New English in Ireland as he was unpopular at the English court.²⁴

Irena is, in effect, a cipher, an empty figure who stands for a blank Ireland which needs to be represented and defined by the New English colonists. Book V depicts her at present as the Irish representative of the Faerie Queene, resembling the rather pathetic damsel-in-distress of Victorian cartoons who needs the martial maid, Britannia, to defend her from the Fenian menace.²⁵ If the requisite policies were to be carried out, then she would cease to be this parasitic ghost, a pale shadow who has nothing to do with the complex reality of Ireland, something Spenser was keen to describe at length elsewhere; she would have to represent the people who flock to her, not simply the monarch she shadows, and in so doing, would be transformed herself, fleshed out, and made into a substantial figure of government. Irena may be depicted as the “true Liege and Princesse

naturall” of Ireland, but the word “naturall” is ambiguous, given the ironies developed in the Proem and first canto of the Book. Irena can only have a right to Ireland if she recognises that it is more than likely that the only laws the universe obeys are those of conquest. This is in itself a fearful admission of arbitrariness, but without conquest, Ireland can only be represented by a pale slip of a girl.

In withdrawing Artegall and Talus from Ireland, the Faerie Queene is abandoning the land to the feminine forces of chaos and disorder. In the process, Ireland disappears from view as the object of Artegall's quest. In its place, the Blatant Beast appears, ready to become the object of the quest of the Calidore, the Knight of Courtsey, in the last completed book of the poem.²⁶

The case of Serena is, I would argue, an even more aggressive and brutal attack on Elizabeth's rule. Serena plays a role in the narrative of Book VI which is only slightly more elaborate than that of Irena in Book V. She and her lover, Calepine, are surprised by Calidore, and, whilst the two men talk, she wanders off, only to be seized by the Blatant Beast. Calidore rescues her, but Calepine, believing she needs further care, carries her off but is forced to confront the aggressive Turpine. They are rescued by the salvage man who heals Calepine, but Serena, still suffering from her wounds, sets off with the salvage man to find a cure. She encounters Arthur who takes her and his squire, Timias, also wounded by the Blatant Beast, to a hermit, who finally succeeds in healing her. She and Timias venture out together—we are not told where they are heading—and run into Mirabella who is being punished by Scorn and Disdain. When Timias is attacked by Disdain, Serena flees again, only to suffer her greatest indignity, when she is captured by the salvage nation who strip her and prepare her for ritual sacrifice. Calepine rescues her, but she is so ashamed of her experiences that she is unable to describe them until the next day, at which point she disappears from the narrative despite the narrator's promise that he will conclude the story later: “The end whereof Ile keepe untill another cast” (VI.viii.51).²⁷

Serena's experiences have excited considerable comment from critics, particularly regarding her role within the pastoral plot, the discussion of courtesy in Book VI, the images of savagery developed within the poem, and Spenser's representation of religion.²⁸ Critical analysis has centred too on her treatment at the hands of the cannibalistic salvage nation and it is this aspect of her fate which I wish also to concentrate upon in this essay. It should be noted first that Serena is one of the only characters in the poem who encounters two forms of savagery, the “good nature” of the vegetarian salvage man who lives on the fruits of the forest, followed by the “bad nature” of the salvage nation, who are cannibals.²⁹ In the opening canto of Book VI, Calidore meets up with Artegall, who tells him that he has seen the object of his quest, the Blatant Beast, when returning from “the saluage Island” (VI.i.9). This indicates that the sequence of representations of savages throughout the poem is related to representations of Ireland and the Irish, especially given the corroborating evidence of *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, which opens with Eudoxus asking Irenius how to start “reducing that *salvage nacion* to better government and Civilitye” [my emphasis].³⁰ Serena, significantly enough, cannot be cured by the good salvage man and is almost destroyed by the bad salvage nation.

The salvage nation are represented as a pointed contrast to the salvage man. Neither work by tending the earth and cultivating crops, a sign of their incivility; but whereas the former “Ne fed on flesh, ne euer of wyld beast / Did taste the bloud, obeying natures first beheast” (VI.iv.14), the latter, “did liue / Of stealth and spoile, and making nightly rode / Into their neighbours borders” (VI.viii.35), behaviour which links them to Spenser's representation of the Irish elsewhere in his poetry and prose.³¹ They appear to have been carefully separated from civilised humanity by their practice of cannibalism:

Thereto they usde one most accursed order,
To eate the flesh of men, whom they mote fynde,
And straungers to deuoure, which on their border
Were brought by errour, or by wreckfull wynde.
A monstrous cruelty gainst course of kynde.
They towards euening wandring euery way,

To seeke for booty, came by fortune blynde

(VI.viii.36).

This description resembles accounts of cannibal practices recently (re)discovered by travellers to the New World.³² What happens is an inversion of human nature, a jettisoning of reason so that the dictates of the body rule the head and all order is cast aside. This is reflected in the random attacks on those unlucky enough to stray over the unseen borders. It was a motif of accounts of cannibals, from Herodotus to Columbus and beyond, that they always lived just over the next hill.³³ The wandering Serena, a woman who clearly does not know where she is going—perhaps like Elizabeth when confronted by Ireland in Spenser's eyes—meets her nemesis in the savage people who inhabit “wylde deserts” (VI.viii.35) and invert all accepted forms of stability in their behaviour.

In marked contrast to their savagery is the elaborate ritual prior to the sacrifice of Serena, who is left naked before an altar ready for the priest's knife. The salvage nation listen to the latter's charms and “diuelish ceremonies” (VI.viii.45), before sounding their bagpipes and horns and shouting so loudly that they make “the wood to tremble at the noyce” (VI.viii.46). This parody of Orphic music creating a harmony with nature links their behaviour and its effects to that of the Blatant Beast.³⁴ The priest is just about to plunge the knife into her breast and “let out loued life” (VI.viii.48), when Calepine stumbles upon the scene, “by chance, more than by choice” (VI.viii.46), and is able to save her.

The preparations for slaughter are described in great detail, as are the reactions of the cannibals to the sight of the naked Serena, creating a voyeuristic spectacle which has disturbed numerous readers because of its pornographic lingering over the helpless female body and its explicit interconnection of sex and male violence.³⁵ The problem is that the language used to describe Serena's body uncomfortably resembles that of much Elizabethan lyric poetry, culminating in the blazon:

Her yvorie necke, her alablatser brest,
Her paps, which like white silken pillowes were,
For loue in soft delight thereon to rest;
Her tender sides, her bellie white and clere,
Which like an Altar did it selfe uprere,
To offer sacrifice diuine thereon;
Her goodly thighes, whose glorie did appeare
Like a triumphal Arch, and thereupon
The spoiles of Princes hang'd, which were in battel won

(VI.viii.42).

Although the previous stanza has condemned the “sordid eyes” and “lustfull fantasies” (VI.viii.41) of the salvage nation, the reader is drawn into the pornographic gaze because the language used clearly comes from a “civilised” quarter, not a savage one (we never hear the salvage nation actually speak—although they do shout a lot—and it should be remembered that the salvage man has no language or speech other than “senselesse words” (VI.iv.11)). As John Pitcher has pointed out, what should serve to separate cannibals and Elizabethan (male) readers, actually draws them closer together.³⁶

What is the point of this episode? I would suggest that on one level, Serena stands as—yet another—representation of Elizabeth and as a counterpart to Irena. Both are connected by their links to the salvage nation, a verbal echo which would appear too strong to ignore. Whilst Irena is unable either to represent adequately or command the salvage nation over which she has nominal control, Serena is stripped naked and left helplessly terrified by the salvage nation who abduct her. Only the chance intervention of a knight saves her, surely a comment on the perilous nature of her power in Ireland after her failure to support Grey's violent initiatives, as well as a reflection on her own aimless wanderings. Neither woman is

represented as anything other than an empty, passive vessel, subject to the control of the active males who surround her and dictate what she must be or do. In effect, because she has refused to seize the initiative—in contrast to Britomart—Elizabeth's encounter with Ireland has reduced her to a pathetic creature. This problem is registered in the increasingly hostile representations of her throughout the second edition of the poem, culminating in her exclusion from the dance of the Graces (VI.x.28).³⁷

What, though, of the voyeurism of the description of the naked Serena? One context within which it might be read is the Diana-Faunus episode in the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*. This fable within a fable tells the story of Faunus who desired to see Diana naked in Ireland where she used to come and bathe with her nymphs. Faunus could not contain himself at the sight of the bare lady, and burst out laughing. As a result, he was chased off by Diana's hounds, the goddess abandoned Ireland and left it under a curse, so transforming it from the most flourishing of the British Isles into the dangerous and inhospitable land which the New English bemoaned in the 1590s (VII.vi.36-55).³⁸

This myth would seem to suggest—more obviously than the case of Serena among the cannibals—that, in Ireland, Elizabeth is exposed because her masks of power do not serve to protect her there.³⁹ Embarrassed and angry at the exposure of her naked body, she flees Ireland, abandoning it and its inhabitants to the forces of chaos:

Them all, and all that she so deare did way,
Thence-forth she left; and parting from the place,
There-on an heauy haplesse curse did lay,
To weet, that Wolues, where she was wont to space,
Should harbour'd be, and all those Woods deface,
And Thieues should rob and spoile that Coast around.
Since which, those Woods, and all that goodly Chase,
Doth to this day with Wolues and Thieues abound:
Which too-too true that lands in-dwellers since haue found

(VII.vi.55).

There can be no doubt that Diana stands for Elizabeth, given the letter to Raleigh, and the notorious verse in the cantos which mocks the Queen (as Cynthia) for her fickleness and her failure to face the ravages of time and accept that she is mortal:

Euen you faire Cynthia, whom so much ye make
Ioues dearest darling ...
Then is she mortall borne, how-so ye crake;
Besides, her face and countenance euery day
We changed see, and sundry forms partake,
Now hornd, now round, now bright, now brown and gray:
So that as changefull as the Moone Men use to say

(VII.vi.50).⁴⁰

Such a *memento mori* also serves as a condemnation of Elizabeth's vacillating court politics and failure to establish a secure succession for her subjects.⁴¹

The resemblance between the treatment of Serena by the salvage nation and Diana in Ireland—the salvage island—is hard to deny. I would suggest that Spenser carefully and deliberately draws readers into the voyeuristic scene of scopic desire for Serena's body because they will have to confront the reality of her nakedness and its malign effects, especially if they are New English colonists in Ireland.⁴² The stripping of Serena—an exposé which looks back to the stripping of Duessa (I.viii.46-50)—is an explicit attack on female rule. This comic image suggests that when confronted by a lawless territory like Ireland, only masculine

government which recognises the one fundamental reality, the law of conquest, and does not fall back on notions of natural rights—associated with the anaemic and ineffective figure of Irena in *The Faerie Queene*—can function. Serena is exposed to a male gaze; the description of her in terms of the Petrarchan poetry fashionable at court and fostered by Elizabeth, turns that poetry against the Queen in the name of her English colonial subjects in Ireland who were caught between the incompetence of their central government and the savagery of the Irish.⁴³ The great fear of the English was that they would “degenerate” and become Irish as many of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman or Old English settlers had done; drawing the reader into the savages' hostile gaze at the vulnerable woman/queen, is a brilliant means of making this point.⁴⁴ Without proper masculine government the chaos of savagism will transform civilisation rather than *vice versa*.

Serena's reaction to her ordeal is one of “inward shame of her uncomely case” (VI.vii.51); Diana's reaction, like Astrea's, is to flee in anger because the world is not pure enough for her. All three episodes, in effect, lay the blame on the woman ruler, whether she recognises the problem or not. Cynthia in the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie* is a figure nurtured by Jove; nevertheless, she is prey to the ravages of Mutabilitie. Jove wins the formal debate with the Titanesse on Arlo Hill and one recalls that Astrea gave the sword that he used against the Titans to Artegal. But one is also continually reminded that it is *only* such weapons and the ability to use them which separate the harsh civilisation which the usurper Jove won from the enveloping chaos of Mutabilitie—a lesson which female rulers would do well to learn, especially those wishing to govern Ireland.

Notes

1. Sheila T. Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Pamela Joseph Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman: The Challenge of Female Independence in the Literature and Thought of Italy and England* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1993); Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1995).
2. I am being unfair to Silberman whose book is, after all, a study of III and IV. Nevertheless, restricting Spenser's discussion of sexuality to those passages tells only half the story.
3. Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981). See also Elizabeth J. Bellamy, “The Vocative and the Vocational: The Unreadability of Elizabeth in *The Faerie Queene*”, *English Literary History*, 54 (1987), pp. 1-30.
4. Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, translated by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), pp. 92-3.
5. A. Bartlett Giamatti, *Play of Double Senses: Spenser's Faerie Queene* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), chapters 2-3.
6. Giamatti, *Play of Double Senses*, pp. 124-30. See also, James W. Broaddus, *Spenser's Allegory of Love: Social Vision in Books III, IV, and V of The Faerie Queene* (London: Associated Universities Presses, 1995), pp. 57-8.
7. See Louis A. Montrose, “The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text”, in Patricia Parker and David Quint (editors), *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 303-40; David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).
8. See Elizabeth J. Bellamy, “The Vocative and the Vocational”, pp. 1-30.
9. See Judith H. Anderson, “Britomart” and Mark Rose, “Castle Joyeous”, in A.C. Hamilton (editor), *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (London and Toronto: Routledge, 1990), pp. 113-15, 136-37. See also Kathleen Williams, *Spenser's Faerie Queene: The World of Glass* (London: Routledge, 1966), chapter 3.
10. See Carol Schreifer Ruppecht, “Radigund”, *Spenser Encyclopedia*, pp. 580-81; Benson, *Invention of Renaissance Woman*, pp. 293-303; Jane Aptekar, *Icons of Justice: Iconography and Thematic Imagery in Book V of The Faerie Queene* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), chapter 11.

- On the general background, see Constance Jordan, "Female Rule in Sixteenth-Century British Political Thought", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 40 (1987), pp. 421-51.
11. See John Guillory, "The Ground of Authority: The *Mutabilitie Cantos*", in *Poetic Authority: Spenser, Milton, and Literary History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 46-67; William Blissett, "Spenser's *Mutabilitie*", in Millar MacLure and D.W. Watt (editors), *Essays in English Literature from the Renaissance to the Victorian Age* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1964), pp. 26-42.
 12. Judith H. Anderson, "Artegall", *Spenser Encyclopedia*, pp. 62-4, at p. 63; Andrew Hadfield, "The 'Sacred Hunger of Ambitious Minds': Spenser's Savage Religion", in Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (editors), *Religion, Literature and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540-1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 27-46, at p. 39.
 13. See Frances A. Yates, *Astrea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1975); Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp. 47-55; Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), pp. 76-7; Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 39-41 *et passim*; Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 31-2, 109.
 14. Aptekar, *Icons of Justice*, chapter 7.
 15. Williams, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, pp. 155-57.
 16. See Sheila T. Cavanagh, "'Such Was Irena's Countenance': Ireland in Spenser's Prose and Poetry", *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, 28 (1968), pp. 24-50. See especially pp. 39-40, 45-6.
 17. See, for example, H.S.V. Jones, "Spenser's Defence of Lord Grey", *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, 5 (1919), pp. 151-219; Richard A. McCabe, "The Fate of Irena: Spenser and Political Violence", in Patricia Coughlan (editor), *Spenser and Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1989), pp. 109-25.
 18. McCabe, "The Fate of Irena", p. 122; Steven G. Ellis, *Tudor Ireland: Crown, Community and the Conflict of Cultures, 1470-1603* (London: Longman, 1985), p. 284.
 19. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, edited by A.C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 1977), p. 530.
 20. Graham Hough, *A Preface to The Faerie Queen* (London: Duckworth, 1962), p. 192.
 21. Hadfield, "Spenser's Savage Religion". More generally see Paul J. Alpers, *The Poetry of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).
 22. On the New English, see T.W. Moody, "Introduction: Early Modern Ireland", in T.W. Moody *et al.* (editors), *A New History of Ireland, III, Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. xxxix-lxiii, at pp. xlvi-xlviii. On demands for greater intervention, see Ciaran Brady, *The Chief Governors: The Rise and Fall of Reform Government in Tudor Ireland, 1536-1588* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 291-300.
 23. Ciaran Brady, "The Road to the View: On the decline of Reform Thought in Tudor Ireland", in Coughlan (editor), *Spenser and Ireland*, pp. 25-45; "A Brief Note of Ireland", *Spenser Encyclopedia*, pp. 111-12.
 24. See Andrew Hadfield, *Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, forthcoming, 1997), chapter 1.
 25. Liz Curtis, *Nothing But the Same Old Story: The Roots of Anti-Irish Racism* (London: Information on Ireland, 1984), p. 56.
 26. See Andrew Hadfield, "The Course of Justice: Spenser, Ireland and Political Discourse", *Studia Neophilologica*, 65 (1993), pp. 187-96, pp. 193-94. It should also be noted that the mother of the Blatant Beast, Echidna, is described at much greater length than the father, Typhaon (VI.vi.9-12).
 27. A recurring narrative device in Book VI: compare the promise to tell the reader of the Salvage Man's genealogy (VI.v.2).
 28. Roy Harvey Pierce, "Primitivistic Ideas in *The Faerie Queene*", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 44 (1945), pp. 139-51, at p. 150; Donald Cheney, *Spenser's Image of Nature: Wild Man*

- and Shepherd in *The Faerie Queene* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 104-16, 192-214; Waldo F. McNeir, "The Sacrifice of Serena: *The Faerie Queene*, VI, viii, 31-51", in B. Fabian and U. Suerbaum (editors), *Festschrift Für Edgar Mertner* (Munich: W.F.V. München, 1968), pp. 117-56; Humphrey Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book VI of The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), *passim*; Kenneth Borris, "'Diuelish Ceremonies': Allegorical Satire of Protestant Extremism in *The Faerie Queene*, VI, viii.31-51", *Spenser Studies*, 8 (1987), pp. 175-209; Anne Fogarty, "The Colonisation of Language: Narrative Strategies in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* and *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI", in Coughlan (editor), *Spenser and Ireland*, pp. 75-108, at pp. 100-01; Leigh DeNeef, "Serena", *Spenser Encyclopedia*, p. 637.
29. See Harvey Pierce, "Primitivistic Ideas in *The Faerie Queene*", pp. 147-48; Cheney, *Spenser's Image of Nature*, pp. 195-214; John D. Bernard, "Salvage Man", *Spenser Encyclopedia*, pp. 624-25. On "good" and "bad" nature see Bernard W. Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), chapters 2-3.
 30. Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Irelande*, in Rudolf Gottfried (editor), *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, Vol. X: The Prose Works* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1949), pp. 39-232, at p. 43.
 31. See *View*, pp. 97-9; *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (1595), lines 316-20.
 32. See, for example, Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), chapters 1-2.
 33. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, pp. 80-1.
 34. Compare, V.xii.41.
 35. Useful comment is provided by Fogarty, "Colonisation of Language", pp. 100-01.
 36. John Pitcher, "Tudor Literature, 1485-1603", in Pat Rogers (editor), *The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 59-111, at pp. 89-90.
 37. Pastorella, the woman who links the last stages of Book VI, is also kidnapped by brigands who could resemble the Irish and she retires to a monastery (VI.xii.23), leaving Calidore to fight the Blatant Beast. See Richard T. Neuse, "Pastorella", *Spenser Encyclopedia*, pp. 532-34.
 38. For further comment, see Andrew Hadfield, "Spenser, Ireland, and Sixteenth-Century Political Theory", *Modern Language Review*, 89 (1994), pp. 1-18, at pp. 13-18. On the classical precedents of the story, see Michael Holahan, "*Iamque opus exegi*: Ovid's Changes and Spenser's Brief Epic of Mutability", *English Literary Renaissance*, 6 (1976), pp. 244-70.
 39. Helena Shire, *A Preface to Spenser* (London: Longman, 1978), p. 64.
 40. See David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 152-54; Berry, *Of Chastity and Power*, pp. 163-65.
 41. See Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 200.
 42. On the motif of scenes of "scopic desire", see Fogarty, "Colonisation of Language", p. 99.
 43. See Arthur F. Marotti, "'Love is Not Love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order", *English Literary History*, 49 (1982), pp. 396-428.
 44. On the Old English, see Moody, "Introduction: Early Modern Ireland", pp. xlii-xlvii.

Criticism: Donald Stump (essay date 1999)

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[In the following essay, Stump focuses on Spenser's perception of Queen Elizabeth I as a female monarch of the English Reformation in Books III and V of *The Faerie Queene*.]

A number of recent studies of gender roles in *The Faerie Queene* have concentrated on what has been perceived as the narrator's shifting (and perhaps shifty) appraisal of women's ability to rule.¹ In Book III, the narrator suggests that women are at least as capable as men in "warlike armes," the "artes," and "pollicy"—which are, of course, the principal areas in which a Renaissance prince was expected to excel (ii.2).² In Book V, however, the narrator seems to retreat from the conclusion implicit in his earlier claims, saying of women that "wise Nature did them strongly bynd, / T'obay the heasts of mans well ruling hand" (v.25).

Although the apparent shift in the poet's attitude has been the subject of a good deal of critical debate, little has been resolved. Some scholars (best represented by Susanne Woods) see an outright contradiction between the two books, although perhaps one that is part of an intentional dialectic with the reader.³ Others argue that, by and large, Spenser takes a consistent stand on the issue, although there has been considerable disagreement about the nature of his position. On the one hand, Josephine Roberts⁴ stresses details that make the poet's views seem closest to those of relatively liberal Anglicans, whose principal spokesman, Bishop John Aylmer, argues that nothing in divine or natural law denies women the right to rule and that they have done so ably "in al ages, in many countreis, and vnder euery monarck[y]." J. E. Phillips and Pamela Benson,⁶ on the other hand, ally the poet with the conservative reformer John Calvin, who regards women's rule as a deviation from the proper order of nature, although one that God occasionally brings about "to condemn the inactivity of men, or for the better setting forth his own glory."⁷

To dispel the impression of inconsistency between Books III and V, such scholars have had to interpret one or the other of the stanzas in question in special ways. Roberts, for example, dismisses the passage opposing women's rule in Book V as nothing more than "the narrator's immediate, impassioned reaction to the humiliation of Artegall."⁸ By contrast, those who accept a Calvinist reading regard the stanza in Book V as the clearest statement of the poet's position, and treat the praises of women's abilities in Book III as limited to the great women of antiquity and a scattering of more recent queens, such as Matilda and Elizabeth.⁹ According to this interpretation, Spenser may well have admired certain female rulers, but he was still committed to the general proposition that "wise Nature" binds women to obedience "Vnlesse the heauens them lift to lawfull soueraintie" (v.25).

Although I admire the scholarship that has been brought forth in support of the Anglican and Calvinist positions, I have never been quite comfortable with either one, since I suspect that their proponents too hastily dismiss, or too narrowly circumscribe, one or the other of the statements about women that other scholars find troubling. I would like to propose a different way to reconcile Books III and V, one that seems to me truer to the language of the passages in question. Before I do, however, I must again raise the difficult issue of Spenser's religious position, for it seems to me that we cannot make much progress until we recognize that the relevant passages in *The Faerie Queene* do not accord very well either with the views of the liberal Anglicans or with those of the moderate Calvinists.

The contrasts stand out most clearly when we consider not just general statements about the nature of women, their capacities, and their proper role in the public sphere, but also the authors' interpretations of key biblical texts on those issues. In the sixteenth-century controversy over women's rule, the Bible was central to the debate. In responding to it, both sides had to contend with a number of texts that were not easy to harmonize: the opening chapters of Genesis, which depict the relationship between the genders before and after the Fall; the Old Testament accounts of female judges, prophets, and queens; the verses in the Epistles of St. Paul that set forth women's proper role in church polity; and the New Testament passages on the equality of the sexes after Christ's Second Coming. As historians of Reformation theology such as John Lee Thompson and Jane Dempsey Douglass have recently shown, the book of Genesis and the Pauline Epistles were sites of particularly contentious debate.¹⁰ Since these texts figure prominently in my analysis of Spenser's position, I begin with them. I then contrast the stands of Aylmer and Calvin on the issues raised by the biblical passages with the much more complex views implicit in *The Faerie Queene*. Finally, I analyze a series of idealized

female rulers in Book V, arguing that they best illustrate the differences between Spenser's position and those held by most Anglican and Protestant churchmen in his day.

II

The book of Genesis offers a good deal of support for the view that the rule of men over women—whether in the home or in society at large—was not part of the original order of creation. For one thing, God commands both sexes to “subdue” the earth and to “rule ouer” it (1.26, 28, Geneva version).¹¹ For another, he creates male and female in his own “image” and according to his own “lickenes” (1.26), and since one of God's primary capacities is governing, the fact that women share the divine image suggests that they also share the ability to rule. Finally, the rule of husbands over wives does not begin until after the Fall. When God punishes Eve for eating the forbidden fruit, saying, “thy desire *shal be subiect* to thine housband, and he shal rule ouer thee” (3.16), the statement implies that Adam has previously held no such sway. Woman's subjection is a consequence of the Fall and is therefore to be regarded, not as a good in its own right, but as the withdrawal of a good. Prior to the Fall, neither gender had dominion over the other because both were expected to subject their desires and their will entirely to God.

To be sure, differences in the treatment of the genders are implicit from the outset. In the interval before the Fall, God spends more time with Adam than with Eve, allowing him to witness the creation of the garden of Eden and its inhabitants and to name the animals and birds (2.7-8, 15-20). God also designates Eve as a “help” to Adam and gives to him alone the command about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, apparently expecting him to communicate it to his spouse (cf. 2.16-17 and 3.2-3). Clearly, however, such priority in knowledge and experience is not sufficient to establish the “rule” or “dominion” of Adam over Eve, for that begins only after the Fall.

Evidence of the initial parity of the genders may be found in the letters of St. Paul. According to the Epistle to the Colossians, the divine “image” in human beings, which has been defaced by Original Sin, will be renewed “When Christ which is our life, shal appear” (3.4). Once restored to their first perfection, people will no longer be divided or bound in subjection to one another. Paul writes, “Lie not one to another, seing that ye haue put of[f] the olde man with his workes, And haue put on the newe, which is renewed in knowledge *after the image of him that created him*, Where is nether Grecian nor Iewe, circumcision nor vncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bonde, fre: but Christ is all and in all things” (9-11, my italics). In a similar passage in Galatians the Apostle applies this process of unification and equalization to the genders as well. There he writes, “all ye that are baptized into Christ, haue put on Christ. There is nether Iewe nor Grecian: there is nether bonde nor fre: there is nether male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Iesus” (3.27-28). In Christ, then, the old distinctions between chosen and not-chosen, freemen and slaves, no longer pertain, and neither do those between men and women. Just as the human race was one in the beginning, created in a single divine image and ruled by God alone, so it will be in the end—at least for those who have “put on Christ.”

Now it is important to note two points on which Paul remains silent. First, he does not extend the principle that man should rule over woman from the family to the state. One might argue, of course, that if wives are barred from rule in the home, then Paul can hardly have intended that women should rule in the state. Since the demands of the two settings are different, however, biblical commentators who take that position have generally felt obliged to seek support elsewhere—notably in Paul's discussions of male “headship,” in his strictures against allowing women to speak in church, and in his requirement that they cover their heads in the congregation.¹² Since these passages address the role of woman in the church rather than in the state, and since the Old Testament treats women rulers such as Esther and Deborah favorably, the evidence remains inconclusive. Second, although Paul discusses the beginning and the end of the process by which male and female are to become equal, he is silent on the intervening stages. The relevant passage in Galatians states that the return to Eden begins in baptism, when Original Sin is washed away and believers “put on Christ.” As the parallel passage from Colossians suggests, however, baptism is not necessarily sufficient to release wives

from subjection. The Greek participial form *anakainoumenon*, which the Geneva version renders “is renewed,” implies that baptized believers are still in the process of “*being* renewed.” Paul’s stress falls, in fact, on the last stage of the transformation, when Christ will come again “in glory” (3.3-4, 10). Nonetheless, a process of sanctification leading up to this final stage is clearly implied, and to the extent that both genders are being restored to the image of God, they might be expected to share more equally in matters of governance.

Now this line of reasoning is not one followed by most Protestant biblical commentators in Spenser’s day. Although most accept the Pauline teaching that distinctions based on gender—including the so-called “curse of Eve”—will pass away at Christ’s return, few concede that even the unfallen Eve shared in God’s *iustitia*. To avoid the implication that the rule of men is a consequence of the Fall, they tend to slant their interpretations of Genesis, first by excluding the capacity to govern from the list of attributes inherent in the “image of God”¹³ and then by contending that Adam’s “rule” over Eve is simply the heightening of a natural authority that he enjoyed from the outset.¹⁴ Such views are frequently tied to Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 11.7 that “[the man] is the image and glorie of God: but the woman is the glorie of the man.” Although nothing can logically be derived from the Apostle’s failure to say here that the woman is also the image of God, most sixteenth-century Protestant commentators take the passage to imply that women are not like God in the same sense that men are.¹⁵ Few, therefore, even consider the possibility that, as women are “renewed” in the image of God, they might take on more responsibility in matters of governance. Since God has not exempted believers from “sorrow in childbirth” or from the other punishments imposed in Genesis 3.16-20, commentators generally regard any attempt to lessen women’s subjection before the Last Judgment as an evasion of divine justice.¹⁶

Nonetheless, interpretations that presuppose an initial ruling parity between the sexes and treat the Second Coming as a return to that prelapsarian state were well known in the sixteenth century. They had, in fact, been widely disseminated from the patristic period on, principally through the influence of St. John Chrysostom.¹⁷ Although no supporter of women’s rule in the present state of the world, Chrysostom concedes that before the fall the genders were equal in rank and authority. In his *Homilies on Genesis* he states that, even before creating the first woman, God intended that she share in his governance (*archên*). In a later passage from the same work, he imagines God reproaching Eve after the Fall: “In the beginning I created you equal in esteem to your husband, and my intention was that in everything you would share with him as an equal, and as I entrusted control of everything to your husband, so did I to you; but you abused your equality of status. Hence I subject you to your husband. ... Because you abandoned your equal ... I now subject you to him in future and designate him as your master.”¹⁸ Only a small step was required to see the ultimate equality promised to women in the Pauline Epistles, then, as a return to this Edenic state. From the fact that Protestant commentators of the sixteenth century so often feel the need to argue against such egalitarian readings, we may infer that they were widely known.¹⁹

Spenser rejects the position of most of his usual religious allies on this issue and adopts one that better accords with an interpretation of Genesis like that of Chrysostom. He regards the Fall as a lengthy process in which, having lost Paradise, men and women gradually lose their parity as well. Although he speaks of the women of antiquity as men’s equals, and sometimes even their superiors, he also asserts that they have since been deprived of liberty and hindered in developing their full capacities:

by record of antique times I finde
That women wont in warres to beare most sway,
And to all great exploits them selues inclind:
Of which they still the girlond bore away,
Till enuious Men fearing their rules decay,
Gan coyne streight lawes to curb their liberty;
Yet sith they warlike armes haue layd away:
They haue exceld in artes and pollicy,

That now we foolish men that prayse gin eke t'enuy.

(ii.2)

As the story of Britomart and Artegall makes clear, however, the poet does not think that women should languish in this diminished state until the Second Coming. Unlike most Protestants of his day, Spenser laments the subordination of women and supports a restoration of their original “liberty.” Unlike most of his contemporaries who advocate women's rule, however, he thinks the abilities of women so little developed in his own day that only the most exceptional are ready to take an active role in public affairs. A comparison of his views with those of Calvin and Aylmer reveals the unusual nature of his position.

III

Even when Spenser praises the achievements of women, as he does in Book III, his position bears little resemblance to that of John Aylmer. In supporting women's rule, the Bishop concedes that it causes some “inconuenience” because the requisite virtues are “moore in the man then in the woman.”²⁰ The disparity is not great, however, as he demonstrates by citing a long list of successful female rulers from antiquity to the present day. From their numbers and the variety of the cultures that they represent, he concludes that “by the wholle consent of nacyons, by the ordinaunce of God, and order of lawe, wemen haue reigned and those not a fewe, and as it was thought not against nature.”²¹ Spenser clearly disagrees. In the opening stanzas of Book III, Canto ii (cited above), he claims that, far from being inferior in the virtues needed to rule, ancient women often excelled over men.²² He also rejects the view that in all ages women have ruled by “the wholle consent of nacyons” and “order of lawe.” Since he believes that, from an early date, women aroused men's envy and were subject to “streight lawes to curb their liberty,” he sees progressive erosion in their participation in public affairs. In the much discussed passage reproving the Amazons in Book V, moreover, he explicitly denies Aylmer's conclusion that women's rule is “not against nature,” insisting instead that

Such is the crueltie of womenkynd,
When they haue shaken off the shamefast band,
With which wise Nature did them strongly bynd,
T'obay the heasts of mans well ruling hand,
That then all rule and reason they withstand,
To purchase a licentious libertie.
But vertuous women wisely vnderstand,
That they were borne to base humilitie,
Vnless the heauens them lift to lawfull soueraintie.

(v.25)

Although Roberts dismisses this stanza as an uncharacteristic outburst prompted by the Amazons' abuse of Artegall, the narrator's tone hardly seems impulsive or angry. He pauses in his narrative to assess not just Radigund and her followers, but all of “womenkynd,” and the tendencies that concern him are not simply the “inconueniences” that Aylmer concedes but a tendency to rebel against reason itself. Whereas the Bishop treats women's rule as a universal practice, the poet thinks it a departure from the prevailing order—and one that ought not to be undertaken without the sanction of “the heauens.”

To be sure, the passage leaves open more possibilities for women that some critics have supposed. Since Book III questions the justice of the laws that men have “coyned” against women, the phrases “lawfull soueraintie” and “mans well ruling hand” may presuppose a more liberal social order than that which currently prevails. In that case, women may have a right to rise to sovereignty more frequently than has recently been allowed. The role of “the heauens” in raising women to power is also ambiguous. It may entail a rare and specific act of divine providence, like that by which Deborah was made Judge over Israel, or a more common and general one by which women are freed from unjust constraints and restored to the possibility of lawful sovereignty. The observation that “vertuous women wisely vnderstand, / That they were borne to base humilitie” might be

thought to militate against this reading, but it too is ambiguous. It may mean that women are bound to obey men in the ideal order of things, or simply in the fallen order imposed until people “put on Christ” and are renewed. If the latter, then women may only be required to obey men until the heavens have restored the genders to a state more nearly like that which they enjoyed in Eden.

I will return to these issues, but for the moment, it is sufficient to note the differences between Spenser's position and that of Aylmer. The Bishop thinks women's rule a universal phenomenon altogether in accord with nature and the inherent abilities of women, whereas the poet sees it as a departure from the prevailing order of things and one that is to be undertaken only with the assent of higher powers.²³ Despite his glowing accounts of women's inherent potential, Spenser clearly holds the actual abilities of most sixteenth-century women in rather low esteem. As Pamela Benson has noted, he often expresses admiration for women of the ancient world, but rarely for those of recent times, of whom he complains,

Where is the Antique glory now become,
That whilome wont in women to appeare?
Where be the braue atchieuements doen by some?

If they be dead, then woe is me therefore:
But if they sleepe, O let them soone awake.

(III.iv.1-2)

Where the Bishop sees a history of women's ongoing ability and achievement, the poet sees a record of steep decline.

It is Spenser's view of the ongoing nature of the Fall that most clearly distinguishes him from Aylmer. As the poet suggests in surveying successive ages of the erotic art in the House of Busirane, the history of relations between the sexes has been one of progressive degradation. In the “goodly arras” of the first room, we glimpse such relations in antiquity, when gods and men first succumbed to the power of Cupid. As we proceed through the tapestries, the males become more lustful, bestial, and domineering and the females more fearful, subservient, and debased (III.xi.27-50). In the end this first era of decline leads to a state in which “Kings Queenes, Lords Ladies, Knights and Damzels gent / Were heap'd together with the vulgar sort, / And mingled with the raskall rablement” (46). In the second room a subsequent period continues the descent, proceeding from the vulgar and bestial to the “monstrous” (51).

Whereas for Spenser the Fall has changed women profoundly, for Aylmer it has had minimal effect, at least in their ability to govern. In commenting on Genesis 3.16, the Bishop takes God's statement to Eve “thy desire *shal be subiect* to thine housband, and he shal rule ouer thee” to mean simply that, despite the pains of childbirth, women will continue to seek sexual intimacy with their husbands.²⁴ In this way he eliminates the issue of female obedience altogether. Although he later concedes that the passage may also be taken to imply male authority within the family, he denies any such implication for the state. A queen may be obliged to obey her husband at home, but he argues that at court she may rightly say, “Law make my husband to obey, for heare he is not my hed, but my subiect.”²⁵

If the idealized image of womanhood in the figure of Britomart is any indication, Spenser once again disagrees. Although the Briton Princess stands to inherit a kingdom, she defers to her future husband in matters of direct rule. When, for example, she overthrows the tyrant Radigund and gains power over the city of the Amazons, she immediately relinquishes authority to a group of male magistrates headed by Artegall. If, moreover, the prophecies of Isis Church are to be believed, Britomart will never seek to exercise royal authority over her husband in the way suggested by Aylmer, not even after she sits in her father's throne. Instead, she will divide the labor of ruling with him as the moon-goddess Isis does with the sun-god Osyris. In this arrangement the masculine figure exercises justice and the feminine figure clemency or judicial equity,

which tempers the harshness of the legal code as extenuating circumstances warrant. Although Spenser says of Isis and Osyris that “both like race in equall iustice runne” (V.vii.1-4), their essential equality still allows differences in force and prominence. The sun is, after all, larger and more dazzling than the moon, although no more important as an astrological influence. In the same way Artegall will apparently be “first among equals” once Britomart takes him “to [her] loued fere, / And ioyne[s] in equall portion of [her] realme” (23). According to Merlin's prophecy in Book III, she will rule alone at his death (iii.28-29). While he lives, however, she will not claim the sort of preeminence enjoyed by the queen in Aylmer's treatise who says, “Law make my husband to obey.”

Spenser's disagreements with the Bishop are also apparent in the poet's account of “Eden Lond” in Book I. In the theological allegory its King and Queen represent fallen humanity. He is the “old Adam” and she the “old Eve,” and both are held in bondage to the “old serpent” Satan. Their savior, the Red Crosse Knight, is in turn associated with the “new Adam,” or Christ, and their daughter Una with the “new Eve,” or the true church. For our purposes, the primary point to observe is the contrast between the conduct of the old Eve and that of the new. Although Una's mother is more than once referred to as Queen of Eden Lond, she takes no part in ruling the kingdom. Instead she seems to live under the “curse of Eve,” remaining silent and passive and, so far as we can tell, leaving matters of state to her husband. Una, however, is far more engaged in public affairs, having initiated and guided the attempt to liberate Eden with the assistance of the Red Crosse Knight. Since she is not only a figure for the Church but also, as her knight's erotic dreams about her suggest, a flesh and blood representative of regenerate womanhood, her energetic and active leadership implies that women need not wait for the Second Coming to begin their renewal. If, after all, her promised marriage to the Red Crosse Knight refers to the final union of Christ with the church, then the Second Coming still lies in the future. Active in the kingdom as she is, however, she is not like Aylmer's exemplary queen. In the judgment of Duessa and other matters, she continues to defer to her father and her intended husband. Although the idealized women of *The Faerie Queene* have the ability to rule alone, only the widowed and the unmarried actually do. The others exercise their authority in ways that complement that of their husbands.

IV

Although Aylmer's views are far from Spenser's, Calvin's seem somewhat closer. As Benson and Phillips have noted, the comments on women's rule in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* resemble statements by Calvin in a letter of 1559 to Lord Burghley in which the Swiss reformer assures the English government that he does not oppose the fledgling rule of Queen Elizabeth. He maintains that governance by women is a “deviation” from the “proper order of nature,” but he concedes that there have occasionally been female rulers “so endowed, that the singular good qualities which shone forth in them made it evident that they were raised up by divine authority.”²⁶ Spenser takes a similar line when he attributes the subordination of women to “wise Nature,” but he leaves open the possibility that the heavens may raise them to sovereignty. There, however, the similarities between the two writers end.

Unlike Calvin, Spenser idealizes antiquity and longs for its recovery. In the Proem to Book V, he praises the glories of “the golden age, that first was named” (V.proem.2) and exalts the reign of Elizabeth as a return to ancient ideals of justice and peace (9-11). That this passage reflects a deeply held personal mythology is confirmed in a letter by Gabriel Harvey, who as early as 1580 complains to the poet, “You suppose the first age was the goulde age. . . . You suppose it a foolish madd world, wherein all thinges ar overrulid by fansye.”²⁷ For Calvin, however, the reign of Saturn never occurred, and the subordination of women is necessary because of inadequacies in their nature far more profound than he lets on in his cautiously diplomatic note to Burghley. In his view God's reasons for occasionally exalting women to positions of authority have less to do with their native capacities than with God's intent to glorify himself or to “reproach the inactivity of men.” We get a fuller view of this line of reasoning in a sermon on 1 Timothy 2.13ff., in which Calvin likens the raising up of the judge and prophet Deborah to God's miraculous use of stones, fools, and mutes to speak for him. In such instances, according to Calvin, the Lord calls on something to do His will

that lacks “intrinsic skill” (*artifice*), thus “perverting” the order of nature.²⁸ Spenser, however, seems to think that women once ruled on the basis of such intrinsic skill and may do so again, if only they will “awake.”

To be sure, Book V also asserts that “wise Nature” ordains that women obey men. As we have seen, however, the stanza in question does not make clear which sense of the notoriously treacherous term “nature” Spenser has in mind. It might refer to the perfect order of things as first created by God, or to the fallen order of subsequent history. The latter meaning seems preferable, however, because it allows a rather simple resolution to the apparent contradictions on this issue between Books III and V. If we assume that Spenser meant to draw the traditional distinction between Nature and Grace²⁹—between the order of the world as we know it and the order that “the heavens” will bring forth as the world is renewed—then his praise for the abilities of ruling women in antiquity and his concern that contemporary women remain subordinate are not incompatible. He may simply have thought obedience wise until such abilities have once again been awakened. On this interpretation, the primary difference between the two writers is that Calvin sees the subordination of women continuing until the end of time, whereas Spenser sees it being gradually relaxed as grace brings sanctification and renewal.

The contrast between the two writers on this point emerges most clearly when we contrast images of Edenic perfection and apocalyptic renewal in *The Faerie Queene* with those in Calvin's biblical commentaries. Calvin holds that women were created in the image of God, but he denies that the Hebrew term rendered as “image” in Genesis 1 includes the capacity for rule. He takes it, instead, to refer to the “righteousness and true holiness” of Adam and Eve.³⁰ Acknowledging that Eve's role as a “help suitable” for Adam suggests “some equality” (*aliquid aequabile*)³¹ and conceding that the woman was endowed with sufficient mental ability to be a close companion to her husband, he nonetheless denies the obvious implication of Genesis 3.16 that Adam did not “rule over” Eve until after the Fall. On this point he says, “[Eve] had, indeed, previously been subject to her husband, but that was a liberal and gentle subjection; [with the Fall], however, she is cast into servitude.”³² The same bias is apparent in Calvin's commentaries on the New Testament, particularly in passages in which he discusses the status of women in the Kingdom of God. Although he does not deny the equality of the genders once Christ returns, he aligns himself with most other Protestants of his day in asserting that, until the world passes away, women must remain subservient to men.³³ As Douglass notes, Calvin softens a number of the harshest attitudes toward women held by his contemporaries,³⁴ yet he is far less egalitarian than Spenser.

The Protestant who most nearly resembles the poet of *The Faerie Queene* is not Calvin but Luther. In his *Lectures on Genesis*, the German reformer—who sometimes addressed his wife as “*Midon*”—argues that “if the woman [Eve] had not been deceived by the serpent and had not sinned, she would have been the equal of Adam in all respects. For the punishment, that she is now subjected to the man, was imposed on her after sin and because of sin, just as the other hardships and dangers were: travail, pain, and countless other vexations. Therefore Eve was not like the woman of today; her state was far better and more excellent, and she was in no respect inferior to Adam, whether you count the qualities of the body or those of the mind.”³⁵ As in Spenser's Isis Church episode, Luther characterizes relations between the genders in astral terms, emphasizing equality in the bearers of the divine image but observing that the genders differ in their potential for glory. He writes, “Although Eve was a most extraordinary creature—similar to Adam so far as the image of God is concerned, that is, in justice [*iusticiam*], wisdom [*sapientiam*], and happiness—she was nevertheless a woman. For as the sun is more excellent than the moon, . . . so the woman, although she was a most beautiful work of God, nevertheless was not the equal of the male in glory and prestige.”³⁶ Like Spenser, Luther also draws a sharp distinction between Eve and women of the present day, and he attributes to her two primary virtues of a ruler: wisdom and justice. Yet even Luther does not go so far as Spenser in defending the sex, for he neither idealizes the descendants of Eve in antiquity nor calls for contemporary women to “awaken” and emulate their achievements. For the German reformer, Eve is different from all her descendents, whose subjection is not to be softened until the Second Coming.³⁷

So unusual, then, is Spenser's view of women that it renders the label "Anglican" or "Calvinist"—or even the broader term "Protestant"—quite misleading. The poet's suggestion that even in this life women can "awake" and recover the virtues and glories that they enjoyed in a long-lost Golden Age runs counter not just to the views of men like Calvin and Aylmer, but also to those of the great majority of churchmen in the period. The distinction turns out to be vital in understanding the succession of idealized goddesses and sanctified women in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*.

V

As I have suggested elsewhere, Book V is designed around a sequence of stages by which the Golden Age may be recovered in this world.³⁸ With these stages will come renewed achievements for women in the public sphere, of which Book V offers primary models in the persons of Astraea, Isis, Britomart, and Mercilla as well as the English Queen to whom they all have allegorical connections. By linking these figures in a sustained narrative of return, Spenser offers an illustration of the renewal promised in the more discursive and theoretical passages that we have so far been considering.

Early in Book V, Spenser reiterates a central aim of his poem: to "fashion a gentleman or noble person" by returning to representations of "vertuous and noble discipline" in the works of the ancient poets Homer and Vergil (and their later Italian imitators).³⁹ As the Proem of Book V suggests, such a return to "antique use" is necessary because the present age is "corrupted sore" (V. proem 3). To achieve discipline in virtue, then, a "noble person"—whether male or female—must look to models in legendary antiquity, when the genders still retained much of the virtue of their first creation. The attempt to shape the future by recovering the past informs the very structure of Book V.

In the Proem to the Legend of Justice, Spenser begins by recalling the dawn of time:

So oft as I with state of present time,
The image of the antique world compare,
When as mans age was in his freshest prime,
And the first blossome of faire vertue bare,
Such odde I finde twixt those, and these which are,
As that, through long continuance of his course,
Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square,
From the first point of his appointed sourse,
And being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse.

For from the golden age, that first was named,
It's now at earst become a stonie one

(V.proem.1. 2)

The "first point" from which all has run out of square is the moment of creation, and the passage echoes the opening chapters of Genesis by associating "mans age ... in his freshest prime" with the resonant term "image" and the phrase "first blossome of faire vertue." With typical syncretism, however, Spenser then blurs the distinction between Eden and the "golden age" of Greco-Roman myth. To stress the magnitude of the Fall from the first age to the current "stonie" one, he laments the changes in the heavens and on earth wrought by Mars and Saturn, the astral bodies that have gone most "amisse" (V.2-8). Although he foresees the world's "last ruinous decay," he holds out hope for a return to ancient heroism in the midst of its "dissolution" (4-6). This hope takes shape in the last three stanzas, which first recall the reign of Saturn and the Golden Age (9) and then offer an image of Edenic order in which humankind once again rules in the image of God (10-11).

As at the beginning of the Proem, allusions to Genesis recur at the end, but with more striking effect, for the one who exemplifies rule in the image of God is not a son of Adam but a daughter of Eve. Depicted as an

image of the divine, Queen Elizabeth serves as an embodiment of justice itself, “Most sacred vertue she of all the rest, / *Resembling God* in his imperiall might” (10, my emphasis). The scriptural allusion in the phrase “Resembling God” is reinforced in the succeeding stanza, where the Queen is represented as a “Goddesse” ruling from the very throne of God:

That powre he also doth to Princes lend,
And makes them like himselfe in glorious sight,
To sit in his owne seate, his cause to end,
And rule his people right, as he doth recommend.

Dread Souerayne Goddesse, that doest highest sit
In seate of iudgement, in th'Almighties stead,
And with magnificke might and wondrous wit
Doest to thy people righteous doome aread,
That furthest Nations filles with awfull dread,
Pardon the boldnesse of thy basest thrall,
That dare discourse of so diuine a read,
As thy great iustice prayed ouer all

(proem.10-11, my italics).

In asserting Elizabeth's divine right to rule, these lines identify qualities in her and in other rulers that few sixteenth-century Protestants are willing to predicate of the divine “image.” As I have pointed out, to avoid attributing ruling virtues such as *iustitia* to women, Calvin and other commentators sought to limit the “image” to a few gender-neutral attributes such as “righteousness and true holiness.” Not only does Spenser greatly expand the list, but he picks precisely the qualities that such churchmen were least willing to accept: “glorious sight” (in two senses), elevated status, “wondrous wit,” “magnificke might,” “righteous doom,” “awfull dread” extended to “furthest Nations,” and the “diuine” virtue of justice itself. Since only men were thought capable of such perfections, adding them to the list of attributes included in the divine image and so shared by women was a bold departure from contemporary thought in the Reformed tradition.

One might argue that Spenser regarded these ruling capacities as inherent in Elizabeth by special grace rather than by the general nature of her sex, but to do so would be to miss a crucial detail. In explaining Elizabeth's ability to administer justice, Spenser makes no distinction between her and other princes, male or female. He simply says, “That powre he also doth to Princes lend, / And makes them like himselfe.” Apparently the origin of the Queen's ruling abilities lies in her “making” and not in any special act by which the heavens have “lifted” her to sovereignty. Like all other princes, she shares God's ability to rule because God created her in his image. To be sure, the phrase “makes them like himselfe” might also be thought to cover an act of extraordinary grace by which a woman is given capacities beyond those of her sex. I suspect, however, that even if Protestants of the period had read the statement in that light, they would still have felt uneasy with Spenser's phrasing and with his glorification of Elizabeth as an ideal image of divine justice. Since most in the Reformed camp thought men able to rule by their very nature and women only by God's grace, they would have noticed more readily than we that the poet is eliding a fundamental distinction.

VI

As a whole, the Legend of Justice follows a pattern similar to that of its Proem. It begins with references to the decline from the Golden Age to the Age of Iron (V.1.1, 11), when according to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Astraea, the goddess of Justice, was so repelled by the lust, treachery, and violence of men that she departed from the earth.⁴⁰ Succeeding cantos then reverse the process, depicting the restoration of justice through the efforts of a series of idealized female figures, the last of which is again a queen ruling in the restored image of God. Although Spenser only occasionally appropriates specific details from accounts of the “Ages of Man” by such authorities as Hesiod, Vergil, and Ovid, he marks the stages in his imagined return to a more orderly

world using their traditional imagery of iron, silver, and gold.

The first of the idealized female figures of justice is Astraea. We learn the sort of justice that she represents from the training that she gives her pupil Artegall prior to her departure. That he is not, at least initially, a figure of the highest form of justice is clear from his guise as the “salvage knight” and from the nature of his crude servant Talus, who is “made of yron mould” and bears an “yron flale” (12). Artegall is a man of the uncivilized Iron Age, whose early adventures all take place in trackless forests or on wild cliffs and lonely toll-bridges. His confrontations with the likes of Sanglier, Munera, Pollente, and the democratic Giant show the characteristics of the age: brute force exercised in the service of treacherous cunning and untempered desire. The punishments meted out by Artegall are proportionately grisly, involving in each case severed heads or limbs. As the Proem has prepared us to see, the advanced state of disorder in the heavens, notably among the beasts of the zodiac—the Ram, the Bull, the Crab, and the Nemaean Lion (5-7)—is matched on earth by bestial desire and its consequent violence.

It is appropriate, then, that Astraea's instruction of Artegall begins with practice “Vpon wyld beasts” (7). In taming them, he recovers not only the lost authority of Adam and Eve over the “beasts of the field” but also the heroism of such early world-tamers as Hercules and Bacchus, with whom he is compared at the opening of Canto i. In this, the hero also resembles Christ, who in the Gospel of Mark begins his ministry in the wilderness “with the wilde beasts” (1.13). Artegall's judgments in Cantos i-iv illustrate the first of the traditional “parts” of justice that Astraea has taught him, namely strict distribution and retribution according to an abstract and unbending code that weighs “right and wrong / In equall ballance with due recompence” (i.7). In Cantos v-vii, the knight will progress to something more humane, namely “that part of Iustice, which is Equity” (vii.3). Also called “clemency,” equity returns to the principles of justice on which the written law is based in order to consider extenuating circumstances that a general or imperfect code may not take into account. Thus Spenser says that it “measure[s] out along, / According to the line of conscience, / When so it needs with rigour to dispen[n]ce” (i.7).⁴¹ After society has been tamed by the application of a strict code of law, the next step in the recovery of the Golden Age is the institution of a more philosophically refined notion of equity. This Spenser introduces in another pair of idealized female figures, Britomart and the goddess Isis.

With their appearance in Cantos vi-vii, Iron-Age justice gives way to that of the Age of Silver. Accordingly, the scene shifts from wild settings to more civilized ones, and in particular to a city and a pagan temple, where the statue of the ruling deity is “framed all of siluer fine” and wears a garment “Hemd all about with fringe of siluer twine” (vii.6). In her dream at Isis Church, Britomart appears in a highly civilized role, that of a queen arrayed in “robe of scarlet.” By contrast, her future husband retains his earlier roughness and brutality, appearing as a crocodile that must be subdued by the silver rod of Isis. Since the goddess is identified with equity (3), the allegory suggests that Artegall's “part” of justice is to be tempered by another, the clemency of his future wife.

In the first eight cantos of Book V, then, Spenser traces two steps in an allegorical return from the Iron Age to that of Gold. The first curbs lawlessness and the second refines and civilizes the treatment of offenders. A third and final step is exemplified in Canto ix in the person of Mercilla, who is depicted ruling from a “throne of gold full bright and sheene” (ix.27). From the wild regions tamed by Artegall and the city and temple dominated by Britomart we proceed to the heart of civil government, the royal court. Although Mercilla knows and practices both the “parts” of classical justice depicted in earlier episodes, she is primarily an embodiment of a higher virtue, Christian mercy.⁴² Like equity, mercy protects the accused but does so by freely forgiving those who repent rather than by simply “measuring out” more equitable punishments. Seated in the divine judgment seat and arrayed in resplendent attire that seems to be cloth of gold but is actually sunlight, the figure of Mercilla resembles God in the Book of Revelation, surrounded by the Cloud of Glory.⁴³ Like her maker, she rules in splendor that transcends the natural:

All ouer her a cloth of state was spred,

Not of rich tissey, nor of cloth of gold,
Nor of ought else, that may be richest red,
But like a cloud, as likest may be told,
That her brode spreading wings did wyde vnfold;
Whose skirts were bordred with bright sunny beams,
Glistring like gold, amongst the plights enrold

(28).

Although Mercilla comes as close as a mortal “image” can to the perfection of the divine, it is important to note that hers is still an earthly court, as the poet stresses by representing her throne “embost with Lyons and with Flourdelice,” the royal arms of England and France (27). Like the image of Queen Elizabeth in the Proem, that of Mercilla embodies the divine in the earthly form of a woman. Once again, there is no distinction drawn between her and male princes in the crucial matter of the means by which she attained her right and ability to rule. In explaining the presence of the Litae at her feet, the poet treats her like any other prince, saying that, as they serve Jove, “They also doe ... / Vpon the thrones of mortall Princes tend” (32). To establish Mercilla's right to govern, he simply gives her bloodline, remarking that she was “the heyre of ancient kings / And mightie Conquerors” (29).

Now it might be urged that the narrative and conceptual progression involving the four great female figures of justice in Book V reveals much about Spenser's views of queens but little about his assessment of ordinary women. After all, Astraea and Isis are goddesses, and Britomart and Mercilla may simply be the sort of divinely chosen exceptions acknowledged by Calvin and other opponents of women's rule. Yet to deny that such figures are representative of their sex is to overlook the fact that all four are linked allegorically with a particular woman, Queen Elizabeth, and her capacity to govern is repeatedly presented as deriving from her creation in the “image” of God. For Spenser to glorify a female ruler of his own day using imagery drawn from the divine throne of judgment in the Book of Revelation was already to challenge the teachings of Calvin and the Reformed Church. For him to celebrate that ruler as a harbinger of a return to a lost Golden Age was to exceed even the most liberal expectations of Aylmer and Luther.

If Spenser's views about women's rule are as I have sketched them, then the problem with which we began allows a rather straightforward solution. Having written the passages in Book III that invoke the memory of the Golden Age and rouse women to reclaim their former glory, the poet may well have written the opposing passage in Book V to urge restraint until the time is right. Since he thinks women of his day ill prepared to reclaim their sex's ancient role in public affairs, and since he regards their “awakening” as a work that only the heavens can bring about, his reminders about the need for obedience and lawful succession are understandable. Although he supports dramatic changes in the roles of the genders, he is concerned that they come about peacefully through the grace of God and not by violent acts of usurpation and vengeance of the sort undertaken by Radigund. The continued subservience advocated in Book V is not to be dismissed, as some have suggested, but neither is it to be regarded as Spenser's final vision of women's earthly estate. It is just the starting point on the long road back to Eden.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Pamela Joseph Benson, Carol Kaske, and William Kennedy for reading drafts of this essay and offering many wise and helpful suggestions.
2. *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (London, 1977).
3. “Spenser and the Problem of Women's Rule,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 48 (1985), 141-58.
4. “Radigund Revisited: Perspectives on Women Rulers in Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*,” in *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, ed. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst, 1990), pp. 187-207.

5. Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Svbiectes agaynst the late blowne Blaste, concerninge the Gouernment of Wemen*. ... 2d issue (Strasbourg, 1559), sig. D2v.
6. James E. Phillips, Jr., "The Background of Spenser's Attitude Toward Women Rulers," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 5 (1941), 5-32; "The Woman Ruler in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 5 (1941), 211-34. Pamela Benson, "Rule, Virginia: Protestant Theories of Female Regiment in *The Faerie Queene*," in *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman* (University Park, Penn., 1992), pp. 251-303. Benson generally agrees with Phillips, although she is also careful to note elements of Anglican and humanist thought in Spenser's synthesis.
7. Letter from Calvin to Sir William Cecil, dated from Geneva sometime after January 29, 1559 (new style). Letter XV in *The Zurich Letters*, 2d ser., tr. Hastings Robinson (Cambridge, Eng., 1845), pp. 34-35.
8. Roberts, p. 192.
9. Margaret Olofson Thickett also sees Spenser's hope for "great exploits" as limited to women of royal blood. See *Fictions of the Feminine: Puritan Doctrine and the Representation of Women* (Ithaca, 1988), pp. 37-59. Mary R. Bowman argues that Britomart (and her counterpart, Queen Elizabeth) gain power in a patriarchal culture by eliminating other, even more threatening female figures (such as the Amazons) and then adopting "the guise of a more conventional female role." See "'She there as Princess rained': Spenser's Figure of Elizabeth," *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990), 509-28.
10. See Thompson, *John Calvin and the Daughters of Sarah: Women in Regular and Exceptional Roles in the Exegesis of Calvin, His Predecessors, and His Contemporaries* (Geneva, 1992), and Douglass, *Women, Freedom, and Calvin: The 1983 Annie Kinkead Warfield Lectures* (Philadelphia, 1985).
11. All quotations from Scripture are from *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, ed. Lloyd E. Berry (Madison, 1969).
12. See Thompson, pp. 107-28, 187-226.
13. Thompson, pp. 87-105.
14. Thompson, pp. 136-38.
15. Thompson, pp. 95-105.
16. According to Luther, among the redeemed "The penalty remains, though the guilt has passed away." See *Commentary on 1 Tim. 2:15*, in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, 55 vols. (St. Louis, 1955-1986), XXVIII, 279. For similar views among other Protestants, see Thompson, pp. 145-57.
17. On Chrysostom's influence in Renaissance Europe and means by which his thought might have reached Spenser, see Harold Weatherby, *Mirrors of Celestial Grace: Patristic Theology in Spenser's Allegory* (Toronto, 1994), pp. 4-11.
18. *Homilies on Genesis* 10.4 and 17.8, in *The Fathers of the Church*, LXXIV (Washington, 1986), pp. 134, 240-41.
19. See Thompson, pp. 87-105, 134-59. Prelapsarian equality is, for example, discussed and rejected in the commentaries of Calvin, Bucer, and Zwingli and of younger reformers such as Peter Martyr and Henry Bullinger, who were particularly influential in England.
20. Aylmer, sig. C4. See also sigs. D1 and I1-13.
21. Sigs. I2v-I3, C3v.
22. Ancient women did not take the garland in battle "still," or continually, but the poet's gross exaggeration does not suggest facetiousness so much as impudence. Both here and at III.iv.2, his disregard for the very historical "record" that he cites seems designed to make the best and most charming defense a bold offense.
23. Spenser's position bears a superficial resemblance to that of Aylmer's archenemy, John Knox. Disparaging contemporary queens such as Mary Tudor and Mary Queen of Scots as modern-day "Amazons," Knox stresses the "cruelty" of women and the unnaturalness of their rule, but also concedes that it sometimes has divine sanction. See *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women. 1558*, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1878), pp. 4, 11-14. Spenser's

- views differ in several crucial respects. He sees Nature itself as in need of renewal, laws against women's rule as the effects of male envy, and "cruelty" not as a vice of women in general but only of those who rebel. A review of all his uses of the term "cruel" and its cognates reveals no special association with women and, if anything, a tendency to depict them as more merciful than men.
24. Sig. G2v. In Aylmer's paraphrase of Gen. 3.16, God tells Eve, "yet shalt thou not be hable to withdrawe the[e] from thy husband, but shalt gyue occasion to haue more [children]."
 25. Sig. G3.
 26. Letter XV in *The Zurich Letters*, pp. 34-35.
 27. *Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey, A. D. 1573-1580*, ed. Edward J.L. Scott (Westminster, 1884), p. 86.
 28. *Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, ed. G. Baum, E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss, 59 vols. (Brunswick and Berlin, 1863-1900), LIII, 221-22; English trans., LIII, 225.
 29. On the importance of this distinction for Spenser, see A. S. P. Woodhouse, "Nature and Grace in *The Faerie Queene*," *ELH*, 16 (1949), 194-228, and Robert Hoopes, "'God Guide Thee, *Guyon*': Nature and Grace Reconciled in *The Faerie Queene* Book II," *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 5 (1954), 14-24.
 30. *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, tr. John King (Edinburgh, 1847; rpt. Grand Rapids, 1984), I, 94-96; *Calvin: Institutes*, ed. John T. McNeill, tr. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of the Christian Classics, 20-21 (Philadelphia, 1960), I, 15.4.
 31. *Comm. Gen.*, pp. 130-31, 146-53, and 164.
 32. *Comm. Gen.*, p. 172.
 33. See *Serm. 1 Cor. 11:4-10*, 11-16, and *Serm. Eph. 6:5-9*, in *Ioannis Calvini Opera*, XLIX.722-23, 741-42; LI, 802-03. See also *Comm. Gen.*, pp. 176-77. For the position of other Protestant commentators, see Thompson, pp. 152-57.
 34. In Douglass see, e.g., pp. 46-51.
 35. *Luther's Works*, I, 115; *Luthers Werke*, XLII, 87.
 36. *Luther's Works*, I, 69; *Luthers Werke*, XLII, 51-52.
 37. See *Luther's Works*, XXVIII, 279.
 38. "Isis Versus Mercilla: The Allegorical Shrines in Spenser's Legend of Justice," *Spenser Studies*, 3 (1982), 87-98.
 39. See the *Letter to Raleigh*, in Hamilton's edition, Appendix I, p. 737.
 40. For Ovid's account of the ages, see *Metamorphoses*, I.89-312.
 41. For a review of secondary literature on the origins and precise formulations of Spenser's concepts of justice, equity, and mercy in Book V, see my article "Isis Versus Mercilla."
 42. Just as her punishment of Malefont reminds us of the harshness of Talus, so her judgment and execution of Duessa calls to mind Britomart's treatment of Radigund. The last two malefactors are both linked allegorically with Mary, Queen of Scots, who was tried by an English commission acting as a court of equity.
 43. Rev. 4.2-11. Since Spenser's exemplars of justice all participate to some extent in one another's special virtues, his use of symbols overlaps. Although the metals associated with Britomart and Artegall are predominantly silver and iron, he bears a "steely" sword "garnisht all with gold" (i.9-10) and she a "Moon-like mitre" that, in her dream, turns to a crown of gold (vii.13). Similarly, the hem of Mercilla's skirt, at which suppliants traditionally seek clemency, "shoot[s] forth siluer streames" (ix.28).

Criticism: Elizabeth Mazzola (essay date 2000)

SOURCE: Mazzola, Elizabeth. "'O unityng confounding': Elizabeth I, Mary Stuart, and the Matrix of Renaissance Gender." *Exemplaria* 12, no. 2 (fall 2000): 385-416.

[In the following essay, Mazzola discusses the portrayals of Queen Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart (also known as Mary Queen of Scots) in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and Shakespeare's *King Lear* in terms of gender discourse in Renaissance poetry.]

For almost two decades in the sixteenth century, a specter haunted England. The twisted shape of twin queens, the closely linked bodies of Elizabeth I and her cousin Mary Stuart, aroused a range of fears and hopes, some secret, some openly expressed, and a variety of speculations political, psychological, or biological. To be sure, bodies are as much the stuff of fiction as they are the hard material of history; if their limits and cavities are easily detected or quickly registered through sensation, their opacities always remain hypothetical. But the bodies of Elizabeth and Mary were especially subject to such imaginings, for in and around their bodies were invested pressing concerns about royal succession and Protestant reform. My argument is that the specter of twin queens not only provoked those anxieties but occasionally relieved them, in the process giving rise to a spectacular network of royal spies and tutors, guards and executioners. We should see Shakespeare and Spenser as part of this network. Many of the issues these poets repeatedly explored—the erotic tangles caused by male gazing, or the artificiality of female chastity—were shaped by doubled images, built on a poetic premise that one female body might supplement another.

Many creative efforts require some kind of perceptual apparatus—some aid to smooth out the contours of images or clarify their designs. Such an apparatus enables us to make connections, for instance, between “aesthetic” and “political” or “historical” dimensions when we read texts; it is what allowed former Catholics to navigate Protestant territory or to grasp Henry VIII's use of the Bible to argue that his first marriage had never occurred. Some fictions permit us to read history. The term *prostheses* comes from the Greek “to set before.” Its derivation suggests that if we use the term to refer to artificial substitutes like false limbs or breasts, glass eyes and dialysis machines, we might also see a prosthesis as an obstacle or obstruction, something designed to fill a hole or cover a gap. A prosthesis provides both a way to indicate hermeneutic weakness or disability and silently supplement (or obscure) it, through a device which does not heal but renders perception less catastrophic.

A brief example may clarify this reading of prosthetic devices and help us to understand the powerful alignment of Mary's and Elizabeth's royal bodies, something I will explore more fully in the rest of this essay. One of the designers of “realistic” breast prostheses had not only co-founded the toy company Mattel, Inc., but originated the Barbie doll. Explaining her career shift, she once told a reporter: “When I conceived Barbie, I believed it was ... important to a little girl's self-esteem to play with a doll that has breasts. ... Now I find it even more important to return that self-esteem to women who have lost theirs.”¹ Two conceits seem to be at work here. If self-esteem properly belongs to those who need it the most, a Barbie doll can serve as useful anatomical tool, rendering invisible longings about femaleness magically material.

Yet more interesting than the rather startling admission of “conceiving” a Barbie doll is the broad way we are instructed to view prosthetic devices. An external supplement is defined as something essential, so that without it, the body appears unnatural. This definition also implies that a prosthesis is designed for and needed by the viewer rather than by the wearer; it's less a part of the body and more a part of the world outside, invented to repair the gap in a philosophical framework in reality intent on discovering itself. If the figure/ground relation becomes momentarily unclear as a result—a problem introduced as well, I argue, in the fictions of *King Lear* and *The Faerie Queene*—the revised picture produced by a prosthesis is not only ultimately convincing but more deeply satisfying.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones have argued that “[a]ll attempts to fix gender are *prosthetic*: that is, they suggest the attempt to supply an imagined deficiency,” sometimes by “the displacement from male to female space or from female to male space” or “by the replacement of male with female tasks or of female

with male tasks.”² Their formulation suggests that gender is something provoked by perceptual confusion, not a cause or symptom of it.

Perhaps the greatest perceptual challenge posed to Renaissance women was the presence of women themselves. A concept that typically split apart in the binary “virgin” and “whore,” “femaleness” was often unable to withstand the threat that more than one image posed. Elizabeth Tudor exploited this epistemological situation, maximizing the problems of managing such a conceptual divide. She took advantage of an upper limit imposed on the way femaleness might be represented, prohibiting any effort to understand femaleness as belonging to more than one woman. Elizabeth shaped a legacy of femaleness that continually undermined itself, a tradition that left no heirs but an ever-widening array of repressed material. What made Elizabeth's body work as a cultural symbol or ideal was its continuous production of abject matter to accompany each discovery of disordered or vulnerable parts, a forging of femaleness that could explain away its questionable components. Hers was a royal prerogative that also fashioned what it might disown.

I will argue that the image of Spenser's fairy queen appears sensitive to Elizabeth's limit, and that the two bathing maidens Guyon encounters in Acrasia's Bower in book 2 of *The Faerie Queene* are so dangerous because they actively flout it. Still, the most notorious instance of this limit to Renaissance imaginings is embodied by the two queens Goneril and Regan. Shakespeare's wicked sisters are conspicuously divided versions of a single whole, “conspicuously *twain* rather than simply two,” as Janet Adelman comments: while their joint presence aggravates Lear's suspicions, their doubled status at once reinforces and challenges each sister's fragile positioning.³ If Lear's violent fears about femaleness cannot help but project radically enlarged images of it, what terrifies him the most are those images' powers of increase (see Q1 1.4.256).⁴ In mirroring each other however, Goneril and Regan eventually each determine that her rival has an “unlivable,” “unthinkable” body. The result is that they destroy not only each other but those who occupy the world between them.⁵

A model for the anguished intimacy and dependency between Shakespeare's sisters was available in the curious connection between Elizabeth and her cousin, a dynamic that operated by disabling one or the other.⁶ This relation seems quite clear in the Catholic propaganda which circulated immediately after Mary's execution in 1587. These reports claimed that, after imprisoning her cousin for almost two decades, the jealous Elizabeth had the Scottish queen killed because Mary was not merely a hostile rival but in fact the rightful heir to the English throne. To substantiate that thesis, these reports sometimes maintained that Elizabeth was the illegitimate offspring of an incestuous union between Henry and his daughter Anne Boleyn.⁷

Such Catholic accounts mar some female bodies in order for other female bodies to be saved. William Cardinal Allen's *Defence of English Catholics* collapses the distinction, proposing that Elizabeth's famed virginity was a papal curse imposed as punishment for England's wars with Spain. Elizabeth's unique position cannot entirely explain Allen's reading of the body politic, however. Powerful women were widespread in sixteenth-century England, and Elizabeth had predecessors like her sister Mary Tudor or contemporaries like Mary Stuart. In fact, it is to both of those Marys that John Knox's notorious invective against a “monstrous regiment of women” was originally addressed. Excluding women from royal office was neither a practical nor a philosophical necessity, as Jane Grey's brief candidacy for the English throne after Edward's death also attests.⁸ Still, just as there were participants on both sides of the debate over women's fitness to rule, there were disparate images of women taking up different rooms in the Renaissance imagination.

Consider the extensive realignment of sympathies and anatomies in the report released by English officials after Mary's death. We are told that:

When the executioner held her head up before the spectators and cried “God save the Queen,” Mary's headdress fell off, and they saw that it was already very white-haired, and that the hair

had not very long before been cut off up to the scalp.⁹

The Scottish femme fatale is uncovered in Protestant reports as a vain, aging woman with a broken set of props, someone whose dismantled body provides matter to exculpate and celebrate Elizabeth's. Another English report sent to Burghley likewise detailed how Mary's:

lipps stirred up and downe almost a quarter of an hower after her head was cut off.

One of Mary's executioners then:

espied her little dogge which was crept under hir clothes which could not be gotten forth but with force & afterwarde could not depart from her dead corpes, but came and laye betweene her head & shoulders a thing diligently noted.¹⁰

So stirring about this spectacle is the way Mary's dead body continues to map out fierce attachments and grotesque detachments, royal prostheses that, I would argue, remained useful tools in the perceptual battles which continued after her execution. Even after her rival's death, Elizabeth's body still needed to be made legitimate and intelligible as a symbol.¹¹

The ongoing, radical revisions of female bodies throughout Elizabeth's reign might also be seen as anatomical and epistemological "shell games" obscuring the limited ways femaleness could be construed or valued.¹² If Mary is Catholic victim, Elizabeth is Protestant villain; if Mary is mother and wife and subject, Elizabeth is daughter, queen and king. To a degree, of course, Elizabeth also borrowed maternal imagery, "arrogating to her throne" "a mother's cultural authority" through symbolic gestures that spared her the enormous personal and political dangers of childbearing.¹³ But the result of all of these constructions, in any configuration, is that "femaleness" is depleted, systematically defined as an attribute or property that can only interrupt or undermine itself.¹⁴

Many of Henry VIII's policies took these "shell games" to an extreme. Both Elizabeth and her sister had been declared illegitimate by their father in his second Act of Succession. Mary Tudor later passed an act during her own reign, annulling her mother's divorce and making her sister a bastard. Henry VIII's last act of Succession, which had "restored Elizabeth to her inheritance[,] left the crown to her with conditions and made her subsequent to any daughter that might be born him and Katherine Parr or any future wife."¹⁵ That Elizabeth's body might easily be detached from her lineage or her future would motivate her abiding interest in public relations and the elaborate progresses she regularly staged in service of her royal image. But even those events inspired confusion, for there were rumors like the one circulated by Henry Hawkins, which claimed that Leicester had had five children by the queen and that Elizabeth "never goeth on progress but to be delivered."¹⁶ Staying at home at court freed Elizabeth only partly from the burden of maternal fantasies.

Perhaps the Renaissance concept of "femaleness" was not wide enough to admit more than one vehicle. Certainly, the concept of chastity appears in Spenser's poetics as a "representational scandal," something awkward and diseased, immediately endangered or destroyed. Spenser's images of femaleness all tend to be partial, often failed, and always contested: every representation implicitly challenges every other one, because femaleness is a stance, not a condition.¹⁷ In the same way, Elizabeth's chastity was set against her fertility, her princely power against her age. Unable to stand for anything in themselves, her images were subject only to fragmentation or decay. We are already familiar with the way Elizabeth upset the Virgin Mary's iconic status; yet the "cult of Elizabeth" which replaced Catholic longings was hardly a monolithic discourse but a collection, as Philippa Berry explains, of competing political, erotic and theological conceptions drawn from divergent hopes of courtiers, Protestant clergy, and professional poets.¹⁸ Both subject and object in such circles, Elizabeth herself might occasionally disappear from view.

“MY SISTER COMES TOO SHORT”

After nearly two decades of indecision and delay, Elizabeth consented in 1586 to order her cousin's execution after Mary had been implicated in the Babington plot to remove Elizabeth. Routinely Mary had been linked to conspiracies to dislodge the Queen from the throne; in a 1571 tract, Scottish humanist George Buchanan announced the hope that the English people might someday puzzle out between good queen and bad queen themselves. Ultimately, Elizabeth made the royal decision for them. Rather than seek to understand Elizabeth's deeper motives or the climate in which they arose, I want to explore the perceptual pressures alleviated by her decision as well as the new physiology it fashions. What anatomical surfaces are skimmed or epistemological depths plumbed when femininity is imagined after Mary's death? What seems clear, if nothing else, is that the shaping of gender had become a public project, an imaging that took shape outside personal visions. At least this is something Queen Elizabeth indicates when she disembodies her rival.

Initially, the Scottish queen had merely been detained in England, fleeing Scotland after her second husband's mysterious death in 1568. Despite the threat she posed and the plots in which she was frequently entangled, Mary had to be kept alive for so many years because she was indeed next in line to the English throne. Exiled like Spenser's fairy queen, Mary's English court was a secret chamber “guarded on all sides by the soldiers and retainers of successive gaolers.”¹⁹ (Anticipating another of Spenser's designs, one of her confiscated letters to Babington in July 1586 instructs him to relay the order to assemble six knights to rescue her from prison.)²⁰ Like Gloriana, Mary was allowed no public appearances, and her every movement had to be concealed from the outside world. As Elizabeth's secretary of state Sir Francis Walsingham wrote to Mary's final jailer:

You shall order that she shall not, in taking the air, pass through any towns, nor suffer the people to be in the way where she shall pass, appointing some always to go before to make them to withdraw themselves, for that heretofore, under colour of giving alms and other extraordinary courses used by her, she hath won the hearts of the people that habit about those places where she hath heretofore lain.²¹

Mary had become a powerful national figure of dreamlike proportions and nightmarish fears, haunting the periphery of the English border and the edges of Elizabeth's throne. The figure of Mary had physiological ramifications, too. Mary's ghostly presence makes it more accurate to speak not of Elizabeth's “two bodies” (one corporate and immutable, the other individual and subject to illness or death) but of a Tudor femaleness that required two bodies, one continually absorbing and repressing or correcting the defects of the other. To some extent, this pattern had been established long before Elizabeth's reign, and Berry reminds us that:

we need to re-“member” and reinterpret Elizabeth's forgotten ties to other women, and reconsider the significance of her permanently censored relationship to the figure of her decapitated ... mother. The tragic life and death of Anne Boleyn overshadowed not only her daughter's childhood but also, by implication, her reign.²²

This form of “re-membling,” as Berry's term implies, also means that such perpetually muted, constantly thwarted images of femininity would make it extremely practical to supplement one female body with another.

This is also because Renaissance femaleness was a vulnerable but powerful construct, something chaotic yet basic. It was derived from a biology grounded on cyclical behavior governed by the moon, so that its character was fluid and shifting. Femininity was not only unfixed but multiple, the bodies it shaped denoted by a continuum of hot and cold, spanning nearly male to fully female, and more or less liquid. Different women might occupy distinct points along an ambiguous path running through anatomies, hormones, and fluids. Julia Kristeva argues that the female body tends to indicate “the objective frailty of the symbolic order.”²³ We see

the frailty of this order in the way Renaissance biology responded so fully to shifting social and philosophical pressures; biology was a “soft” science that only grew harder and faster as the factors controlling women's imperfect bodies increased. This control was urgently required, moreover. Women were seen as weaker vessels because they were “leakier vessels,” incapable of holding secrets or containing lusts. As Gail Kern Paster argues, the greedy womb could not be controlled and, given sufficient liberty (as Shakespeare suggests) would swell up toward King Lear's heart (Q1 2.7.222).²⁴

If Mary's queenly body was notoriously corrupt and thus ontologically incomplete, the famous virgin Elizabeth's body similarly relied on a constant surveillance of anatomical borders and political margins, the neglect of which could present similar imbalances. That such an imbalance needs to be promptly redressed is specified in another of Walsingham's instructions to Elizabeth's guards, this time a few days before Mary's execution:

her Majesty ... doth note in you ... a lack of that care and zeal of her service that she looketh for at your hands, in that you have not in all this time of yourselves ... found out some way of shortening the life of that Queen, considering the great peril she is subject unto hourly, so long as the said queen shall live.²⁵

Walsingham points to a dangerous or, at least, embarrassing condition which could deflate the Queen's aspirations and force her outside perceptual limits if Mary remained alive.²⁶ Even here, proper nouns slip uneasily out of Walsingham's grasp (he relies instead on more ambiguous titles like “her Majesty,” “that Queen,” “said queen” and a *she* whose referent can only be deduced by the loyal reader), explaining why Elizabeth might also have to watch her spies and guard her keepers.

Biology underlies some of these political disturbances as well. Renaissance hormonal theory proposed that shapeless female forms or excess feminine liquids, like menstrual blood, breast milk, tears or urine, were transferred and transformed through the veins or “occult passages” of the body (although their passage was never guaranteed and usually occurred when unexpected).²⁷ Compromising a confidence with the Countess of Shrewsbury, Mary boldly availed herself of these imagined passages through Elizabeth's body. Already proficient in secret codes, invisible inks, and allegorical embroidery,²⁸ Mary imagined no lack of access, writing to Elizabeth that the Queen's illness “resulted from the stopping of a fistula on [Elizabeth's] leg.” Mary seems especially aware of the objective, material status of Elizabeth's body, yet she easily represents it as pliable, passive, almost inert. Fearlessly proceeding with her outline of the Queen's anatomy, Mary relies on the faint impression shared by the Countess and tells Elizabeth:

[There was] no doubt that, with the interruption of your menstrual periods, you would soon die and [the Countess] drew comfort from empty speculation ... [of] a violent death for you and the succession of another queen, which she interpreted as myself.²⁹

What Kristeva formulates Mary confidently assumes, that female physiology is both a politics and a poetics. There are only surfaces to this female form, with manifold points of entry, no real depths or barricaded regions. The same outline is employed also by anxieties surrounding witchcraft, for these “occult passages” Paster describes might allow women to infiltrate others' bodies. In addition, given their corrupt and hence incomplete state, women's bodies might shatter or melt in the presence of other female bodies. The threat is enormous, the solutions not without their own complications. If Elizabeth's body became a huge screen that completely mirrored her power, allowing its subject “to see in any representation not only a reflection of itself but a reflection of itself as master of all it survey[ed],” Mary could avail herself of this mirror as well.³⁰

We should read Lear's contest as an effort to avoid such upsetting refractions.³¹ Shakespeare's king devises a competition for his daughters so as to discover “Which of you shall we say doth love us most” (F 1.1.49). Perhaps Lear hopes that, by making explicit their private wishes, he can render his daughters' imaginative

limits obvious and discover where their affections lie, their shortcomings register. Lear's simultaneous efforts at politics and poetics collapse, however. His repeated attempts to hold the mirror to his daughters keep failing—as when he tries to revive the dead Cordelia, or long before that, when he utters his faint praise of Regan because she so clearly illustrates her sister Goneril's “naught” (F 2.2.298).³² Lear's formulations are much like Henry VIII's, insisting over and over that femaleness is a falsehood or something impossible, a categorical mistake.

One of Spenser's formulations appears to remedy this recurrent error but, like Lear's and Henry VIII's plans, it backfires. The first installment of *The Faerie Queene* appeared in 1590, just three years after Mary's execution; much of it was drafted earlier, however, during the 1580s when Mary had been detained in England, her image even then fatally entangled with the Queen's. In book 3 of *The Faerie Queene* Spenser represents this threatening if glorious alliance in the twin sisters Belphoebe and Amoret. The two sisters protect a fragile conception of chastity, but the thin membrane each of them carefully guards exposes the rest of womankind to shame:

twixt them two did share
The heritage of all celestial grace.
That all the rest it seem'd they robbed bare
Of bountie, and of beautie, and all vertues rare.

FQ 3.6.4.6-9³³

Their genetic heritage (or epistemological merger) makes it hard to perceive anyone else.

The problem pervades the poem in the shape of the twin Florimells, since the false Florimell, fashioned out of snow, “Florimell her selfe in all mens vew / She seem'd to passe” (4.5.15.8-9). The two Florimells are divided by a norm, a girdle which Spenser terms a “relic” because it always leaves one of the two Florimells behind.³⁴ Indeed, the two Florimells only come together rhetorically, briefly linked by the poet's epithalamium for the real Florimell's marriage to Marinell. The twins' miraculous union is likened to the blinding which occurs:

As when two sunnes appeare in the azure skye,
Mounted in Phoebus charet fierie bright,
Both darting forth faire beames to each mans eye,
And both adorn'd with lampes of flaming light,
All that behold so strange prodigious sight,
Not knowing natures worke, nor what to weene,
Are rapt with wonder, and with rare affright.

FQ 5.3.19.1-7

The wedding guests are disabled by the brilliant illumination two specters of femaleness provide. Fortunately, the knight of Justice Artegall is on hand. Called upon to stand in for the absent bridegroom, he carries out his legal duty by making one of the two brides disappear:

Then did he set her by that snowy one,
Like the true saint beside the image set,
Of both their beauties to make paragone,
And triall, whether should the honor get.
Streight way so soone as both together met,
Th'enchanted Damzell vanisht into nought:
Her snowy substance melted as with heat,
Ne of that goodly hew remayned ought,
But th'emptie girdle, which about her wast was wrought.

“THY SISTER'S NAUGHT”

Although Mary and Elizabeth never met, I think we can safely assume that neither would have melted in the other's presence. Nevertheless, fantasies about such an encounter between queens often insisted upon the disappearance of one of them. Leah Marcus recounts one such “shaping fantasy,” describing how:

During the period when there were actually “Two Queens in One Isle”—Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth of England—more than one loyal subject expressed the wish, as Nicholas Throckmorton had put it as early as 1559, “That one of these two Queens of the Isle of Britain were transformed into the shape of a man, to make so happy a marriage as thereby there might be a unity of the whole isle.”³⁵

Throckmorton's fantasy may have promoted other anatomical speculations, and Carole Levin reports that the “monstrous births” of 1562 were perceived by Protestants as omens against a meeting between the queens.³⁶

If shaping fantasies seem to spark many of Lear's familiar tensions, they also provide him with a number of solutions. Adelman argues that *Lear* springs out of Hamlet's “violent fear of maternal power,” a fear grown so extreme that it needs both Goneril *and* Regan to animate it. In “collapsing father and son into one figure,” Adelman claims,

Shakespeare enables his story about a father's relationship with his daughters to carry the immense fear and longing of a son's relationship with a mother, investing it with infantile fantasies so unmediated in their intensity that they are relatively disorganized, not bound within the limits of a single fictional character or plot movement. ... [H]ere all the traditional guarantees of identity itself dissolve in a terrifying female moisture in which mother and daughter, male and female, inner and outer, self and other, lose their boundaries, threatening a return to the primal chaos.³⁷

Chaos does return, and when the king and Cordelia are finally reunited in Act 5, Lear proposes that they retire from the world to become “God's spies” (F 5.3.17). Clearly, divine vision or supervision has been irrevocably ruined and epistemological limits no longer work. Yet this is the chaos Lear himself introduced at the opening of the play when he set the king's two bodies at odds, his division of royal property opposing kingly charisma to brute force.³⁸ Such biological and political divisions remain confusingly entangled. Ultimately Regan and Goneril's treachery escalates to the point where the evil sisters become nearly unintelligible versions of each other, and more jealous of each other than they ever were of Cordelia.

Regan and Goneril are clearly conventional, almost interchangeable characters, most familiar to us as the wicked sisters who inhabit many fairy tales. They are not doubles of each other, however: both sisters must appear for most of the dramatic effects of the play to occur. Besides raising the question of why Lear only has daughters,³⁹ we might further ask why Shakespeare employs *two* stock characters, and gives Lear three rather than two daughters (one good, one bad)? One answer is provided by the ancient British history Shakespeare drew on, another by the 1603 Annesley lawsuit which involved three daughters and took place a year or so before Shakespeare begins composing the play, in the year of Elizabeth's death. There are three daughters in Shakespeare's primary source, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, and in accounts provided by Spenser (1590), Holinshed (1587), and Warner (1586). On stage, though, this doubling of wicked sisters suggests a fundamental distrust of female agency, even for evil deeds—an incapacity to see the sisters as autonomous moral agents or separate biological entities.⁴⁰ Perhaps amnesia is not the only “phallogocentric technique” or patriarchal tactic for subverting women. There are places, like this one, where Renaissance texts exceed themselves, producing a place where knowledge has not “forgotten” woman—but [instead reiterates] her

image, again and again, compulsively, strategically.”⁴¹

The sisters' duplication takes up space, moreover, in a theater where actors frequently doubled roles. Marilyn Williamson comments that “in many of [Shakespeare's] plays multiplication of very similar characters produces little psychological subtlety, though the audience profits from the understanding of personalities through comparison and contrast”; “in others,” Williamson adds, “Shakespeare makes doubling yield powerful psychological results.”⁴² Certainly there are powerful psychological tensions in Regan's and Goneril's doubling. The two sisters contaminate and subvert each other by insisting on each other's desires, jealousies and fears. We see this when Goneril's profession of love debilitates her powers and denies her material existence; in the opening scene, she tells her father she loves him:

Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare,
No less than life; with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er loved or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable.

Lear F 1.1.54-58

Regan repeats this language as a formula for self-denial, almost duplicating her sister's singular protestations of love:

Sir, I am made
Of the self-same mettle that my sister is,
And prize me at her worth In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love.

Lear Q1 1.1.60-63

Especially interesting is the way that, rather than announce her own ties to her father, Regan proclaims a physical identity with her sister. This is a particularly dangerous tie, given Lear's desire to “[d]ry up in her the organs of increase” (Q1 1.4.256).

Adelman's discussion of family dynamics in *Lear* uncovers a complicated machinery of abdication and withdrawal. Even Cordelia's sisters, according to Adelman, are “psychic progeny” “generated out of Lear's terrible need” for Cordelia and the terror her refusal causes him.⁴³ Stanley Cavell suggests a deeper generic link between Goneril and Regan, arguing that, while the names of the legitimate Edgar and bastard Edmund closely parallel, the two sisters' names are practically anagrams.⁴⁴ Initially, the sisters seem to promote such an obvious connection—verging on absorption—because they are so unsure of each other, only conscious of their father's disdain. The first real expression of empathy, long deferred, occurs when Goneril gives her sister her hand after Regan privileges her sister's messenger over the king's (F 2.2.355-59).⁴⁵ This only tentative affiliation persists. Goneril tends to push faster and harder, so that Regan's more sadistic impulses toward Kent and Gloucester may represent an effort to meet her sister's harsher demands.

Growing up under submission to a difficult father and finally given a chance by him to relate their experience, Lear's daughters decide, after the king has banished their sister and Kent, to “hit together” (Q1 1.1.287).⁴⁶ Their “subversive repetition” of each other will systematically undo Lear's retinue: Goneril halves his hundred knightly followers and Regan imitates the gesture, reducing that number by half. She thereby calls into question all of the “regulatory practices of identity itself” by embodying the “principle of female autonomy run mad.”⁴⁷ But this “principle” is never really articulated in the play. Lear's few efforts to distinguish between Regan and Goneril appear misguided and self-serving; he turns them into separate creatures when he tries to expand his band of men, appealing to Regan after being refused by Goneril:

Thou shalt never have my curse.
Thy tender-hested nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness. Her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort and not burn.

Lear Q1 2.7.322-35

Lear eventually condemns both Goneril and Regan to an indecipherable mass, both women all above because centaurs “Down from the waist” (Q1 4.5.118-19).

Even discounting Lear's fantastic fears, Renaissance femininity often appears confused, disabled, and easily torn asunder. When Edgar discovers Goneril's letter proposing the murder of her husband, he faults her indecipherability, exclaiming at the same moment he's uncovered her plan: “O indistinguish'd space of woman's will” (F 4.5.254-62; in the quarto, he faults her “wit”). Later, when Goneril scorns Regan's fantasies, she repeats Edgar's charge about anatomical disarray, blaming her sister for the blind hope that Edmund will marry her: “That eye that told you so look'd but asquint” (F 5.3.65). Regan seems unable ever to focus, and even repeats her father's inaugural error by introducing his royal test to Edmund:

You know the goodness I intend upon you.
Tell me but truly—but then speak the truth—
Do you not love my sister?

Lear F 5.1.7-9

Adelman's shrewd reading of the troubled specter of femininity in Shakespeare's poetics avoids acknowledging the epistemological troubles women can cause each other. Perhaps she too heavily relies on Lear's neurotic need to revive his daughters' mother, a demand which splits his wife in two and subjects his daughters to an impossible standard. According to Adelman, male fantasy becomes a zero-sum game. “Acting out Lear's fantasied relation to the occluded mother through all three of the daughters who are her projections,” Adelman claims, “the play divides and conquers her, recontaining her in the daughters who are his derivatives, all three of whom die in an instant.”⁴⁸ But I think Edmund's arithmetic is more accurate than Adelman's, because he calculates each sister's “naught” into his amorous equations:

Which of them shall I take—
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoyed
If both remain alive.

Lear F 5.1.48-50

LEARNING CURVES

There is a moment of clarity Edmund enjoys when he realizes each sister's deep attachment to him, his dying words acknowledging, “Yet Edmund was beloved” (F 5.3.238). Joanne Craig comments on the way such vision is achieved through the specter of two females in Spenser's poetics, arguing, in fact, for “the presence of two female figures at or near the core of much of Edmund Spenser's poetry.” As Craig observes: “Sometimes one occupies the foreground while the other hovers nervously over her shoulder, sometimes the predominant figure almost crowds out or conceals the other; sometimes, though rarely, the two images coalesce.” When the female figures do conceal each other, their identities are still available to us, for Craig claims:

The first of the figures, of course, is the clearly identifiable one of the Queen. The second, although it is probably impossible to assign a historical identity to it, is that of the object of Spenser's personal and private devotion. ... When Spenser writes about the Queen, her rival is

still present in his poem and in his mind; when he writes about the rival, he does so in the uneasy awareness that he has deflected his attention from his duty to the Queen.⁴⁹

The deflections come to halt in book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*, when Spenser reveals the troubling specter at Mount Acidale—where the Queen's uniqueness or autonomy is threatened by a rival—to be an optical illusion.⁵⁰ But nearly everything else is lost in this awareness. When the knight Calidore discovers the maidens secretly dancing in a ring at Acidale, the process of male “self-fashioning” is almost stretched to its vanishing point as Calidore strains to take in the spectacle before he defeats it. We are left wondering: Where does maleness begin? and where does it end?⁵¹ Female subjectivity, in contrast, becomes multiple and material at this point. The instant invention and compression of male subjectivity Spenser provides here has much in common with the “strenuous” production of the image of a returned Queen Cordelia, now wife, ruler, daughter and saint.⁵² It is a strained and ultimately opaque representation, like the one a Petrarchan lover might also apprehend, pushing and pulling at his beloved's visage in order to study his own origins and ends (One sonneteer even finds himself confessing: “My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun.”).

In the same way, the rendering of female space at Acidale is finally experienced as a “non-event” or aesthetic sensation, while the fairy queen's presence is registered as a series of phantom pains in Spenser's poem.⁵³ Recounting the story of their only meeting, Arthur blushing reports that:

Slombring soft my hart did steale away,
Me seemed, by my side a royall Mayd
Her daintie limbes full softly down did lay:
So faire a creature yet saw neuer sunny day.
.....Most goodly glee and louely blandishment
She to me made, and bad me loue her deare,
For dearely sure her loue was to me bent,
As when iust time expired should appeare.

FQ 1.9.13.6-9; 14.1-4

The fairy queen is pictured through an allegorical sleight of hand, a visual trick that only illuminates the way light bends.

Perhaps a similar visual trick operated behind the shadowy image of Mary Stuart, accustomed in her secret chamber to a variety of experiments in non-events and aesthetic sensations. “Shortly after Elizabeth's accession,” Kerby Neill tells us, Mary “had had the arms of England quartered with her own, and beneath the device verses had been added which stiled her as Queen of Scotland, France, and England.”⁵⁴ If Spenser usually represents Mary as a foil in his poem, figured by the vilified Duessa or Radigund or Acrasia, Mary's vague form also suggests the outlines of the fairy queen herself, so expert at deploying knights or losing them, seducing followers and sending them away.

“TWO QUEENS IN ONE ISLE”

Numerous pamphlets, letters, and rumors circulated for years outlining the Catholic suffering, nuptial treachery, papal threats, and Protestant dismay caused by Mary's mysterious presence in England. The influence of these texts must have been enormous, but little critical work on their impact has been carried out so far. Some links to more famous works are obvious: Thomas Nelson's “A Short Discourse” describes how the Scottish Acrasia would kill Elizabeth in her Bower.⁵⁵ Probably the most notable text was Buchanan's 1571 attack, dedicated to Elizabeth, which introduced murder charges against Mary to the world and to the English court after the Scottish queen fled Scotland in 1568, her second husband Lord Darnley murdered and buried without a funeral. Buchanan's account might even be called the first detective novel. It is a record of infidelities and sordid activities aptly titled *Detectio, Ane Detection of the doings of Marie Queene of Scottes*,

*touchand the Murder of hir husband, and hir Conspiracy, adulterie, and pretended marriage with the Erle of Bothwell.*⁵⁶ At the time it was published, Buchanan was tutor to Mary's son, Elizabeth's godson, the future James VI of Scotland and I of England; after James assumed the throne, the king worked to discredit the *Detectio*. A collection of gossip and circumstantial evidence, Buchanan's *Detectio* was, in one reader's view, "practically a government attempt to discredit Mary Stuart completely."⁵⁷

Buchanan (1506-82) was famous for his chronicle plays, a chief spokesman of the anti-Marian party, a colleague of (though not friendly with) John Knox, and the author of a Latin verse edition of *Medea* (1544). He later wrote a work of antiroyalist political theory entitled *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* (1579) with which Milton was apparently familiar. Ultimately, Buchanan completed a comprehensive Scottish history *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582).⁵⁸ Loosely related to the Sidney circle which included Leicester, Walsingham, and Spenser, Buchanan seems to have much in common with the poet who tutors Elizabeth in *The Faerie Queene*. Like Spenser, Buchanan was a dejected civil servant who in earlier days composed an *Epithalamium* for Mary's first marriage to the Dauphin François. Spenser was familiar with Buchanan's Latin poetry, as well as with Buchanan's much-anticipated Scottish history, making use of the geographical information and accounts of Celtic origins Buchanan provides, and directly commending Buchanan in his prose tract *A View of the Present State of Ireland*.⁵⁹

Buchanan's antiroyalist sentiments stand in stark contrast to Spenser's views, but both men aim to train their royal readers through a perceptual machinery which tracked the whereabouts of an elusive, enchanting queen and traced her erotic misadventures.⁶⁰ In an address to the reader which calls to mind Spenser's letter to Raleigh, Buchanan recommends the troubled history of one queen for the benefit of another and explains why he must reveal privileged state secrets in order to guarantee Elizabeth's safety:

While it is unusual, and thus unpleasant to all who are independent, to have strangers demand an account of things judicially determined within the state, it must be especially grievous to us, who are driven to the necessity of impugning the careers of those whose faults we wish to conceal, lest we ourselves be accounted the most wicked of scoundrels. But much of this annoyance is alleviated by your kindness, most excellent Queen, for you are no less grieved than we to see your relative, and our Queen, so dishonourably spoken of by all men, and are as eager to understand the truth as we are to avoid calumny.⁶¹

Buchanan's piece of detective work helped inaugurate a series of writings preoccupied with locating Renaissance vanishing points, places, like Acrasia's Bower, where male bodies get lost, or where an errant queen might retreat from male gaze. Shakespeare seems especially concerned with this project in *Hamlet*, so that the Prince, alert to Gertrude's duplicity, tries to correct her flaws by showing her the image of two kings, his father and uncle. We know, too, that Shakespeare relied on Buchanan's Scottish history for background material for *Macbeth*, composed in 1606, a year or so following *Lear*. Lady Macbeth's image as loyal daughter (finding her father's countenance in the sleeping Duncan) and demonic spouse evokes Buchanan's picture of twin queens.⁶² Other connections are equally intriguing. The murders of sleeping kings so central to *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* closely resemble Mary's alleged poisoning of Darnley and even her reputed involvement in her first husband's death. But more pointed is the way Shakespeare seems to convert Mary's murderous activities into fratricide in *Lear*, so that the wicked sisters Goneril and Regan spin out of and then collapse into each other.⁶³ In the conclusion to the English version of his treatise, Buchanan entreats his audience: "Now iudge Englishmen if it be gud to change Qhenis. O unityng confounding. Qhile your Quenis enemy liveth, hir danger continueth." Roger A. Mason suggests that Buchanan's dangerous doubling reflects shrill apocalyptic outcry over the difficulty of distinguishing the true Protestant Church from the false Church of Rome.⁶⁴ But this doubling seems to characterize Lear's political and hermeneutical dilemmas, too. When he tries to "change" queens, Lear discovers that there is no severing of female images because they both endanger and constitute each other.

FIT HELPMEEETS

We might draw a connection between private eyes and humanist rhetoric, to fashion a poetics of Renaissance sleuthing. At work in the imaginations of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Buchanan is a nagging suspicion that the universalist and universalizing assumptions of humanism are unstable, or at least prone to being misled, seduced by bodily desires or entranced by erotic longings. In many ways, the constant sexual surveillance of Mary's activities was the real project of many sixteenth-century constructions of femininity.⁶⁵ But given that it takes *three* daughters to teach Lear the lessons of identity, perhaps an equally pressing problem was figuring out exactly what gender was made of. An array of metaphysical, theological, political and erotic quandaries all revolve around Renaissance gender's stipulation of multiple bodies and single perspectives. The questions behind these confusions are simple enough: What is the matter? and what is the form?⁶⁶

We are used to reading gender as something inscribed across surfaces or established by superficial performances (so that cross-dressing worked surprisingly well in England). Rarely does gender seem to organize depths or coordinate physicality at a deeper level, Lear's acknowledged *hysterica passio* or Prince Arthur's unacknowledged blushing being obvious exceptions. Still, there are intimations of such a deeper structure, as when Goneril takes Regan's hand and reduces Lear's retinue, or when Arthur tells Guyon about the fairy queen he's dreamt of, and we're forced to question Arthur's vision even as we find ourselves utterly reliant upon it.

These are doubts pornography heavily leans on, insisting upon the materiality of female forms even as it teaches viewers to distrust the subjects these forms embody (Guyon will assume, for instance, that the glorious figure of the fairy queen on Arthur's shield is dead). Louis Montrose alludes to these habits when he writes that “women's bodies—and, in particular, the Queen's two bodies, provide[d] a cognitive map for Elizabethan culture, a veritable matrix for Elizabethan forms of desire.”⁶⁷ I would only add that the early-modern invention of pornography highlights the increasingly strenuous struggles of the state to make its subjects visible. The history of pornography coincides with the systematic forgetting of women, and the erasure of women occurs with the doublings that Shakespeare and Spenser provide.

One of pornography's severest critics, political theorist Catharine MacKinnon, was also among the first scholars to point out that sexism is not only a legal or social or historical problem, but a perceptual one, too. In a now notorious formulation, MacKinnon reasons: “Sexually, femaleness means femininity, which means attractiveness to men, which means sexual attractiveness, which means sexual availability on male terms.”⁶⁸ We see this fragile availability in the queen's two bodies, or in the maidens Guyon encounters at Acrasia's Bower, “sweet spoiles” (2.12.64.9), already drained and vacant. Other feminists have sharply criticized MacKinnon because her formula makes women neatly disappear, but that is exactly MacKinnon's point, that the way men construct themselves necessarily violates the construction of women.

As an ontological category, Renaissance femaleness in particular seems to have a very short half-life. We see its ebb and flow represented by the “naked Damzelles” Guyon finds dancing in the fountain at the Bower. C. S. Lewis called the maidens “Cissie” and “Flossie”; Spenser leaves them nameless:

Sometimes the one would lift the other quight
Aboue the waters, and then downe againe
Her plong, as ouer maistered by might,
Where both awhile would covered remaine,
And each the other from to rise restraine.

FQ 2.12.64.1-5

The wanton Maidens him espying, stood
Gazing a while at his vnwonted guise;

Then th'one her selfe low ducked in the flood,
Abasht, that her a straunger did a vise:
But th'other rather higher did arise,
And her two lilly paps aloft displayd,
And all, that might his melting hart entise
To her delights, she vnto him bewrayd:
The rest hid vnderneath, him more desirous made.

With that, the other likewise vp arose,
And her faire lockes, which formerly were bownd
Vp in one knot, she low adowne did lose:
Which flowing long and thick, her cloth'd arownd,
And th'yuorie in golden mantle gownd:
So that faire spectacle from him was reft,
Yet that, which reft it, no lesse faire was fownd:
So hid in lockes and waues from lookers theft,
Nought but her louely face she for his looking left.

FQ 2.12.66-67

Spenser gives us an erotic tug-of-war between male subject and female objects, for if the picture is something Guyon makes, it is also continually torn from him. Yet the knight is enthralled because the two maidens tease him with doubleness. In fact, the expanse of surfaces makes for a pornographic “artifice of absorption,” where there are no secrets or interruptions, no space to get lost or be found out. Femininity is represented as a construct capacious enough for two women, and the twinned maidens relieve Guyon's imagination. Filling in all the blanks, they even make Guyon's imagination unnecessary.

But the knight also becomes, in the process, a confused sum of parts, like Prince Arthur asleep in the grass, dreaming of a phantasm. Indeed, it is Guyon's disordered body to which we are given access, and Spenser traces an imaginary male flow, depicting the way desire circulates through the knight's body. His heart melts (2.12.66); his “greedy” eyes start “wandring” (2.12.64, 69); his breast grows “stubborne” (2.12.65); and the poet describes his “sparkling face” (68); even the palmer finally takes notice of him.⁶⁹ In this gendered and regendered spectacle, the poet demonstrates the “inflection of mind into body, and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion, one side becomes another.”⁷⁰ And yet, in this series of inflections, one woman always serves as a prosthesis for the other, with the result that the spectacle of the female body is always kept in the narrative: there are no blind spots or places where “male flow” must ebb. Later, we will momentarily lose a stable image of femaleness at Acidale, but Calidore quickly exposes the deception. Still, the twinning goes on at other times in Spenser's poem, more successful when it is less subtle, as in the case of the two hags Impatience and Impotence who trail Maleger with his deadly equipment, or Shamefastnesse and Prays-desire who jointly remind Arthur and Guyon of the knights' secret defects.

DISCIPLINE AND PUBLISH

One prototypical piece of pornography (with which Spenser was probably familiar) is Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534-36), a dialogue in which an older prostitute lectures a younger one about erotic possibilities and positions. Aretino's text adopts the same format More's *Utopia* employs to convey male secrets of reason—only here, the story draws upon two *female* bodies, with the object of turning one into the other. This is Acrasia's aim in the Bower as well, where she empties out bodies in order to produce pleasure. But Spenser's readers have not puzzled over the presence of two maidens there in the way they have debated over the meaning of the Bower itself or of Guyon's intemperate destruction of it, even though the doubling seems graphic and gratuitous, almost mechanical in its imagery and effects.⁷¹

Antoinette Dauber approaches the problem in a sympathetic treatment of Acrasia's artistry, arguing it is precisely because they merge into each other that we can see who the two maidens are. They provide the

ground for an unstable yet basic femininity, dissipating its troubling elements and preserving or conserving its appeal. Dauber's account explains how the spectacle of two maidens might be both enticing and corrective, seductive and healing. She notes that "more than simple seduction is at stake":

First, we must observe that there is an abrupt suspension of allegory. Excess, who was accurately named by the moral allegorist, is followed by two nameless girls, dubbed Cissie and Flossie by the critic. Lacking clear tags, like Titillation and Desire, they are not simply iconographic figures supported by a suitably allegorical background. Rather they and the setting are versions of the same thing: The elements repeat rather than complete each other.⁷²

The two shape-shifters collectively offer a sum greater than their parts, like Milton's angels who, when they embrace, yield an allegory that is fashioned out of—rather than productive of—ruins. But, if they mimic the "compulsory and comic quality" of heterosexual desire,⁷³ the doubling of Cissie and Flossie offers some critics a picture of "Venus rising from th' Oceans fruitfull froth" (2.12.65).⁷⁴ Perhaps the poet is still more generous than that. Whereas male desire can finally dissolve into beastly hoggish forms which insist upon themselves, Spenser indicates that female desire yields multiple and, therefore, perfect selves.

CONCLUSION

That ideas about gender organize physicality at a deeper level is a Renaissance discovery, one that Hamlet makes as part of his education as a prince. Hamlet's next impulse is to educate others. He storms his mother's bedchamber and presents her with the twinned images of father and uncle so as to point out the insubstantiality of her own feelings and appetites. Comparing images of father and uncle, the Prince reduces his mother's body to a collection of spare parts and non-working devices. Like the aging body of Elizabeth that Mary had rudely diagnosed, Hamlet finds Gertrude's body unable to properly sort its desires or evaluate its interests:

Look here upon this picture, and on this.
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
.....Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
.....Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope—O shame, where is thy blush?(75)

After the lesson, Hamlet urges his mother to avoid her husband's bed and commands her chastity. Perhaps the Prince's speech provokes her chaste body into existence, evoking (by reminding Gertrude of) its gender. Through the same power of suggestion the men Spenser's Acrasia turned to beasts remain intact and can finally be retrieved.

As Buchanan had earlier warned in the *Detectio*, without constant surveillance these same suggestive powers might succumb to or be overturned by female forms, and Renaissance rhetoric might be unveiled as an empty gesture or superficial flourish. Still, Lear will tell Gloucester the trick is not seeing but acquiring the right prosthetic devices: "Get thee glass eyes, / And—seem / To see the things thou dost not" (F 4.5.260-62). Lear's instructions suggest that we do not have to look to the body for lessons about gender, but to the world around us.

His instructions are not without their own perils, however; and on one of Elizabeth's royal progresses through East Anglia the Queen lodged at the Catholic Rookwood estate, only to be scandalized when an image of the Virgin hidden on the grounds was accidentally exposed.⁷⁶ More often, these imaginative scandals were kept to a minimum, with few surprises to trouble the images that royalty might fashion. At other times, it is the

doubling which prevents these surprises. Spenser's Guyon is faced with two images at Acrasia's Bower, but he does not have to choose between them—there is no point outside his universe or place to critique it, no place, that is, where imagination reigns. Shakespeare's Albany is in the same position at the end of *Lear*, instructing his servants after the two dead sisters are brought on stage to “[c]over their faces” (F 5.3.216). Albany proves his humanity to us in the same way Guyon does, simply by looking at the women's bodies.

Notes

1. See Amy M. Spindler, “Bless Her Pointy Little Feet,” *The New York Times Book Review*, Feb 5, 1995, 22.
2. Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, “Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermaphrodite in Renaissance Europe,” in *Body Guards*, ed. Julia Epstein (New York: Routledge, 1991), 105-6.
3. Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 123.
4. In discussing *King Lear*, I cite both the First Quarto (Q1) and First Folio (F) reproduced in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997).
5. My thinking has been influenced by Judith Butler's account of gendered bodies in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990). As Butler puts it, the “exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed ... requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet ‘subjects,’ but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject” (3). Over the course of the sixteenth century, during which the Tudor monarchy became, as Judith M. Richards observes, “gendered,” these boundaries of outside and inside nevertheless remained fragile and volatile or, as Butler states, “recurrently exasperating” (10). See Richards, “‘To Promote a Woman to Beare Rule’: Talking of Queens in Mid-Tudor England,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (1997): 101-21.
6. See Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 3-4.
7. James Emerson Phillips, *Images of a Queen: Mary Stuart in Sixteenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 174. For more general background information about Mary Stuart, see Antonia Fraser's beautifully written biography *Mary, Queen of Scots* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978).
8. Richards writes: “As the health of their young king and brother Edward VI faded, Mary and Elizabeth ... had emerged as almost inevitable contenders for the royal throne. All other candidates were female, distinguished primarily by differences of religious affiliation” (“To Promote a Woman,” 105). See also Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 26; and Carole Levin, who explores some of the ways Mary Stuart's royal claim was construed as more compelling than Elizabeth's in *The Heart and Stomach of a King* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 78, 83.
9. Phillips, *Images of a Queen*, 139.
10. *Ibid.*, 132.
11. Apparently such efforts continued even after Elizabeth's death, when some Catholic reports circulated that the Queen's corpse had exploded during her wake. See Catherine Loomis, “Elizabeth Southwell's Manuscript Account of the Death of Queen Elizabeth [with text]” *English Literary Renaissance* 26 (1996): 482-509.
12. I borrow this term from Lauren Silberman, “Singing Unsung Heroines: Androgynous Discourse,” rpt. in *Edmund Spenser*, ed. Andrew Hadfield (New York: Longman, 1996), 261.
13. See Christine Coch's useful examination of Elizabeth's efforts in “‘Mother of my Contreye’: Elizabeth I and Tudor Constructions of Motherhood,” *English Literary Renaissance* 26 (1996): 423-50. Coch argues that, “By eschewing a mother's body and eventually even the name of ‘mother,’ Elizabeth freed her maternal identity from myriad outside constraints and contingencies: the dangers of childbirth, alienation from body and child, dissonance between public and private roles, and

- patriarchal control” (450).
14. In “Elizabeth I Amongst the Women,” *UCLA Historical Journal* 14 (1994), Lisa Hopkins cites the typically romanticized readings of the two queens' lives by young girls: “Elizabeth is often perceived not so much as a figure in her own right, but as a counterpart to her more romantic, less successful cousin, Mary Queen of Scots” (204). In “Renaissance Queens and Foucauldian Carcerality” (*Renaissance and Reformation* [Spring 1996]: 17-32) Hopkins suggests that Mary's imprisonment provided Elizabeth with a way to guard her cousin's threatening body (19).
 15. Kerby Neill, “*The Faerie Queene* and the Mary Stuart Controversy,” *ELH* 2 (1935): 194 n9. Neill would likely object to my argument, for he suggests that: “When allowances have been made for irresponsible commentary, only three characters in *The Faerie Queene* remain as possibly important allusions to Mary Stuart: Duessa, Acrasia, and Radigund” (192). Since references to Mary were habitually veiled, however, I would emphasize that allusions to her would be scattered more widely, with better results.
 16. Quoted by Louis Montrose in “The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text,” in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 311.
 17. I take this phrasing from Elizabeth J. Bellamy, “Waiting for Hymen: Literary History as ‘Symptom’ in Spenser and Milton,” *ELH* 64 (1997): 391-414. Bellamy discusses the possibility that “chastity can be represented only metonymically—through memorializing displacements that freeze-frame chastity's precariousness” (403).
 18. As Philippa Berry explains, “there is no coherent, ‘base’ ideology of the cult of Elizabeth; it rather was comprised of a loose collection of discourses, which accorded different weight to various ideas of Elizabeth and which defined the female monarch in relation to different ‘subjects’”; Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 63, and 62-67.
 19. See Roy Strong and Julia Trevelyan Oman, *Mary Queen of Scots* (New York: Stein & Day, 1972), 6. They describe as well the almost oxymoronic state of a queen forbidden any public appearances (65-66).
 20. Mary Queen of Scots to Anthony Babington, from Chartley, 17 July 1586, in Patrick Collinson, *The English Captivity of Mary Queen of Scots* (Sheffield: Sheffield History Pamphlets, 1987), 55.
 21. Walsingham's March 1585 instructions are reprinted in Collinson, *ibid.*
 22. Berry, *Of Chastity and Power*, 5-6.
 23. Quoted in Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 25.
 24. *Ibid.*, 24-25.
 25. Walsingham and William Davison to Paulet and Sir Drue Drury, from London, 1 February 1587, in Collinson, *English Captivity*, 57.
 26. See Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 194. Describing this dangerous, liminal space (or time) Grosz draws on symbolic treatments in Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* and anthropological readings in Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger*.
 27. Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, 24, 39-40.
 28. See Strong and Oman's description of these talents (*Mary Queen of Scots*, 67-68).
 29. Mary Queen of Scots to Queen Elizabeth (1584?), in Collinson, *English Captivity*, 53.
 30. See Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 21; and Luce Irigaray, who describes the crisis interrupting “masculine specularization” which occurs when “an ‘other’ image of woman intervenes in and disrupts” it. Irigaray's claims are discussed by Berry, *Of Chastity and Power*, 8.
 31. For related discussions of Elizabethan espionage networks and sovereign attempts at information-gathering and surveillance, see John Michael Archer, *Sovereignty and Intelligence: Spying and Court Culture in the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); and Jennifer Summit, “‘The Arte of a Ladies Penne’: Elizabeth I and the Poetics of Queenship”

- English Literary Renaissance* 26 (1996): 412.
32. The differences between the quarto and folio editions are especially intriguing in their handling of Regan. Lear strikes Oswald, but Regan is blamed by Goneril in the quarto; Goneril immediately bursts out: "Who struck my servant? Regan, I have good hope / Thou didst not know on't" (2.7.340-41). In the folio, it is Lear who interrogates Regan: "Who stocked my servant? Regan, I have good hope / Thou didst not know on't" (2.2.353-54). Cf. Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 306 n43.
 33. I use the edition of *The Faerie Queene* prepared by A. C. Hamilton (New York: Longman, 1977), citing by book, canto, stanza, and (where necessary) line numbers.
 34. See Sheila T. Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 89-91.
 35. Leah Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and its Discontents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 97. Marcus comments that such a vision was only achieved in Shakespeare's comedies or in the New World of Virginia.
 36. Levin, *Heart and Stomach*, 194 n44.
 37. Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 103.
 38. This observation was prompted by Raphael Falco's forthcoming *Charismatic Authority in Early Modern English Tragedy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).
 39. See Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 108.
 40. A reading that rejects critical charges of Goneril and Regan as "monstrous" is offered by Cristina Leon Alfar, "King Lear's 'Immoral' Daughters and the Politics of Kingship," *Exemplaria* 8 (1997): 375-400.
 41. Elizabeth Grosz, "Bodies and Knowledges: Feminism and the Crisis of Reason," in *Feminist Epistemologies*. ed. Linda Alcott and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 206, 204.
 42. Marilyn L. Williamson, "Doubling, Women's Anger, and Genre," *Women's Studies* 9:2 (1982): 107-9. I think Williamson restricts the scope of her argument about Shakespearean doubling too narrowly: in *The Winter's Tale* Hermione is not only doubled by Paulina but, I would argue, by Perdita, and in *Othello* Desdemona is doubled not only by Emilia but by Bianca.
 43. Adelman proposes a somewhat different explanation, arguing "at this point, maternal presence splits in two, as the benign and nurturant mother with whom Lear would merge generates her opposite, the annihilating mothers who seek his death" (*Suffocating Mothers*, 116-17).
 44. Stanley Cavell, "The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear*." *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 39-124. The letters indicting Edgar, which Edmund claims to have found in the casement of his closet (1.2.58), evoke the casket letters which implicated Mary in Darnley's death.
 45. Stephen Reid links the sisters still more deeply, suggesting that "[w]ith Edmund they work out the jealousies that existed *between* them, jealousies earlier than but submerged in their mutual jealousy of Cordelia. Edmund becomes the instrument of their revenges against Lear and Cordelia, but in doing so he inevitably becomes the replacement of their father"; Reid, "In Defense of Goneril and Regan" *American Imago* 27 (1970): 226-44, at 243.
 46. We should note that in F, Goneril says "Pray you, let us sit together" as a way to proclaim their new joint status. Additional discussions of the family dynamics at play are provided by Adelman and by Harry Berger, Jr., in "*King Lear*: The Lear Family Romance," *Centennial Review* 23 (1979): 348-76.
 47. See Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 118; and Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 32.
 48. Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 116-17.
 49. Joanne Craig, "The Queen, Her Handmaid, and Spenser's Career," *English Studies in Canada* 12.3 (1986): 255-56.
 50. Elsewhere, Craig argues that Spenser "sets the Queen's two bodies in opposition to one another, for Belphoebe ... has some strong associations with [Britomart's enemy] Radigund"; "'Mirrors More Than One': Marriage and the Body Politic in *The Faerie Queene*," *Cahiers Elisabethains* 45 (April 1994): 9.

51. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), and Marjorie Garber, "Spare Parts: The Surgical Construction of Gender," *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1992), 94.
52. See Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 119-20.
53. I borrow the term from Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays in Subjection* (New York: Methuen, 1984), 82. See Bellamy, "Em(body)ments of Power," *LIT: Literature, Interpretation, Theory* 2.3 (1991), for a description of such objects as "uninterpretable" (318).
54. Neill, "*Faerie Queene* and the Mary Stuart Controversy," 195.
55. *Ibid.*, 204.
56. In addition to the Latin (London, 1571) edition located in the Huntington Library, see the modernized version used here, *The Tyrannous Reign of Mary Stewart, George Buchanan's Account*, trans. and ed. W. A. Gatherer (Edinburgh: University Press, 1958).
57. Neill, "*Faerie Queene* and the Mary Stuart Controversy," 200-201. In 1584, the Scottish parliament passed an act punishing Buchanan's calumnies, and King James later supervised Camden's history which sought to revise Buchanan's chronicle.
58. See Roger A. Mason's discussion of Buchanan and Knox and Reformation Scotland's religious and political crises in "Usable Pasts: History and Identity in Reformation Scotland," *The Scottish Historical Review* 76.1 No. 201 (1997): 54-68. A helpful introduction to Buchanan's work is provided by I. D. McFarlane, "George Buchanan and European Humanism," *Yearbook of English Studies* 15 (1985): 33-47. David H. Sabio briefly discusses Buchanan's epithalamium in "George Buchanan's Secular Latin Poetry and New Historicism," in *The Language and Literature of Early Scotland*. ed. G. Ross Roy, *Studies in Scottish Literature* 26 (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1991), 319-27.
59. See James E. Phillips, "George Buchanan and the Sidney Circle" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 12 (1948-49): 46-47, 52, 54; and McFarlane, "George Buchanan and European Humanism," 42. In many ways my argument begins where Phillips leaves off; he explains at the close of his essay that "I have tried to resist the temptation, strong at times, to find evidence of borrowings and indebtedness in specific works. ... [M]y present purpose has been simply to emphasize the necessity for considering Buchanan as, in effect, a member in absentia of the Sidney circle" (55).
60. See Mason, "Usable Pasts," 57. Phillips notes that Gabriel Harvey admired Buchanan's "tragical pamphlets of the Quen of Scots" ("George Buchanan," 47). Harvey also made numerous marginal comments on his copy of *Detectio* (47 n97), and chided Spenser for not attending more closely to the model of "divine poetry" Buchanan supplies (48).
61. *Tyrannous Reign*, 165. Alan Sinfield reiterates Buchanan's claims, asserting: "The problem in [Stuart] Scotland is not unruly subjects, but unruly monarchs"; Sinfield, "*Macbeth*: History, Ideology, and Intellectuals," *Critical Quarterly* 28 (1986): 68.
62. Lilian Winstanley establishes a number of suggestive links in *Macbeth, King Lear and Contemporary History, Being a study of the relations of the play of Macbeth to the Personal History of James I, the Darnley Murder and the St. Bartholomew Massacre, and also of King Lear as Symbolic Mythology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922). I do not go to the same extremes of finding parallels, in part because Winstanley so ably does so. Finding a treasure trove in Buchanan's *Detectio*, she points to resemblances between: Shakespeare's Edmund and Bothwell—Mary's third husband and reputed murderer of her second (33); the Darnley murder and Hamlet's father's sudden death (10); Spenser's Una as not only Elizabeth but the Protestant Anne Boleyn (17); Darnley and the murdered Scottish king Duncan (29); Lear's misfortunes and Mary's harsh treatment of Darnley, including subjecting him to inclement weather during the winter (32-33).
63. Perhaps the connections between the *Detectio* and *Lear* are more striking than even Winstanley allows. One of Mary's sins, according to Buchanan, was depriving Darnley of his followers. According to Regan, her father "hath ever but slenderly known himself" (Q1 1.2.278-90). Later, the sisters force Lear to "disquantity his train" (Q1 1.4.227). Buchanan reports that Darnley was sent off in the winter cold with a "company so slender that it was inadequate even for a private gentleman."

Lear's daughters forbid him to lodge with them, while Mary's lover Bothwell was admitted immediate access. Bothwell's figure collapses Lear and Albany into Edgar's opponent: "In the meantime, while the King, destitute of all goods and friends, could scarcely beg lodging in a hovel, Bothwell was transferred from the house in which he had been lodging and carried, as if in triumph over the King, in full view of the people, to the Queen's lodging, and placed in the chamber directly under the room in which the Queen lay" (*Tyrannous Reign*, 169-70).

Bothwell's connections to Edmund are indeed extensive. Buchanan writes that, after being cleared by Scottish courts and before his marriage to Mary, "to establish his innocence beyond all doubt, [Bothwell] was prepared to defend it by the sword, if anyone of honest name and rank would accuse him of the King's death. The next day someone accepted the challenge, in a placard set up for all to see, on condition that a place should be appointed where he could reveal his name without fear" (*Tyrannous Reign*, 178-79). The disguised Edgar, of course, issues a similar challenge to his brother (F 5.3.102-05). I have been surprised to see that Bothwell's name (given the erotic and political doublings that served him so well) never proved rhetorically advantageous. Hopkins reminds us that Bothwell was incarcerated at Elsinore until he died insane ("Renaissance Queens," 29).

64. Mason maintains that Knox particularly relied on the Book of Revelation ("Usable Pasts," 60).
65. This does not mean that such surveillance was always clearly organized or rationalized. See *Mary Stewart: Queen in Three Kingdoms*, ed. Michael Lynch (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988). Lynch writes that much of the evidence collected at Mary's trial could "point in different directions—as indeed it was designed to do, for much of it was the product of competing intelligence networks, which operated in a half-real world, at once international and closeted" (3).
66. Grosz expertly raises these questions (*Volatile Bodies*, 189).
67. Louis Montrose, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," *Representations* 1 (1983): 47.
68. Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory," *Signs* 7 (1982): 515-44, reprinted in *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).
69. Commenting on the dearth of writing about men's bodily fluids, Grosz claims that "the writings of de Sade, Genet, and others are as close as we get to a philosophical or reflective account of the lived experiences of male flow" (*Volatile Bodies*, 198).
70. *Ibid.*, xii.
71. For a useful if general discussion of this scene, see Arlene N. Okerlund, "Spenser's Wanton Maidens: Reader Psychology and the Bower of Bliss," *PMLA* 88 (1973): 63.
72. Antoinette Dauber, "The Art of Veiling in the Bower of Bliss," *Spenser Studies* 1 (1980): 163-65.
73. See Peter Osborne and Lynne Segal, "Gender as Performance: An Interview with Judith Butler," *Radical Philosophy* 67 (Summer 1994): 36.
74. For instance, see Paul Alpers, *The Poetry of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 315.
75. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins (New York: Routledge, 1982), 3.4.52-53; 63-64; 78-81.
76. Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare*, 84-85.

My interest in the ways the poetry of Shakespeare and Spenser coordinates some of the multiple transformations of Renaissance gender was first inspired by a seminar led by Katherine Eggert on "Spenser and Shakespeare: Genders and Sexualities" at the 1995 meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America. My City College students greatly helped me extend that discussion. Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the CUNY Graduate English Forum, the Renaissance Society of America's 1999 annual meeting, and at the St. Andrews University Scottish Studies Institute. I want to acknowledge the help offered by my colleagues at a City College English Department Faculty Colloquium, with special thanks to Kate D. Levin, Paul Oppenheimer, and Gordon Thompson. Finally, I am grateful for the assistance provided by the staffs of the Huntington Library and the Folger Shakespeare Library. A PSC-CUNY Research Award allowed me to

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The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser: Further Reading

CRITICISM

Bellamy, Elizabeth J. "The Vocative and the Vocational: The Unreadability of Elizabeth in *The Faerie Queene*." *ELH* 54, no. 1 (spring 1987): 1-30.

Analyzes Spenser's representation of Queen Elizabeth I in The Faerie Queene.

Boehrer, Bruce Thomas. "'Carelesse Modestee': Chastity as Politics in Book 3 of *The Faerie Queene*." *ELH* 55, no. 3 (fall 1988): 555-73.

Discusses Spenser's representation of Queen Elizabeth I in The Faerie Queene in relation to the virtue of Chastity.

Broadus, James W. "Renaissance Psychology and Britomart's Adventures in *Faerie Queene* III." *English Literary Renaissance* 17, no. 2 (spring 1987): 186-206.

Analyzes Book III of The Faerie Queene in terms of sixteenth-century ideas about human psychology and the moving forces of history.

Burchmore, David W. "The Unfolding of Britomart: Mythic Iconography in *The Faerie Queene*." *Renaissance Papers 1977*, edited by Dennis G. Donovan and A. Leigh Deneef, pp. 11-20. Durham, N.C.: Southeastern Renaissance Conference, 1977.

Discusses Spenser's treatment of the virtue of Chastity in The Faerie Queene.

Christian, Margaret. "'The ground of Storie': Genealogy in *The Faerie Queene*." In *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual*, Vol. 9, edited by Patrick Cullen and Thomas P. Roche, Jr., pp. 61-79. New York: AMS Press, 1991.

Explores Spenser's treatment of family lineage in The Faerie Queene.

Cook, Patrick J. "The Epic Chronotope from Ariosto to Spenser." *Annali D'Italianistica* 12 (1994): 115-41.

Discusses the epic form of The Faerie Queene.

Daniels, Edgar F. "Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*." *Explicator* 48, no. 3 (spring 1990): 173-75.

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Gold, Eva. "The Queen and the Book in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*." *South Atlantic Review* 57, no. 4 (November 1992): 1-19.

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Gough, Melinda J. "'Her filthy feature open showne' in Ariosto, Spenser, and Mucho Ado about Nothing." *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 39, no. 1 (winter 1999): 41-67.

Discusses representations of women in Spenser's The Faerie Queene, Shakespeare's Much Ado about Nothing, and the tales of Ludovico Ariosto.

Heberle, Mark. "Aristotle and Spenser's Justice." *Studia Neophilologica* 63, no. 2 (1991): 169-73.

Discusses the theme of justice in The Faerie Queene.

Lethbridge, J. B. "Raleigh in Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene*: The Primacy of Moral Allegory." *Studia Neophilologica* 64 (1992): 55-66.

Discusses representations of Sir Walter Raleigh and the theme of morality in The Faerie Queene.

Mallette, Richard. "Book Five of *The Faerie Queene*: An Elizabethan Apocalypse." In *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual*, Vol. 11, edited by Patrick Cullen and Thomas P. Roche, Jr., pp. 129-59. New York: AMS Press, 1994.

Discusses references to religious apocalypse in The Faerie Queene.

Mueller, William R. "Introduction: A Brief History of Spenser Criticism." In *Spenser's Critics: Changing Currents in Literary Taste*, edited by William R. Mueller, pp. 1-17. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1959.

Provides an overview of developments in critical response to The Faerie Queene.

Purdon, Liam O. "A Reconsideration of the Ass Image in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*." *English Language Notes* 25, no. 1 (September 1988): 18-21.

Explores Spenser's handling of the the image of the ass, the animal Una rides in Book I of The Faerie Queene, suggesting that Spenser may have used it as an allegorical symbol for the flesh.

Wall, John N., Jr. "Orion's Flaming Head: Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, II.ii.46 and the Feast of the Twelve Days of Christmas." In *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual*, Vol. VII, edited by Patrick Cullen and Thomas P. Roche, Jr., pp. 93-101. New York: AMS Press, 1987.

Discusses the twelve-day feast described in Book II of The Faerie Queene in the context of the English Protestant Reformation.

Additional coverage of Spenser's life and career is contained in the following sources published by the Gale Group: *British Writers*, Vol. 1; *Concise Dictionary of British Literary Biography, Before 1660*; *DISCovering Authors*; *DISCovering Authors: British Edition*; *DISCovering Authors: Canadian Edition*; *DISCovering Authors Modules: Most-studied Authors and Poets*; *DISCovering Authors 3.0*; *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 167; *Epics for Students*, Vol. 2; *Exploring Poetry*; *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800*, Vols. 5, 39; *Literature Resource Center*; *Poetry Criticism*, Vol. 8; *Poets: American and British*; *Reference Guide to English Literature*; *World Literature and Its Times*, Vol. 3; *World Literature Criticism*; and *World Poets*.

Analysis: The Poem

Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, is holding her annual twelve-day feast. As is the custom, anyone in trouble can appear before the court and ask for a champion. The fair lady Una comes riding on a white ass, accompanied by a dwarf. She complains that her father and mother are shut up in a castle by a dragon. The Red Cross Knight offers to help her, and the party sets out to rescue Una's parents. In a cave the Red Cross Knight encounters a horrible creature, half serpent, half woman. Although the foul stench nearly overpowers him, the knight slays the monster. After the battle, the Red Cross Knight and Una lose their way. A friendly stranger who offers them shelter is really Archimago, the wicked magician. By making the Red Cross Knight dream that Una is a harlot, Archimago separates Una from her champion.

Una goes on her way alone. Archimago quickly assumes the form of the Red Cross Knight and follows her to do her harm. Meanwhile the Red Cross Knight falls into the company of Duessa, an evil enchantress. They meet the great giant Orgoglio, who overcomes the Red Cross Knight and makes Duessa his mistress. Prince Arthur, touched by Una's misfortunes, rescues the Red Cross Knight from Orgoglio and leads him to Una. Once again Una and her champion ride on their mission.

At last they come to Una's kingdom, and the dragon that imprisoned her parents comes out to do battle. After two days of fighting, the Red Cross Knight overthrows the dragon. After the parents are freed, the Red Cross Knight and Una are betrothed. Still hoping to harm the Red Cross Knight, Archimago tells Sir Guyon that the Red Cross Knight despoiled a virgin of her honor. Shocked, Guyon sets out to right the wrong. The cunning Archimago disguises Duessa as a young girl and places her on the road, where she tells a piteous tale of wrong done by the Red Cross Knight and urges Guyon to avenge her. When Guyon and the Red Cross Knight meet, they lower their lances and begin to fight. Fortunately the signs of the Virgin Mary on the armor of each recall them to their senses, and Guyon is ashamed that he was tricked by the magician.

In his travels Guyon falls in with Prince Arthur, and the two visit the Castle of Alma, the stronghold of Temperance. The most powerful enemy of Temperance is the demon Maleger. In a savage battle Prince Arthur vanquishes Maleger. Guyon goes on to the Bower of Bliss, where his archenemy Acrasy lives. With stout heart Guyon overthrows Acrasy and destroys the last enemy of Temperance. After sending Acrasy back to the fairy court under guard, Guyon and Prince Arthur go on their way until on an open plain they see a knight arming for battle. With Prince Arthur's permission, Guyon rides against the strange knight, and in the meeting Guyon is unhorsed by the strong lance of his opponent. Ashamed of his fall, Guyon snatches his sword and continues the fight on foot.

The palmer, attending Guyon, sees that the champion cannot prevail against the stranger, for the strange knight is enchanted. When he stops the fight, the truth is revealed: The strange knight is really the lovely Britomart, a chaste and pure damsel, who saw the image of her lover, Artegall, in Venus's looking-glass and sets out in search of him. With the situation explained, Britomart joins Guyon, Prince Arthur, and Arthur's squire, Timias, and the four continue their quest.

In a strange wood they travel for days, seeing no one, but everywhere they meet bears, lions, and bulls. Suddenly a beautiful lady on a white palfrey gallops out of the brush. She is Florimell, pursued by a lustful forester who spurs his steed cruelly in an attempt to catch her. The three men join the chase, but out of modesty Britomart stays behind. She waits a long time; then, despairing of ever finding her companions again, she goes on alone.

As she approaches Castle Joyous she sees six knights attacking one. She rides into the fight and demands to know why they are fighting in such cowardly fashion. She learns that any knight passing has to love the lady of Castle Joyous or fight six knights. Britomart denounces the rule and with her magic lance unhorses four of

the knights. She enters Castle Joyous as a conqueror. After meeting the Red Cross Knight in the castle, Britomart resolves to go on as a knight errant. She hears from Merlin, whom she visits, that she and Artegall are destined to have illustrious descendants.

Meanwhile Timias is wounded while pursuing the lustful forester. Belpheobe, the wondrous beauty of the Garden of Adonis, rescues him and heals his wounds. Timias falls in love with Belpheobe. Amoret, the fair one, is held prisoner by a young knight who attempts to defile her. For months she resists his advances. Then Britomart, hearing of her sad plight, overcomes the two knights who guard Amoret's prison and free her. Greatly attracted to her brave rescuer, Amoret sets out with Britomart.

At a strange castle a knight claims Amoret as his love. Britomart jousts with him to save Amoret, and after winning the tourney Britomart is forced to take off her helmet. With her identity revealed, Britomart and Amoret set off together in search of their true loves.

Artegall, in search of adventure, joins Scudamour, knight errant. They meet Amoret and Britomart, who is still disguised as a knight. Britomart and Artegall fight an indecisive battle during which Artegall is surprised to discover that his opponent is his lost love, Britomart. The two lovers are reunited at last, but in the confusion Amoret is abducted by Lust. With the help of Prince Arthur, Scudamour rescues Amoret from her loathsome captor. He woos Amoret in the Temple of Love, where they find shelter.

Artegall, champion of true justice, is brought up and well trained by Astraea. When Artegall is of age, Astraea gives him a trusty groom, and the new knight sets out on his adventures. Talus, the groom, is an iron man who carries an iron flail to thresh out falsehood. Irene, who asks at the fairy court for a champion against the wicked Grantorto, sets out with Artegall and Talus to regain her heritage. With dispatch Artegall and Talus overcome Grantorto and restore Irene to her throne.

Later Artegall enters the lists against a strange knight who is really the disguised Amazon, Radigund. Artegall wounds Radigund, but when he sees that his prostrate foe is a comely woman, he throws away his weapons. The wounded Amazon then rushes on the defenseless Artegall and takes him prisoner. Artegall is kept in shameful confinement until at last Talus informs Britomart of his fate. Britomart goes to her lover's rescue and slays Radigund.

Continuing his quest, Artegall meets two hags, Envy and Detraction, who defame his character and set the Blatant Beast barking at his heels. Artegall forbids Talus to beat the hags and returns to the fairy court. The Blatant Beast, defamer of knightly character and the last remaining enemy of the fairy court, finally meets his match. The courteous Calidore, the gentlest of all the knights, conquers the beast and leads him, tamed, back to the court of the Fairie Queene.

Analysis: Places Discussed

Faery Land

Faery Land. Mythical country that serves as a setting for the romantic adventures of idealized knights, whose charge is to perfect themselves in their calling and rescue or protect innocent victims from their enemies. An array of forests, caves, and dungeons gives each knight (a different hero in each of the poem's six books) an opportunity to exhibit his skill and inspire gratitude and love in the person—usually a fair maiden—whom the dragon or monster of the moment is afflicting.

In a sense, Faery Land is also England, but not one visibly recognizable. While Spenser makes many references to English place names, as well as many more pertaining to other parts of the world, he makes no

attempt to relate any part of his landscape in any realistic way to actual English sites. One effect of these allusions is to remind readers of England's historical culture and values.

Spenser's prefatory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh explains the "Faerie Queene" as signifying the woman who reigned in England through most of Spenser's life: Queen Elizabeth I. The Prince Arthur of the poem is not precisely the legendary King Arthur but an Arthur who, if Spenser had succeeded in bringing his poem to a conclusion (for he projected twelve, and possibly even twenty-four books), would have sought out Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, then wooed and married her. This union would have underscored the desirability of a marriage for Elizabeth which would presumably stabilize the royal succession and thus foster the integrity of the real English kingdom.

In its basic structure, however, the poem is a complex allegory with a stated purpose: "To fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline." In the largest sense, then, its Faerie Land is the human soul. Spenser believed strongly that it was the writer's goal to paint virtue in an attractive, active, even heroic manner capable of inspiring readers to perfect themselves morally and thus qualify as "gentle" or "noble" persons, whatever their social class. Faery Land might be called the landscape of the soul, and the movement from place to place symbolizes the soul's labors throughout life. Each book of the poem celebrates a particular virtue. The Red Cross Knight of book 1 seeks to perfect himself in holiness, Sir Guyon of book 2 represents temperance, and so on.

Typically in the course of each book, its hero comes to places that help or challenge him (or her, for Britomart of book 3 is a female knight devoted to chastity) in the quest for moral perfection. Thus the Red Cross Knight is challenged by the House of Pride, Guyon by the Cave of Mammon. Eventually the knight reaches a countering place that fosters virtue: the Red Cross Knight, the House of Holiness; Guyon, the Bower of Bliss (a good place because the Bliss depicted is natural and moderate). Spenser's descriptions of these places are often graphic. For example, Sir Scudamour of book 4 spends a night at the house of a blacksmith named Care, who along with six assistants wields "huge great hammers that did never rest," hammers which "like bells in greatness orderly succeed." The combination of this crew working all night and a pack of howling dogs permits the knight no sleep, but the purpose of the episode is not to represent the blacksmith's trade but to convey the anxiety of Sir Scudamour at this point in the narrative. What is most "real" for Spenser throughout is not the material, sensible world but the life of the human spirit.

Analysis: Historical Context

Humanism and Education

Tudor England in the sixteenth century was a place of great change. There were significant social, religious, and political changes during this time, and together, these changes created an atmosphere of danger and tension. One of the earliest transformations was the way in which English boys and young men were educated. Education had always been an issue that focused on men, since there was little interest, nor perceived need to educate females, but as the fifteenth century drew to an end, the emphasis on education changed. Instead of educating boys and young men for a lifetime serving God, as members of the clergy, there was a new emphasis on careers in government, requiring a different sort of education. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, two men, the English Sir Thomas More and the Dutch Desiderius Erasmus, were cultivating an intellectual movement that became known during the Renaissance as Humanism. According to the doctrine of Humanism, the education of a Christian gentlemen should be every society's primary concern. An important component of this education was a focus on the preparation of a young man for public service. As a way to achieve this goal, there was also a new emphasis on rhetoric and classical texts, and on a need to learn Latin grammar, the language of diplomacy. Latin had always been taught as necessary for the clergy, but now, it became clear there were other uses. Each country conducted its international business in Latin, and with international travel and trade, there was a greater need for men to assume these new duties. In this new world,

there was a close connection between universities and the government. The sons of nobility attended colleges, but so too, did an increasing number of commoners, many of whom were destined for government service. Initially, humanism combined classical learning with Christianity or Catholicism. In humanism's early development, More was an enthusiastic supporter of Greek Classical texts, but he was also a Catholic who chose to die rather than agree to take the oath that acknowledged the king as head of the church in England. With the adoption of a new religion, the second-generation movement of humanism included Protestantism. Like many men of his period, Spenser was a strong advocate of Humanism, and so, one of his desires in composing *The Faerie Queene* was to create a model for the ideal gentlemen. Spenser was enamoured of chivalry and the medieval world, where men were honorable and where men adhered to a code of behavior that emphasized morality and truth. In composing his epic, Spenser sought to educate the public to chivalric ideals by recalling the medieval romance, which he thought presented a better society. Spenser's text not only revives the classical epic, which in its purest form, had not been used since Virgil, but it emphasizes the ideals of charity, friendship, and virtue, which are the hallmarks of the humanistic movement. In addition, Spenser uses allegory to tell his story, and allegory is a medieval tradition, which recalls the importance of allegory in biblical teaching. The setting of Spenser's epic is medieval England, but the topic is Renaissance in origin. As Philip Sidney argued in his *Defence of Poesy*, poetry has merit in its ability to make education sweeter and easier to swallow. Spenser accomplished this by resurrecting the medieval romance and the chivalric knight as instruments to demonstrate the righteousness of the Church of England.

Religious Turmoil

In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser is reflecting the Renaissance emphasis of leading a life of beneficial action. At the same time, his text reflects the real-life tensions between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England, which was formally established by Elizabeth I in 1559. The pope's response to the queen's action was her excommunication in 1570, but officially, there was little notice of the pope's actions. After the formal establishment of the Anglican Church, some of the tension of the past twenty-five years dissipated, primarily because the queen was more tolerant of religious choice and less likely to endorse the extreme prosecution that Mary I favored. When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and abbeys in 1534, it was not because he would not tolerate dissenting religious views.

Certainly he had no use for the Catholic Church, but that was primarily because the pope refused to permit his divorce. And, to assure the succession of any heir he might have after divorcing his first wife, Henry required that his citizens take an oath that recognized him as head of the Church of England. But Henry was never vehement about religion. The king dissolved the monasteries and abbeys to claim the land, buildings, monies, and expensive art and jewelry that lay inside. Henry VIII understood that eliminating the Catholic Church would make him rich; it was simply a sound economic move. After Henry died, his young son, Edward VI became king and for a while the religious component of Tudor life remained stable. But the young king did not live long, and at his death, his elder sister, Mary, became queen. During the brief years of Mary's reign, 1553-1558, religious intolerance and religiously inspired murder became commonplace. Mary, who was Catholic, immediately reinstated Catholicism as the official religion in England. Moving quickly, she outlawed Protestantism to please her new bridegroom, Philip of Spain. Protestants were persecuted, and hundreds were burned at the stake when they refused to convert to Catholicism. Mary's ruthlessness earned her the nickname, "Bloody Mary." In contrast to Mary's rule, Elizabeth seemed a refreshing new breath in the kingdom. She was young and beautiful, full of energy and vibrant. And although she quickly established Protestantism as the official religion, she manifested none of the intolerance of her older sister, Mary. The legacy of Mary's reign was a fear of Catholicism and a determination to permit no Catholic in government, nor should Catholics have any power. The immediate effect of Mary's reign was that any plotting that was discovered, any subversion that was detected, any unexpected crisis, could well be credited to Catholic sympathizers. Although Elizabeth's reign was prosperous and relatively peaceful, religion still remained a force that could divide the people. Spenser reflects these fears and determination in *The Faerie Queene*.

Analysis: Literary Style

Character

The actions of each character are what constitute the story. Character can also include the idea of a particular individual's morality. Characters can range from simple stereotypical figures to more complex multifaceted ones. Characters may also be defined by personality traits, such as the rogue or the damsel in distress. Characterization is the process of creating a life-like person from an author's imagination. To accomplish this task, the author provides the character with personality traits that help define who that character will be and how that character will behave in a given situation. Most of the characters in *The Faerie Queene* differ slightly from this definition, since each character is little more than a "type." The audience does not really know or understand the character as an individual. For instance, Una represents little more than a quality, not an individual. The audience understands that Una signifies truth, an essential component of an ideal world and a tenet of religious belief.

Epic

An epic is a long narrative poem, which presents characters and events of high position. There may be a central heroic figure, or, as in the case of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, there may be several heroic figures, such as the Red Cross Knight, Prince Arthur, Sir Guyon, Sir Artegall, and Calidore. There is frequently a muse who inspires the writer to create a work that is inspired and magnificent in its scope. The epic most frequently recounts the origins of a nation or group of people. *The Faerie Queene* creates an ideal Britain, and it mythicizes Queen Elizabeth I, making her the ideal monarch. Epics usually share certain features: a heroic figure who is imposing in his greatness; a vast setting or great nation; heroic deeds; supernatural forces, such as miracles, gods, or angels; elevated diction and style; and an objective narrator. The Faerie Queen is an epic in the tradition of The *Odyssey*, creating an ideal world, filled with heroic deeds and people.

Genre

Genres are a way of categorizing literature. Genre is a French term that means "kind" or "type." Genre can refer to both the category of literature such as tragedy, comedy, epic, poetry, or pastoral. It can also include modern forms of literature such as drama, novels, or short stories. This term can also refer to types of literature such as mystery, science fiction, comedy, or romance. *The Faerie Queene* is an epic, but it has also been labeled a romantic epic.

Parable

A story intended to teach a moral lesson. The stories in *The Faerie Queene* are designed to teach people how to be better Christians and how to live a moral life. The Bible is one of the most obvious sources of parables, since religion traditionally relies upon stories to teach lessons. This tradition stems from a period in which most men and women could not read, and the clergy found that stories were the most effective way to instruct moral lessons. Spenser uses his poetry in much the same way that the clergy uses the bible, to tell stories that teach a lesson.

Plot

This term refers to the pattern of events. Generally plots should have a beginning, a middle, and a conclusion, but they may also sometimes be a series of episodes connected together. Basically, the plot provides the author with the means to explore primary themes. Students are often confused between the two terms; but themes explore ideas, and plots simply relate what happens in a very obvious manner. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser creates a series of stories, and so, there are multiple plots. Sometimes, these many plots are unfolding at the same time, as characters and story lines jump from one idea to the next. But the themes include the need to prepare oneself for God and the importance of morality in creating an ideal world.

Romantic Epic

A romantic epic is a long narrative poem that combines the medieval romance and the classical epic. The poets who created romantic epics used many of the features of the classical epics but combined these features with stories of love and both romantic and religious. Spenser uses traditional romance, but he combines romance with love of God to create a blending of secular and religious love.

Setting

The time, place, and culture in which the action of the play takes place is called the setting. The elements of setting may include geographic location, physical or mental environments, prevailing cultural attitudes, or the historical time in which the action takes place. The location for *The Faerie Queene* is mostly Britain, but the time is in flux, with Spenser interjecting contemporary ideas into his work, which primarily recalls a period much earlier when knights and chivalry were common.

Stanza

A stanza is a grouping of two or more verse lines, which may be defined by meter, rhyme, or length. The stanza may also be considered as similar to a prose paragraph, exploring one element of the author's thoughts. *The Spenserian Stanza*, is nine lines, with a rhyme scheme of *abbabbcc*. Many other poets adopted the Spenserian Stanza for their work, including Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Tennyson.

Analysis: Compare and Contrast

Sixteenth century: In 1517, Martin Luther's actions grow into the Protestant reformation. This event has important ramifications for England, when King Henry VIII seeks a divorce from his wife. When the Pope refuses to grant a divorce, the king declares himself as leader of the English church. This act, in 1534, creates the Anglican Church and establishes Protestantism as the official church. In effect, it also outlaws the Roman Catholic Church, since Henry seizes all church property, using it as a source of revenue. Spenser uses this history to depict Una as Truth, the Anglican Church. Duessa represents falsehood, the Roman Catholic Church, which is attractive on the outside, but corrupt on the inside. This illustrates the English notion that Catholicism was all about performance and ornamentation and lacking substance inside.

Late twentieth century: In many ways, the English still view the Catholic Church with suspicion. There are still laws that prohibit a member of the monarchy from marrying a Catholic, and the Anglican Church remains the official Church of England. No Catholic can inherit the throne.

Sixteenth century: After Henry VIII and his only son, Edward VI, died, Mary I inherits the throne, and in 1555, she restores Catholicism to England and outlaws Protestantism. After marrying Spain's heir to the throne, Mary begins persecuting Protestants, burning those who fail to embrace the Catholic faith. Mary becomes known as "Bloody Mary" because of her actions. These persecutions lead to an enormous animosity between Protestants and Catholics, which Spenser depicts in his epic by having many evil characters portrayed as Catholic, such as Archimago, Duessa, and Error. In contrast, the good knights, such as the Red Cross Knight, are represented as Protestant.

Late twentieth century: Not surprisingly, religion is still a source of conflict around the world. As it was in sixteenth-century England, the conflict between Protestants and Catholics still rages, accounting for bombings and deaths in both London and in Ireland. Each side still views the other as evil and destructive, much as they did when Spenser was writing his epic.

Sixteenth century: In 1588, Elizabeth I defeats the Spanish Armada. The Spanish Armada, consisting of 132 vessels, sailed against England, with intent to invade and claim the country for the Catholic Church. The English rebuffed the invasion, and with the aid of a storm, destroyed more than half the ships. Elizabeth is

seen as a heroic monarch, and thus her depiction in Spenser's epic as the Faerie Queene, the virginal queen who inspires such loyalty from her knights.

Late twentieth century: The English have managed to successfully defend their small nation against invasion for the last four hundred years, defeating first Napoleon, and later, Hitler. The devotion to country and ideals that Spenser celebrated in his epic has continued to motivate the English to overcome overwhelming odds and defeat enemies, even when victory appeared out of reach.

Sixteenth century: In 1587, Elizabeth I has her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, executed. Mary had been a prisoner since 1568, when she was forced to flee Protestant Scotland. While a captive of Queen Elizabeth, Mary was frequently the center of plots to overthrow the queen and place the Catholic Mary on the throne. The concern that the Protestants felt about Mary is depicted in Spenser's work. In Book V, Duessa is tried and found guilty. She represents the evil and deception that many English citizens felt that Mary represented.

Late twentieth century: Although the English royalty are firmly entrenched on the throne, many other countries still bear witness to the possibility of a coup. This is unlikely in England, where the monarchy remains very popular, as it was when Spenser was writing.

Analysis: Topics for Further Study

The Cult of Elizabeth was an important literary force at the end of the sixteenth century. Because of a number of excessively flattering literary portrayals, Elizabeth, as a virgin queen, achieved goddess status. Discuss how Spenser's depiction of Elizabeth as Gloriana pays homage to this idea of Elizabeth, the goddess.

Investigate the circumstances surrounding the British victory over the Spanish Armada, and discuss the impact of this event on Elizabethan society. Why was it so important for the British to defeat Spain, a Catholic country? Try to explore how a major victory during wartime contributes to national pride. Consider if this is a factor in Spenser's epic. Research the Catholic and Protestant conflict in England during the sixteenth century. Using what you discover, discuss the depiction of both Catholics and Protestants in Book I of Spenser's epic.

The impact of Humanism on sixteenth-century life was an important factor in how society functioned. Spenser saw the world of knights and religious quests as providing an effective model to teach people about truth, loyalty, and virtue. Select a modern text or film and discuss how this piece teaches its audience about these same attributes.

Analysis: Media Adaptations

An audio cassette of *The Faerie Queene* (1998), with John Moffatt as reader, is available from Naxos of America. This recording, which is also available as a CD, contains selections from Spenser's text.

Analysis: What Do I Read Next?

Edmund Spenser's "The Shepheardes Calendar" (1579) is a series of poems that celebrate the pastoral tradition and perfection of country life.

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) is the story of the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden. Milton derived many of his ideas from *The Faerie Queene*.

Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485) is the story of King Arthur. Spenser also uses many of the Arthurian legends in *The Faerie Queene*.

Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* (1579) argues that poetry serves an important purpose in the education of people and maintains that poetry is superior to philosophy and history in teaching about virtue.

Virgil's *The Aeneid* (30-11 B.C.) is a Roman epic that served as an important influence for Spenser's epic. The story of Aeneas and his journey establishes a history for the Roman people and the heroic behavior of Aeneas serves as a model for which men should strive.

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Short-Answer Quizzes: Questions and Answers: Introduction and Book I, Cantos i-iv

Questions

1. Why are Una and the Redcross Knight companions?
2. Why does the Redcross Knight abandon Una?
3. What warning about Fidessa does the Redcross Knight ignore?
4. The Redcross Knight is deceived by the Archimago and Fidessa. Is the Lady Una ever deceived? If so, is her error of the same type as the Redcross Knight's?
5. What scares the Redcross Knight away from the House of Pride?

Answers

1. The Faerie Knight has vowed to kill a dragon that is savaging Una's land.
2. The Redcross Knight believes the deception of the Archimago, which pretends to show that Una is not chaste.
3. Fidessa and the Redcross Knight relax under a bewitched tree that used to be a man, Fradubio. Fradubio tells his story in which, as a young man who was very much in love, he was tricked by a sorceress into believing that his love was ugly and the sorceress beautiful.

4. While wandering the forests with her protective lion, Una meets the Archimago, who is disguised as the Redcross Knight. She falls for this deception and believes he is her true love. However, unlike the Redcross Knight, she never doubts her love's good qualities; she believes him to be good, brave and strong even though he has deserted her and apparently loses a battle. The Redcross Knight doubts her chastity and begins to court another woman. Clearly, his errors are much more deep-rooted.

5. The Dwarf tells the Redcross Knight about thousands of prisoners trapped in dungeons beneath the House of Pride. They were ordinary men and women who were tempted into pride or indolence and now are paying the price. In such a lovely setting, surrounded by flattering women, it would be difficult for the Redcross Knight to maintain his honor and bravery. He flees in order to escape being trapped by his own vices.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Questions and Answers: Book I, Cantos v-viii

Questions

1. What motivates Redcross to escape the House of Pride?
2. How is Satyrane different from the others in the troop of fauns, satyrs and nymphs? How does that difference benefit Una?
3. What character represents Pride and capture Redcross? What is Duessa's role in each capture?
4. What textual clues link Duessa to Catholicism?
5. How is Orgoglio defeated?

Answers

1. Redcross' Dwarf tells him of sinners trapped by pride or idleness and forever tortured in the dungeons beneath the House of Pride. Afraid of a similar fate, Redcross rides out in search of worthy pursuits.
2. Satyrane is half-man and was raised to be fearless. He has more intelligence than the other wood gods and so not only worships Una, but also understands her teachings. Because of his sympathetic nature (despite his ferocity) and intelligent bearing, Una confides her wish to escape and find Redcross, and Satyrane comprehends and helps her.
3. Orgoglio represents Pride. Duessa leads Redcross to the House of Pride, and he fights for her as booty as well as for his own honor in a prideful battle with Sans joy. Duessa also relaxes Redcross by the stream that causes weakness, and so he is unable to fight when Orgoglio appears. Duessa then bargains for Redcross' life, but also causes his imprisonment.
4. In the sixteenth century, Protestants referenced the Whore of Babylon to indicate Roman Catholicism. Duessa wears the same clothes, carries the same cup, and rides the same beast that the Whore of Babylon has in the book of Revelation in the Bible. Furthermore, she brings Redcross to the House of Pride, and that kingdom is a sly reference to the Pope and Catholicism as well. Like the House of Pride, Duessa's beauty and charm come from pomp and impudence, a common criticism of Catholicism by Protestants in the sixteenth century.
5. Prince Arthur's intervention defeats Orgoglio. He blows a horn which opens locked doors and causes Orgoglio to leave his castle, and then uses blinding flashes of light and battles to kill Orgoglio, despite earthquakes and the injury of his own Squire.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Questions and Answers: Book I, Cantos ix-xii

Questions

1. Why is Prince Arthur, who is from Earth, in Faerie Land?
2. What is Prince Arthur's quest? How did he come by it?
3. What does the episode with Despair reveal about the Redcross Knight?
4. How does the House of Holiness prepare the Redcross Knight for his battle with the dragon?
5. What two miraculous events save Redcross during his fight with the dragon? How do they reveal the presence of God?

Answers

1. Prince Arthur was sent to Faerie Land because he was too young to assume the throne when his father died, although he was the rightful heir. His mother worried that the uncle who took over the kingship would kill the Prince to keep his claim to the throne, and so sent him to Faerie Land. Merlin watched over him, gave him spectacular gifts like his armor and shield, and a stepfather named Timon watched over him.
2. Prince Arthur seeks Gloriana, the Faerie Queen. She came to him while he was resting, and he fell in love with her. Before he met her, he was a cold and rude young man, but after falling in love with her he has become a steadfast and true Knight.
3. The Redcross Knight has just endured the physical trial in Orgoglio's dungeon, but Despair shows him that he is also susceptible to emotional and logical manipulation that can endanger his life just as much. Despair reminds him about God's vengeance and justice, but does not mention God's mercy. This harsh portrayal of God leads Redcross to bemoan all of his sins and fall prey to self-pity. Only Una's influence saves him.
4. The House of Holiness gives Redcross a sense of identity and religion. It clarifies his mission in life and gives him the courage, strength, and acceptance of God to complete his quest with Una. He accepts God's grace and his own destiny as a saint.
5. A well of healing water and the sap from a healing tree revive Redcross from near-death states and give him extra strength and stamina to battle the dragon. Since a plunge into healing waters can easily be tied to baptism, particularly in such a religiously laden work, and the tree is explicitly named as the tree of life, God's presence is indicated by both events. Furthermore, the tree of life is right next to the tree of knowledge, suggesting that Una's land is in Eden. If Eden is a physical locale, the Bible may be taken literally and God's existence cannot be denied. In addition, the suggestion that God's grace and sacraments save Redcross from death also strengthens the idea that God is present during the battle.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Questions and Answers: Book II, Cantos i-vi

Questions

1. What happened to Ruddymane's parents?
2. Why does Guyon have to walk to Medina's castle?

3. What reason does Pyrochles give for fighting with Guyon?
4. Why does Cymochles leave his indulgent lounging by the river?
5. In what circumstance does Atin discover that Pyrochles lives? Who else witnesses this?

Answers

1. Ruddymane's father fell into indulgence at the Bower of Bliss and died because Acrasia cursed him when he left. His mother committed suicide in despair.
2. Braggadocchio stole Guyon's horse while he was speaking with Ruddymane's mother.
3. Pyrochles claims that it was not Knightly for Guyon to defeat the old woman Occasion.
4. Atin tells Cymochles that his brother Pyrochles was killed by Guyon and Cymochles must avenge that death.
5. Atin and the Archimago watch Pyrochles stumble into the river claiming that his organs have been set afire by Furor and Occasion, though nothing can be outwardly seen. The Archimago heals him.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Questions and Answers: Book II, Cantos vii-xii

Questions

1. Why does Guyon enter the cave of Mammon? What happens when he leaves?
2. How do Guyon and Prince Arthur enter Alma's castle? What is it like?
3. What is striking about Prince Arthur's battle with Maleger?
4. What role does the Palmer play in the navigation to the Bower of Bliss?
5. What is Arcasia's effect on her paramours?

Answers

1. Although Guyon has refused the wealth Mammon has offered, he is curious to see what it is he refuses. He enters the cave of Mammon out of curiosity and in response to Mammon's invitation. When he leaves, he collapses from lack of food and water and only survives Pyrochles and Cymochles' appearance because of the Palmer and Prince Arthur.
2. Guyon and Prince Arthur enter Alma's castle victoriously, after defeating a band of brigands assailing the castle walls. Inside, they find an orderly castle where everything is useful and rooms exist for each type of good desire. The castle and Alma are models of temperance.
3. Two factors of Prince Arthur's battle with Malegar are particularly striking. Prince Arthur is saved from death by his Squire, which Spencer attributes to God's grace. If even Prince Arthur, a Christ-like figure, requires aid to survive, the situation of all men's dependency on grace becomes evident. The second striking factor is Prince Arthur's helplessness and the stalemate between him and Maleger. The battle is somewhat dreary to read because Prince Arthur is so impotent. This suggests the fallen state of all men and the need to continue to act despite feelings of helplessness and despair.

4. The Palmer continually restrains Guyon's wish to linger in unwholesome places, vanquishes the vision of sea monsters, and guides the boat through a heavy mist to land. He controls and steers Guyon and the boat.
5. Arcasia weakens and debilitates her lovers, causing them to put aside their armor and relax in the idle Bower so that she can suck their souls.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Questions and Answers: Book III, Prologue-Canto vi

Questions

1. Why doesn't Britomart remove her armor at Castle Joyeous? What mistake does that lead Malecasta into?
2. Why does Britomart malign Artegall?
3. Why does Florimell flee Faerie Court? Why does she flee Prince Arthur?
4. What is darkly humorous about Cymoent's attempt to protect her son from the prophecy's fate?
5. Describe Belpheobe and her twin's birth and upbringing.

Answers

1. Britomart leaves her armor on to hide her gender. Britomart's beautiful face then incites Malecasta's lust because she believes Britomart to be male.
2. Britomart is in love with Artegall and wishes to hear stories about him from Redcross, so she uses an insult to Artegall to provoke Redcross into praising Artegall.
3. Florimell flees Faerie Court because she hears that Marinell, her true love, is dead. Florimell flees Prince Arthur because she is afraid of all men being lustful.
4. Cymoent protects Marinell against the love of women because of a prophecy saying a woman will greatly harm Marinell. Cymoent does not worry that her strong, brave young son will be injured by a female, and so Britomart's wounding of Marinell makes the prophecy both literal and true. Cymoent protected Marinell against the wrong kind of assault from a woman because Cymoent stereotyped women.
5. Belpheobe and Amoretta were born of a virgin who was impregnated by sunbeams and had her children while she was asleep. Venus and Diana found the newborns, and Amoretta was raised in the Garden of Adonis to be an example of femininity and true love, while Belpheobe was raised in virginal, female company in the woods with Diana's nymphs.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Questions and Answers: Book III, Cantos vii-xii

Questions

1. Why does Satyrane believe Florimell dead?
2. What motivates the witch to create the false Florimell?
3. Why does Paridell stay at Malbecco's castle?

4. Why does Malbecco transform into a living example of jealousy?
5. What situation does Britomart find Amoretta in?

Answers

1. Satyrane sees the witch's monster eating Florimell's horse and finds Florimell's bloodied golden girdle, so he believes Florimell has died because of the monster.
2. The witch's son is sick with love for Florimell, and her disappearance ruins his state of mind. When the witch tells her son that Florimell is dead, her son goes nearly mad. After consulting the spirits, the witch creates the false Florimell so that her son will have something besides the missing image of Florimell to fixate upon.
3. Although Paridell claims injuries from his fight with Britomart are the reason he stays at Malbecco's, Paridell really stays to court Hellenore.
4. Malbecco's young and beautiful wife Hellenore runs off with Paridell and has sex with him, then goes into the woods and lives with satyrs as wife to all of them. When Malbecco finds her and begs her to return to his castle, she refuses. The intense jealousy Malbecco feels causes him to transform out of being a man and into a living example of jealousy.
5. Amoretta is tied to a pillar and her chest is split open when Britomart finds her. Amoretta's heart is still pumping blood, which Busirane uses as ink with which to write.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Questions and Answers Book VI, Proem-Canto vi

Questions

1. What conditions must Crudor meet in order to live?
2. How does Calidore acquire a Squire?
3. How is Turpine humiliated?
4. What does the Blatant Beast symbolize, and what happens when it bites someone?
5. Does the savage man need Prince Arthur's protection? Why or why not?

Answers

1. Calidore forces Crudor to agree to be kind to all Knights and Ladies, to marry Briana and teach her courtesy, and to drop his dowry requirement of a mantle made of the hair of Ladies and Knights.
2. The brave, noble youth Tristram fought an armed Knight with only darts and bare hands for the honor of a Lady. To reward the young man, Calidore allows him to become a Squire, although he does not allow Tristram to travel with him.
3. Turpine flees before all of his minions, and his cowardly life has to be bargained for by Blandina. When he regains consciousness, Prince Arthur chastises him and his life.
4. The Blatant Beast symbolizes slander, and the bites fester until the recipient behaves and thinks moderately.

5. The savage man is protected by magic from any injury, and so needs no one's protection. Furthermore, the savage man fights very well.

Short-Answer Quizzes: Questions and Answers: Book VI, Cantos vii-xii

Questions

1. Why does Turpine lie to the two Knights about Prince Arthur?
2. Why can't Timias, Enias, or even Prince Arthur free Mirabella from her tormenters?
3. How does Meliboe's wisdom possibly lead Calidore astray?
4. Why do the slave-traders demand to see Pastorell? Why does the captain resist?
5. What happens to the Blatant Beast?

Answers

1. Turpine feels humiliated by Prince Arthur, but he is afraid that he will be defeated again if he engages in combat with him. By lying to the two Knights, he can send proxies to defeat his enemy.
2. Mirabella's punishment was decreed by the gods. She must endure it until she has completed two nearly impossible tasks, and if her tormenters die then she will suffer eternally.
3. Meliboe says that the secret to happiness is to be happy with one's lot. Because Calidore becomes content and secure in the village, by doing exactly what Meliboe has advised, Calidore does not continue his quest to kill the Blatant Beast. This error leads many more to suffer from the Blatant Beast's rampages.
4. The slave-traders remember Pastorell's beauty and want to witness it again. The captain resists because he is in love with her and does not want to sell her or let others lustfully gaze upon her. 5. Calidore captures the Blatant Beast and muzzles it. He leads it around to villages to increase his own glory and fame. After a time, the Beast is released into England, where it continues to wreak havoc today.

Quotes: "All For Love"

Context: Sir Guyon, who in this allegory represents Temperance, is one of the twelve knights of the Faerie Queene. He has been tempted unsuccessfully by Mammon for three days, during which time he has neither eaten nor slept. Mammon then is compelled to guide him back to the world, but on first seeing the light Guyon falls down in a trance and would have perhaps died if his companion, the Palmer, had not been called by an angel whom God has sent to watch over Guyon. Spenser tells us that God "loves his creatures so" that He often sends angels on errands of mercy. Dryden used Spenser's words in 1678, when he published his "refined" version of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra which he called All for Love. Spenser, in referring to the errands of mercy performed by angels, says:

They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward,
And their bright Squadrons round about us
plant;
And all for love, and nothing for reward:
O! why should heavenly God to men have such
regard?

Quotes: "Be Bold, Be Bold—but Not Too Bold"

Context: The exemplification of love's aspects is the major theme of Book III. Britomart, the lady-knight of Active Chastity, is fervently seeking her love, Sir Artigall, the knight of Justice. While on this quest, she finds Scudamore, the Shield of Love, weeping on the ground because Busirane has held Amoret captive for seven months by means of black magic. Busirane, who represents the negation of Chastity and of the will of love, is Lust. Britomart accompanies Scudamore to Busirane's castle where the entrance is guarded by a sulphurous smoking flame. Britomart, alone, is able to penetrate the flame. Inside the castle, she passes through three rooms, each of which teaches her something of the transforming nature of love. In the first, she sees a tapestry depicting the many disguises under which Jove made love, showing that even gods can debase themselves and become bestial in the search for love. Britomart passes through a door capped with Busirane's motto: Be bold. She finds herself in a room of pure gold hung with Cupid's "warlike spoils" which show the destructive effect of love on personal and political power. These two rooms have portrayed graphically the boldness of love: desire, pursuit, victory. Over the centuries, Spenser's lines have undergone a change in the popular memory.

And as she lookt about, she did behold
How over that same dore was likewise writ,
Be bold, be bold, and every where Be bold,
That much she muz'd, yet could not construe it
By any ridling skill, or commune wit.
At last she spyde at that roomes upper end,
Another yron dore, on which was writ,
Be not too bold; whereto though she did bend
Her earnest mind, yet wist not what it might intend.

Quotes: "Chaucer, Well Of English Undefined"

Context: Sir Blandamour, riding in company with Paridell, comes upon Sir Ferraugh, who is in the company of the counterfeit Florimell. Sir Blandamour vanquishes Sir Ferraugh in combat and takes Florimell from him. After a time the situation of Florimell's being Sir Blandamour's love irritates Paridell, as Paridell and Blandamour had an agreement to share any prizes they might take. They engage in a fight for the lady, and when both are bleeding freely from their wounds, they are joined by the Squire of Dames, who tells them that there is to be a tournament, the prize to be Florimell's girdle, which Satyran had found and worn until the jealousy of other knights forced him to arrange the contest. As they therefore all go towards the place of the tourney, they are met by the two fast friends, Cambell and Triamond, and their ladies, Canacee and Combine. There then ensues the stanza in the poem in which Spenser refers to Chaucer as the well of English undefined. It was a popular Elizabethan idea that Chaucer was the founder of the English language, but Spenser does not say so: what he does say is that Chaucer wrote pure and unblemished English. The stanza containing Spenser's reference to him is as follows (a "beadroll" is a list):

Whylome, as antique stories tellen vs,
Those two were foes the fellonest on ground,
And battell made the dreddest daungerous,
That euer shrilling trumpet did resound;
Though now their acts be no where to be found,
As that renowmed Poet them compyled,
With warlike numbers and Heroicke sound,
Dan Chaucer, well of English vndefyled,
On Fames eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled.
Bur wicked Time, that all good thoughts doth waste,
And workes of noblest wits to nought out weare,
That famous moniment hath quite defaste,
And robd the world of threasure endlesse deare,
The which mote haue enriched all vs heare.. . .

Quotes: "Divine Tobacco"

Context: The bold and virtuous squire, Timias, pursues a wicked foster, or forester, who had attempted an assault upon the person of the beautiful damsel, Florimell. The foster, knowing the woods, escapes from the pursuit and makes his way to his two brothers, who are as wicked and depraved as he; the three band together

to go to meet Timias, with whom they do battle. He finally slays all three of them, but not before he is severely wounded in the thigh by an arrow. The wound and the resultant loss of blood cause him to fall in a faint, almost dead, upon the ground. In the meanwhile the beautiful Belphebe is ranging the forest in search of a wild beast that she has wounded in the chase. Instead of finding her prey, she comes upon the unconscious Timias, who lies weltering in his blood. Tenderly she removes his armor, and at the sight of his face she falls completely in love with him. She tries for a while unsuccessfully to revive him to consciousness, and then decides that medicines are called for:

Into the woods thenceforth in hast she went,
To seeke for hearbes, that mote him remedy;
For she of hearbes had great intendiment,
Taught of the Nympe, which from her infancy
Her nourced had in trew Nobility;
There, whether it diuine Tobacco were,
Or Panachaea, or Polygony,
She found, and brought it to her patient deare
Who al this while lay bleeding out his
hartbloud neare.

Quotes: "Hard Is To Teach An Old Horse Amble True"

Context: Florimell, beset by a villainous forester in the woods, escapes his clutches and flees, eventually taking refuge in the hut of a witch and her loutish son. The son becomes enamored of Florimell, who decides to fly before his love becomes too violent for her to control. She therefore decamps early one morning. The witch, upon discovering her departure, sets on her trail a savage beast much like a hyena; the beast pursues her until her horse falls from weariness on the seashore. Florimell had thought to drown herself in the sea to escape being devoured by the beast, but finding a small boat occupied by an old sleeping fisherman drawn up on the shore, she enters it and poles her way out into the water. The beast does not follow; instead, it eviscerates her horse. Florimell's movement of the boat wakes the old fisherman, who at first is dazed by her beauty. The old man finally becomes fully awake and leers horribly at Florimell; although aged, he begins to feel the stirrings of fowl lust. He leaps at her, but she scornfully repulses his madness. He, however, pays scant attention to her rebuff. Today we say: You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

But he, that neuer good nor maners knew,
Her sharpe rebuke full litle did esteeme;
Hard is to teach an old horse amble trew.
The inward smoke, that did before but steeme,
Broke into open fire and rage extreme;
And now he strength gan adde vnto his will,
Forcing to doe, that did him fowle misseeme:
Beastly he threw her downe, ne cared to spill
Her garments gay with scales of fish,
that all did fill.

Quotes: "Let Grill Be Grill And Have His Hoggish Mind"

Context: The theme of temperance is paramount in the Book II of the epic. Guyon, the Knight of Moral Reason, assays to destroy the Bower of Bliss and to overthrow its mistress, Acrasie, who represents Intemperance and who prevents man from attaining his best self. Guyon is guided in his effort by the Palmer, who exemplifies the intellectual virtue of Prudence. Guyon attains the proper balance between his natural, rational soul and his physical actions through theoretical education and physical training at Alma's Castle, the House of Temperance. Having attained this balance, Guyon and the Palmer are able to fight their way through the Bower of Bliss where they find Acrasie with her new lover, Verdant. Casting unbreakable nets over the two, Guyon and the Palmer mercilessly destroy the palace and its garden. There they find men whom Acrasie has turned into wild beasts. The Palmer returns these to their former state. Some are shamed, others angry. Grill, who had been turned into a hog, even berates his saviors for rescuing him. Guyon remarks how quickly this man has forgotten the divine grace which ordains all men to a higher end. The Palmer's answer points out that the saving of all men is not within the power of one man; there are those who will resist all attempts to save them and are best left to their own desires.

Said Guyon, "See the mind of beastly man,
That hath so soone forgot the excellence
Of his creation, when he life began,
That now he chooseth, with vile difference,
To be a beast, and lacke intelligence."
To whom the Palmer thus, "The donghill kind
Delights in filth and foule incontinence:
Let Grill be Grill, and have his hoggish mind;
But let us hence depart, whilest
wether serves and wind."

Quotes: "Roses Red And Violets Blue"

Context: In this section of the allegory, Chrysogonee is the mother of Belphoebe, the chaste maiden who represents Queen Elizabeth I in Book III of *The Faerie Queene*. Belphoebe and her twin, Amoretta, are conceived in an immaculate manner, after Chrysogonee bathes in the forest, then lies on the grass "all naked bare" and falls asleep. The sunbeams play on her body, enter her womb and make her pregnant. As she is bathing, Spenser says:

In a fresh fountaine, far from all mens vew,
She bath'd her brest the boyling heat t'allay;
She bath'd with roses red and violets blew,
And all the sweetest flowres that in the forrest grew.

Quotes: "Squire Of Dames"

Context: In *The Faerie Queene*, a long allegorical poem made up of a series of knightly adventures, a knight known as "the Squire of Dames," assigned by his ladylove the task of seeking pledges of love from as many ladies as possible in a year's time, has received pledges from three hundred, but, when his lady sends him forth to seek an equal number of examples of chastity, he finds only three ladies in three years willing to reject his advances. The Squire of Dames, who happens upon a giantess carrying off the lady Florimell, allows Florimell to escape but is himself snatched up by the giantess. Sir Satyrane rescues the squire, and together they search for a monster like a hyena that the witch has sent after Florimell. Then Sir Satyrane:

Who having ended with that Squire of Dames
A long discourse of his adventures vaine,
The which himselfe, then Ladies, more defames,
And finding not th' Hyena to be slaine,
With that same Squire, returned backe againe
To his first way.

Quotes: "The Gentle Mind By Gentle Deeds Is Known"

Context: The concept of courtesy is the major theme of Book VI. In the first portion of this book, courtesy is exemplified in the actions of Calidore, the knight of Courtesy. While on his search for the Blatant Beast, Slander, he finds Priscilla weeping beside her wounded knight, Aladine. A lustful knight had attacked the unarmed Aladine while he and Priscilla were making love; she had escaped by hiding quickly. Calidore assures her that their attacker has already been slain by Tristram. Calidore then straps Aladine on his shield; he and Priscilla carry the wounded knight in this manner to the nearby castle of Aldus, Aladine's father. Spenser then comments that Calidore's actions have been an excellent example of true courtesy. The theme of this episode is expressed in Spenser's quotation from Chaucer (*Canterbury Tales*, "Wife of Bath's Tale," 1. 1170):

True is, that whilome that good Poet sayd,
The gentle minde by gentle deeds is knowne:
For a man by nothing is so well betrayd,
As by his manners, in which plaine is showne
Of what degree and what race he is growne.
For seldom seene, a trotting Stalion get
An ambling Colt, that is his proper owne:
So seldome seene, that one in baseness set
Doth noble courage shew, with courteous manners met.