The Faerie Queene Study Guide

The Faerie Queene by Edmund Spenser

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Introduction

The Faerie Queene is a romantic epic, the first sustained poetic work since Geoffrey Chaucer. In this work, Spenser uses the archaic language of Chaucer as a way to pay homage to the medieval poet. Spenser saw himself as a medievalist, but cognizant of his audience, he uses the modern pronunciation of the Renaissance. Spenser uses biblical allegory to tell his story, but the poem is much more than just a religious poem. Its purpose was to educate, to turn a young man into a gentleman. There are two levels of allegory present. One level examines the moral, philosophical, and religious and is represented by the Red Cross Knight, who represents all Christians. The second level is the particular, which focuses on the political, social, and religious, in which the Faerie Queene represents Elizabeth I. Spenser was not born to a wealthy household, as were so many of the other great Renaissance poets, such as Philip Sidney. This fact is important, since his work is colored by this lack of wealth. Spenser needed a patron to provide for his support while he worked, and patrons expect that the artists they support will write .attering words. This was certainly the case with Spenser's work, *The Faerie Queene*, which is meant to celebrate Elizabeth I and, oftentimes, flatter her. In this work, Spenser presents his ideas of what constitutes an ideal England. He also thought that he could use his text as a way to recall the chivalry of a past era, and thus, inspire such actions again. Spenser influenced many of the poets who followed, including John Milton, Percy Shelley, John Keats, Lord Byron, and Lord Tennyson.

Author Biography

Edmund Spenser was born in London in 1552 or 1553. The Spenser household was working class, his father a tailor. Little is known about Spenser's family, although it appears he had a sister and a couple of brothers. As a child, Spenser attended the Merchant Taylor's Free School, where his education focused on the new humanist movement. Spenser received a bachelor's degree from Pembroke College, Cambridge in 1573 and a Master's degree in 1576. While at Cambridge, Spenser was a work study student, earning money to pay for his meals and lodging. After leaving Cambridge, Spenser worked as a secretary for the Bishop of Rochester, John Young. During this period, Spenser composed "The Shepheardes Calendar," which was printed in 1579. Also in 1579, Spenser went to work for the Earl of Leicester, where Spenser became acquainted with Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Edward Dyer, both of whom were part of the artistic circle at court. A year later, Spenser moved to Ireland as a secretary to the newly appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland.

Within the next few years, Spenser changed jobs a few more times, and in the process, acquired some property in Ireland, living there with his sister, Sarah. After Sir Walter Raleigh read through an early draft of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser agreed to accompany Raleigh to court, where he was presented to Elizabeth I. At this time, Spenser published the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*. At this time, Spenser acquired a patron, which allowed him to remain in London. After some sort of scandal, Spenser returned to Ireland in 1591, marrying Elizabeth Boyle in 1594. To honor his new wife, Spenser wrote "Amoretti" and "Epithalamion" in 1595. "Astrophel" and "Colin clouts come home again" were also published in 1595. The next three books of *The Faerie Queene* were published in 1596, with Spenser once again back in London, although only temporarily. During this time, Spenser continued to work, writing "A vewe of the present state of Irelande," "Fowre Hymnes," and "Prothalamion." Spenser returned to Ireland, when he was unable to secure another patron at court.

In 1598, Spenser received an appointment as the Sheriff of County Cork, but the appointment did not last long. A rebellion in the area forced the Spenser family to flee to safety. Soon Spenser was sent back to London with messages for the Privy Council. Spenser died in London a few months later, apparently having starved to death, according to Ben Jonson. Spenser was immensely popular with other poets, who mourned his passing by throwing verses of their poetry into his grave. Spenser is buried in the Poets Corner at Westminster Abbey. It was never clear how a poet as popular as Spenser was allowed to die in such poverty, nor even if the story is true. Spenser was never wealthy, but he did earn a comfortable living, having years earlier secured a lifetime pension from the queen, in addition to his wife's dowry and his salary as sheriff. The facts surrounding Spenser's death, then, must be considered as undocumented. All that is known for certain is that he died on January 13, 1599. Spenser had always intended to publish another six books of *The Faerie Queene*; they were never found, nor is it known if Spenser ever completed the composition of the missing books.

Plot 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, Belphoebe, 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 Belphoebe treats him with herbs and heals him. When he awakens, Timias falls in love with Belphoebe. At the same time, a witch and her monstrous son are pursuing the beautiful Florimell, and soon an old .sherman 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 Ertegall 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.

Book 1, Canto 1

Book 1, Canto 1 Summary

The Red Cross Knight is riding across the plain (wearing borrowed armor that doesn't quite fit him and bears marks of battles he has not yet seen) with the Lady Una (wearing white but covered with a black veil and leading a white lamb) and a dwarf. The Knight has been assigned his first quest by Gloriana, the queen of Faerie, and is supposed to defeat the dragon that has ravaged Una's homeland and kidnapped her parents. The weather threatens to turn nasty, so the party seeks shelter in a nearby wood. The forest is a comfortable retreat, but the travelers soon lose their way and cannot find the path out. The knight strikes out into a dark, creepy den, despite Una's warning to take his time and be careful, for they are in the Den of Error, a monstrous half-woman, half serpent hybrid. The foolhardy knight battles with this creature and is nearly dispatched by her poisonous stingers and vomit of moldy books and papers, but Una calls out to him at the last moment to have faith, and the Red Cross Knight is finally able to prevail, cutting off the beast's head. Error's children scuttle forth to feast on her blood until they burst. The Red Cross Knight is disgusted by the scene, but is quickly restored by Una's praise of his battle prowess.

The group continues on their quest, now able to find the path, of course, and soon they come upon an old man in black who offers them rest for the night in his cottage. The travelers agree and Archimago leads them back to his hermitage. That night, Archimago uses dark spells to first give the Red Cross Knight some passionate and lustful dreams, then makes it appear as though Una has appeared in his room intent on dishonoring herself with him. The knight manages to talk his way out of the encounter, stunned that the virtuous Lady Una would stoop to such levels, but willing to forget the matter. The evil spirits return to Archimago to report their failure.

Book 1, Canto 1 Analysis

Red Cross represents the young untried knight on his first step towards Holiness. He gets his name from the bloody red cross on his shield, the image of his faith. He is rash, often foolhardy, and quite naïve, but he has potential. He is eager to prove his worthiness to Una and his queen. Una, on the other hand, represents Unity, oneness, or the one true faith—Protestant. At the start, Una's purity is shrouded by the black veil, a symbol of her mourning, and also the first suggestion that appearance is not always reality when in Faerie—a lesson the Red Cross Knight desperately needs to learn. Una is a font of virtue and a shining example for the Red Cross Knight to look to for advice, though he seldom heeds her advice in this first canto. The Knight manages to defeat the dragon of Error more so out of fear of defeat—that is, looking bad in front of Una—than any true faith or talent.

Archimago, the magician they encounter, represents Hypocrisy, or the appearance of friendship and hospitality while truly sowing malcontent and distrust. He fails to convince the knight of Una's faithlessness because of the knight's own insecurities—he does not believe that Una could want him—not because the knight is steadfast in his faith regarding Una's fidelity. Archimago uses this episode to learn how to drive a wedge between the knight and the lady under the knight's protection.

Book 1, Canto 2

Book 1, Canto 2 Summary

After his first failure with the knight, Archimago changes tactics, this time having his evil spirits pose as Una and a young man in a delicate position and summoning the Red Cross Knight to watch. Disgusted by his lady's unfaithfulness, the knight storms out of the hermitage. Una awakes alone and confused, but leaves on her own after realizing her knight has fled. Archimago disguises himself as the knight and follows her.

The Red Cross Knight stumbles upon a fellow knight, Sansfoy, and his lady, Fidessa, and gets himself into another fight. He wins, kills Sansfoy, and offers to protect the lady. They are troubled by an amazingly hot sun and seek shade beneath a tree. The Red Cross Knight breaks a branch off the tree and is amazed to se that it bleeds. The tree then tells its story—it was once Fradubio, a knight traveling with his lady Fraelissa. The couple happened upon an evil knight, Fradubio killed him, and claimed the lady traveling with his opponent, a woman named Duessa who happened to be a witch. The witch turned Fraelissa into a tree and fooled Fradubio for a time, but eventually he saw her true nature (while she was bathing, of course) and was turned into a tree himself for his trouble. After hearing this tale of woe, Fidessa (obviously the witch the story speaks of, but the Red Cross Knight just doesn't see it) faints and the couple leave the trees to their fate.

Book 1, Canto 2 Analysis

Red Cross has stumbled onto the first of three brothers who will challenge his faith. Sansfoy, literally "without faith" falls quite easily to the knight's sword, but the true malice of this particular challenge lies in his companion, the lady Duessa. Literally "twofold," the lady is clearly symbolic for deception, duality, false appearance, and, for Spenser, an image of the false faith that had tried to challenge his true Protestantism—Catholicism. Even the clothing Duessa ("Fidessa" or a mockery of faith) wears is reminiscent of Catholic garb. Duessa also can be compared to the whore of Babylon. Red Cross falls neatly into her trap without a struggle—a clear sign that he has not yet attained holiness, or even the ability to see the truth when it is right in front of him.

Book 1, Canto 3

Book 1, Canto 3 Summary

The tale returns to Una, Red Cross's abandoned lady, as she wanders alone. A lion tries to attack her, but sensing her innocence, decides to protect her instead. The unlikely duo stumble onto a deaf and dumb girl and scare her to death. She flees and Una and her lion follow her back to a house. When no one lets Una inside, the lion tears down the door, and she and the beast rest comfortably inside the home of Abessa (the deaf mute daughter) and her mother, Corceca (who is blind). In the middle of the knight, a robber steps inside (to deliver a portion of his stolen goods to the crooked mother and daughter) only to be torn to pieces by the lion guardian. Una leaves the home amid much discontent from the two women, and is only saved from despair by the sight of her Red Cross Knight (Archimago in disguise). There is a joyful reunion, and the two set off again. Soon, they come upon Sansloy, the brother of the defeated Sansfoy, who is not too happy to hear of his brother's death at Red Cross's hands. The two duel, Red Cross is unhorsed and nearly killed, but at the last moment Archimago dispels the magic that makes him appear as Red Cross and Sanloy spares him. Instead, Sansloy takes Una as his prize, and kills her lion guardian as it tries to protect her.

Book 1, Canto 3 Analysis

The lion that befriends Una represents natural law, which Spenser would have associated with Christian truth. Occasionally violent, natural law can always be reasonable when true Christianity appears—like Una, the true faith. However, the lion has no power when faced with Sansloy, literally "without law"; that is, without God's law or fundamental Christianity. The episode with the evil mother and daughter represent another jab at Catholicism, with the robber standing in for monasticism, and the women illustrating the Catholic church's blindness and deafness to the rest of the world while they collect their money. Abessa is clearly reminiscent of "abbess" or the head of an abbey. When the lion of natural law destroys the robber, Spenser is showing how true Christianity will overcome false Catholicism—a running theme throughout the book.

Book 1, Canto 4

Book 1, Canto 4 Summary

We now return to the Red Cross Knight, who approaches the House of Pride with Duessa. They are welcomed by Lucifera, the queen of the House of Pride, and she displays a parade of her six advisors—1dleness, Gluttony, Lechery, Avarice, Envy, and Wrath—who all appear very much like their names. At the end of this display of sinfulness, another Saracen arrives on the scene—Sansjoy—the brother of the slain Sansfoy, who challenges Red Cross to a duel. Our hero agrees, but the duel is scheduled for the next morning. Duessa then pledges herself to Sansjoy (without Red Cross's knowledge, of course, but probably right in front of him).

Book 1, Canto 4 Analysis

The House of Pride itself is built upon sand, a reference to Jesus' claim that any house not built upon the teachings of the church may as well be built upon sand, and Spenser's attempt to show what can happen the false religion is allowed to flourish. The parade in the House of Pride is a standard list of sins that any knight concerned with Holiness should know to avoid. Red Cross does not yet recognize the danger he is in; a sign that he is not quite on the right path towards becoming a better Christian knight. Red Cross is easily fooled by Lucifera, the devil, and Duessa. Lucifera is a character used by Spenser to contrast with Queen Elizabeth. Where Lucifera is crooked, evil, and sinful, Queen Elizabeth is rightfully on the throne, a good ruler, and a virtuous person, despite what the Catholics say about her.

Book 1, Canto 5

Book 1, Canto 5 Summary

The next day, the two knights fight. Eventually, Red Cross manages to knock down Sansfoy (after some misinterpreted "aid" from Duessa) and is about to deliver the killing blow when Sansjoy disappears in a swirl of black mist. Unbeknownst to the Red Cross knight, Duessa accompanies Sansjoy down to the Underworld (along with Night) and they convince Aesculapius, a physician punished for knowing the secrets of bringing people back to life, to bring Sansjoy back to life. Eventually, the doomed man agrees and Sansjoy is saved.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross Knight is recovering from the battle in bed. The faithful dwarf (remember Una's dwarf from Canto 1?) is wandering the castle and discovers a basement filled with the bodies of those who would not leave because they were overcome with Pride. He tells this to a dismayed Red Cross Knight, and the two flee in the dawn light.

Book 1, Canto 5 Analysis

The obvious deception of Duessa is completely missed by the Red Cross Knight, who fails once again to recognize the difference between appearance and reality. His life is saved by the dwarf who is able to see the effects of pride and convey the deadliness of that path to the wounded Red Cross knight. The sheer magnitude of Pride's effects finally seems to sink in through Red Cross's somewhat slow sensibilities, and the knight has his first real movement towards Holiness.

Book 1, Canto 6

Book 1, Canto 6 Summary

The tale flips back to Una, now in the not so gentle care of Sansloy, who is nearly raped by her captor. She cries out and is heard by some gentle forest folk, including Satyrane, who all bend down to worship her. Sansloy is considerably disturbed by this display and flees the scene. Una is cared for by this gentle satyr until they come upon an old man. Seeking the Red Cross Knight, Una inquires about her protector, and is dismayed to hear that he was killed by a pagan knight. The two continue on and find Sansloy (who actually defeated Archimago disguised as Red Cross) and Satyrane battles the knight on Una's behalf. The fight drags on for hours, and Una, afraid of the outcome, flees the scene. Archimago, watching the fight from a hiding place, sees Una leave.

Book 1, Canto 6 Analysis

Satyrane represents nature, but in a different way from the Lion of natural law. Satyrane is a good protector for Una, but he is no match for Sansloy because he himself has no Christian faith. In other words, Spenser claims, the natural faith of the pagans is a good thing, but it cannot fight against the things which threaten the true faith; that is, the things that a Christian knight, as Red Cross hopes to be, must face and defeat.

Book 1, Canto 7

Book 1, Canto 7 Summary

Once again, we find the Red Cross knight fooled by Duessa as she comes upon him lying down, still resting from his fight with Sansjoy. The two talk, but are come upon by a giant Orgoglio. Duessa's pleas spare Red Cross's life, but he is thrown into the giant's dungeon, and Duessa becomes the giant's lover. The dwarf manages to escape, and finding Una back down the road, explains the situation. Una is surprised to hear that Red Cross is alive and captured (she faints a few times), but she recovers. The dwarf also tells her of Archimago's deception (the reason why Red Cross left her in the first place) and the two head towards Orgoglio. On the way, they run into the famous King Arthur (on a quest of his own but never too busy to refrain from helping a maiden in distress) and Una pours out her story. She tells of her parents, who are held captive by a dragon, and of the knight the Faerie Queene gave her to help free them from the beast's clutches. She also tells of her knight's current predicament with Orgoglio. Arthur agrees to help free Red Cross.

Book 1, Canto 7 Analysis

Orgoglio represents willful disobedience to God, or godless pride, and he easily overcomes anyone separate from his faith—like Red Cross and Duessa. The fact that Red Cross is so easily captured shows how far he has fallen from his true path towards Holiness. His inability to see Duessa for what she is could be part of the problem. The introduction of the famous King Arthur to the story is a popular twist in Romance. He shows up like the US cavalry (in all WWII movies) just in time to save the day.

Book 1, Canto 8

Book 1, Canto 8 Summary

Arthur rides with Una and the dwarf to the castle where Red Cross is held prisoner, and Arthur blows his horn to call out Orgoglio. The giant emerges, followed by Duessa riding a fantastic seven headed beast. Arthur and Orgoglio have a battle worthy of a Mel Gibson movie, with the dwarf trying to help out and nearly getting killed by Duessa for his trouble. Eventually, after much toil, and the unveiling of an extremely bright shield, Arthur is victorious. Una runs into the castle to find her knight, and the nearly dead Red Cross is helped out of the dungeon by Una and Arthur. They force Duessa to strip before him so that he can see her witchy nature, then force her to flee into the woods while the foursome (Una, Red Cross, Arthur, and the dwarf) take shelter in the castle.

Book 1, Canto 8 Analysis

The beast the Duessa rides on is straight out of Revelations, with her a the whore of Babylon riding on its back. Because she represents the false faith of Catholicism for Spenser, he is showing how belief in such a religion will lead to the end of the world. The fact that Arthur bests the giant is a given, but it in interesting that he nearly fails without his diamond encrusted shield (of faith). 1t is this unbeatable shield that Red Cross has yet to earn. That Arthur and Una together must force him to see Duessa's true nature does not suggest that he will get his shield any time soon.

Book 1, Canto 9

Book 1, Canto 9 Summary

During their rest at what was formerly Orgoglio's castle, Una and Red Cross ask Arthur about his story. He tells them a bit about his life (Wales, Merlin, etc.) and also that he has fallen in love with Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, and is on a quest for her. The knights part company after a time, and Una and Red Cross continue on their way. They soon come across a knight, Trevisan, who is fleeing from Despayre, a gloomy old man who has already convinced Trevisan's fellow knight Terwin to commit suicide. Red Cross convinces Trevisan to lead him back to Despayre's cave so that he may confront the man. Trevisan complies, and they approach Despayre. Red Cross wants to exact revenge for Terwin (whose body lies nearby) but is waylaid by Despayre's questions. By the time Despayre is done talking, Red Cross is ready to kill himself (what use is living in sinfulness anyways?) but is stopped by Una. The lady gives him a fierce talking to that saves his life and the two ride away from the cave of Despayre.

Book 1, Canto 9 Analysis

By having Arthur place his origins in Wales, Spenser is linking Queen Elizabeth, and the Tudor House, to this legendary knight. Arthur also serves as a Christ figure, with his ability to give healing draughts (like the Eucharist) to Red Cross.

Red Cross is easily persuaded by Despayre (Despair) to give up on life, yet another sign of his weakness in faith and holiness. He is unable to logically reason his way out of despair because of his lack of faith. 1t is only when Una practically shames him into living that he leaves, not because he sees the truth at last, but because Una has reminded him of his duty to slay the dragon that holds her parents captive. Red Cross cannot die with a quest unfulfilled, he understands, but his decision to go on has nothing to do with faith—yet another failure. At this point, Red Cross seems more of an example of what not to do as a Christian knight than what to do.

Book 1, Canto 10

Book 1, Canto 10 Summary

Having gained an understanding of her knight's weakness, Una takes Red Cross to the House of Holiness. He has lessons from the daughters of Caelia's daughter give him lessons there. First, Fidelia instructs him in discipline and the gospel; then, Sperenza helps to prevent his sins from leading him once again into a deep despondency. Next, Patience and Penance helps him cleanse himself of sin. Finally, Charissa comes to Red Cross, and she teaches him of love and righteousness. Once Red Cross has learned these spiritual lessons, seven wise men heal his physical body at a hospital. As a special treat, he is taken up the hill by Contemplation and his destiny is revealed: Red Cross is not an original denizen of Faerie, but was stolen from a mortal king as a baby. He is destined to fight dragons and will one day be known as a saint. Red Cross also learns his real name—George. Red Cross comes down the hill a changed man, and he and Una set off to defeat the dragon.

Book 1, Canto 10 Analysis

Red Cross finally reaches Holiness through the aid of many others. Caelia, whose name mean heavenly, helps him, along with her daughters, Faith, Hope and Charity. The intervention of these characters suggests that spiritual enlightenment is only possible through other people's assistance, along with the true faith and a bit of contemplation. Once Red Cross has been schooled and has found his true faith once more, he is allowed to know his destiny and his name. Now that he has faith, Red Cross is more secure in his future as well. Because the knight's name is George, and his mission is to slay a dragon, there is a reference to the myths of St. George, the Dragon Slayer. The reference leads to the logical conclusion that Red Cross will succeed in his mission.

Book 1, Canto 11

Book 1, Canto 11 Summary

Una and Red Cross come at last to Una's homeland, where they immediately hear the dragon's roar. Red Cross begins a rather lengthy fight with the beast (even involving superheated armor that scorches our hero). At first, he cannot even wound the dragon, and is tossed about an awful lot. At the end of the first day, Red Cross is tossed, quite wounded, into the Well of Life. Una fears the worst, and the dragon assumes him dead. Of course, the well only rejuvenates him, heals his wounds, and increases his power. On day two, he is able to wound the creature, but again is pushed back to splash into the mud where a sacred tree grows. Una spends a fretful night wondering about him, the dragon nurses its wound, and Red Cross is made even stronger. On the third day, the dragon tries to swallow him ala Dragonheart, but Red Cross manages to stab the monster in the throat, and puts the dragon down. 1t crashes to the ground like a mountain, and Red Cross and Una are thrilled.

Book 1, Canto 11 Analysis

The path of the Red Cross knight is finally clear—he has overcome the dragon, or sin and faithlessness. Red Cross becomes a Christ figure here in many ways. First, he fights the dragon for three days and perseveres on the third, overcoming death to rise again much like the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. He also represents the Christian who is able to overcome sin through faith. However, Red Cross does not defeat the dragon on his own—he is rescued from death by the well of life (baptism) and the sacred tree (Eucharist)—suggesting that all Christians need help from god when facing sin and evil. Of course, Spenser suggests that the true Protestant will always triumph is his faith is true and god steps in to help with the impossible. Of course, the victory isn't Red Cross's alone—God gets the credit for the kill.

Book 1, Canto 12

Book 1, Canto 12 Summary

Following his victory over the dragon, all is well and Red Cross and Una are engaged with the blessing of her parents. Then, a messenger arrives, claiming that Red Cross may not marry Una because he already pledged his hand to another—the evil Duessa when she was pretending to be Fidessa. Red Cross and Una quickly talk the knight out of this obligation, stating that affection and promises won under false pretenses are not valid or binding. In fact, she is so adamant about appearance equaling truth that she asks the messenger to reveal himself. Of course, it turns out to be that villain Archimago. The celebration continues, but the couple does not wed at once. Red Cross has more work to do, and he sets off to fulfill his destiny.

Book 1, Canto 12 Analysis

The appearance of Archimago and Red Cross's ability to explain himself and his duty so clearly show how far the knight has come in his quest for holiness. He is able to overcome hypocrisy and falsehood. The fact that he and Una do not marry right away relates back to another of Spenser's goals regarding Protestantism. Since Duessa escaped, and the false religion of Catholicism will continue to spread its evil, Red Cross must continue his fighting against falsehood everywhere before he can settle down and enjoy his own life. He has to sacrifice his happiness temporarily to serve the true religion.

Book 2, Canto 1

Book 2, Canto 1 Summary

Archimago escapes and tries to follow Red Cross. On the way he meets up with a new knight, Sir Guyon, and Archimago tells Guyon that a knight with a red cross on his shield has raped a virgin. Archimago then offers to lead Guyon to where the villainous knight can be found. Guyon, ever ready to avenge wrongdoing, eagerly follows him. En route, the two come across the supposedly ravished virgin (really Duessa up to her old tricks again) and Guyon is even more determined to avenge her honor. He confronts Red Cross and the two fight, but Guyon can't bring himself to strike the holy emblem on Red Cross's shield. The two eventually realize their kinship (as fellow good knights) and part as friends.

Guyon, who is traveling with a Palmer (who always offers good advice that Guyon occasionally hears), then comes upon a woman holding a baby who is weeping over the body of her husband. She stabs herself (getting blood all over the baby's hands) then tells Guyon her tale. Her husband Mortdant was enchanted by an evil witch Acrasia, (who lures men to her Bower of Bliss, then turns them into beasts) but soon came to his senses with the aid of his wife Amavia (the teller of the tale). Even so, the witch had poisoned him, (with a potion activated by water from a pure fountain) so he died, and Amavia, unable to live with the loss, kills herself, and gives her bloodstained baby to Guyon. Guyon takes the baby and swears vengeance against Acrasia.

Book 2, Canto 1 Analysis

Since Guyon is supposed to embody temperance, or the middle path through life, his hasty attack on Red Cross based on unfounded accusations reveals a deep flaw in his character. Guyon must learn to be calm and control his instincts. By starting off with Duessa and Archimago again, Spenser has linked Guyon's tale to that of Red Cross, thereby establishing a connection between the first and second books.

The Palmer that travels with Guyon represents God's own common sense, and often tries to show Guyon reason through temperance.

The couple that Guyon stumbles upon shows what can happen to a family when betrayal is involved. Even though Mortdant returned to his wife and child, the evil of his actions kills him and his wife, and stains their child forever. Guyon's pledge to avenge the family gives Book 2 a plotline.

Book 2, Canto 2

Book 2, Canto 2 Summary

Guyon takes the baby to a nearby fountain to wash it and is stunned to discover that the blood won't come off the child's hands. The Palmer explains that the fountain is a transformed nymph (who preferred being a fountain to be ravished by Faunus) whose waters cannot be made impure. The three continue on foot (Guyon's horse has vanished) to a castle where three sisters live. The middle sister, Medina, offers them shelter, but her other sisters (Elissa and Perlissa) are having man trouble with their respective lovers—Sir Huddibras and that old villain Sansloy. The two men are fighting when Guyon arrives, but they soon turn on him. Medina talks everyone into calming down, and a banquet is held for the newcomers. At the party, Guyon reveals his mission. The Palmer came to the court of the Faerie Queene asking for a champion to defeat the evil witch Acrasia (who caused the death of Mortdant and Amavia), and Guyon was chosen for the job. Guyon leaves the orphaned baby with the bloody hands, now called Runymede, with Medina, and heads off with the Palmer.

Book 2, Canto 2 Analysis

The three sisters are examples of how to live life: Medina chooses the middle path—the proverbial "golden mean" and serves a model for the temperance Guyon needs to learn. Her older sister Elissa refuses to join in the fun at the banquet, while her younger sister Perlissa jumps into the party with wild abandon. These women are opposite ends of the spectrum, but both extremes are to be avoided by the knight seeking true temperance. Their respective men are also extremists; Huddibras is given to cruelty and Sansloy is a lustful degenerate.

Book 2, Canto 3

Book 2, Canto 3 Summary

The story turns to Braggadochio, a local who has stolen Guyon's horse and spear while the knight was listening to Amavia's story. The false knight scares another man, Trompart, into being his servant, and the two set off across the countryside. They are soon et by Archimago, who tells them that Red Cross and Guyon are responsible for the deaths of Mortdant and Amavia, and urges Braggadochio to exact vengeance. Archimago promises to retrieve Arthur's flaming sword for Braggadochio's use in the task. Then he flies away into the sky. Both Braggadochio and Trompart, no heroes themselves, flee from the display. They bump into a well-armed and very beautiful woman in the woods, Belphoebe (whose approach through the brush scares them to death). Braggadochio begins what he does best, boasting about his great deeds, but eventually woks his way around to asking the lady why she is in the woods and not at court where such great women like herself obviously belong. Belphoebe responds that she prefers the woods and the wild places of the land to the softness and pretense of the court. Braggadochio tries to embrace her, but Belphoebe leaves him.

Book 2, Canto 3 Analysis

Archimago is easily taken in by Braggadochio's speeches; thus showing how easily Hypocrisy will fall for false displays of courage shrouded in well crafted words. Braggadochio is a model for false bravery and bragging, as his name denotes, and he contrasts with Belphoebe, the true image of courage, bravery, virtue, innocence, and truth. Belphoebe is another representative of Queen Elizabeth (much like Gloriana is) except that this lady is more active in the events of the book than the Faerie Queene's rulings from afar.

Book 2, Canto 4

Book 2, Canto 4 Summary

Guyon and the Palmer, still walking, come upon a madman, Furor, who is beating a young man at the urgings of an old hag, the Madman's mother, Occasion. Guyon breaks up the party, subduing Occasion (at the behest of the Palmer's advice) before calming Furor. The beaten young man, Phedon, tells Guyon his tragic tale. Phedon was to marry Claribell, but his best friend Philemon convinced Phedon that she was false. To prove his allegations, he had Phedon go to a place where he would see his fiancée with another man. In *Much Ado About Nothing* fashion, the friend Philemon disguises himself as a servant and ravishes Claribell's maid (who is dressed in Claribell's clothing) so that Phedon can see his "lady" being unfaithful. Enraged, Phedon kills Claribell. Then, upon finding out the truth from the distraught maid, he kills his best friend Philemon and was intent on destroying the maid as well when he was captured by Furor. Then, a servant rushes into the scene, claiming that his master Pyrochles is coming, is eager to fight, and seeks Occasion. On seeing Occasion tied up, the servant, Atin, is upset, and tries to peg Guyon with a dart. Guyon easily blocks it and Atin flees.

Book 2, Canto 4 Analysis

The episode with Phedon illustrates what happens when one is not Temperant. Phedon is rash, wrongfully murders his fiancée, and then turns around to commit more murder. He is literally engulfed by Fury and spurred on by Occasion. Through the Palmer's advice, Guyon is able to overcome such unrestrained anger by subduing Occasion and then shackling Furor. The arrival of Atin, or Strife, on the scene to announce the coming of Pyrochles, a man overcome by his fiery nature, or his uncontrolled hot temper, continues the allegorical examples of what happens without temperance.

Book 2, Canto 5

Book 2, Canto 5 Summary

Pyrochles arrives and is unreasonably angry at Guyon for binding Occasion and Furor; thus depriving him of a good fight. He tries to fight Guyon, but his rash, anger-fueled method of fighting is easily defended and Guyon subdues him. Pyrochles wishes to release the Occasion and Furor, and Guyon agrees. As soon as she is released, Occasion urges her son to attack Pyrochles. The Palmer tells Guyon to stay out of the fight, since Pyrochles did release his own enemies and cause his own downfall. Guyon and the Palmer leave Pyrochles to his fate. Atin, seeing his master in dire peril, leaves to find Cymochles, his master's brother, to avenge Pyrochles' death against Guyon, the knight who abandoned him to his fate. Cymochles is found at the Bower of Bliss where he is hanging out with his mistress, the enchantress Acrasia (that Guyon is seeking). Atin quickly convinces him to get Guyon, and Cymochles swears to get vengeance the same day.

Book 2, Canto 5 Analysis

Pyrochles is a classic example of a hot-tempered man who cannot control himself. He is always looking for a fight, that is, Occasion, that will allow him to indulge his Fury. Pyrochles' brother, Cymochles, is not much less of a hot head, but he usually focuses on more sensual things instead. He is at the Bower of Bliss indulging in his own baser nature when Atin, Strife, cajoles him into retribution.

Book 2, Canto 6

Book 2, Canto 6 Summary

Cymochles comes across a beautiful lady in a boat, Phaedria, and asks her to ferry him across to where he may find Guyon. She agrees, but instead of taking him where he wants to go, she drops him off on a pleasure-filled island, where he sleeps contentedly, Guyon forgotten. Guyon then happens on the same lady, asks the same favor, and is also delivered alone (she refused to take the Palmer) to the same island. Guyon is less than pleased with the turn of events, and does not succumb to the lady's charms. Cymochles awakes to find Guyon on the same island and they fight, but the lady intercedes and agrees to drop Guyon off on the far shore and allow Cymochles to stay with her. The men agree. Guyon meets Atin, the evil servant who likes to start trouble, on the shore, and is terribly insulted and goaded by him, but does not fall prey to his taunts. Guyon heads off on his quest, leaving a frustrated Atin behind. Atin then sees a knight covered in blood and mud, not to mention flaming armor, streaking towards the water. He is relieved to find his master Pyrochles alive, but alarmed at the burns his master has received. Archimago shows back up just in time to heal both Pyrochles' physical burns along with his fiery nature.

Book 2, Canto 6 Analysis

Unlike his brother, Cymochles is easily dissuaded from battle by the promises of the flesh, and he succumbs to the wiles of Phaedria on her island in the 1dle Lake, much like the Lotus Eaters of the Odyssey. Guyon's ability to ignore Phaedria's wiles bode well for his future encounter with Acrasia and the Bower of Bliss, since that is her prime weapon.

Book 2, Canto 7

Book 2, Canto 7 Summary

Guyon continues on alone and comes upon a man. The man is Mammon, and he takes Guyon to his cave where he claims many treasures can be found. The entrance to the cave is very near the gates of Hell, but Guyon follows, intrigued. Three days of intense temptation ensue, with Mammon offering Guyon everything from riches beyond his dreams, to his beautiful daughter and the ladder to power, to the apples and chair in the garden of Proserpina. Each time, Guyon politely declines the offered temptation. After three days of no success, Mammon returns Guyon to the surface. Because he has had no food or water or rest for three days, Guyon faints as soon as he reaches the surface.

Book 2, Canto 7 Analysis

This entire canto revolves around Guyon's temptations, much like the temptations of Christ, and even though he resists, the brave knight still passes out after the ordeal. Perhaps this is due to mere human starvation and dehydration, but it could also be a spiritual collapse; maybe Guyon's resistance has been taxed to its own limits, and eventually, he would have given in to temptation. This also mirrors Mortdant's fate, the man whose poison was activated by pure water. After being exposed to such evil, it is the fresh air that causes Guyon to collapse.

Book 2, Canto 8

Book 2, Canto 8 Summary

While he is lying there unconscious, Guyon is guarded by an angel and discovered by the Palmer. Pyrochles and Cymochles, now traveling with Archimago, approach, and seeing their enemy helpless, prepare to strip him of his armor (despite the Palmer's pleas). Right on cue, Arthur arrives on the scene just in time to challenge the two brothers. They fight, but Cymochles is killed, and Pyrochles is subdued. Arthur offers Pyrochles the chance to redeem himself, but the fiery knight refuses, and Arthur kill him too. Guyon revives just after this, in time to meet Arthur and forge a great friendship. The two set off (with the Palmer) into the sunset.

Book 2, Canto 8 Analysis

Guyon has reached rock bottom at this point, and it utterly dependent on others to survive. Through the fortuitous arrival of Arthur, the Christ figure, Guyon's life is saved (along with his armor). This shows that even the man with temperance must rely on God at times. Arthur shows Christian mercy by offering Pyrochles the chance to redeem himself, and further links to Christ are forged by the wound Arthur takes in his right side during the battle (like Christ on the cross).

Book 2, Canto 9

Book 2, Canto 9 Summary

Arthur and Guyon approach a gorgeous castle besieged by bands of ruffians. They send the men scattering, and Alma, the virgin ruler of the castle, offers them a warm welcome. She gives them the grand tour through the hall, the kitchen, past some knights and ladies courting, and then shows the three rooms near the top where the decisions are made: Phantastes, judgment, and Eumnestes.

Book 2, Canto 9 Analysis

This house, ruled over by Alma, the soul, is a perfect allegorical depiction of the body in accord with Temperance. Guyon and Arthur are shown through the hall (mouth) and into the kitchen (digestive tract), up passed the lovers (heart), and into the higher faculties—Phantastes covers foresight, fancy, and imagination; judgment covers wisdom in the current situation, and Eumnestes covers memory.

Book 2, Canto 10

Book 2, Canto 10 Summary

Arthur finds a book in the library about the history of Britain and reads it with great interest. 1t recounts many important episodes in British history, including King Lear's division of his kingdom, the rivalry between Ferrex and Porrex, the invasion of Caesar, the rule of Rome, the betrayal of Hengist and Horsus, and the book ends with the coming of a great king, Uther Pendragon (Arthur's father). Guyon also finds a book about the history of Faerie and he learns the lineage of Gloriana, from the initial Elf down through Oberon and to her (originally called Tanaquill). Once the books have been read and their knowledge absorbed, Alma calls the boys down for dinner.

Book 2, Canto 10 Analysis

This portion does more for the overall book than it does for Guyon's quest for Temperance. This history of Britain places Arthur into context, though much of the history is taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth's account (that would have been popular in Spenser's day), and Spenser takes great care to emphasize the successful rule of several women—an obvious nod to Queen Elizabeth's ability to rule as a woman. The history of Faerie is more fantastical, but allows a comparison between the greatest queen to ever rule—Gloriana—and Elizabeth.

Book 2, Canto 11

Book 2, Canto 11 Summary

Guyon, well rested and ready for anything, rides off with the Palmer to complete his quest. Arthur remains at the castle to defend Alma from the brigands, who have regrouped under Maleger. The attacker, a fearsome looking man who rides a tiger and wears a skull as a helmet, tries to shoot Arthur from afar, but is ineffective against Arthur's shield. When they get within range for melee combat, Maleger flees, but his two hags (impatience and impotence) stay behind to fight. They capture Arthur and all appears lost, but Arthur's squire holds the hags at bay until he can recover his wits. Arthur and Maleger finally duke it out, and Arthur delivers a killing blow. To his astonishment, Maleger stands back up, apparently fully healed. After this happens several times, Arthur finally realizes that since Maleger was spawned from the earth, the earth itself heals him. Arthur then holds his foe off the ground, crushes the life out of him, and dumps his body into a nearby lake.

Book 2, Canto 11 Analysis

Arthur's defense of Alma's is literally the Christian knight defending the good Christian full of temperance from the evils of Sin. Maleger is the embodiment of that sin, with his diseased body and his constant rising from each fall—much like evil continues to appear despite all efforts. Arthur does manage to beat the Sin back this time, but the question is open as to what will happen next time. Of course, Arthur is again a Christ figure triumphing over Satan. The image of Maleger's defeat echoes the fight between Hercules and Antaeus, where the hero holds his foe off the ground so he cannot heal.

Book 2, Canto 12

Book 2, Canto 12 Summary

Guyon and the Palmer continue on their way, taking the three day boat ride to Acrasia's paradise. Along the way, they encounter many trials reminiscent of Odysseus, but through the rational advice of the Palmer, Guyon is able to avoid the whirlpool of Greed, Phaedria's charms, various mermaids with wicked plans, and a number of other trials. The pair finally reach the island and are faced with a herd of wild beasts that are held at bay by the Palmer's staff (it works against sea monsters as well). The two are allowed to proceed into the Bower of Bliss where they are met by Excess, a beautiful woman who offers wine and other worldly pleasures. Guyon smashes her cup and continues on his way. He passes a fountain with a number of naked girls and slows his pace, but is recalled to his quest by the Palmer. The two make their way further into the bower where they find Acrasia lying in bed with her newest lover. They toss a net over the two, Acrasia is bound, and her lover, verdant, is given a stern lecture. Guyon then proceeds to destroy the Bower of Bliss, knocking down everything in his path. He and the Palmer return to the boat, only to be faced by the same herd of beasts. They are returned to their true shapes (since they were men transformed by Acrasia's magic) and only one of them, Grill, is upset about it.

Book 2, Canto 12 Analysis

This is the end of Guyon's journey, and he does accomplish his mission, but only now does he have the Temperance needed. He can look at temptation and stay clear of it because he has learned to listen to the advice of the Palmer, or of his own reason or conscience. Guyon's actions in the Bower after he captures Acrasia make him out to be somewhat of a killjoy, but he does everything with the best intentions in mind, even freeing verdant—the green man of pagan lore—and saving the men from lives as pigs. In contrast to Red Cross, who had to face himself and his own faith, Guyon has learned to face others and adapt his behavior accordingly.

Book 3, Canto 1

Book 3, Canto 1 Summary

Guyon and Arthur are riding along when they meet another knight. Of course, Guyon and the new knight fight, and Guyon is unhorsed on the first charge. Devastated by the first defeat of his life, Guyon is talked out of further fighting by the Palmer, who recognizes the spear of the new knight. The new companion is Britomart, famous female knight and owner of a wonderful spear. The three continue on until a maiden comes streaking out of the woods past them followed by a rugged forester intent on rape. Guyon, Arthur, and Arthur's squire (Timias) take off in pursuit. Britomart stands around for a bit, then continues on her way. She comes across six knights attacking a lone knight in front of a castle. She interrupts the fray to hear the story: the lone knight is Red Cross who refused to profane his love for Una (as the lady who owns the castle orders the six knights to do) and so the six knights must kill him. Britomart seems to consider this, then jumps into the fray on Red Cross' side without warning, lopping off heads and quickly dispatching four of the six would be attackers. Britomart and Red Cross approach the castle. This is Castle Joyous, where tapestries of Venus and Adonis are everywhere near sumptuous beds, and Cupid in inspiring lust in all who enter. Britomart introduces herself to the ruler of this castle, Malecasta, without revealing her gender. The lady is smitten with Britomart (whom she thinks is a man) and later that night she sneaks into Britomart's bed. Astonished, the lady knight leaps out of bed and draws her sword. Malecasta is surprised to see that she is indeed a woman and faints. Other knights come piling into the room, and Britomart and Red Cross leave in a rush.

Book 3, Canto 1 Analysis

Having a female knight may seem a strange choice, but Britomart is a counter to Queen Elizabeth's masculine strength and enduring virtue. Britomart also carries the spear that can unhorse any man, an obviously phallic reference. Since Britomart unhorses Guyon, the suggestion is that Chastity overcomes Temperance. The Castle Joyous represents love as lust, ruled over the Malecasta, or Unchaste, who falls for men before they even show their faces. That Britomart does not recognize Malecasta' interest for what it truly is a sign of her innocence and naivety; Britomart has some growing up to do (just like Red Cross and Guyon).

Book 3, Canto 2

Book 3, Canto 2 Summary

Red Cross and Britomart continue onward and Red Cross inquires about her quest. Britomart gives a bit of her history, explaining how from childhood she has disliked the softer ways of women and preferred to learn to fight. Her father, King Ryence of South Wales, was given a magic mirror by Merlin, and in it, Britomart glimpsed the face of her future husband. She is in love with the image of the man (Artegall), but tells Red Cross that he has committed a foul betrayal and that is why she hunts him. Britomart's nurse, Glauce, promised to find relief for Britomart's lovesickness.

Book 3, Canto 2 Analysis

Although she may represent Chastity, Britomart is very much a woman with a sex drive. She seeks Artegall, the man in the mirror, with intentions of a complete life with him—including marriage, sex, etc. She simply is not attracted to the tactics of Malecasta, but would be and is attracted to Artegall. The man in the mirror is often associated with Lord Grey, a contemporary of Elizabeth and Spenser's boss, because of the hound on his armor. Lord Grey's Christian name was Arthur and Artegall means "like Arthur." He is the only man worthy of Britomart's love, just as Spenser felt Lord Grey was the only one worthy of Queen Elizabeth, the virgin queen.

Book 3, Canto 3

Book 3, Canto 3 Summary

Britomart continues her tale, explaining how she met with Merlin and learned of her future with Artegall, their children, and how they line will eventually lead to a virgin queen on the throne. After the meeting, Britomart and Glauce disguised themselves (Britomart taking armor recently claimed from a queen) and set off throughout Fairyland to find Artegall.

Book 3, Canto 3 Analysis

Much like Alma's house and the history Arthur learned there, Britomart's recollection of the history serves more to link book three with one and two than to further her chastity. This segment also gives more credence to Queen Elizabeth, who is the virgin queen on the throne at the end of the tale.

Book 3, Canto 4

Book 3, Canto 4 Summary

Britomart and Red Cross continue for a bit, but eventually part ways. Britomart comes to the seashore and meets a knight who refuses her passage. This is Martinell, a knight told by his mother to avoid women for he would be killed by a strange virgin someday. Britomart quickly dispatches him, leaving him on the beach for dead, and continues on, scorning the many jewels that litter this part of the beach.

Martinell's mother, Cymoent, hears of his defeat and quickly collects him, speeding down to the bottom of the ocean (she is a sea nymph) to ask Tryphon for aid. The tale then shifts to Arthur and Guyon as they chase after the maiden in the woods. The two part at a fork in the road, and it is Arthur who spies the girl in the woods. He tries to catch up to her, but soon night falls, and he must give up the search.

Book 3, Canto 4 Analysis

Martinell serves as a great contrast to Chastity because he is breaking the rules of love. Instead of experiencing life, he shuns all women, hiding from the one who will kill him. Britomart strikes him down for this offense.

As far as the shift in perspective goes, this is the first time Arthur is not victorious. He is overcome by the darkness and must spend the knight without having completed his goal. For once, the great Arthur appears somewhat human.

Book 3, Canto 5

Book 3, Canto 5 Summary

The next day, Arthur meets up with a dwarf who is seeking Florimell (the lady Arthur had been unable to catch up to the previous day). The dwarf tells Arthur, in a severe jump in continuity, that Florimell was overcome with grief when she heard that a knight she loves, Martinell, was struck down by a knight, and she fled the court. (Britomart did this, but at least a few days after they saw Florimell fleeing in grief).

The story shifts again to Timias, Arthur's squire, who has been pursuing the Forester who chased Florimell. The squire is overwhelmed when the forester's brothers show up, and is deeply wounded. Bleeding profusely, he dispatches all three of them and manages to crawl to safety and pass out. He is found by Belphoebe (remember her from Book 2 when she scared Braggadochio?). She takes him to her home and treats his wound. Timias recovers and falls madly in love with his rescuer, but doesn't say anything because he feels himself so beneath Belphoebe to be unworthy as a suitor.

Book 3, Canto 5 Analysis

Timias is usually associated with Sir Walter Raleigh and Belphoebe with Queen Elizabeth. Timias' encounter with forester and his brothers shows what an amazing fighter he is; even though he is overcome, he manages to kill all three of them before passing out.

Book 3, Canto 6

Book 3, Canto 6 Summary

The story now turns to the origin of Belphoebe. Chrysogone, a young maiden, fell asleep by the water one day and was impregnated by the sun's rays. Confused and ashamed, though without really knowing why, she disappears into the woods. Much later, Diana and Cupid have a fight, and the goddess asks Venus to help her find him in the woods. The two come across a sleeping Chrysogone with two baby girls next to her (she gave birth in her sleep and is still clueless about everything). Each goddess takes a girl to raise. Diana raises Belphoebe (hence why she is a fierce virgin fighter type) and Venus raises her sister, Amoret, whom we have yet to meet. The tale goes on to explain that Amoret was raised in the garden of Adonis, where everything is perfect. Children are sent into the world from one gate, and are received through another gate when their time to live has ended. The Garden is also where Venus keeps Adonis safe and alive. Amoret is raised alongside Cupid and Psyche's daughter Pleasure in the ways of femininity. When she is grown, Amoret is taken to the court of Faerie where she falls in love with Sir Scudamore.

Book 3, Canto 6 Analysis

This origin tale explains where Belphoebe comes from, and also gives the two sisters an otherwordly aura. Born to a virgin (like Christ), the two girls represent different aspects of love and chastity. The paradise of Adonis is similar to the Bower of Bliss destroyed by Sir Guyon in Book 2, but it survives because it is a god-created place of rejuvenation and life, not a man-made construction based on lust. The garden also operates on a cycle of life, death, and rebirth based on love.

Book 3, Canto 7

Book 3, Canto 7 Summary

Florimell, meanwhile, has found safety inside a witch's cottage. The witch's son courts her in a country manner, but Florimell is not interested. Eventually, she leaves. The witch's son throws an angry tantrum that his earlier displays had not hinted at, and his mother send a beast after Florimell to bring her back. Florimell escapes by jumping into a boat (the fisherman is asleep) and rowing away. The monster, upset at Florimell's escape, chews on her horse instead. Satyrane (Una's protector from Book 1) shows up, and recognizing a girdle near the horse as Florimell's, uses the girdle to leash the beast and lead it away. Soon, he comes across a giantess carrying a squire on her saddle. Satyrane fights the giantess, but is overcome and knocked out. He is saved by another knight who chases the giantess away and frees the squire. The Squire tells Satyrane the story: the giantess is Argante, daughter of a Titan who feasts on men to feed her appetite. The Squire is on a quest of his own: his own love, Columbell, had charged him with a quest. He was to go out, save maidens, and earn their pledges in response. He returned to his lady with three hundred such pledges. Angered, she ordered him on another quest—to find as many women who would refuse him. The Squire of Dames (as he calls himself) has been journeying for three years, and he has only had three refusals (not for lack of interest or love, even). The knight who saved the day is Palladine, a chaste and virtuous maiden warrior, the only one worthy of facing such a beast as the giantess.

Book 3, Canto 7 Analysis

The witch's son is an example of lustful passion unchecked by Christian Chastity. As a result, he is unworthy of Florimell (who is in love with Martinell anyway). The reappearance of Satyrane serves to link Book three to the former books. The giantess represents a perversion of Chastity with her uncontrolled appetite (literally) for men, and even the Squire of Dames' lady is a disgrace to her sex by challenging her lover with an impossible task. She is a woman with unreasonable expectations of her mate, but the Squire is a good example of Chastity, so he seeks to meet her demands so they can find happiness. The knight Palladine is only able to overcome the giantess because of her own female virtue, which will cancel out the giantess' appetite instead of inflaming it, as a male would do.

Book 3, Canto 8

Book 3, Canto 8 Summary

The witch's beast escapes from Satyrane and goes back to the witch with Florimell's girdle. To appease her son, the witch creates a false Florimell (sometimes called Snowy Florimell) through magical arts. The story shifts again to the real Florimell in the boat with the fisherman. When they are far out to sea, the man awakes, and tries to rape her on a pile of fish. Florimell cries out for help, and the sea god Proteus rises to her rescue. He gives the fisherman a sound beating, then carries Florimell down to his lair beneath the waves. He too tries to seduce her, but she refuses, and he tosses her in the dungeon. The story once again leaves Florimell in dire peril (where she seems to always end up) and reverts to Satyrane and the Squire of Dames. They have met up with Sir Paridell (also seeking Florimell) and approach a castle where they are refused entrance.

Book 3, Canto 8 Analysis

The creation of a false version of a character is nothing new in the realm of Romance; Archimago did essentially the same thing to fool Red Cross in Book 1. Florimell represents heavily defended virginity. She has to fend off every guy with a stick, but still falls for the idea that her rescuer will turn out to be a better person than her last rescuer. She is determined Chastity, not to mention the classic "damsel in distress."

Book 3, Canto 9

Book 3, Canto 9 Summary

The owner of the castle is an angry miser, Malbecco, who tries to keep his wife Hellenore from meeting anyone new. Discouraged, the knights spend the knight in a pig shed. Soon, another knight arrives, and Paridell and the newcomer begin fighting. Satyrane calms things down. The three knights burn down the gates to the castle, and Malbecco allows them inside. The new knight is revealed as Britomart. At the banquet, Malbecco keeps his own good eye on Satyrane, but doesn't see Paridell flirting madly with Hellenore (who returns his signs).

Book 3, Canto 9 Analysis

Clearly, Malbecco and Hellenore are not the perfect example of Chastity. Malbecco keeps his wife a secret and she flirts with the first guy who comes along. This sets the stage for worse trouble in the next canto.

Book 3, Canto 10

Book 3, Canto 10 Summary

The knights leave in morning, but not before Paridell manages to make love to Hellenore and steal away with her. Since she knows her husband so well, Hellenore sets fire to his beloved treasure just before they leave, knowing that Malbecco will not leave his things in danger to reclaim his wife. She is correct, and the lovers escape. Malbecco puts out the fire and vows revenge. He meets Braggadochio and Trompart, and offers them a lot of money to kill Paridell. Braggadochio initially scoffs at the money, but eventually accepts, and they set off after the lovers. Soon, the come across Paridell alone. When asked about Hellenore, he tells them she is in the woods somewhere. He has abandoned her the same way he has abandoned many others before her. Hellenore, wandering alone in the woods, is taken in by the satyrs. The make her do humble work and use her as their common concubine, but then they crown her the Queen of May and she is content. Malbecco spies this crowning and attempts to sneak closer to the lady during the celebration. He asks her to return to him and she refuses. She is happy with the satyrs. Malbecco slinks away and returns to where he had buried his treasure, only to find it gone. He lives in a cave, eats toads and frogs, forgets he is a man, and lives out the rest of his miserable existence as Jealousy.

Book 3, Canto 10 Analysis

Malbecco is the classic miser who chooses his money over love. Then, when he does try to claim his "love," she would rather be with satyrs, half-men, half-goats who use her body, than with her husband. Once he finds his money is gone as well, Malbecco is ruined. Because he did not live in accordance with Chastity, his wife has chosen to be as unchaste as possible, and he has lost his fortune. Paridell serves a model for the deplorably unchaste knight. Where Arthur runs around rescuing maidens on his best behavior, Paridell spends all of his time seducing maidens and then leaving them behind.

Book 3, Canto 11

Book 3, Canto 11 Summary

Britomart and Satyrane find Ollyphant, Argante's brother, and pursue the giant. The giant eludes them, but they are separated in the chase. Britomart finds a knight lying on the ground before a castle surrounded in flames. He is Sir Scudamore, and he is very unhappy because Busirane, and evil magician, has stolen his love Amoret away, and is tying to force her to become his love. Britomart uses her shield to pass through the flames, but Scudamore cannot pass. Britomart passes through two chambers which extol the powers of Cupid. The first chamber advises "be bold," but the second states, "be not too bold." Britomart continues through the seemingly deserted castle.

Book 3, Canto 11 Analysis

Britomart is able to pass through the fire around Busirane's castle due to her shield, literally, her "shield of faith." Scudamore is not a virtuous as she, so he is not allowed to pass. Amoret serves as the damsel in distress for this scene, although she does not possess quite the luck of Florimell when it comes to men.

Book 3, Canto 12

Book 3, Canto 12 Summary

Britomart is startled by an earthquake. A door opens in the castle and a parade of figures trail out—each is a personification of feelings associated with love (Fancy, Desire, Pleasure, etc.). They are followed by a woman with a broken heart (whom Cupid —next in line—sees and dismisses) and then a horde of evil personifications—Death, Poverty, Shame, etc. Britomart continues further into the castle and finally finds Amoret and Busirane. Amoret is tied to pillar in typical damsel fashion, while Busirane casts evil spells over her. At Britomart's entrance, the wizard tries to kill Amoret with a knife, but only wounds her. Britomart subdues Busirane, but keeps him alive to heal Amoret. The women leave the castle to see that the fire has gone out (and much of the castle's attraction has vanished). Sadly, when they reach the spot where they left Scudamore, he is gone (he and Glauce having gone for help).

Book 3, Canto 12 Analysis

The Masque of Cupid was something familiar to readers of Spenser's age, listing both the joys and sorrows of love. Since the first publication of the book ended after this book, Sir Scudamore was outside and there was a joyous reunion. But, for the second publication of the book, which included the last three books, Spenser changed the ending, had Scudamore disappear, and left many things unresolved.

Book 4, Canto 1

Book 4, Canto 1 Summary

Britomart and Amoret continue their search for Scudamore. Apparently, Amoret and Scuadamore were married, but Amoret was kidnapped by Busirane during the wedding feast. Now traveling with a man who is not her husband, Amoret fears for her honor. Britomart doesn't help this idea by pretending to be a knight. 1t is only when they come to yet another castle and meet a knight intent on claiming Amoret for himself that Britomart takes off her helmet and reveals her sex. Amoret is much relieved and the women form a fast friendship. Britomart and Amoret meet up with two knights and their respective women: Paridell (love 'em and leave 'em) and Duessa (witch from Book 1); Blandamour and Ate. Paridell remembers Britomart (and how she beat him) and declines a fight, but Blandamour eagerly challenges and is unhorsed. Britomart and Amoret leave the scene.

As Blandamour sits on the ground, another couple approaches: Scudamore and Glauce. Though wounded, Blandamour detests Scudamore, and asks his friend Paridell to attack the knight "out of friendship." Paridell agrees and the two men unhorse one another. As Scudamore gets to his feet, Duessa, Ate, and Blandamour ridicule him, claiming that his beloved Amoret has been consorting with another knight, namely Britomart (whom he still thinks a man). Scudamore is so infuriated that he nearly kills Glauce for what he assumes are her "master's" faults.

Book 4, Canto 1 Analysis

Since this book is all about Friendship, the relationships between characters becomes all important. Paridell and Blandamour appear to be friends, but both fail in their efforts, a sign that their friendship is not valid, probably because they are both bad people (and their friendship is based on utility). Scudamore is also given a test, but his trial involves distinguishing whether what his "friends" tell him is the truth.

Book 4, Canto 2

Book 4, Canto 2 Summary

A knight named Ferraugh appears with the false Florimell (whom he had stolen from Braggadochio) and Blandamour quickly attacks the knight without warning, unseats him, and claims his woman. Paridell is jealous of his "friend's" newest acquisition, and spurred on by Duessa and Ate, the two men fight over the snowy Florimell. Before they can kill each other, the Squire of Dames arrives, calls a truce, and announces a tournament nearby. Satyrane has found the real Florimell's girdle, and he who wins the tournament wins the girdle. The group rides after to join the games.

They come upon another foursome: Cambell and Triamond and their wives Canacee and Cambina. The story of this quartet is told. Cambell held a tournament for his sister Canacee (who gave her brother a magic ring so that none could defeat him—and she wouldn't have to marry anyone). Three brothers came to the tourney—Priamond, Diamond, and Triamond. Unknown to anyone there, their mother had made a bargain with fate; the brothers could give their lives to one another if they chose.

Book 4, Canto 2 Analysis

Blandamour and Paridell's friendship falls apart on the introduction of a beautiful one, and one who is made of magic, at that. Clearly, this is an example of what Friendship should not be. The three brothers who can exchange lives are another example of true friendship—they are willing to die for one another. The tale of Canacee and Cambell was started in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,* but left unfinished, so Spenser chose to finish it here.

Book 4, Canto 3

Book 4, Canto 3 Summary

The story of Cambell and Triamond is continued. The three brothers fought Cambell, each was killed, and each gave his lifeforce to Triamond upon death. Cambell dealt two death blows to Triamond, but each time, one of his brother's souls left him. Then, Cambina, the three brothers' sister, showed up, and she urged Cambell and Triamond to peace. Everything was settled: she married Cambell and Triamond married Canacee.

Book 4, Canto 3 Analysis

This was Spenser's way of ending the Squire's Tale that Chaucer left incomplete. Of course, Cambell and Triamond are the perfect examples of friendship. The three brothers also represent different levels of being—Priamond is the vegetative physical aspect, Diamond is the sensitive intellect, and Triamond is the angelic heavenly aspect. 1t is appropriate that Triamond, the highest of the three, should survive. Cambel represents Everyman, and Cambina is Concord.

Book 4, Canto 4

Book 4, Canto 4 Summary

The party arrives at the tournament, and Braggadochio recognizes the snowy Florimell as his own. Blandamour suggests that they fight over her, with the disgusting Ate going to the loser. Braggadochio declines, but still wants his former lady back. The tournament lasts for three days. The first day, Triamond does spectacularly until Satyrane puts a spear through his side and claims victory for that day. The next day, Cambell puts on his friend's armor (didn't Patroclus learn that this was a bad idea in the *1liad*?) and fights exceptionally well. He is eventually surrounded by one hundred of Satyrane's men. Hearing the commotion, Triamond goes to his friend's aid. Though still terribly wounded, Triamond can't find his own armor, so he puts on Cambell's and goes out to help his friend. The two men are victorious that day. The final day, Artegall shows up (looking pretty savage) and is beaten by Britomart (who doesn't recognize the knight from the mirror).

Book 4, Canto 4 Analysis

The obvious lesson here is the friendship between Cambell and Triamond. Each overcomes personal adversity to help his friend out when he is needed. This pair is a great image of true friendship.

Book 4, Canto 5

Book 4, Canto 5 Summary

After the fighting, the men present their women in a Miss America like contest. Of course, the snowy Florimell wins, but is unable to wear the girdle of the true Florimell. The other women also try to wear it, but the only one who can get it in is Amoret. The snowy Florimell snatches the girdle back from Amoret and keeps it. As victor in the tournament, Britomart is entitled to the snowy Florimell, but politely declines. Cambell and Triamond also refuse the lady. Since the rest of the guys begin fighting over who gets her, they decide to let the lady decide. She chooses to go with Braggadochio, a man worthy of her deception. Meanwhile, Scudamore and Glauce spend a sleepless knight in the house of care. Scudamore can't stop thinking about Amoret's betrayal with Britomart (so he thinks).

Book 4, Canto 5 Analysis

Clearly, the reason why Florimell's girdle won't fit anyone there is because all of the women are not worthy. They are not good friends, nor are they pure and virtuous. Certainly the false Florimell would be unable to ear the magic girdle of her true counterpoint, but no one notices this point, and she holds onto the girdle instead.

Book 4, Canto 6

Book 4, Canto 6 Summary

Scudamore meets Artegall (who still looks rather savage) and the two confer on ambushing Britomart. Soon, the lady knight in question (though both men think her another man) appears and she and Artegall fight. There is a pitched battle, Artegall finally proving a match for Britomart, and then he strikes her helmet, cracking it, and revealing her face. He falls to his knees, instantly smitten, and Scudamore is also overjoyed to find that she is a woman and his Amoret has been faithful all along. He inquires about his bride, and Britomart explains that she woke up one day to find Amoret gone. He is afraid by Glauce tells him not to give in to unfounded fear. Britomart agrees to help Scudamore find Amoret. Artegall pursues his love with passion, yet now Britomart plays it quite cool (pretending she wasn't on a quest to find him). Still, the two part reluctantly (with definite plans for the future). Artegall must finish his own journey, and Britomart must help Scudamore find Amoret.

Book 4, Canto 6 Analysis

Because Artegall is a match for Britomart, it's obvious that he is the only knight (aside from Arthur himself who is pledged to Gloriana) worthy of Britomart's hand. The fact that the two realize that there are other things more important than their desire to be married and continue on their respective quests is a good sign. They will have a good marriage and a solid friendship based on more than lust.

Book 4, Canto 7

Book 4, Canto 7 Summary

The story winds back to Amoret, who was captured by a hideous beast while Britomart was sleeping. The beast, called the Hairy Carl, brings her back to his cave where she meets another woman Aemylia (who was carried off when meeting her lover for a tryst in the woods) and finds out that he rapes and devours his women. When the Carl comes for her, Amoret runs out of the cave, the beast in hot pursuit. Luckily, she is spotted by Belphoebe and Timias (who has followed her since she healed him) and rescued. Timias fights with the Carl, and accidentally wounds Amoret, whom the Carl uses as a shield. Then Belphoebe comes on the scene and the Carl flees. Belphoebe hits him with an arrow in the throat as he runs away. She returns to find Timias leaning over Amoret (trying to revive her after he accidentally wounded her) in what she considers a suspicious way. She accuses him of lust for the maiden, and then runs away. Timias is so distraught by this that he becomes a hermit in the woods and even Arthur doesn't recognize him when they meet again.

Book 4, Canto 7 Analysis

The Hairy Carl embodies lust and is only afraid of Belphoebe (the only one with the power to defeat him). He is a gross depiction of exaggerated passion who must be destroyed. The split between Timias and Belphoebe echoes that between Elizabeth and Raleigh (over an affair between Raleigh and Elizabeth's lady-in-waiting Elizabeth Throckmkorton). The queen had him banished from the court over the incident, and he spent a long time trying to get back into her good graces.

Book 4, Canto 8

Book 4, Canto 8 Summary

Timias spends a lot of time with a turtledove that eventually leads Belphoebe back to him (she follows a jewel she recognizes) and the two are reconciled. Belphoebe recognizes that Timias' love is true and the two are happily together.

Arthur comes upon Amoret and Aemylia in the woods and applies ointment to Amoret's wounds. The trio seek shelter in the cottage of an old hag, Sclaunder, who chases them out calling Arthur a thief and the ladies whores. They next come across a squire screaming for help as a dwarf drags him about. Following them is a huge giant who keeps blaspheming. Arthur takes on the giant and cuts off his head, then frees the squire. The thankful man tells his story: he was friends with a humble squire named Amyas (who is in love with Aemylia), who was captured by the giant, Corflambo, while waiting to meet his lover. Once captured, Amyas was taken to Corflambo's castle and was forced to serve as the giant's daughter Poeana's lover. Since the two looked so much alike, the rescued squire, Placidas, offered to take Amyas's place as Poeana's lover (since he has no lady to love of his own and Amyas does). When he saw his chance, Placidas tried to knock out the dwarf guarding him, but didn't quite manage things—that was when Arthur arrived. Aemylia listens to this story and recognizes her lover's friend. The group plots to rescue Amyas.

Book 4, Canto 8 Analysis

The couple Aemylia and Amyas have been thoroughly punished fro their secret rendezvous; Aemylia was captured by the hairy Carl of Lust and Amyas was taken away by Corflambo, the Flaming Heart, suggesting that their love was a bit too passionate. Now that they have been through such harrowing adventures, they will probably have a better marriage. The friendship between Amys and Placidas is the greatest example of friendship next to Cambell and Triamond, except that this is friendship between men of lower rank (not knights). Each is willing to sacrifice himself for the other.

Book 4, Canto 9

Book 4, Canto 9 Summary

Arthur bribes his way into the castle using the giant's head, and the group frees Amyas. Poeana is astonished to discover that she has had two lovers who look alike, and after a long talk from Arthur agrees to reform her ways. Arthur has another chat with Placidas, and the squire agrees to marry Poeana, since he sure does like her. Aemylia and Amyas are reunited and promise to be a bit more cautious in their relationship.

Arthur continues traveling, now with Amoret under his protection, and he runs into Druon, Claribell, Blandamour, and Paridell (who are all fighting over the snowy Florimell). A grand melee ensues, during which Britomart is attacked by everyone (but they stop when Arthur explains that she did not take the snowy Florimell), and Blandamour and Paridell alternately aid and attack one another. Arthur finally manages to pacify the fighters and encourages Scudamore to tell his story (of how he won Amoret).

Book 4, Canto 9 Analysis

The big fight scene shows many more examples of false friendship. The odd thing here is that Arthur has been traveling with Amoret. Scudamore shows up with Britomart, and he has been searching for his wife far and wide, but no reunion scene occurs. 1t seems like Spenser forgot about that couple when writing about all the others.

Book 4, Canto 10

Book 4, Canto 10 Summary

Scudamore recounts how he won Amoret at the Temple of Venus. He defeated twenty foes and many more trials on the way inside, and he acquired the shield of love. When he finally reaches Amoret, she is surrounded by Womanhood, Shamefastness, Cheerfulness, Modesty, Courtesy, and Obedience. They ask him not to take her, but once he displays the shield, they agree. Scudamore earns the hand and heart of Amoret, and they get married.

Book 4, Canto 10 Analysis

The shield of love is what allows Scudamore to pass Amoret's guardians. Without true love to guide him, he would not have triumphed. Because he feels more than lust, friendship, or any of the other myriad emotions mistaken for love, Scudamore is rewarded with the woman he loves.

Book 4, Canto 11

Book 4, Canto 11 Summary

The story returns abruptly to that of Florimell and Marinell (remember them from Book 3?). Florimell is held in the dungeon of Proteus's castle. There is a huge wedding between the river Thames and Medway, and everyone is invited to Proteus' castle to attend the grand event. Marinell's mother, the sea nymph, is invited, and she brings her newly recovered son (Britomart nearly killed him) to the event.

Book 4, Canto 11 Analysis

This passage, though illuminating in is depiction of sea life and famous mythological characters, works to set up the meeting of Florimell and Marinell in the next canto.

Book 4, Canto 12

Book 4, Canto 12 Summary

Marinell wanders off during the big bash and hears Florimell bemoaning her fate in Proteus's dungeon. Hearing his name as the cause of her plight (she fled the court after hearing news of his downfall), he falls into a deep depression because he can't release her from the prison. He returns home with his mother, and after much moping around, she finally discovers that it is love that has him so depressed. She takes his case to Jove, who manages to get Florimell released. Marinell and Florimell are married (the only marriage that actually takes place within the book).

Book 4, Canto 12 Analysis

Marinell and Florimell's relationship serves as a model for a decent marriage, but what shadows it is Marinell's reliance on his mother. A true mama's boy, he listened to her warnings against women for most of his life, then needs her to get his woman released from prison. Any other knight in the story would have either challenged Proteus, or risked a daring prison break. Marinell does neither, yet he gets the real version of the woman most of the knights have been fighting over the entire time.

Book 5, Canto 1

Book 5, Canto 1 Summary

Artegall is charged by the Faerie Queene to rescue Eirena, a damsel in distress, from the wicked Grantorto. He has been instructed in the ways of justice by Astraea and has been given a magical sword, Chrysaor (that once belonged to Jove), to aid in his journey. Astraea left the earth because of man's excessive evils, but left behind Talus, the iron Man, who serves as Artegall's squire.

Artegall and Talus come across their first challenge: Sanglier. A squire stands over the headless body of a lady in the woods. He explains that he came across a Knight, Sanglier, who forced a trade of his woman for the squire's woman. When the knight's lady objected, he cut off her head. He then took off with the Squire's woman. Artegall sends Talus to find Sanglier. The iron Man returns with Sanglier and Artegall demands an explanation. The evil knight requests trial by combat to decide the truth, but the squire declines, knowing that he will be killed. Instead, Artegall offers to cut the remaining lady in half (one half to each of them) to settle the dispute. The squire objects, and Artegall knows that he truly loves the woman in question and awards her to the Squire. He punishes Sanglier by hanging the other woman's head around his neck for a year and sends him on his way.

Book 5, Canto 1 Analysis

This is Artegall's first challenge in matters of justice. He must decide who is telling the truth, and decides in a Solomon like fashion (like with the two women claiming the same baby). The Iron man is pure, emotionless Justice, much like a hangman.

Book 5, Canto 2

Book 5, Canto 2 Summary

Artegall and Talus meet Florimell's dwarf. He tells Talus that in order to get to the wedding of Florimell and Marinell, they must cross a bridge guarded by a Saracen who demands heavy tribute from all who cross. Artegall challenges the man, Pollente, and is treacherously dropped through a trap door in the bridge. The fight continues in the river, and Artegall beheads Pollente. He and Talus approach the castle, where Pollente's daughter Munera (who has grown quite rich from her father's extortion) tries to distract him by throwing gold over the walls. Artegall ignores this, then Talus breaks down the door. They find Munera within, huddling beneath a pile of gold. Artegall feels some pity for her, but watches as Talus cuts off her gold hands and silver feet and tosses her into the river. Then, Talus melts her gold and pours that into the river as well.

Artegall and Talus then come across a giant on the beach who is speaking to a gathered crowd. The giant proposes to weigh all things on earth and redistribute them (from valleys and mountains to wealth). Artegall denounces the giant for upsetting God's natural balance, then asks if he can also weigh things like light, wind, right, or wrong. When the giant cannot do that, Talus tosses him and his scales in to the water. The people almost turn on Artegall, but he sends Talus after them and they scatter.

Book 5, Canto 2 Analysis

The punishment of Pollente is in keeping with those who practice extortion. Munera, because she benefited from her father's tactics, is also punished by losing hands and feet (which are nailed up for all to see—in keeping with the penal system's practice of Spenser's day). The giant on the beach is clearly an egalitarian set on redistributing the wealth. He is also a proponent of democracy, or even communism. Spenser, through Artegall, defends the chain of being, claiming that the current status quo is right and true because "god made it that way."

Book 5, Canto 3

Book 5, Canto 3 Summary

Artegall and Talus finally reach the wedding Florimell and Marinell. There is a tournament that Marinell has been dominating for the first two days, but now he is surrounded by foes. Artegall borrows a shield from the nearby Braggadochio to hide his identity and rides in to aid Marinell. When the tournament is over, Braggadochio accepts the award for defending Marinell. He also reveals that his Florimell (the false one) is more beautiful, and displays his woman. Artegall is very upset to see Braggadochio claim his reward and is about to challenge him. The two Florimells stand next to each other, and the false one melts. The real Florimell finally regains her girdle, which fits perfectly.

Sir Guyon pops back up, and claims that Braggadochio's horse was stolen from him long ago. Artegall judges, awarding the horse to Guyon since he mentions a mark in the horse's mouth (and the horse won't let anyone but Guyon look in its mouth). Talus takes Braggadochio outside, shaves his head, takes his shield, and breaks his sword.

Book 5, Canto 3 Analysis

Again, Artegall is forced to dispense justice as he sees fit. Artegall makes the decision, but Talus carries out the sentence.

Book 5, Canto 4

Book 5, Canto 4 Summary

Artegall and Talus continue their journey and come across two brothers and their wives fighting over a treasure chest. They tell their story: Each brother, Amidas and Bracidas, was left an island by their father. Over time, erosion pushed part of Bracidas' island into Amidas' island. Bracidas' fiancée, Philtra, left him for Amidas and the bigger island. Amidas' fiancée, Lucy, was cast aside and found a treasure chest while floating to Bracidas' island. Artegall decides that just as Amidas kept the soil the sea gave him, Bracidas (and Lucy) should keep the chest the sea gave them.

Artegall and Talus move on and encounter a knight, Turpine, who is being taken to his death by a mob of women. Artegall and Talus save Turpine from the women and hear Turpine's story. A woman, Radigund, an Amazon-like warrior, forces all the men she defeats to wear dresses and perform women's work. The three head towards her castle and battle with her women warriors until dark. Finally, Radigund send her maid, Clarinda, to settle terms, and Artegall agrees to single combat with Radigund the next day. The loser will serve the winner as the winner decrees.

Book 5, Canto 4 Analysis

Artegall solves yet another problem, this time a property dispute, according to English common law. The problem with Radigund is that she is emasculating men and turning gender roles on their head. This is against the laws of nature (for Artegall, even though he is engaged to Britomart, another woman who does her own share of unseating male knights) and he is determined to set things right.

Book 5, Canto 5

Book 5, Canto 5 Summary

Artegall fights with Radigund and puts her down. When he bends down to unlace her helmet so he can deliver the killing blow, he is overwhelmed by her beauty. Radigund regains her senses as Artegall leans over her, and she quickly subdues him in turn. Turpine is hanged, Talus escapes, and Artegall is forced to wear a dress and act like a woman (along with other beaten knights). Radigund wants Artegall in the worst way, and asks her maid Clarinda to help in the seduction. Clarinda agrees, but promotes her own suit instead, even offering to help Artegall escape in exchange for his favor. Artegall encourages her in the hopes of escape, but retains his virtue.

Book 5, Canto 5 Analysis

Artegall's first defeat in his pursuit of justice is due not to any fault in dispensing rulings, but by an ill-chosen display of pity. Certainly, Talus would not have fallen for Radigund's beauty. Artegall must learn that misplaced pity can have serious consequences.

He also must rely on outside aid to set him free.

Book 5, Canto 6

Book 5, Canto 6 Summary

Talus finds Britomart and tells her of Artegall's predicament. She is immediately jealous and angry at Artegall's plight. The two set off for Radigund's castle, but they meet an elderly gentleman on the way. Dolon is convinced that Britomart killed his son, Guizor, because she is traveling with Talus, but says nothing. In fact, Artegall killed Dolon's son before making his way toward Pollente (the guy with the taxed bridge). Guizor was working for Pollente at the time. Dolon invites Britomart to rest in his house and sets a trap for her. Britomart stays awake all night and avoids the trap, Dolon flees before Talus can exact justice for their betrayal, but his remaining two sons are killed by Britomart and Talus the next morning when they block the duo's exit.

Book 5, Canto 6 Analysis

Britomart's reaction to Artegall's capture makes her the most human character in the entire book. Rather than act as a one-sided symbol, Britomart reacts in a non-virtuous knight manner. She is jealous and confused, and it is this swirl of emotions that keeps her awake to avoid Dolon's trap.

Book 5, Canto 7

Book 5, Canto 7 Summary

Britomart and Talus continue onward toward Artegall, and come across the Temple of 1sis. Only Britomart is allowed to enter; she sleeps the knight at the foot of the status of 1sis and dreams of being attacked, wooed, and impregnated by a crocodile before giving birth to a lion. A temple attendant interprets her dream in the morning, claiming that she and Artegall will wed and give birth to a great king. She leaves, and she and Talus continue towards Radigund. Radigund tries to get terms from Britomart (1f 1 win, you will serve me, etc.) but Britmart refuses to fight under any code beyond that of chivalry. She slays Radigund (just as she has so many others before) without pitying her beauty, while Talus forces his way into the castle proper and takes out many female warriors. Britomart stops Talus from killing more and rescues Artegall. She is rather disgusted at him while he wears women's clothing, but she forces the women in the castle to swear allegiance to him. Britomart and Artegall talk a bit, then the lady knight returns home. Artegall and Talus continue their quest (remember Eirena?).

Book 5, Canto 7 Analysis

This episode with the crocodile relates back to the myth of 1sis and Osiris. Just as 1sis tempered her husband's harsh punishments, so shall Britomart serve to ease Artegall's decisions as an agent of mercy (not pity). Talus is not allowed to enter the temple because he is stern justice without a human touch, and it is 1sis' temple. When Britomart faces Radigund, she does so without any special rules of engagement, thereby avoiding the mistake that Artegall made. On top of that, she is a woman and not subject to female beauty. Britomart may be the merciful side of justice in this canto (she stops Talus from all out bloodshed), but she knows when mercy and pity alike should not be granted, a lesson Artegall has just recently learned. Yet, Britomart does show pity to the women warriors of Radigund, asking Talus to cease his slaughter. By making the women swear loyalty to a man, Britomart is restoring balance to the land (women are loyal to men). Interestingly, Spenser chooses only to punish the female rulers who get out of line; the others are left to their devices—another sign of his support for his own female ruler Elizabeth. Not to mention that it is Britomart, a female, who gets things in order again after the upset. Spenser seems to like a female ruler, but not an area ruled by all of its women.

Book 5, Canto 8

Book 5, Canto 8 Summary

Artegall and Talus come upon yet another damsel in distress (this one being pursued by two knights who are in turn pursued by a third). The lady runs to Artegall for protection. One of the two knights turns to face the following knight and is killed. Artegall kills the second knight, then he too begins to fight the third. The lady intercedes, and the situation unfolds. The third knight is Arthur, who was trying to rescue the lady. The lady is Samient, maid to the queen Mercilla whose kingdom is bothered by an evil man Souldan, and his wife Adicia. Samient was sent as an envoy by her queen to seek terms with Adicia. The evil woman wanted nothing to do with her and tossed her out, then rethought her strategy and sent two knights after her to bring her back. That was when Arthur spotted the mess and tried to help her. Of course, Artegall and Arthur agree to sort things out.

Artegall dresses in one of the fallen knight's armor (a bit of subterfuge never too low when seeking justice, apparently) and rides back to Adicia's castle with Samient. Adicia takes him for one of her knights and the two are admitted. Meanwhile, Arthur rides up and demands they release the lady Samient. Souldna gets very upset at the newcomer's arrival and prepares to ride him down with his chariot. The two battle, and Arthur wins when Souldan's chariot overturns and mangles him. Arthur hangs Souldan's armor by a tree where Adicia can see it. When the ruler of the castle sees her husband's armor, she flies into a rage, takes a knife, and tries to kill Samient. Artegall protects her, of course, and fights off about a hundred of Adicia's men. Adicia flees to the woods where she lives the rest of her life as a rabid animal. Arthur, Artegall, and Samient enjoy a lovely knight in the castle.

Book 5, Canto 8 Analysis

This is another chance for Artegall to dispense justice, though this time he is dealing with more than property rights. Adicia and Souldan are flagrant promoters of injustice and must be punished. Souldan's reliance on his great chariot proves to be his undoing, and Adicia ends up a rabid animal, except now she lives in the woods instead of ruling a castle. Mercilla's tale also has some historical allegory attached to it. In Spenser's time, the Spanish (Philip 2) were trying to invade England and were responsible (so say the English) for many attempts on Elizabeth's life. The battle between Arthur and Souldan (on his heavily armored chariot like the Spanish galleons) was won through supernatural intervention (Arthur's glowing shield that distracts Souldan's horses and overturns his chariot and the storm that ravaged the Spanish fleet as it tried to head north).

Book 5, Canto 9

Book 5, Canto 9 Summary

The trio travel onward to Mercilla's court, and on the way Samient tells them about Malengin, a wild man who likes to rob and kill travelers who pass through this part of the trail. Of course, Arthur and Artegall stop to take care of the nuisance (dispense justice). They use Samient as bait to lure Malengin out of his cave. The wild man captures her in a snare, but lets her go when he sees Talus approaching. Malengin, a shape shifter, tries to flee the scene, but Talus catches up and kills him.

The party continues on its way and arrives at Mercilla's court. All is well ordered in accordance with law and decorum inside. Arthur and Artegall witness Duessa's trial as the witch is sentenced to death. At first, Arthur is moved to pity for the woman accused of, among many other crimes, trying to kill Mercilla and seize her throne. Soon after, though, Arthur's pity is replaced by the determination to see justice done. Artegall, on the other hand, feels no pity at all. Even after the sentence is delivered, Mercilla is reluctant to execute Duessa, and holds off the punishment.

Book 5, Canto 9 Analysis

Malengin represents the Irish nationals that Spenser had to deal with during his time in Ireland (they burned down his house at one point). This episode shows Spenser's sympathy for the English soldiers who had to contend with guerilla tactics (by offering Samient as bait) in any way they could. The trial of Duessa is more historical allegory. Duessa here represents Mary, Queen of Scots, who tried to overthrow Elizabeth, and was accused of that crime along with being Catholic. Elizabeth issued the same sentence here, death, but held off the execution for a long time. What is interesting is that while Arthur, that great knight, feels moved to pity (like the Earl of Leicester felt for Mary at the time) while Artegall does not. The great knight of justice has finally learned his lesson, it seems.

Book 5, Canto 10

Book 5, Canto 10 Summary

Duessa's execution, delayed for a bit (three cantos), is finally carried out. Afterwards, two messengers arrive at the court seeking Mercilla's aid. Their mother, Belge, needs help ridding their land of a cruel tyrant, Geryoneo. The wicked man wormed his way into their widowed mother's good graces, then began feeding the lady's sons to a horrible monster. Belge has sent her two eldest boys to get help. Arthur offers to help, insisting that Artegall continue on his own mission (remember Eirena?), and he sets off with the boys. Arthur meets up with Belge and she explains the situation again. She points him towards the castle where Geryoneo lives and Arthur takes off.

Approaching the castle, Arthur challenges the man, but only a deputy (servant) is in residence. There is also a huge false idol with a man-eating monster hidden beneath, but Arthur ignores that for now. Arthur kills the deputy, then another three knights who try to attack him. After seeing such a display of battle prowess, Geryoneo flees the scene. Arthur, Belge, and her remaining five sons retake the castle.

Book 5, Canto 10 Analysis

The land of Belge represents the lands overtaken by the Spanish during Spenser's time. Geryoneo is the King of Spain, while the deputy is the Duke of Alva, Spain's vicious viceroy. Arthur's victory over these challenges shows England's participation in the fight against Spanish usurpation.

Book 5, Canto 11

Book 5, Canto 11 Summary

Hearing that his castle has been overtaken, Geryoneo returns. The giant has three bodies and a number of arms, and is very angry. He faces Arthur on the battlefield, and Arthur is hard pressed, but wins at last. Next, Belge asks Arthur to get rid of the huge idol and the beast lurking beneath (not like he hasn't already had a busy day). Arthur calls forth the monster, a terrible creature with a woman's face, dog's body, dragon's tale, eagle's wings, and lion's claws. In the toughest fight of his life, Arthur manages to slay the beast (spilling wet entrails on the ground in a grisly description). Having restored order to yet another kingdom, Arthur rides off.

The tale then shifts back to Artegall, en route to Eirena and back on his original mission. He and Talus meet Sergis, a knight who tells them that Eirena is held captive by Grantoro and will be killed in ten days if no champion comes to fight for her. They head in that direction, but come across a knight fighting a number of men and a screaming lady in the distance. They join in the fray and meet the knight: he tells them he is Burbon, and he is trying to rescue his lady Flordelis from capture by Grantoro's men. During the fight, Burbon has given up his shield (it is Red Cross' old shield which, Burbon says, has earned him a lot of trouble from people who mistake him for the former) and Artegall gives him a stern lecture for putting aside his shield and compromising his honor. They finally overcome the men and Flordelis is saved. She is quite ungrateful and yells at Burbon for nearly letting her get captured. Artegall gives her an even sterner talking to and eventually the couple ride away together. Talus nearly goes on another killing spree, but Artegall stops him. Artegall, Sergis, and Talus continue towards Eirena.

Book 5, Canto 11 Analysis

Here is more historical allegory. Burbon is Henry IV of France (who had been raised Protestant) who was fighting the Catholics in his own country (Grantoro represents Catholicism). Queen Elizabeth helped him out a few times, but eventually Henry converted to Catholicism to stop the bloodshed (stating "Paris is worth a mass"). His faith of Protestantism, or Red Cross' shield, has been tossed aside, because it caused too much trouble for him. The rest of the Protestant world was very disappointed in him, like Artegall.

Book 5, Canto 12

Book 5, Canto 12 Summary

Artegall finally reaches Eirena's kingdom. Talus does some work with the mob on the beach as they arrive, and soon Grantoro and Artegall face off. Artegall sets terms—if he wins, Eirena gets the kingdom back; if Grantoro wins, well, we know he won't anyway, so who cares? They fight, and of course Artegall is triumphant. He sets Eirena back on her throne and begins meting out justice left and right. Artegall is soon called back by the Faerie Queen and he leaves Eirena to her land.

On the way home, Artegall is beset by two hags, Envy and Detraction, who set the Blatant Beast on him. Talus drives them all away, (would have killed them but Artegall stays his flail) and heads back to court.

Book 5, Canto 12 Analysis

Grantoro continues to represent Catholicism, yet this time in Ireland. Artegall is still Lord Grey, Spenser's boss and Elizabeth's diplomat in charge of putting down the Irish rebellion. Spenser portrays Lord Grey as a just dispenser of justice and attributes any acts of blind justice leading to outright violence to Talus, the emotionless machine of justice, not his hero Artegall. Artegall's somewhat hampered return to court mirrors Lord Grey's return to Elizabeth amid rumors of scandal and backstabbing.

Book 6, Canto 1

Book 6, Canto 1 Summary

Calidore is searching for the Blatant Beast, or Scandal. He meets Artegall and the two recount their adventures. Later, Calidore encounters Maleffort (Briana's seneschal who shaves and shears knights and ladies to provide the raw material required by Crudor's matrimonial clause) and beheads him. He confronts Briana, who calls on Crudor to avenge her, but the valiant champion of Courtesy teaches both lady and knight the meaning of True Courtesy and converts them to faithful (and married) devotees.

Book 6, Canto 1 Analysis

Here, Calidore has his first brush with "discourtesy," if this couple's actions can be so simply labeled, and sets things right. Briana and Crudor have erred against courtesy, which would demand that the lady set the quest for her knight (remember the Squire of Dames?), and have been breaking the laws of hospitality as well.

Book 6, Canto 2

Book 6, Canto 2 Summary

Calidore watches a comely youth stab a knight to death as a typical damsel in distress looks on, though not as distressed as she might have been, and demands how the youth could dare to so cross the laws of chivalry and attack a knight (not being a knight himself). The youth, one amazingly virtuous and handsome Tristram, explains that he stumbled onto the deceased knight thumping the damsel in question along beside his horse, and this was so contrary to the laws of knighthood and chivalry (mistreating a lady so) that he was forced to act. The deceased knight's actions are further impugned by his former lady, who explains how he had tried to steal himself a better, fairer maiden and failed, and then blamed her for his own inadequacies. Calidore is so impressed by Tristram's story that he makes the young man (who happens to be the son of a king, of course) a squire and delivers the not-so-distressed-damsel into his newly appointed protection. Soon, Calidore stumbles onto another of the wicked knight's victims: a wounded knight and his weeping lady. Calidore and the lady, Priscilla, carry the knight, Aladine, to the castle of the knight's father.

Book 6, Canto 2 Analysis

Calidore faces more challenges to his code of Courtesy, first by believing the young Tristram, and second by aiding the wounded Aladine. This is the first mention of the noble origins of courtesy, since Tristram, though raised in the wild, is quite courteous and a fine specimen for future knighthood, and is due to his kingly lineage.

Book 6, Canto 3

Book 6, Canto 3 Summary

Calidore, Priscilla, and Aladine arrive at Aldus's castle and are warmly greeted. Priscilla frets over her reputation, and Calidore finds it within his code to create a somewhat plausible cover story for her father upon her return home. Interestingly enough, Calidore's code allows him to save the lady's honor, but it does not allow her to avoid the marriage she fled the castle to avoid. Apparently, lady's reputations are Calidore's concern, but a lady's unfortunate fate at the hands of her father is not. Calidore then encounters a loving example of a knight and his lady in Calepine and Serena. While the boys chat, Serena is chomped on by the Blatant Beast and carried off. The knights give chase and the Beast drops Serena. Calidore pursues the Beast instead of checking on Serena, who has been tossed aside by the fleeing creature, showing his dedication to his quest, but somewhat ignoring the rules of Courtesy (a lady's "defense" should presumably include at least seeing if she has a pulse after she is tossed from the jaws of a wild animal). Luckily for her, Calepine stumbles onto his love and seeks aid. He is rebuffed at every turn, first by Turpine and his mockery, then by Turpine's castle. Calepine tries to fight Turpine, who refuses to engage under honorable circumstances and chooses to attack an unarmed Calepine later on. The Canto ends with Calepine and his lady love bleeding to death.

Book 6, Canto 3 Analysis

Turpine is an example of gross discourtesy in a simpler sense than Briana and her knight's marriage request. He is a knight who willingly and joyfully forgoes the rules of chivalry, hospitality, and knighthood, and therefore, the worst sort of villain in Calidore's eyes. Turpine should know better, but chooses to abandon Courtesy. The allegory could be seen as follows: "Internally Turpine is a rancorous and revengeful disposition which upsets peace of mind (Serena) and irritates a normally mild temperament (Calepine). 1t is accompanied by a pretended pity and concern (Blandina) and uses 1ago-like Deceit. This self destructive mood is very hard to displace from the mind; its defeat by the irascible faculty (Salvage Man) merely puts it to flight for a time. Only heavenly grace (Arthur) can subdue the appetite for revenge, and even then not fully."

The similarity between Calidore and Calepine is striking, since both represent different aspects of courtesy: Calidore is "Spenser's ideal gentleman in his daily contacts with other people and in his mission to suppress libelous slander" while Calepine represents the "internal disposition of this same gentleman and his struggle to maintain a proper balance of virtues within his own soul." Both knights suffer similar fates, but Calepine always preceding Calidore (Calepine kills a bear; later Calidore slays a tiger) as if to suggest that Calepine is the idea of Courtesy in action (sometimes blundering and often forgetting important things), but Calidore's better planned behavior more perfectly personifies Courtesy.

Book 6, Canto 4

Book 6, Canto 4 Summary

The Salvage Man appears and saves the day, showing that an uneducated, ill-tutored, and even non-speaking man can be a gentle savage. Using natural herbs and grunting gestures, this preview of the Romantic's noble savage stands as a sharp contrast to the well-educated, yet horribly behaved Turpine. Sometimes even the simple people can be better than discourteous knights. While Serena heals, Calepine wanders in the woods (showing that he clearly has not learned a lesson from Serena's previous wood-walking disaster) and finds a bear in the progress of eating a baby. He kills the bear with a rock (somehow bypassing the teeth and shoving the rock down the bear's throat) and saves the baby. He is saved the trouble of figuring out what to do next when he meets Matilde, a lady whose husband is quite upset at her lack of child-bearing. Calepine offers up the youth of questionable parentage to fulfill the prophecy of "be gotten, not begotten." Calepine seems to be of the opinion that the baby's upbringing, not heredity, will determine the person he becomes and is proven right by time.

Book 6, Canto 4 Analysis

This proves an intriguing view of the nature vs. nurture argument. Calepine's view contrasts the idea presented before (with Calidore and Tristram) that an untutored peasant might be a great knight someday as long as he happens to have noble parentage (even if the noble parentage in question is no longer in power). He sees the baby as a blank slate to be formed by his adoptive parents, Bruin and Matilde.

Book 6, Canto 5

Book 6, Canto 5 Summary

Since Calepine has disappeared sans armor and steed (the man cannot hold onto these things to save his life), Serena and the Salvage Man set off in pursuit. Serena rides his horse and the Salvage Man wears his armor (though he really doesn't need it since he's pretty much invincible), and they run into Arthur and Timias. They recount their adventures and Arthur is disgusted to hear of the discourteous knight Turpine. Timias's story is also recounted (he was attacked by Despetto [Malice], Decetto [Deceit], and Defetto [Detraction] and then bitten by the Blatant Beast). Since Timias probably represents Sir Walter Raleigh, this shows how even though he was forgiven by the Queen [Belphoebe], he still suffered from hints of slander and vicious rumors.

The four travelers spend the night with a kindly (and courteous) hermit, but in the morning Serena and Timias are too ill from the venomous bite of the Blatant Beast to continue. The hermit cares for them while Arthur and the Salvage Man continue.

Book 6, Canto 5 Analysis

The Salvage Man's decision to ride with Serena and care for her echoes Satyrane's journey with Una in Book 1. Both honorable men want to protect the ladies in the absence of their knights. The "savage man" and the hermit also have some historical allegory attached to them. A wild man appeared at one of Queen Elizabeth's masques in 1574, and in 1575, a "hombre salvaggio" showed up at Kenilworth Castle in honor of the queen. A wild man also welcomed Elizabeth to "an oak-tree adorned with the coats-pf-arms of the Sussex gentry" in 1591. A Hermit welcomed the queen at Woodstock in 1585 and told of his past life experiences with "the Temple of Venus" and his meetings with "the Queen of the Fairy."

Book 6, Canto 6

Book 6, Canto 6 Summary

The hermit instructs Serena and Timias on how to overcome their wounds: virtuous living, self-control, and avoidance of secrecy. Apparently, this is how one should overcome the effects of scandal. Arthur and the Salvage Man come to Turpine's castle where they are discourteously attacked and mistreated. Arthur beats Turpine within an inch of his life, but spares the man because of Blandina's (false) cries for mercy. Turpine agrees to never call himself a knight again, and Arthur moves on.

Book 6, Canto 6 Analysis

The allegory at work here can be described thusly: "When [a man's] natural grace of manner (Timias) and his peace of mind (Serena) are upset by false slander against him (the bite of the Blatant Beast), they are both calmed by his prudence (the hermit), which helps him to regain his poise and self-control."

Book 6, Canto 7

Book 6, Canto 7 Summary

In typical discourteous fashion, Turpine sends two knights after Arthur and the Salvage Man to kill them. Arthur defeats them, and hunts Turpine down. After much trouble, Arthur hangs Turpine from a tree in a satisfying punishment for his appalling lack of courtesy. Calidore would definitely approve. Serena and Timias, having now recovered from their run-ins with the Blatant Beast, are on the road when they spy Mirabella, a beautiful woman being mistreated by two hideous creatures, Disdain and Scorn. Timias, ever a chivalrous and courteous squire, forgoes the courtesy of asking if the lady needs help and rushes in. He is quickly subdued. Serena thinks he is dead and flees into the woods.

Book 6, Canto 7 Analysis

Timias is punished for his lack of courtesy, even though he is trying to rescue a lady apparently in distress.

Book 6, Canto 8

Book 6, Canto 8 Summary

Arthur and his newfound knightly friend Enias come upon Mirabella and her train (which now includes Timias) and immediately act. Jumping on the two beasts, they nearly succeed in freeing the lady from her tormentors. At the last moment, they finally listen to her pleas, and she explains that riding with these two creatures is her punishment for being a snooty woman who disdained love and rejoiced when her suitors pined away for her. She cannot allow the knights to kill these companions because they are necessary assistants in her road to recovery.

Meanwhile, Serena is captured by another band of savages after fleeing into the woods (she ought to know better by now). In direct counterpoint to the honorable Salvage Man, these savages strip her and prepare to feast on her in true cannibal style. Obviously, not all uneducated people turn out so nicely. Of course, Calepine (still without a horse of course) saves the day, rescues his lady love, and the two are joyfully reunited (though she doesn't speak for a while after the episode, and Calepine has some trouble recognizing her without her clothes).

Book 6, Canto 8 Analysis

Mirabella's case shows a gross discourtesy against courtly love. While a lady need not return all of the love her suitors bestow upon her, she should at least pick one of guys and marry him. Mirabella's scorn for love and men offended Cupid, and now she must atone for her trespass against courtesy in love.

Serena's episode with the savages is reminiscent of Una with the satyrs in Book 1, except that Una's band was a lot nicer.

Calepine's character has undergone some major development so far. One could see that "Turpine's castle was Calepine's place of testing, the Salvage Man's bower was his place of perfecting, and the rescue of Serena was his climactic test." He has gone from a knight who hid behind his lady love to avoid a confrontation to a superhuman paragon of virtue who fights off cannibals single-handedly. This is what Courtesy can do for you.

Book 6, Canto 9

Book 6, Canto 9 Summary

We finally return to Calidore, the main knight, who has been pursuing the Blatant Beast for a long time (several cantos, in fact). He comes across some shepherds, and, being one for a lovely lady, this time Pastorella, he decides to stay with them. He lays aside his weapons, his armor, and even his quest to spend some time with these semi-Lotus-eaters, and his only minor trouble is Coridon, a rival for Pastorella's love. Calidore manages to outdo his rival in the most courteous fashion, undermining Coridon's attempts to prove he is better for Pastorella with his charming mannerisms and courtly flair. Amid scenes of blissful pastoral delight, Calidore meets such memorable characters as Meliboe, Pastorella's wise and simple foster father, and Colin Clout, the man who can create worlds with his music.

Book 6, Canto 9 Analysis

Typically, Colin Clout refers to Spenser himself, the poet who creates worlds with his own type of music to praise those he admired (just as Colin praises his beloved among and above the other women). The beloved in question is thought to represent Elizabeth Boyle, the woman he later married, but other critics think she is Lady Elizabeth Carey, an English lady he courted but never married.

Calidore himself is often identified with Sir Philip Sidney and Pastorella with the woman he married, Frances Walsingham. In this case, Meliboe would be her father Francis Walsingham. Since Sidney was already associated with the pastoral through his *Arcadia* also lends credence to this view. The problem with this identification is that when Spenser mentions Sidney elsewhere, he often focuses on Sidney's poetic abilities, while Calidore has no such qualities. For this reason and others, some schools of thought identify Calidore with the Earl of Essex since, physically at least, Calidore more closely resembles him. The Earl also married Frances Walsingham a few years after Sidney died, so the rest of the allegory still works.

The pastoral episode here owes much to both Sidney and other precursors like Robert Greene, and follows the general formula for a pastoral romance. Meliboe's philosophy for living is based on the idea of a "simple life" with "small needs" and "obedience to nature." The shepherd's life takes place "in a natural state such as it had been in the Golden Age" and the "Blatant Beast is unknown" to them. The characteristics of the Calidore-Pastorella relationship follow the traditional formula, "the knight's interrupted quest and pastoral disguise, the foundling motif, the uncouth rival and the attack of the wild beast (here, the tiger), the captivity, and the melancholy shepherd." Basically, the pastoral involves a life close to nature that is portrayed in idyllic and often overly utopian tones, where the shepherds and shepherdesses run around wooing one another while wearing rose garlands and hand woven wool skirts.

Book 6, Canto 10

Book 6, Canto 10 Summary

Calidore stumbles onto Colin Clout's finest performance yet, and by his mere presence effectively destroys the scene. The rivalry between Calidore and Coridon is settled when the latter flees from a tiger that attacks Pastorella and the former defends his lady love. The Canto concludes with brigands raiding the pastoral paradise while Calidore (the only one who can really fight) is out hunting. All are captured and held for ransom in a cave.

Book 6, Canto 10 Analysis

Again, Calidore has stumbled onto something and soon after it ceases to exist. He isn't exactly destroying the Bower of Bliss, but he comes fairly close. In this Canto, "on the cosmological level, it authorizes the Neoplatonic image of the emanation and return of love that we see in the Dance of the Graces, where the natural and corporeal realm is infused with spirit and raised through art towards its supernatural source." This scene with the Three Graces is an integral part of the pastoral episode in this Book.

Book 6, Canto 11

Book 6, Canto 11 Summary

The brigands try to sell their newfound slaves, but the captain has fallen in love with Patorella's beauty. A fight ensues during which Meliboe is killed, but Coridon escapes. Calidore has discovered the remains of the pastoral camp and finds Coridon, who tells him that all have been killed, included the beloved Pastorella. Calidore finds the brigands, fights bravely and courteously (as always) and is overjoyed to find his love alive.

Book 6, Canto 11 Analysis

The idea of a pirate captain overwhelmed with love for his female captive is nothing new in the romance genre. In fact, this is a typical device that allows the hero time to arrive on the scene. Another way to see this as more than a simple plot device is to recall that Pastorella's untainted shepherdess beauty is what captures the attention (if not love) of even the basest of men.

Book 6, Canto 12

Book 6, Canto 12 Summary

Calidore and Pastorella arrive at the castle of Bellamour and Claribell, who of course are Pastorella's parents revealed by the old rose-shaped birthmark trick. This scene seems to imply that a person of Pastorella's amazing qualities must come from noble stock, in keeping with Calidore's previous stance with Tristram, but this does contradict the episode with the bear-baby where nurture determines character.

The canto concludes when Calidore finally catches the Blatant Beast, subdues it, and binds its Jaws-like mouth. The Book ends with the suggestion that, though now bound, the Blatant Beast will always find a way to escape, a dire prediction that Slander will return to haunt the court of Spenser's own Faerie Queene again.

Book 6, Canto 12 Analysis

This debate is never quite solved in this Book, but both sides are argued fairly well. Calepine, the knight who gets beat up an awful lot and can't hold onto his belongings or his girlfriend, is a proponent of Nurture, while Calidore, the accomplished knight who spreads courtesy and punishes discourtesy wherever he goes, seems to support Nature. One could conclude that Spenser's own sympathies were with the hero of this Canto, Calidore, but Calepine always puts up a good fight and displays courtesy in dire circumstances, so perhaps his case should also be given due consideration.

This is a somewhat depressing end to this book. We have been thoroughly entertained with a number of brand new and startlingly realistic characters, we have defeated some rather nasty villains (and villainesses), and we have experienced the joys of a simpler life with Colin Clout. 1t is somewhat disconcerting to discover that Calidore's quest for the best is ultimately in vain, since it will only escape to cause further trouble. 1 suppose we can take solace in the fact that because this generation has spawned a hero worthy of capturing such a vile creature, future generations will also manage to deal with Slander in their own way.

Book 7, Canto 6

Book 7, Canto 6 Summary

The goddess Mutability (Change) has subdued much of the earth, having destroyed man's golden age, and is currently engaged in dethroning Cynthia (goddess of the Moon). The gods are not pleased by her behavior, and Mercury is dispatched to sort the mess out. Mutability defies Mercury, and his default, his master Jove, and is requested to appear before the gods.

She has her proverbial day in court, and Jove, instead of smiting her impertinence, is charmed by her beauty and allows her to continue. (Didn't Artegall make the same mistake and have to wear a dress as punishment?) Given free leave to speak, Mutability argues that she should be in charge of all the gods because she holds dominion over them all. Though she denounces him as a usurper, Jove tries to explain that fate has placed them in their hierarchy, and Mutability should accept their decree. The feisty goddess is not satisfied by this explanation and demands a trial with Nature, the supreme deity.

The court of Nature is at Arlo Hill in Ireland, and a brief history of the locale follows. Yet another man, Faunus, spied on Diana bathing, though this time on purpose and with the complicity of the river nymph Molanna (unlike his unfortunate predecessor Achtaeon, who stumbled on the goddess accidentally), and as a result was disguised as a deer and hunted by the vengeful goddess's hounds. The river nymph was pelted with stones (though she did get the man Faunus promised in exchange for his peep show), and Diana cursed the place to run with wolves and thieves.

Book 7, Canto 6 Analysis

This Book, had it been completed, was Spenser's way of dealing with change. Although it may seem like Mutability, change, is in control of everything, from God to nature to every human being, the whole purpose of this episode is to show that there is a purpose in such fluctuation.

The description of Arlo Hill seems to be Spenser's way of immortalizing the Ireland he spent so much time in. Although he loved the river Molanna and the river Funsheon that it emptied into, he disliked the people who dwelled there (the rebel Irish who burned down his house); hence, Diana's curse on the region.

Book 7, Canto 7

Book 7, Canto 7 Summary

The trial of Mutability begins with the goddess detailing her control over earth, water, air, and fire. She goes on to explain her control over the seasons, time, and eventually life and death. She demands that Nature accede to her demand to rule, since she already has dominion over everything in the natural world in all but name. Nature responds by explaining that Change doesn't quite control things the way that Mutability thinks. In fact, Change is really only aiding all things to become closer to perfection while never altering the basic nature of their reality. Nature suggests that there will be a time when no Change will occur, presumably in the afterlife.

Book 7, Canto 7 Analysis

In a world that is ever changing, Spenser seeks to justify a force that seems to blindly dominate all aspects of life and even death. Instead of giving the power and purpose to Change alone, Spenser gives another reason altogether for the shifting—Mutability is merely a cog in a great machine that pushes everything in the world closer to perfection.

Book 7, Canto 8

Book 7, Canto 8 Summary

In this brief portion, the poet decides to forswear earthly vanities, since Change does hold sway over them for the time being, but he focuses instead on a time when there will be no more Change because Mutability does not rule the heavens.

Book 7, Canto 8 Analysis

The Mutability Cantos serve as an intriguing commentary on Spenser's worldview. Since the world at this time is based on immutability and permanence (geocentric, Chain of Being, etc.), it is difficult to accept the changes that occur daily within God's supposedly ever-fixed creation. This is the poet's way of blending these two conflicting views in a way that he can live with.

Often thought to be Book 7 of Spenser's work, a section dedicated to Constancy, there are only two cantos and the beginning of a third available. The cantos are not even the first in the book (They are 6, 7, and part of 8) so there is no way to determine the overall plot of the book from these fragments. (Remember that Calidore's book was without him for many cantos in the middle. Such could be the case here.) The Mutability Cantos (Book 7) serve as an intriguing commentary on Spenser's worldview. Since the world at this time is based on immutability and permanence, it is difficult to accept the changes that occur daily within God's supposedly ever-fixed creation. This is the poet's way of blending these two conflicting views in a way that he can live with.

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. Britamart 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, Belphoebe. 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.

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. Spencer'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.

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* differs 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 *abbabbcbcc*. Many other poets adopted the Spenserian Stanza for their work, including Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Tennyson.

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. Spencer'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*.

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 Spencer'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

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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 dif.cult 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.

Criticism

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Critical Essay #1

Metzger has a Ph.D., specializing in literature and drama at the University of New Mexico, where she is a Lecturer in the English Department and an Adjunct Professor in the University Honors Program. In this essay, she discusses Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene *and its contributions as a representation of the literary ideal, the usefulness of literature in educating man, and creating social change.*

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 historicall 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 .avoring in medicine to entice a child to swallow. For Spenser, the cherry .avoring 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 .delity 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 .ction 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 dissention 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.

Critical Essay #2

John Vanderslice describes Amoret's rescue from Busirane by Britomart in The Faerie Queene *as one woman rescuing another from evil, but more importantly, aiding her in matters of the heart.*

The entrapment of the newly betrothed Amoret in the house of the magician Busirane in *The Faerie Queene*, book 4□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

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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 bloud" 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, lifedenying 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.

Critical Essay #3

In this essay, Charles Ross examines Spenser's use of social practices and values in The Faerie Queene *and how he addresses the questions of tolerating others customs and staying true to one's own beliefs.*

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 houndlike 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 Darthur* 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.

Critical Essay #4

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 Blattant 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.

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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 Blattant 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 liefe 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.

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Critical Essay #5

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 counterrevolution."

There is, therefore, no bright line test for courtesy in *The Faerie Queene*. The Blattant 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 Blattant 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 Blattant 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.

BOOKRAGS

Critical Essay #6

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 frollicke, 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 nonmimetic 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 nonimitative 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, entertainement 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 dif.culty 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 mellifiuous rhymed epic in English. Such an attitude never dies, but must be ignored by the successful undertaker, just as Turpine is not eliminated, only baf.ed, 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.

Critical Essay #7

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.

BOOKRAGS

Critical Essay #8

In her analysis of Book 5 of The Faerie Queene*, Katherine Eggert makes the distinction that the book's shift from fiction to fact is in keeping with its concern of "transformations of kind" and how this shift includes the theme of female and poetic authority.*

To begin his discussion of the allegory of *The Faerie Queene*'s Book 5, A. C. Hamilton voices the private opinion of even Spenser's greatest admirers, that "Spencer's fiction seems to break down in Book 5. 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 5's adherence to a nonfictional point of reference: "Throughout Book 5 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 5, 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 5'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 5 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 5 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 3, 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 5, 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 5□ its sudden, unexplained, and unsatisfying shift in mode from fiction to fact□is replicated by a criticism that takes up Book 5 only in piecemeal fashion.

BOOKRAGS

In my view, neither the traditionalist desire to paper over Book 5's structural shift nor the current tendency to treat Book 5 merely episodically does justice to a Book whose concern from the beginning is transformations of *kind*. The Proem to Book 5 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 degendered.

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 forhead" of the Proem to Book 4 "[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 5'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 4. Book 5 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 "degendered" rather than "degenerated" to describe the sorry pass to which form has and will come, Spenser not only easily catches a poststructuralist critic's eye, but also recasts the problem of form in the terms in which it will appear in Book 5: the problem of feminine authority. The Proem's stony men look forward to Artegall's subjection to hint that Book 5 might illustrate Freud's Medusa effect, where men are no longer men because they are "degendered" stones, castrated by the phallic woman. By the 1611 folio of Spenser's complete works, "degendered" in this stanza had become the more purely francophonic "degenered," a substitution that encourages us to make a more explicit connection between the end of feminine rule showcased in Book 5 and the shift in literary form that immediately follows. To reverse the effect of men becoming "degendered," enthralled by the Medusa or the Amazon, *The Faerie Queene* must confront the perception that the poem itself has become "degenered," debased in literary kind from its original epic intent. Book 5'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 3 through 5 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 2 of the poem, she has identi.ed 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 3, hold sway in Book 4, and linger stubbornly into the central cantos of Book 5. It is therefore Book 5's turn toward history, not romance, that carries the force of nostalgia: nostalgia for Guyon's antiromantic narrative thrust, which managed in its "rigour pitilesse" to conquer the effeminacy induced by both a desiring queen and an arrested, uncloseable poetics.

Critical Essay #9

My first task, then, is briefly to track the history of the alliances between poetry and femininity proposed in Books 3 and 4, alliances that eventually necessitate Book 5's generic shifts. Because Book 5'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 2, 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 2 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 3 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 3, which describes the "ravishing" power of Walter Ralegh'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 Ralegh'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, Ralegh's reader rests passively in delightful "slomber." Book 3 here seems willingly to model itself after those moments in Books 1 and 2 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 3'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 engraffed 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 Ralegh 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 cutoff 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 3'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 3 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 3 fully exploits as poetic form the feminized qualities attributed to Ralegh's verse. On the level not only of lyric but also of narrative structure, poetry in Book 3 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 3 and 4 of *The Faerie Queene*. Maureen Quilligan and Lauren Silberman both read Book 3'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 3'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 3 and 4 is a writerly delight in castration and loss, in an excess of always-unfinished production. As Goldberg describes it, Book 3'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 4. For Goldberg, the pleasure of the writerly text of the entire *Faerie Queene*, but particularly of Book 4, 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 3 and 4 *are* in fact driving toward a particular conclusion, marriage. But as Books 3 and 4 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 Poeana's wedding to the Squire of Low Degree; and the unnarrated vows of purely allegorical rivers), Book 4's narrative effort is spent eluding rather than concluding wedlock. This avoidance is jumpstarted, as Goldberg points out, by the 1596 revision of Book 3, 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 3 witnessed

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Scudamour's embrace of Amoret only to be reminded of her own incompletion: "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 4 have little to do with women exercising will. Rather, women's thought and desires in Book 4 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 4's "middest," the analogue point to Book 3'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 *post*ponement 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 2's patrilineal genealogies□is a kind of suspended animation. And a male hero's safe response in Book 4 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 .esh□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 4□its turns and returns, engagements and disengagements. Having devolved so much of its action upon anticipated wedlock, Book 4'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 4 is seeded with everincreasing narrative guilt for not properly ending things. The kinds of conclusions that Book 4 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 4 begins to ask forgiveness for the cliffhanger technique that *The Faerie Queene* has employed since Book 1. Canto II opens by apologizing that Florimell has been left "languishing in payne" since 3.8. And Book 4 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."

Critical Essay #10

That "other place," that place of perfection, is Book 5, 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 5's narrative asserts openly what Book 4'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 oftenrepeated 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 5: 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 5 firmly disenfranchise feminine authority from this return to finality.

Of all the proems in *The Faerie Queene* , Book 5'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 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 (5.Pr.II)

Given Spenser's cunning hubris throughout *The Faerie Queene*, it is difficult not to read *aread* 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 5 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 3 and 4. 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 3 and 4, 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 5 approaches its center, a center we have learned in Books 3 and 4 to associate with realized or potential feminine arrestiveness, with marriage and feminine (re)production. Cantos 5 through 7 of Book 5 in fact stage in small the extensive, interwoven problematics of marriage and of a feminine poetics mounted at length through Books 3 and 4. 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 yeelded of his owne accord". Moreover, Radigund catalyzes at the precise moment of Artegall's quasi-marital oath a regression to Book 3'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 yeelded 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 3 and 4. Unlike Cantos I through 4 of Book 5, 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 3 and 4, Book 5 has feminine authority at its heart. Significantly, Britomart in Book 5's "middest" Canto 6 rearms herself.

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The dilemma of the arrested text begins to be resolved as Book 5 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 5; 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 3, where Britomart's state of feminine dismay and incompletion 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 3 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 5 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 Maygame 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 chast *Penelope* possesse,/To see her Lord, that was reported drent". With Artegall's promotion to head of state, Book 5's curious catalogue of ways to abuse the human headits elaborately grisly panoply of hangings, beheadings, scalpings, and even haircutsbegins 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 aduenture, 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 represse,
And mighty hands forget their manlinesse

A comment on Artegall's recent imprisonment, it would seembut 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.

Critical Essay #11

As Artegall's earlier dismissal of Britomart in Book 4 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 4 conforms to the poetics of castration—of excess compensation for loss—then in keeping with its obsessive decapitations of illegitimate authorities, Book 5 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 5's revision of form reaches back nostalgically for the completed heroic endeavors of Books 1 and 2; if Books 1 and 2 can legitimately (if broadly) be described as the epic segments of *The Faerie Queene*, then the nostalgia that Book 5 expresses is for epic over romance. But Book 5 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 horrour, 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 1. 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 aduenture" clearly navigates where he and the poem are going: "on his first aduenture [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 apocalyptics (like Bodin's political theory) were also a matter of historical event and analysis. If Book 5'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 suprahistorical, 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 5'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 sixteenthcentury 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 aucthoritie; 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 5'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 5 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 chamberbut 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 5 by engaging upon yet another generic experiment. Book 6's pastoral stands in contrast to Book 5 not only as a conspicuously anti-epic form, but also as a conspicuously and innovatively *masculine* anti-epic form. Although Book 6 seems to accept with pleasure poetry's suspension of experienceas does the narrative voice, which in the Proem admits itself "nigh rauisht with rare thoughts delight" in Faery land's delightful waysit 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 Shepheardes 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 6 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 6's narrative, which is hardly famous for its seamless conclusions. And Book 6'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 6 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 5 and 6, 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.

Critical Essay #12

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 poetrycannot 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 .ctive 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 5; 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 5'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 5'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 5'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 5 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 5'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 bloodclaim 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 unmasks 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 5'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 5'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.

Critical Essay #13

Author Kathleen Williams discusses the use of symbolism to create unity throughout the seven books of The Faerie Queene *in her essay.*

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 Belphoebe, 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 Belphoebe 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 Dudon 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 himselfe even trembled at his fall. Symbol and allegory, often dif.cult 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. Belphoebe is

Pure and unspotted from all loathly crime,
That is ingenerate in .eshly 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 Belphoebe 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 Belphoebe, 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 Belphoebe 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 selfsufficient, 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 Almightie 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 knowof 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, firmely stay'd
Upon the pillours of Eternity.

On earth, the calm and orderly process through which the universe works it 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: 0 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.

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.

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.

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: In1588, 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.

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 Spencer'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.

The Cambridge Cultural History: 16th Century Britain (1992) edited by Boris Ford, provides an accessible history of sixteenth century life, including: cultural and social life, architecture, literature, music, art, and Renaissance gardens.

Further Study

Berger, Harry Jr., *Revisionary Play: Studies in the Spenserian Dynamics*, University of California Press, 1988.

Berger's book contains essays that he has written on Spenser's work. The essays span nearly twenty-five years of study of Spenser's poems and exam his work from several critical vantages.

Cavanagh, Sheila T., "Nightmares of Desire: Evil Women in *The Faerie Queene*," in *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 91, No. 3, Summer, 1994, pp. 313-338.

Cavanagh examines the way women function in Spenser's epic, arguing that the dreams and visions of men suggest that women are dangerous.

Ferry, Anne, *The Art of Naming*, University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Ferry's book is a rhetorical study of the language in Spenser's epic. Ferry makes connections between grammar and repetitions, etc., and then makes further connections to historical interpretations.

Fitzpatrick, Joan, "Spenser's Nationalistic Images of Beauty," in *Cahiers Elizabethains: Late Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, No. 53, April, 1998, pp. 13-26.

Fitzpatrick examines Book I of Spenser's epic for representations of Irish Catholics in the demonic characters. Fitzpatrick argues that Spenser's demonization of the Irish appears in other Spenser work as well.

Frye, Susan, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation,* Oxford University Press, 1996.

Frye uses three separate episodes from Elizabeth's reign to explore her struggle for power. A significant portion of this text focuses on the queen's response to Spenser's epic.

Heninger, S. K. Jr., "Orgoglio," in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry,* edited by Hugh McClean, W. W. Norton, 1968, pp. 593-602.

Heninger uses the giant, Orgoglio, as an example of Spenser's intention to confiate morality and history. Heninger maintains that Spenser uses classical mythology, the Book of Revelations, and recent politics in the Orgoglio episode to explore the connections between morality and history.

Summers, David A., *Spenser's Arthur: The British Arthurian Tradition and 'The Faerie Queene,'* University Press of America, 1997.

Summers traces the history of the Arthurian legend through literature and examines its impact on British society.

Villeponteaux, Mary, "'*Not as Women wonted to be'* Spenser's Amazon Queen," in *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*, edited by Julia M. Walker, Duke University Press, 1998.

Villeponteaux examines the representation of Elizabeth in the Amazon queen, Radigund.

Williams, Kathleen, "Spenser and Medieval Romance," in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, edited by Hugh McClean, W. W. Norton, 1968, pp. 555-563.

Williams discusses the use of myth in Spenser's epic and argues that Spenser took old myths and made them contemporaneous with Elizabethan life.

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Sidney, Philip, *The Defence of Poesy*, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. I., 6th edition, edited by M. H. Abrams, W. W. Norton, 1993, pp. 480-500.

Spenser, Edmund, "A Letter of the Authors in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. I., 6th edition, edited by M. H. Abrams, W. W. Norton, pp. 516-519, 1993.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Epics for Students (EfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, EfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of EfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of EfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of classic novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board memberseducational professionals helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in EfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by EfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

EfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Epics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the EfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the EfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Epics for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Epics for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from EfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

Night. Epics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from EfS (usually the first piece under the Criticism subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on Winesburg, Ohio. Epics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of EfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition, Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Epics for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of EfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. Richard Wright: Wearing the Mask, in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Epics for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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