

SPENSER • NEWSLETTER ^{DM}

WINTER 1988 • VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 1

E. J. Gless

EDITOR: DARRYL J. GLESS
ASSOCIATE EDITORS: JERRY LEATH MILLS, S. K. HENINGER, JR.

SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

ASSISTANT EDITOR: ANTHONY M. ESOLEN
CORRESPONDING EDITORS:
ELIZABETH BIEMAN, ELLEN M. CALDWELL,
DONALD CHENEY, A. KENT HEATT, RITCHIE D. KENDALL,
HUGH MACLEAN, WALDO F. MCNEIR, RICHARD D. SCHELL
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: MARY ELLEN O'SHIELDS

•
CONTENTS

BOOKS: REVIEWS AND NOTICES	1
Kendall, Ritchie D. <i>The Drama of Dissent: The Radical Poetics of Nonconformity, 1380-1590</i>	1
Lockerd, Benjamin G., Jr. <i>The Sacred Marriage: Psychic Integration in The Faerie Queene</i>	4
Vance, Eugene. <i>Marvelous Signals: Poetics and Sign Theory in the Middle Ages</i>	6
Wiggins, Peter De Sa. <i>Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and Design in the Orlando Furioso</i>	10
ARTICLES: ABSTRACTS AND NOTICES	12
SPENSER AT MLA	17
ANNOUNCEMENTS	26
SPENSER AT KALAMAZOO 1988: PROGRAM	27

The *Spenser Newsletter* is published three times a year, Winter, Spring-Summer, and Fall, by the Department of English at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Please address all communications to: *Spenser Newsletter*, Department of English, CB# 3520 Greenlaw Hall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599.

The editor solicits letters containing news of any sort which would be of interest to Spenserians, and will make an effort to print any legitimate query. He also solicits abstracts and/or offprints of articles (with full publication data, please), the receipt of which may reduce the time between the publication of the article and the report on it.

Subscription rates, institutional and private: \$5.50/yr. in USA, \$5.50 (US funds or equivalent) in Canada, \$9.00 US in Latin America and overseas. These rates are for Vol. 19, 1988.

BOOKS: REVIEWS AND NOTICES

88.01 Kendall, Ritchie D. *The Drama of Dissent: The Radical Poetics of Nonconformity, 1380-1590*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986. x + 286 pp. \$30.00.

As I began to find my bearings in this elegantly written study, I recalled a recent exchange at the Newberry Library Milton Seminar. We were discussing a provocative paper on *Samson Agonistes*, part of a book-in-the-works on Milton's iconoclasm. Suddenly one of the participants asked the presenter: "What's the difference between the iconoclasm you see as a widely operative force in Milton's authorship and what we ordinarily call 'polemics'?" After a pause came this answer: "Nothing substantive, perhaps. But if we read the polemics specifically as iconoclasm, we find striking things to contemplate, like the violence Milton directs against opponents' imagery and makes integral to his own. 'Iconoclasm' organizes my primary material for my interpretation."

Ritchie Kendall mounts a similar case for "drama" as the complex referent that will open the early vernacular literature of religious dissent in England to fuller critical appreciation and understanding. Initially couched as a paradox to make us stop and think, Kendall's thesis quickly secures itself a hearing. It is true that we have pigeonholed Lollards and emerging Puritans -- Reformers generally -- as haters of plays. This standing judgment, together with its human and literary objects, has gathered a good deal of dust. Now Kendall challenges us to consider afresh how much drama -- especially the ambivalence that he labels "displaced drama" (58) -- figures in early English nonconformist writings and how indispensable such elements as personae, dialogue, and conflict become in the production of these texts. Between a methodologically reflective prologue and a short epilogue (on *Samson Agonistes*!) this study unfolds in five spacious chapters: (1) "The Lollards: The Unmasking of Mystery," (2) "The Lollards: Displaced Drama," (3) "John Bale: The Cloistered Imagination," (4) "Thomas Cartwright: The Drama of Disputation," and (5) "Martin Marprelate: Syllogistic Laughter."

How does Kendall implement his organizing concept, "the drama of dissent"? Four of his chapters yield lively insights into literary concerns that normally attach to dramatic presentation. A superb two-part appraisal of Lollard writings details how exegetical and introspective struggles make of life -- and its renderings on the page -- a display of soul-making that bids to upstage miracles in the Mass and the mystery-play. In place of the latter, these writings offer something closer to the morality and its psychomachia while pumping altogether new content into an Everyman figure. The heretical, steadfast in countering his or her bishop under formal examination, and the earnest seeker after salvation in Pierce the *Plowman's Creed* emerge as enduring, formative studies in sainthood redefined.

The chapter on John Bale convincingly traces "playing" through tract and stage drama as an activity vitiated for the most part by deceit, disguise, and the flouting of linguistic and moral constants. Such playing must be contained and countered by exposé -- the constant reflex of Bale's mind and work, as Kendall shrewdly perceives. Over

against this chapter, as a testimony to nonconformist complexity, stands a fine discussion of Martin Marprelate's triumphant shifts of guise, tone, mood, scene, and issue to confound the worldly bishops whom he surprises at cards or in more compromising postures. Only the chapter on Thomas Cartwright stretches the organizing concept beyond the reaches of plausibility as it argues that the undoubted oscillation between dialectical logic and affective appeal in this polemical prose is a species of drama. Despite all efforts, Cartwright continues to seem, if not irrecoverably undramatic, surely far less "dramatic" than contemporaries like William Turner or John Foxe, who come in for merely incidental notice.

The literary dimension of *The Drama of Dissent*, however, is by no means confined to the successes of sensitive textual commentary that abounds in its pages. Kendall is deeply committed as well to arguing that his nonconformist writers worked cognizantly to create "a poetics of dissent" (5) realized variously as "Lollard aesthetics" (50), as outright "dramatic art" in Bale (102), and as "nonconformist displaced drama" in the "Puritan artist" Cartwright (140). Yet, with the notable exception of Bale, Kendall fails to provide any real evidence for his claim regarding the artistic intentions of the writers he discusses. Even the stagey Marprelate stakes out a place for himself in the domain of the non-fictive when he calls what he is doing "pistle-making" (190).

Kendall does manage to establish a more modest but nonetheless historically valuable point: this is his writers' reiterated cognizance of working in coarse, blunt language aimed to shock and shatter complacency, their sense of operating at the extremities of plain style. Such declarations of authorial self-awareness, however, prove inadequate to the larger interpretive ambitions of this study, both because they occur in writers who are not nonconformists (the defenses of verbal rough handling in Jewel's *Apology for the Church of England* and Thomas Becon's 1563 preface to his *Works* come immediately to mind) and because they afford no means of getting to the other side of the blurry divide between rhetoric and poetics in this period, where Kendall wants to locate his writers. To lend force to his claim that they know themselves to be artists and, at the very least, incipient dramatists, he resorts over and over to a master metaphor that characterizes the polemical protocols of these writers as "ritual patterns of self-dramatization" (9), "the Lollard attempt to substitute the ritual of biblical exegesis for that of the Eucharist" (20), "ritual reenactment" that "emblemizes an act of aesthetic as well as moral choices" in "sacramental art" (62), "sacramental rite" (135), and "the ritual conflict of intellect" (209). I can only say that I find such metaphors unconvincing substitutes for argument. Such loose use of the vocabulary of ritual and sacrament muddies vital issues of the period. It also often seems curiously at odds with the formulations evolved by early English nonconformists as they sought self-representation and self-understanding.

But there is an insistent implication that these subjects understood themselves considerably less well than Kendall (and we with him) can claim to. In pressing his case for a "poetics of nonconformity" that materializes in a "drama of dissent," he trades from the outset in psychosocial as well as literary concerns. Kendall credits precedents in Stephen Greenblatt's account of Tyndale in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and in David Leverenz's detection of inward misgivings externalized as antitheses in *The Language of Puritan Feelings*. Adopting their composite outlook as fact or truth -- both at once, really -- Kendall posits a personality type that recurs through the period he is investigating.

"The term nonconformist," he declares early on, "is itself suggestive of the complex process of self-definition that characterizes this movement, its pursuit of identity through a ritual combat with an ambivalently regarded nemesis" (6). Shortly thereafter he fixes the terms of joint description and judgment once and for all: "The Puritans and their ancestors attacked in the drama those things which they feared and loathed within themselves. The assault on a well-defined, external enemy was, for the nonconformist, a rite of self-exorcism" (10).

Subsequent applications of this interpretive postulate prove relentless and fairly reductive. We are told that "the Lollard troubled by misgivings over the idiosyncratic nature of his belief ... reaffirmed his own sense of sanity, well-being, and importance ... by repeatedly casting his rivals in the role of threatening deviant" (68-69). We are told that "what distinguishes Bale's thinking from similar Lollard formulations was his insistence that the enemy by which man measured his sanctity was an internal as well as an external demon" (93), although "whether a sense of public spirit prompted him to expose the sexual crimes of the orders or a more selfish need to hide a private confession of sin beneath the objectivity of history is not a penetrable mystery" (95). "Presumably," we are told, "Cartwright eased his anxieties of criminal complicity [in] ... the mysticism of the Catholic or the Anabaptist ... by grounding his ... favorite images ... on biblical precedent" (164). "Martin's exasperating shifts between inspired innocent and painful scholar are yet another expression," we are told, "of the fundamentally divided nature of the Puritan and Lollard personalities. Intellect and spirit always coexist in an unresolved tension that produces saints who alternately see themselves as 'learned' and 'godly'" (185-86).

It will by now be clear that I have reservations about the accuracy and utility of a sometimes imperious structuralism that undertakes to categorize early English nonconformists in accordance with conditions for drama that are taken to define them as well as their works. The constitutive dramatic elements that concern Kendall -- dialogue form, identities at once discovered and forged agonistically through an epistemological or moral showdown between the author or author's mouthpiece and opponents, linguistic enactment of the struggles and movements of individual psychologies, plain speaking that gradates in vehemence to slang and vituperation -- turn out, in fact, to be just as operative in such works as Pecoock's *Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy*, Elyot's *Pasquil the Plain*, More's *Dialogue concerning Heresies*, and Becon's *Sick Man's Salve*. No one would mistake any of these for nonconformist productions. As for internal self-division and the urge to vindicate one's identity in public controversy -- presumptive concomitants of a change in religious affiliation or even of a conversion experience in this period -- who would wish to assign a monopoly to nonconformists? Can these authorial traits be predicted of John Bale but not of Stephen Gardiner? of Thomas Cartwright but not of Thomas Harding? John Carey's *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* strongly persuades otherwise.

Despite the reservations I have expressed, I welcome the lively readings that grace Kendall's chapters as well as the disregard for conventional periodization that lumps Lollards and Puritans together in this study, prompting constant attention to the nature, strength, and provenance of what look like constants of thought, expression, attitude, and outlook. Kendall's notes and scholarly bibliography are also admirably rich. Although *The Drama of Dissent* does not consolidate the bond between Lollardy and Puritanism

that has been offered as the key to the English Reformation since Bale and Foxe, the scope of Kendall's proposed "radical poetics of nonconformity, 1380-1590" is boldly suggestive and a timely stimulus to further inquiry.

Janel Mueller
University of Chicago

88.02 Lockerd, Benjamin G., Jr. *The Sacred Marriage: Psychic Integration in The Faerie Queene*. Lewiston, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1987. 209 pp. \$29.50.

Benjamin Lockerd has written a good book that lucidly applies to Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Carl Jung's concept of individuation, the internal marriage that reflects and symbolizes a more general *conjunctio oppositorum*. He may encounter resistance, if only because for some readers (not including this reviewer) Jung is less familiar and convincing than Freud, while for yet others any psychoanalytic reading of Spenser turns his poem into a bad novel. In his Introduction, Lockerd acknowledges the risk, hoping to escape it by locating psychological shifts not so much within characters as in the spaces between *personae*, in the structure of their actions and relations (C. S. Lewis says something like this in *The Allegory of Love*, but his model was less dynamic). To be sure, this short book does not exhaust the possibilities of his method, and a longer study might take even more account of how posture and terrain, for example, impede, impel, or imply the marriage in question.

Chapter I explains some Jungian basics, illustrating them with Spenserian examples -- fair enough, for Jung often took his evidence from Renaissance materials. Lockerd stresses that what for Spenser was objective truth, for Jung was exclusively psychological; he may exaggerate here, since despite Jung's insistence on speaking only as a doctor there is little doubt that he believed in a divine if obscure reality "out there" (M.-L. von Franz, *C. G. Jung*, p. 188). The explanations are otherwise serviceable, although in discussing a Christian poem it is misleading to call the anima or animus a man's or woman's "soul" (28); these are better described as archetypes through which the unconscious manifests itself and which, because perceived as "other," appear as the opposite gender (see, e.g., Jung's *Aion*, in *The Portable Jung*, ed. Joseph Campbell, pp. 148-62). In defining them, Jung often speaks of the masculine as *logos*, spirit, the revealing and dividing light, and of the feminine as *eros*, feeling, connectedness. Spenser thought this way too, and Lockerd's application of such distinctions to *The Faerie Queene* is exciting. He may, however, alienate even mildly feminist readers, and I wish he had noted how such binarism can be cruelly misapplied to living males and females. Just as some Freudians have dissociated themselves from the master's stress on penis envy (sometimes a cigar is just a cigar for us nonsmokers, too), Jungians can retain this version of yin and yang while recognizing its potential for abuse: Ann Ulanov's *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology*, which Lockerd cites, expresses such doubts. Lockerd's opening remarks on Spenser and Jung is neatly handled, though, and he adroitly locates the psychic tensions that sustain the poetry's mannered prettiness, just as others now find a degree of unsuspected political *drang* if not *sturm*.

Chapter 2, "Epic and Romance; Logos and Eros," applies Jung's divisions to the genres Spenser marries, associating them with war and love, forces that many knew hold

the world in poise. True, to see the feminine arriving in the "European consciousness" with the later Middle Ages (52) may raise hackles -- the chronology is tempting because Roland's prowess did yield to Orlando's lunacy, but the feminine can be found elsewhere in earlier times, especially as fifty percent of Europe's population was female, conscious, and not entirely animus-ridden. Chapter 3, "Allegory and Psyche," uses Britomart to demonstrate how Spenser's allegory serves psychological exploration, Malecasta and Gardante functioning as the knight of Chastity's shadows (that is, as unacknowledged contents of the unconscious); such a role for the dark and dreadful, as well as for separation and differentiation, is found also, says Lockerd, in the myth of Psyche, now living in the Garden of Adonis with a husband who has progressed, in her awareness, from a devouring monster to a boy god to a father.

The rest of the book treats *The Faerie Queene* as two sequences of individuation, one completed by George's betrothal to Una (true holiness entails full personhood, at least in Spenser's version of sanctified humanity) and the other extending from Book II to VI; even readers who find the scheme unlikely will enjoy Lockerd's often subtle commentary. Chapter 4, "Holiness and Individuation," follows Red Crosse and Una from their initial unintegrated proximity to their necessary separation -- the knight is first possessed by an anima whose inadequacy is signaled by her parodic "femininity" and then immobilized by a pseudomale pride, while the true lady bears his armor even as her own animus develops from the leonine to the magnificent -- and finally to a union that parallels the cosmic marriage of masculine and feminine. (Modern physicists call these the strong and weak forces, avoiding gender; or one could say that St. George and Una tie the knot with superstrings.) Lockerd recognizes Redcrosse's kinship with Orgoglio, Despair, and the Dragon; this is not new, but to position such shadow figures along the path to integration is fresh and the focus on Una is welcome. One error: Lockerd says that in *The Golden Legend* George marries the princess and the dragon is spared. This is excellent Jung, allowing the sacred marriage and preserving the darkness from premature extinction, but in the *Legend* George saves his body for celibate martyrdom and the Libyans, knowing that in real life the only good dragon is a dead dragon, are glad to see the monster killed. The true Jungians were the European towns that annually trotted out dragons like "Snap" or "Doudou" to help celebrate April 23 or Corpus Christi, the monsters prancing in perennial love / hate near their conquering Margarets and Georges.

Chapter 5 reads Book II as exploring an early adolescent stage of psychological development (not that Guyon is himself a child, Lockerd hastens to add). The discussion may insist too strongly on the positive value of Guyon's innocence -- Jesus recommends serpentine subtlety -- but the appreciation of Belphoebe in the development of the feminine is appealing; indeed one could defend Belphoebe as a perennial if dangerous energy ("with beauty like the tightening bow," says Yeats of a related figure) that saves us from dwindling into exclusively sexual or domestic roles. Lockerd adds a fine discussion of Arcasia as the devouring mother from whom the young masculine must tear itself, even if that requires a fit of destructive bad temper, for only then can the feminine become Venus, Isis. Chapter 6 speeds the pace, taking us from the needed separations of Book III to the differentiated *quaternio* (man / anima / woman / animus) of Book IV, the unions of masculine and feminine in Book V and (most ingeniously) the parenting that shows in book VI's fascination with nurseries, nurture, and offspring. The final chapter reads Book VII as indicating once more the marriage of earth and heaven

already indicated by Book I and by Book VI's Mt. Acidale. Like other recent critics, if from his own angle, Lockerd defends Mutabilitie: she is, he says, not just a parodic or would-be Nature but a potential or preliminary Nature, transmutable into that which merges human and divine, matter and spirit. And he has some harsh words for Olympus: "When Jove berates the bold aspirations of those who attempt to claim heaven, one may wonder if he might not reject even the heavenly aspirations of the pious. Certainly his disgusted rejection of 'earthly mire' is meant to be contrasted with Christ's taking on of an earthly body" (179).

Despite a few errors and some puzzling omissions in the bibliography (Kent Hieatt's *Chaucer Spenser Milton* would fit in nicely and the work by Hal Weatherby in *Spenser Studies* on baptismal rites at Una's betrothal would lend support), *The Sacred Marriage* is an intelligent application of powerful and haunting metaphors. Perhaps someday Lockerd will say how his approach intersects with what we know of Spenser's world. After all, Contemplation tells Redcrosse not only his nature (earth), his name (always good to know in an allegory), and his personal destiny (saved); he also "places" him with regard to what Jung calls the "Collective" -- he is to be the patron of Merry England. It is a measure of this book's ahistoricity that "Collective" is not even indexed, for that archetype is by its nature the most apt to take on the coloration of an individual psyche's historical situation. In the course of an analysis Jungians, perhaps more than Freudians, acknowledge the impact of external circumstances on the analysand, so there is no theoretical objection to admitting that even the Sacred Marriage is subject to impediments, to a particular decade's quirks of dress and rite, perhaps even to a whispered chorus of "th'unpleasant Quayre of Frogs still croking" and the "damned ghosts cald up with mighty spels"; Spenser ordered these last out of his bedchamber in *Epithalamion* 349, 347, but in a fallen world they never go far from the threshold and *The Faerie Queene* includes them. Lockerd doubtless knows this, which is why he could write a sequel (*Son of Sacred Marriage?*) to show how the archetypes fared in Spenser's particular imagination and how they fit or do not fit recent Spenser criticism.

Anne Lake Prescott
Barnard College, Columbia University

88.03 Vance, Eugene. *Marvelous Signals: Poetics and Sign Theory in the Middle Ages*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986. xvii + 365 pp. \$35.00.

At about the midpoint of this remarkable book, Eugene Vance makes an observation (a propos of his analysis of *Aucassin et Nicolette*) that properly serves as a starting point for a review of *Marvelous Signals*:

Critics today who address themselves to the discourses of medieval texts have interesting alternatives before them: whether to confine themselves to a historical perspective upon medieval discourses and their context, whether to cast their lot with modern analytical techniques, or whether to draw on the insights of both. I believe that the last choice holds the most potential for modern critics, so long as their eclecticism is coherent and lucid (153).

First things first. Those who disagree with this judgment will not care for *Marvelous Signals*. At its best, this wide-ranging semiotic approach to medieval and

Renaissance texts both adopts this critical principle and applies it with unwavering excellence. The discussions of individual texts, from Augustine's *Confessions* to *The Faerie Queene*, are stunning analyses showing less the *applicability* of modern theory than the ubiquity of semiotics (its jargon aside).

The book begins with two companion chapters on St. Augustine dealing with two related semiotic problems to which Vance will return again and again. Chapter One, "Augustine's *Confessions* and the Poetics of the Law," is a meditation on the broader connotations of the word *confession* as testament or witness, which naturally introduces the problem of language and the ineffable. Chapter Two, "St. Augustine: Language as Temporality," focusses on the contingency and fragility of the spoken and written word, on the word in time and *as* time. Clearly showing both Augustine's sensitivity to the sign and Vance's sensitivity to Augustine, these two pieces comprise a disarmingly straightforward and efficient overture to the book: Vance lets *Augustine* talk about the evanescence of the word and the supplementarity of the sign without even one cosmetic reference to the *Grammatology*.

These chapters are followed by a stunning sequence of loosely linked treatments of *The Song of Roland*, Chretien's *Yvain*, The Châtelain de Coucy, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, medieval French theater, the *Inferno*, Chaucer's *Troilus*, and *The Faerie Queene*, most of which are revisions of articles published in the late 1970s and 1980s. For the most part, these analyses are models of the skilled, considered eclecticism which Vance espouses in the passage quoted above. Before touching on the chapter that deals with *The Faerie Queene*, I will discuss only four chapters. Two are unqualified successes; two are somewhat flawed.

Chapter 3, "Roland and Charlemagne: The Remembering V-ices and the Crypt," builds on the themes of "St. Augustine: Language as Temporality" to produce a sweeping reading of the *Roland* as an embodiment of the analogy between action and/as memory, *acta et facta, res et verba*, the hero as (perpetuator of) tradition, and the singer as hero. Looking closely at memorializing and remembering as the primary verbal and mental actions of the poem, Vance's analysis should be read by anyone hoping to understand the essence of epic.

Chapter 5, "Chrétien's *Yvain* and the Ideologies of Change and Exchange," is Vance's first of several forays into the sociolinguistics of metaphor, a close textual study of the language of mercantilism in Chrétien's poem. As nowhere else in the book, the text is made to exfoliate the semiotic pattern Vance explores, and the result is a model of critical eclecticism that is, to recall his words, "coherent and lucid."

The two qualified successes exhibit failures of this same eclecticism. Chapter 4, "The Châtelain de Coucy: Enunciation and Story in Trouvère Lyric," moves from notions of enunciation (Emile Benveniste) to notions of subjectivity (Paul Zumthor and Roland Barthes) to notions of the dialectic of lyric (Zumthor and Roger Dragonetti) to the actantial theories of A.-J. Greimas to conclude with reference to the Freud's *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. All of this happens in twenty-four pages. Here modern theorists usurp the place of the text, and Vance neglects the difficult job of fully exploring the concord of modern semiotics and medieval poetics. The chapter provides

brehtaking reading, but the ride is much too fast, the turns too sharp, the loops too self-conscious.

A different failure of eclecticism flaws Chapter 9, "Mervelous Signals: Sign Theory and the Politics of Metaphor in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*." Here the problem is not a multiplicity of theoretical frameworks but what strikes me as a tendentious insistence on a framework of questionable applicability. This long chapter shows dramatically how Chaucer's Troy is the site of a denatured, delusive, and self-perpetuating language, a necrophiliac town enamoured of its own dead metaphors, a sense of the poem generally in line with others of the best readers of Chaucer. The problem with the chapter is the semiotic machinery with which Vance attempts to explore these important notions. Early on, Vance reports the results of an informal survey of the "discursive composition of the poem as a whole" (270), discovering that about one half of its utterances are "*illocutionary or perlocutionary*," three eighths or so are constatives, and the remainder are "exclamatory" or "lyrical 'cores' that mark the main 'stations' in the progress of the erotic passion" (270-71). Vance then illustrates, by way of one of three charts, that performatives are somehow "lyrical" in nature while constatives are somehow "narrative."

Aside from the stylistic infelicity of utterance-counting and lyrical-narrative charts, the introduction of speech-act theory here poses serious problems. First, both Austin and Searle ultimately collapse the distinction between constatives and performatives, arguing in effect that all utterances are either explicit or ellipsed speech acts. Vance's use of what is really a working distinction not only misuses the theory but also obscures the crucial performative role of the Chaucerian narrator, the source of all of the poem's speech acts. Second, the most important part of speech-act theory for Austin and Searle is not classical semiotic but finally sociolinguistic: for performatives to work or be "felicitous" there must exist a community competent in the rules governing their felicity. Vance clearly has this in mind but fails to follow out the social implications of these internalized rules as definitive of the society that holds them: to exchange these speech acts is to be part of a community not bounded by the walls of Troy but walled by the binding of Chaucer's tragedy. Speech-act theory perforce leads to reader-response criticism, and Vance declines to fish in these waters.

The chapter on *The Faerie Queene*, "Spenser, Troy, and the Humanist Ideology of Translation," closes the book and, like the Thomas Browne chapter in Fish's *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, its structural role is contrast. The chapter addresses the semiotic challenges of *The Faerie Queene* in only a preliminary way, seeing Spenser's poem as the *terminus ad quem* of the fundamentally medieval sign theory that is the true subject of the book. In examining Spenser, Vance hopes "that the sharp contrast of historical attitudes and artistic reflexes that emerge from this study of a Humanist text at its most optimistic will provide interesting hindsight upon medieval semiotics and poetics" (311-12).

The basis of this contrast is Vance's sense of the poetics of *The Faerie Queene*, a poem largely lacking the self-reflexive texture of the French texts and the explicit anxiety about authorship and accuracy to be found in the *Troilus* and the *Hous of Fame*. This is an important contrast, properly framed in terms of Spenser's faith in the fundamental efficacy of his craft:

Spenser was the first English poet to explore seriously the psychic factors underlying the Humanist ethics of translation (in an enlarged sense), and I shall suggest that certain aspects of Stoic epistemology that had become current in the Humanist movement of the sixteenth century were incorporated by Spenser into a bold and positive statement about poetry as a responsible mode of translation (312).

In exploring this change in the "ideology of translation" that took place between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, Vance analyzes a number of familiar (and some unfamiliar) Renaissance pronouncements about the efficacy and decorum of English. The chapter succeeds nicely in demarking a change in the consciousness of English writers about the acceptability and necessity of their vernacular as a medium.

What is missing from the discussion, however, is a sustained treatment of the question of style in the Renaissance. Among other things, the "plain style" was an attempt to insulate English from ultramontane gimcracks and egregious Latinisms, and the self-conscious debate that ensued over aureate words and Ciceronian construction certainly played an important part in the new ideology of translation. Similarly, it is curious that Vance gives so little consideration to the stirrings of the Reformation in this chapter on a Reformation poet with Spenser's Humanist credentials. Like the plain style controversy, the deepening rift in Christendom (on relevant issues like individual interpretation of scripture) helped considerably to power the change in the "ideology of translation."

The discussion of *The Faerie Queene per se*, specifically the Rome and Troy narratives of Paridell and Britomart in Book III, is short (even peremptory) but carefully reasoned and strikingly demonstrative of Vance's thesis concerning the incipient self-confidence of Humanist translation. The discussion is not seminal Spenser criticism and is not intended to be, but it is an uncompromising vision of Spenser's position at the beginning of a new age.

The level of both my praise and my objections to *Mervelous Signals* suggests, I hope, the level at which we are to engage Eugene Vance's book. This is not a quick poststructuralist knockoff full of jargon and *jouissance*; it is a serious contribution to literary theory and history. When Vance succeeds, it is never with mirrors, never with empty assertion or wordplay. When he misses the mark, it is never through failure of insight or nerve. Like *A Preface to Chaucer* or *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, *Mervelous Signals* is an important, singular achievement, a book to be studied, perhaps thrown against the wall, then picked up and studied again, a book to be treasured less for the debates it closes than for those it opens.

J. Stephen Russell
Hofstra University

88.04 Wiggins, Peter De Sa. *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and Design in the Orlando Furioso*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. ix + 219 pp. \$24.50.

The assumption upon which Wiggins bases his provocative reading of Ariosto's chivalric epic-romance -- that the poet conveys an important part of the meaning of his poem through his depiction of character -- challenges the propriety of prevailing critical practice in one major respect. Wiggins understands Ariosto's characters largely in terms of (modern) psychological realism rather than in those of high Renaissance allegory. Readers of the poem have, of course, always paid attention to its characters, analyzing motivation, tracing the development of romantic and epic relationships, evaluating performance according to the behavioral codes the poet endorses or questions. But their interpretations have generally reflected a concern for the poem's almost incredible richness as intertext, the ways in which its literal or apparent meanings yield repeatedly to a process of reperspectivization that conditions, qualifies, or ironizes them. It is difficult to think of a single recent critic who has not, in one way or another, been moved and fascinated by the poem's constant and self-reflexive meditation on earlier models of epic or chivalric enterprise, on types expressing values traditional to the codes establishing courtly love, a Virgilian *pietas*, or the humanistic "institution" of men who must assume public responsibilities.

Against such readings Wiggins proposes one that is in a sense simpler and more direct. Taking his cue from Galileo, Wiggins chooses to read the *Orlando Furioso* as a study of the human character in its various manifestations. Galileo, Wiggins asserts, concentrates on the formation of Ariosto's characters in his *Considerazioni al Tasso* and *Postille all'Ariosto*; Galileo reproaches and exhorts characters "when he finds them behaving in a way that offends his sense of reality" (2). So acute is Galileo's psychological focus that Wiggins wonders whether Galileo "did not implicitly regard literature as a protoscience of psychology" (3). (This is in itself an interesting point that Wiggins does not pursue. It raises the larger question of critical bias, the historical situation of the critic whose intentions must inevitably be conditioned by his particular circumstances. If, in his criticism of the *Orlando Furioso*, Galileo is reaching for a kind of protoscientific objectivity that deliberately eschews a consideration of the poem's allegorical dimension, the effect of its creator's knowledge of the literary tradition within which he works, are we not justified in asking why? What is at stake for Galileo in repudiating allegory in favor of realism?) More precisely, Wiggins is interested in Galileo's perception of the *Orlando Furioso* as comprehensible *as a totality* rather than as an aggregate of discrete though interrelated narrative sequences. Wiggins notes that Galileo understands the poem as he would "an oil painting" and not as a "work of marquetry"; a distinction that implies a challenge to Ariosto's own description of the poem as a many-threaded tapestry. And Wiggins sees that such a totalizing view of the poem means that its complexity of plot has to find its points of origin in the enduring particularity of the *characters* of the poem rather than in formulaistic arrangements of tropes and figures conventional to high Renaissance epic-romance. Terming this approach "antiallegorical," Wiggins then speculates on the extent to which it permits a reading that measures the "*displacement*, to use Northrop Frye's term, in the direction of the *real* (as the term *real* is understood in discussions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction) undergone by the characters [of the poem] ..." (5, 6). One needs to admit the propriety of this query on stylistic grounds; a comparable concern with the perception

of real as opposed to symbolic space and time is a feature of much art of the period. Machiavelli bases his institution of a prince on an appreciation for the "real [effectual] truth" of political affairs and not the idealized constructions of humanist thinkers. Ariosto himself rejects some of the allegories common to medieval mythographers. The Galileo-Wiggins thesis -- that the poem makes sense as a study of the human character and that this character is realistically rather than symbolically constructed -- is certainly arguable in light of contemporary ideas of meaning in the visual arts and political philosophy.

A test of the usefulness and interest of reading the *Orlando Furioso* as a psychological novel is its effects on our understanding of the poem and perhaps especially on our appreciation for realistic as opposed to allegorical modes of representation. We need to begin by asking in what sense Wiggins understands realistic representation and how he contrasts it to allegory. His position on these matters is partly to be inferred from his comments on the Ruggiero / Angelica episode. Noting that neither Melissa's exhortations nor Logistilla's instruction is any good at preventing Ruggiero from moral relapse, Wiggins observes that "he might be just as well off if he were back with Alcina" (12). Allegory has in this case "given way to parody, and the entire episode in question becomes a lesson that the absolutes upon which allegory is predicated have only a limited power to describe human nature, which always turns out to be ambiguous and elusive." The "moral scale" on which characters are to be judged is therefore one "which they create themselves out of their own words and deeds and interrelationships." Not much of this is exceptionable, in my view; the question is rather whether such a reading is properly "antiallegorical." For it could as well be argued that it is the business of allegory to convey the nature of experience that eludes definition or description by absolutes. Rosemond Tuve's analysis of Spenserian allegory, which many comparatists would see as indebted to Ariosto's practice, makes precisely this point. Allegory is for her a mode of representation that is constantly involved in the generation of new meanings for specific figures, meanings that are to be understood through reflection upon the actions in which a character is engaged (*Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity*, 1966, esp. pp. 362-67). The meaning of allegory is therefore always given both to innovation and to retrospection; it is, moreover, historical, at least in relation to a reading of the text itself, since it stands to reason that the meaning of a given character will be the result of what Cesare Segre has termed a "memorial synthesis," a remembered sum of his particular actions, however contradictory these may appear (*Structures and Time: Narration, Poetry, Models*, 1979, pp. 10-14). Wiggins's sense of the psychological depth and creativity of Ariosto's characters does not necessarily obviate a reading that understands character as metaphor; such a sense merely gives that kind of metaphor a dynamic grounding in behavior. (We are not, in any case, dealing with the kind of allegory that appears in narratives like *La Queste del saint graal* in which each figure is assigned a significance that it retains for the duration of the narrative.)

To illustrate by returning briefly to the Ruggiero / Angelica episode which Wiggins treats at greater length in a later chapter devoted to assessing realistically the character of Ruggiero. Is what Ruggiero's moral relapse signals the futility of Logistilla's instruction, as Wiggins claims? As a result of her "guidance," he writes, Ruggiero's "introspection has led him to frivolous detachment from the world of

initiative and responsibility ... " (88), a detachment that induces a complacent self-indulgence leading in turn to the hero's humiliating and burlesque encounter with Angelica. In short, Ruggiero is an adolescent trapped by the illusion that life admits absolutes. If the aggregate meanings of the obviously allegorical elements of this episode are also considered, however, I think it is possible to see Ruggiero's characterization as contributing more richly to the meaning of the poem. Logistilla's instruction works well enough until the hero sees Angelica: that is, as I understand it, rational introspection of the kind made possible by controlling the hippogryph is a passionless affair; human contact, even visual, is open to passion; human beings live between two worlds -- that in which the ring of reason is most needed is also that in which it is almost invariably lost. What Wiggins sees as Ruggiero's moral relapse is therefore less indicative of the illusionary quality of Logistilla's instruction, and rather more of its terribly transcendent effectiveness (and hence of the paradigmatic nature of Ruggiero's education, its value and ironic limits). Ruggiero's difficulty is essentially Platonic: how does the enlightened visionary translate Truth into action in a dark world. Allegory -- of the dynamic self-generating kind -- is not here dismissed but is rather made the means by which understanding is possible.

Many of Wiggins's analyses of the characters of the *Orlando Furioso* proceed along lines similar to those he adopts with respect to Ruggiero. His readers will be informed by his valuable observations of character and chivalric society as a whole. Where they are not caught up short by his systematic discounting of the allegorical or symbolic meanings, many (and perhaps too many) enshrined in the critical commentaries of generations of readers, they may well be encouraged to examine again and in a new light Ariosto's brilliant and enigmatic poem.

Constance Jordan
Northwestern University

ARTICLES: ABSTRACTS AND NOTICES

88.05 Anderson, Judith H. "The Antiquities of Fairyland and Ireland." *JEGP* 86, no. 2 (April 1987): 199-214.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the word "antique" and its cognates had begun to acquire the modern connotation of obsolescence and irrelevance. This change can be charted in Spenser's use of the word, from the Proem to *FQ* I, which treats the antique material of myth as if it were eternally valid and sacred, to the *Vewe*, which, though appreciative of the poetry inherent in Irish tradition, condemns those traditions as antiquated, and dismisses as likewise false the myth of Brutus upon which Spenser founds his royal genealogies in *FQ*. Yet Spenser does not come to view his poetic work as simply false or historically inaccurate. Although in later life -- witness *FQ* V and VI -- Spenser was forced to admit the "chasm between the antique ideal and the perturbing reality of political antiquation," he still believed in the truth and efficacy of that ideal, however dim and disused it had become. (A.M.E.)

88.06 Bellamy, Elizabeth J. "The Vocative and the Vocational: The Unreadability of Elizabeth in *The Faerie Queene*." *ELH* 54, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 1-30.

Spenser's attempts to name his queen aright, to write Elizabeth, are continually frustrated by the gap between word and object, and disseminate themselves in a labyrinthine allegory which necessarily misnames Elizabeth. If allegory, according to De Man, must involve "a supplementary figural superposition which narrates the unreadability of the prior narration," then the more Spenser writes, the more thoroughly he records his failure to call Elizabeth by her proper name. For the epic poet this unfulfilled quest for the vocative implies an unfulfilled vocation, a failure to name and be named. His narrator deteriorates into a "rare dispenser" of Elizabeth's graces, a weakened identity known, like Colin Clout, to everyone and to no one, and never quite convergent with Spenser himself. The Blatant Beast is Spenser's own futile allegory, always calumniating, never attaining the unmediated presence of Elizabeth. Spenser ends his poem with a desperate cry for God's rest, Eli-Sabbaoth, but even here "the vocative is forever lost in dissemination, equivocation, and paranomasia." (A.M.E.)

88.07 Brennan, Michael G. "Foxes and Wolves in Elizabethan Episcopal Propaganda." *CahiersE*, no. 29 (April 1986): 83-86.

The usual imagery of the wolf and the fox in sixteenth-century English religious debate -- the wolf being the "politician" and the fox being the "Puritan" -- is significantly reversed in the contemporary ballad fragment "A tale of Robin hoode." The reversal is a reaction to Puritan extremism. Usually, the wolves represented Roman Catholic priests and foxes "were Church of England clergymen who secretly favored Roman Catholic doctrines and ceremonies." In the "tale," however, the extremist Puritans themselves are wolves who threaten Robin hoode (the Bishop), implying "that the most insidious threat to the authority of the Bishops comes not from the secret and professed Catholics, as the Puritans claimed, but rather from an extremist faction of the Puritans themselves." Also, as wolves, the reformists' aims are "self-seeking and voracious." The "tale" is a useful contrast to the *SC*, "a rare example of the literary opposition" to Spenser's reformist views and those of Puritan extremists. (K.F.)

88.08 Broadus, James W. "Renaissance Psychology and Britomart's Adventures in *Faerie Queene* III," *ELR* 17, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 186-206.

Read within the context of Renaissance psychology -- today we would call it psycho-physiology -- the episode in which Britomart falls in love, together with the Castle Joyous episode, defines chastity as the stable, healthy psycho-physiological state necessary for the proper, healthy direction of sexual desire. Britomart's encounters with Merlin, Marinell, and Paridell demonstrate the control of fortune by the virtuous which results in part from the participation of the virtuous in the unfolding of Providence. These episodes prepare for a reading of Britomart's rescue of Amoret from the House of Busirane which focuses on a Renaissance psychological interpretation of the Masque of Cupid as an evil external to Amoret, as a generalized corruption of love by a life of ease and inconstancy, rather than what has become the usual reading of the Masque as a reflection of or projection of Amoret's psyche. (J.W.B.)

- ✱ 88.09 Hazard, Mary E. "Absent Presence and Present Absence: Cross-Couple Convention in Elizabethan Culture." *TSLI*, 29, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 1-27.

The habit of Elizabethan sonneteers to use the absence of the beloved as a spur for poetry, and, paradoxically, to absent themselves from identification with the poet-lover, is one example of a practice in Elizabeth's court to use absence or silence as a means of wielding power without suffering the reductions which physical presence and explicit statement often entail. Instances of "absent presence," or "the condition of one's presence felt even during physical absence," include Elizabeth's odd withdrawal from view during the consecration of the host at her coronation mass; her failure to attend the Requiem Mass for the Knights of the Garter; the law's requirement that knights absent from that mass at Windsor Castle be present symbolically under the forms of escutcheons and coats of arms; its further requirement that the same knights do obeisance, in the chapel in which they were to hear the mass, to an empty stall decked out with cloths of state, as if the sovereign were present; household regulations prescribing similar obeisance in honor of an absent lord, and, finally, Elizabeth's cunning failure to make her travelling plans fully known, so that all noblemen within a certain radius of her progress had to prepare to receive her "unexpectedly." Conversely, Elizabethans used "present absence," or "the condition of regarding or being regarded as absent even though physically present," to strip disgraced knights of their honor, or to signal a shift from one's fictive role as courtier to one's equally fictive role as ordinary human being. (A.M.E.)

- 88.10 Imbrie, Ann E. "'Playing Legerdemaine with the Scripture': Parodic Sermons in *The Faerie Queene*." *ELR*, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 142-55.

That the language of Spenser's villains is so often biblical casts the characters of *FQ* quite specifically, not simply as false rhetoricians but as false preachers. Such characters as Despayre, Phaedria and the Giant with the Scales deliver parodic sermons on biblical texts, and their speeches register Spenser's concept of the right use and interpretation of Scripture. The proper context in which to examine these figures is Renaissance hermeneutics. In their commentaries on Matthew 4, Christ's temptation in the desert, such Protestant preachers as Bullinger, Perkins, and Knox identify a double hermeneutic model, for proper interpretation in Christ's words and for improper interpretation in Satan's. Among the faults most commonly cited are quoting out of context, deleting significant verses, and reading too literally or too allegorically. By detailing the effect of parodic sermons, Spenser implies the Protestant's double interest in spiritual understanding and moral application, and the insistence that proper understanding of Scripture develops not only from faith but also from instruction. (A.E.I.)

- 88.11 King, John N. "Milton's Bower of Bliss: A Rewriting of Spenser's Art of Married Love." *Ren&R* 10, no. 3 (August 1986): 289-99.

For the Renaissance, parody was not "a literary imitation designed to make an original appear comical or ridiculous" but "a composition that seriously transfers conventions from one genre to another." Spenser's parodic Bower of Bliss therefore "denigrates the failures of Arcasia rather than the ideals of wedded love." Milton, following Spenser, reverses the parody in Eden's "blissful bower." But Milton uses

aspects of Spenser's Bower, such as "the garden setting, lovers' bower, nudity, and bed of roses," to restore "to full vitality the doctrine of love" from "an ironic perversion of lost innocence." (K.F.)

88.12 McCabe, Richard A. "The Masks of Duessa: Spenser, Mary Queen of Scots, and James VI." *ELR*, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 224-42.

By representing Mary Queen of Scots as Duessa in *FQ* V, Spenser calls attention to the political implications of Book I, throughout which the characterization of Duessa consciously evokes that of Mary as presented by her Protestant opponents. Duessa's relationship with Orgoglio is designed to "shadow" Mary's alleged involvement with Norfolk in the Northern Rebellion and the Ridolfi Plot. Thus it is necessary for Una (Elizabeth I) to spare her life but her "release" is the fiction of Tudor propaganda. Spenser deliberately distorts the known facts of history to exonerate Elizabeth and represent Mary as the victim of her own "craft." By blackening Mary's character more than necessary, however, he casts a slur upon the honor of her son, James I, thereby making a deliberately provocative contribution to the succession debate. Realizing this, James immediately banned the poem in Scotland and sought reassurance from Elizabeth. (R.A.McC.)

88.13 Montrose, Louis Adrian. "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text." *Literary Theory / Renaissance Texts*. Eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. 303-40.

"'The Elizabethan subject' in question is both the Queen's subject, Edmund Spenser, and the Queen-as-subject, subject of and in her subject's discourse, in the Spenserian text. The dynamic principle here exemplified is that, as both the subject and his discourse are shaped by ... the whole field of cultural meanings personified in the Queen ... they also reshape the Queen by the very process of addressing and representing her." The theory underlying this view emphasizes that literature is not only "socially produced"; it is also "socially productive."

Spenser "synthesize[d] a new Elizabethan author-function" that contested his own social, political, and geographic marginality. In *SC Aprill*, even "the encomium of 'Eliza, Queene of shepheardes' ... gestur[es] toward the controlling power of the writing subject over the representation he has made" and so "suggest[s] that in fact the ruler and the ruled are ... reciprocally constituted." Similar paradoxes appear in the representations of Elizabeth and Belphoebe / Gloriana, and in "the gender-specific character of the self-fashioning process figured in Guyon's violent repression of his own sexual arousal." What is being fashioned in *FQ* II.xii is "not merely a civilized self but a male subject, whose self-defining violence is enacted against an objectified other who is specifically female." (D.J.G.)

88.14 Quilligan, Maureen. "The Comedy of Female Authority in *The Faerie Queene*." *ELR*, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 156-71.

Belphoebe, Braggadocchio, and Spenser's blazon in Book II, canto iii, may go on feeling conspicuously irrelevant to the program of temperance a rather humorless Guyon pursues in Book II, but the comedy of that moment cues the representation of female

authority Spenser stages throughout the epic he titled *The Faerie Queene*. If he seems to have risked a lot, we must remember that the strain of humor he used may have been already authorized by Elizabeth. What she may have found funny about a Falstaff, enhorned and mocked by a society of women, may have been different from what the male political nation found comic in Braggadochio or Faunus. But we all know what a relief it is to laugh at our terrors. If Queen Elizabeth could laugh at the kind of fears that became all too real with the braggadocio of an Essex, Spenser's readers could laugh at the power that was real enough, finally, to cut off the Earl's head. (M.Q.)

88.15 Silberman, Lauren. "The Hermaphrodite and the Metamorphosis of Spenserian Allegory." *ELR*, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 207-23.

Spenser's moralized revision of Ovid's myth of the Hermaphrodite signals a shift in his allegory as it moves from the Christian typology of Book I to a new model of allegory in Book III designed to make sense of, rather than transcend, sensual experience. Where Ovid's myth effaces sexual differences in favor of arbitrary semiological differences -- the Hermaphrodite loses his manhood because he fails to understand himself -- Britomart's chastity is the female equivalent of the Hermaphrodite's manhood that re-includes sexual difference, by being explicitly sexual identity. If Ovid shows the self deconstructed and safely lost, Spenser shows the self constructed and put at risk. That risk appears in Book III as the temptation to seek Narcissistic self-involvement and the security of a *priori* security rather than engaging oneself actively in the world. Britomart's heroic quest is presented as a battle for interpretation; she figures and finds meaning as she moves through Faerie Land and fashions herself as the Knight of Chastity. (L.S.)

88.16 Suzuki, Mihoko. "'Unfitly yokt together in one teeme': Vergil and Ovid in *Faerie Queene* III.x." *ELR*, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 172-85.

In the Malbecco episode of *FQ* III.ix where Spenser's heroine Britomart encounters Paridell and Hellenore, modern descendants of Paris and Helen, Spenser defines his own poetic project in relation to those of Vergil and Ovid. Through their self-serving misreadings and trivializing repetitions of history, Paridell and Hellenore show themselves to be inadequate heirs to the epic line extending from Troy. Spenser legitimizes Britomart, whose imaginative power endows her with a creative understanding of history, by juxtaposing her to Paridell and Hellenore, whose genealogies parallel Britomart's. Through the allusive use of Vergil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Heroides*, Spenser dramatizes the seemingly mutually exclusive imperatives of public and private, as exemplified by Vergil's epic and Ovid's love letters. In fashioning his new heroine Britomart, who yokes her epic project of founding Troynovant to her romance quest for Artegall, Spenser clears a dialectical space between his two classical forebears. (M.S.)

88.17 Weatherby, Harold L. "The True Saint George." *ELR*, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 119-41.

When Gabriel Harvey accused Spenser of allowing "*Hobgoblin* [to] runne away with the Garland from *Apollo*" in *FQ* I, he may have referred to Spenser's selection of Saint George as the Knight of Holiness, for the Saint George legend was in disrepute

with humanist intellectuals and Protestant theologians in the late sixteenth century. But Spenser may instead have modeled his hero on the George of ancient, Eastern liturgy rather than of medieval legend. The liturgical George was available in numerous contemporary editions of Byzantine service books; these present a saint much more authentically holy than the subject of popular story. Many details from the liturgy appear in Spenser's allegory: the association of George with Easter, the emphasis on the saint as a "sign of victoree," and the identification of the dragon slaying with the Harrowing of Hell. (H.L.W.)

88.18 Wofford, Susanne Lindgren. "Britomart's Petrarchan Lament: Allegory and Narrative in *The Faerie Queene* III, iv." *CL* 39, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 28-57.

Britomart's lovelorn comparison of herself to a ship in distress, dependent upon sonnet 189 of Petrarch's *Rime Sparse*, creates a Petrarchan confusion of inner erotic experience and outer object of desire, a confusion endemic to *FQ* and perhaps to the human condition as understood by the anti-apocalyptic Christian Spenser. For Spenser's purpose in *FQ* is not, like Dante, to impose upon the narrative a final gridwork of Augustinian theology, nor, like Petrarch, to err in self-reflexive circles, creating a love or a beloved which is merely an idolizing of language in which that love is expressed. Instead, acknowledging "the gap between human and divine understanding" (33) and playing upon the disjunction between allegory and narrative, Spenser avoids both Petrarchan circularity and apocalyptic or closed significance. Britomart symbolizes this play, as in her lament she stands upon the shore between the world of mortals and the world of classical gods, trapped in "human subjectivity" (47), yet barely able to glimpse the poetics of the world she inhabits. (A.M.E.)

SPENSER AT MLA

The annual convention of the Modern Language Association of America, held in San Francisco on 27-30 December 1987, included many items of interest to Spenserians.

Session 30 *Edmund Spenser: Elegy, Allegory, and Abduction*. Program arranged by the Spenser Society. Presiding: Richard Helgerson, California Institute of Technology.

88.19 In "Chains of Abduction: Kidnapping and Courtship in *The Faerie Queene*," Sheila T. Cavanagh (Brown University) maintained that in *FQ* IV.iv.15-16 the girdle, emblem of female chastity, becomes the source and object of the very lustful urges it purportedly guards against. The girdle's symbolic power is further subverted at the close of the tournament. Ever since Venus, the original owner, cunningly undid the girdle "when so she vsd her looser sport", the "goodly belt" has ostensibly separated chaste women from their less scrupulous counterparts. Though many seek it, none of the women in attendance except Amoret can "find it fit." The judges decide to ignore this distressing circumstance and give it to the False Florimell anyway.

However startling these reversals might initially appear, they accord with a consistent pattern of responses to women and female virtue. Titular knights and miscreant knaves may differ dramatically in their behavior under most circumstances, but

a notable convergence remains between their involvement with the women in the poem. Although *FQ* is generally accepted as an epic designed to explore the nature of varied public and private virtues, with an avowed end of inculcating exemplary behavior among its readers, this view of the poem only coheres if gender relations are omitted as a salient category in the determination of virtue. The concurrent reverence and disparagement of female virtue emerges repeatedly at critical moments in which women's reputed sexual incontinence provokes open laughter. Sir Satyrane and the Squire of Dames, for instance, first shake with laughter at the Squire's account of his failed quest to find chaste women, then initiate a wave of male amusement when only a single demonstrably chaste woman can be found. As Freud points out, the primary motivation behind such forms of entertainment originates from a desire for sexual aggression. Similarly, when the insistent suitor, Scudamour, arrives to claim Amoret, he steadfastly refuses to value the sanctity of the Temple or the integrity of the female virtues represented. The knight's ensuing pride at successfully terrorizing the guardians of female virginity correlates with the tenor of aggressive laughter in IV.v. Personifying the machismo ideal, Scudamour proves that might and perseverance easily triumph over mere "reclusive virgin[s]." As these episodes suggest, a version of "the traffic in women" dominates the landscapes of power depicted. (S.T.C., adapted by D.J.G.)

88.20 In "Eulogies to Elegies: Spenser's Resistance to Praise and the Power of Song," Richard C. McCoy (Queen's College and the Graduate Center, CUNY) argued that in representing his relationship to his patrons and society, Spenser resists straightforward praise while resolving to set himself and his work apart. He succeeds in doing so, establishing an aesthetic space relatively free from the constraints and contingencies of courtly poetry. McCoy acknowledged that in making these claims, he is challenging some of the increasingly doctrinaire assumptions of current criticism, particularly new historicism, which tends to mystify the power of state and social authority. Without lapsing back into more traditional literary mystifications, McCoy wants to argue for the distinctive intellectual power of Spenser's poetry.

The immediate precedents for Spenser's work in 1579 were the courtly entertainments of Gascoigne, Harvey, Sidney, and Dyer, precedents he considered and then rejected. He wrote something comparable to Harvey's *Granulationes Valdinenses* called the *Stemmata Dudleiana*, yet, for all his declared anxieties about pleasing "his excellent lordship," he allowed the work to vanish without a trace. What he published instead was *The Shepherdes Calender*, a work which follows the advice given in *The Tears of the Muses*. In the *Aprill* eclogue and elsewhere, it changes "praises into piteous cries, / And Eulogies turne[s] into Elegies." By refraining from direct or fulsome praise of Leicester and by rendering his encounter with the Queen entirely imaginative, Spenser keeps his distance from the powerful and acquires an authorial control lacking in courtly entertainment. For many of his contemporaries -- and for many current readers -- such an achievement has little value. Harvey mocked Spenser's dedication to "Mistresse Poetrie" and resolved to pursue "those studies and practyzes, that carrie as they saye, meate in their mouthes." But Spenser persisted in the "elegiac strategy" throughout his career, as the *Prothalamian* shows. There, the poet remains detached from the scenes of courtly splendor and chivalric glory which float upon the river's protean flux. Spenser's valedictory refrain is a resonant affirmation of his song's enduring power over its own transient subjects. (R.C.M., adapted by D.J.G.)

88.21 In "Spenser's Giants: The Politics of Allegory in *The Faerie Queene*," Susanne Wofford (Yale University) explored the connection between Spenser's allegory of desire -- that is, his psychomachia of the self -- and his political allegory by means of a study of the giants in *The Faerie Queene*. She argued that this connection is central to Spenser's reflection on the powers and limitations of allegory. In light of both the classical tradition of giants as figures of rebellion against "lawful" authority, and the more popular tradition -- appropriated for civic and royal purposes by Tudor monarchs -- in which giants can represent the body politic and the legitimacy of the social order, Spenser's giants expose an ambivalence about the political system -- in the self or in the society -- that they either threaten or protect, and signal a concern about the legitimacy of the order allegory is able to represent. The use of the defeat of giants as one of the poem's principal figures for the imposition of order suggests, furthermore, that Spenser represents order as being based on the political suppression of a violent other which nonetheless is necessarily figured as another version of the self.

Although Spenser appears to privilege the classical version of the myth -- giants as rebels against legitimate authority -- he also invokes the popular and native figurative tradition evident, for instance, in civic pageants that represented foundation myths like that of Corineus and Gogmagog. Corineus, the able warrior who arrived in Britain with Aeneas, received Cornwall, and overcame Gogmagog, the last of the indigenous giants, himself becomes a giant in the pageants. Together, these figures remain important in Spenser's foundation myth, both as forces to be overcome and pacified, and as figures conveying the greatness of the land itself. As figures for the aspects of the self, they may also represent the direction and control of a violence essential to the creation of an ordered self. The originary antithetical function of giants in myths such as these suggests that stories of giants allude to the violent founding of society and therefore can also undermine claims of legitimacy such as those the Tudors consistently strove to reinforce. They illustrate the domestication of the violence by which "legitimate" order imposes itself, and together reveal how that violence may be elided and transformed into a myth of legitimacy. While such pageants in Elizabeth's honor may have suppressed their antithetical quality, Spenser's allegory cannot do so easily since his giants inscribe both the myths of legitimacy on which his politics are based and the structure of domination and suppression that permits his allegory to work. Recurrently, a characteristic inward turn from political to moral implication suggests that the kinds of oppositions Spenser's allegory represents can be successfully resolved within his moral framework but not within the political framework he necessarily gives to his poem, and that the model of the self that Spenser proposes is necessarily a political one. (S.W., adapted by D.J.G.)

88.22 Responding to the papers, Louis A. Montrose (University of California, San Diego) began with some reflections on the peculiar genre of the MLA Commentary, one that he is "not sure it's possible, or, for that matter, desirable, to master." Despite this ambivalence, he proceeded to compliment the polemical force of Cavanagh's paper, which participates in the salutary challenge that various modes of feminist work have posed to traditions of Spenser scholarship; traditions which have read the poem from an unreflectingly male subject position; have evaded the social matrix of the poem's narrative and imagery through the intellectual abstractions of allegorical commentary; or have celebrated Spenser as the great poet of married love, a representative of enlightened Protestant Humanist thinking about the institutions of marriage and family. Despite these strengths, the paper seemed to oversimplify Spenser's textual constitution of gender --

both male and female. It also failed to provide a sense of the poem's position within the ambient Elizabethan discourses about gender; and an explicit historical positioning of both the Poet and the Critic, and of the implicit "ideology of sexual conduct" by which the latter judges the former.

Like Cavanagh's, Wofford's paper implicitly repudiates earlier critical assertions about the poem's organic unity, of the formal and thematic coherence and stability of Spenser's "vision." Wofford's richly textured exploration of a latent contradiction between the political and moral or psychological registers of allegorical discourse not only demonstrates that giant figures in Elizabethan culture had ambivalent implications. It also shows that, when conjoined, these antitheses of violence and order may put into question the project of political legitimation by insinuating that the origins of the state or the regime are in repressive force rather than in the workings of providence. The ideological contamination operative in such political allegory produces an obfuscating "inward turn" toward moral allegory: the traditions of psychomachia can accommodate the radical ambivalence which, within the domain of politics and history, is dangerously and disturbingly subversive. The paper only lacked some clarification of the tension it suggests between Spenser's possible intentions and investments, and the intractability of the form in which he is working.

This observation set up Montrose's "collision with" McCoy's paper, which might be said to invert the implications of Wofford's argument concerning the writer's relationship to the political and cultural authority of the monarchy, on the one hand, and to the constraints and resources of textuality, on the other. Montrose disputed McCoy's effort to see Spenser as wholly alienated from the debasing system of aristocratic patronage, and as achieving "creative independence and control" through the constitution of an "aesthetic space" within his poetry. The notions of autonomy and freedom at work here misrecognize as an anachronistically individualistic aestheticism what are rhetorical strategies for asserting the poet's agency in producing and sustaining the forms of authority and value to which he himself is also subjected. Such an argument in the end does indeed lapse "back into more traditional literary mystifications." (L.A.M., adapted by D.J.G.)

Session 199 *Writing Tudor History*. Presiding: Arthur F. Kinney, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. This session included one paper on Spenser.

88.23 In "The Arraignment of Paridell: Tudor Historiography in *The Faerie Queene* III.ix," Heather Dubrow (Carleton College) pointed out that critics generally neglect or skirt this canto's survey of Trojan and English history. The passage deserves more attention, for it illuminates questions about historiography and storytelling in general, questions that are germane to the work of Tudor historians, of Spenser, and of contemporary Renaissance scholars. The contrasting accounts delivered by Paridell and Britomart exemplify Renaissance debates about the reliability of history and the putative differences between that discipline and poesy. These accounts also raise issues about Spenser's own methodology: the episode mirrors Mount Acidale in many ways, but it does so above all in its reflexive meditations on the visions that the poem has earlier established. Canto ix comments not only on Spenser's enterprise but also on its own: its emphasis on limited and partial visions can direct our attention to some ways of refining

our own current preoccupation with historical studies, such as reading Lawrence Stone more critically.

The episode is more closely connected to the rest of its canto and to all of Book III than we have acknowledged. It exemplifies Spenser's characteristic habit of confounding yet not collapsing the antitheses he has earlier established; here he at once stresses and blurs the distinction between Britomart and Paridell. In exploring that distinction Spenser reveals the connections between sexual seduction and storytelling, between attempting to enter someone else's dwelling and attempting to recount someone else's history. The juxtaposition of Paridell's version with Britomart's raises the question of whether history is like the body of a Helen or a Hellenore -- unstable, open, liable to seduction and appropriation. (H.D.)

Session 217 *Chaucer to Spenser: Assimilation and Transformation*. Presiding: Lynn Staley Johnson, Colgate University.

88.24 In "Dogmatic Mutability: Spenserian Nostalgia, Spenserian Zeal," Darryl J. Gless (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) explored some instabilities of meaning in dogmatic theology as well as in passages of *The Faerie Queene* that invoke the stabilizing authority dogma seeks to confer. Focussing on *FQ* I.x.1, Gless contended that the antivoluntaristic interpretation of the stanza's final lines ("If any strength we have, it is to ill, / But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will"), assumed by many to constitute their simple and obvious meaning, in fact represents but part of the story. As patristic, continental Reformed, and specifically Elizabethan readings of the Pauline texts Spenser echoes here demonstrate, a "will" must, by definition, enjoy some degree of volition. To acknowledge that fact, and to understand the doctrines (Protestant as well as pre- and post-Tridentine Roman Catholic ones) that variously explain the complex interactions of grace and human will, is to locate the grounds for conflicting yet self-consistent and convincing interpretations of the House of Holiness, and by extension of the Legend of Holiness and of "Spenser," the author we manufacture while building interpretations of his works. Each of these competing interpretations would, of course, be grounded in differing selections of textual evidence and differing evaluations projected upon the places of indeterminacy which literary, scriptural, and theological texts necessarily incorporate. The configuration Protestant theology fosters, applied to the allegorical figure Contemplation, illustrates most directly some of the ways in which Spenser can be seen less to admire and preserve features of medieval culture than to rework them. That refashioning displays *The Faerie Queene's* participation in the cultural work of creating and stabilizing elements of a newly dominant ideology, employing as his material selected features of his medieval cultural inheritance.

88.25 In "The Iconography of Spenser's Virgin Queen," John N. King (Bates College) re-examined commonly received opinions about the dedication to a life of perpetual virginity that constituted Queen Elizabeth's entry into a symbolic marriage to England. This union enabled her to receive the adulation of her subjects as the subject of a Petrarchan religion of love, one that pervaded ballads, pageants, and dramatic entertainments. Scholars claim that she was able to convert her unprecedented weakness as a celibate queen into a powerful propagandistic claim that she could not be subjugated and that she sacrificed personal interests in the name of public service. Her maidenly chastity was therefore interpreted as an unprecedented symbol of the power of a woman

who survived to govern despite illegitimization, primogeniture, patriarchy, and masculine supremacy, and who remained unwed at a time when Protestant clerics attacked the vow of celibacy and the veneration of Mary as the Blessed Virgin. It seems, then, that from the accession of Elizabeth in 1558, at the age of twenty-five, celebration of her perpetual virginity steadily accelerated in works of literature that flattered her as a new Judith or Deborah, Eliza Triumphans, Astraea, Cynthia, or even Venus Virgo.

Little scrutiny has gone to the assumption that Queen Elizabeth made a youthful vow of perpetual virginity, one that set in motion her cultic celebration through literary and artistic symbolism. A fresh review of the sixteenth-century record suggests instead that in place of a continuous phenomenon, Elizabethan iconography was closely tied to events in the queen's own life. The breakdown of marriage negotiations between the queen and her last suitor, the Duke of Anjou, represents a dividing line between Elizabeth's early praise as a marriageable virgin and her late adulation as a mythically chaste and youthful lover. *SC*, which appeared during the heat of the controversy over the proposed French marriage, reflects this change. *Aprill* in particular may be seen to enhance the queen's standing as an eligible woman -- still *remotely capable of bearing an heir* -- at the same time that it praises her in a manner that may be read as an appeal to remain unmarried. Together with its Syrinx / Pan allusion, *Aprill's* ostentatious emphasis on the queen's virginity participates in the Elizabethan rehabilitation of Anne Boleyn just as it defends Elizabeth herself against long-standing Catholic accusations of illegitimacy and sexual transgression. References to Diana, classical deity of the moon and protectress of virginity and hunting, were conspicuously absent from literary and artistic praise during the early decades of the queen's reign. The best-known face of the Elizabethan image would not emerge until after the resolution of the debate over royal marriage, which made it possible for committed Protestants to argue for the first time that the queen's virginity was a mark of national greatness. (J.N.K., adapted by D.J.G.)

88.26 In "Guillaume de Lorris, Dorigen and Britomart: *The Allegory of Love Revisited*," Elizabeth D. Kirk (Brown University) argued that C. S. Lewis saw *FQ* III as the culmination and correction of the medieval tradition of "courtly love," which he regarded as centrally adulterous and intrinsically opposed to the institution of marriage. Neither assertion has stood the test of time, but he was quite right that Spenser draws on medieval paradigms to create his structure. Both Cheered de Trowel's *Garden of the Joy of the Court* and Guillaume de Lorris's *Garden of Mirth and Fountain of Narcissus* acknowledge central elements of solipsism in the notion of love as a gratuitous experience cut off by secrecy from the real-world constraints of life. They address specifically the confusion of the self with the other involved in falling in love by perceiving the other in a form that is partly a projection of the self, embodied in the image of falling in love as looking in a mirror. They also are concerned with the exclusion of the lady's experience from a paradigm of love that focuses purely on the experience the lover has, occasioned by her but distinct from her. As a result both medieval readers and modern critics remain deeply divided about whether these works are ironic and anti-feminist, or serious and celebratory. Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*, also highly ambiguous, continues the separation of love from the real world by giving Arveragus and Dorigen a relationship whose essential nature depends on being hidden from eyes of the world, but takes a step toward putting the lady's experience into the story by including her in the injunction that "trothe is the hyest thing that man may kepe." Spenser transforms these medieval topoi by portraying chastity as married love and as

experience not only of women but by women. He makes the House of Busirane a danger that strikes Amoret at her wedding feast and uses it to explore not an adulterous challenge to marriage but the occupational hazards of monogamy as such. (E.D.K.)

88.27 In "Language, Periodicity, and Modernity," an energetic and engaging presentation that did not touch directly on Spenser, Russell Peck (University of Rochester) offered a series of reflections arising from his perusals of recent books by Ronald Lavao and Victoria Kahn. In contesting the drift of each book, Peck suggested that, whatever his historical period, a poet's main concern may be anti-historical. The way in which the act of writing itself engenders the author's own self-consciousness and reflects his desire for modernity is characteristic of great writers, regardless of the historical periods in which they write.

Session 276 *Spenser and the Pastoral*. Presiding, on behalf of Patrick Cullen: Thomas P. Roche, Jr., Princeton University.

88.28 In "Home-making in Ireland: Virgil's Eclogue I and Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*," Julia Lupton (Yale University) discussed the ways in which Virgil's first Eclogue appears throughout *The Shepheardes Calender*, in Colin Clout, and in *FQ* VI. Virgil's poem contrasts the fortunes of two shepherds: Meliboeus must leave the pastoral world, while Tityrus is allowed to stay. In the final image of hospitality that temporarily resolves the Eclogue's mounting tension, "home" appears simultaneously as a place of originary plenitude, of secondary compromise, and of another's painful displacement. In *FQ*, Spenser transforms the iron age Ireland of Book V into the golden world of Book VI through two interlocking versions of Eclogue I, both centered around the old shepherd Meliboe, host to the wandering Calidore. First, in Meliboe's tale of his trip to the city and home again, Spenser rewrites Virgil's story of exile into a narrative of return. Meliboe's construction of "home" out of distance from city and court parallels Spenser's two-fold position as a kind of exile from England and a home-making colonizer in Ireland. Second, in the story of Meliboe's murder at the hands of the Irish-like Brigants, this "lawlesse people" appears as the agent rather than the victim of dispossession. Furthermore, Spenser softens the tragic Virgilian fate of his character by restoring the pastoral lands to young Coridon. This version of Eclogue I helps Spenser pastoralize the Irish politics of Book V.

In both cases, Spenser resolves Virgil's painful structural contrast between "exile" and "home" into a redemptive narrative sequence of exile followed by return or repossession. While Virgil's poem is synchronic in its juxtaposition of two opposing fates, Spenser's is diachronic in healing the pain of one fate with the pleasure of the other. In the process, Virgil's pastoral of exile becomes a defense of colonization. Virgil's Eclogue I, whose imitations span Spenser's life, helped fashion a career both poetic and political. In this way, Spenser's "biography" takes shape through the literary conventions the poet received, transformed, and transmitted -- conventions laden, however, with historical and political implications. (J.L.)

88.29 In "Spenser's Pastoral of Desire: The Scene of the Poet's Failure," Robert E. Stillman (University of Tennessee, Knoxville) maintained that in *The Shepheardes Calender*, Colin's experience of loss, his frustration of desire and its attendant emotional chaos, furnishes Spenser both with the primary material for realizing his own poetic

ambitions and with a contrasting instance by which to attempt to disengage his poetry from the influence of desire. Central to the vision of Spenser's pastoral and to the disposition of its historical components are the dynamics of desire, and contemporary psychoanalysis and linguistics are useful in illuminating that fact. In Spenser's pastoral, the poet returns repeatedly to primary scenes of unsatisfied desire (most importantly, to the loss of Rosalind's favors) as the narrative occasion for his representations of poetic failure (Colin's breaking and discarding of the pipe). Spenser's pastorals are suffused with nostalgia for a golden age of requited desire, at the same time that they are poetic efforts to achieve mastery over the loss of the desired object. His pastorals can be read, then, on the model of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, as elaborated games of *fort / da*, with some crucial differences. Spenser's "games" repeatedly reenact in memory the loss of love, but these pastorals conclude not with the restoration of the desired object, but with a sobering awareness of the inevitability of frustrated desire and a characteristically Spenserian gesture to find some metaphorical bridge beyond desire's fluctuations to a stable and transcendent realm of value. But neither for Colin nor for Spenser is the escape from desire possible. The transcendence of desire is itself a fiction motivated by a complex set of desires: by Spenser's wish, for example, to find some absolute order of meaning and value by which to authorize his poetic ambitions. (R.E.S.)

88.30 Responding to the papers, Richard Mallette (Millsaps College) observed that Julia Lupton argues two related but quite distinct points -- as her phrase describing Meliboe's tale as one of "return or repossession" suggests. Her first, that Spenser re-writes Virgil's story of exile in Eclogue I as a "narrative of return," inaccurately characterizes Meliboe as an "exile." In fact, he leaves and returns to the pastoral world entirely voluntarily. Lupton's blurring of this crucial difference between Virgil's shepherd and Spenser's also calls into question her identification of Spenser himself with Meliboe with respect to the poet's "exile" to Ireland. Lupton's second major point, on the other hand, argues persuasively that Spenser associates the brigants with the Irish, and she discerns the association as forming a bridge between Books V and VI by way of the *Vewe*. Whether this association comprises Spenser's justification of England's colonialist ambitions remains problematic; nonetheless, Lupton has offered a sensitive model of penetrating Spenser's complex relations to his literary forebears.

By observing Colin as both poet and lover by way of analogy to the Freudian view of the child's game *fort / da*, Robert Stillman hones in on a peculiar feature of the familiar Spenserian linking of love and poetry, namely on Spenser's insistence on the failure of each of these enterprises. Stillman insightfully investigates the motif of "wasting" in the *Calender*, centering attention on the deficiencies and corruptions of Colin's love life. A comparison with Virgil's tenth Eclogue demonstrates the justice of Stillman's shifting focus away from Colin's status as poet and toward his role as lover, at the same time that it raises questions about Stillman's conclusions. The bleak concluding vision of Gallus, so similar to that of Colin in *December*, does not override the claims of Virgil's Arcadian poet for our attention to his poetic prowess. Just as the conclusion of Eclogue X cannot be mistaken for the Virgilian poet's failure, *December* ought not too readily to be inferred to be Spenser's. The attention of both papers to pastoral characters as those in whom Spenser invests his own imaginative business reminds us that Spenser's pastorals set forth a landscape of the imagination. His *locus amoenus* is his *locus poeticus*. (R.M.)

Session 319 *The Writer: Self and Society*. Presiding: Judith H. Anderson, Indiana University, Bloomington. This session included one paper that focused on Spenser.

88.31 In "Spenser's Malfont: Some Reflections on Renaissance Self-Immolation," Kenneth Gross (University of Rochester) reminded us that at the threshold of the Palace of Justice (*FQ* V.ix.26-27), we find a poet punished for slandering the Queen Mercilla, figure of Elizabeth. His tongue is nailed to the wall, and over his head the words "bon fons" have been changed to "Malfont" -- either because he was a "font" of evil words, or because of the evil that his words "did." Gross then stressed, first, the peculiarly stark, but also fantastic aspect of this figure: its grotesque image of the wounded tongue, its blunt re-writing of moral predications, its archaic use of double etymology. Though no doubt echoing the fate of individuals actually punished for slander or sedition, the description speaks more broadly and strangely of the fate of the poet under the eye of Elizabeth. Malfont is an abstract image of the poet as slanderer, a picture of the "evil" or "bad" mouth accused, marked censored, stopped, punished, known. The description is especially significant given Spenser's fascination with ambivalent images of source, as well as his almost paranoid sense of the power of slander and rumor, their ability not only to spread lies but to raise poisonous doubts about things which cannot be proven. Malfont is made to seem, in fact, a minor cousin of the Blatant Beast, that creature in whom biting and speaking are the same thing. The fascination of the figure, however, is also based on a hovering sense that it represents a fate awaiting even the good poet.

The sense of the poet as always caught between the roles of compelled propagandist and potential slanderer, is brought out most sharply in Goldberg's argument that the scene reveals a system in which the poet is immolated by the very need to speak on behalf of an authority backed by coercive force which is yet always seeking transcendental valorizations. Yet there are questions of value and truth being played out in the episode that get occluded in this aggressively "political" reading. They appear especially in the disposition of "bon" and "mal." First, the predications are applied asymmetrically: "bon" serves only as a generalized, underdetermined epithet, while the "mal" is bound to the fiction of proper name, constitutes the very identity of the evil agent. Moreover, it is a name which, given the changed spelling of "fons," can now refer to acts as well as intentions or potentialities. Moreover, Spenser refers to Malfont as one who not only did evil, but as one who took upon *himself* the "bold title of a poet bad," named himself a bad poet. Such ambiguities suggest that the text raises questions about the ways in which a moral term applies to or transforms an agent, what backs such terms, who utters them, how they relate to our pictures of action or intention.

Such questions cannot be answered by appealing strictly to "politics" or "power." We must also recognize here, first, a subtler interest in what we might call the "poetics" of moral or legal accusation, and second, a continuing desire for a real rather than a specious authority of moral utterance, that is, for the power to call things good and bad, true and false, just and unjust, even though this must find a place in a world where such utterances are always flawed, partial, subject to misapprehension or slander. The description of Malfont shows us the poet immolated as much by the will to truth as by the will to power, or by the desire to find truths which are different from, even at odds with, the "truths" of power. (K.G., adapted by D.J.G.)

Session 469: Annual Meeting and Luncheon of the Spenser Society.

88.32 Richard Helgerson (California Institute of Technology), President of the Spenser Society, presided at this typically high-spirited event, held at the Four Seasons Clift Hotel. At the business meeting following the luncheon, Judith H. Anderson (Indiana University, Bloomington) was elected president of the Society for 1988. S. K. Heninger, Jr. (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) was elected vice-president. With a trace of reluctance that struck terror into the heart of the vice-president elect, Russell Meyer (University of Missouri) generously agreed once again to accept his election to the position of treasurer. Elected to three-year terms on the Executive Committee were Gordon Teskey (Cornell University) and Patricia Parker (University of Toronto).

Professor Helgerson announced that the Society will sponsor two meetings at next year's MLA convention in New Orleans: an open session on Edmund Spenser and one on psychological perspectives on *The Faerie Queene*. For details concerning next year's MLA and the Isabel MacCaffrey award, see ANNOUNCEMENTS below (88.34).

The highlight of the luncheon was a powerful paper -- which presented a "remarkable re-reading of Spenser's career," as Richard Helgerson said -- by Professor Annabel Patterson (Duke University). Since the paper, titled "Acyron, or the Uncouth," will be published in *Spenser Studies* VIII, we can all look forward to reading it there. And the editor of *Spenser Newsletter* can breathe easier, being relieved of the obligation to attempt to abstract a presentation so rich and well crafted that the process of summarizing would work more than its usual violence, both to the summarizer and the item summarized.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

88.33 CALL FOR PAPERS: For the 1988 MLA convention, the Spenser Society solicits papers of no more than 18 minutes for one session on *Edmund Spenser*. Send papers on any Spenserian topic to Professor Judith H. Anderson, Department of English, Ballantine Hall, Bloomington, Indiana 47405. The deadline is *March 1, 1988*.

The Society also solicits papers for a session titled *Spenser's Dreambook: Poetic and Psychological Perspectives on The Faerie Queene*. Papers need NOT be Freudian; any submissions concerned with dream and romance interpretation will be appropriate. Send papers, by *March 15, 1988*, to Professor Kenneth Gross, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627.

88.34 At the Spenser Society MLA Luncheon, the third annual Isabel MacCaffrey award was presented to Gordon Teskey (Cornell University) for his article "From Allegory to Dialectic: Imagining Error in Spenser and Milton," *PMLA* 101, no. 1 (January 1986): 9-23. The MacCaffrey award committee -- Judith H. Anderson, Donald Cheney, Jon Quitslund -- gave special praise to the essay for its "breadth and originality as well as its lucidity and theoretical sophistication."

Next year's judges for the MacCaffrey award -- presented (ordinarily to a younger scholar) for a significant article on Spenser published in calendar year 1987 -- will be S. K. Heninger, Jr., Richard Peterson, and Susanne Woods. People wishing to make nominations should send authors' names and citations to Professor Russell J. Meyer, Department of English, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211. People wishing to enter their own work should send three copies of the article to Professor Meyer. The deadline for nomination or application is September 15, 1988.

SPENSER AT KALAMAZOO 1988

Sponsored by Spenser at Kalamazoo

Organizers: Margaret P. Hannay, Siena College (chair)
 Jerome Dees, Kansas State University
 William Oram, Smith College
 Anne Lake Prescott, Barnard College
 Robert Stillman, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Opening remarks: Russell J. Meyer, University of Missouri

Spenser I: Back to the Future

Presiding: Catherine Chopp, Ohio State University

"Vergil's Colin Clout: Origin in Absence"
 William A. Sessions, Georgia State University

"Spenser, Ovid, and the Ideal of Privacy"
 Theresa M. Krier, University of Notre Dame

Respondent: Ronald B. Bond, University of Calgary

"The Projected Continuation of *The Faerie Queene*: Rome Delivered?"
 A. Kent Hieatt, University of Western Ontario

Respondent: Thomas P. Roche, Jr., Princeton University

Spenser II: Romantic Readings and Spenserian Romances

Presiding: Linda Gregerson, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

"Sequentiality and Concentricity in *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*"
Alexander Dunlop, Auburn University

"Hierarchical and Dynamic Principles in *The Faerie Queene*"
John A. Quitslund, George Washington University

Respondent: David Miller, University of Alabama

"The Duality of Romantic Spenserianism"
Greg Kucich, University of Notre Dame

Respondent: David Evett, Cleveland State University

Spenser III: Continual Spring and Harvest: Gender and Generation

Presiding: Sayre Greenfield, University of Tulsa

"Renaissance Physiology and the Garden of Adonis"
James W. Broadus, Indiana State University

"Flesh, Blood and 'Secret Feare': Britomart, Artegall, and Elizabeth Face to Face"
Julia M. Walker, SUNY - Geneseo

Respondent: Judith Anderson, University of Indiana

Spenser IV: The Kathleen Williams Lectures on Spenser and His Age

Presiding: Donald Stump, Virginia Polytechnic Institute

"'Backe by the Hindergate': An Aging Boy Returns to the Garden"
Harry Berger, Jr., University of California at Santa Cruz

Respondent: A. Leigh DeNeef, Duke University

Closing remarks: Russell J. Meyer, University of Missouri

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
CB #3520
GREENLAW HALL
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHAPEL HILL NC 27599-3520

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 177
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599