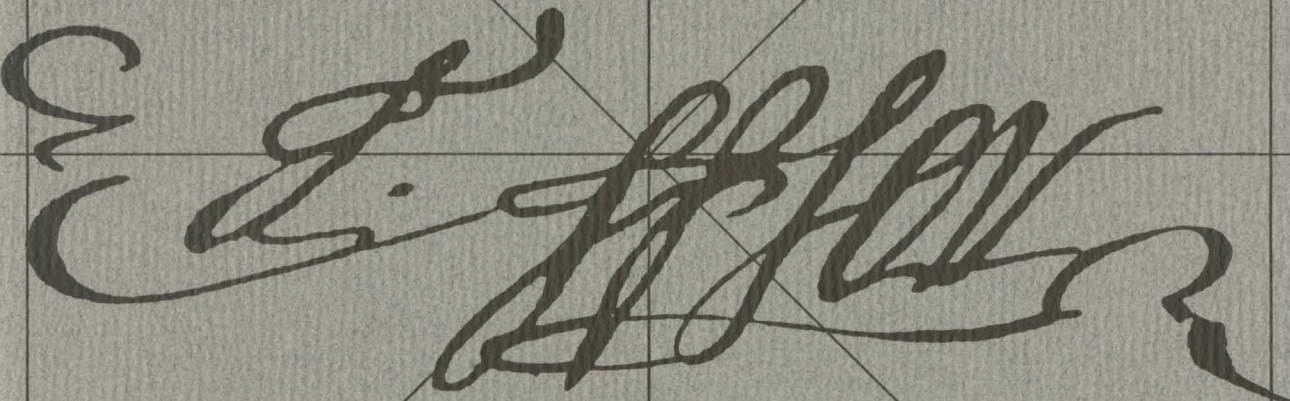


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TO OUR READERS

89.01 The following notice from the Spenser Society repeats, in improved form, an announcement that first appeared in the previous issue (item 88.113):

At its meeting during the MLA Convention last December, the Executive committee of the Spenser Society turned its collective mind to certain practicalities that will interest everyone concerned with Spenser studies. It was decided to offer membership in the Society and a subscription to *Spenser Newsletter* at the combined rate of \$10 per year. Of course, you can still belong to the Spenser Society for the annual fee of \$5. And you can still subscribe to *SpN* at the annual price of \$6.50, for US and Canadian subscribers, and \$11 (US currency) for those in Latin America or overseas. However, US and Canadian subscribers can opt for the combined rate of \$10; Latin American and overseas subscribers can opt for a combined fee of \$14.50. That's a saving of \$1.50 each year for everyone, domestic and international.

We hope readers will take advantage of this bargain for several reasons (besides the obvious one of saving money). In the face of rising printing and postage costs, it would be helpful to enlarge the subscribership to the *Newsletter*. There is also an immediate need to increase the membership of the Spenser Society, or at least to demonstrate more precisely how many participate in its activities.

Increased membership has begun to prove important because of a policy the MLA has announced this year: unless affiliated societies like the Spenser Society have more than 200 members, they will not be allowed to sponsor more than one session at annual MLA conventions. As most readers know, the Spenser Society has for years been automatically given two sessions, and usually a third -- the Spenser and Milton special sessions that ran for several years. For the past two years, the Society's backing has also helped win approval for a third session, *Chaucer to Spenser*.

Such sponsorship is, of course, central to the Society's purposes, which are to provide occasions when scholars interested in Spenser and his cultural contexts can present versions of work in progress and become part of the international network of Renaissance scholars. Among these occasions is the Spenser Society luncheon, held annually at the MLA convention -- for which the Society makes the (sometimes elaborate) arrangements and supplies the wine. The Society also works to encourage and reward excellence in scholarship, especially by younger scholars. The most visible activity of this sort is the Isabel MacCaffrey Award presented each year at the luncheon.

So if you aren't yet a member of the Spenser Society (or if your membership has lapsed), send your name, address, and \$5 check to John Ulreich, Secretary-Treasurer, The Spenser Society, Department of English, Modern Languages Building #67, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721. Better yet, send John a check for \$10 (or \$14.50, if you are overseas) to cover both membership and subscription to *Spenser Newsletter*. John's renewal announcement next November will offer the combined membership and *Spenser Newsletter* subscription for Society members already in good standing.

BOOKS: REVIEWS AND NOTICES

- 89.02 Berger, Harry. *Revisionary Play: Studies in the Spenserian Dynamics*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988. xi + 483 pp. \$48.00.

From the outset I will announce that this is not intended as a "review" of Harry Berger's *Revisionary Play*; such an endeavor would be both impertinent and unnecessary. Maureen Quilligan's observation on the book's jacket cover -- that we are all delighted "to trade in [our] dog-eared photocopies of Harry Berger's Spenser essays" for this new volume -- is as comprehensive an indication as any that "reviews" of the record of Berger's omnipresent influence on Spenser studies border on silliness. My purpose, then, is twofold: (1) to "re-view" one of the more pervasive strands of Bergerian criticism, the concept of the "retrospective" as perhaps his most powerful interpretive tool (as, indeed, a touchstone of Spenserian criticism in general); and (2) to highlight what I believe to be some of the more interesting undercurrents of Louis Montrose's introduction to the volume -- an essay both complimentary and critical in ways that can suggest some new directions for Spenser studies.

A common theme in Berger's essays is his concept of "retrospection," which argues that for every forward (or "evolutionary") motion of development in *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser self-consciously utilizes a nostalgic "habit of mind" (46) that ceaselessly reviews earlier poetic styles and poses throughout literary history. Thus the Spenserian "state of present time" is just as often as not replaced by "the image of the antique world" (V.Pr.1) and its expression in the received "matrix of convention" (47). One of Berger's great contributions to Spenser studies has been his emphasis not so much on *what* Spenser says thematically as on *how* he says it poetically and stylistically. Berger has done much to eliminate some of the vexed questions of the difficulties of assessing tone throughout *The Faerie Queene* by foregrounding Spenser's habits of "quotation and revision" (38). In his self-conscious treatment of traditional material, Spenser "depicts it as something old" (38) -- and the challenge is on for the reader to assume the appropriate distance between an immediate "now" and a poetic "then." In short, the reader must be alert for the "conspicuous allusion," stock literary motifs that "emphasize their conventionality" (245).

As a consequence, in the Bergerian *Faerie Queene*, the reader must assess many of Spenser's characters as self-consciously presented, retrospective "images of the antique world." Berger urges us to view Merlin as a product of "the popular imagination which may have once been a fresh and significant cultural force but can no longer be taken seriously" (101). Paridell and Hellenore, locked as they are in the cliché, artifice, and archaism of prior tales of Paris and Helen, "represent a psychic and cultural dead end, a kind of genealogical blind alley" (113). Proteus, as "the shepherd of the seas of yore" (III.viii.30), is so much a Spenserian cliché of an antique world that he is "in effect presented in quotation marks" (213). Exhausted poetic forms abound in Busyrane's palace, which is characterized by such "artificial" forms as tapestries, paintings, masques, and elaborate pageantry. The "solipsistic" masque of Cupid is a "sophisticated development and antithesis of the pseudo-

primitive content of the tapestries" (179). And finally, the pageant in *Cantos of Mutabilitie* is so self-consciously artistic that we are meant to revel in "the synoptic power of the human poet's imagination" (268).

Berger's newer essays on *The Shepheardes Calender* develop many of the same themes of Spenser's self-conscious literary artifice that characterize his earlier essays on *The Faerie Queene*. In his introduction to these essays, Berger proclaims Spenser a "metapastoralist," presenting not only a critique of pastoral withdrawal, but also investigating, in Berger's chiasmus, "the desire of literariness" and "the literariness of desire" (320). Spenser's "metapastoralist" eclogues rely on what Berger calls a "reflexive criticism" (282) in which pastoral writes about itself writing about itself. Because literary competition is always a privileged pastoral convention, the metapastoral shepherd "learns to love primarily in terms of the relation between the poet and his audience" (343). As Berger argues, the thwarted Colin's obsessive repetition of his desire for Rosalind may, in a "metapastoralist" perspective, signify nothing more than "the poet's obsession with *copie* ... in finding as many ways as possible to say the same thing" (357). In any case, whether the reader is situated in the "hyperliterary" realm of *Faerie* (154) or the "anthological" world of Colin's "pastoral semantics" (353, 364), all of these conspicuous allusions to a self-conscious literary artifice play with gaps in cultural time that the reader must recognize and negotiate as phases of both poetic and "psychocultural experience" (93).

I wish to conclude, not with a further assessment of the content of Berger's essays themselves, but rather with a sort of "meta-review" that takes into account one of the more intriguing "dynamics" of *The Spenserian Dynamics*, the debate between New Historicist and New Critical "close readings" that emerges from Berger's "Afterword" and Louis Montrose's introduction to the book, where, like the "Februarie" debate between young Cuddie and old Thenot (a privileged locus of analysis for Berger), generational tensions arise as to the best method for textual interpretation. Montrose's unqualified admiration for Berger is outlined in his praise of Berger's "inexhaustible capacity" for revision (3), his restless need, like Spenser, "to write ... and to move on" (4); Berger's stunning syntheses of Neoplatonic and Neo-Hegelian intellectual traditions (6); and the ceaselessness of Berger's interpretive energy, which means that he is always engaging other critics directly in immediate debate (particularly in his *Shepheardes Calender* essays).

For my part, one of the more insightful contributions of the New Historicism (though less prominent in this country than in Great Britain) is its investigation of the sociopolitical matrix not only of the writer, but also of the literary critic and his/her entrenchment in the agendas, hidden or otherwise, of a network of institutional and professional expectations. If one of the founding impulses behind a Spenserian New Historicism is a foregrounding of how a literary career is shaped and presented, then it comes as no surprise that Montrose is motivated also to investigate the sociopolitical "dynamics" behind the shaping of Berger's career as a literary critic. Thus what emerges from Montrose's introduction is a fascinating assessment of where Berger did and did not capitulate to prevailing intellectual and scholarly methods. Montrose's frank acknowledgement of "the genteel Protestant and Anglo-Saxon ethos" (8) that characterized Berger's postwar Yale English Department is, in its own way, as intriguing and insightful a contribution to Spenser

studies in this country as any new "reading" of *The Faerie Queene*, outlining, as it does, the ways in which a Bergerian scholarly career (like a Spenserian literary career) can be shaped as a counter-move against the pressures of a more "orthodox" literary history. In this way, Montrose's introduction is itself an impressive document of New Historicism.

But following his insightful and powerful biography of a scholarly career, Montrose initiates a theoretical debate by criticizing Berger (with apologies that "mere encomium would itself be indecorous" [16]) for his tendency to hold fast to authorial intention and a reluctance to confront the "pervasive shaping and constraining power of sociocultural codes" (11) that Spenser was entrenched in. In response, Berger, identifying himself as a "reconstructed old New Critic" (460), gives no ground, arguing that "there is something inherently wrong with not doing readings" (459). In a new regime of Foucauldian "discursive fields," Berger claims that "close reading becomes a primary source of evidence across the whole field of humanistic and social study" (459). This debate strikes me as interesting as any in critical theory today, and I hope it is not trite to offer the opinion that Spenser (and Spenser studies) is the winner in this debate. Not only is Spenser the inspirational force for many of the most fruitful rapprochements between Renaissance studies and contemporary post-structuralist theory, but he is also now the site of a possible "retrospective" reassessment of earlier critical methods in light of these new post-structuralist methods. Not that Berger is issuing a simple call for a revival of the New Criticism -- Berger is too critically eclectic for that. But the "aging boy" (Berger's self-fashioned persona at the 1988 Kathleen Williams lecture at Spenser at Kalamazoo), committed as he is to textual interpretation, has suggested ways in which a revitalized New Criticism can enter the "conversation" of more recent developments in literary criticism. Thus Berger's *Revisionary Play* combines the best of "something old" and "something new" for readers of Spenser.

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89.03 Miller, David Lee. *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988. xiv + 298 pp. \$29.50.

The discontinuities and discordances in Spenser's poetry -- what Harry Berger called its moments of "conspicuous irrelevance" -- have preoccupied much of the close reading of *The Faerie Queene* over the past three decades. It has been an uneasy preoccupation, for critics who have felt that their vocabulary, rooted in the New Criticism, was itself conspicuously irrelevant to a poem that is so little dramatic as regards its presentation of either protagonists or narrator. If our early introduction to Error in Book I, with her "womans shape ... Most lothsome, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdain," invokes a misogyny that the poem fails to declare openly and the modern reader is unwilling to take for granted, what do we do with it? Attribute it to Spenser's personal problems, or to the neurotic colonialism of his queen's Irish policy? Or see it as something that Redcrosse must grow out of, before he can rescue Una? If there is something similarly excessive in the praise of Belphoebe's legs as "two faire marble pillours," where do we locate the consciousness of excess, and what does it imply for Spenser's praise of Elizabeth? In

a major revisionary study, David Lee Miller now attempts to outline a Spenserian poetics that will let us read the poem with a fuller understanding of the dimensions of these problems.

Miller starts from the familiar concept of the king's two bodies, formulated by Ernst Kantorowicz, and suggests that the complex, controversial, and shifting relationships between contradictory aspects of identity -- public and private, corporate and individual, spiritual and physical, sacred and profane -- that this concept shadowed may be applied as well, first, to the "gentleman or noble person" that the 1590 poem is fashioning in "vertuous and gentle discipline," and by extension to the contradictory aspects of the poem itself, or to allegory's problematized presentation of tenor and vehicle. He argues that *The Faerie Queene* is a product of -- and a contributor to -- an historical moment when the doctrine of royal sovereignty was struggling to assert and inscribe itself in England. As a text, it takes its place "within the long emergence of corporate logic from the ecclesiastical into the secular domain, particularly the confused and often violent emergence of the sovereign state as a consolidation of medieval legal and political institutions powerful enough to rival the Church" (15). Accordingly, the human bodies figured in the poem partake of the changing shapes of corporate identities, in ways that are not obvious to earlier and later ways of thinking about selfhood, in the characteristic figure of an individual alone with his God or his therapist.

Miller's metaphor of the two bodies seems to work in two ways that prove finally to be less distinct than they first seem. They point to oppositions present within the world itself: Elizabeth as mortal queen and immortal principle of kingship, humans as males or females, in public and private roles. At the same time, it is central to what Miller calls the poem's "aesthetic theology" that "Spenser's art fantasizes its own perfection in terms of access to a spiritual body replete with truth" (71). The world that is subject to change dreams of a time when all things will have worked their own perfection. The offstage Gloriana is a figure of such wholeness and sufficiency, at least by contrast with the lesser figures who appear in the poem; so, in another sense, is the ever-deferred marriage of Arthur and Gloriana as an enhanced picture of a sovereignty that can reproduce itself. Glimpses of such perfected bodies appear in the poem in a name like Telamond, perhaps, or in the hermaphroditic union of Scudamour and Amoret at the end of the 1590 poem. But the world of the poem is one of absences and elisions, relative to its ideal plenitude.

For a way of describing the idea of self, or contrary selves, that the poem expresses, Miller turns to psychoanalytic theory, and specifically to Lacan's essay on "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I." He explicitly takes exception with James Norhnberg, who applied Ericksonian models of developmental psychology to the poem, on the grounds that Lacan's theories seem closer to Freud's tragic vision, and (in a remark that I confess I read with foreboding) that "the Lacanian reinvention of Freud ... realigns the Freudian terms *phallus* and *castration* with what we have learned from structuralism about language and meaning. In this way Lacan gives us a Freud whose pertinence to cultural interpretation of all sorts seems greatly amplified" (8).

Two major consequences for Miller's reading of Spenser follow from his choice of psychoanalytic model. Although he does not invoke Lacan's theories in much detail, he does see a "mirror stage" as a nearly inclusive figure of the poem's arena of psychic discovery. In fact, although he presents Lacan's mirror stage as a stage or phase of development, his application of it to Spenser suggests that it is the stage on which all of the poem's characters play their parts (the literal rather than the figurative sense, therefore, of the French *stade*, stadium). The glass through which they see darkly presents reversed and contrary images to them; and again, when Spenser chooses to refract identity into "mirrours more then one" (III Pr. 5), the focus is still on differences, dissimilarity, analysis.

The second consequence of Miller's Lacanian orientation is an emphasis on the epistemological and social dilemmas that are inherent to the mirror stage of self-knowledge. This seems part of the tragic Freudian vision mentioned above; and it functions in Miller's readings of individual passages as a psychoanalytic counterpart (or perhaps, confirmation) of his historicism. In Elizabeth's England, castration in its various metaphorical senses (including the threat of literal decapitation) is virtually a condition of existence, or of self-awareness: much is made of the "avoidance" of the genitals in the description of Alma's house, and of a corresponding absence of any "decent" word for the penis in Elizabethan vocabulary. Plotted onto the structuralist theory of language, as threatened above, this absence is seen as anticipatory of a grander sabbath sight of erasure. Although castration may be seen as a transitional phase en route to rebirth in a more advanced, androgynous condition "symbolizing wholeness and reconciliation with authority" (7), Miller reminds us of the perfect being in Plato's *Timaeus*, "round as from a lathe," a figure of comprehension and plenitude with no need for members or orifices since there is no longer anything outside the self. If this is the circle, "immortal, perfect, masculine" to which the feminine triangle is contrasted (258), it represents a goal of "the ultimate *corpus mysticum*" (287) in which infinite comprehension becomes indistinguishable from nothingness, the "nought" that had earlier been identified with the female.

To attempt a summary of Miller's argument, as I have done here, is to give little sense of what his book is like. He devotes most of his time to extended readings of individual episodes from *The Faerie Queene*: Arthur's dream, the house of Alma, the gardens of Adonis. Although he recognizes that "it is hard to reconcile the demands of argumentation with those of commentary" (26), he opts for the latter, and in so doing he implicitly lets both his historicist thesis of the two bodies, and the psychoanalytic vocabulary in which it is elaborated, be judged finally on the basis of their heuristic value. "What my title names is not an interpretive paradigm that simplifies the work of reading Spenser, but a structural duality, a specularly that complicates the work of reading both Spenser and his historical context" (28).

Especially in his analyses of the poem's overt presentations of the human body, Miller relies on his Lacanian paradigms to a degree that readers may find excessive. In particular, his claims for patterns of "avoiding" the genitals -- both in *The Faerie Queene* and in contemporary descriptions of the body -- tend to work their own violence on the texts he is reading. Perhaps the widening gap between entertainment and instruction is most conspicuous in a note on page 166, where he

observes that the chapter in a 1597 edition of Aristotle's *Problemata*, where "carnal copulation" is described without mentioning the penis, begins on a page with the signature E, recto. At times like this, this reader suspects that some penises must be more conspicuously absent than others, just as not all portrait busts portray legless individuals. Even the conspicuously ungendered house of Alma may owe its elided genitalia to the fact that it is figuring the human body and not just the male or female body.

Here the historicist aspect of Miller's argument seems at odds with a reliance on twentieth-century vocabulary, and I wish there had been more of the former. Angus Fletcher figures prominently in the book, and justly so; but I wish that space had been found for Phineas as well, since *The Purple Island* seems a useful instance of a near-contemporary response to Spenser's treatment of the body, and it would be good to hear some fresh discussion of that poem for a change. Yet, Miller is at times an incisive commentator on Spenser's poem, and he is ingenious in finding ways of applying the image of mirroring to a wide range of contexts.

His approach is most valuable, I think, in enabling a more tactful and comprehensive discussion of the familiar Spenserian propensity for doubling and dividing, at the level of the individual stanza where elements like chiasmus or grammatical ambiguity enact rhythms of infolding and unfolding, and on the largest structural scale as well, where similar patterns of interlace are found in the relations among episodes or books. The concept of specularity sheds a new light on the ways that contrariety, reversal, or denial function in this patterning, and at the same time, it reminds us that we are as involved in the specular relationship to the text as are the poem's characters or its ideal reader, Elizabeth. Miller builds upon recent critics who have seen the poem as a world of glass and a test of reading, and provides a refined and more economical terminology. He brings us closer, I think, to understanding what Puttenham may have meant when he called allegory a "false semblant or dissimulation." Although his historical claims for the centrality of the two bodies to Spenser's culture may be debated, he provides a sustained reading of the poem that is fundamentally, and profitably, speculative.

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89.04 Thickstun, Margaret Olofson. *Fictions of the Feminine: Puritan Doctrine and the Representation of Women*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988. xi + 176 pp. \$19.95.

Professor Thickstun has written a substantial critical book in a clear, jargon-free style. It is an ambitious book, as it follows the history of an idea over four centuries and two continents, but the author's interesting insights into texts as diverse as *The Faerie Queene* and *Clarissa* more than compensate for the necessarily limited time she spends on each author. Her survey of previous scholarship is very useful, and she constantly clarifies the place of her own argument. Repeatedly, she succeeds in showing valuable connections among her texts, illuminating their heritage and their common source in Puritan interpretations of a powerful Pauline doctrine and giving us a long historical perspective. Interestingly, the final chapters

bring one back to the first with a sense of relief that Puritan dogma afflicted Spenser's female characters much less than it did Christiana, Clarissa, or Hester Prynne.

Thickstun's purpose is to demonstrate that seventeenth-century Puritan authors wrote within a Pauline tradition, creating female characters without those positive roles they traditionally may have had in English narrative. She argues that the Puritan influence produced male characters who appropriate conventional female virtues like chastity, that female spiritual inferiority is everywhere assumed, along with a universal identification of the deeply distrusted flesh with femaleness. Thickstun's readings are avowedly feminist and also conservative, because her goal is to provide a searching critique of key Christian texts rather than reject them, believing as she does that "the Christian tradition is not essentially sexist but only historically so" (x).

The texts Thickstun selects are all canonical, indeed those which normally form the backbone of the Puritan tradition: *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Clarissa*, and *The Scarlet Letter*. After an introductory chapter on "The Pauline Precedent," a chapter is devoted to each text. Every chapter so overflows with illuminating readings that readers will wish Thickstun had had more space to devote to her analyses of Spenser and Milton.

In the introductory chapter, Thickstun proposes that "Puritan men found in Paul a metaphorical understanding of gender relations by which to deflect their own ambivalence about Original Sin onto women" (4). Thus, Puritan writers and clergy from William Ames to Cotton Mather use their reading of the Pauline epistles not only to promulgate the inherent subordination of women at home and in church, but also to interpret woman as the essence of fallen humanity. Thickstun's contribution here is to offer concrete evidence of how several Puritan writers interpreted female biology -- childbearing and motherhood -- as evidence of universal female sinfulness dating back to Eve's punishment. Wrestling with the paradoxes of original sin, spiritual regeneracy, and further capability of sin, Puritan men could blame women for all human lust and displace onto them their own self-contempt. The possibility of pure female spirituality seems to disappear; the doctrine of female spiritual inferiority ascends -- again. One wonders, as Thickstun briefly does, how much these theories might respond to an actual demand for or assumption of a spiritual role for women in the church. It is certainly worth studying the change in language from the previous century when certain women (Anne Askew, Jane Grey, Anne Bacon) were useful to the establishment of the Reformation.

Thickstun begins with *The Faerie Queene*, a "transitional" text, and so one which will by definition reveal ambivalence about the sexuality of its female characters. Because we can clearly distinguish between the chastity of Una and the lust of Duessa in Book I, Thickstun is right to focus on Book III where Britomart's journey reveals a tension between the need to give her the moral and spiritual power of chastity and the need eventually to subordinate her to Artegall and the requirements of patriarchy. As Thickstun early on remarks, "Puritanism offers no model for female celibacy" (31), and she reads Britomart's defining virtue as a limiting prerequisite for marriage, rather than an equalizer. Unlike Redcrosse and

Guyon, who actually experience their opposites, Britomart does not herself experience lust; it is left to her female surrogates to undergo sexual adventures. She exits the Malecasta scene, for instance, without an erotic ripple.

All of Britomart's passion, Thickstun declares, is controlled by her journey toward lawful, companionate marriage with Artegall, and by her preparation, inspired by "heavenly destiny" (3.3.26), to be the perfect wife. As the contrast with Radigund suggests, Britomart must oppose the Amazon, who uses sex to dominate men, and Thickstun argues credibly that Britomart's role and language in the Amazon episode reinforce the final lesson about the dangerous, unnatural "liberty of women." She reads Spenser as a supporter of the status quo, willing to admit exceptions to the rank of women, but ultimately desiring to keep the sex in its place. Perhaps this is the place where Professor Thickstun would like us to engage with her readings, to ponder our responses to Spenser's paradoxical "chaste sexuality," to ask whether there are ambiguities in the apparent ease with which Britomart can adjust to being Mrs. Artegall. As she castigates Radigund, doth she protest too much in the attempt to control this lawless version of her own character and desires? Like all good critics, Thickstun makes us return to the text to test her hypotheses further.

Given the present forum, I have lingered on the Spenser chapter, although readers will certainly benefit from Thickstun's clear-headed, insightful reading of her other authors. Continuing the discussion of Spenser, the Milton chapter tackles the thorniest of feminist questions about Eve's paradoxical subordination / sufficiency. Thickstun advances the critical debate by using the parallels between Sin / Satan and Eve / Adam to illuminate the woman's position as physical embodiment of man's "effeminate slackness" (11.634). Out of control, this element leads to sin; however, in the "perfect man," the Son, the feminine qualities are correctly subordinated. Eve's sin is expressed in her physical sexuality, and she becomes "the scapegoat for Adam's guilt" (85). Perhaps because Eve rather fades out of the poem itself, silent and submissive, there is an open-ended quality to this chapter; however, with considerable skill, Thickstun continues many strands of the Milton chapter in subsequent chapters.

In the chapter on *The Pilgrim's Progress*, for instance, she argues that the thoroughly masculinist Bunyan "subsumes female experience and conventional virtues into the male ideal," in this case, into Stand-fast. Even the possibility of female Christian heroism (visible perhaps in Eve's modelling her own steadfastness after that of the Son) disappears in Bunyan where "Christiana and Mercy mend clothes while the men slay giants" (102). Bunyan's gendered determinism produces female characters whose motherhood and submissiveness define an interior spirituality or whose inherent lust is the source -- and scapegoat -- for the sins of the male characters.

Thickstun's discussion of *Clarissa* will interest scholars of the earlier periods because in fascinating ways, Thickstun's reading of Richardson's Puritan context gives her heroine a familiar outline: she is said to model her action on "the Pauline formula that the true Christian life involves *imitatio Christi*, the bearing of persecutions and afflictions in the name of the Gospel" (109). In negating her own will, submitting to parental authority, believing in her spiritual purity despite the

perceived defilement of her body, and maintaining her unremitting moral watchfulness, Clarissa prepares herself for martyrdom. Triumphant over the considerable pitfalls of her gender becomes her greatest achievement.

In her final chapter, Thickstun brings her analysis of the suppression of female heroism in favor of male characters to bear on *The Scarlet Letter*. Unlike Hester, Dimmesdale can become a Puritan hero, but at least, Thickstun speculates, Hester shows a way out of the closed Puritan world: "She learns to acknowledge sexuality, generation, and history" (156).

While I am not convinced that to understand Puritan oppression in its Pauline context or to critique it as such is also "to neutralize its disfiguring ideological assumptions" (159), I return not only to these canonical texts but to the work of other writers, male and female, with some thorny, intriguing new questions.

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89.05 Waller, Gary. *English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century*. London and New York: Longman, 1986. xiv + 315 pp. \$29.95 cloth; 12.95 paper.

At one remove from the Author's Preface but still impinging on it, a brief editorial note announces the aim of the Longman Literature in English Series: "to show that the most valuable and stimulating approach to literature is that based upon an awareness of the relations between literary forms and their historical context." Waller's own prefatory remarks ally his contribution to the series with revisionist projects both in England and the United States, with the work of scholars whose assumptions about social relations and categories of thought also help support this book's central claim that sixteenth-century poetry reproduces and is reproduced by the social and political discourses -- "texts" -- of the age.

Waller devotes his first hundred pages or so to the cultural context of the poetry he will discuss in the remainder of the book. Much of the first chapter discusses what for Waller both pressures and produces sixteenth-century texts and what they themselves finally disclose to their readers -- the ideology of the court. Citing Foucault, Waller reminds the reader that power (which in this century equals the court) "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives." Art, including poetry, becomes one method by which the court tries to exercise its power.

Chapter 2 stresses the class-bias of much sixteenth-century literary theory, the court's use of poetry, the conflicting claims of didacticism, neoplatonism, and rhetoricism, and the question of reading. Puttenham, Waller claims, subordinates poetry to "class-specific interests" and co-opts various kinds of poetry "into the centralizing hegemony of the Tudor Court" (35). Yet most poetry of the period demands an active and thus potentially dangerous reader (as Tottel, with his meaning-limiting titles, seems to have understood), and the poets themselves are "more aware of the issues involved in reading than any theorists before the twentieth

century" (57), of the slippage between *res* and *verba*. Alongside the word-drunk "celebration of textuality," however, Waller sees a growing resistance to the "promiscuity of language" (66), a suspicion of the words of human beings as opposed to the unchanging Word of God. Protestant intellectuals and poets, such as Spenser and Greville, as a later chapter explains, both appreciate and fear the problematic status of representation.

Given Waller's introductory chapters, a reader should be able to discern, in the poetry discussed in the next three chapters, the repressed ideological struggles of the poet and the court, of the private and the public, of the idealization of centralized hegemonic culture and its brutal realities, of didacticism, neoplatonism, and rhetoricism, of petrarchism and protestantism. In short, a reader should be able to recover the social text in the poetic text. For instance, Raleigh, whose "poems evoke the collective fantasy of the Elizabethans -- a world that is harmonious, static, and from which all change has been exorcized" (123) -- becomes Waller's quintessential manipulator and victim of the court's power. The ideological struggles in the "Ocean to Scinthia" reveal this doubleness, as it "repeatedly deconstructs the philosophy to which it gives allegiance: its incoherences, gaps, uncertainties, and repetitions at once affirm the dominant Elizabethan court ideology and articulate a desire to oppose it" (124).

Newsletter readers will find especially engaging Waller's approach to *The Faerie Queene*, "the most important single poem of the century precisely because it brings so compellingly to our attention the conflicting voices by and against which it was written; it allows us more richly than any other poem of the age to construct those voices which spoke so powerfully to create the hegemony of the Elizabethan regime" (179). Blaming in part an annotation-mad "Spenser industry," Waller takes to task those who would read the poem as whole or unified; he claims that dominant Elizabethan culture has still such a hold on the text that the *modern* dominant reading is close to that of the regime. James VI, an early demystifier of the text, might inspire modern readers to follow his lead, for the poem itself "may offer, despite its intentions, a radical critique of the power that brings it into being" (177). It is not clear whether Waller wishes to appropriate the text to criticize or expose particular twentieth-century institutions or power relations, although his conclusion suggests it.

By creating an assumed reconciliation of opposing views, a court poet meets the regime's demands to suspend debate. Thus, Waller suggests, *The Faerie Queene* presents unity as the assimilation of disharmonies, as the cosmic and absolute transcendence of its own values. Spenser also shares the protestant anxiety over the promiscuity of language, over the poet's responsibility to reconcile man's words to God's Truth. After a brief description of each book and its conflicts, from the violent repression of desire in Book II to the criticism of but loyalty to the Irish policy in Book V, Waller devotes much of the chapter to Book VI. Though writing of courtesy, the poet can no longer sustain his vision of the court or his belief in national destiny. In Book VI alone "there is no allegorical representation of the Queen within the narrative" (195). Written after Spenser's eye-opening visit to England, Book VI questions, perhaps radically, "the ideals on which the Court was built" (195). Calidore, whose name ("beautiful gift") itself reveals relationships of

power, cannot finally defeat the Blatant Beast and Spenser cannot adjust his own conservative, protestant moral absolutism to the contingent reality of court politics. When at the end of Book VI Calidore destroys the vision of Mount Acidale, much as the Beast destroys the court, the two morally opposed figures are conflated, and like Elizabethan society, the poem cannot "remain faithful to the desires which motivated it, and the more those were asserted to be natural and true, the more their falsity and the naked power on which they rested, is revealed" (212). Waller sees Calidore and Colin Clout as two sides of Spenser or of the court poet -- the apologist and the critic.

In this chapter I would prefer to see even more detail. If Spenser is indeed the poet who best demonstrates sixteenth-century conflicting ideologies and their attempted effacement, the reader might also appreciate a better sense of the particularities for and against which the poetry (and the populace) contended. Some *Newsletter* readers might also wish to see more attention lavished on the background chapters, perhaps on the theoretical concerns of the period, as I would like to see more detail on the political and social context. Others may miss in-depth discussions of the evolution of forms and techniques besides the short lyric, and how these too speak the social text. Although Waller must, of course, discriminate to develop his theories and his ideological stance, competing methods of reading do surface in the book. Its silences and its shifting audience may perhaps be traced to the fact that several of its parts were published previously and seem to require extensive familiarity with the historical background, while others, to emphasize a point for a general or student audience, oversimplify.

Readers should be aware of particular lapses, large and small. The motives for Waller's choices are not always clear: the struggle to invent a new form to translate Augustan imperial ideals to Henrician courtly ideals -- an excellent occasion for Waller to link the invention of blank verse with a social and ideological text -- is not discussed, nor are the various attempts to silence the women writers of the period. Waller's revelation that Douglas' *Eneados* translates Homer's Greek also revises ancient literary history and makes literal Virgil's debt. Slighter errors in bibliographical entries and in citations from the poetry could mislead a non-specialized audience, and they may be symptomatic of the book's overall problem with details -- a residual resistance, perhaps, to historicization. To point to such surface flaws may seem concessive to a particularly ugly form of authoritarianism, or dismissive of the discourses "scripting" the author and his book. It does seem logical that Waller, like others before him, might want to silence the arrogance of a Surrey or the presumption of marginal voices. The book is to be commended, moreover, for the enormous task it has taken on and the number of poets it does manage to include.

It is in fact the book's first chapter that poses the most serious problems. Whereas this section might have detailed the forces of the court, delineated its institutions, cited the differences among the various courts of the period (the chapter does compare the Scottish and English courts) and their various hierarchies, it for the most part generalizes about the Court as a Power Structure -- an oversimplification that tends to reify, out of almost all descriptive value, the very terms "court," "regime," "culture," "discourse," and especially "power." The

expressions become code words for relationships only glanced at but implied to be monolithic for all times and places. It would seem useful for readers to know that there were staggering differences among the various Tudor, Stuart, and continental rulers and their constitutions of their courts, that such structures evolve according to and within differing material pressures which in turn impinge differently on the poetry. Since the "Elizabethan court" appears most frequently in the book, Waller might have attempted to distinguish its forms and categories of oppression from those of other courts of the century, even at the risk of reifying them as well. Without such distinctions, his conclusion that "[s]truggle with and within the power of the Court, then, constitutes sixteenth-century poetry's most important characteristic" (30) is rendered trivially true. Even *with* such distinctions, however, the book's focus on the court would still tend to recuperate the world picture it claims to wish to subvert.

English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century also undermines its revisionism by indulging in "dominant" methods of reading -- by using some sort of implied or "natural" measures of poetic "excellence" to exclude particular writers. The book also contains the flaws of many cultural studies -- generalization, hierarchization, reification, binarism masquerading as dialecticism -- without meeting the standards of the important works it cites. I believe that a materialist approach to the non-dramatic poetry of the sixteenth century is necessary. Perhaps future studies benefiting from Waller's contribution will also strive to recognize difference and record detail, to include marginalized voices, and, if possible, to remain sensitive to their own motives.

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ARTICLES: ABSTRACTS AND NOTICES

- 89.06 Allen, Michael J. B. "Marsilio Ficino's Interpretation of Plato's *Timaeus* and its Myth of the Demiurge." *Supplementum Festivum: Studies in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*. Ed. James Hankins, John Monfasani, and F. Purnell, Jr. (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Studies, 1987): 399-439.

The correct reading of a textual crux in Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* is crucial for interpreting Ficino's views on the correlations between Platonic metaphysics and Christian doctrines of the Trinity and its place in creation. In a passage comparing the Timaeian Demiurge, who creates the world as "an artisan who gazes up at the Ideas in order to make his world soul and other souls" to the Mosaic God, Ficino does not write that "the Christian and Mosaic truth is lacking" in its explanation of the world's cosmogony. In construing it so, E. N. Tigerstedt mistakes *mancat* (lacks) for *manet* (abides). "Classical Latin has no such verb as *mancare*," though Italian does. Moreover, the Basel edition of 1576 of Ficino's *Opera Omnia*, as well as the 1484, 1491, and authoritative 1496 editions of Ficino's *Platonis opera omnia* all show *manet*. Thus, Ficino wrote that the Christian truth abides.

Tigerstedt's reading, which makes Ficino endorse the Arian rejection of the Trinity, is unacceptable, given Ficino's dedicated program to Christianize, like Augustine before him, the pagan philosopher. Importantly, by Christianizing Plato, whose works shadow "divine revelation" in preparation for Christ's coming, the humanist activity of classical scholarship could receive legitimation because the "hermeneutical and intellectual challenges" which Platonism offered led the Christian scholar "towards the contemplation of the mysteries of true religion."

For Ficino, Plato's *Timaeus*, the "Greek counterpart to Genesis," addresses the role of man as creator, "who, having been once created, must continue himself to create in God's image and likeness." Furthermore, "though made in God's image, man cannot fashion from nothing. Rather, like the Platonic Demiurge, he must fashion from ideas: not from fantasies and notions peculiar to himself and the vagaries of that inferior faculty, the imagination; but from the *formula idearum*, from the models of the eternal Ideas in God which God has planted in man's mind." Ficino thus attempts to balance Christian and Platonic concepts of creation. (Kevin Farley)

89.07 Fukuda, Shohachi. "A Numerological Reading of Spenser's *Daphnaida*." *Kumamoto Studies in Language and Literature*, Nos. 29 & 30 (1987): 1-9.

Numerological analysis of *Daphnaida* reveals many patterns based on the number seven. Moreover, "the relationship of the second half of 57 [stanzas] to the whole of 81 is noteworthy: the ratio of 57 to 81 is 1:1.42 which is almost equal to the golden section of 1 to root 2." This patterning establishes the second part of the poem, Alcyon's lament, as its dominant element. The poem's main ideas appear in "two centers: the poem's center at stanza 41 and the lament's center at 53." Stanza 41 contains Christian consolation, Daphne's description of her desired celestial home where "Saints and Angels in celestial thrones / Eternally him praise." The central stanza of the lament (st. 53), however, dwells upon Alcyon's inconsolable grief, which is registered in the lament's intricate seven-part patterning. Because the poem's narrator shares Alcyon's cause of grief, Alcyon can be seen as an image of Spenser's own grief-stricken condition after the death of his first wife, Machabyas Childe. (D.J.G.)

89.08 Hulse, Clark. "Spenser and the Myth of Power." In Hulse, Clark, Andrew D. Weiner, and Richard Strier. "Spenser: Myth, Politics, Poetry." *SP* 85, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 378-89. (See items 89.10 and 89.11.)

Spenser attempts to cover the fissures between two predominant languages about power: the one derived from Machiavelli and Guicciardini, skeptical, amoral, concerned only with the techniques of statecraft; the other derived from classical fable, flattering and advising the prince by presenting him with the mythical etiology of his power. The struggle for power in the Renaissance can be traced in the struggle for dominance among these and other definitions of power. In Spenser this tension produces hybrid myths which investigate their own origins and therefore the political claims they validate. Examples of such ambiguous, self-deconstructing mythography include Elizabeth's designation as Astraea (a myth she borrowed from, of all places, the Hapsburgs), Artegall's dubiously violent predecessors Hercules and

Bacchus, and Astraea's gift to Artagall of Chrysaor -- a sword which in Homer belongs to Apollo but which Spenser transfers to the usurper Jove, who uses it to confirm his usurpation by quelling the Titans' rebellion. Spenser thus reminds us of the cold reality of power in the world: dominion is based upon conquest rather than right. In *Vewe* he continues this Machiavellian discourse, recognizing the relativity of customs and laws; yet, dazzled by his own myth of the Empress Elizabeth, he cannot admit that the Irish ought to be ruled by their own customs. *Vewe* was suppressed not, as Goldberg says, because it laid bare the porous foundations of power. Rather, Spenser's recognition that the presence of an Irish culture negated his myth as absolute justice forced him to want that culture eradicated, whereas Elizabeth had hoped to resolve the conflict by using the Anglo-Irish (whom Spenser detested) as cultural mediators.

New historicists ought to avoid a "polarized vocabulary of authority and subversion," in which some vaguely evil mythology is unmasked to reveal a more truthful political reality. All is text, the interpenetration of languages. Ignorance of this fact makes the new historicist's revelation of truth impotent or incomplete, for even progressive political action demands the seizure of authority. Moreover, historicists ought to analyze diachronic movements in addition to synchronic moments, in order to "inquire into the nature of sequence, agency, and causality." (Anthony M. Esolen)

89.09 McCabe, Richard A. "Gabriel Harvey and Edmund Spenser: A Pembroke Friendship." *Pembroke College Annual Gazette* 61 (1987): 16-24.

A gifted scholar and Latin poet, Harvey was impolitic in his aggressive pursuit of preferment and scholarly eminence. His feud with Thomas Nevile precluded promotion at Pembroke. His collusion (with Spenser) to advertise his gifts by publishing the *Thre Proper, and wittie, familiar Letters* backfired when obscure passages were construed "as personal attacks upon the Earl of Oxford and Sir James Croft." And his "acrimonious controversy with the master satirist, Thomas Nashe" made him "the centre of social ridicule." "Court and University alike dismissed the man who, in slightly different circumstances, might have proved the foremost English humanist since Thomas More." (K.F.)

89.10 Strier, Richard. "Divorcing Poetry from Politics -- Two Versions: Clark Hulse and Andrew Weiner on Spenser." In Hulse, Clark, Andrew D. Weiner, and Richard Strier. "Spenser: Myth, Politics, Poetry." *SP* 85, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 407-11. (See items 89.08 and 89.11.)

Hulse's explanation of the suppression of *Vewe* (89.08) is more plausible than Goldberg's suggestion that Spenser let the Machiavellian cat out of the bag; surely the Queen and her advisors were not so naive as to think that no one in England knew upon what practical grounds political policies were often based. Yet Hulse's implied definition of myth as a false belief mystifies Spenser's conscious choice of mythology as a mode of expression. Spenser was never blinded by his myths, nor are his mythology and Machiavellianism in conflict. Hulse's assertion that the new historicism celebrates subversion is not valid, nor is his claim that "real power" does not necessarily follow from the debunking of myths.

Weiner (89.11) is right to remind us that the Elizabethan poets were concerned with more than the machinations of the court, and that their values were not only secular-political. His distinction between the earthly and the transcendental, however, is too harshly drawn. Pleasure is not always to be condemned; the beauty of the vision of Mount Acidale is not simply other-worldly. Oddly, both Montrose and Weiner are right, though our current criticism seems unable to embrace both Elizabethan idealism and Elizabethan realism. (A.M.E.)

89.11 Weiner, Andrew D. "Spenser and the Myth of Pastoral." In Hulse, Clark, Andrew D. Weiner, and Richard Strier. "Spenser: Myth, Politics, Poetry." *SP* 85, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 390-406. (See items 89.08 and 89.10.)

Louis Montrose insists that we cannot understand Elizabethan pastoral unless we find out what the Elizabethans thought it to be. Montrose then derives his definition of pastoral's function from Puttenham, for whom pastoral is a means of reforming morals and expressing politically dangerous opinions. But Sidney's account of the uses of pastoral is more flexible than Montrose's definition; for example, Sidney will allow pastoral to show us the transience of the earth and the worthlessness of earthly glory. This emphasis upon transcendence is evident throughout Spenser's *November* eclogue, and in the Isaian *contemptus mundi* which underlies both it and Colin's subsequent complaints in *December*. Similarly, the vision of the dancing women on Mount Acidale depends upon neither Calidore's previous nor his subsequent actions, but is granted to him by grace and directs the reader towards an order which transcends the illusory ideals of Melibee. Transcendence is in fact Spenser's answer, sometimes, for the political, economic, and courtly problems which Montrose considers "actual." Although we have no basis upon which to build an authentic, linguistically unmediated past, still we should not define the past solely in terms of what we think authentic. (A.M.E.)

SPENSER AT MLA

The annual convention of the Modern Language Association of America, held in New Orleans on 27-30 December 1988, offered many items of interest to Spenserians.

Session 42: *Spenser: Monstrosity, Aristocracy, and the Poetic Calling*. Program arranged by the Spenser Society. Presiding: Judith H. Anderson, Indiana University.

89.12 In "Spenserian Ambivalence: Language, the Monstrous, and the Feminine," Mihoko Suzuki (University of Miami) pointed out that Spenser consistently figures linguistic duplicity through female monsters, who seduce by hiding their deformity under attractive appearances. This emphasis on both their sexuality and their monstrosity focuses and exorcizes Spenser's anxiety about the duplicity of language and the necessary doubleness of allegory. He thus creates these monsters in order to destroy them; but as soon as one monster is destroyed, another takes its place -- dramatizing the resiliency of female monstrosity, which can never fully be exorcized. (For example, when Redcrosse defeats "plaine," readily discernible Error, she is

replaced by her more seductive and hence dangerous reincarnation, Duessa.) In their multiplicity and their confounding of categories, these monsters represent perversion and error, but Spenser's own literary form, in its dependence upon a similar multiplicity of plot, literary models, and subtexts, displays unmistakable affinities with the monstrous. Finally, in making his Blatant Beast, the ultimate monster of language, male, Spenser accepts the monstrous Other as part of the self. (M.S.)

89.13 In "The Laureate Choir: The Dove as a Vocational Emblem in Spenser's Allegory of Timias and Belpheobe," Patrick Cheney (Pennsylvania State University) reminded us that critics identify the dove of *Faerie Queene* IV.viii. as, loosely, Elizabeth's womanliness, or Timias' spiritual condition, or a charmingly real bird inhabiting Spenser's forests of allegory. The symbol's history, however, renders such interpretations too simple. Editors trace Spenser's dove to the story of Noah, and to Venus' doves in *Aeneid* VI; moreover, Vergil, Horace, and Petrarch all used the dove as a symbol of the poet and his vocation. Spenser fuses the dove's theological, political, and vocational dimensions in order to locate himself, Raleigh, and Elizabeth in an ideal Protestant power structure. Thus the episode is an allegory of grace, of both divine grace and its subsidiary grace conferred by the sovereign upon her subjects. In addition, the allegory celebrates the divine authority of the poet, or of the eloquent orator, to bind the hearts of men and move them to virtuous service of the state. This interpretation undermines the recent commonplace that late in his life Spenser abandoned the quest to fashion virtuous readers by means of his poetry.

89.14 In "Tasso on Spenser, or the Politics of Chivalric Romance," Richard Helgerson (University of California, Santa Barbara) maintained that Spenser's choice of Hobgoblinism -- his flouting of what would become the neoclassical rules of epic -- may be read as a reaction to Tasso's political-motivated subordination of romance to epic in *Jerusalem Delivered*. In Tasso, the knights errant must give up their amorous and adventure-seeking ways and unite their strengths under the leadership of Goffredo, their divinely chosen leader. Epic thus becomes a means of extolling unity, specifically the universalism of the Counter-Reformation church and the political absolutism it would sanctify in France and Spain. The civic overrules the romantic. But in our experience of *The Faerie Queene*, unity, even the conceptual unity of allegory, plays little or no part. The poem reads like that melange of adventures in Ariosto; it "represents power as relatively isolated and dispersed," granting the individual knights a great deal of autonomy in their quests. Spenser thus places himself squarely on the side of such Protestant knights errant as the militant Essex and Leicester. His romance reflects the compromise in Tudor England between the collectivist interests of the crown and the adventurism of its chivalric courtiers.

89.15 In response to the papers above, Anne Lake Prescott (Barnard College) agreed with Helgerson's linkage in Tasso of anti-romance pressure and Counter-Reformation absolutism, and with his portrayal of Gloriana as a feudal, Arthurian ruler. She asked, however, why such Protestant epics as Du Bartas' *Weeks* also excise romance; whether Spenser might have become more like Tasso as the poem progressed; why Spenser sometimes "represses romance in a way that befits Tasso but that Tasso himself avoids." In a similar fashion, Prescott expressed gratitude for

Suzuki's fresh approach to Spenserian characters, but objected to her general association of female monsters with linguistic slipperiness. She noted that many of Spenser's male characters abuse language, and that Faery Land has its share of oversexed male monsters. Finally, Prescott was intrigued by the implications of Cheney's discussion for our sense of Spenser's career, and offered as additional support for Cheney's argument several traditional interpretations of the dove and ruby symbols. Yet she wondered whether Cheney had not underestimated the pain of Timias' and Raleigh's situation: Raleigh could not undo his offense, Belphoebe cannot love Timias, and Timias, even though he is restored by the dove's embassy, neglects his lord, Arthur. In conclusion, Prescott suggested that each of the papers would gather force from the provocative questions raised by the others.

Session 265: *Spenser's Dream Book: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on The Faerie Queene*. Program arranged by the Spenser Society. Presiding: Kenneth Gross, Rochester University.

89.16 In "Reading Desire Backwards: Belatedness and Spenser's Arthur," Elizabeth J. Bellamy (University of Alabama, Birmingham) argued that although recent studies have shown that "desire" is both the theme of epic romance and its structuring principle, the term has at times been borrowed from the psychoanalytic lexicon without full attention to its complexities. Critics misrecognize desire as a static concept. But *The Faerie Queene* is an "endlesse worke" not simply because of Arthur's (or any character's) desire. Rather, a belatedness -- already constitutive of the unconscious -- characterizes Arthur's response to an event that may not have occurred at all. Arthur's false solution to this belatedness is his creation of a nonexistent first and final cause of his desire: Gloriana.

89.17 In "La (Le) Britomart n'existe pas and (or) Thereby Hangs a (the) Tail (Tale)," Marshall Grossman (Fordham University, Lincoln Center) maintained that, formally, a psychoanalytic perspective on *The Faerie Queene* implies a retrospective glance from Freud to Spenser. Psychoanalytic discourse transfers the structuring experiences of childhood from the timeless unconscious to a spoken tale, working backward in search of a childhood origin. The narrative elicited in analysis is given its distinctive shape and theme by the future presence of the past that Freud called *Nachträglichkeit* or deferred action. Deferred action is also Spenser's theme, and his relation to (and of) the tale in *The Faerie Queene* shares in the psychoanalytic project of prospective retrospection. We may thus consider, in lieu of a psychoanalytic perspective on *The Faerie Queene*, a Spenserian, Freudian story of the formation of the ego in and through desire's quest for the always deferred traces of its own origin. In this reading, *The Faerie Queene* appears as an interminable (and incomplete) first effort at representing the historically specific ego that will become the subject of Freudian analysis. Such a reading, placing Spenser's text and Freud's in the relation of practice to theory, will forgo the diagnostic transposition of Spenserian categories into Freudian ones, raising instead the historical question of a Renaissance origin to the Freudian conception of the self. (M.G.)

89.18 In "Allegory and Compulsion: 'The Legend of Holinesse' and the Mutability Cantos," Paul Morrison (Brandeis University) explored Spenser's two works in relation to the conventional Renaissance definition of allegory as the introduction of

an initial metaphor into a continuous series. This necessarily begets a narrative governed by the proleptic force of its initial metaphorization, or what Spenser's "Letter to Raleigh" calls a "fore conceit." The act of reading allegory, in turn, necessarily becomes a kind of backward looking, an unending reactivation of the significance of an origin or original moment. In the "Legend of Holiness," however, backward looking is frequently thematized as a form of spiritual or intellectual sloth -- both Trevisan and Ignaro, for example, are backward lookers -- and fidelity to an origin, to what the *Mutabilitie Cantos* call a "first estate" of intelligibility, is precisely the failure of Sylvanus and the satyrs. The first of the Legend's many moralized landscapes, "the shadie grove" of Error's den, proleptically governs the allegorical significance of the shady arbor in which Sylvanus sleeps, yet fidelity to an origin or "first estate" is precisely the spiritual failure of Sylvanus. The principle of the structural or allegorical intelligibility would thus seem at odds with the thematic burden of the allegory.

Allegory, or allegory understood as the introduction of an initial metaphor into continuous series, characteristically resolves tensions of this kind by sacrificing content to form. For if the seriatim progress of allegory is but the predetermined, specifically structural consequence of an initial metaphorization, then the particular signifiers of allegory necessarily become the vehicles of a larger structural story that they carry out but in which they finally play no part. The climactic judgment on Arlo Hill, for example ("For thy decay thou seekest by thy desire"), suggests a cosmos informed by a will to structuration, temporality characterized by an unwitting desire for its own effacement. The cosmic structure *Mutabilitie* challenges by her ascent in turn structures *Mutabilitie* out of court, into constancy. But disjunction again enters the poem when Nature's vision of cosmic harmony conflicts with the melancholy reflections of the poet of the *Cantos* "unperfite." Here mutability is not the unwitting agent of constancy, but its symmetrical opposite: "the pillours of Eternity, / That is contrayr to *Mutabilitie*." (P.M., adapted by D.J.G.)

Session 767: *Medieval or Renaissance: Reconstructing Traditions from Chaucer to Spenser*. Presiding: Jacqueline T. Miller, Rutgers University.

89.19 In "The Scene of Reading, from the Renaissance to the Middle Ages," Thomas Hahn (Rochester University) argued that although we cannot distinguish Renaissance from medieval texts by their appropriation and reconstitution of authorities, or by their placement of the reader as prime subject, we can note a difference in the representation of reading as we move from Chaucer to Spenser, a difference arising from social and political contexts. E. K.'s gloss on the *Shepherdess Calender*, tracing the reader's path through hard words and obscure sources, presents the poem as already having been read, interpreted properly, and canonized. The *Shepherdess Calender* thus resembles an old, well-established curriculum text, a classic at its very inception. It produces, or posits the preexistence of, its ideal audience: erudite, refined, aristocratic, and powerful. To achieve this already-canonized status, Spenser must seem at once utterly humble and utterly ambitious. In the role of fledgling poet, Spenser calls upon Chaucer as the best defence for his worthless writing, and yet Spenser appropriates Chaucer as an index for his own success, enlisting him as a Pandarus in order to win the kisses of his potential patrons. Chaucer, however, had no model of authorized reading by which to

sanction his own poetry, and so, in the Prologue to the Man of Law's tale, presents himself as his own central authority and sacred text.

89.20 In "'Faire of Face ... though Meane her Lot': The Narrative of Sexual Economies in Spenser and Chaucer," Sheila Cavanagh (Emory University) argued that Chaucer, in his Clerk's Tale of patient Griselda, and Spenser, in his story of the proud Mirabella punished by Cupid (*FQ* VI.vii), employ "narratorial diffusion" in order to exalt or at least evade responsibility for the tortures inflicted upon the women. Both Mirabella and Griselda are presented as base-born, and thereby unworthy to be loved by noble knights and princes. Since they inherit only their native graces, they have no cause to deny their aristocratic suitors anything, and ought to be grateful for whatever attention (or cruelty) they receive. Chaucer's Clerk and Spenser's narrator both express outrage against the women's punishment, but that outrage is muted. The Clerk spends most of his energy exclaiming about Griselda's superhuman patience; in addition, he helps his male readers to save face by attributing the poem to Petrarch and by shifting into an allegorical interpretation of Griselda as representing humanity in a properly supine posture before the trials God visits upon it. Similarly, Spenser shifts abruptly away from Mirabella in horrifying disgrace, instead focusing upon the supposed cause of that disgrace, Mirabella's disdain for her propertied lovers. His narrator interrupts the story several times to comment upon the proud hearts of women, yet passes over in silence (as do Arthur and Mirabella herself) the sadistically sexual whipping applied to Mirabella's "dainty flesh."

89.21 In "The Force of Allegory in *The Faerie Queene*," Victoria Kahn (Princeton University) maintained that Spenser's occasional identification (in *FQ* V and in *Vewe*) of equity with force shades his presentation of the divinely ordained Elizabeth with the amoral practicality of Machiavellianism. The notion that equity -- or the queen's prerogative -- precedes law, when combined with a Lutheran, secular skepticism which insists that human law, itself a consequence of the fall, could never reflect eternal law, freed the ruler of moral and legal restraints, but only at the cost of calling into question the divine origin of power. The structure of Spenser's allegory itself demonstrates this ambivalence: allegory capitalizes upon the fraud of its "false semblant" in an effort to enforce or police its meaning. Its characters, moreover, behave with a surprising amorality, since their morality consists not in their means of representation but in their pedagogical end, the application of hierarchical structures to a fallen, mutable, historical world. Readers who exercise equity, then, will read Spenser's poetry justly, deferring fixed meanings while preventing interpretations from proliferating unchecked. In doing so they differentiate themselves from both the bad allegorist Talus and the egalitarian Giant, who "represent in part a coercive view of allegory" in which "too much force is not enough." Ultimately, Spenser's poetic equity degenerates into the uncontrolled force of the Blatant Beast, a self-subversion similar to Elizabeth's exercise of force against a lawful sovereign.

Anthony M. Esolen
Furman University

Session 555: Annual Meeting and Luncheon of the Spenser Society.

89.22 The annual luncheon of the Spenser Society was held at the Westin Canal Place on December 29th. President Judith Anderson (Indiana University, Bloomington) presided there, first, over the election of the officers for 1989. Elected president was S. K. Heninger, Jr. (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill); Clark Hulse (University of Illinois, Chicago) was elected Vice President; and John C. Ulreich, Jr. (University of Arizona) officially began his term as secretary / treasurer. Elected to three-year terms on the Executive Committee were Patricia Fumerton (University of California, Santa Barbara) and Richard C. McCoy (Queens College, CUNY). Thereafter, Richard S. Peterson (University of Connecticut, Storrs) presented the Award for 1987. See items 89.23 and 89.24, below.

President Anderson also announced that the Society will sponsor two sessions at the MLA meetings in Washington, DC, in December 1989. One will be an open session on *Edmund Spenser* (chaired by S. K. Heninger, Jr.); the second, titled *Later Spenser: "England's Arch-Poet" in Elizabeth's Last Decade*, will be chaired by David L. Miller (University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa). See our earlier announcement, item 88.114.

After the business meeting had been briskly concluded, A. C. Hamilton (Queen's University) the speaker on this characteristically good-humored occasion, brought extremely good news (and high spirits) to the event. He began by acknowledging that he appeared there as

the annual token or sacrificial substitute for *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, that "absent presence" which "exists" -- if that is the term to use -- only as billions of electro-magnetic binary digits locked up in David Richardson's computer, where it is -- and this is the term to use -- constantly "under erasure," a treasure box apparently never to be opened. Year after year its publication has been promised as imminent; and it has even been announced (by Gary Waller in *English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century*) as having been published in 1986; and so the ritual has gone on ... with publication endlessly deferred. I am here today to stop this ritual by promising that never again will anyone ever promise that the *Spenser Encyclopedia* is forthcoming.

It WILL appear, at latest, in the fall of 1989. Having made that cheering announcement, the *Encyclopedia's* distinguished general editor proposed "to draw aside some of the veils that have been hiding our editorial procedure." At least a few of the revelations that resulted from so remarkable an unveiling must be recorded here. Describing various "madnesses" of the board editorial, Professor Hamilton disclosed that

our third piece of madness ... was not to leave well enough alone. For some perverse reason that must have its origins in original sin, we undertook an extended program of "contributor harassment" or "contributor abuse" by systematically and radically deconstructing every article by the strongest mis-readings possible. No statement could be so simple as not to provoke an orgy of objections. As part of our deconstructionist tactic, we would "dumb-down" an

article by indicating to the contributor that what had been submitted even in its punctuation and sentence structure wouldn't get a D in a first-year composition course. We always asked that a first draft be substantially revised, and always hoped to have the revision revised and (ideally) the revised revision revised before proceeding to keyboarding so that we could start all over again with further revisions of the revisions of the revisions in an infinite regression.

It became a matter of proper editorial pride and much rejoicing when an article had been so thoroughly revised that the contributor couldn't recognize it as bearing the slightest relation to what had been first submitted. As one consequence of our editorial energies, we formulated our basic editorial rule: the commentary on an article must be much longer than the article itself. After a while we convinced ourselves that our commentary was much more interesting than the article itself; and at one point we seriously thought of publishing what we had written as an anti-*Spenser Encyclopedia* -- in some twenty-five volumes.

We devised four chief ways to harass contributors. First, and most commonly, we would offer suggestions for revision that were entirely incompatible. Second, we would list a number of essential changes so that once the contributor had made them in revised draft, we could express our astonishment that the original draft had been so considerably weakened by incorporating them. Third, we could offer as many suggestions as possible so that upon receiving a much expanded article we could say that, because of limitations of space, the original article had to be reduced by half -- at the very least. Fourth, we would surreptitiously plant sentences in the article, so that, when we encountered them in the revised draft, we could object most strongly both to what had been said and how it had been said. When a contributor howled, "I didn't say that; you did!", our mirth only increased.

Judging by the audience response to these disclosures -- laughter, varying from outright hilarity to nervous giggling -- it appeared that most in the room could recognize the accuracy of the speaker's portrayal of the events over which he had presided.

And in gratitude for his endeavors, Professor Hamilton received warm applause, followed by less intangible gifts. David A. Richardson, Managing Editor of the *Spenser Encyclopedia*, presented him (in lieu of a proof copy of the *ding an sich*) a little "fore-conceit" of the *Encyclopedia*, a true "micro-*puideia*" -- which took the shape of a handsome if tiny 3" x 2" green book.

George M. Logan (Queen's University, Canada) then presented Professor Hamilton an advance copy of an exceptionally impressive volume of essays published in his honor: *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance*, eds. George M. Logan and Gordon Teskey (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989). The dedication reads

The contributors present this volume to
A. C. Hamilton, Cappon Professor
of English at Queen's University, Canada,
in recognition of his contribution
to English Renaissance studies.

Following an introduction by Gordon Teskey, the volume contains essays by Judith H. Anderson, Alastair Fowler, Robert B. Heilman, W. W. Barker, A. Kent Hieatt, Carol V. Kaske, Donald Cheney, Thomas P. Roche, Jr., Patricia Parker, Harry Berger, Jr., Maureen Quilligan, and William Blissett.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

89.13 During the Spenser Society luncheon at the Modern Language Association meetings in New Orleans (December 29, 1988) the MacCaffrey Award was presented to Susanne Lindgren Wofford for her article, "Britomart's Petrarchan Lament: Allegory and Narrative in *The Faerie Queene* III.iv," *CL* 39 (1987): 28-57. In his remarks, Richard S. Peterson (University of Connecticut, Storrs), chairman of the award committee, praised Wofford for "the precision of terminology, the subtlety of method, the steady build of argument, and the eloquence and humanity of her conclusions." The committee also recognized Lauren Silberman with an honorable mention for her article "The Hermaphrodite and the Metamorphosis of Spenserian Allegory," *ELR* 17 (1987): 207-23.

89.14 The Spenser Society announces the fifth annual ISABEL MACCAFFREY AWARD. The award consists of a medallion together with the sum of \$100, to be presented for a significant article on Edmund Spenser published in English. The fifth annual award, for an article published during the calendar year 1988, will be presented at the Spenser Society luncheon during the 1989 MLA Convention in Washington, DC.

The award is intended to encourage scholarly work on Spenser, and there is a bias toward younger scholars. All interested persons are eligible to be considered for the award, although only one article by a given author may be submitted in a single year. Submissions and requests for further information should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Spenser Society:

Professor John C. Ulreich, Jr.
Department of English
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721

To be considered for the award this year, articles must be submitted to Professor Ulreich, for the attention of the MacCaffrey Award Committee, *not later than 15 September 1989*. Authors are encouraged to submit their own articles and are requested to forward three copies to Professor Ulreich. Those who wish to direct

the Committee's attention to important articles by others should submit a single copy of each recommended article.

89.25 *Newsletter* readers will be interested in the following announcement, recently sent to us by the Indiana University Foundation:

E. Talbot Donaldson (1910 - 1987) was a great editor, translator, critic, and teacher. He is best known for the definitive edition of *Piers Plowman* which he and his friend George Kane lovingly produced. He is also highly regarded as a Chaucer scholar. His vision of Chaucer as an ironic observer of the world's vanity and mutability who, nevertheless, makes the reader love the beauty of that world all the more has become very influential among critics. A graduate of Harvard, Donaldson taught at Yale University, King's College (London), Columbia University, the University of Michigan, and Indiana University. Among the many honors he received over the course of his brilliant career were two Guggenheim Fellowships and the 1978 Haskins Medal, the highest recognition of the Medieval Academy of America.

To commemorate the life work of this extraordinary scholar, the Friends of E. Talbot Donaldson have established the E. Talbot Donaldson Fellowship Fund. The fellowship or fellowships which will be generated from the income of this fund will be awarded annually to academically meritorious students. Recipients of the fellowship must be doctoral majors in Old English, Middle English, or Renaissance Literature in the Department of English at Indiana University, Bloomington.

Checks for the E. Talbot Donaldson Fellowship Fund should be made payable to the Indiana University Foundation with the name of the fund noted on the check. All gifts should be sent to: Indiana University Foundation, PO Box 2298, Bloomington, IN 47402.

89.26 *Spenser Newsletter* gratefully acknowledges receipt of a donation from Lois E. Dodd. This donation was made in memory of long-time *Newsletter* subscriber Mary C. Dodd, who passed away in December 1984.

89.27 *Corrections*. For the past two years, the *Newsletter* has listed Donald Cheney as a member of the MacCaffrey Award committee. During the entire period, however, that honorable position and the hard work which attends it belonged in fact to Professor Richard S. Peterson (University of Connecticut, Storrs). Also, in item 88.97, *English* dropped out of the title of Stephen Greenblatt's edition of essays from *Representations*; the true title is *Representing the English Renaissance*. The editor very much regrets these errors.

Judging by a flurry of recent errors, Sheila T. Cavanagh (Emory University) appears to have been singled out for special abuse by the *Newsletter's* resident hobgoblin. This time, the slip appears in entry 125 of the *Spenser Bibliography Update*, 1986. The title of Professor Cavanagh's article should read "'Such Was Irena's Countenance': Ireland in Spenser's Prose and Poetry." We regret this error, too, Sheila, and will strive to exorcise the pesky spirit.

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