



THE  
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REVIEW

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# THE Spenser

REVIEW

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## TO OUR READERS

36.01

This issue of *The Spenser Review* contains news from the 2004 Modern Language Association meeting, where the International Spenser Society bestowed lifetime achievement awards upon Paul Alpers and Judith Anderson for their distinguished contributions to Spenser studies. We are also offering readers the opportunity to read the text of Janet Adelman's address to the Spenser Society luncheon. Looking ahead, we offer the program for the Spenser events at Kalamazoo 2005 and include the call for papers of the Toronto International Spenser Conference in 2006. Clearly, excellent work continues to flourish in this field.

We also invite readers to remember the "International" aspect of the Society's mission. We are particularly interested in reflecting the status of the Spenserian community throughout the world and welcome news of conferences, publications, etc. from all countries.





## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

36.02

Evans, Margaret Carpenter. *Rosemund Tuve: A Life of the Mind*. Portsmouth: Peter E. Randall Publisher, 2004. xiii + 325 pp.  
ISBN 1-931807-20-5. \$25.00 cloth.

*Reviewed by Amelia Zurcher*

The publication of Margaret Carpenter Evans's biography of Rosemund Tuve, 25 years in the making, seems in some ways an odd event. Tuve, who died 40 years ago this winter, was an academic in a fairly rarefied sense, someone who devoted her life to painstaking primary-source research. She had no ambitions to cross over into intellectual culture outside the college and university, and within academia she would have resisted being attached to any school of criticism or theory. Despite her lasting influence on the study of imagery and her enormous personal effect on graduate students and younger scholars, in many ways her work has proved to run counter to the currents of the profession—during her lifetime in its devotion to source study and its rejection of New Critical methodology, and later, after historicist criticism reclaimed its ground, in its lack of interest in what she called “politics” and local context. This biography, written as an attempt to reciprocate Tuve’s “intensity and generosity” by a former student of Tuve at Connecticut College who went on to work in journalism, does not do much to situate Tuve’s thought in its intellectual milieu and will not help anyone looking for an introduction to her scholarship. But if the book makes little claim for its subject’s larger cultural significance and cannot really be called an intellectual biography, it is nonetheless fascinating as an account of the obstacles faced by an outsider—a Midwesterner,

above all a woman—finding her way in the East Coast academic establishment with virtually no models before her. Evans’s liberal quotation of Tuve’s lectures and letters, and of reminiscences by friends, colleagues and students, gives an engaging portrait of the intellectual rigor, the sensitivity to detail, and the unaffected enthusiasm that eventually inspired such devotion within what Sherman Hawkins calls the “world of Roz Tuve lovers.”

Tuve was born in 1903 in Canton, South Dakota to Ida Larsen Tuve, formerly Head of the Department of Music at Augustana College in Canton, and Anthony Tuve, mathematician and president of the college for twenty-five years. The Tuves were educationally ambitious for all of their children, three of the four of whom eventually earned PhDs; when Anthony Tuve died suddenly in 1917, Ida Tuve moved the family to Minneapolis so that Rosemund’s older brother could enroll in the University of Minnesota. Eventually Rosemund earned a BA at the University herself, paying for it with various odd jobs and a miserable year spent teaching third and fourth grades in rural South Dakota. Her work at Minnesota was distinguished enough that Friedrich Klaeber, for whom she was a research assistant, got her an invitation to do graduate work at Bryn Mawr; there too she flourished, winning several fellowships to support herself. Her third year she moved to Baltimore, dividing her time between a teaching job at Goucher College and study at Johns Hopkins, where she continued her friendship with Kemp Malone (who had just moved from Minnesota to Hopkins) and studied under Edwin Greenlaw. In 1928, with money from the AAUW and Bryn Mawr, she went to Somerville College, Oxford to finish her dissertation, then



back to Vassar for a three-year appointment that was not renewed. She then went to England and France for a somewhat haphazard year, in which she published her thesis, grew increasingly worried about finding a permanent job, and began to transcribe the correspondence of Horace Walpole owned by the husband of an Oxford friend at whose home she was living. The job was given to her as a favor, and she was apparently, and revealingly, awful at it; Wilmarth Lewis, the collector preparing the correspondence for publication by Yale, remarked acidly that she was "the only person I ever knew who could type illegibly." In the end she managed to find a job at Connecticut College, where she taught for 29 years. She left permanently only in 1963, for a year at the University of Pennsylvania before what, from the standpoint of her career, was her tragically early death in 1964.

Tuve's work was clearly respected at Vassar; the reason for her dismissal, said the Chair of the English Department tactfully, was that she had not "digested, as fully as one might expect, her Bryn Mawr and Oxford experiences," and seemed immaturely to retain "little notions that seemed to some fantastic . . . as to how life," and teaching, "ought to be conducted" —code to convey that she was socially at odds with the community at Vassar, and that her Midwestern frankness, informality, and physical uninhibitedness (over and over people commented on her devotion to riding her bicycle) made other faculty uncomfortable. But Tuve also began quickly to produce large amounts of rigorously researched and documented scholarship, in all of which she insisted that it is the proper business of the critic to subordinate aesthetic judgment and critical categories—indeed all of her own culture and context—to the effort to inhabit the poet's "linguistic world." Tuve retained, all her life, in lectures, classrooms, and her books, a hab-

it of jumping immediately into her subject, without any social pleasantries or framing discourses; one of the participants in the Gauss seminars she gave at Princeton blamed Mary McCarthy's and Hannah Arendt's rather notorious dismissal of her there on the fact that "the general implications of what she was saying she never bothered with that much." This habit makes her famously difficult to read, especially in book form, but it also probably served her well, requiring her audience to see her critical authority as derived entirely from the poets she loved. Indeed, one of the virtues most often attributed to her late in her life by such admirers as Tom Roche was her humility. Not surprisingly, Tuve rarely seems to have complained, even in private letters, about the gender discrimination that affected every step of her career. She had to campaign hard, as Evans liberally documents, for all her promotions and raises at Connecticut College—even in the 1950s, when her academic reputation was soaring—and her sex barred her from many jobs she was overqualified for—for instance at Duke, where a dean met Allan Gilbert's efforts to get her hired as his replacement with the rejoinder that male graduate students would never seek her out. This climate, which was second nature to her, made her success all the more remarkable: she was the first woman, during visiting appointments, to teach in the English departments at Harvard and Princeton; the first woman to be hired in the English department at the University of Pennsylvania; and was deliverer of the Gauss Seminars at Princeton. She was also recipient of the Rosemary Crawshay Award through the British Academy; of a \$10,000 ACLS award; and of honorary doctorates from Wheaton College, Mt. Holyoke College, Carleton College (at the same time as all three of her brothers), and Syracuse University.



Evans's biography gives some tantalizing clues to Tuve's early politics, though not much context for them. Tuve taught for three summers at the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers in Industry, where, as she says in a letter, she came to be "forever (I hope) left of center," and she was the chairman of the Industrial Committee of the New London YWCA for several years, ending in 1940. Religion—and religious music—permeated her life from earliest childhood and in her later life found its way increasingly into her writing and lectures. It would have been fascinating to learn more about the relation between her Lutheranism (much of which, probably, she modeled on her father's) and her politics, and more about the relation of her religious belief to her increasingly ironic presentation of herself in talks and lectures, as if despite the honors and invitations she could not really believe in her audiences' good will—perhaps a sign that as she aged she grew less and less concerned with persuading those outside her immediate circle of her own authority or of poetic truth. One of the ways Tuve distinguishes her beloved imagery from ordinary figurative language is that it eschews persuasion, attempting instead to convey lived experience. And indeed one of the most interesting parts of Evans's book in this regard is the attention it gives to Tuve's fascination with the visual, her delight in landscape and her interest from early childhood in stained glass, painting, and visual emblems—an interest that leads, as Roche says in the introduction to a volume of her essays, to "the work that was peculiarly hers as a literary critic: the relation of pictorial and verbal imagery." Those who knew Tuve will relish Evans's biography for the space it gives to Tuve's vivid personal voice; those who did not, but know Tuve's work, will find abundant raw material for situating it in relation to her life; and anyone interested in the social

history of academia in the mid-twentieth century, particularly in its gender politics, will find rich data in Evans's painstakingly accumulated store of details.

Amelia Zurcher, Assistant Professor, Marquette U., has published articles in *ELH*, *ELR*, and *SEL* on Shakespeare and history and on Mary Wroth's *Urania*. She is also the editor of Judith Man's *Epitome of the Historie of Argenis and Polyarchus* for Ashgate Press's Early Modern Englishwoman series. She is completing a book entitled *Revaluating Romance: Allegory, Interest, and Ethics in Seventeenth-Century English Fiction*.

## 36.03

Fitzpatrick, Joan. **Shakespeare, Spenser and the Contours of Britain: Reshaping the Atlantic Archipelago**. Hatfield: U of Hertfordshire P. x + 182 pp. ISBN 1-902806-36-0/1-902806-37-9. £35.00/\$59.95 cloth. £14.99 paper.

*Review by Virginia Mason Vaughan*

Joan Fitzpatrick's comparison of Edmund Spenser's and William Shakespeare's "topographical manipulation" is an interesting but flawed study. The subtitle suggests that this monograph will be a serious discussion of early modern chorography, but the analysis seldom ventures beyond close readings that highlight the poets' use of topographical imagery. Fitzpatrick chooses the term "Atlantic Archipelago" to stand for the islands on the eastern rim of the North Atlantic ocean—Ireland; Scotland, Wales, and Britain; and smaller islands scattered from Guernsey to the Orkneys—instead of the more common, but politically charged term "Great Britain." This terminology bespeaks the care with which she conducts this study; throughout



the monograph she is careful to cite other critics and situate her arguments within their debates. Such punctiliousness borders on the pedantic, yet its honesty is refreshing.

Fitzpatrick proposes a reexamination of Spenser and Shakespeare. Most twenty-first century readers, she argues, see Spenser as a militant Protestant writer, conservative in political views that often seem incongruent with his sensitive use of language. In opposition, they view Shakespeare as beyond politics; writing in the more collaborative medium of theatre, he expresses the "universal human condition" and never reveals his own political views. Fitzpatrick hopes that her study will mediate this binary and show that the poets are more similar than it might seem at first glance. The common thread, at least for her discussion, is topographic manipulation, the poets' imaginative fantasies about containing and altering the landscape.

She begins with Spenser's pastoralism, which she juxtaposes with the views expressed by Irenius in *A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland*. Spenser was appalled at Irish "misuse" of the countryside and called for a clearing of dense woodlands and the elimination of the practice of "booleying" (pasturing cattle on open land). Fitzpatrick argues that Spenser's pastoral poetry, including *The Shepheardes Calender*, *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, and Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*, demonstrates an uneasiness with pastoralism that resonates with ideas expressed in *A Vewe*. In prose and poetry, Spenser focuses on "those peripheral threats which undermine the existence of an idyllic society of shepherds" (57). The poet and the polemicist both want to shape the landscape and its inhabitants.

Fitzpatrick uses the marriage of the Thames and the Medway in Book IV of *FQ* to show Spenser's concern with topographical manipulation. His poem creates an image of the

peaceful union of English and Irish waterways, but it omits Ireland's history and its people. Just as the colonist should clear the Irish landscape and introduce English methods of husbandry, the heroes of *FQ* hew down their enemies and support the virtuous in an effort to reclaim Fairyland for Gloriana. In this way, *FQ* enacts "a kind of imaginative enclosure" (79).

Using *Richard II*, *Cymbeline*, and *King Lear*, Fitzpatrick contends that Shakespeare shows a similar interest in topographical manipulation, but for him fantasies about controlling the land generally prove to be illusory. Gaunt's famous speech, for example, paints a picture of England as a self-contained island with no rebellious subjects enclosed within its borders. Yet if Richard had not traveled to Ireland to quell his rebellious subjects, he might not have lost the throne. In *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare presents the natural landscape of Wales as a protective haven that works against invasion from outside. And in *Lear*, his representation of the French invasion veils concerns about Ireland and Irish rebellion.

Similarly, the Irish rebel O'Neill also serves as a subtext for Glendower in *Henry IV, Part 1*; scenes set in Wales present the rebels as a squabbling, fractious group who care more about their reputation than their country. Hotspur's desire to turn the Severn River to make his portion larger is literal topographical manipulation which shows the pettiness of the rebels' motives. At the same time, the conspirators threaten the establishment of English nationhood. Taking her cue from Terence Hawkes, Fitzpatrick contends that the play's Welsh characters may have originally been performed by Welsh speakers, and that their appearance on an English stage in and of itself can be seen as subversive. The witches of Scotland in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are also troubling, manipulating the landscape until it is "sick," and making themselves part of that



sickness.

Conceivably a closet Catholic—and Fitzpatrick makes much of recent theories regarding the dramatist's religious leanings—Shakespeare was alert to the difficulties of shaping the land into a pre-conceived ideal. The dramatist repeatedly shows the imagination trumped by political pragmatism. Spenser too was subversive of the established government in that he argued that Elizabeth's policies in Ireland were too lenient. In an attempt to ameliorate the picture she has created of a fanatical colonist who will use any means necessary to tame the land, Fitzpatrick devotes two pages in her conclusion to showing that Spenser admired certain aspects of Irish culture. But for this reader she is unsuccessful. Instead of showing similarities between these two prolific writers, *Shakespeare, Spenser and the Contours of Britain* reinforces our sense that they were radically different. Spenser comes out of this study as more the militant Protestant, less the sensitive poet; *FQ* becomes less an exercise in epic poetry and more a poetic rendition of the polemicist's theme, namely that to clear the land, we must first "exterminate the brutes." Catholic or not, Shakespeare seems, in contrast, the tolerant skeptic who critiques fantasies of absolute control.

That Fitzpatrick does not cite important works on the role of landscape and geography in early modern English nation formation (particularly Richard Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood* and John Gillies' *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference*),<sup>1</sup> suggests the limitations of her view of topography. The result is an intriguing but ultimately disappointing account of the uses of landscape in Spenser and Shakespeare.

<sup>1</sup> Helgerson, Richard. *The Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1992 and Gillies, John. *Shakespeare*

*and the Geography of Difference*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1994.

Virginia Mason Vaughan is Professor of English at Clark University. She is the co-editor of *The Tempest*, Third Arden Series, and the author of *Othello: A Contextual History* and, most recently, *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800*.

## 36.04

Maley, Willy. *Nation, State, and Empire in English Renaissance Literature: Shakespeare to Milton*. Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. xvii + 185 pp. ISBN 0-333-64077-2. \$69.95 cloth.

*Reviewed by Rebecca Ann Bach*

Willy Maley's important book on "the British problem" in relation to English Renaissance literature is a welcome contribution to the fields of Renaissance and colonial studies. Although many of *Nation, State, and Empire in English Renaissance Literature's* chapters consist of essays published elsewhere, the book brings those essays together beautifully, enabling us to hold in hand, and to teach, a series of strongly linked and very significant pieces. In the first note to his introduction, Maley calls the book "a companion volume" to his earlier fine work, *Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture, and Identity*. In *Nation, State, and Empire in English Renaissance Literature*, Maley expands the scope of his work on colonialism, adding to our understanding of how literature of the English Renaissance is deeply inflected by its authors' engagements with Scotland, Wales, and even Cornwall, in addition to Ireland. Maley discusses Shakespeare's histories, *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare's use of Holinshed,



Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, Bacon's essay *Certain Considerations Touching the Plantation in Ireland*, Ford's late history *Perkin Warbeck*, and Milton's *Observations upon the Articles of Peace with the Irish Rebels*. In each discussion, Maley shows us angles and contexts that previous scholarship has missed. The essays are not all of equal caliber, but they are all worth reading. Maley shows us that most scholarship on nation and empire in the period has been partial in both senses of that word. Either we scholars have inaccurately defended authors from charges of colonial oppression or we have seen only England and Ireland in a system in which, Maley shows us, all of the polities of the British Isles signified. As Maley says, "After 400 years we are still harping on Ireland and eliding the Scottish contribution" (100).

Maley's work on literature takes into account, and may introduce readers to, a large body of historiography on the construction of Britain. In Maley's Introduction, "Fostering Discussion: From the Irish Question to the British Problem by Way of the English Renaissance," he establishes his essays within debates about Ireland, Wales, and Scotland in relation to English identity. As significantly, he persuasively shows us the necessity of revisioning what is too easily called English literature. He tells us that the "paradox at the heart of [his] book is that the precarious Britishness out of which" Shakespeare, Spenser, Bacon, Ford, and Milton "forge their colonial visions has been obscured by the emphasis, in literary criticism, on the supposedly peculiarly English culture to which they contributed" (3). He calls his essays "interventions . . . in the adjoining fields of early modern Irish history and the new British historiography" (5). They are also persuasive arguments that we should not be limiting our attention to "English culture" or to the interactions between England

and Ireland when we read canonical and less canonical literature written in English in the Renaissance.

The book has seven numbered chapters as well as the Introduction and a pithy forward by John Kerrigan. The first three chapters discuss Shakespeare's works. In the first, "'This Sceptered Isle': Shakespeare and the British Problem," Maley makes the case that "Shakespeare's texts offer a much more fragmented picture of British politics than that adumbrated by some radical English critics" (9). He reminds us that Shakespeare lived in "a polity that consisted of England, Wales, and contested Ireland" and that he wrote for two monarchs, one whose royal house claimed affinity with Wales and one who came to England as the king of Scotland (10). He makes the strong point that Shakespeare "lived and worked through the formation of a British political system" (19), and he offers readings of Shakespeare's history plays that demonstrate Shakespeare's direct involvement and commentary on that formation. Chapter Two, "Postcolonial *Cymbeline*: Sovereignty and Succession from Roman to Renaissance Britain" makes the case that this late play is "a dramatic endorsement of the Roman roots of Britishness, rather than a repudiation of its Celtic fringe" (33). In this reading, *Cymbeline* "deals . . . with the birth of Britain" (34). This reading of the play sees Shakespeare as confronting that birth and welcoming it as an "opportunity" (43). Faced with the union James advocated, Shakespeare represented an imperial but also a "pluralistic" Britain. Maley's third chapter on Shakespeare, "Shakespeare, Holinshed and Ireland: Resources and Con-texts," looks closely at two texts within Holinshed's *Chronicles: The Conquest of Ireland* by Giraldus Cambrensis, translated by John Hooker, and Richard Stanyhurst's "A Plaine and Perfect Description of Ireland." Maley argues that the



exchange between Macmorris and Fluellen in *Henry V* has its source in Giraldus's text. Giraldus wrote about the precarious cultural identity of the Anglo-Irish, an identity Maley describes as "in limbo, the unfinished product of a hyphenated community torn between two cultures" (50). Maley's view of Macmorris is fascinating and at odds with the conventional criticism surrounding that character. Equally original is Maley's reading of Stanyhurst's text in relation to Richard II's reference to Ireland's "rough rug-headed kerns," that are venom in a land otherwise free of venom (54). Maley provides a short but illuminative cultural history of the story of St. Patrick casting out Ireland's snakes. Again, Maley shows us that critics today have misread Shakespeare because they have misunderstood his placement within an emerging and contested Britain.

In his fourth chapter, a chapter that will probably be of most interest to the readers of this journal, Maley provides a powerful reading of Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. The chapter is structurally the weakest in the book, hampered by an extensive and distracting literature review; however, when Maley gets to his argument, he illuminates Spenser's ethnographic project, demonstrating the planter-poet's interest in breaking down simple notions of ethnic identity and origins. Maley argues that Spenser is most engaged in persuading readers that "the feudal nature of the Old English, their unwillingness to embrace modern English values, is the real problem" (83). Again, Maley's British perspective is crucial, because he shows us a Spenser deeply concerned with the possibilities of "an Irish-Scottish axis, or the mixing of Old English and Gaelic Irish, particularly if the Spanish were involved" (87). This reading of *Viewe* is essential for Spenser scholarship.

The book's remaining chapters focus on

less commonly studied texts, the most familiar among them, John Ford's 1633 history play, *Perkin Warbeck*. Chapter Five, "Another Britain? Bacon's *Certain Considerations Touching the Plantation in Ireland* (1606; 1657)," argues for the importance of this minor text. Maley calls it "an item washed ashore that is worth salvaging" (95). Bacon, Maley argues, saw plantation in Ireland as inextricably and profitably linked to union with Scotland. Bacon's text offers an alternative to Spenser's concerns about Ireland and Scotland. Thus, it can and should be read, with Maley as our guide, if we are to see more clearly the discourses that surrounded Spenser. In chapter Six, "Fording the Nation: Abridging History in *Perkin Warbeck* (1633)," Maley offers Ford's history play, similarly, as an alternative to Shakespeare's histories. Like Shakespeare's history plays, Ford's is haunted by "[i]ntra-British hostility" (119). However, unlike Shakespeare's plays, Ford takes seriously "two possible futures for Britain, a federal republic or a centralized monarchy" (131). In this chapter, Maley considers, as the play does, the places of Cornwall and of Europe in the British system. The book's final short chapter looks closely at Milton's *Observations upon the Articles of Peace with the Irish Rebels*. Once more, Maley shows us that a text purporting to be about Ireland is at least as concerned with Scotland and the possibility that the Scots and the Irish will combine against England. Milton, like Spenser, was only a republican at home.

As this brief summary of the book's contents indicates, although only one chapter directly focuses on a text of Spenser's, the book is valuable for Spenserians more generally. Although the book was constructed from essays, it functions as a monograph, and Maley often comments on Spenser's place in relation to other authors' arguments. Maley also has a delightful



voice. He is forced to correct earlier readings by such noted critics as Stephen Greenblatt, Jonathan Dollimore, and Alan Sinfield, but he always does so graciously and gives due credit. Maley uses theory deftly, and he is often witty. Writing about John of Gaunt's famous speech in *Richard II*, he says, "This has been described—in my edition—as 'one of Shakespeare's most moving speeches', and it is moving, because it moves the map of England north and west to obliterate Scotland and Wales" (16). I could wish that the book's index were more than a list of names, but that is a small fault in a generally fine work that should force us to rethink nation, and state, and empire in Renaissance texts.

Rebecca Ann Bach is Associate Professor of English at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is the author of *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World: 1580-1640*. She has published widely on Renaissance literature and culture in journals such as *Textual Practice*, *Renaissance Drama*, and *SEL* and in essay collections. She has recently completed a book, *Early Modern England Without Heterosexuality*. Her essay, "(Re)placing John Donne in the History of Sexuality," is forthcoming this spring in *ELH*.

## 36.05

Sessions, William. *Henry Howard, The Poet Earl of Surrey: A Life*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. xi + 448 pp. ISBN 0-19-818624-X/0-19-818625-8. \$35.00 paper.

*Reviewed by John Watkins*

William Sessions's biography of the Earl of Surrey is one of the richest books on early modern England that I have read. It offers readers

not only a comprehensive account of Surrey's life but also a profound meditation on the decline of the English aristocracy during the reign of Henry VIII. Although revisionist historiography has qualified both G. R. Elton's influential model of a "Tudor Revolution" and Lawrence Stone's view of an aristocracy in crisis, no one would contest that the Tudors secured their dynasty by reducing the prestige and influence of rival families. The Howards arguably suffered more than any other clan: one after another went to the block for alleged treason against the Tudor regime. Of all the Howard men and women who died, none was more elegant in decrying the new social and political order than Henry Howard, the "Poet Earl" of Surrey.

Surrey's story is hard to tell. Anyone who tries to tackle it has to sort through conflicting and biased sources. Central moments in Surrey's life, moreover, all but cry out for a sentimental, even romanticized treatment: his devotion to his wife, his attachment to Henry VIII's illegitimate son, and, above all, his struggle against the men of comparatively low origin on whom the king erected the Tudor state. But Sessions resists the temptation to sentimentalize at every turn. The Surrey that he portrays is a complex figure. In his youth, Surrey struggled to overcome a visual disability and fashion himself into a champion horseman and warrior. Although no one at the Henrician court proved a more loyal friend, patron, and protector than Surrey, he was also prone to depression, violence, massive overspending, and bouts of outrageously inappropriate behavior. In 1543, Surrey and a group of friends spent five hours roaming the streets of London firing stones from crossbows at apprentices and prostitutes. He ended up in the Fleet, where in an ethically questionable but aesthetically splendid gesture of self-justification, he took on the mantle of a Hebrew prophet and



castigated London itself in one of his most biting satires. Surrey's social conservatism chimed with the interests of many recusants; his grandson Philip Howard converted to Catholicism and was eventually canonized for his sufferings under Elizabeth. But like his friend Thomas Wyatt, Surrey adhered to the reformed faith and eventually paraphrased the book of Ecclesiastes in language borrowed by the Protestant Anne Askew on the eve of her execution. Brilliant and ingenuous, but never quite urbane, Surrey created the language of the Elizabethan future out of Virgil, Marot, Saint-Gelais, Alamanni, Trissino, and the other French and Italian poets he probably first encountered during his 1532-33 residence at the court of Francis I. But he also owed a conspicuous debt to Chaucer, especially to *Troilus and Creseide* and even to the Scots poet Gavin Douglas, whose translation of the *Aeneid* provided an important model for Surrey's own unfinished masterpiece. The inventor of English blank verse, he wrote some of his most important poems in the poulter's measure that modern readers may find halting and unreadable.

In recreating a career this complex and contradictory, Sessions foregoes conventional chronological narrative and tells his story instead as a series of reflections on the archival, architectural, poetic, and pictorial traces of Surrey's life. The cumulative effect is powerful indeed. A remarkable exegete of both literary and non-literary texts, Sessions shows just how much an imaginative critic can bring to a historical investigation. Whereas a more conventional historian works to make his or her sources disappear in a seemingly transparent account of the past, Sessions displays his sources in all their messy provisionality. Brooding as much on what we can't know about Surrey as on what we can, Sessions transforms the lacunae in the biographical record into poignant reminders of the

destructiveness of the Henrician and later Edwardian regimes. The fact that we don't have the heraldic sketch in which Surrey allegedly quartered his arms with those of Edward the Confessor, for example, reminds us of just how hard his enemies on the Privy Council had to work to build up their case of treason against him. The judges and jurors who condemned him never saw the sketch either: the prosecution based its entire case on the testimony of those who claimed to have seen or to have heard about it. Sessions never tries to exonerate Surrey *per se*, but instead invites us to appreciate the fatal intersection of Surrey's own hubris and occasional poor judgment with the malice and Machiavellian cunning of his enemies.

The book begins and ends with what may have been the central fact of Surrey's life, his death as a traitor against Henry VIII. For early modernists, the book's value lies in the way Sessions weaves this individual tragedy into a larger story of cultural collision. Many volumes have been written about the "new men" on whom the Tudors built their highly effective bureaucracy. Sessions offers us the most compelling extant treatment of the other side of the story, the suppression of the surviving Plantagenet aristocracy. In its most poignant chapters, Sessions shows how Surrey devoted his life to one splendidly ambitious and ultimately futile project: an attempt to wrest all the creative energies of the Renaissance to the service of a residual social order in which the great feudal families retained their centrality in the nation's governance. This project bound together all his political, military, and artistic undertakings from the building and furnishing of Surrey House in Norfolk, to his blank-verse translations of Virgil, to his orchestration of the defense of Boulogne, to his fatal revision of his personal coat of arms. The more we think of Surrey as the representa-



tive of an embattled culture rather than as merely an extremely ambitious young man, the more sympathetically we can approach not only his poetry but also the architectural, sartorial, and decorative projects that ran him so into debt. In Sessions's masterful analysis, the inventories of clothes, tapestries, table settings, and pictures that can make Surrey seem like a sixteenth-century Dorian Gray become part of a tragically futile effort to ward off what Surrey perceived as the degradation of England's moral promise at the hands of the "new erectyd men" who finally destroyed him (166).

The local virtues of Sessions's biography are almost too numerous to tally. Sessions does a particularly fine job of situating Surrey's story in a broader European context. He explores the Burgundian origins of the cult of honor that inspired so much of the poet's career and brilliantly recreates the intellectual and artistic culture that Surrey encountered during his winter in Paris and at Fontainebleau. Sessions is also a superb genealogist who guides us masterfully through the tangles of lineages and marriage negotiations among the country's elite. This is in some ways a book as much about the Howard family as about its talented but tragically ambitious scion. Scholars interested in gender and sexual identity will appreciate the nuances of Sessions's discussions of Surrey's relationships with the men and women who touched his life: the mother who lived apart from her husband; the impoverished Irish aristocrat whom he immortalized as Geraldine; his own countess whose voice he ventriloquized in transgendered poems written from France; the sister who betrayed him; and the bastard son of Henry VIII, the Duke of Richmond, whom Surrey loved and mourned in what may be his finest poem.

Surrey failed to defend himself, his country, and his class against the new men and

their bureaucratic future. But as Sessions notes throughout the book, he bequeathed his vision of a society founded on honor, courtesy, and elegant expression to future generations. As Sessions repeatedly suggests, the careers of men who mattered enormously to Edmund Spenser—Sir Philip Sidney and the Earl of Essex—were eerily and self-consciously patterned on Surrey's. I finished this biography with a renewed interest not just in Surrey but in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene* and the nostalgic longing of "The Ruines of Time." Sessions has paved the way for other scholars to ponder anew the connections between these two poets—one the descendent of Plantagenet kings and one an upstart secretary in the queen's colonial administration—who founded a new literature on Virgil's tragic vision of history.

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36.06

**Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual.**  
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Lake Prescott, Thomas P. Roche, Jr. New York:  
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19217-3. \$79.50 cloth.

*Reviewed by Craig Berry*

One measure of the breadth and depth of this impressive annual publication is the sheer variety of people, places, and discourses deployed in the volume under review. An incomplete list of lenses through which the authors view the Spenserian corpus includes: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, republicanism, memory, rhetoric, allegory, melancholy, romance, devotion, medicine, censorship, gender, Ireland, Virgil, Ovid, Calvin, Bale, Perkins, Kierkegaard, Raleigh, and Thomas Tomkis. Most of these points of reference are familiar to Spenserians, but what sets apart some of the strongest essays here is the ability to combine two or more paradigms into a single, synthetic argument in a way that provides additional analytical traction.

M. L. Donnelly's opening essay considers together two aspects of Spenser's career that are usually either dealt with separately or regarded as opposite and irreconcilable poles: his Virgilian career path and his pursuit of bureaucratic advancement in the Elizabethan administration. By introducing as a third term the *Life of Virgil* commonly attributed to Aelius Donatus (and that appeared in the front matter of Renaissance editions of Virgil's works), Donnelly shows that the aesthetic life and the political life were never very far apart for Virgil, particularly the Virgil known to the Renaissance. Donnelly does not mention that Donatus's Virgil was also a magus and miracle worker, associations that might have been difficult for Spenser to square with his

own Protestant vision. But the selective reading of Donatus really belongs to Spenser and not to Donnelly, who here makes an important contribution to the intersecting concerns of poetic career and biography.

Benedict S. Robinson, in "The Secret Faith of Spenser's Saracens," seeks to remedy the relative lack of critical attention to the Saracen in Spenser criticism by tracing the interlocking histories of medieval crusading romances, Western notions of Islam, and the Protestant identification of Catholicism with infidel heresy. Spenser, he argues, translates such conventions of romance as the dialectic of identity formation and the negotiation of difference onto a cultural scale, so that the travails of the hero become the travails of a Christian culture divided against itself, each half attempting to assert its identity by associating the other with the heresy of Islam. Building on an impressive engagement with Tasso and a very wide range of other medieval and early modern materials, this approach bears fruit in an analysis of the Saracens of *The Faerie Queene*. For example, the traditional identification of the Souldan of Book V with Philip II of Spain gains considerable force and explanatory power in the context of Robinson's argument that Spenser adapted the conventions of crusade narrative to the establishment of Protestant identity. Robinson concludes by suggesting that Spenser, under the influence of John Bale and other Reformers, encounters the limits of romance as a medium for his Protestant ideal: "while romance conventionally presses toward clarification, toward a realignment of self and other, Spenser defers that promise" (61). Given that Spenser's deferrals are typically seen as a turn toward romance rather than away from it, this point needs further clarification; a greater acknowledgment of Ariosto's place in Spenser's romance heritage might well be the missing link here.



Mary Bowman skillfully wields three interrelated threads in her argument about gender and conquest in Book V of *FQ*. "The reduction in female power accomplished in the last section of Book V," she proposes, "is integrally related to the ethos of justice that is evident from the earliest episodes of the book, and both help in turn to naturalize an aggressive policy in Ireland; all three dimensions of the Book coalesce in the figure of Irena" (151). Bowman divides her essay into three main sections corresponding to the early, middle, and closing cantos of Book V. In the early cantos, she shows that Artegall's decisions consistently efface the agency of women, such as in the case of the woman who is a material witness to a murder in the Sanglier episode but herself becomes in Artegall's decision merely the material evidence in a theft. Bowman next turns to the Radigund sequence of the central cantos, arguing, "Where before [Artegal] showed a tendency not to see women at all, as persons, he is able to see Radigund, whom he cannot ignore as a person, only as a woman" (162). Paired this way, the early and middle cantos profoundly question Artegall's authority. What sort of justice is it, we are invited to ask, that either ignores women entirely, or sees in a violent tyrant nothing but her sex? Bowman addresses the closing cantos of Book V armed with this question, and in doing so sheds new light on that section's historical allegory in which "every nation that requires English intervention is figured as a woman in need of male rescue" (168). In particular, the multivalent figure of Irena evokes yet another erasure from Artegall, but this is a complicated and even dangerous move since Irena may well represent—among other things—Elizabeth's rule in Ireland. Bowman concludes by suggesting that Artegall's trajectory through Book V produces "a reading experience that makes ideology a process rather than a product"

(176), and her essay does much to show what an intricate, self-questioning process the Spenserian text gives us.

It is easy to imagine—though impossible to provide in my allotted space—one or more different reviews giving more adequate attention to the remaining seven full-length essays in the main section of the volume. Each makes a substantive contribution to the study of Spenser and his contemporaries, as I think will be evident even in the quick summary that follows.

Andrew Escobedo and Beth Quitslund offer a coordinated pair of essays on the topic of despair in Protestant thought and *FQ*, Escobedo pursuing a Kierkegaardian argument about the relation of self to world, and Quitslund weaving together medical and devotional discourses to elucidate the relation of soul to body. Ty Buckman writes on Arthur's errantry in *FQ* as a rhetorical answer to Elizabethan England's succession anxieties, concluding that the infinitely delayed courtship of Arthur and Gloriana, "calls attention to the dream of continuity and stability in a mutable world, to the Tudor heir that Elizabeth . . . never delivered" (125). Judith Anderson deploys her trademark sensitivity to Spenserian wordplay in an analysis of the rhetoric of Busirane's palace, arguing that "Busirane abuses figuration and the perception based on it to feign that metaphor is the same as reality" (142). Lin Kelsey engages in hydrological detective work in her comparative analysis of Raleigh's "Ocean to Cynthia" and Spenser's *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, finding that through the image of a river that goes underground, "Spenser/Colin demonstrates that he can sing what he pleases undetected" (183). Alan Stewart and Garrett Sullivan provide a new look at Eumnestes's chamber in Book II of the *FQ*, viewing it retrospectively through the lens of Thomas Tomkis's 1604 play *Lingua*, and in the process revealing "some of the



latent tensions in the poem's account of relations among memory, history, discipline, and heroic action" (215). Finally, Clare Kinney uncovers an emergent resistance to the conventions of romance and an undoing of female authority and authorship in the manuscript continuations of Mary Wroth's *Urania*.

The Forum section consists of a debate between David Wilson-Okamura and Andrew Hadfield about Spenser's place in what may (or may not) have been a well-rooted English republicanism long before the demise of Charles II. Wilson-Okamura, responding to an earlier essay by Hadfield in *English*,<sup>1</sup> argues that "what sounds like proto-republicanism in Spenser's writing is actually a conservative response to the decline of the English aristocracy" (253). In his rejoinder here, Hadfield argues, "there is a danger of dismissing or underestimating the extent of republican thought in Tudor and Stuart England because a hard and fast definition is sought" (278). The problem of definition indeed looms large. If *res publica* means "the thing of the people," then what is the thing and who are the people? While both interlocutors address both of these questions, Wilson-Okamura puts more emphasis on who is (or is not) fit to govern in the polity discernible from Spenser's writing, whereas Hadfield seeks primarily to identify those characteristic elements of republican governance with which Spenser aligned himself. Wilson-Okamura places Spenser in the tradition of Virgil and Tacitus (over against Milton as a follower of Livy) in seeing little distinction between the "crowd" and the "mob," concluding, "the people as such have no place in [FQ]" (266). Hadfield's most striking point is that the Spenser of the *Vewe*, drawing on the political theories of George Buchanan and others, makes recommendations for the governance of Ireland that are republican in nature, and that "[a]nyone who recommended

such proposals as a means of increasing English control over Ireland was automatically changing the nature of English political life" (285). Ultimately the yes-or-no question—Was Spenser a republican?—is less interesting than the other questions to which it leads, questions only partly answered here: What were the roots, branches, and affinities of Spenser's political thought? How did that thinking evolve in the course of Spenser's career and how was it deployed in the poems and the *Vewe*? Though these fine essays could hardly address such questions fully, they have productively stirred up the pot for anyone working on Spenserian polity.

The Gleanings section concludes the volume with two brief notes on Spenserian publication history.

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Hadfield, "Was Spenser a Republican?" *English* 47 (1998): 169-82.

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## HUGH MACLEAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

### REVALUING THE BODY IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE* I

By Janet Adelman

Delivered at the Modern Language Association Convention, December 2004. Each year at MLA the Spenser Society hosts a luncheon for members, at which an invited speaker delivers an address, known since 1999 as the Hugh Maclean Memorial Lecture.

36.07

Let me begin with a confession: I accepted this invitation to speak not because I thought there was the remotest possibility that I would have anything plausible to tell you that you didn't already know but because I have always wanted to be a "real" Spenserian. Though I've happily spent my academic life on Shakespeare, I sometimes think of him as a kind of forty-year-long hiatus from Spenser. In fact my writing sample for Berkeley was a 6-page-long paper on *Faerie Queene* VI that I had written for John Pope's course at Yale rather than a chapter of my far-from-complete dissertation on *Antony and Cleopatra*, which goes to show you how much the profession has changed since 1968. And before Yale, I had had what still seems to me the ideal introduction to Spenser, one that could not have been more effective if it had been carefully calculated to circumvent the anxiety about knowledge that too often cripples my students' responses to Spenser. When I arrived in Oxford in 1962, plunked down into the second year of their BA equivalent, I discovered that everyone else had been instructed to read the whole of *FQ* over the summer, and that I had less than a week to read it and produce a paper on it. Needless to say, I had no time for libraries or even footnotes (my memory is that the edition available to me didn't even have footnotes), and so I plunged into *FQ* as into a forest of delight rather than a thicket of interpretation. Because I had no opportunity to develop even the illusion of mastery, I had to

work from the naive conviction that I could learn what I most needed to know from Spenser's invented world itself: that meaning inhered as comfortably in its narrative and rhetorical details as in any play by Shakespeare or any realist novel. I now suffer as keenly as anyone from an anxiety about insufficient knowledge, especially on this occasion, where it seems to me that my ignorance means that what I have to say will almost certainly be either redundant or absurd, or perhaps some novel combination of the two; I assuage my anxiety only by imagining that a group that chooses to invite non-Spenserians to give talks is eager to hear what no knowledgeable Spenserian would say. But that early delight has never left me, and I am always perplexed about how to reproduce it in my students, who have to sandwich some chunk of *FQ* (usually Books I and III) into a Chaucer-Spenser-Milton course, and whose wonderful editions with their extensive footnotes at the bottom of every page too often succeed only in convincing them that they can't possibly know enough to read this poem, let alone to be delighted by it.

I think that one of the reasons I was so happy wandering around in Spenser's text was that many aspects of his allegorical method seemed both familiar and entirely natural to me. I often startle students by saying that *FQ* seems to me more psychologically plausible than any realist novel because it works at the juncture of inner and outer where much of our experience takes place. Its method allows not only for the



free expression of fantasy, but also for the lived sensation that we are constantly meeting bits of ourselves in the world and usually failing to recognize them as our own. Spenser seems to me particularly wonderful at getting at the state in which our projections are not *only* projections, in which—like Wordsworth—we “half-perceive and half-create” what we meet by sorting out and acknowledging in the undifferentiated welter of experience only those elements that reflect our own internal state. It is this that—at its best—allows for the seamless merging of historical and moral allegory, as well as for the sense that inner psychic meaning inheres in events presented as external: in Red Cross’s meeting with Sansfoy and Duessa, or in the pronoun confusions in I.i.46 that locate Red Cross’s lascivious dream simultaneously inside and outside of him. Moreover, projection is not for Spenser merely a fixed or static generator of narrative meaning: though *FQ* has obvious affinities with the style of allegory characteristic of the morality play, which Nohrnberg wonderfully characterizes as “the story of a dissociated personality,”<sup>1</sup> Spenser seems to me—perhaps especially in the early cantos of Book I—to subject the splittings and projections characteristic of this kind of allegory to scrutiny, in effect grounding them in psychic process, though of course he wouldn’t call it that. The truly dissociated personality is as determined not to know as Ignaro in *Orgoglio*’s prison; and Spenser allows us to see the traces of that determination in Red Cross. When Spenser shows us Red Cross running away from Archimago’s hermitage, “Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare” (I.ii.12) just after Una has been split in two and just as he himself is becoming similarly split, and when he then meets both himself and the split-off Una in Sansfoy and Duessa, Spenser gives us nearly textbook illustrations of the ways in which splitting and projection function to

ward off knowledge. (He even shows us Archimago scaring himself and then attempting to fly from himself two stanzas before Red Cross attempts to flee himself, as though to underscore the point.) And when Red Cross meets a version of his own story in Fradubio, his disavowal of it is registered in his final gesture, when he thrusts the bleeding bough “into the ground, / That from the bloud he might be innocent” (I.ii.44);<sup>2</sup> in effect, he buries the evidence as quickly as possible in order to maintain his sense of his own innocence and thus his capacity not to know what he is in danger of knowing. But how can thrusting the bleeding bough into the ground make him innocent of its blood? Through both the force and the illogic of the gesture, Spenser signals the strength of the disavowal, and thus in effect catches Red Cross in the act of dissociation. In other words, this is not simply dissociative allegory-as-usual; Spenser shows us both the process and the cost of this unknowing.

I want to try out the logic of what I’ve been saying by following the consequences of one particular act of projection in *FQ* I. And before I begin, I want to glance briefly at some of the elements of Kleinian psychoanalytic theory that undergird my reading. In Melanie Klein’s view, the great human achievement is the attainment of what she calls “the depressive position,” which turns on the capacity to tolerate both one’s own sexual and aggressive impulses and the ambivalence one feels toward one’s own beloved objects; this achievement allows one to tolerate guilt and hence to make reparations for the damage one has done in fantasy. But this is a fragile achievement, and we are always prone to slipping back into a prior psychological stage, what she calls the “paranoid-schizoid position,” in which we deal with our horror at our own impulses by projecting them outwards, and our horror at our ambivalence toward our beloved



objects (as well as the genuinely mixed nature of those objects) by splitting the objects into good and bad (call them Una and false Una, or Una and Duessa). So, let me begin by asking, where does the hideous storm of rain that angry Jove pours into his leman's lap (I.i.6) come from? Or rather, since the image of sky impregnating earth seems to be a nod toward *Georgics* ii,<sup>3</sup> where do the anger and the hideousness absent in Virgil's image come from? The rainstorm emerges as a rupture in the narrator's smoothly controlled descriptive tone, turning the static and unspecified plain of Red Cross's and Una's journey into the landscape of a dream and tainting that hitherto neutral space with a peculiarly aggressive form of sexuality; and it, rather than the encounter with Error, initiates the wandering action of the poem. But why begin the action with so violent an image? Why not force Red Cross and Una to shroud themselves in Error's woods via a less aggressively sexual burst of rain? One might argue that Spenser is rewriting Chaucer's famous opening lines, warning us that the relation between spiritual and bodily love will be even more vexed in this book than in *The Canterbury Tales*: no April with his sweet showers stirring up both birds and pilgrims here. But the image nonetheless seems exaggerated: the image of Jove as "angry" may respond to the weather, but what makes a rain storm "hideous," with its buried evocation not only of horror but also of that which should be hidden? The excessiveness of the image (carried, as so often in Spenser, by the adjectives) calls attention to a double act of interpretation: first, imagining rain as the sexualized act of a male deity (a familiar-enough move); and second, a weirdly horrified response to that initial act of imagination, as though the storm were made hideous exactly by becoming identified with a sexual act that should not be seen. The adjectives—in other words—do the

work of calling attention less to the storm than to the mind interpreting the storm, sexualizing it and then recoiling from its own sexualizing imagination. But whose mind are we watching? I will return to that question in a moment; let me just note that, for once, it would seem not to be the reader's, since the terms are excessive for us, overkill even for the most violent storm.<sup>4</sup>

What makes this image a particularly telling way to begin the action of the poem is not only the excess that calls attention to the interpreter rather than the weather, but the ways in which the image does not fully quadrate with what follows. Up until the entry of Orgoglio, Red Cross is portrayed largely as the victim of seductive female sexuality, whether of Archimago's miscreated sprite or of Duessa. The encounter with Error that follows from Jove's storm makes perfect sense as the starting point for this story of victimage insofar as it depicts entry into the generative world of matter—traditionally coded female—in which the man who would be holy is doomed to wander. Error's alliances with the combined figure of Satan and Eve—the serpent with the female face—make sense in this story, and so does the labyrinthian Error's associations with the figure of Fortune who rules the wandering sublunar world. (Here is the Chaucerian version of the same figure from "The Merchant's Tale":

O thou Fortune unstable!  
 Lyk to the scorpion so deceyvable,  
 That flaterest with thyn heed whan thou  
     wolt styng;  
 Thy tayl is deeth though thyn  
     envenmyng.  
 O brotil joye! o sweete venym queynte!  
 O monstre . . .

where the pun in "sweete venym queynte" makes the female genitals stand in for subjection to fortune and for the unreliable and ultimately deadly



pleasures of the world.) And certainly Error, with her mortal sting, her thousand young ones, and her "poisonous dugs" (I.i.15) would be a recognizable emblem for the world of matter into which—and via the incipient pun on mater, from which—man is born: so that, e.g. for Quarles, the maternal body itself becomes the epitome of what is deadly about the material world:

Be thy lips screw'd so fast

To th'earth's full breast? . . .

Ah, fool, forbear; thou swallowest at one  
breath

Both food and poison down! thou draw'st  
both milk and death . . . .

There's nothing wholesome where the  
whole's infected.

Unseize thy lips; earth's Milk's a ripen'd core,  
That drops from her disease, that matters  
from her sore (*Emblemes*, 1.12).

No wonder (according to this logic) Red Cross and Una are forced to "shroud" themselves as they enter into the maternal realm of Error's wandering wood: the realm of matter is by definition mortal.

But of course it isn't Error that forces Una and Red Cross to shroud themselves; it's Jove's hideous storm of rain—and that seems to me a crucial difference. By beginning with this image, the poem calls attention to the imagination—here, specifically the male imagination—that sexualizes the world, seeing a hideous sexual act in a rain storm, and then recoils from its own imagination, in effect projecting that distinctly male hideousness onto a monster imagined as emphatically female. Thus the hideousness of Jove's liquid ejaculate is transferred to the "hideous" tail of that female monster—a transfer underscored by the fact that we find at the center of this labyrinth not the Minotaur, the male monster we might expect, but a emphatically female monster. And the very excessiveness of

the narrative's initiating image underscores that transfer: the horror, that which should be hidden, may now be lurking in the center of the woods, in a suspiciously anatomical "darksome hole," but it first entered the poem in an imagined act not of female but of male sexuality.

Let me return to the question that I raised a moment ago: whose psyche are we witnessing in this transfer? Another way to ask this question is, Whose monster is Error? In a book (by which I mean *FQ I*, not the whole of *FQ*) in which evil is persistently associated with the ruinous female form, it is certainly possible to argue that the monster is Spenser's alone. Book I would then tell the story of a man's fall into the generative world and the sexual body, a fall registered by his dalliance with Duessa and his captivity by his own sexual pride in the form of *Orgoglio*, which inevitably leads to *Despair* at his recognition of the sins of the body, and thence to the cleansing of those sins in the House of Holiness, the defeat of the old dragon, and a curiously bodiless marriage at the end. But although the force of this version of Book I seems to me undeniable, I think that the move from Jove's sexualized rain to Error makes it possible to read another story in these events: one in which excessive guilt and horror at the body (rather than bodily sin) are exactly what Red Cross needs to be cleansed of. And insofar as Spenser enables this story—which is the one I want to try to tease out—he and Red Cross to some extent part ways. In the story I want to tell, the monster Error is erroneous not only because she represents something like wrong doctrine, but also because she represents a wrong way of thinking about the world of matter and the body—and Jove's hideous storm of rain suggests that that erroneous way of thinking about the body has its origins in Red Cross's own troubled sexual imagination. Part of the task of Book I, it seems to



me, is to imagine a way that the man who would be holy can live in the labyrinthian world of flesh, and Red Cross's task is to learn to tolerate his own mortal nature and eventually to ground his holiness in it, and those tasks entail a re-imagining of flesh itself. We are accustomed to seeing something like that re-imagining in Book III, with its reconceptualization of both matter and female anatomy in the Garden of Adonis and its exploration of the cost of sexual dread in Busirane's castle. But Book I also seems to me to move toward a radical embracing of flesh in the most surprising place: right in the midst (not of the race of canto vii, nor of this paradise of the Garden) of the House of Holiness.

So in what ways might it be legitimate to read Error both as the projection of what I am calling Red Cross's troubled sexual imagination and as a wrong version of the body and the material world? We know that Red Cross is uncertain about his relation with Una, that he fears doing wrong, that he has trouble controlling his horse; I think that Spenser signals Red Cross's anxious relationship both to his anger and to his lust—or more broadly to his bodily passions—in the excessiveness of the description of that storm of rain, and that he then allows us to witness the displacement of that anxious relation to the body from Red Cross himself to the monster Error. (If we imagine a Red Cross who fears his own bodily impulses so much that he projects them into an innocent meteorological event, then we can imagine a Red Cross who sees in the monster Error that he half-creates the epitome of those impulses, but now safely outside himself.) In effect, Spenser uses the permission given by allegory to locate figures simultaneously inside and outside the self in order to provide Red Cross with this female monster while enabling us to see the ways in which she emerges partly from Red Cross's own eagerness to fight her. Despite

Una's warning, he rushes toward her "darksome hole" as though drawn there by his own desire, "full of fire and greedy hardiment" (l.i.14), and it's literally his rushing into the cave that makes her visible: he sees her by the shady light he himself sheds. In fact another Virgilian echo has the effect of simultaneously locating and disavowing the presence of his desire there in the cave. A sequence that begins with a storm and ends in a cave would have particular resonances for an audience schooled in *The Aeneid*: Dido and Aeneas made love for the first time in the cave they find when they take shelter from a storm.<sup>5</sup> In the sequence from Jove's rain to Error's cave, Spenser replicates the Virgilian sequence with one crucial difference: the couple forced to shroud themselves from the storm do indeed come upon a cave, but instead of coupling there (as the Virgilian echo would lead us to expect), they find a kind of substitute monster within it: a monster that substitutes precisely for their coupling, as though this is Red Cross's nightmare vision of what might have been between them, his nightmare version of the desire Una stirs up within him. In other words, the anticipation created by Spenser's echo of Virgil's storm-cave sequence invokes what amounts to the potential sexual act of Una and Red Cross only to displace it immediately onto Error. But, as is usual with such displacements, Red Cross is immediately returned to the act he would deny when he finds himself entangled in Error's poisonous train. Spenser draws on Hesiod's Echidna for Error's bifold body and on the lore associated with her lower-case kin—the female viper also known as echidna—for her grotesque relationship with her children, and I think that he draws on the same lore for his representation of Red Cross's enmeshment in Error. According to this lore, the female viper slew the male in intercourse; more specifically, since the female viper lacked a



womb, the male viper inserted his head into the female viper's mouth, ejaculated, and then had his head bit off for his pains.<sup>6</sup> Spenser seems to me to replicate a version of this vivid fantasy of what might happen to a man in intercourse—a fantasy not only of castration but of a deadly suffocation by immersion in the female—in the image of Red Cross's paralysis: "That hand or foot to stirre he stroue in vaine" once he is "wrapt in Errours endlesse traine" (I.i.18). And insofar as Error herself is a grotesque image of the generative world of matter, the image suggests that Red Cross can imagine the sexual act and the sexual body only as monstrous enmeshment in this hideous—and hideously female—world.

In other words: the sequence from storm to rain is, I think, a kind of nightmare image of entry into the generative world of the body, and more specifically, a nightmare image of the sexual body. In my reading, Red Cross signals his own discomfort with male sexual desire by projecting it onto the rain storm and then attempts to disown what he experiences as the hideousness of his own body by locating it outside himself, in the female monster he seeks out in order to kill. In this reading, the excessiveness of both Jove's rain and of Error issues from Red Cross's—rather than Spenser's—imagination: and Spenser in fact designs the sequence in such a way that it enables us to see the logic that leads from imagining the male sexual act as hideous to imagining the male hopelessly entrapped in female matter (the pun, I think, that underlies the insistence on the maternal in the representation of Error). And he then inserts two radically opposed epic similes into the Error episode to make sure that we see that one's concept of matter and sexuality will affect one's capacity to act in the world. The first responds to Error's "filthy parbreake" with its "great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw" (I.i.20)

with what looks like an attempt to escape from the generativity of the maternal body altogether: in the image of Father Nilus, generation is the property of the male alone (even the leman's lap of Jove's storm has disappeared), and compared to the revolting things that issue from Error, the creatures that proceed from the parthenogenetic overflowing of his "fertile slime" seem initially to be relatively benign (I.i.21). But as soon as these creatures have been marked as "partly male / And partly female"—as soon as gender-difference emerges again in language that (in a parody of God's first creation in *Genesis*) does not distinguish between sorting each of the creatures separately into male and female and making them each partly male and partly female, as though each predicted the fate of Hermaphroditus at the fountain we meet in canto vii—disgust at generation returns, marked by the abrupt transition from Nilus's "fruitful seed" in line 8 to "Such vgly monstrous shapes elsewhere may no man reed" in line 9. And this disgust returns Red Cross to his enmeshment in female matter, where he is suffocated and paralyzed by its "deadly stinke" ("welnigh choked with the deadly stinke, / His forces faile, ne can no longer fight," 1.1.22). What rescues him from this state is the next simile's promise of a change of perspective: Red Cross is in effect freed from the paralyzing effect of his erroneous conception of the body by the image of the shepherd tending his flock, an image of man at home in the material world, and perhaps of the material world itself revalued by Christ's presence in it.

But in my view this didactic simile offers a perspective that is not yet available to Red Cross himself. Though he is able to kill Error, her death accomplishes very little: his disgust at the material body and his tendency to project that disgust onto the female continue to haunt him for most of Book I. In my reading, he must



undergo a kind of working-through of his conception of matter before he can once again arrive at something like this vision in the House of Holiness. More exactly: he must learn to tolerate his own earthiness—especially his own aggressive sexual desire—before he can undo the work of splitting and projection that shapes his journey. If we follow out the logic of this reading, this means that Red Cross has two slightly different tasks: first, to understand that the versions of sexuality and the body that he keeps finding outside himself are at least in part externalizations of what he has within, and secondly, that these versions of the body are distorted projections, in effect the products of his own guilt and fear. It seems to me that the poem records his progress on both fronts, eventually bringing him (and of course us) to the place in which the image of Charissa as nursing mother can replace the image of Error as the epitome of the generative world, the place from which Red Cross can tolerate his own connection to the earth and in fact find his sainthood contingent on that connection. So how does this double progression work? Let me try to sketch out an over-quick answer.

Immediately after he has conquered Error, the image of the sexual body projected first onto the rain and then onto her returns to haunt him, courtesy of Archimago. In those dreams, so ambiguously located both inside and outside Red Cross in the pronoun confusions I have already mentioned, his own desires are stirred up in ways that replicate both Jove's sexual liquidity ("nigh his manly hart did melt away," I.i.47) and the earth's status as a leman or illegitimate sexual partner: in what amounts to his wet dream, Una herself is transformed into "a loose Lemman" in Red Cross's imagination (I.i.48). And she, not the false Una, becomes his "foe": in a curious anticipation of Britomart finding Arthegall in a mirror designed to show

enemies, Red Cross starts up from his dream "as seeming to mistrust / Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his: / Lo there before his face his Lady is" (I.i.49). Here Spenser's surprising temporarily does the work of undoing splitting, allowing us to see that Una herself is the simulacrum Red Cross dreads insofar as it is her presence that has stirred up his "great passion of vnwonted lust, / Or wonted feare of doing ought amis" (I.i.49). Lust *or* guilt: with uncanny psychological insight, Spenser knows that either one will function to separate Red Cross from Una. What Red Cross cannot tolerate is the possibility that he feels desire toward her, a desire immediately projected outward when the "faire couple" that had sheltered in the wood on the way to the cave (I.i.6) becomes the "false couple" that he now witnesses with "gealous fire" (I.ii.5). No wonder his sight is "guiltie" (I.ii.6): "gealous fire" perfectly signals both his own ambivalent desire to participate in this coupling and his rage at himself as well as at the couple. And no wonder he attempts to flee from himself as well as Una, "still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare (I.ii.12): "gealous feare" is what has become of his "gealous fire," and it beautifully registers the combination of lust and guilt—"vnwonted lust, / Or wonted fear of doing ought amis"—that drives him away, guided only by his will and his grief (I.ii.12).

But if (as I am arguing) Red Cross is fleeing his own lust, or more exactly, the rage and guilt that lust provokes in him, how does he end up in the embrace of Duessa? I think that the potentially sexualized term "will" partly gives us the answer: because he can't acknowledge his desire as his own, he is doomed to meet it in the world as the seductive woman who works to betray him. The Error that he has apparently defeated thus returns to him in the form of Duessa, as though embodiment itself means subjection to intolerable desire, once more coded



as—and therefore represented by—the female. And if he is guided to her—to Una's double in her—precisely by the will he can't acknowledge, I think it's perversely his self-disgust—his inability to locate desire in any positive view of the body—that drives him toward the shame of coupling with her, as though he is forced to enact the most debased version of bodily desire that he can imagine in order to make himself as disgusting as he already feels. Hence the repetition both of the liquidity of the Jove image and the melting effect Una has had on him in the description of his sexual congress with Duessa, where he is “poured out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd” (I.vii.7). And hence the covert replication of his experience with Error there: in the Ovidian tale of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus that lies behind the enervating fountain of canto vii, Hermaphroditus becomes half-female when Salmacis winds herself—Error-like—around his body, and enmeshed with Duessa, the “inwardly dismayde” Red Cross punningly replicates Hermaphroditus's condition in himself. (In fact “poured out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd” registers as a kind of hermaphrodite line, equally applicable to Red Cross or Duessa, and midway between them.)

But if this moment is a kind of perverse enactment of what he most fears—and of the projection by which he deals with his fears—it is also the beginning of the long process of his recovery: the process that will in effect make him own his projections and enable him to revise his vision of the body. Orgoglio comes on the scene like a nightmare image of Red Cross's sexuality, something like the gigantic projection of Red Cross's own erection, “a monstrous mass of earthly slime, / Puft up with emptie wind, and fild with sinful crime” (I.vii.9).<sup>7</sup> But it seems to me that Orgoglio is made monstrous as much by Red Cross's guilt as by his sin: he comes on

the scene like a parent startling two teenagers—“disarmd, disgrast, and inwardly dismayde” (I.vii.11)—on the living room couch, as much a function of a superego as of an id. And if Orgoglio represents something like Red Cross's shame at his own bodily desire, he also replicates the vision of the body that has driven Red Cross from the start: the vision of the body as mere matter, utterly divorced from spirit. Hence I think the parody of God's creation of man in Orgoglio's genealogy, and its recapitulation both of Jove's angry storm and Error's cave:

The greatest Earth his vncouth mother was,  
And blustering Aeolus his boasted sire,  
Who with his breath, which through the  
world doth pas,  
Her hollow womb did secretly inspire,  
And fild her hidden caues with stormie yre,  
That she conceiv'd . . . (I.vii.9)

Even the wind in this genealogy returns us to Error via its subterranean link with Echidna, who (as Spenser well knew, see *FQ* VI.vi.11) coupled with a similar windy god, Typhon, to produce her monstrous children; both Hamilton (97) and Norhnberg (268) in fact hear Typhon's bellowing in Orgoglio's approach to Red Cross. And this conception of the body as mere matter is the conception that Red Cross's own shame makes him captive to: carried off by Orgoglio like a “sencelesse corse” (I.vii.15), Red Cross languishes “vnderneath the ground” (I.viii.38) in a prison that is also a burial ground, as though he has become the merely dead matter he imagines his body to be. And in this earthly womb, where he lies buried for nine months, he can imagine birth itself as nothing but a form of death (“O, who is that, which brings me happy choyce / Of death,” I.viii.38). But the parody in Orgoglio's genealogy of God's great infusion of matter with spirit should alert us to the falseness of this conception of the body: body is not merely earthly



slime puffed up with empty wind, as Red Cross will learn in the House of Holiness. And in fact his captivity to this version of the body seems to me the starting point of his cure. Finally imprisoned by the projection of his own guilt and shame and thus unable to escape them—simply stuck in the prison he has made—Red Cross can begin to reabsorb that projection back into himself; and (here is the marvelous turning point of the book) that fleshly prison—so similar to the earthly womb in which Orgoglio was conceived—can be re-imagined as a womb from which a rebirth into another view of matter can be sustained.

In Orgoglio's dungeon, I am suggesting, Red Cross meets himself: meets not only his bodily desire and the shame and guilt that it produces but also the version of the body that produces, and is produced by, that shame and guilt. Hence I think the relation between Orgoglio and Despair: for the body represented by Orgoglio—the body as mere matter—can lead only to despair, as we see when Despair emerges out of Red Cross's own corpse-like appearance in Orgoglio's dungeon, Red Cross's "hollow, dreary, murmuring voyce" (I.viii.38), his "sad dull eyes, deepe sunck in hollow pits," his "bare thin cheekes" and "rawbone armes" (I.viii.41) all replicated in the landscape of Despair (in the "darke, dolefull, drearie" "hollow caue" and the leafless trees that surround it, I.ix.33-34) and in Despair himself, with his "hollow eyne" that look "deadly dull" and his "raw-bone cheekes" (I.ix.35). And here, in the encounter with Despair, Red Cross begins the process of owning his own projections and dealing with the guilt that their reabsorption provokes in him. Here he is brought face to face with both the aggression (the bloody battles) and the lust (the dalliance with Duessa) that he had projected onto Jove's storm in the moment that initiated the narrative, and here he must ac-

knowledge both of them as his own. This is (as any Kleinian would tell us) a dangerous moment, even for those who do not believe either in the hell that Despair threatens Red Cross with or in a god that might send him there, and perhaps especially dangerous in a culture that (like Red Cross's and like ours) has largely lost any easy way to assuage guilt. (Whenever I read parts of Despair's speech to my classes, I am keenly aware that some among my hundred or so students will be all too aware of the allure of suicide.) But guilt in Klein is nonetheless a positive achievement, and Red Cross's internal experience of guilt in the Despair episode would for Klein mark his entry into the depressive position: only the capacity to tolerate the guilt caused by one's own destructive desires can put an end to the set of splittings and projections that have constituted Red Cross's flight from himself, and only the capacity to tolerate guilt can enable an act of reparation toward those one has wronged. This is partly the efficacy of Una's wonderful double reply to the temptation of suicide: even before she promises him that God's mercy is greater than his guilt, she points him the way toward reparation when she asks "Is this the battel, which thou vaunst to fight?" (I.ix.52).

Red Cross (I am suggesting) is driven by a vision of the body that causes splitting and projection from the very first moments of the book, but when he can tolerate the guilt continent on this vision of the body, he can begin the process of reparation—and then begin to change his sense of the body itself. This is why the House of Holiness is not so much a lesson in lust-management as it is a lesson in guilt-management, and also why, when Red Cross finds out who he is—that he is of the earth, earthy—his discovery comes partly as a revision of Orgoglio's genealogy. When Una snatches the knife from his hand, she articulates the



possibility of that change: whereas the body for Despair—a version of Orgoglio's body—could lead only to death (“Die shall all flesh,” I.ix.47), Una calls him to her, and to God, by his very fleshliness (“Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight,” I.ix.53). And so she leads him to the House of Holiness, where he can cleanse his sense of the body by doing penance for the sins that he has hitherto attributed to others and can finally be brought—in another stunning instance of Spenser's psychological insight—to love himself, and to allow himself to be loved by Una, who “Him dearely kist, and fairely eke besought / Himselfe to chearish” (I.x.29). And only once he has been brought to this point can Charissa appear, arising in effect out of his new capacity to cherish himself, his cure signaled by this revised version of the generative female body that had been so horrific in Error. This new image promises that the material body is the vehicle through which God's love is experienced and directed outward into the world. We see that bodily love in the description of the Seven Beadsmen, which—in an age when social services are being cut and empathy of all kinds is being foreclosed—has become one of my favorite parts of the poem and perhaps the one my students most need to know about. There, with the Beadsmen, Spenser insists that the works of charity/Charissa and mercy depend crucially on the recognition that the body itself is sacred: the poor are deserving of aid because they are “the images of God in earthly clay” (I.x.39), and even the dead body is not the merely dead matter of Orgoglio's dungeon, it is “the wondrous workemanship of Gods owne mould” (I.x.42). This is of course a revision of the view of the body represented in Orgoglio's conception, or rather a return to the original moment of creation that his conception parodied. And with this righting of Red Cross's understanding of the body, he can be brought to

understand that he himself is a “man of earth” (I.x.52), found in a furrow that not only anticipates his naming as St. George but contains an allusion to Orgoglio's name in it. In fact his name as a saint and Orgoglio's name have the same root in earth: Hamilton notes that “orge,” which is related to tilling and hence to furrows, is “also the etymology of George” (109). In effect, when Red Cross comes to know himself, he comes to know his kinship with Orgoglio, but the earthly body that they share has been transformed as he re-absorbs his projections back into himself. No longer the domain of a disgustingly female matter that was the projection of his own guilt, earth has become not only the soil from which Red Cross was born but the ground from which his holiness springs.

<sup>1</sup> Nohrnberg, James. *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1976. 98.

<sup>2</sup> I was privileged to teach Spenser in a lecture course with three wonderful graduate student instructors during fall semester, 2004: Nicole Asaro, Stephen Katz, and Brendan Prawdzik. Though I learned from all of them, I owe this particular insight to Brendan Prawdzik.

<sup>3</sup> Hamilton cites *Georgics* ii.325–6 in his note to I.i.6 (Spenser, Edward. *The Faerie Queene*. ed. A. C. Hamilton. London and New York: Longman, 1977. 31). All citations of *FQ* and references to Hamilton's notes are from this edition.

<sup>4</sup> This demurrer is my way of registering my enormous debt to Paul Alpers; it was a particular pleasure for me to be present when he received a lifetime achievement award from the International Spenser Society.

<sup>5</sup> I owe this observation in part to Wolfgang E. H. Rudat, who notes (in the course of a very different argument) that “the famous cave scene between Dido and Aeneas might have allusive relevance for the first canto of [*FQ*]” (Rudat,



Wolfgang. "Spenser's 'Angry Ioue': Vergilian Allusion in the First Canto of *The Faerie Queene*." *Classical and Modern Literature: A Quarterly* 3 (1983): 96.

<sup>6</sup> I am drawing largely on J. D. Pheifer's work here (Pheifer, J.D. "Errour and Echidna in *The Faerie Queene*: A Study in Literary Tradition." *Literature and Learning in Medieval and Renaissance England: Essays Presented to Fitzroy Pyle*. ed. John Scattergood. Dublin: Irish Academic P, 1984: 127-174).

<sup>7</sup> The Maclean/Prescott edition put this more delicately: "his physiology and his emergence as the unarmed Red Cross dallies with Duessa on

the grass . . . hint that he arises from the hero's own swollen lust" (Spenser, Edmund. *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*. ed. Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott. New York: Norton, 1993. 83.); Hamilton notes that the Greek root for Orgoglio means "to be swollen with lust" (97).

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## ABSTRACTS OF CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES SPENSER AT MLA

The following papers were delivered at the MLA Convention in Philadelphia, December 2004.

### SPENSER AND HIS IRISH CONTEMPORARIES

Sponsored by the International Spenser Society; David J. Baker (U. of Hawai'i, Manoa) presiding.

36.08

Richard McCabe (Merton College, Oxford U.), "Rhyme and Reason: Poetics and Patronage in Elizabethan and Jacobean Ireland."

This paper explores the nature of patronal relationships in Elizabethan and Jacobean Ireland in the light of Phebe Lowell Bowditch's characterization of literary patronage as a "material practice that operates as a system of gift exchange or gift economy" [in *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage* (2001)]. It examines the consequences of

such a system for the contemporary understanding of artistic and political independence, taking the classical instance of Horace as both a positive and a cautionary exemplar. Focusing upon the issues of patronage, presentation, and dedication through this critical lens, the paper seeks to contextualize Spenser's experience in Ireland with reference to the contrasting fortunes of such New English writers as Barnaby Googe, Barnaby Rich, Geoffrey Fenton, and Lodowick Bryskett. It examines the varying strategies of address and appeal whereby writers sought support from both Old and New English patrons while at the same time recognizing (and often attempting to marginalize) the formidable presence of rival poets from the Gaelic community who enjoyed long-established traditions of service to both

Gaelic and Old English families. By contrasting the traditional system of Gaelic patronage with newly emergent forms and networks of patronal support and exploitation (on the part of both patrons and poets), the paper seeks to illustrate the various modes of literary opportunity and opportunism that arose from writing within an increasingly conflicted political situation that placed the “economy” of gift and reciprocation under severe strain. The point is illustrated in relation both to Gaelic and Anglophone texts, and with particular reference to the writings of bardic poets employed by New English administrators to forward particular facets of the colonial agenda—poets who nevertheless manage, on occasion, to negotiate an agenda of their own.

A fuller version of this paper will appear in 2005/6 in a collection of essays on the relationship between literature and politics, co-edited by Richard McCabe and David Womersley for Delaware University Press.

### 36.09

Patricia Palmer (U. of York), “One of their Bardes will say’: Beyond Spenserian Ventriloquy.”

This paper reassessed the role of Ireland in recent Spenserian scholarship. While Ireland has significantly illuminated Spenser’s literary corpus, there appears to be an inadequate “traffic of enlightenment in the opposite direction.” Critical engagement with Spenser and his fellow colonialists sheds little light on the culture they reviled. In fact, we seem to persist in our focus on colonial detractors like Spenser, albeit from a postcolonial perspective. For instance, in reading *A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland*, critics have astutely recognized Irenius’s discourse on the Irish bards as a highly fraught encounter between the colonial poet and the native tradition. Yet

“chalking out the cracks is as far as we can go,” since the text does not bring us any closer to the culture it traduces. Scholarship must necessarily move away from the ventriloquism of the colonial text and engage with the language of the other. Fortunately for us, our limits need not be set by those of the colonial text. Alongside Spenser’s ventriloquised bards are real bards who can take us far beyond the ken of “Irenius’s bard.”

### 36.10

Deana Rankin (Girton College, Cambridge U.), “Little but numbersome burnings and bitings’: Spenser’s Irish Afterlife, 1633-1679.”

In this paper I want to explore three moments across the seventeenth century when Spenser’s *A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland* is resurrected and becomes enmeshed in debates about the nature of Irish citizenship within the turbulent Three Kingdoms. I shall suggest that Spenser’s *Vewe* shifts from being a radical text on the margins of English policy-making to become, by the late seventeenth century, a mainstream “History” of English success in Ireland. I will also seek to demonstrate that this inexorable movement was constantly, eloquently resisted by a number of writers in Ireland, members of Spenser’s hated tribe, the “degenerate English.”

I begin with the *Vewe*’s first ever appearance in print: Sir James Ware’s 1633 Dublin edition, published as part of a larger collection of histories of Ireland. The quotation of my title is taken from a 1635 manuscript response to this edition. Penned by an eloquent, anonymous Old English commentator (possibly Richard Bellings), it voices his horror at this reappearance: the 1596 *Vewe* “ever sithence kept dormant as a destructive platform laid for the utter subversion of this kingdom.” This exchange gives valuable insight into definitions of Irishness in the decade



before the outbreak of war.

Next, I move forward to 1646 when a Parliamentary Irish campaign led by Viscount Lisle, Philip Sidney, seemed imminent, and policy-makers at Westminster took up their pens in imitation of Spenser. Sir John Temple's *The Irish Rebellion or an Historie* and Adam Meredith's incomplete *Ormond's Curtain Drawn: in a short discourse concerning Ireland* both appeared in London in that same year. Both texts rely on Spenser's *Veve* not only for their historical but also for their formal inspiration; both speak through Spenser and through their own experiences of Ireland to re-articulate the claims of that ever-growing group, the Protestant "English-in-Ireland." *The Irish Rebellion* in particular survives the test of time, animating militant English attitudes to Ireland for many years to come. It finds a harsh critic in Richard Bellings, Old English secretary to the Catholic Confederation and author of its history in defeat.

Finally I want to consider briefly the first London publication of Spenser's *Veve* in 1679, re-titled a "History" and seamlessly integrated into *The Works of that famous English poet, Mr Edmund Spenser Viz. The Faery Queen, The Shepherd's Calendar, The History of Ireland, &c.* The spectres of Elizabethan Ireland are resurrected alongside the Irish "rebels" of 1641 to galvanize English Protestant resolution during the Exclusion Crisis. Once again, it is Richard Bellings who, along with others, offers a persuasive counter-argument, but Spenser's document of Irish resistance has effectively been rewritten across the century as a history of English conquest and colonization.

## SPENSER AND THE GODS

Sponsored by the International Spenser Society; Jeffrey Knapp (U. of California) presiding.

### 36.II

Joseph Campana (Kenyon College), "Damaged Gods: Spenser's Disarmed Divinities."

In the proem that opens both the 1590 *FQ* and the Legend of Holiness, Spenser follows his initial invocation of the epic muse Calliope with an invocation of Venus. The poet invokes Venus's aid—and the erotic charms of her disarmed son, Cupid—in the interest of allaying the ferocity of Mars. This gesture of disarming at the opening of a heroic poem signals no momentary paradox but rather represents the sign of a larger intellectual endeavor. In this paper, I argue that we can understand Spenser's relationship to many of the pagan deities who populate *FQ* by understanding the role these deities play in Spenser's larger project of shaming or disarming heroic masculinity and thereby reformulating the sexual contracts that govern not only the logic of gender position but also the relationships between matter and form that govern the workings of allegory. The surprising encounter between Diana and Venus in *FQ* III.vi represents a fundamental revision of the relationship between *eros* and *heros* and of the relationship between militant virginity and erotic desire. When the heavenly Venus descends to the mortal realm in search of Cupid and surprises the bathing Diana, these goddesses of seemingly diametrically opposed purposes encounter one another in states of vulnerability. This revision of the myth of Actaeon severs the identification between *eros* and violence secured by Diana's vicious retribution. This scene relocates the eroticism between two women; as Diana and Venus become vulner-



able in one another's presence, both become open to matter in two important senses. In addition to being materialized as bodies that are sites of both pain and compassion, Venus and Diana develop a new relationship to matter, as both become maternal figures that mark Belphoebe and Amore, the progeny of Chrysgonee, with their own character, as if they together had both mothered and fathered the children. No longer is matter the mere receptacle in which masculine form reproduces itself; rather, matter emerges as the aftermath of an erotic scene between two female divinities drawn into a vulnerable materiality through experiences of suffering and sympathy.

### 36.I2

Heather James (U. of Southern California), "And is there care in heauen?": The Question of the Pagan Gods."

This paper examines the challenge to Spenser's poetry posed by two pagan traditions: the indifferent gods of Epicurean philosophy and the meddling and capricious gods of Ovidian poetry. The pagan gods of Virgil survive in Spenser because their poetic representation intersects with anxieties of faith in Reformation England and Europe: the Epicurean belief in removed gods dangerously intersects with Luther's idea of the *deus absconditus*. Ovid's gods survive for an entirely different set of reasons: their abuses of position and opposition to human creativity coincide with Elizabethan anxieties and debates over the scope and limits of poetry. The pagan gods of both types (those who care too little and those who care too much for the affairs of humans) raise questions about the capacity of poetry to bring about change or reform in the contemporary worlds of faith and politics.

### 36.I3

Gordon Lloyd Teskey (Harvard U.), "Thinking and the Classical Gods."

What role do the classical gods play in *FQ*? A marginal role, as it happens, but not an unimportant one. Until Mutabilitie we hardly see the Olympians except indirectly in art, notably in the tapestries of the Castle Joyous and in the House of Busyrane, both in Book III. There are minor classical gods in the underworld, Aesculapius and Morpheus in Book I and Proserpina's "silver chair" (but not Proserpina) in Book II. Minor gods, such as Nereus, father of Cymoent, in Book III, come in by report. Venus and Diana, overseeing goddesses of Amoret and Belphoebe respectively, come into a back-story in Book III. Book IV has the minor goddess Ate, Book V the late classical Isis blending Aphrodite and Artemis. Book VI is in the very human world of romance and pastoral, in which the gods are (at most) distant objects of reverence and appeal.

The greatest concentration of classical gods is in Book Three, and the only classical god with an important role in the story is Proteus, a minor god in antiquity but a major figure in Spenser, a symbol of the role of the gods in undermining metaphysical order, effecting perpetual incipience and perpetual decay in the thought-work of allegory. Like Proserpine's empty silver chair, the gods are an absence that is felt, a power that is kept out of sight.

Petrarch said that the revival of classical antiquity would allow future generations to work their way back to the very source of the Heliconian font. But Spenser makes his way in leisurely fashion downstream, sampling every brackish tributary, every crumbling bank, and every backwater with its drowned and rotting trees. Unlike Milton, who is a thinker of the arche, of the origin and principle, seizing history



at its beginning, in the garden of Eden, Spenser is an archeological thinker. Spenser is interested in the intermediate stages of development that Milton cuts out, in what things become in and through time. This is especially so of the classical gods, who are for Spenser indices of the process of thinking itself.

In the tapestries in the House of Busyrane displaying Jove's amours, the lurking golden thread that "shone unwillingly" and that is compared to a multi-colored snake in the green grass is like Jove himself, gold being the Jovian metal. Gold is the noblest metal but also the most malleable, "like gold to airy thinness beat," as Donne says. Gold is a figure of transformation and is like the seed of Jove himself.

The tale of Ares and Aphrodite being caught making love in Hephaestus's invisible net, which when pursed up displays them in *flagrante delicto*, was allegorized from antiquity as an image of metaphysical order, the union in the net of the logos of the contrary forces of concord and discord. The tapestries are like a purse net that has been opened into a grid, freeing the eroticism of the gods and, more broadly, freeing them to change. Jove's transformations are not something to which he is subjected. They represent his freedom from identity and hence from metaphysics, for metaphysics is reasoning from identity.

In Aristotle the gods become planets and are no longer free to indulge in erotic dissimulation and change in the sphere below the moon. They become symbols of metaphysical order and of the principle of scientific law. But if there is to be a renaissance of the classical gods it cannot be a revival of them in their high classical forms: the rebirth must be an eruption from below into metaphysical order and an eruption of the past into the present. That is what Spenser does with his new goddess, Mutabilitie.

The figure of Cupid, who usurps Jove's throne "whiles Jove to earth is gone," is an alternative vision of the outcome of the trial in the "Cantos of Mutabilitie," one in which Mutabilitie wins her case against Jove. When Jove wins, Mutabilitie is "put down." But the gods are confined, too: they are confined to the heavens, condemned to be round, spinning planets repeating their metaphysical cycles endlessly. In the alternative vision of the case, in which Eros or Mutabilitie wins, the gods surrender the heavens to Mutabilitie (just as Cupid usurps Jove's throne) and go to earth like their king to make love, die, decompose, and rise again, like the titans, to become the very substance of our thinking. Renaissance artists tried to see the gods retrospectively, in their true, original forms. For Spenser, such idealism is a fantasy: there never were any true, original forms existing apart from time and change, from the movement of the waters of Helicon's downstream.

#### EPICS WITHOUT NATIONS

A special session; Adam N. McKeown (Adelphi U.) presiding.

### 36.14

David Lee Miller (U. of South Carolina), "Reinventing the Law in the Legend of Justice."

This paper takes the recent death of Jacques Derrida as an occasion to reopen the question of deconstruction in our reading of Spenser. Taking its inspiration from the later (post-1990) work of both Derrida and Harry Berger, Jr. (and calling for renewed attention to this work) the paper proposes (begins, but does not finish) a deconstructive reading of the Legend of Justice. Focusing on the proem to Book V and the

first two cantos, the paper argues that Spenser is presenting an allegory not of justice but of its rhetoric: an allegory of legal fictions and their conventional modes of imposition. In this allegory the *aporia* within justice, the place in which the difference between “rigor” and “mercy” appears undecidable, is identified quite literally

with the poet’s name. The paper concludes by turning to an “extra-concluding” stanza added to Book V, canto ii by Keats not long before his death, and sees in this stanza a model for the way deconstructive reading strategies can respond to the radical demystification of political power implicit in Spenser’s text.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUERIES

### 36.15

#### International Spenser Society Executive Committee Minutes

Brasserie Perrier, Philadelphia

December 28, 2004, noon—2 pm

Present: John Watkins, President; Dorothy Stephens, Vice President; Executive Committee Members: Anne Lake Prescott, David Baker, Barbara Fuchs, Heather James, and Garrett Sullivan. *The Spenser Review* Editor: Sheila Cavanagh.

President John Watkins called the meeting to order at noon. The first item for discussion was the Spenser Society’s desire to involve the membership more directly in the composition of the Executive Committee. A decision was made to solicit nominations from the membership for future committees. Discussion also focused on the committee’s desire to balance committee membership and programming between established and emerging areas of Spenserian interest.

Discussion then turned to the role of Secretary-Treasurer, which is currently held by Craig Berry. Voicing concern over the lack of

administrative support associated with this position, the committee determined to make funding available for a modest stipend to facilitate hiring limited secretarial help during major mailings. Since the Society remains extremely grateful for Craig Berry’s computer skills and other relevant abilities, the committee wants to ensure that he has the support he needs in order to fulfill this important, but taxing job, without undue personal sacrifice.

Dorothy Stephens then announced the winners of the MacCaffrey awards, thanking the members of the committee who read articles and books from the prior two years. The winners, later announced at the Spenser Society MLA luncheon, include the article awards, granted to Harry Berger, Jr. for “Archimago: Between Text and Countertext,” *SEL* 43.1 (Winter 2003): 19-64 and Jennifer Summit for “Monuments and Ruins: Spenser and the Problem of the English Library,” *ELH* 70.1 (Spring 2003): 1-34. The book award is being given to A.C. Hamilton, for *Edmund Spenser: The Faerie Queene* (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2001). Richard McCabe’s *Spenser’s Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002) and Elizabeth Fowler’s *Literary Charac-*



ter: *The Human Figure in Early English Writing* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003) received Honorable Mentions in the book category. Winners will receive the Society's MacCaffrey medal and a modest monetary award. In 2005, the MacCaffrey Committee will consider Spenserian articles published in 2004.

The Vice President then announced the commissioning of the Colin Clout medal, which will be given in conjunction with the Society's periodic Lifetime Achievement award. The medals, featuring the woodcut from the November eclogue, have been designed and the Executive Committee approved their manufacture. Discussion of this award ensued, with the decision to bestow the Colin Clout medal in 2004 to Judith Anderson of Indiana University and to Paul Alpers of the University of Californian at Berkeley in recognition of their important contributions to Spenserian studies. These awards were announced at the Spenser Society annual MLA luncheon.

The committee then discussed the possibility of an award for an undergraduate essay on Spenser and decided to solicit entries from the students of members, with an award being granted whenever essays merited such recognition, with a more formal procedure being instituted if the number of submissions warranted any revision.

In the report on *The Spenser Review*, Sheila Cavanagh announced that the transition of this publication to Emory University had gone fairly smoothly, largely due to the efforts of colleagues and graduate students in Atlanta. She also lamented the typo that listed 2005 individual subscription rates as \$1200 per year, noting that \$12.00 per year was what was actually expected. In further *Review* business, Cavanagh reported on a solicitation from EBSCO to contract for electronic dissemination of the *Review*. The committee determined that further investi-

gation was needed before entering into any such agreement.

John Watkins then raised concerns about his diminishing office space, due to his current storage of past issues of *The Spenser Newsletter/The Spenser Review*. The committee is going to inquire about possible donations of complete runs of the publication to a small set of libraries. It was also decided that Watkins could reduce the number of issues stored, so long as sufficient copies were retained to fulfill requests. Watkins also volunteered to serve as *Review* archivist for the foreseeable future.

In a discussion of periodic member contributions in excess of dues, the committee determined that it would investigate the possibility of subsidizing some participation in the Society by graduate students and Spenserians from countries facing severe financial hardship.

At this point, Watkins turned the discussion to the upcoming International Spenser Conference at the University of Toronto in May 2006. He announced that Elizabeth Harvey and David Galbraith were spearheading the planning with the able assistance of Anne Lake Prescott and Theresa Krier. The conference will be held at Victoria College with the exact dates to be determined (and not conflicting with Kalamazoo). Members are advised that further information will be forthcoming on the Spenser listserv and through *The Spenser Review*, as well as in other relevant venues.

In further MLA related business, the committee recommended future Maclean lecturers, noting that speakers often needed considerable lead-time to arrange their schedules accordingly. The committee also determined that next year's MLA panels would include a session on Spenser and Republicanism, to be convened by Joseph Loewenstein, and an open session, to be organized by Garrett Sullivan.

The slate of new executive committee members was also finalized and announced at the Spenser luncheon. New members include Jennifer Summit, Christopher Warley, and Kenneth Gross.

The meeting was adjourned at 2 pm.

## 36.16

### International Spenser Society 2004 Treasurer's Report

Craig A. Berry, Secretary-Treasurer

#### Overview:

Starting Balance	\$15,567
Expenses	\$5,528
Income	\$6,069
Ending Balance	\$16,108

#### Expense breakdown:

Member Luncheon (2003 & 2004)	\$4,044
<i>Spenser Review</i>	\$517
Stationery, mailing supplies, postage	\$636
Bank fees, returned checks	\$148
Miscellaneous	\$183

#### Comments

- The Expenses include an artificially high restaurant component since they include both the 2003 and 2004 luncheons.
- When the *Review* changed editorship, the amount transferred back to the Society (\$405) was most of the amount paid out this year (\$517), and Sheila Cavanagh produced her first issue with very little support from the Society (using only Emory University funding). So *Review* expenses for 2004 are artificially low and not an indication of what the Society will need to do in the future.

## 36.17

### Fortieth International Congress on Medieval Studies

May 5-8, 2005 at Western Michigan U.  
Spenser at Kalamazoo

Organizers: Clare Kinney (U. of Virginia), Anne Lake Prescott (Barnard College), Beth Quitslund (Ohio U.), Ted Steinberg (SUNY Fredonia), David Scott Wilson-Okamura (East Carolina U.)

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Session 1: Canonical Spenser? Supplementation, Illustration, and Annotation

Presider: Mark Stephenson (U. of Western Ontario)

Opening Remarks

Presenter: William A. Oram (Smith College)

Paper #1: "A New Spenserian Poem: M. L.'s *Envies Scourge*" by Richard Peterson (U. of Connecticut)

Paper #2: "Improving Reception: Annotative Practice and *FQ*" by Holly A. Crocker (U. of Cincinnati)

Paper #3: "Louis du Guernier's Illustrations for the John Hughes Edition of *FQ* (1715)" by Rachel Hile Bassett (U. of Kansas)

Respondent: Joseph Loewenstein (Washington U. in St. Louis)

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Session 2: Spenserian Chastity and Marriage: Dewly, Maidly, Deeply

Presider: Jean Goodrich (U. of Arizona)



Paper #1: "Casting Pearls in 'Dew Time':  
*Epithalamion* and *FQ*" by Roger W. Rouland (U.  
of Texas at Austin)

Paper #2: "Amoret's 'Perfect Hole': A Source for  
*FQ* 3.12.38.9 That Probably Has Not Occurred  
to You" by Lauren Silberman (Baruch College)

Paper #3: "Who can loue the worker of her  
smart?": The Politics of Chastity in *FQ*" by  
Melissa Sanchez (San Francisco State U.)

Respondent: Thomas P. Roche, Jr. (Princeton U.)

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Session #3: Sound, Memory, and Silence in  
Edmund Spenser  
Presider: Dan Lochman (Texas State U.)

Paper #1: "Savagery, Civility and Silence in  
Spenser: *FQ* Book VI and *A View*" by Jane Gro-  
gan (Penn State U.)

Paper #2: "Spenserian Alliteration" by Paul  
Hecht (Wake Forest U.)

Paper #3: "'Souenaunce' and Poetic Knowledge in  
*FQ* Book II" by Anne Sussman (U. of Virginia)

Respondent: Andrew Escobedo (Ohio U.)

Paper #4: Closing Remarks  
Presenter: William A. Oram (Smith College)



36.18

The Fourth International Spenser Society  
Conference: Spenser's Civilizations

Location: Toronto, Canada

Date: May 18-21, 2006

Plenary Speakers:

Gail Kern Paster, Gordon Teskey, Paul Stevens,  
Linda Gregerson

The International Spenser Society invites  
proposals for papers for its fourth International  
Conference, following the success of earlier  
conferences at Princeton (1990), Yale (1996), and  
Cambridge, U.K. (2001). The 2006 conference  
will take place over three days on the campus of  
Victoria College in the University of Toronto. It  
will be hosted by the International Spenser Soci-  
ety, and by the Department of English, Univer-  
sity of Toronto, and Victoria College.

We expect the conference to demonstrate the  
intellectual vitality and diversity of contemporary  
Spenser scholarship. We are also interested in  
furthering dialogue between Spenserians and  
scholars in other fields of early modern studies.

#### Call for Paper and Panels

The Conference Program Committee welcomes  
the submission of paper and panel proposals that  
address the conference topic and related issues.  
Possible topics include but are not limited to:

Classical Civilizations  
The Civilizing Process  
Spenser and Moral Philosophy  
Barbarian Invasions  
Early Modern Savages

Spenser and the Law  
Spenser and Nationality  
Renaissance Education  
Spenser's Reading  
Spenser's London  
Civilizing Gender  
Beastly Natures  
Criminals and Punishment  
Civic Virtues  
Spenser's Cities  
Public Ceremonies  
Urban Spaces/Wild Places  
Spenser's Ireland  
Civility and Courtesy  
The Passions  
Language and Civilization  
Spenser's Dialogues  
Politics and the Structure of Authority  
Early Modern Archeology  
Material Cultures  
The Early Modern Book Trade  
Civilization and Its Discontents

The conference will feature four plenary addresses, as well as a variety of multi-paper sessions and round-tables. Those interested in participating are invited to submit abstracts of 250-500 words describing their proposed papers. Submissions (hard copy or e-mail) should be sent to:

Spenser Conference  
73 Queen's Park Crescent  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1K7  
Canada

[spenser@chass.utoronto.ca](mailto:spenser@chass.utoronto.ca)

The deadline for submissions is June 1, 2005.



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