



THE  
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REVIEW

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# THE Spenser REVIEW

Summer 2008 • Volume 39, Number 2

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## TO OUR READERS

38.88

In recent months, the Spenser community has lost two beloved and well-respected members of its scholarly company: Richard Helgerson (a Colin Clout Lifetime Achievement Award winner) and S.K. Heninger, Jr. (a former editor of *The Spenser Newsletter/Review*). Each of these colleagues will be sorely missed, but their work remains invaluable to countless Spenserians and innumerable memories of their gracious collegiality will be cherished.





## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

38.89

Dolven, Jeff. *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 281 pp. ISBN 0-226-15536-6. \$29.00 cloth.

*Reviewed by Helen Hackett*

This serious and clever book considers Elizabethan narrative fictions within the framework of the educational theory and practice of the period. It also frames this again, self-consciously, within the interests and experience of the author and his expected readers as scholars and teachers of Renaissance literature, themselves deeply embedded in and defined by education.

Chapter 1 considers in detail different sixteenth-century models of teaching, and taxonomises methods of testing what has been learned by various exercises in repetition, analysis, and disputation. Dolven calls this a "poetics of pedagogy" (18). Both here and later in the volume he displays a propensity for pseudo-mathematical formulae and diagrams which might slightly alarm the more literarily minded of his readers, though he is reassuringly self-effacing about his "unsystematic mix of mock-algebra and pictograms" (52). He suggests some affinities between education and romance, such as the curriculum as a kind of narrative sequence, education as the building of selfhood, growing up as a story, and the educative mission of Renaissance fiction to teach through delight. Whereas the title of the book might suggest a slightly narrow and specialised focus, this introductory discussion convincingly asserts numerous reasons to read romance in relation to education. Even more important than their likenesses, argues Dolven,

are their differences: pedagogical exercises seek to take knowledge out of time, whereas fictional narrative unfolds and tests understanding over time; education by example is mainly (but not exclusively) the method of the classroom, whereas education by experience is mainly (but not exclusively) the method of narrative. However, as Dolven also shows, example and experience are both difficult to define and do not fall into a neat dichotomy; indeed, it is the interplay between them which is central to this book.

On these foundations Dolven builds readings of the two parts of *Euphues* (*The Anatomy of Wit* and *Euphues and his England*), the "old" and "new" *Arcadias*, and the 1590 and 1596 versions of *The Faerie Queene*. Choosing bipartite works enables him to explore how Lyly, Sidney, and Spenser each revisit, revise, or repudiate aspects of the earlier work in the sequel. The theme in each case is how the author partly emulates the methods and forms of schoolroom exercises, and partly rejects them to explore the unregulated and extravagant nature of romance; or at least uses the distance afforded by the genre of romance to view classroom procedures askance. The chapter on the 1590 *FQ* compares the different educational trajectories of the Red Cross Knight, Guyon, and Britomart, and indeed suggests that they are not exactly trajectories, as the poem constantly reviews, questions, and undermines its own models of learning and understanding. By 1596, Dolven then contends, Spenser has become preoccupied with the opposition between punishment and play in education. After the penal strictures of Book V, Book VI seems to offer a return to youthfulness and a new beginning; but the book is also pervaded by shame, and its nostalgia for chivalry as a code for training a courteous gentleman turns gradu-

ally to melancholy disillusionment. Throughout, Dolven poses the question whether the journey towards knowledge is about gaining wisdom, or losing innocence. He concludes that *Euphues*, the *Arcadia*, and *FQ* are all works which feel an obligation to instruct, but ultimately refuse to teach, as the three authors "sabotage their own didactic authority." A coda extends the inquiry to Milton's works, especially *Comus*, and glances forward to the very different educational thinking of the eighteenth century and its consequent production of the *Bildungsroman*.

Throughout, Dolven shows an impressive inwardness with these rich and dense works. There is a delightfully deft reading of the moment in George Gascoigne's *The Adventures of Master F.J.* when the protagonist finds his rapier missing, used to illustrate how radically different *Euphues* is in its lack of realistic detail and action. Close reading often produces fine writing, as in a description of Philoclea finding her poem on the marble slab worn and blotted: "Philoclea is looking at an old text to try and recover an old self, and finds too much time in the way" (121).

Much of Dolven's interest is in the tension between duty and delinquency, and in the self-fashioning of heroes and authors; consequently, the reader is not surprised to learn that the critical work he most admires is Richard Helgerson's *Elizabethan Prodigals*, deferred to as "still the most useful book on the fictions of this period" (79 n41). Dolven's book reads well as an accomplished supplement to Helgerson's landmark work, but one looks in vain here for much awareness of the substantial recent work on gender and sexuality in Renaissance romance. Dolven sometimes touches on moments when women become teachers—Una explaining Duessa's allegorical meaning to the Red Cross Knight, Philoclea dissuading Pyrocles from suicide—but more discussion of this would have been welcome. Why

do women assume more authority than men at certain crucial narrative moments? What do these imply about the nature of women's knowledge? Is it represented as a wisdom which is more innate, more natural, than that of men, and therefore less dependent upon education? What about the significant developments in women's education in the sixteenth century? These are not questions which interest Dolven.

He has little interest, either, in post-structuralist accounts of the open-endedness and multivalency of romance, or in the relation of Elizabethan romance to court politics or to popular culture. Though self-conscious about his identity as an educator, Dolven is largely unconscious about the masculinity of his account of romance, and about its canonicity, and this gives the book a somewhat old-fashioned feel, though many readers may enjoy this. It is primarily a work of meticulous and scrupulous reasoning, partly historicist in its desire to situate Elizabethan romance in the context of contemporary educational theory and practice, but verging on the philosophical in its intellectual pleasure in inquiry into how both we and the Elizabethans conceptualise teaching and learning (accordingly, the epigraph is from Wittgenstein). It should be emphasised, however, that the intellectual earnestness of the book is frequently leavened by a gracious wit, including a philosopher's pleasure in linguistic play and paradox: "Why does no one ever learn anything in romance?" asks Dolven, "And what are we to learn from that?" (13)

Helen Hackett is Reader in English at University College, London. Her publications include *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (2000) and *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (1995). *Shakespeare and Elizabeth: The Meeting of Two Myths* will be published shortly by Princeton



University Press. She is currently researching the Aston-Thimelby circle, a seventeenth-century group of Catholic poets.

38.90

Herron, Thomas. *Spenser's Irish Work—Poetry, Plantation and Colonial Reformation*. Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate Press, 2007. x + 268 pp. ISBN 0-7546-5602-0. \$99.95 cloth.

*Reviewed by Brinda Charry*

Put broadly, Thomas Herron's book is an Ireland-focused reading of Spenser's poetry, specifically Books I, V, VI, and VII of *The Faerie Queene*. It thus belongs to the body of Spenser-criticism produced by scholars such as Andrew Hadfield, Richard McCabe, Judith Owens, and Joanne Grenfell among others, who write within the Irish paradigm, and whose work Herron engages with and responds to in interesting ways. Herron's unique and valuable contribution to Irish-Spenser studies is perhaps the challenge he poses to the "anxiety criticism" which, he argues, has dominated the field in the last decade or so. Chapter 1 titled "Spenser and the Anxious Critics" draws attention to scholarly notions of "a disaffected colonial Spenser at odds with the communal spirit of plantation and conquest" (22). The poet's work is often perceived, Herron points out, as reflecting the guilt, anxiety, displacement, and ambivalence of the colonizer (as theorized by Homi Bhabha), and this has become a critical staple in work on Spenser's literary engagement with Ireland. It is precisely this stand that Herron refutes. While he concedes that the poet "does sound anxiously post-colonial at times," he still maintains that Spenser "remains positively colonial when he rolls up his sleeves and writes

stirring verse in an imperial vanguard . . ." (29). This thesis certainly serves as a useful corrective, or at least a valuable supplement, to both recent Spenser scholarship and to early modern studies on European engagement with otherness and cultural alterity that tend to focus, perhaps all too often, on the anxiety and disorientation experienced by the colonizer / European subject, rather than on the self-assurance, pragmatism and sense of purpose informed by feelings of cultural and racial superiority that eventually contributed to the success of Euro-imperialism.

Herron's critical approach is an interesting mix of the literary (close-reading, genre studies) and historicist (a historicism that is in fact not always of the New Historicist variety). The latter method is a way of moving beyond the "vague and painfully repetitive theorizing of colonial 'otherness' in Spenser" (6) and is also meant to serve as a corrective to the generalized power dynamics that inform New Historicism. Much of Chapter 1 of Herron's book is occupied with laying out the historical background, focusing on Spenser's relationship with the Munster Plantation, the place and role of the New English, including Spenser's cousin-in-law Richard Boyle, and their antagonistic relationship with the Old English and native Irish, and the urbanization of Munster. While this section is interesting and useful, especially if one is convinced by Herron's argument for a historicist method, the chapter appears to be largely a synopsis and retelling of previous scholarship (as attested by the footnotes). While this is perhaps inevitable in a well-researched field, a few references to and quotations from primary historical documents would have certainly contributed to the chapter. The remaining two chapters of Part I lay out the discursive and ideological contexts that informed and were impacted by Spenser's own literary engagement with Ireland. Herron examines the



plantation rhetoric clearly visible in the writings of Edmund Walsh, Sir Thomas Smith, Robert Payne, Ralph Birkenshaw and Parr Lane, among others. He briefly turns to *FQ* towards the close of Chapter 3, but Spenser's own work is clearly not yet the focus. This might make those readers eager to get to the analysis of Spenser's work rather impatient, but the section clearly serves Herron's methodological purposes.

Part I also introduces a crucial and interesting aspect of Herron's thesis: that Spenser's poetry was influenced by the "forward-driving, organic ethos" (3) of Virgil's *Georgics* and this influence was "consonant with the ideological and practical goals of plantation . . ." (3). Part II subsequently goes on to examine Book I of *FQ* from within "a Georgic-Irish paradigm" or in terms of Spenser's "plantation aesthetic" (101). Subdivided into three chapters, this section is an impressive combination of historicist scholarship combined with thorough and fascinating close-reading of or "detail-work" on Spenser's verse. The argument that informs the section is that the "georgic spirit" evident in the poem was influenced by the rural labor of the New English who attempted to make a pastoral and civilized society of the lush, fertile "wastelands" of Ireland. Further, Spenser's own work as artist and poet parallels that of the New English planter and strives to create a pastoral yet utilitarian poetic landscape. Herron effectively elaborates on and complicates this argument by examining Spenser's treatment of violence in the pastoral-political landscape of Book I of *FQ* (violence is depicted as cropping, part of the natural scheme of things) and how the creativity of the poet-planter is less an antithesis to this mode of violence than a complement to it. Chapters 6 and 7 examine how the unfolding of the story of the Red Cross Knight and his final encounter with the Dragon relies on agricultural metaphor and georgic

source material and the ways in which the figure of the monarch as divine and nurturing fits into the georgic framework.

Part III studies episodes from Books V, VI, and VII. The chapter on the Mutabilitie Cantos examines how georgic tropes and themes are combined with Christian motifs and how English military engagement with Ireland is easily combined with images of planting, growing, and fertility. Both in this and in the following chapter on the Souldan episode of Book V, Herron again challenges the "anxiety critics" who dwell on Spenser's troubled cross-cultural identity as teller of Irish stories, by arguing that Spenser easily appropriated the role of Irish poet by referring to himself as *filh*, a type of Irish poet whose roles were historical, prophetic, and judiciary, and used the persona to encourage New English enterprise in Ireland, narrate English triumph, and satirize Irish chiefs such as Cúchullain (who Herron argues is refigured as the Souldan). The latter chapter is rather cursory in its treatment of the georgic overtones of the poem, though the final chapter on the Blatant Beast episode returns to the theme arguing that the heroic Calidore's struggle against the Beast is a georgic-epic battle that "advertises Spenser's Irish landscape and its dissolved monasteries . . . as a rich and fertile land to be won by the pious and hard-working Protestant planter" (186). In this final chapter though the detailed sketch of historical background is clearly important to Herron's reading of the poem, the tendency to separate "background" and "close-reading" into distinct and separate sections (rather than blending or combining the two) somewhat takes away from the effectiveness of the treatment of the material.

*Spenser's Irish Work* is overall an exciting contribution to early modern studies. It not only complicates the popular "anxiety" paradigm in studies of early modern cross-cultural encounter,



it is also an interesting and effective attempt to combine historical scholarship informed by an ideological / political stance with genre studies.

Brinda Charry teaches at Keene State College. Her primary interest is in early modern globalization and cross-cultural encounters. Recent work includes her article "Beauteous Scarf—Shakespeare and the 'Veil Question'" appearing in *Shakespeare Quarterly* and co-editorship of the forthcoming *Early Modern Emissaries, 1550–1700*.

## 38.9I

Majeske, Andrew J. *Equity in English Renaissance Literature: Thomas More and Edmund Spenser*. New York and London: Routledge, 2006. 217pp. ISBN 0-415-97705-3. \$110.00 cloth.

*Reviewed by Karen Cunningham*

Intervening in the lively critical conversation about the role of the literary in legal development, Andrew Majeske identifies a significant shift in the meaning of equity that began to be evident in the sixteenth century in England and on the Continent. Claiming that this shift is hard to discern in more conventional works of the era addressing legal and political theory, Majeske draws his conceptual path from Thomas More's comprehensive understanding of equity in *Utopia* as "perhaps the core element of justice" (1) to Edmund Spenser's narrow treatment of the idea in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, where equity is granted only a severely curtailed jurisprudential function. Among the causes of this shift were the rise of legal positivism and decline of theory-based juridical systems in favor of practice-based ones in the wake of Machiavelli;

the notions of Luther and Calvin of the duty of political obedience to secular rulers, which contributed to the idea that positive law trumped divine law in practical affairs; and the rise in the Baconian scientific method emphasizing theories based on actual occurrences. In the work of More and Spenser, Majeske discovers a lost classical sense of the meanings of equity, deriving largely from Aristotle and Plato, that mediates between two notions of an ideal political order: one, the best *theoretical* commonwealth, the other, the best *practically achievable* commonwealth (6).

Majeske's method is largely etymological and philological, and the book's introduction is devoted to an excavation of the historical meanings of equity, especially the classical Greek and Roman, which the author finds were subsequently modified to serve the purposes of Christian doctrine. Aristotle and Plato stand as Greek exemplars, the former in particular as the source of the idea that equity "was a device that intervened between the laws and specific cases to which they were applied" (2). Laws were necessarily general, and the cases to which they were applied were specific and unique. Equity quietly intervened between the laws and specific cases to produce appropriate outcomes by taking into account the unique circumstance of each case and ignoring where necessary the strict letter of the law. Effectively making new law for each case, this Aristotelian invisible equity supported the impression that laws were capable of producing fitting outcomes, and thus silently reinforced faith in legal justice.

Majeske follows tradition in attributing to Cicero the contrasting Roman term *aequitas*, which denotes an equal application of the laws. Although the Greek understanding highlighted distinguishing characteristics of cases in order to achieve a result fitting each case, the Roman *aequitas* sought to create equalness—"to dimin-



ish the relevant differences between cases" (3) so the application of the same law to different cases would be perceived as fair according to an idea of "equal" treatment. It is these conflicting classical theories, the author finds, that eventually combined uncomfortably into the English word *equity*, which itself was being modified by English Christian discourses. From a classical perspective, laws were defective since they needed to be formulated in general terms to apply to specific cases. From a Christian perspective, people were defective, by nature fallible, so their laws shared this fallibility. Equity's role in both instances was to assist—to work with the laws. In Christian discourses, however, equity was adapted and perceived as flowing from the infallible sources of natural and divine law; thus, it could potentially *correct* human law.

Four uses of equity (3 references, 1 allusion) occupy the discussion of More's *Utopia*: in the conversation between Raphael Hythlodæus and Lord Chancellor Morton in Book I; in the hypothetical conversation about how a king might raise revenue in I; in the dialogue between Raphael and "More" and Giles after Raphael has described the Utopian nation in Book II; and in Raphael's hypothetical description of the indirect method of counseling kings in I. These episodes present an interplay among the elements beginning to transform equity, which change it from a powerful jurisprudential concept to a narrowly conceived idea largely severed from its former meanings, and they anticipate the ways the concept of mercy (so routinely collapsed into equity in literary criticism) begins, unsatisfactorily in More's view, to perform equity's former function. For More, equity plays an essential role in maintaining and preserving the rule of law, a role that mercy by virtue of its position outside law cannot perform. Nonetheless he resists the Machiavelian impulse to prefer pragmatic to idealistic

principles, articulating instead a notion of utopian communism: a political ideal echoing classical values in which the distribution of wealth is one face of the distribution of justice and in which political theory can affect practical affairs.

A subject of much critical commentary, the Isis Church episode (Book V) is the focus of Majeske's discussion of *FQ*. By the time Spenser writes his epic, equity in England had been subordinated to law and its significance to justice had been greatly reduced. The scene surprises, Majeske argues, by showing a female monarch ruling over her male counterparts and equity ruling over justice in the description of Isis as "That part of Iustice, which is Equity" and her husband Osiris as justice itself (V.vii.3.4). Extending the work of Katherine Eggert and others who have explained the shift in Book V from the "feminine" literary genre of romance to the masculine genre of historical allegory, he finds that "lying down with Talus," the iron man figure of rigorous justice and its enforcement, involves the elimination or suppression of Aristotelian equity (95). It is Spenser's gendering of equity—his dividing off as feminine and ultimately rejecting flexible Greek equity, promoting instead a conventionally more masculine concept of Roman equity based on notions of equality (98)—that links the Isis Church episode to the gynocracy controversy and various positions about women's rule. In this account, the gendering of equity at Isis Church is an invention, "a device used by men to recruit women to the dubious cause of women's (re)subjugation to the rule of men" (103).

Despite Majeske's considerable erudition, the book suffers from a narrowness that makes its claims about the literature seem oddly confined and lacking implication; this effect is intensified by the relative absence of engagement with other early English literary figures or cur-



rent scholarship about the works. (A relevant contrast is Mark Fortier's more comprehensive *The Culture of Equity*, mentioned once in passing.) More troublesome is the organization. Following the introduction, the book comprises four chapters, two treating the classical perspective, one on *Utopia*, and one on *FQ*. These are followed somewhat problematically, however, by four more mini-essays in an Afterward and three Appendices that appear here as afterthoughts. Majeske's Latin-English translation of chapter one of Hugo Grotius' *De Aequitate, Facilitate, et Indulgentia* in Appendix B makes an important contribution to the history of ideas, but readers would have been better served if the appendices on Hobbes and Cicero had been integrated into the main argument where these figures had already been discussed. The author is also not served well by Routledge's rather casual editing, which has allowed typographical errors and repetition within and among chapters to persist into print. Given Majeske's etymological talents, readers can hope for later work that allows its ideas to achieve more complete resonance.

Karen Cunningham is a lecturer in the Department of English at UCLA. She is the author of *Imaginary Betrayals: Subjectivity and the Discourses of Treason in Early Modern England* and the editor with Constance Jordan of *The Law in Shakespeare*. Her essays and articles on Renaissance drama and literatures have appeared in *PMLA*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Renaissance Drama*, and Blackwell's *Companion to Shakespeare's Works*, among other places.

# 38.92

Roston, Murray. *Tradition and Subversion in Renaissance Literature*. Pittsburgh, P.A.: Duquesne UP, 2007. xiii + 258 pp. ISBN 0-8207-0390-7. \$60.00 cloth.

*Reviewed by Amelia Zurcher*

In *Tradition and Subversion in Renaissance Literature*, as in his most recent book on Graham Greene, Murray Roston turns away from the "interart" criticism on literature and the visual arts for which he is best known to return to literature on its own. The frame around this loosely connected collection of essays about Shakespeare, Spenser, Jonson, and Donne is Roston's argument against deconstruction. From a perspective perhaps more firmly rooted in art history than in current literary studies—the book makes no mention of the post-deconstructive turn to historicism in literary scholarship, but it does close, incongruously, with a brief endorsement of Barry Geween's 2005 attack in *The New York Times Book Review* on postmodern art and art criticism—Roston claims that deconstruction "continues to inform all aspects of criticism" and devalues both literature and the interpretive process (xiii). His method is not to challenge any particular deconstructive or poststructuralist reading of the Renaissance works in question, but rather to set up, via a few quotations from Derrida, Barthes, and J. Hillis Miller, a very broad claim for deconstruction's hostility to literary coherence and value which he then means to invalidate through individual literary readings.

Roston's central argument is that all great literary works include "subversive" themes and perspectives that challenge the broadly traditional ideas they espouse; so, in Roston's example from the Introduction, Edmund's bastardly



skepticism threatens the Elizabethan great chain of being with which *King Lear* largely sympathizes. This conflict is the potential incoherence, by Roston's not-that-well-informed account, that deconstruction calls aporia and intertextuality, and Bahktin construes (in a move Roston applauds) as heteroglossia. Roston's task is mainly to show that what looks like incoherence is actually integration and unity, although occasionally he settles for heteroglossia. In *The Merchant of Venice* there is no way to read Antonio as anything but a straightforward Christ figure (hence his melancholy), Shylock the Jew trying to shed his blood, and Portia the restorer of the spirit of the law. The real action in the play, against this rigidly allegorical backdrop, is Shakespeare's effort to reconcile his traditional Christian sentiments against usury with the subversive necessity for moneylending in the new capitalist economy, which he achieves by merging merchant and Christ within the single figure of Antonio and opposing him to the Jewish usurer. Similarly, Hamlet is caught between, on the one hand, the traditional Renaissance valuing of individual achievement and the comforting Christian belief in the afterlife as reward, and on the other, the subversive Stoic reading of death as annihilation. His command to his Stoic friend, just before his death, to preserve his memory only partly resolves the dilemma, because he has killed Claudius impetuously, rather than through any conviction; nevertheless, says Roston, we are left not with deconstructive incoherence but with a "coherent duality" that captures "the ambiguity of the human condition" (84-5).

Of the four writers he discusses, Roston construes Spenser as most resistant to his central thesis. In "Spenser and the Pagan Gods," which alone among the book's essays has not appeared previously in any form, Roston begins by arguing that although Spenser's "overall conception"

in *The Faerie Queene* must be acknowledged Christian, the critical commonplace that the work merges classical and Christian elements is wrong (103). In fact Spenser "is so enamored of the classical world in all its rediscovered richness that the Scriptures have not been merely subordinated to it but almost forgotten" (91). When Spenser has set up for himself the opportunity to make the obvious parallel between Amoret's and Belpheobe's virgin birth and Jesus's, he ignores it; when he might explicitly compare Book VI's Blatant Beast to the Beast in Revelations, he turns instead to Hercules's Hydra. Roston's purpose in the essay is not to reconcile this seeming disparity between Spenser's overall Protestant allegory and his local attraction to classical myths and ideas, but to emphasize it. With the recourse to broad historical narrative typical of this book, under the umbrella of Protestantism Roston gathers empiricism, the interest in materiality and the tactile that we begin to see in Chaucer, the Lutheran insistence on "tongue sense" alone, and late sixteenth-century Puritan hostility toward the pagan gods, and sets Spenser against all of them. Although the argument proceeds somewhat meanderingly, its main work is to link Spenser's resistance to what Roston sees as conventional Puritanism with his attraction to the classical and pagan, and then to connect both to Spenser's allegorical technique: just as *FQ* eschews the Christian for the classical, so it warns us against appearances masquerading as reality and refuses mere literality. Roston does somewhat recuperate Spenser's religious purpose at the end of the essay, but only to end where he began, reaffirming that *FQ* makes "no attempt to merge" pagan mythology with scripture (132). Though Roston assures us that it is not therefore disqualified from a "unified reading," *FQ* does thus remain somewhat on the book's margins, outside its integrative agenda (133).

It is hard to pinpoint the audience Roston had in mind for this book. He tends to traffic in very broad historical narratives—about the growing acceptance of usury over the two centuries before Shakespeare, for instance; or, in the Donne chapter, about the distinctions between Protestant and Catholic forms of meditation—that have been treated more fully in other scholarly work, and he so rarely turns to close textual analysis that most of his connections between historical context and the literary texts that are ostensibly his subjects remain, at most, gestures. His rather irresponsible treatment of deconstruction as a straw man seems aimed (perhaps a bit belatedly) more at a conservative popular readership than at an academic one. His real aim seems to be to argue against what he perceives to be critical consensus, whether it be on deconstruction, or the syncretic relation between Christianity and the classics in Spenser, or the moral disapprobation of Volpone's character in Jonson criticism. When Roston's methodology succeeds, as in his earlier books about the relationships among literature and the visual arts, it is in the stimulating connections it suggests among our various canonical narratives about the Renaissance. The risk of his approach is banality and such light-handedness with its literary subjects that it fails to do any of the real work of persuasion.

Amelia Zurcher is an Associate Professor English at Marquette University. Her teaching and scholarship focuses on Renaissance and seventeenth century British literature, with a particular interest in genre, historiography, narrative, and gender. She is the author of *Seventeenth-Century English Romance: Allegory, Ethics, and Politics* (Palgrave, 2007) and the editor of Judith Man's *Epitome of the Historie of Faire Argenis and Polyarchus* (Early Modern Englishwoman Series, Ash-

gate, 2003). She has also published articles on pastoral in Mary Wroth's *Urania* (*SEL*), history and stoicism in Shakespeare's romances (*ELH*), and ethics and the politic subject in seventeenth century prose romance (*ELR*).





# ARTICLES: ABSTRACTS AND NOTICES

*Abstracts by Gitanjali Shahani (San Francisco State U.)*

## 38.93

Kambaskovic-Sawers, Danijela. "Never was I the golden cloud': Ovidian Myth, Ambiguous Speaker and the Narrative in the Sonnet Sequences by Petrarch, Sidney and Spenser." *Renaissance Studies* 21.5 (2007): 637-661.

Looks at the ways in which the sonnet form "functions as a *sequence*, an integrated work of fiction in which poems have been ordered, and characters fashioned, to make sense when the work is read from beginning to end." Argues that the sequentiality of the sonnet is all too often neglected in critical discourse. It therefore becomes imperative to turn attention to the "mechanisms sonneteers employ to achieve interactivity with the reader . . . as well as to acknowledge that the use of such mechanisms betrays the presence of novelistic thinking." The sonnet sequences of Petrarch, Sidney, and Spenser employ a kind of ambiguous self-fictionalization—"building an ambiguous first person speaker"—in order to achieve reader involvement and a perception of integrity. Each draws on an Ovidian subtext as an example of ambiguous self-fictionalization, employing "contrasting speaker voices and multiple resonances of meaning that engage the reader and propel the plot. . . ." In Spenser's *Amoretti*, we see some subtle but significant changes in the quality of the first-person voice. With the poet's betrothal being imminent, the speaker no longer celebrates the poetics of permanent frustration, reveling instead in the progress from frustration to satisfaction. "Spenser's speaker changes the nature of the reader's response in two important ways: first, as the storyline of Spenser's *Amoretti* progresses towards a reintroduction of equilibrium, it builds

in the reader a heightened sense of expectation, a stronger sense of narrative flow; and second, because of the awareness that the sonnets were written for a particular set of eyes [those of Elizabeth Boyle], another reader's presence takes on a voyeuristic quality." This involvement in what feels like a private turmoil challenges not only the readers' ethical views, but also their pre-conceived notion of the genre.

## 38.94

Palmer, Patricia. "Missing Bodies, Absent Bards: Spenser, Shakespeare and a Crisis in Criticism." *English Literary Renaissance* 36.3 (2006): 376-395.

Begins with the observation that native bodies frequently go missing in Elizabethan accounts of sixteenth century Ireland. Like the Faerie Queene of Arthur's dream—"Nought but pressed gras where she had lyen"—their traces of occupancy point only to their absence, whether it is the mittens left behind by the 'rebel' Sir Edmund Butler as he escaped Dublin castle, or the shoes left behind by the 'insurgent' Sógán Earl of Desmond as he was being pursued by Sir George Carew, or the provisions for a "merry Christmas" meal left behind by Felim Mac Fiach O'Byrne, who ran naked into the woods to escape being captured by Lord Deputy Mountjoy. It is precisely this kind of absent / present trace of the native that we see in recent scholarly discussions of the colonial Irish context of English Renaissance literature. The critical analysis of *A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland* is a case in point. For several commentators "committed to replacing colonial absolutes with intimations of contact,"



the moment when Irenius introduces a bardic song in his narrative constitutes a moment when the canonical text is "giving voice" to the native. However, the actual bardic poet is entirely absent in this dialogue—"and nobody seems to have noticed his absence." It would seem like "the bard holds no real interest for . . . critics; he enters their discourse only when his identity merges with Spenser's." Argues that "we need to abandon the illusion that a genuine dialogue can be opened up within the master texts of the colonizing nation." Indeed, "it is irresponsible for critics to imagine that an English-language text, however polyphonic, can conduct a dialogue across cultures and particularly across languages."

### 38.95

Schmelzer, Mary. "The Tyranny of Temporality: Edmund Spenser, Desire and the Already Written Text." *KronoScope* 7.1 (2007): 67-77.

Examines the temporal disparity between an idea and its inscription, between an act of creation and its representation in writing. "No speaking, writing, or even thinking can replicate its source because the linear activity of communicating an unarticulated notion operates in a different temporal register from the seeming wholeness of its inspiration." It is perhaps the scientist or the artist, seeking "to share the visions of the unarticulated imagination in representation, who notices most deeply the lack inherent in every act of temporal expression." This conundrum seems central to Spenser's subject in Book VI, canto X of *The Faerie Queene*, which describes Colin Clout's vision on Mount Acidale, "its interruption and interpretation." Throughout Spenser's work, he would grapple with these frustrations, figured forth in his battle with the muses. "As a poet, the problem is this: . . . How can I reconcile the unreconcilable desires of the synchronic un-

conscious and its discrete structure, with the proliferation of that desire in the temporal chain of signifiers that are never it?" Despite his repeated vows to sing no more, though, the poet always returns to his "endlesse work."

### 38.96

Stark, Sue P. "Spenser's Romance Heroines: The Heroic and the Pastoral in Book 3 and Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*." *The Heroines of English Pastoral Romance*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007. 86-106.

Argues that Pastorella, the shepherdess of Book VI and Calidore's beloved, "provides a more typical model of the heroine of English Renaissance romance than does Britomart," Spenser's female knight of Chastity, whom we first encounter in Book III. No doubt a minor character in Spenser's epic poem, Pastorella nevertheless presents an interesting point of comparison with Britomart. "Each offers a different answer to the question: how does a romance heroine prove herself?" Both heroines undergo a range of trials (both of the flesh and the spirit), which testify to their fitness as objects of courtship. While Britomart must endure the visual threat to chastity from Malecasta's rolling eye (3.1.41) and lascivious knights like Gardante (3.1.65), Pastorella must fend off threats to her body and her life at the hands of marauding brigands (6.9.19). In these two versions of feminine romance heroism and in their respective experiences of fleshly violation and recovery we see how "Spenser imagines the difference between the chivalric and pastoral concepts of honor." In both characters, the poet offers "two separate generically inflected versions of feminine honor for the well-born girl, thus supplementing his initial goal as outlined in the Raleigh letter to include trials of maturity associated with female coming-of-age."



## ABSTRACTS OF CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

The following papers were given at the 43rd International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 8-11, 2008, at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI.

### PASTORAL CARE

Sponsor: Spenser at Kalamazoo

Organizer: Beth Quitslund (Ohio U.), Theodore L. Steinberg (SUNY-Fredonia), and David Scott Wilson-Okamura (East Carolina U.)

Presiding: Bruce Danner (St. Lawrence U.)

### 38.97

David J. Lohnes (U. of South Carolina, Columbia), "John Dove's *Calendarium Pastorum: An Interpretive Reading of the Shepheardes Calender Dating from the Middle 1580s*."

As students of Neo-Latin culture in the Elizabethan universities know, the middle 1580s saw a thriving circle of Latin poets at the University of Oxford. One of the minor members of that circle was John Dove, a poet whose work seems to have been limited chiefly to contributions for various anthologies of Latin poetry published by the newly founded Oxford UP. But there is at least one piece of John Dove's Latin poetry that has never been printed, his complete Latin translation of Spenser's then new *SC* (the translation is of the poems only; it does not include any of the arguments or other apparatus). Found in a single manuscript housed in the library of Gonville and Caius College at Cambridge University, it offers a glimpse into the earliest reception and interpretation of Immerito's shepherd songs.

By its very nature, any translation must be a kind of close reading—a word-by-word, line-by-line analysis and interpretation of another piece of writing. Dove's translation, therefore, is a close analysis of Spenser's work—perhaps one of the most detailed and comprehensive reading of Spenser (certainly of the *SC*) made until very re-

cent times. And since it has been dated to within five years of the original publication of the *SC*, it not only represents one of the most detailed, but also one of the very earliest critical responses to Spenser.

This paper will serve as an introduction to Dove's translation, touching briefly on its origin and Neo-Latin context, but focusing primarily on how it reads the *SC*; what it indicates Spenser's early readers found interesting about his work; and what it implies about how we are to respond to the *SC*'s sometimes troublesome and contradictory critical apparatus.

### 38.98

Mark Jackson (U. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), "Youth, Age, and Repentance in Spenser's *Fowre Hymnes*."

Readers of the *Fowre Hymnes* occasionally have tried to resolve the contradictions between the earthly and heavenly pairs of hymns by reading the diptych as a model of human progress from sensuality in youth to wisdom in old age. In the 2005 volume of *Spenser Studies* Robert Ellrodt opposes such readings on the ground that Spenser never encourages his readers to postpone the pursuit of heavenly wisdom till old age. In essence, I agree with Ellrodt, but in this paper I expand upon his note so that a set of problems and contradictions tied to the language of aging in the *Fowre Hymnes* may receive larger consideration. I think those problems can best be seen when we realize that Spenser's *Fowre Hymnes* shifts back and forth between two ideals of human experience, one transcendental and the



other natural.

In passages of the *Fowre Hymnes*, Spenser condemns the follies of his youth and encourages other readers, youthful in either age or spirit, to eschew the course of life he has followed and repent of earthly love. Nevertheless, inclusion of the first two hymns celebrating earthly love implies that such love is still praiseworthy; it is still worthy of a hymn. The estimation of earthly love rises even more when we realize that a third kind of love not even deserving the name love, but rather "lust," does not warrant a hymn even though lust marks a place in the speaker's history. Thus, on the one hand, inclusion of the earthly hymns makes their subsequent renunciation more shocking and heavenly love more glorious, but on the other hand, it puts earthly love in the role of a propaedeutic to heavenly love. This is another way of saying that the *Fowre Hymnes* entertain what J.A. Burrow has dubbed an ideal of transcendence and an ideal of nature. According to ideals of transcendence, perfection lies beyond the natural progression of the ages of man; to perfect ourselves we can and must overcome the faults typical of our years. An exquisite formulation occurs in the *Book of Wisdom*, often cited as a source for Spenser's final hymn and his figure of Sapience: "For honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But Wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age." According to ideals of nature, on the other hand, perfection comes only with age; over time we gradually attain to the wisdom and sobriety of sage old men. Of the two, ideals of nature are the more permissive. In the Renaissance, they often could impart to youth a palatable excuse for miscreant behavior.

When Spenser associates earthly love with youth and then renounces it, he underscores its defect and the need for continual sanctification.

Thus the *Fowre Hymnes* concludes with a transcendent ideal. When read unitively, however, the quartet renders earthly love as an example of *tempestivitas*, or seasonableness, something not perfect but suitable for its age, a safe alternative to heavenly love at a time when the human body may make the progress to divine love most difficult. The interest Spenser has in the tension between transcendental and natural ideals can be seen in other works, too. Most noteworthy, at the end of Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser delves into the ambiguity of nature and transcendence as the Red Cross Knight vacillates between joining the elderly Contemplation on his mountain and descending back to earth to finish his task of saving Una's parents. Contemplation deems the latter choice the one appropriate to the Red Cross Knight's stage in the progress of holiness, but as for the question whether the joys of contemplation are proper to the last years of this life or only to a new afterlife, Spenser leaves it in suspension. The ambiguity of nature and transcendence is something he does not harmonize, here or in the *Fowre Hymnes*; it is, he implies, rooted in human life on earth.

## 38.99

Jean N. Goodrich (Albany State U.), "Class Anxiety in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*: Beyond the 'Saluage Nation' and the 'Many-Headed Monster.'"

The depiction in early modern texts of the lower classes or the "lower sort" as the enraged mob or "many-headed monster" is common enough to be styled ubiquitous. Stephen Greenblatt has investigated what he calls "the frequent representations in Elizabethan literature of the victory of the forces of property, order, and true religion over the many-head monster," which include "tales of mass rebellion and knightly victories"



in Sidney's *Arcadia*, Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI*, and, of course, Spenser's *FQ* (15). Greenblatt looks specifically at the episode of the Gyant of the scales of Book V as the depiction of a radical threat to appropriate boundaries and limitations required by civilized society, readily followed by the gullible masses. Todd Butler uses the same scene in addition to Una's sojourn among the satyrs in Book I to demonstrate Spenser's anxiety about the slow acceptance of Protestantism by the uneducated, often misled multitudes. This is an anxiety, Butler argues, shared by many Elizabethan Protestants and expressed frequently in reformist polemic. Many of these early modern sources depict the "lower sort" functioning in large groups and always in the process—or on the verge of—pulling society down as they try to pull themselves up in life.

Contrary to this tendency, Spenser also depicts the "lower sort" through individual portraits, including those of the blacksmith Care of Book IV and the female cottagers who give hospitality to Florimel in Book III and Arthur, Amoret and Aemylia in Book IV. These depictions suggest a view of the "lower sort" that is often more sympathetic, and significantly more nuanced than his contemporaries' views. While Spenser's depictions of the mob, the "rascall crew" and the "many-headed monster," are used in specifically charged contexts—suggesting an anxiety caused by empowered women or Irish kerns, for example—Spenser's representation of individual common folk seems more personal, perhaps reflecting Spenser's awareness of his own humble origins and an unwillingness to reduce the common folk always to the (safely) anonymous horde. Spenser's treatment of Care in particular suggests not a fear of being pulled down by the commoners but of what life might be like were he to fall on his climb into the gentry. For Spenser, the life of the "lower sort" is

akin to Kristeva's idea of the abject: something to be pushed away and rejected from / as oneself. In this essay, I examine the representations of the "lower sorts" which appear in Spenser's *FQ* that differ from the "rascall crew" and "many-headed monster" studied previously. These alternate depictions express perhaps not the anxieties "of an Age," but rather those of a man caught between merchant-class and gentry, patronage and poverty.

#### Works Cited

- Butler, Todd. "That 'Saluage Nation': Contextualizing the Multitudes in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*." *Spenser Studies* XIX (2004): 93-124.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and The Representation of Rebellion." *Representations* 1 (Feb 1983): 1-29.

#### SPENSER: SOURCES & CONTEXTS

Presiding: Scott D. Vander Ploeg (Madisonville Community College)

## 38.100

Bruce Danner (St. Lawrence U.), "Cecilian Succession: *Mother Hubberds Tale* and the Theobalds Entertainment of 1591."

Critical assessment of Edmund Spenser's *Mother Hubberds Tale* has long been occupied with inconclusive inquiries into the work's origins. Even though no reference to the poem exists before its publication in the *Complaints* volume of 1591, Spenser claimed in his work's dedication that it was "long sithens composed in the raw concept of my youth," a comment that has provoked much consideration, but little certainty. Since Edwin Greenlaw's ingenious attempts to locate these origins during Spenser's service at Leicester House in 1579, scholars have speculated on the



poem's first beginnings, work that has served to distract attention from its incendiary role in the political and court discourses of 1591. Indeed, the very basis for an early dating of the poem very likely stems from this incendiary content, in the poet's attempt to deflect attention from the work's most provocative topical content.

Confirmation of the poem's censorship by government authority in the March 1591 comments of Catholic recusant Sir Thomas Tresham offers a sweeping refutation of Greenlaw's thesis, along with promising new directions for scholarly attention. In this paper I connect the subversive content of *Mother Hubberds Tale* and the government's calling in of the *Complaints* with the Cecils' entertainment of the Queen at Theobalds in May 10-21, 1591, a mere six weeks following the scandalous public reaction to Spenser's poem. While Lord Burghley had hosted Elizabeth many times at Theobalds throughout the reign, the 1591 entertainment represented an unprecedented degree of cost, opulence, and theatricality to court the Queen on behalf of Burghley's son, Robert Cecil. The stakes of this visit were breathtaking in their political ambition. Having bestowed the grandeur of Theobalds (the most extraordinary building of Elizabethan England) upon a second son, Burghley was vying to secure Robert's future with one of the highest ministerial positions in the country, the secretaryship, left vacant after the death of Sir Francis Walsingham. In the fictional arc of the entertainments presented to the Queen during her visit, the Cecils staged the young Robert's advancement as a political succession from his father, who represented himself in the guise of a retiring hermit ready to let go of the daily cares of state, with Robert as the vigorous youth ready take on the mantle of high office. By any account, their efforts were enormously successful. Robert was knighted upon the Queen's

departure, and was elevated to the privy council later that August, a staggering honor for the 28 year old political newcomer. Elizabeth would reject Burghley's attempts to retire, however. In need of her most trusted councilor, the Queen could not allow Burghley to leave his duties, nor, in the heated disputes over the disposition of the secretaryship, was she prepared to grant that further honor as well. Burghley would stay on to continue the duties of the secretary, with his son handling its day to day operations as *de facto* minister, a condition that Elizabeth eventually formalized in 1596.

Just as these ambitions succeeded in elevating Robert Cecil to high office and intimacy with the Queen, they reinforced intense antipathy and resentment crystallized in the notorious term "*regnum Cecilianum*." Regardless of the author's intentions in *Mother Hubberds Tale*, Spenser's work would inevitably be viewed in the context of the upcoming Cecil entertainment, festivities that showcased Burghley's power and prestige in the estate of Theobalds, and the rising status of Robert that exposed an open bid for a Cecilian succession to power, even as questions about the royal succession would grow more anxious in the early 1590s.

## 38.101

Sharon K. Higby (U. of Maryland, College Park),  
 "The Astrophel of Spenser and Nash."

Critics have identified the source material for Spenser's *Astrophel* in a variety of places. The Adonis myth; the tradition of pastoral elegy; Sidney's experiences on the field in Zutphen in 1586; Sidney's *oeuvre* and Spenser's own writings are all evident in the poem. As many critics point out, these various sources have been blended, manipulated and focused for the elegiac purpose of commemorating the life of Sir Philip



Sidney.

My essay looks at the formal and thematic oddities of *Astrophel* and locates them in an analogue that has been underappreciated in the critical history surrounding Spenser's elegy: Nash's preface to the 1591 edition of *Astrophel and Stella*. The tone, language and narrative arrangement within Nash's preface are closely examined and, as I suggest, offer a precedent for Spenser's *Astrophel*. Reading Nash's preface as an intertext to Spenser's elegy confirms my suggestion that several oddities (the *Astrophel* shepherd-cum-slaughterer; the superior artistic pathos given to Stella; the failure of the elegy, excluding the *Lay*, to deliver consolation; the phenomenon of the double elegy) have a purpose beyond accusing Spenser of missing his mark (in the vein of C.S. Lewis's famous assessment back in 1954) or of casting a cloud over Spenser's poetic ambitions (Falco). I argue instead that the ambiguities within Spenser's elegy mirror the structure, audience and themes of Nash's preface and in order to reinforce a Sidneian poetic.

Both Nash and Spenser present unflattering portraits of *Astrophel*, and yet both poets were ardent admirers of Sidney and the poetic experiments at Wilton. Their purpose? To remind Sidney's disciples of Sidney's own investment in and assessment of art. Spenser's elegy performs mimetically what Sidney's poetics hope to achieve: a sharpening of wits and discernment regarding the arts, a claim that finds its strongest defense in Nash's prefatory material.

My essay should interest scholars hoping to discover stronger ties among the Sidneian coterie (ties which include Spenser), and scholars seeking further evidence on the interdependence of Sidney's and Spenser's poetics.

## 38.102

Matthew L. Simpson (U. of Connecticut),  
**"Richard Bostocke's Binarius: A Satanic and Divisive Precursor to Edmund Spenser's Duessa."**

In Spenser's *FQ*, Duessa personifies evil duality. Compared to Una, the epitome of oneness, she represents a malevolent two-ness that bedevils any episode in which she appears. Duessa's doubleness is encoded in her name, and as she explains, this makes her duplicitous: "I that do seeme not I, Duessa ame." Spenser's treatment of duality is part of a Renaissance tradition in which two-ness represented satanic evil while unity was associated with divine goodness. However, Spenser was not the first author writing in English to personify duality with an allegorical figure. Five years before the first version of *FQ* was published, Richard Bostocke authored an anti-Galenic medical treatise promoting the scientific theories of Paracelsus. The conflict between unity and duality was central to Bostocke's argument, as is evident in the book's prodigious title: *The difference betwene the auncient phisicke, first taught by the godly forefathers, consisting in vnitie peace and concord: and the latter phisicke proceeding from idolaters, ethnicks, and heathen: as Gallen, and such other consisting in dualitie, discorde, and contrarietie And wherein the naturall philosophie of Aristotle doth differ from the trueth of Gods worde, and is iniurious to Christianitie and sounde doctrine* (1585). Although Bostocke's prose is relatively devoid of allegorical signs, it features a satanic figure, Binarius, the "author of division." Binarius is a clear precedent, if not prototype, for Duessa, not only because his name encodes duality, but in his divisive actions against unity.

Throughout Bostocke's treatise, he associates Paracelsian medicine with unity and Galenic



medicine with division. This dichotomizing rhetoric is relieved by biblical allegory however, when Bostocke invokes Genesis. When God "created Microcosmum or little worlde, us, man," men and women lived in harmony and

The worlde did persist in this union, and did observe the nature of unitie, untill that wretched creature Binarius which fell from unitie and made a dualitie and contrarietie, enuyng the state of man, that persisted in unitie, by captious sophistical reason did perswade him to eate of the Apple forbidden, wherby he brake unitie, and fell head-long into disobedience, dualitie and contrarietie.

Disease was a direct consequence of this intervention by Binarius. Later in the treatise Bostocke argues that the diseases of the microcosm can only be relieved by the "medicine Vnary. . . . Sickness can not be taken away. . . by Binarius the Author of discorde and contrarietie." Bostocke goes on to associate divisive Galenic medicine with papism—"Romish doctrine." Thus, just as Spenser's Duessa is a religiously and politically divisive force, helping to separate the Red Cross Knight from Una and reformed religion, fighting Arthur in the demonic trappings of Antichrist, and representing Mary Stuart in the court of Mercilla, Binarius wreaks havoc upon unity at the level of the human body, religious doctrine, and divine providence.

#### FORMS OF WORK IN SPENSER'S

##### FAERIE QUEENE

Presiding: Elizabeth Bradburn (Western Michigan U.)

38.103

Nathaniel B. Smith (Indiana U., Bloomington),  
"Shielded Subjects and Dreams of Permeability:

#### Scudamour in *The Faerie Queene*."

Care's cottage would seem the perfect place to find evidence of the much-discussed "permeability" of the early modern subject. The phantasmatic blacksmith and his underlings, after all, viciously beat their anvils until the sound "did molest" Scudamour's violated senses; Care fashions the "yron wedges" of "vnquiet thoughts" that "inuade" Scudamour's "carefull mind"; and the smith's "redwhot yron tongs" memorably "nip" the knight under his armor, leaving a nasty mark (IV.v.41, 35, 44). Some of these infiltrations are only quasi-material: sounds and thoughts are given the same penetrative force on bodies as "yron tongs." Even the knight's dream—occurring in the body's *spiritus* or *pneuma*—would have been understood in the period as traversing the threshold between a body and its surroundings, revealing the subtle connections between flesh, mind, and soul and recalling the motions of humors and passions as described by Gail Kern Paster and others. Although Scudamour's dream may seem like a wholly inward, immaterial phenomenon, "nothing else but the echo of our conceits in the day" as Thomas Nashe would have it, I argue that it reenacts the intersubjective, linguistic invasion of Ate's wounding words that "thrild" Scudamour's body "with inward grieffe" (IV.i.49), an image of the somatic efficacy of language common to classical and early modern theories of rhetoric and magic, where language is situated in the same quasi-material register as the spirits, humors, and passions. Scudamour's story, though, troubles the notion of the endlessly permeable, "leaky" subject, for those thrilling words not only pierce and penetrate but bind and harden him, just as (the narrator tells us) a wounded stag "astonisht stands in the midst of his smart" (IV.i.49). Such is the paradox of Scudamour, whose very shield depicts piercing arrows. The knight is at once vulnerable to

words and yet at times as insensible to them as those forge-workers who "Ne let [Scudamour's] speeches come vnto their eare" (v.38). Scudamorean subjectivity, then, is structured by linguistic fixation, a variation of what Marsilio Ficino might have called "fascination," when the object of desire is internalized and imprinted as an obsession in the lover's *spiritus*. Spenser reveals this condition as a callous, narcissistic, impenetrable subjectivity, apparent in Scudamour's disregard for Glauce's counsel just before entering the house of Care but nowhere more evident than in the Temple of Venus, when Amoret fruitlessly "prayd" and "besought" her captor "with tender teares to let her go" (x.57). Scudamour's impenetrability in the poem manifests a profound lack of concern—care—for the other, a condition that directly leads to his own anxious, care-filled night with the blacksmiths. In this episode, then, linguistic permeability, openness, and vulnerability come to be figured not as the inevitable physiological condition of the subject but instead as an ideal, a dream Spenser extends to his own readers, who are asked to approach the poem not with a "rugged forehead"—itself a kind of censoring shield—but instead with "melting loue" to "soften" the potentially inflexible boundaries of the subject (IV.Proem.1, 5).

### 38.104

A.R. Bossert, (U. of Maryland), "Radigund, the Maligned Queen: An Analysis of Slavery and Tyranny in Book V of Spenser's *Fairie Queene*." Radigund, the bellicose Amazon ruler of Spenser's *FQ*, has appeared to many modern scholars as a duplicitous jezebel, a licentious hedonist, and a litigious trickster. Such labels often arise by reading Spenser's character in a wider context of literature, iconography, or allegory, and each reinforces the conclusion that Radigund is a tyrant.

However, on a closer reading of Book V of Spenser's epic, it becomes clear that the poet depicts Radigund as a far cry from these less than noble representations. Although she certainly exerts excessive authority over her male captives by shaming them with woman's garments and forcing them into domestic labor, Radigund continuously displays the traits of a noble monarch: selflessly serving her own warriors and even willingly laying down her power in the name of love. That is, she appears a tyrant only to those with whom she has no political relationship. Far less tyrannical than her reputation would make her seem, Radigund is a victim of ill reports and conniving courtiers. Rather than tricking Artegall with her terms of combat, Radigund herself falls prey to betrayal at the hands of Artegall, who is the first to break the terms to which he willingly agreed. The encounter between the Amazon and the knight of Justice shows how abuses of justice can produce tyranny before a tyrant abuses justice.

Radigund is a victim of misrepresentation by the men whom she takes prisoner and humiliates but also by some of the women whom she dutifully serves. Artegall's suffering in captivity increases at the very moment when Radigund intends to lessen it because a self-serving courtier misinforms the knight as to the queen's intentions. Politically, Spenser alerts his reader to the dangers of the court: an environment that separates a ruler from the lowest members of society. Such an environment can distort rulers' and subjects' perceptions of one another to the advantage of corrupt courtiers who play royalty against commoners. Radigund's reputation for tyranny precedes any tyrannous behavior on her part, but those same false accusations lead those beneath her to act in such a way as to compel her to become the very tyrant they assumed her to be. This argument is part of a larger project I



am working on that considers depictions of royal slavery in early modern literature. In particular, my discussion of Radigund and Artegall relates to English beliefs of tyranny as a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the victim is responsible for his own enslavement.







ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUERIES

38.105

Craig Berry submits this announcement:

I am pleased to announce that the just-released WordHoard 1.2.8 now includes all of Spenser's poetry, including what we now call the shorter poems. While it would be fair enough to refer to WordHoard as a browsable and searchable electronic text or better yet as a concordance on steroids, it is probably best just to have a look for yourself. The software, as well as documentation on what it is and how to use it, are all available at: <http://wordhoard.northwestern.edu>. The new texts have not (yet) had quite the same level of review and correction of their lemmatization and part-of-speech data as have *The Faerie Queene* and *The Shepheards Calender*. I am sure some errors remain and will be working to correct them, but problem reports directly to me are welcome (email: [craigberry@mac.com](mailto:craigberry@mac.com)).

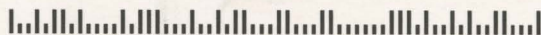


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