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To Our Readers

38.75

In this issue, we bring you news from the 2007 MLA meeting, including Gordon Teskey's Hugh Maclean Memorial lecture. We also include abstracts from other MLA Spenser sessions and reviews of recent books of interest in our field. We encourage you all to make plans to attend the Kalamazoo Spenser sessions, which will be detailed in a future issue.

Book Reviews and Notices

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Burlinson, Christopher. *Allegory, Space and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser*. Cambridge, England: D.S. Brewer, 2006. xvi + 256 pp. ISBN 1-84384-078-2. $85.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Scott Maisano

No ideas but in things. Christopher Burlinson's first book, which bills itself as "a radical reassessment of Spenserian allegory," brings *The Faerie Queene* as close as it has ever been to the poetic credo of William Carlos Williams. A few pages into *Allegory, Space, and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser*, Burlinson risks simplicity by asking the question directly: "To what extent is *The Faerie Queene* a poem about things?" (6). What sounds, initially, like a joke, a gag, a farce—*FQ* is about virtues not things!—turns out to be a serious inquiry that sheds new light on a decaying epic. Indeed, physical deterioration (as well as historical distance) takes on a positive valence when Burlinson, in a dazzling chapter on the role that Kilcolman has played in Spenserian criticism, summons into evidence the maxim of Walter Benjamin: "*Allegorien sind im Reiche der Gedanken was Ruinen im Reiche der Dinge*" ["Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things"] (150). The basic argument of Burlinson's book is that "[like] Mammon himself, Spenser presents us with a superfluity of objects and material" (19)—for example, the tapestries hung in Busyrane's castle or the "royal arras" on display in Orgoglio's—but readers have been trained to disregard these materials as immaterial to the meaning of the poem and to eschew these objects as inessential to Spenser's stated objective "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." Burlinson asks us to read not for the forests, which he describes in his penultimate chapter as "simply static symbols from an exclusively literary vocabulary" (170), but for the actual, historical trees: the timber, in this case, being exported out of sixteenth-century Ireland. No meaning, to paraphrase Williams, but in materials.

Burlinson notes in his opening chapter that "English Renaissance literary studies in the last five years or so have been marked by an acute interest in material culture" (19). Scholars of early modern drama, particularly, have turned with increasing frequency to cultural anthropologists, such as Igor Kopytoff and Arjun Appadurai, in their efforts to explain why the non-human "things" in the theatre, the lowly stuff of the costumes and props department, are every bit as interesting and indispensable for critical analysis as the much vaunted literary characters with whom these things share the stage. Not content to look only at the commodities or properties (for instance, Chrysaor, the sword that "materializes" Justice in Book V) which circulate throughout the allegory, Burlinson shows us why the most important material products in fairyland are not things which can be placed into the hands of literary characters but things which, as it were, hold the literary characters themselves in place: Spenser's quasi-realistic galleries, royal chambers, fortifications, forests, caves, and huts. Why quasi-realistic? Because critics rarely consider these places and spaces in Spenser's allegory to be substantial structures—the elaborate descriptions of their physical makeup notwithstanding—but treat them, instead, as reified mental states, the psychic projections of nervous knights and damsels in distress. Again, Burlinson begins to challenge the traditional (mythological, nu-

merological, and iconographical) ways of reading architectural and natural spaces in the poem, by asking a few simple questions (this time about "the wandring wood" in the poem's first canto): "Is Una recognizing a place that she has either seen before or knows something about, or are she and Redcrosse merely encountering a reified image of their own wandering and error? . . . Does it make any sense to think of the place [Errours den] as having any sort of reality before Redcrosse and Una encounter it? Do they, indeed, encounter it, or is it a projection of their mental and moral state?" (26)

How we answer these questions literally makes a world of difference. As Burlinson demonstrates, one consequence of writing off every edifice and environment in the allegory as merely a mental phenomenon or else a literary convention is that we divorce Spenser's epic from his own lived experiences, his first-hand knowledge of such places, and the uses and abuses to which both royal galleries and desolate forests alike (not to mention the queen's own "presence chamber") were put in the age of Elizabeth. If readers do not know the variety of activities historically associated with each of these spaces then they are lacking a crucial context for understanding and appreciating some of *FQ*'s most notorious episodes: from the Red Cross Knight's arrival at the House of Pride (76-9) to Mutabilitie's trial at Arlo Hill (175-80). Just as Martin Heidegger once insisted, in his own meditation on the nature of "things" in art, that the viewer of Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes* must imagine stepping into the footwear in order to experience not only what the shoes are made of but also what purpose they serve—what they are used for—so, too, Burlinson suggests that "Britomart, who spends a night in [Busyrane's gallery] and is free to move around, look at and disregard the tapestries in ways that contradict [the sequence in which the tapestries are described to the reader], has had a different experience of the space from the reader of the poem" (58). Here, I think, is the greatest strength of *Allegory, Space, and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser*: in Burlinson's hands, *FQ* is no longer a text to be read in predictable sequence but an immersive and interactive 'world' to be inhabited and explored in the same way that Britomart, kept waiting, temporarily makes herself at home in Busyrane's allegorical castle.

Allegory, like an amusement park, would appear to be a very controlled environment. Visitors to fairyland, like visitors to Disney World, typically assume that the entire experience has been carefully scripted out in advance and thus they tend to do things in the order they are supposed to be done because doing anything else would risk ruining the author/inventor's intended effect. Burlinson believes otherwise. He discusses the production of space in the poem in terms borrowed from Henri Lefebvre and Michel De-Certeau and, in doing so, he subtly encourages readers to move around independently and to adopt tactics for subverting and/or repurposing the rules of the game (recall that Gordon Teskey makes the connection between allegory and games in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*), all of which has the salutary effect of "opening up" even the most overdetermined places in the poem.

Burlinson's book concludes with a note on the vanishing materiality of literature itself: "The status of objects and literary objects, and changes in their status as they pass through history, also need to be taken into account. As I have shown, for example, we encounter these literary and real objects and places (and both 'literary' and 'real' are terms that we should never stop interrogating) within a process of physical decay and forgetting (as with the ruins of Kilcolman Castle), a process of historical revision and material disappear-

ance (as with the Irish forests)" (221). Since the rendering of Spenser's allegory into a video game is surely already in development, Burlinson's user-friendly and interactive approach to the poem, allowing for a greater variety of meanings and ways to play, is positioned, in this reviewer's opinion, just ahead of the game.

Scott Maisano is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. He has essays either published or forthcoming in *The Shakespeare Yearbook*; *Configurations: A Journal of Literature, Science, and Technology*; *Genesis Redux: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Artificial Life*; and *Approaches to Teaching Ovid and Ovidianism*. Professor Maisano's current book project is entitled *Shakespearean Science Fictions: New Philosophy and Late Romances*. He is also co-editing a scholarly edition of James Shirley's dramatic romance *Saint Patrick for Ireland*.

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Chamberlain, Richard. *Radical Spenser: Pastoral, Politics and the New Aestheticism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005. 161 pp. ISBN 0-7485-2192-X. Paperback. $75.00 cloth; $25.00 paper.

Reviewed by Elizabeth Jane Bellamy

In the 1990s, a dominant trend in Spenser scholarship was a focus less on Spenser the laureate poet than on Spenser the planter in Munster, a New English colonist who viewed Ireland as "saluage," barbarous, degenerate; harbored phobias about assimilation into Irish culture; and even advocated violence to subdue the Irish. But Willy Maley, whose scholarship has contributed significantly to this trend, has also issued a word of caution about reading the presence of Ireland everywhere in *FQ*: a focus on Ireland "primarily leads to a bias toward contextual criticism that talks around *FQ*, rather than taking them [readers] into the text .... [Ireland] can never exhaust the range of meanings in the poem" (Hadfield and Willy Maley 184).

The current scholarly climate's focus on a colonized early modern Ireland may be less than favorable in its assessment of Spenser's politics. But Richard Chamberlain's *Radical Spenser: Pastoral, Politics and the New Aestheticism*, picking up where Maley left off, seeks to recoup Spenser's politics for a new millennium via the unlikely—but no less compelling—category of the pastoral. In so doing, Chamberlain neither shies away from the vexed "Irish question" in Spenser's writing, nor does he perceive a politically retrograde Spenser.

Pastoral is a genre notoriously difficult to define. To expand on this elusiveness, Chamberlain quotes Paul Alpers's observation that "it sometimes seems as if there are as many versions of pastoral as there are critics and scholars who write about it" (Alpers 8). For Chamberlain, the pastoral is the political—the undefinable pastoral, that is; and from Alpers's observation, he begins the task of excavating a "radical" Spenser. Alpers's "many versions of pastoral" echoes the title of William Empson's 1935 *Some Versions of Pastoral* that conceives of pastoral not as a readily classifiable genre, but rather as a "mode," an art form of subtle oppositions where simplicity shades into complexity, rudeness into delicacy, comedy into tragedy. In *Radical Spenser*, Chamberlain, endorsing refusals to offer a totalizing definition of pastoral, revives the subtle oppositions of Empsonian pastoral to fashion a potentially "radical," emancipatory Spenser.
Taking issue with the anti-democratic, politically regressive Spenser of the new historicism, Cham-

berlain argues that Spenser's poetry demands an aesthetic attentiveness to the strange, erratic, elusive, irreducible, ambiguous, unaccountable, surprising, and uncanny moments residing at the core of the pastoral mode. Chamberlain (wisely) makes no attempt to argue that Spenser's poetry openly espouses radical values. But the author does insist that the unaccountable, anti-totalizing impulses of Spenser's poetry confound authority in ways that call into question the new historicism's politically retrograde Spenser.

Chamberlain reads Spenserian pastoral under the banner of what has come to be called the "new aestheticism," a critical movement that, broadly defined, combines some of the more desirable, close-reading practices of the new criticism with Adorno's concepts of immanent critique and unresolved dialectic. Chamberlain begins the process of space-clearing for his radical/pastoral Spenser by reviewing what he sees as the damage done by the new historicist injunction always to historicize. He argues that despite new historicist claims that its readings are contingent, these readings are, in fact, "aggressive contextualizing explanations" that actually work to suppress art's subversive power (16). As a master trope, new historicism's privileged term "culture" is, in fact, a pre-emptive, totalizing category that glosses over what Chamberlain wonderfully terms "the erratic dimension of the aesthetic" (3). The author observes that although pastoral is prominently featured in the new historicism—as, for example, in the work of Louis Montrose—the genre has been perceived as conservative, politically reactionary. But Chamberlain argues that the literary dimension of pastoral has the capacity to undermine its *own* logic, comfortably trafficking in contradiction and opposition in non-hierarchical ways that are anything but conservative.

Empsonian pastoral eludes the critic's desire to pin down meaning. Chamberlain reminds us that pastoral is the literary mode where art and criticism intersect and become mutually transformative. Bringing Empsonian pastoral to bear on *The Shepheardes Calender*, the author teases out the poem's ambiguous non-prioritizing of prose (E.K.'s glosses) and poetry. The physical layout of *SC* suggests that the "our new Poete" Spenser (or is he, rather, the unsophisticated Colin?) can become famous only if his poetry is accompanied by prose commentary. But Chamberlain contends that E.K.'s "learned" glosses are often unreliable—ridiculous, even—and his allegorical commentary seeks totalizing moral meanings that end up dominating pastoral elusiveness. In his reading of "Maye," Chamberlain argues that E.K.'s reductive Piers-as-Protestantism and Palinode-as-Catholicism overlook some of their more uncanny similarities. Thus, Chamberlain's E.K. is an ambiguous presence in the text, "materially with it, but opening a whole range of speculative questions about aesthetics" (53).

Spenser scholarship has conventionally argued that the poet's transition from pastoral to epic is a calculated escape from pastoral immaturity to "high" epic grandeur. But Chamberlain argues that such an interpretation overlooks the intriguing dialectic between pastoral and epic. He argues that *SC*, far from being left behind, is an "authoritative introduction to the epic" (59)—indeed, an indispensable paratext whose absence would render *FQ* unintelligible. In Book I, for example, Chamberlain argues that the dialectic between pastoral and epic is evident in the stanza comparing the Red Cross Knight encountering Errour's monstrous spawn and a rural shepherd swatting at annoying gnats (I.i.23). Exemplifying the "erratic dimension of the aesthetic," the stanza is a peculiar eruption of pastoral into the epic, a strange juxtaposition of simple and complex, of small and big—one of many moments of

Spenser's pastoral habits of thought that embed his epic within pastoral irreducibility and question epic's generic priority over pastoral.

Chamberlain provocatively reads certain moments in Books II and III as reflecting what he terms pastoral "modes of transport," a dialectic between movement and stasis. Book II's House of Alma is both the well-regulated body and also strangely fixed, unable to move. The viscous "dull billowes" (II.vi.187) of Phaedria's Idle Lake link up with the "dead image" of the Queen on Guyon's shield, unexpectedly associating sluggishness and stasis with Gloriana (80). In Book III, stasis yields to sudden movement. Arthur and Guyon pursue the fleeing Florimell, thrusting the reader into a sense of "irresistible movement" (9) where the knights' disciplined will cedes place to sheer reflex action, miming "the flight of meaning" in the poem itself (84).

Although Chamberlain agrees with new historicist readings of Book V as the collision of poetry and politics, he does not concede that politics succeeds in displacing aesthetics. The new historicism tends to see the concept of "political poetry" as a tautology. But Chamberlain, keeping poetry and politics in tension with one another, defines "political" poetry as poetry *about politics*, politics presented aesthetically (93). Providing us with some salutary common sense, he contends that "[i]f one can write a novel about the French Revolution, then one can certainly combine poetry and colonialism in Munster" (93). He reads Book V not as an aberration from pastoral but rather as a "fulcrum" for typically pastoral engagements with difficult problems. For example, Chamberlain argues that Spenser's troubled concept of Equity, utterly indefinable and contingent, "cannot exist outside of particular circumstances unique to each case" (101). Moreover, Chamberlain argues that an exercise in immanent critique is the only way to read Book V's notoriously troubled juxtaposition of justice and violence. In other words, the book consistently undermines the values it overtly posits. Book V also demonstrates the subtle oppositions typical of Empsonian pastoral; for example, Artegall's inconsistent punishments wherein the murderer Sanglier is set free, while Pollente's daughter Munera is mutilated and killed. The "saluage" Artegall suddenly becomes a judicious magistrate when he initiates the tender reunion between Guyon and his horse Brigadore, unexpectedly presenting *FQ*'s readers with what Chamberlain argues is "the most moving emotional display in the whole poem" (102).

Set far from the court, Book VI's Arcadian legend of Courtesy is an obvious return to the pastoral mode. But Chamberlain argues that the very fact that the book is *about* courtesy also embodies the unresolved dialectic of the pastoral mode itself. As an interactive mode of behavior, Spenser's courtesy is neither fully innate nor fully learned. As Chamberlain astutely observes, a dialectical courtesy becomes a virtue "only in the exercise, for we can hardly think of a person as showing courtesy if he never sees or speaks to anyone else" (106). Moreover, when Colin Clout, as he did in "Januarye," breaks his pipe on Mount Acidale, the end of *FQ* doubles back and depends on the *beginning* of *SC*—Spenser's conscious return to an earlier pastoral mode that also becomes the deferral of epic closure.

Chamberlain brings eco-criticism to bear on the Mutabilitie Cantos, where a radical Spenser becomes a specifically "green" Spenser whose poetry encompasses both the land and aesthetics. The goddess Nature, admittedly the product of a complex prior literary history, is also, fundamentally, nature itself. Making her epiphany in the pastoral space of Arlo Hill, Spenser's Nature becomes a prime Empsonian example of putting the complex into the simple. Chamberlain

reminds us that the otherwise provincial Arlo Hill is where Nature's viceroy Order disposes all creatures "According to their sundry kinds of features" (VII.vii.4). In such a scheme, Spenser seems to imply: who *wouldn't* know Arlo Hill—that is, Arlo Hill as the pastoral, aesthetic locus of nothing less than all of creation?

Eco-criticism argues that the political and the natural are inseparable; and on Arlo Hill, as Chamberlain argues, Spenser problematizes the notion of "rule" itself. The author objects to traditional interpretations that view Nature's verdict against Mutabilitie as the Titanesse's defeat, the resounding victory of constancy over change, labeled as the destructive enemy of divine rules of existence. But when Nature also claims that change is essential to the natural order of things, Chamberlain argues that the two goddesses enact not a "neat synthesis" but rather an unresolvable, pastoral dialectic of sameness and difference (128).

Chamberlain is well aware that *A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland* presents the most serious challenge to his "radical" Spenser. But the author argues that to focus on the document's often overlooked "twisted and fragmented remnants of pastoral" (139) is to see how Spenser transforms Ireland into an unpredictable dialectic of natural and cultural forces. He argues that New English authority in Ireland is persistently confounded by, for example, the many varieties of the island's terrain—farmland, bogs, woods, mountains—that thwart colonialist incursion, denying New English attempts to negotiate this shifting landscape: "no single principle of opening or closure is adequate to overcome its resistance" (144).

Irenius seeks to outlaw the mantles worn by the Irish rebels, symbols of an intractable Irish barbarity. But this condemnation also entails lengthy praise of the garment. The mantle cloaks the rebels, who use it for both warmth and ventilation, for sleeping, and for protection against the island's bothersome gnats. Irenius' goal of a reified law to abolish the mantle ends up unexpectedly celebrating the mantle's intimate relationship with nature, thus "defeat[ing] the reductively analytical thought of the New English" (145). Having noted the *Vewe*'s persistent engagement with terrain, clothing, local customs, etc., Chamberlain astutely contends that "[i]t seems as if Irenius and Eudoxus sometimes struggle to remember their purpose for engaging in this dialogue, so often do their digressions take them into antiquarian matters with little obvious relevance to colonial conquest" (153).

Some readers, skeptical of a "radical" Spenser, will inevitably remain unconvinced that the Empsonian oppositions of Spenser's pastoral habits of thought are sufficient evidence of a democratic or emancipatory Spenser. That is for individual readers to decide. What undeniably makes *Radical Spenser* required reading for Spenserians are its many graceful and original interpretive gems, seemingly obvious but subtly nuanced, such as his rhetorical question, "Where would Cleopolis be if there were no *FQ* to mention it?" (63). Or his observation that Fradubio "still feels human sensations, even though he is made of wood" (66). Or his reading of Grill as Spenser's insistence that "the material and animal dimension to human existence cannot be ignored" (72). Or his revisitings of *FQ*'s proems that, lurking on the boundaries of the poem, are in fact "sly essays in literary theory" (60). Chamberlain's study impressively illustrates Willy Maley's observation, quoted at the beginning of this review, that we "can never exhaust the range of meanings" in Spenser's poetry.

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Hugh Maclean Memorial Lecture

Let's Get Spenser on the Undergraduate Syllabus Everywhere

By Gordon Teskey (Harvard U.)

Delivered at the Modern Language Association Convention, December 2007. 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.

38.78

No one in this audience will be unfamiliar with William Camden's account of Spenser's funeral, in 1599, paid for by the young Earl of Essex, himself destined to pass from this world only two years later, at the executioner's block. Until the spectacular obsequies in Paris for Victor Hugo in 1885, almost three centuries later, Spenser's funeral was surely one of the most impressive occasions on which a European nation marked the passing from this world of its national poet—for that is what Spenser had become, England's national poet. Dekker imagined Spenser seated on the Fortunate Isles, at Chaucer's right hand; and Nashe called Spenser "the Virgil of England." But it was Milton's schoolmaster, Alexander Gill, who said it in the fewest words when he called Spenser *Homerus noster*, "our Homer." The phrase is an assurance that there had indeed occurred in England a Renaissance of antiquity. How else could one be sure of the fact, without an epic poem to prove it?

I am particularly drawn today to the locution, *noster:* Spenser is *ours*. Or perhaps I should say, since we are in Chicago and our present occasion is the annual luncheon of the International Spenser Society, "Spenser is *theirs*." How do we who are not English make Spenser our own, and how are all of us, including those of us who are English, to make Spenser our own today, at the end of the year 2007?

Here is how they did it in 1599. We learn from Camden that as the cortège made its way through the streets towards Westminster Abbey, it was followed by the principal English poets of the day bearing elegies that were read aloud before Spenser was interred in the abbey beside Chaucer, in what would eventually be called the Poets' Corner. We are further informed that once Spenser was lodged there, the poets threw their elegies into the grave, after which they threw in the goose-quill pens with which those elegies were written.

It is a heartwarming gesture, one altogether worthy of our poet, and its very naivety is moving. I think of those feathers fluttering "downward to darkness," as if plucked from the extended wings of song. They call to mind Spenser's locution, "mine afflicted stile" (*Faerie Queene* I.proem.4), where *stile* means what we mean, abstractly, by the word *style*, but also, more literally, Spenser's *stilus*, his pen. Gloriana is the "argument" of Spenser's "afflicted stile," his thrown-down pen. We are only thirty-five lines into *FQ* when the pen is thrown down because of the poet's declared inability to do justice to his theme. Obviously, the pen will be resumed. Both gestures—throwing down and picking up again—allude to a theme common enough among poets who have reflected on their art, as Yeats does in "The Circus Animals' Deser-

tion": poetry is born out of frustration and is continually giving up on itself, before resuming again. By contrast, the novelist needs a certain phlegmatic insensibility to frustration, pressing onward stolidly through deserts of waiting blank paper. A different kind of fortitude is needed, however, to withstand the rhythm of continual frustration experienced by the poet, a lifetime of throwing down and resuming the pen, generating an habitual megalo-micromania: "Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds / To blazon broad emongst her learned throng" (*FQ* I.proem.1). The poet must withstand the continual proof of his inadequacy, together with the need to continue—plus an invincible sense of his own importance: the sacred muse is talking to **me**. As we learn from Richard Ellmann's study of thousands of pages of Yeats's unpublished manuscripts, the poet labored for many years over his best poems, mumbling their verses to himself and forcing his song through countless variations and drafts, all variations except the last being cast down like Spenser's "stile"—and yet preserved for posterity to witness.

Spenser's persona, Colin Clout, is a serial breaker and caster-down of pipes. When still a "pensive boy," in the "Januarye" eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*, finding that the muse no longer mitigates the anguish of his mind, he "broke his oaten pipe, and downe did lie" (*SC* "Januarye" 76, 72). By "December," Colin is old and has brought in the harvest of his verse, which he devastatingly refers to as "a weedy crop of care" (122). But with the resignation of age—as contrasted with the youthful frustration expressed in the "Januarye" eclogue—Colin merely hangs his pipe upon a tree. His doing so may suggest something like poetic tradition, a "handing on," the old poet leaving the pipe for a younger poet to find, but one can't help thinking of the satyr who was famous for his pipes, Marsyas, who was himself hung on a tree to be flayed by Apollo:

> Here will I hang my pype upon this tree,
> Was never pype of reed did better sounde.
> Winter is come, that blowes the bitter blaste,
> And after winter dreerie death does hast.
> ("December" 141-44)

Lest we identify this persona too closely with the poet, it's worth remembering that Spenser was about twenty-seven years old when he wrote these lines; he had *FQ* before him, still to write. Even so, he won't soon be taking the shepherd's pipe down from the tree: he will change it for "trumpets sterne" (*FQ* I.proem.1). As Spenser loved imagining complete structures, it is inevitable that the poet represented in the circuit of *SC* should be old in its final lines, near the year's midnight. But one feels also that something close to the heart of Spenser's talent always wanted to be old, though he never made it, dying at forty-seven. Being old, or imagining oneself old, is another form of vatic abjection. "Why should the agèd eagle stretch its wings?" said T. S. Eliot, when he was all of forty-two.

With no less than six "adieus," Colin takes his leave of the pleasures of this world and of the love he never won:

> Adieu delightes, that lulled me asleepe,
> Adieu my deare, whose love I bought so deare;
> Adieu my little Lambes and loved sheepe,
> Adieu ye Woodes, that oft my witnesse were;
> Adieu good *Hobbinol*, that was so true,
> Tell *Rosalind*, her Colin bids her adieu.
> ("December" lines 151-56)

We note the loosened rhythm of the final line, with its pathetic falling cadence and the unstressed, feminine ending of that last *adieu*. The speaker of these verses is surely very near to death and feminized by the pathos of his condition. When he appears again, unexpectedly, sixteen years later, in *Colin Clout's Come Home*

Againe (1595), in the shade of "green alders by the *Mullaes* shore" (59), we are seeing an earlier episode in Colin's life, before these sad adieus. But it is still more startling when we come upon Colin again and for the last time, in the sixth book of *FQ*. It is startling not only because we have not thought of Colin in fairyland but also because this seems to be a further adventure and a later tableau—something past the time of the conclusion of *SC*.

Here, Colin is in vigorous middle age, like Spenser himself, and, being married, the "jolly shepheard" is in a better mood. *Jolly—joyeux*—is surely the right word for a mature man piping to no less than "An hundred naked maidens lilly white, / All raunged in a ring, and dauncing in delight" (*FQ* VI.x.11). The vision has an inspiriting and revivifying effect: "That iolly shepheard, which there piped, was / Poore *Colin Clout* (who knowes not *Colin Clout*?) / He pypt apace, whilest they him daunst about" (*FQ* VI.x.16).

In the midst of these hundred maidens are "Three other Ladies," the Graces. And "in the middest of those same three," surrounded by them as they join hands,

> was placed
> Another Damzell, as a precious gemme,
> Amidst a ring most richly well enchaced,
> That with her goodly presence all the rest
> much graced. (*FQ* VI.x.12)

Being "placed parauaunt," the lady is "aduaunst to be another Grace" (*FQ* VI.x.15, 17). She graces "all the rest" (by which *rest* Spenser means the one hundred maidens, but not the Graces themselves) because, as we shall shortly be told, she excels them in beauty:

> But she that in the midst of them did stand,
> Seem'd all the rest in beauty to excell,
> Crownd with a rosie girlond, that right well
> Did her beseeme." (*FQ* VI.x.14)

It is a beauty that is enjoyed as far as beauty *can* be enjoyed because its bearer, the lady, answers the love that her beauty ignites in the poet: she is "that iolly Shepheards lasse" (*FQ* VI.x.16).

Notwithstanding Colin's having got the lady, we can't help noting the word *poore*. Even here, at the height of his joy, there is a trace of self-pity, although its purpose is not as self-indulgent as such a phrase implies. We need this link between the middle-aged, jolly shepherd who is piping to those lovely ladies, and to his own lovely lady, and the ancient shepherd who says, "careful cold hath nypt my rugged rynde / And in my face deepe furrowes eld hath pight" ("December" 133-134). It is as if this Colin has traveled backwards in time and lived his life again, but with more success and less complaining, so that we hardly recognize him on his second passage through the vale of years. For the poet-shepherd of *SC*, "Delight is layd abedde, and pleasure past" ("December" 133-36), but it is hard to imagine him ever having been delighted or pleased in the first place. Even in the "Januarye" eclogue, where we first see him, he breaks his pipe and throws himself down on the ground. "Both pype and Muse," he says, "shall sore the while abye": "So broke his oaten pype, and downe dyd lye" ("Januarye" 71-72). When we encounter Colin again in the sixth book of *FQ*, it is small wonder Spenser must upbraid us for our tardiness in identifying the shepherd who pipes before us now: "who knows not *Colin Clout*?"

The word *poore* is retrospective, pointing back to the weary bard who hangs his pipe upon a tree and to the younger bard, the same one, who breaks his pipe and throws himself upon the ground. But the adjective *poore* is also foreboding, for in just a moment Colin's joyous vision will be broken as the dancing ladies "vanisht all away out of his sight" (*FQ* VI.x.18). Worse still, his "lasse" vanishes too. Will he see her again? After her disappearance, Colin seems to spend

whole weeks in discussion with Calidore without any mention of his lass:

> In such discourses they together spent
> Long time, as fit occasion forth them led;
> With which the Knight him selfe did much content,
> And with delight his greedy fancy fed,
> Both of his words, which he with reason red;
> And also of the place, whose pleasures rare
> With such regard his sences rauished,
> That thence, he had no will away to fare,
> But wisht, that with that shepheard he mote dwelling share. (*FQ* VI.x.30)

Calidore seems almost to be replacing Colin's lady. Small wonder that when the lady disappears, we are told that "for fell despight / Of that displeasure" Colin "broke his bag-pipe quight, / And made great mone for that vnhappy turne" (*FQ* VI.x.18). That's the Colin we know.

It is also the Spenser we know, or one of them. It seems right that Spenser should have published an entire volume entitled *Complaints*. But although in the sixth book of *FQ* Spenser echoes the turn at the end of *SC* towards silence and death, we should not miss what Spenser also achieves in the scene: a rebirth of the spirit of poetry in the dance of the ladies and the graces on the top of Mount Acidale. For this upward-surging moment to occur, it appears that a downward turn is required and is in some sense the engine of that contrary, upward, Acidalian movement. Perhaps this begins to explain why Spenser is so instinctively drawn to complaint. Just eleven lines from the end of his poetic career, Spenser is still performing the gesture of complaint, loathing "this state of life so tickle" and casting away all "loue of things so vaine" (*FQ* VII.viii.1). But he is doing so so that he may again take wing, this time to the "Sabaoths sight" (*FQ* VII.viii.2).

Shall we give this trope of casting away or casting down a name that honors its master: the *colintrope*? I suppose it may be argued that the gesture of relinquishment is, strictly speaking, more a *topos* than a trope, a *topos* being a rhetorical theme or *locus*, a "place." If the gesture of casting away is performed in an open place, a clearing like the top of Mount Acidale, that rhetorical *topos* is not a level place but a tilted one, where everything that appears on it, dancing, is also, almost imperceptibly, sliding away—into the abyss. Colin's "fell despight" at the sudden disappearance of the ladies, which makes him "[break] his bag-pipe quight" (*FQ* VI.x.18), is a figure for the moment of sadness, the tiny speck of dismay, that lives in every scene of beauty and of fully answered love: it is the cypress-bud that appears among the roses Hymen bears. The sudden disappearance of the ladies allegorizes the insidious work of time. The *colintrope* is the self-destructive but necessary acknowledgment within poetry of the dismay that haunts our experience of beauty: "*Ou sont les neiges d'antan*?" "where are the 'snows'—the gleaming beauties—of yesteryear?" They are nowhere. And their being nowhere is a part of what they are even in the moment of their glory, on the top of Acidale.

These scenes of relinquishment of which Spenser is so fond—of breaking, of hanging up, of casting down and casting away—may lead us to suspect that for Spenser the negation of the means to make art belongs in some way to this art, such that true art continually destabilizes and transcends whatever temporary balance it achieves between the product and the means of production, the poem and the creation of the poem. Art is always re-centering its energy on the edge of itself—the Elizabethan word *bias* comes to mind—because art, far from being for itself, reaches for something outside itself, something beyond, *allothi* "elsewhere," as Plato says of the forms. The breaking of the pipes belongs to

the assertion of art's inadequacy to itself and of its need to reach beyond.

I suspect, therefore, that the poets who cast their goose-quill pens into Spenser's grave were also launching them. The poets understood their gesture to be *dialectical*, even if they wouldn't have called it that. They would, however, have understood that word from its components as a "speaking or reasoning all the way through," a linking up or joining of elements, an articulation that will take you all the way through: in one side and out the other—from England to Faerie. The feathers settle into the grave, but in another country they take wing.

Entering a place and leaving it are contradictory motions: one can't at once enter and leave. But when entering and leaving are put into time in a sequence they make up what we call a *narrative*. The knights in Spenser are often entering a place and leaving it, and for a knight to leave a place he has entered—or, in Britomart's case, a place she has entered—entails canceling something about that place. The canceling of the locus is accomplished either by rejecting the place totally, as Redcross must do when he escapes the House of Pride, or by taking away something (or, rather, someone) who has belonged to that place, as Amoret is changed when Scudamour takes her from the Temple of Venus, or when Britomart removes her from the House of Busirane. I suggested that the feather pens form wings to carry Spenser from the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey to another country. But where do these wings lay the poet to rest? At the end of this talk I will venture to propose a location.

What are the two meanings of the gesture of throwing the pens into the grave? First, the obvious one, which is affliction: poetry is dead. The poets might as well climb in there with Spenser, following their own elegies and their own pens. It is a sinister image, like the Pied Piper leading the children under the hill. The death of poetry with the death of the poet is a commonplace of pastoral elegy, one continually appearing in Spenser and others' elegies for Sidney, even if the profusion of mourning songs and doleful lays may be taken to refute what they assert.

This paradox of repetitive leave-taking (recall those six "adieus" of the "December" eclogue) leads us to the second thing said by the gesture of throwing the pens into the grave: poetry is alive. By this I mean that even in this tomb there is an opening somewhere, an unexpected exit through which the winged spirit of poetry can pass, like the holes pierced in mortuary jars so that the soul can escape and go free. The death of poetry, which seemed a total death at its initial moment, and not only seemed but was, has become the negation of the possibility of making poetry in a particular way—in Spenser's way. It is very likely, for example, that John Donne was present at the funeral and joined the other poets in casting into Spenser's grave his elegy and plume. The inscription on the monument that would at last be raised (in 1620) over Spenser's tomb, by Lady Anne, Countess of Dorset, captures the dialectic of the scene I have described. It reads, with italics I have added, "The Prince of Poets *in his tyme*." From the early 1590s, well before Spenser's death in 1599, Donne was writing with another pen, a sharp one.

Is this confinement of Spenser to being the prince of poets in his time true for us now, and should it be? Certainly Spenser scholarship in the twentieth century has been so impressive it vies with the best work of any previous time and exceeds it in quantity and thoroughness. The

modern movement of Spenser scholarship extends from the editions of A.J. Smith and Ernest de Selincourt to the brilliant critical writings of C.S. Lewis and of other British scholars, such as R.L. Renwick and Graham Hough, and, in America, from the Johns Hopkins University Variorium edition of the 1930s to the great scholarly and critical movement that began after the second world war and continued up to the 1970s, to be codified in the indispensable, annotated bibliography of Waldo MacNeir and Foster Provost. *The Spenser Newsletter*, the original of *The Spenser Review*, having "like race to runne," picked up where MacNeir and Provost left off and continues to this day, in these pages, a chronicle of what is in my opinion the liveliest but least-known critical field in English literary studies.

In 1990 there appeared that extraordinary monument, *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, which is surely, and by far, the best encyclopedia ever devoted to an English author. The only worthy comparison I can think of is the multi-volume *Enciclopedia Dantesca*. I have alluded to *Spenser Studies*, the annual collection of critical essays, modeled in some respects on *Milton Studies*. There is an old, funny, warm-spirited article by Stanley Fish on how the profession works, using Spenser studies' imitation of Milton studies: a newsletter maturing to a quarterly, a hardbound annual volume, an encyclopedia. The humor is at the Spenserians' expense, but as someone who belongs to both scholarly communities, I think it is fair to say, and I think many Miltonists would agree, that if the Spenserians followed the Miltonists in producing a newsletter and quarterly, an annual volume of criticism, plus an encyclopedia, the Spenserians did a better job in two of three departments. Spenser studies is praised for its diversity, its vitality, and its courtesy towards many differing and even incompatible views and approaches, as if these praiseworthy attributes were acquired at the expense of quality. But in my observation Spenser studies now and for many years has been producing work of the highest quality in the field of English literary studies. Nobody is doing it better than we are.

There is some danger that Spenser studies will follow Milton studies in another, less auspicious tendency. Milton studies has become obsessed with the prose and the politics behind the prose, to the severe detriment of Milton the poet. For a young scholar to break into Milton studies now, that person has to win his or her spurs in the study of the prose. I see it in my graduate students: they know Milton's poetry well, but are almost afraid to show it in print. If they want to be published and employed, they know they have to prove themselves in the prose works, and in the political context of those works. Moreover, they had better have the correct opinions on the history of the time and read the right sources, letting others pass by in silence. There is some danger of a similar, ideological *Gleichschaltung* taking place in Spenser studies, evident at the 1996 Yale conference in celebration of the publication of the 1596 *FQ*, where *A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland* was much more on view than the three books of *FQ* to which the conference was dedicated.

Why is the poetry neglected, as poetry? Even when his inspiration of the romantics is acknowledged, Spenser seems to us a poet who brings to fruition all the artistic tendencies, all the emotional currents, all the intellectual hopes and all the religious longings of his day—but not of ours. As for the new historicism and the methodology of cultural poetics, notwithstanding its having re-named our period "early modern," so far as Spenser is concerned, the culture being studied is chiefly that of the Elizabethan court and of Ireland in the Elizabethan age. There

may be ideological connections to be observed between the English plantations of Spenser's day and global, European colonialism, and however tenuous these connections are they may still be instructive, although they are more likely to mislead, as tenuous connections do. But the question remains: does Spenser, the real and essential Spenser, the poet we value, have anything to say to us now, or are we the custodians of the Spenser museum? If Spenser does have something to say to us now, are we willing to listen? The only compelling connection between Spenser and modernity is through what he had to say about the emerging modernity he prophesied in *FQ*.

We have been weak advocates for Spenser as a poet who can speak to us now, and not only now but at any time. The proof of this is where we should expect to find it: in the undergraduate curriculum, that abstract scale in which the importance of poets is weighed. In undergraduate curriculum committee meetings I have often felt the presence in the room of Spenser's giant with his set of balances. In many universities, certainly in those where I have taught, courses devoted entirely to Spenser are very rare, whereas courses devoted exclusively to Milton are offered every year, as they should be. Why is Milton considered so much more important than Spenser?

After Shakespeare, Milton has been the necessary poet in our time, outweighing Chaucer, which is a pity, and Wordsworth, which is a surprise. (What used to be called "the Yale school" of literary critics, Geoffrey Hartman, Harold Bloom, Hillis Miller and Paul de Man, did much to displace Milton in favor of Wordsworth. But an inertial correction seems to be setting in again, now; or perhaps the revolution favoring Wordsworth over Milton as the canonical English poet after Shakespeare never reached down as far as the curriculum.) There are ideological as well as aesthetic reasons for Milton's preeminence. For the aesthetic reasons, there is the negative one that there's nothing obviously old-fashioned in Milton: no knights and ladies, no jousts or feasts, no elaborate castles, no turbaned, paynim knights, no leisurely ekphrastic descriptions, and, above all, no antiquated diction and elaborate rhyme: "the skill of artifice or office mean" (Milton VIII.39). The unrhymed verse of *Paradise Lost* is a relentlessly propulsive force, like the steam engine of the industrial age it seems to forebode. Adam and Eve have no clothes and no culture to date them. They are like Dürer's Adam and Eve, but they are just as much like our own, recent figures of Man and Woman, bare outlines etched on platinum and launched among the stars. Likewise, Milton's angels, including Satan, have stood up remarkably well, in contrast with many figures like them in science fiction. Milton's angels command immense power; they soar across vast regions of space; and they alter their forms at will, as if their maker knew in advance how quickly our ideas of appropriate appearance can change. Milton's angels stretch our imaginations without focusing our attention, as Spenser does, for example, in his description of Arthur, or of Belphoebe. In Spenser's descriptions we must take in a great number of details in sequence, paying attention to each. There is amplification and description aplenty in *Paradise Lost*, but there is nothing leisurely about it. Milton has thought through every detail in *Paradise Lost*, but he does not expect the reader to. Milton *moves*: he doesn't *dwell*.

As for ideology, *Paradise Lost* is beautifully adapted to the expression of Milton's ideas, which were entirely worked out, as I said, before he began. *Paradise Lost* is a masterpiece of representation, a perfect realizing in imagery and verse of what Milton has carefully thought out. It took

a great genius to keep new ideas out of the poem as it was written. As for the ideas themselves, it is small wonder Milton has remained so important as he is. Liberty has been the dominant idea in Europe from Milton's day up through the great revolutions out of which the modern world was formed, in England first, in America next, in France, in nineteenth-century Italy and Germany, in Russia, in China, in Africa and in Latin America. Milton is a Promethean revolutionary with the modern revolutionary's leveling message: throw off your chains, and obey.

How might we contrast these things of Milton with Spenser? If *Paradise Lost* is a poem ideally suited to the tastes of the industrial age, having no wasted motion, *FQ* is a poem for the electronic age. There is a very great deal of apparent inefficiency in *FQ*, as in the World Wide Web, requiring considerable powers of second-order processing. If *Paradise Lost* is like a well-oiled machine, the efficient action of a brilliant design, *FQ* is like a rain forest, extending out of sight in all directions, and ascending out of sight on many levels. The entymologist E.O. Wilson said that he could take a few steps into the Amazon rainforest and discover, in a square foot of jungle, enough work to do for many months—and new species to discover. So it is with *FQ*, a poem it is possible to read through in six days only when one is young and eager to press on. There is far too much complexity in the poem for any one mind to grasp, including the mind of its poet.

What sort of ordering occurs in the rainforest of *FQ*? Spenser is a poet of delicate hierarchies, of what we may call ecologies, as Sean Kane does in his wise book, *Spenser's Moral Allegory*. Spenser makes us feel the countless "friendly offices that bind" us to the natural world as much as they do to one another. The moral thinking in *FQ* is subtler, less definitive, more reflective, more speculative, and much more incomplete and unrealized than that of *Paradise Lost*. But in following the questions that surround this one question—how is one to be a self within the social world?—Spenser works his way down to the roots of morals, which are in courtesy. It takes him a long time to get to that unexpected place, and, when he does, it may seem to us a strange place for moral thinking to start from, although courtesy is not so far as we may suppose from the Categorical Imperative, although it is more poetically expressed, being entangled with life instead of abstracted from life.

Spenser's moral message is that we should learn from the Graces, who are our most natural teachers, the following things:

> As comely carriage, entertainement kynde,
> Sweet semblaunt, friendly offices that bynde,
> And all the complements of curtesie . . . .

Spenser is therefore not shy about saying that the Graces *teach* us—note that *teach* is the operative word in the passage—how to conduct ourselves "to each degree and kynde":

> They teach vs how to each degree and kynde
> We should our selues demeane, to low, to hie;
> To friends, to foes, which skill men call ciuility. (*FQ* VI.x.22)

Spenser seems to pause briefly over that word *civility*, which is redolent of Latin administration. "Men"—that is, people generally, nowadays—call courtesy by this newfangled, Renaissance word based on the ideal of the city. Spenser calls it by the warmer term, *courtesy*. *Civility*, which is following the forms in the midst of the rapid interactions of city life, tends towards the treatment of others as moveable parts in a machine, like the letters on a printing press—Aldus's, for example—or like those lists of words, isolated from syntax, in a dictionary such as the popular one of

Calepinus. That seems to be the sense of Spenser's reference to these works, through the knights Aladine and Calepine, in the sixth book of *FQ*. I will concede that Spenser is mainly looking for harmony between the terms *civility* and *courtesy*, but the difference is there nevertheless, and it is meant to be felt. *Courtesy* acknowledges that the soul of the other is veiled and inaccessible to us, which means inaccessible to our knowledge and use. When courtesy is the operative virtue, signaling takes place between the self and the other, in tokens and signs that are nearly allegorical—Lady Murasaki's *Tale of Genji* displays such courtesy at its virtuosic extreme of elegance and complexity. But it is a condition of such intermediary gesturing that the other remain impossible to seize and possess. All social relations, but especially the relation of love, require distance and secrecy, veiling the self from the other, and even veiling the other from the self.

Perhaps that is why Spenser cancelled the original conclusion to the book of Chastity, with its comparison of the embrace of Scudamour and Amoret, after their ordeal, to the hermaphrodite. The sight of the fulfillment of the desires that are awakened in this world being actually fulfilled in this world—which is to say, in the terms of this world—filled Spenser with *loathing*, the word he startles us with at the end of the Mutabilitie Cantos and again at the end of the "Hymn to Heavenlie Beautie":

> Looke at last up to that soveraine light,
> From whose pure beams al perfect beauty springs,
> That kindleth love in every godly spright,
> Even the love of God, which loathing brings
> Of this vile world, and these gay seeming things. (295-99)

I wonder if the monstrous birth of the fraternal twins Ollyphant and Argante, copulating as they emerge from the womb, isn't a sort of hermaphrodite in the making, like Aristophanes' image, in the *Symposium*, of the original humans, who were in a perpetual state of copulation, joined at the genitals, with four arms and four legs on which they cartwheeled about until Jove separated them, leaving them to search ever after for their missing halves. To be human is not to be complete, and courtesy is the virtue by which we acknowledge the incompleteness in ourselves as we greet it in others.

Hermaphroditic images do not seem elsewhere to fill Spenser with loathing, as do scenes of sexual intercourse, such as the one at the Church of Isis. I don't know about you, but a crocodile "turning all his pride to humblesse meeke" so as to couple carnally with the goddess Isis—after threatening to eat her and being beaten down with a rod—so that "of his game she soon enwombed grew," causing her to give birth to a "Lion of great might," does not stir in this reader tender longings like those felt by Britomart at the sight of Amoret and Scudamour's embrace (FQ V.vii.16). But this is a scene of prophecy, "A wondrous vision, which did close implie / The course of all [Britomart's] fortune and posteritie" (*FQ* V.vii.12). Those words are meant to prepare us for what is shortly to follow. But for one moment at least the teratological shock of the scene breaks through our defenses to awaken a loathing of what we see, and perhaps of generation itself:

> . . . he so neare her drew,
> That of his game she soone enwombed grew,
> And forth did bring a Lion of great might;
> That shortly did all other beasts subdue.
> (*FQ* V.vii.16)

Something similar may be said of Spenser's other hermaphrodites (actually, his only hermaphrodites, for the one evoked by Scudamour and Amoret is a poetic image, a comparison): the

goddess Venus in her temple, where Scudamour finds Amoret, and the goddess of Nature, in the Mutabilitie Cantos. It is surely significant, however, that their hermaphroditic status is only spoken of, or guessed at, while the physical fact is concealed:

> The cause why she was couered with a vele,
> Was hard to know, for that her Priests the same
> From peoples knowledge labour'd to concele.
> But sooth it was not sure for womanish shame,
> Nor any blemish, which the worke mote blame;
> But for, they say, she hath both kinds in one,
> Both male and female, both vnder one name:
> She syre and mother is her selfe alone,
> Begets and eke conceiues, ne needeth other none. (*FQ* IV.x.41)

We don't want to see her "beget . . . and eke conceiue."

As for the goddess of Nature, Spenser shows still more *pudeur*, having the veil fall over her face rather than her sexual parts:

> Yet certes by her face and physnomy,
> Whether she man or woman inly were,
> That could not any creature well descry:
> For, with a veile that wimpled euery where,
> Her head and face were hid, that mote to none appeare. (*FQ* VII.vii.5)

Nor is sexual ambiguity the only possible reason for this veil. Spenser mentions two other reported explanations for the veil ("some doe say . . . others tell"): either that the beauty of Nature's face emits a splendor surpassing the power of a thousand suns; or, on the contrary, that "the terror of [Nature's] vncouth hew" and her resemblance to a lion would be an unbearable shock to mortal eyes ("That eye of wight could not indure to view") (*FQ* VII.vii.6). It seems almost as if the lion born of Isis and Osiris "that did all other beasts subdue" has become the goddess of Nature on whom all creatures depend for their lives, though she is unbearable to look on herself:

> That [the veil] some doe say was so by skill devized,
> To hide the terror of her vncouth hew,
> From mortall eyes that should be sore agrized;
> For that her face did like a Lion shew,
> That eye of wight could not indure to view:
> But others tell that it so beautious was,
> And round about such beames of splendor threw,
> That it the Sunne a thousand times did pass,
> Ne could be seene, but like an image in a glass. (*FQ* VII.vii.6)

These visions of Spenser's are prophetic revelations, scenes in which the veil of *maya* is briefly drawn aside to show us what our desire of beauty leads to in this world: generation. But much as we adore the exuberance of life itself and the desire of beauty that makes us wish to reproduce, Spenser seems to suggest that the hidden power by which that life is brought forth fills us with a loathing as intense as our loathing of decay and death. Blindness to that mysterious truth, or indifference to it, is what Spenser means by *lust*—the desire that might as well work in the dark, as Spenser's monster of that name does.

Generation works in the dark, the darkness of the womb, which is informed with timely seed, as we hear in *Epithalamion*. But this is a darkness from whence there is a passage out into the light, not a blind terminus, as in Errour's cave, or Lust's. Recalling E.M. Forster's Marabar caves, the caves of Errour and Lust obliterate distinctions and differences. The loss of distinction, and in this we must surely include sexual distinction, is a nightmarish prospect to Spenser. There is a profound thought in the farcical indecision of the cannibals whether to rape Serena or to eat her:

when appetites work in the dark, not knowing what they are for, they become confused among themselves. Desire in Spenser is painful, but it works in the light that "sheweth each thing, as it is indeed" (III.iv.59), this being the light not only of the sun but of the planet Venus, whose "infusion of celestiall powre ... which giveth pleasant grace / To all things fair" ("An Hymne in Honour of Beautie," 50, 57-58).

"All things fair": everything that is beautiful. The phrase is from Spenser's "An Hymne in Honour of Beautie," where he explains the origin of amorous desire, which is the reflection of that divine, Venerian light from the fair one upon whom it falls into the soul of the desirer of that fair. Spenser explicitly opposes this idealism to the conception of beauty that was already current in his time, a conception that would win out in the eighteenth century and is commonplace now: that beauty is "comely composition" and "proportion of the outward part" (69, 75). By "outward part" Spenser means that part which is perceivable to the senses, as opposed to those parts that are spiritual and inward. Spenser is referring to the reduction of beauty to the field of sense perception, to the aesthetic (from *aesthesis* "perception"). Although it was already commonplace in Spenser's day (and no doubt it has been commonplace always), this reduction became the basis of an academic field in the middle of the eighteenth century, one opened by A.G. Baumgarten's treatise on aesthetics as the perception of the beautiful. At the moment the beauty of art became perceivable by the senses—that is, at the moment the problem of beauty becomes a problem within the theory of perception—a certain part of art broke free from this tomb of the senses to go soaring again in the realm of the spirit. It was called "the sublime." Elaine Scarry has written trenchantly of the separation, in the Enlightenment, of the beautiful from the sublime and of the demotion of the beautiful that inevitably followed (82-85).[1] It is a separation we can find earlier, in Milton, in the distinction between Adam and Eve, Eve with her beautiful tresses partly concealing and partly revealing her breasts—a scene that recalls Edmund Burke's example of the beautiful—and Adam with his "eye sublime" (IV.300). But in Spenser, whom we rightly think of as the poet of the beautiful, the sublime and other beautiful things belong together, as different moods of beauty. I mentioned the description of Belphoebe before: when we first see her in Book II, is she beautiful, or is she sublime? For Spenser, beauty it is not a ratio of the senses: it is spiritual power.

Spenser has an interesting argument for beauty as spiritual power. "Comely composition" and "proportion of the outward part" are shared, he says, by flowers and other beauties of nature which give pleasure without "mov[ing] such affection in the inward mind," that is, without awakening intense erotic longing for the other: "For of the soul the bodie forme doth take, / For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make" (132-33). These famous lines do not merely voice a Neoplatonic commonplace, versifying doctrine. They hint at something more: the spirituality of erotic desire. They suggest that the desire awakened by beauty is connected to something higher than the body, that the desire for beauty is part of that linking up or joining of elements—the *dia* + *legein*—which will take you in one side and out the other, on wings. Where does this desire take us? Not to generation. The desire goes right through generation to something beyond: *wisdom* or, as Spenser calls her in "An Hymn to Heavenlie Beautie," *Sapience*.

In "An Hymne in Honour of Beautie" Spenser says that "lovers eyes more sharply sighted be / Than other mens" (231-32). He means

that the lover can see, on the forehead of the beloved, "A thousand graces masking in delight" (254), the handmaids of Venus. It is a broad forehead, no doubt, and this broadness may remind us of the "spatious plaine" on the summit of Mount Acidale (III.5.39).

But to link beauty to wisdom takes more than being "sharply sighted." It takes the power to see in the dark, or rather to see through the dark. It requires a leap of faith, or what we might still call an existential choice. Without evidence of any kind (etymologically, *evidence* is that which "shows forth"), indeed, with some evidence to the contrary, I myself choose to think that visible beauty is invisibly connected to wisdom. This can be said also, as Spenser himself has suggested, of homosexual desire, which passes by generation altogether as it transits through the cave of longing and out the other side. The Greeks thought this, of course: that male beauty and the sensual desire it raises is nobler and more spiritual than the love of man for woman because it is not entangled with generation. The same may be said, of course, of lesbian desire, as the poetry of Sappho attests. Such desire is thought to be more spiritual for avoiding generation altogether, a claim that any Christian, like Spenser, would contest were it to be openly stated: God created desire to make up the number in heaven. But desire as a means of subjective elevation to the sublime has considerable unconscious force. As for the beauty of wisdom, it "filles the heauens with her light, / And darkes the earth with shadow of her sight" ("An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie," 228-29). The "earth" in this phrase means "the physical beauty of the earth and all things on it." Heavenly beauty, sapience, cancels all visible beauty in order to raise it up to something more sublime. Wisdom eclipses beauty's sun.

But isn't this simply untrue? Perhaps today we are in possession of the truth, a possession that is based, like anything that can be possessed, on empirical evidence, the evidence of what we can see and measure. Modern science has made its inroads into beauty, and it tells us something at least structurally not dissimilar to what the Neoplatonists have said: that beauty is a signal, an index. We discover, however, that beauty is not a signal of the immaterial and supercelestial "One" of the Neoplatonists, of the wise unity in which all things are held. In closer conformity with the Christian view than we might have expected, beauty is a signal of reproductive fitness. When beauty is coupled with money—and who shall ever separate them for long?—it confers differential reproductive advantage, not in oneself, of course (in one's beautiful, phenotypic self), but in one's genes. Beauty is thus connected to a very different, but still largely invisible order: that of genetics. We have come a long way from admiration of the beauty that "kindle[s] love in high-conceited sprites" (5). Where does this leave us? Genes do not have morals, but their human phenotypes do.

As it happens, another poet has an answer to this question, a poet who has prophetic moments that sometimes recall Spenser. His answer is that the vision of beauty as reproductive advantage, especially when it is entangled with wealth, leaves us in a bad place. Rainer Maria Rilke, in the tenth of the *Duino Elegies*, wrote one of the most intensely allegorical poems to appear in an age no longer favorable to allegory, that ancient way of staging the coming into appearance what cannot be seen but is real. Early in the poem we meet a young man at a fair who stumbles awkwardly from booth to booth and from one deceiving crier to the next, continually trying his luck, throwing dice and shooting at targets. As in life, the life of which this youth's passage through the fair is an allegorical image,

the youth's luck goes up and down. He then hears the barker from the freak show and we feel we are coming to a moment of truth, as in one of Spenser's allegorical *loci*. It may also remind us of Spenser because what we are shown is a hermaphrodite idol, bringing together commodity and lust: "For Adults, however, there's something especially worth seeing: How money increases itself! Anatomically instructive and not just for fun! The reproductive organs of Money! Everything on view, the whole process! Guaranteed to make you better-informed and productive!" (29-32).

However we may judge it, here at least is a view of desire we may suppose to be more true than that desire for a beauty that is secretly related to wisdom. We have instead the connection, or rather, the deep interpenetration, of physical beauty and money. From Guillaume de Lorris to F. Scott Fitzgerald we are told what we know to be true about the beauty that we see all around us: that beauty exacts a large financial cost and that it also attracts money to itself. I said *beauty* again, but I really mean *lust*, the excitement (rather than the desire) that beauty arouses when the excitement has no object, no other, but only the flickering images of otherness which must be rapidly changed for this otherness not to be unmasked as ourselves.

We are brought by such observations to the recognition that lust is more abstract, less connected to the real, than is desire, the desire for communion with the really real other. The same may be said about money. Obviously, there's something real about money and the passions it raises, as real as the frenzy of lust. We speak of them both, revealingly enough, as *cupidity*, the power of Venus' son. But as those who work in the financial world will tell you, there's nothing more fluid and abstract than money, which, like lust, hasn't any definite form. To put your faith in money and lust—that is, in those copulating genitals Rilke describes—is not to put your faith in nothing. But it *is* putting your faith in an idea, or in a composite idea, not in what is morally real, which in human terms can only be the un-appropriated other. To trust to the goodness of money and lust is to make a leap of faith from the real circumstances of your own life, in which what you need is nurture, culture and love, into imaginary circumstances that come down at last to the interpenetrating energies of those lucrative organs.

Do we have better ideas of our own and on our own? If we did, we wouldn't need religion, philosophy or art. We wouldn't have poets. For the purpose of poets is to teach us ideas, which means teaching us to think beyond the hermaphroditic, frenzied copulation of money and lust. The poets give us ideas that are more difficult than the ones in the electronic fair that Rilke appears to have foreseen. But the poets' ideas are likelier to make us happier and wiser. Why not start with wisdom, and let happiness take care of itself? We may with Spenser choose to believe that beauty arousing desire and love is connected to wisdom. That's for each of you to decide for yourself. But we may also choose together to decide that the beauty of art, which awakens us to thinking, is also connected to wisdom.

In her book, *On Beauty*, which I have already mentioned in connection with the separation, which is so foreign to Spenser, of the beautiful and the sublime, Elaine Scarry argues that beauty is not (despite Keats's famous assertion) identical to truth. Instead, beauty points us in the direction of truth, awakening our desire for truth by the dialectic (an exchange taking place within beauty) of conviction and Errour:

> The claim … that beauty and truth are allied is not a claim that the two are identical. It is

> not that a poem or a painting or a palm tree or a person is "true," but rather that it ignites the desire for truth by giving us, with an electric brightness shared by almost no other uninvited, freely arriving perceptual event, the experience of conviction and the experience, as well, of Errour. This liability to Errour, contestation and plurality—for which "beauty" over the centuries has so often been belittled—has sometimes been cited as evidence of its falsehood and distance from "truth," when it is instead the case that our very aspiration for truth is its legacy. It creates, without itself fulfilling, the aspiration for enduring certitude. It comes to us, with no work of its own; then leaves us prepared to undergo a giant labor. (Scarry 4)

In a later passage in this book, in the course of an argument against the notion that the appreciation of beauty privileges a few things at the expense of many others, Scarry asserts that beauty works in two phases, the involuntary phase of exposure to beauty, and the voluntary phase of action incited by beauty. We are involuntarily aroused by our encounter with beauty into a state of heightened attention, and this experience leads us voluntarily to attend to "other persons or things" which are not beautiful but which need our attention—in the interest, for example, of justice. Scarry notes the antiquity of this argument, which in various forms may be found in Plato, Boethius and Dante, but her description of it has the vividly particular quality of personal experience, of an idea that has been found not in books but where its original discoverers found it as well: in the world. Finding this idea in the world changes it subtly but decisively in favor of the world. For the aim of the perception of beauty is not situated outside this world, as it is in Plato, Boethius and Dante. Advancing a claim that is altogether foreign to the transcendent idealism of these thinkers, Scarry says that beauty provokes us to a higher standard of "lateral attention" to the things of this world, particularly with respect to justice. The incentive awakened by beauty is therefore not to a further and more fastidious exclusion, which idealism requires, but rather to a further "distribution" of the good that beauty makes us see:

> It is as though beautiful things have been placed here and there throughout the world to serve as small wake-up calls to perception, spurring lapsed alertness back to its most acute level. Through its beauty, the world continually recommits us to a rigorous standard of perceptual care: if we do not search it out, it comes and finds us. The problem of lateral disregard is not, then, evidence of a weakness but of a strength: the moment we are enlisted into the first event, we have already become eligible to carry out the second. It may seem that in crediting the enduring phenomenon of beauty with this pressure toward distribution, we are relying on a modern notion of "distribution." But only the word is new.

I can think of no better description of Spenser's purpose in *FQ*, which is not to ascend beyond this world by passing through beauty to a truth that is beyond. Spenser's purpose is rather to move outward from beauty—to be sure, the beauty of Gloriana at the Court of Cleopolis, but also the highly mobile and inapprehensible beauty of Florimell and of Belphoebe, and even of such morally ambiguous, beautiful things as the tapestries in the House of Busirane—into those unlovely but worldly places, inhabited by monsters, where the standard of beauty must be carried in the interest of justice. For justice is surely the significance of the Faerie Queene's beauty. Indeed, one cannot but feel that Spenser would have done well to remember the importance of beauty for justice when he wrote Book V of *FQ*, the Legend of Justice.

Spenser does appear to have remembered

beauty, however, when he turned from the unhappy end of Book V to Book VI, the Legend of Courtesy, and anyhow, the ugliness of the conclusion to Book V has a beauty of its own: the beauty of a certain truth. Artegall is assaulted by the hags, Envy and Detraction, the one throwing at him half-eaten, still-biting snakes, the other, like Shimei, when David fled from Jerusalem, throwing stones and bitter terms of abuse. Both of them also incite the Blatant Beast "to barke and bay,"

> With bitter rage and fell contention,
> That all the woods and rockes nigh to that way,
> Began to quake and tremble with dismay;
> And all the aire rebellowed againe,
> So dreadfully his hundred tongues did bray. (*FQ* V.xii.41)

The acoustical ugliness of the "rebellowing" noise of those hundred braying tongues complements the moral ugliness of Envy and Detraction. And then something beautiful happens. The iron man, Talus, hearing Detraction's stinging slanders, "Would her haue chastiz'd with his yron flaile, / If her Sir *Artegall* had not preserued, / And him forbidden, who his heast obserued" (*FQ* V.xii.43). Justice (following King David's example) lets Detraction take its course unmolested, and for this forebearance is only more abused: "So much the more at him still did she scold" (*FQ* V.xii.43). But the reason given for the Knight of Justice not permitting the chastisement of such obvious injustice is not what we should expect, although it may be implied: that slander is too widespread and elusive for justice to apprehend it. Instead, the reason given for the Knight of Justice's ignoring Detraction's assault is that he is at this moment reorienting himself towards the beautiful, on which he relies:

> So much the more at him still did she scold,
> And stones did cast, yet he for nought would swerue
> From his right course, but still the way did hold
> To fairy court, where what him fell shall else be told. (*FQ* V.xii.43)

We never hear "what him fell." Artegall disappears from the poem at this moment, as he is heading back to fairy court, the moral center of fairyland, where Beauty is at home.

What is interesting about this moment at the close of Book V is the manner in which it is followed up in the lines that immediately follow, in the proem opening Book VI, the Legend of Courtesy. The beauty we are shown now is not the beauty at the center of fairyland, at the Faerie Queene's court. It is rather the accidental appearances of beauty far away from that court, in the "strange waies" (VI.proem.2) of fairyland. It is these accidental beauties captured on the way that awaken the poet's attention and give him strength to carry on the moral quest:

> The waies, through which my weary steps I guyde
> In this delightful land of Faery,
> Are so exceeding spacious and wyde,
> And sprinckled with such sweet variety,
> Of all that pleasant is to eare or eye,
> That I nigh rauisht with rare thoughts delight,
> My tedious trauell doe forget thereby;
> And when I gin to feele decay of might,
> It strength to me supplies, and chears my dulled spright. (*FQ* VI.proem.1)

In Book VI Spenser will show a deeper commitment than he has hitherto to the decentering of beauty. Until now, just because we ourselves never see fairy court, beauty in *FQ* has been a fleeting thing, glimpsed on the run and pursued, but never made stable and clear in the line of our attention. (Not even where we should expect it to be stable and clear in the line of our

attention: in the Mercilla episode.) Indeed, such stability as we do see in beauty earlier in *FQ* is typically an indication of danger, most obviously so in the Garden of Acrasia, but elsewhere as well. Even Belphoebe is a danger, although she is dangerous to the morally impure, not to the seekers of the good, or even to the seekers of beauty, to whom such figures as Lucifera, Phaedria, Acrasia, Proserpine and the False Florimell are so perilous. I daresay that if Arthur were ever to encounter Belphoebe—and why do we feel that it would be impossible for Arthur and Belphoebe to meet?—he is the one who would be intimidated, not she. So far as beauty is concerned, Book V is the most Cleopolis-centered book of the poem, even though Cleopolis never appears in it, or, of course, anywhere else. But the pressure of Cleopolis is there in every episode of Book V, as it is not in any previous book of the poem. It seems right that Artegall, the knight of Justice, has no lady, for he is more devoted to Gloriana than the knights who bear her image on their shields.

Calidore, the knight of Courtesy, does have a lady, and that she is an unrefined shepherdess far from fairy court seems to indicate that one of the purposes of courtesy is education, the education, or the refinement, of beauty wherever it is found in nature. The Briana and Crudor episode with which the book of Courtesy opens suggests that by *courtesy* Spenser means something near to what we mean, speaking anthropologically, by *culture*, a word that has its roots in cooking and in cultivation. The underlying code of the Briana and Crudor episode, as the name *Crudor* suggests ("raw, bloody"), is the distinction between the raw and the cooked, one of the distinctions on which, as Claude Lévi-Strauss has taught us, a culture relies. By opening Book VI with the Briana and Crudor episode Spenser indicates that courtesy is to be understood not exclusively in terms of the court, the apogee of the cultivated world. Courtesy has its paradoxical home and its true place of work on the periphery of the civilized world, on the boundary between nature and culture. But it is not work all in one direction, as if nature were only some material, some stuff, raw and uncooked, to be shaped and improved by human work, according to a "foreconceit" or, as Spenser calls it in the Letter to Ralegh, a "generall intention," a working model into which information flowing into the poem may be organized and from which the poet may depart at any time, when the muses lead the poet into regions of thought he could never have expected in advance: "Guyde ye my footing, and conduct me well / In these strange waies, where neuer foote did vse, / Ne none can find, but who was taught them by the Muse" (VI.proem.2).

The model according to which information flowing into Spenser's poem was to be organized is of the twelve-day feast at fairy court, on each day of which a knight receives a quest from the Faerie Queene and goes forth to achieve it. The early editors of Spenser, notably John Upton, imagined that the poem would have concluded with a formal procession of these same twelve knights after their quests have been achieved, invisibly bound by the "goodly golden chaine, wherewith yfere / The virtues linked are in louely wize" (I.ix.1). With Prince Arthur at their head (recalling Tasso's allegorizing of his Goffredo as the "head" of the army and Rinaldo as its right arm), the knights would process into the presence of the Faerie Queene, and this event would be the occasion of Prince Arthur and Gloriana's reunion (if it is, in fact, a reunion), after the night when, as he was sleeping on the ground in the "forest wide," the Faerie Queene visited Arthur in sleep:

> But whether dreames delude, or true it were,
> Was neuer hart so rauisht with delight,

Ne liuing man like words did euer heare,
As she to me deliuered all that night;
And at her parting said, she Queene of Faeries hight.

When I awoke, and found her place deuoyd,
And nought but pressed gras, where she had lyen,
I sorrowed all so much, as earst I ioyd,
And washed all her place with watry eyen.
From that day forth I lou'd that face diuine;
From that day forth I cast in carefull mind,
To seeke her out with labour, and long tyne,
And neuer vow to rest, till her I find,
Nine monethes I seeke in vaine yet ni'll that vow vnbind. (*FQ* I.ix.14-15)

The vision of Spenser's knights proceeding on their quests outward into fairyland from its center at the fairy court—each knight being aided at a crucial moment by Prince Arthur—and the implied counter-movement within that vision—of all the knights returning in procession, with Arthur at their head, into the presence of the Faerie Queene—is a vision of moral work, of struggle with the monstrous other that ranges in the forest of the world. Since this is an allegorical poem, the struggle with the monstrous other is also in the self.

But this vision of moral work, centered in fairy court, is very different from what is surely the defining vision of the Book of Courtesy, which is not of moral work but of moral recreation, or art. For Spenser, art is never centered in itself but is always turning, like a heliotrope, towards something outside art. This other thing is beauty, which art does not so much capture in itself by *mimesis* or "imitation" as bring into appearance by a kind of sympathetic magic, an imitative resonance.

We return therefore to the episode of Calidore's epiphany, when he is ranging "far from all peoples troad" (VI.x.5) in a wilderness not unlike the "forest wide" (I.ix.12) in which Arthur had his nocturnal vision of the Faerie Queene. Calidore, Mr. "Beautiful Gift," himself gets a beautiful gift when comes to Mount Acidale, on the top of which he sees the Graces dancing with the "hundred naked maidens lilly white." But this is to come upon it too quickly. It is an episode that requires a more leisurely approach to its culminating, fragile vision.

Calidore first penetrates a forest "of matchless height, that seemed th'earth to disdaine." In this forest grow "all trees of honour," though the trees are not catalogued on this occasion, in contrast with the first episode of *FQ*, with its wood of Errour (*FQ* VI.x.6). As we see in that earlier episode—"The Eugh obedient to the benders will, / The Birch for shaftes, the Sallow for the mill" (*FQ* I.i.9)—such cataloguing invariably turns the mind to the uses for which the trees are cut down. But this is a sacred wood, where even the thought of putting the axe to a tree is a profanation. Instead of being "to hand," or there-for-the-cutting, these trees stand in state, as Spenser puts it, in one of his deliberate, etymological repetitions: they "stately stood" (*FQ* VI.x.6).

The wood into which Calidore penetrates is also a classical *locus amoenus*, for its trees put out buds throughout the winter as well as in the spring and are therefore never bare. Nor are they lifeless: their lower branches provide "pauilions" for the birds to nest and sing (*FQ* VI.x.6). In contrast with the wood of Errour, where our attention is directed downwards to the tracks left on its forking paths, this forest continually draws the eye upward, as the eye experiencing forests always is. The trees are of such matchless height that they seem, despite their rooted standing, to disdain the earth, like fir trees in a rain forest, where micro-environments thrive, and new trees,

growing in the canopy of old ones, are rooted far above the ground. So far do the crowns of these trees reach into the sky that the hawks perching in those crowns are as high up if they were actually on the wing, soaring in the sky and "towering" there:

> It was an hill plaste in an open plaine,
> That round about was bordered with a wood
> Of matchlesse hight, that seem'd th'earth to disdaine,
> In which all trees of honour stately stood,
> And did all winter as in sommer bud,
> Spredding pauilions for the birds to bowre,
> Which in their lowest braunches sung aloud;
> And in their tops the soring hauke did towre,
> Sitting like King of fowles in maiesty and powre. (*FQ* VI.x.6)

Through this forest there flows a pure stream that rises from the foot of Mount Acidale. The stream is sacred, too, being, like the forest through which it flows, set above the order of nature. Its flow is unimpeded by ragged moss or silt; wild beasts do not approach it; and it is free from human eyes—at least those of the "ruder clowne," who would look upon the stream as we look upon the trees in the Wood of Errour: as something for use—to make a mill-pond of the stream, for example, or to fill it with garbage ("ne filth mote therein drowne") (*FQ* VI.x.7). We may be reminded of the innocence of water even when it is put to use: "Not even man can spoil you," Auden says in "Streams," "should he herd you through a sluice / To toil at a turbine, or keep you / Leaping in gardens for his amusement, / Innocent still is your outcry [which] Tells of a sort of world, quite other, / Altogether different from this one." That is the water we are seeing here, at its streaming source. On its banks, under the shade of the trees, nymphs and fairies make music to accompany the rhythm of the water's sound as it flows. The stream is thus a source of poetry, a Celtic Hippocrene:

> And at the foote thereof, a gentle flud
> His silver waues did softly tumble downe,
> Vnmard with ragged mosse or filthy mud,
> Ne mote wylde beastes, ne mote the ruder clowne
> Thereto approch, ne filth mote therein drowne:
> But Nymphes and Faeries by the bancks did sit,
> In the woods shade, which did the waters crowne,
> Keeping all noysome things away from it,
> And to the waters fall tuning their accents fit. (*FQ* VI.x.7)

Our attention is now directed to the "hill" that the forest surrounds. Its top is a level, "spacious plaine" to which the fairies and nymphs ascend from the woods to dance whenever they wish to ("when they to daunce would faine") (*FQ* VI.x.8). Like the forest and the stream beneath it, the hill is also a *locus amoenus*, affording every pleasure and banishing every cause of danger. Just as important, the hill is the site not of one dance—the dance we shall see—but of many. For the nymphs and fairies inhabiting the region, the hill's broad, flat summit is a place of regular dancing:

> And on the top thereof a spacious plaine
> Did spred it selfe, to serue to all delight,
> Either to daunce, when they to daunce would faine,
> Or else to course about their bases light;
> Ne ought there wanted, which for pleasure might
> Desired be, or thence to banish bale:
> So pleasauntly the hill with equall hight,
> Did seeme to ouerlooke the lowly vale;
> Therefore it rightly cleeped was mount *Acidale*. (*FQ* VI.x.8)

The etymology of *Acidale*, to which Spenser

draws our attention with that "Therefore," indicates something that is conspicuous by thrusting out, or upwards, from the main mass—often the main mass of soldiers. In the *Iliad*, the goddess Athena gives Diomedes extra fighting power and savagery so that he will be *ekdelos* "conspicuous, visibly standing out," among all the Argive fighters. The hill is thus an outcropping of excellence and is meant to be seen, to be conspicuous, as it will be in this episode, both the hill and what happens on it.

Something tells me Spenser was also thinking of the hill as an island, like the sacred island of Delos, which the name *Acidale* contains. The birthplace of Apollo and Artemis, Delos descended from the sky and floated freely for a time without connection to the bottom of the sea, thus retaining a stronger link with the sky than with the earth. So it is with Acidale. We know it is a hill grounded in the earth, even if it is hollow inside, but like Dante's Eden and Milton's, its commerce is chiefly with the sky above it. Like those rooted trees that "stately stood" but still "seem'd th'earth to disdaine," there's something loose and unconnected about this hill, which is perhaps why Spenser does not at first bring the wood up to its foot—let alone up its sides—but has the hill "plaste in an open plaine." This plain has only a momentary, vestigial existence: Calidore never has to cross it, and he will closely watch the dance of Graces from "the couert of the wood" (VI.x.11). But at this moment of setting out, Spenser intends the altitude of the trees and the altitude of Acidale to exist in different regions of altitude, to be incomparable. That way, Acidale will be more "conspicuous" from afar.

There is a suggestion, however, that the hill is meant not only to be seen but also as a place to see *from*, like the Top of Speculation, as it is called, in *Paradise Lost*. The level top of Acidale gives a three-hundred-and-sixty-degree view of the "lowly vale" on all sides, and we may suppose that in relation to this hill the entire world may be counted as a lowly vale. It is a spooky moment, one in which something happens that the poem never says, but that the poem discloses briefly to our sight. For who is doing the looking? It appears as if the nymphs and fairies who live at the hill's base, and who ascend it to dance, also ascend it to look out into the world—perhaps to look at us, even as we suppose it is we alone who look at them.

The classical reference Spenser now introduces, since he is dealing, we recall, with the problem of the otherness of beauty, is to the goddess Venus, who prefers Acidale to her island of Cytherea (another indication that Acidale is a kind of island), where she keeps her royal court in stately grandeur. Here she can be more herself, and relax, "as in a gladsome port," playing with the Graces. In other words, on Mount Acidale Venus is free from the purposes of generation and can be purely what she is, which is beauty:

> They say that *Venus*, when she did dispose
> Her selfe to pleasaunce, vsed to resort
> Vnto this place, and therein to repose
> And rest her selfe, as in a gladsome port,
> Or with the Graces there to play and sport;
> That euen her owne Cytheron, though in it
> She vsed most to keepe her royall court,
> And in her soueraine Maiesty to sit,
> She in regard here of refusde and thought
> vnfit. (*FQ* VI.x.9)

As Calidore approaches the summit of the hill, bringing the woods with him, he hears high above ("on hight"), as if the sounds were descending from the air, a shrill pipe playing "And many feet fast thumping th'hollow ground"—a delicious line for a joyful noise (*FQ* VI.x.10). The mixed sounds of pipe and thumping feet

echo through the woods in which Calidore stands. When he draws nearer to the source of these sounds, climbing higher until he crests the hill, Calidore at last sees the vision, though he is still in those woods, which conceal him from what he sees:

Vnto this place when as the Elfin Knight
Approcht, him seemed that the merry sound
Of a shrill pipe he playing heard on hight,
And many feete fast thumping th'hollow ground,
That through the woods their Eccho did re bound.
He nigher drew, to weete what mote it be;
There he a troupe of Ladies dauncing found
Full merrily, and making gladfull glee,
And in the midst a Shepheard piping he did see.

He durst not enter into th'open greene,
For dread of them vnwares to be descryde,
For breaking of their daunce, if he were seene;
But in the couert of the wood did byde,
Beholding all, yet of them vnespyde.
There he did see, that pleased much his sight,
That euen he him selfe his eyes enuyde,
An hundred naked maidens lilly white,
All raunged in a ring, and dauncing in delight.

All they without were raunged in a ring,
And daunced round; but in the midst of them
Three other Ladies did both daunce and sing,
The whilest the rest them round about did hemme,
And like a girlond did in compasse stemme:
And in the middest of those same three, was placed
Another Damzell, as a precious gemme,
Amidst a ring most richly well enchaced,
That with her goodly presence all the rest much graced. (*FQ* VI.x.10-12)

Among the Graces, and added to them to make a fourth, is a beautiful shepherdess, who is "there aduaunst to be another Grace" (VI.x.16) and is the inspiration of the music to which those ladies dance on this occasion; she is "she to whom that shepheard pypt alone" (VI.x.15). The music is made by the poet-shepherd, Colin Clout, who pipes "in the midst" of the dancers—not, it should be noted, to the side, or from a distance. In this brief moment, Colin Clout affords a vision of the artist in the midst of his art, creating his work from within rather than from without, or at a distance. That is how Spenser made *FQ*: it is indeed the only way one could make a poem on such a scale. Unlike a sonnet, which one carves, as it were, from the outside, and which one can contemplate from a certain distance, as a whole, a poem on the scale of *FQ* envelops one's entire life and cannot be seen from the outside, least of all by the poet. The poem is like a huge tent the extent of which along the ground remains unknown as one erects it from within; and one is never able to get outside the tent to contemplate the whole. Yet here, Spenser gives us a positive vision of what it can be like to be immersed in one's art, "in the midst" of it, and yet with a clear vision of the whole as a joyous dance of all the poem's beautiful parts.

It is not quite correct, however, to speak of the hundred naked ladies lily white, still less of the Graces or of the shepherd girl who joins them, as a vision of art. The point of the vision is that the dancers are not the poem itself. They are what the poem discovers it is for, which is to move into nearness with beauty. The poem, *FQ*, may be comparable to the music Colin plays, but not the dancers, which are what the poem coaxes into sight. There is another reciprocity here, in addition to that asymmetrical reciprocity traditionally associated with the Graces, who teach (as Colin will teach Calidore in turn) that the

graciousness we show towards others will come back to us in double measure. One of the naked Graces is turned away from us, as if going forth, and two face us, as if coming back: "That good should from vs go, then come in greater store" (VI.x.24).

The other reciprocity I referred to is this: the music and the dancers need each other. The supernatural otherness of beauty is the source of poetic imagery, of the strong visible impressions that are transmitted to us in the acoustic medium of verse, impressions that are strangely alien to that verse: moving silently before us, they seem to haunt the shrill piping. But the dancers also need the music of the verse for their dance. The fully supernatural creatures do not. Like the nymphs and fairies who come up from the wood to dance and play on the Acidalian height, the Graces are "wont to haunt / Vppon this hill, and daunce there day and night" (VI.x.15), whether to Colin's music or to a music heard by them alone. But the hundred naked maidens lily white, whose status is never made clearer than this, being neither nymphs, nor fairies, nor Graces, need the poet's music to be as beautiful as they are. The poet's music brings them into sight and raises their beauty to the stars, like Ariadne's starry crown, which at last, after all her travails, "Through the bright heauen doth her beams display, / And is vnto the starres an ornament, / Which round about her moue in order excellent" (VI.x.13).

That is why poetry must be on the edge of itself, as I have said, and de-centered, or biased—however symmetrical it may appear to be from a formal point of view. For poetry is not a simple making of artifacts that are sufficient to themselves: it is a communication with something beyond it, towards which it leans and hearkens. The poetry will not work without this other presence. But neither will this other presence truly exist apart from the poetry that calls it forth to sight. Beauty is not in the eye of the beholder alone, but it does need the beholder to flourish, to dance. The good intention of the viewer enlivens beauty to return, like the Graces' gifts, "in greater store" (VI.x.24).

The culmination of this vision of the supernatural otherness of beauty is focused on the shepherd lass, who "all the rest in beauty [did . . .] excell," crowned with roses where she stands (*FQ* VI.x.14). It is noteworthy that she alone does not dance, but is simply "placed" in the middle of the dance: "But that faire one, / That in the midst was placed parauaunt, / Was she to whom that shepheard pypt alone" (VI.x.15).

This "placing," a willful, *a priori* act of "setting up," or "positing," no doubt was intended to indicate that the other "Damzell" (VI.x.12) who has been thus "advanced," being a mortal ("Yet was she certes but a country lasse" [VI.x.25]), does not belong in the vision but has been put there by the poet of his own will. She does not appertain to the supernatural otherness of beauty but is merely a human instance in the here and now of what does not essentially belong to the here and now. She is the poet's wife, Elizabeth Boyle, who is accorded this magnificent compliment. But her presence among the Graces cannot be eternal. The poet indicates as much when he excuses himself to "Gloriana" for his momentary bias:

> Sunne of the world, great glory of the sky,
> That all the earth doest lighten with thy rayes,
> Great *Gloriana*, greatest Maiesty,
> Pardon thy shepheard, mongst so many layes,
> As he hath sung of thee in all his dayes,
> To make one minime of thy poore handmayd,
> And vnderneath thy feete to place her prayse,
> That when thy glory shall be farre displayd
> To future age of her this mention may be
> made. (*FQ* VI.x.28)

In another sense, an unintended but more important sense that may have startled the poet as he wrote, and should surely startle us, this is not a temporary act of placing that must inevitably give way to the full and unadulterated otherness of the vision of beauty. Let us look at her again. The dancing, naked ladies lavish flowers and perfumes on her, and the Graces endow her with the more inward gifts of beauty:

> Such was the beauty of this goodly band,
> Whose sundry parts were here too long to tell:
> But she that in the midst of them did stand,
> Seem'd all the rest in beauty to excell,
> Crownd with a rosie girlond, that right well
> Did her beseeme. And euer, as the crew
> About her daunst, sweet flowers, that far did smell,
> And fragrant odours they vppon her threw;
> But most of all, those three did her with gifts endew. (VI.x.14)

If poetry is a communication with something beyond, towards which it leans and hearkens, and if poetry must therefore be on the edge of itself, biased to one side, why shouldn't this bias in particular—the poet's bias towards the mystery of beauty that shines on him from his wife—really be the center of his vision, and not just an accidental compliment? It won't do to idealize the vision too much, or too far, as if it had little to do with us. To appear, beauty needs our cooperation, but it also needs our desire and our care. To make what we desire and what we care for merely an instance of transcendental, Neoplatonic beauty is to ignore the element of choice in the determination of beauty. It is by our choice that there is beauty in nature, as there are nymphs and fairies in nature. Invisible as they are, they are there beside the stream whose "siluer waues did softly tumble downe," giving it that silvery beauty and also that musical sound, to which they "tun[e] their accents fit" (VI.x.7). The sound of the motion of the waters of this stream is a beautiful sound because the nymphs and fairies tune their accents to it. Otherwise, it would be noise. What they do is what the poet does as well: he chooses beauty from what is objectively there in the world, and tunes his accents to it.

Spenser chose Elizabeth Boyle, who may or may not have been beautiful in others' eyes, and tuned his accents to her through the *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*, partly making her beauty, partly discovering it, and perhaps also saluting what was there for all to see. But what makes this event in *FQ* something more than the daily experience of beauty is the poet's transferring away from himself the complex act of positing—of making, of discovering and of saluting—by which a person unites beauty to his or her desire and care. The act of positing is transferred to those visionary beings dancing around the simple shepherd lass, showering her with blossoms. Nor is she in any way secondary to them at this moment. To the contrary, they are at this moment willingly subordinate to her and even accept to receive their grace and their beauty from her:

> And in the middest of those same three, was placed
> Another Damzell, as a precious gemme,
> Amidst a ring most richly well enchaced,
> That with her goodly presence all the rest much graced. (*FQ* VI.x.12)

This is not a vision of moral work through struggle and effort. It is instead a vision of moral recreation achieved through art and from the inspiration of what is outside art. It is a vision of what moral work is for.

I said before that Mount Acidale has something of the character of an island, in particular the sacred island of Delos, birthplace of Apollo and Artemis, which was supposed at one time

not to be connected to the floor of the sea and to have moved freely among the Cyclades, signifying its connection with the sky. As the dancing place of nymphs and fairies, Mount Acidale is also like a drum, one sounded by the feet of the dancers:

> Vnto this place when as the Elfin Knight
> Approcht, him seemed that the merry sound
> Of a shrill pipe he playing heard on hight,
> And many feete fast thumping th'hollow ground,
> That through the woods their Eccho did re bound. (*FQ* VI.x.10)

It comes upon us as a surprise that Acidale is hollow, that its interior is a cave, and for one critic at least, William Blissett, it is a cave with an exit, like the cave of the nymphs in the *Odyssey*, from which these dancers have been called into the light by Colin's music. I said I would find Spenser's tomb in fairyland, and I think it is here. When the poet was borne away from Westminster Abbey (on those wings that were formed by the plumes that were thrown into his grave) he was carried to fairyland and lodged within the Acidalian mount, where his spirit might forever pipe above him and the dancers feet, making "gladfull glee," would sound forever in his ears. Is that possible? You will have to judge for yourselves.

[1] *On Beauty and Being Just*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999.

Articles: Abstracts and Notices

Abstract by Thomas Herron (East Carolina U.)

38.79

Carey, Vincent. "Atrocity and History: Grey, Spenser and the Slaughter at Smerwick (1580)." *Age of Atrocity: Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland.* Eds David Edwards, Pádraig Lenihan and Clodagh Tait. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007. 79-94.

Explores the history, contemporary and modern historiography of the massacre of foreign papal troops and some clergy and civilians at Smerwick, Co. Kerry, by troops including Sir Walter Ralegh and led by Spenser's patron Arthur, Lord Grey, Lord Deputy of Ireland. Reviews description of event not only in John Hooker's pro-Protestant history in Holinshed (1587) but also from Catholic and Continental points of view, such as John Copinger's *Theatre of the Catholic and Protestant Religion* (1620), wherein "the slaughter of the garrison was noted, and the torture of the priest [Lawrence Moore] elaborated upon" (86). Concludes with analysis of Grey's and Queen Elizabeth's enthusiastic letters regarding the event, and discusses the direct influence of Grey's correspondence on published trac (perhaps by Anthony Munday), *The true reporte of the prosperous successe which God gave unto our English souldiours against the forraine bands of our Romaine enemies, lately ariued (but soon inough to theyr cost) in Ireland in the yeare 1580* (1581), which celebrates the event in verse and prose. Spenser's dedicatory sonnet to Lord Grey briefly analyzed and connections made between the massacre and those like "wyld Goates… chased all about" and killed in the Souldan episode (*Faerie Queene* V.viii.50). "Smerwick is important not alone because England's leading renaissance poet may have been present —and certainly wrote about it as if he were— but because it marks an important stage in the development of an xenophobic and anti-Catholic rationale for brutal war in Ireland, and for war against Spain in England"(79).

Abstracts of Conference Activities

The following Spenser panels took place in December of 2007 at the MLA conference in Chicago.

SPENSER'S USELESS LOVES

Sponsor: International Spenser Society
Presiding: Jeff Dolven (Princeton U.)

38.80

Heather James (U. of Southern California), "Spenser's Narcissism."

Although Spenser famously moralizes his song, he also cultivated and experimented with a poetic style as close to the purely aesthetic as he could get it, from the early works of the Complaints and *The Shepheardes Calender* to *The Faerie Queene*. This paper contrasts Spenser's use of the moral inventory—which arranges historical, biblical, or mythological figures as examples of vice or virtue—with the sensual inventory of elegiac figures (such as Narcissus and Hyacinthus) of erotic promise and loss. It argues that Spenser cultivated the sensual inventory as a hallmark of his own poetry at its most narcissistic, which is to say, at its most detached from instrumentality. Spenser's reasons for carving out space in his poems for a conspicuous negligence of moral and political obligation, the paper argues, derive from his equally moral and political reluctance to place his poetic voice in the service of potentially tyrannical authorities. In such a scenario, Spenser's very eloquence would make him poor, to draw on Narcissus' motto, *inopem me fecit copia*. In this sense, the poet's experiments in narcissism—poetry without instrumentality—represent a corrective to the super-serviceability of the moral inventory.

38.81

Sean Keilen (Princeton U.), "Sweet Infusion."

"Sweet Infusion" approaches the story of Cambell and Triamond in Book IV of *FQ* as a meditation on reading and interpretation, and on imitation and tradition as Spenser understood these concepts in relation to Chaucer. The paper focuses particularly on the survival of pastoral sensibilities about poetic subjectivity and textual transmission in this episode and on the difficulty of fitting them to the heroic context of Spenser's poem. Cambina's magical intervention in the conflict between Cambell and Triamond is shown to create a condition—oblivion—in which these Spenserian heroes may be incorporated into the classical tradition stretching back to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Oblivion, in turn, is explored as a key term in Spenser's understanding of friendship and charity.

38.82

James Kuzner (Pomona College), "'Without Respect of Utility': Precarious Life and the Politics of Spenser's *Legend of Friendship*."

Kuzner's paper examines Book IV of *FQ* in the context of friendship theory both early modern and modern. Specifically, he charts friendship's capacity in Spenser's epic to shape selfhood—its capacity to respect and reinforce boundaries of identity but also to disregard and dissolve them.

As he reads it, the Legend of Friendship explores how to best calibrate subjectivity and intersubjectivity, self-interest and self-sacri-

fice, bounded, unencumbered selfhood and its exposed, unbounded opposite. In particular, Spenser puzzles over two, rival calibrations. The first follows a basic structure evident in numerous stories of friendship in the Renaissance—not to mention contemporary politics of friendship, ranging from those of Jürgen Habermas to those of Laurie Shannon—wherein initial acts of self-sacrifice, and initial disavowals of friendship's utility, lead to self-fortification and fulfilled self-interest. To be sure, friendships that place sociation in service of better individuation also appear in Book IV—for instance, in the stories of Cambel and Triamond and Placidas and Amyas. And while Spenser does at times valorize this structure, he is, Kuzner argues, both weary as to acquisitive individualism's offer and wary of what friendship which offers it so often needs to reach a happy ending: an instrumentalized approach to others and, more specifically, the manipulation and elimination of those who do not share such friendships' avowedly incidental (but finally central) commitment to personal boundaries and interests. The most egregious instance of this approach—an instance which, I believe, Spenser himself sees as egregious—occurs when a nameless woman disregards her own safety entirely, allowing for the preservation of another set of friends, Amoret and Aemylia, only to be excoriated and shunted out of the poem altogether by Belphoebe.

While Spenser is critical of ostensible sources of value such as Belphoebe and Cambel, this does not mean that his legend of friendship is always only ambivalent as to its theme. Quite the contrary; Spenser unequivocally endorses relations structured by the full assumption of the uselessness that in Cambel's case is only avowed, relations driven by more intense forms of self-abandonment—as they are, for example, in Britomart's bed scene with Amoret in canto i and in her exposure to an already exposed Artegall in canto vi. In the first scene, interior existence is emptied out in an ecstatic affective outpour of being "twixt"; in the second, Spense portrays the founding of the English nation its to depend not on aggrandized subjects but on ones subject to extremities of undoing. In both scenes, Spenser constructs a politics of friendsh founded not on the disciplined English self-fas ioning, as Stephen Greenblatt and a host of oth critics contend, but on the intersubjective unfashioning of subjects—on an incapacitating "b tween" seen as salutary. In these scenes, Spense defines friendship as that which unbounds Eng lish identity, which affords not the restoration o will but its loss, not energy's instrumental use b its useless, immense expenditure, vulnerability not minimized but shared. Doing so, Spenser's thinking augments that of recent theorists of friendship with similar emphases, from George Bataille and Maurice Blanchot to Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler.

SPENSER AND THE CONTINENT

Sponsor: International Spenser Society

Presiding: Anne Lake Prescott (Barnard Colleg

38.83

Joseph Campana (Rice U.), "Tasso's Tree, Spen er's Trauma."

In the landscape of romance, trees bleed with alarming frequency. Whether we consider Boi do's *Orlando Innamorato*, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* or Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, a poet lik Edmund Spenser had ample precedent for the appearance of the bleeding tree Fradubio in th Legend of Holiness. This paper explores the w in which a particular language for both physica pain and cultural memory bleeds from Tasso t Spenser. For all that these bleeding trees have

been taken to be concretizations of intertextuality or relations of influence, my argument here is that Tasso's deployment of the bleeding tree not only enabled that trajectory of psychoanalytic thought known as trauma theory, but it also enabled Spenser to treat the consequences for representing the lived experience of pain of a cultural trauma induced in the wake of the Reformation with the excision of familiar modes of sacramentality, such as the Eucharist, and, more importantly, figurations of the suffering Christ. I combine here the work of Geraldine Heng, who argues that medieval romance allows for the representation of cultural traumas, and the work of scholars such as Deborah Shuger and Regina Schwartz, who argue that early modern literary forms compensate for post-Reformation loss of ritual and sacramental forms. I then argue that Spenser's bleeding tree compensates for a lost symbolics of the suffering Christ in whom might be grounded the texture of lived experience rooted in pain and an ethics of compassionate response

38.84

Roland Green (Stanford U.), "Edmund Spenser Invents Europe."

The paper argues that the later cantos of Book V of *FQ* might be read as a dynamic account of the imperial world of Spenser's time from one "scriene" to another, namely from the threshold of Mercilla's castle in England to the boundary of Geryoneo's castle in the Low Countries. The figure of the "scriene," a kind of wall fitted with a door, is assimilated to two contrasting modes of demarcating place in the imperial enterprises of England and Spain, respectively: the *palus* or pale that marks the boundary between civilization and barbarism in early instances of English imperial inscription, and the *via* or way (such as a river or a road) that projects the Spanish enterprise into the heart of conquered societies. Thinkers about empire in the later sixteenth century can often be found thinking through the pale or the way, or adapting these figures to imagine both the successes and liabilities of their enterprises, as Spenser does in Book V as well as in *A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland*. The process that animates such thinking might be called *teleiopoesis*, or the establishment of imaginative effects across distances that is common to early modern literature and politics. Imperial writing in this period, imaginative as well as historical and practical, might be defined as the conjunction of geographical inscriptions such as the *palus* and the *via* with *teleiopoetic* effects; and the counterparts of Book V might be seen to go well beyond the usual romance epics, extending to the body of imperial writings that think through these terms and participate in these processes.

38.85

Melissa Sanchez (U. of Pennsylvania), "Chivalry, Seduction, and Huguenot Theory in *The Faerie Queene*, Book V."

As has been frequently remarked, Book V of *FQ* transforms England's conflicts with Spain into a series of chivalric battles in which Protestant knights rescue helpless women from Catholic brutality. These gendered allegories strive to promote the policies of the "forward" Protestant party in England by appealing to romance conventions that demand the rescue of damsels in distress and that accordingly imagine the English battle against Spanish power as a simple military contest between good and evil. But the actual

behavior of Belge and Irena (the Netherlands and Ireland) suggests that, far from being innocent victims, these women have been complicit in their own oppression. For Belge and Irena have been not been forcibly ravished by Geryoneo and Grantorto (both figures for Spain), but have been seduced or deluded: "needing [Geryoneo's] strong defence," Belge gladly "Him entertayn'd, and did her champion choose" (V.x.12), while Irena has fallen into Grantorto's clutches through "gilefull treason" and "subtle slight" rather than outright attack (V.xi.39). In their failure to recognize or resist the encroachment of tyranny, Belge and Irena resemble less the innocent Una than the proud and promiscuous Fleur-de-Lis (France), who has been "entyced" by Grantorto's "golden gifts" and "guilefull word[s]" to abandon her proper love, Burbon (Henri IV, himself an emblem of failed Protestant conviction) (V.xi.50). Through these ambiguous tales of rape and seduction, coercion and consent, Spenser expresses the fear that England will fail to respond not only to the foreign menace posed by Catholic powers, but also to the domestic danger of a queen increasingly perceived as weak and arbitrary, ruling by prerogative rather than counsel. For given Elizabeth I's preference for caution, frugality, and pacification, to urge an aggressively Protestant foreign policy was itself to defy royal will. In such a context, English subjects may prove more like Fleur-de-Lis than Artegall or Arthur. In depicting the danger of effeminate compliance, Spenser follows the account of tyranny offered by such writers as Hubert Languet, Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, Françios Hotman, and Étienne de la Boétie, all of whom were widely read among the Sidney-Essex circle in whom Spenser found his most consistent source of patronage. According to these Huguenot thinkers, the tyrant achieves and perpetuates his power not merely through military conquest, but, more insidiously, through his ability to seduce subjects into what de la Boétie described as "voluntary servitude." By incorporating these Continental theories of resistance, Spenser not only urges English military intervention in the Netherlands and Ireland, but also warns that aristocratic English subjects must guard themselves against similarly effeminizing submission to unjust royal demands if they wish to protect native English laws, liberties, and religion.

Announcements and Queries

38.86

The Department of English in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences at East Carolina University, would like to announce their upcoming interdisciplinary symposium, "Raleigh and the Atlantic World." The free symposium will take place at East Carolina University on April 10-12, 2008. Keynote speakers are Dr. Mark Nicholls (St. John's College, Cambridge U.) and Dr. Carole Levin (U. of Nebraska). More information can be found at the symposium's website: http://www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/engl/raleigh/. Please contact Thomas Herron (herront@ecu.edu), Marianne Montgomery (montgomerym@ecy.edu) or David Wilson-Okamura (david@virgil.org) with questions.

38.87

International Spenser Society Executive Committee meeting
December 28, 2007
12:00-2:30 p.m.
Vong's Thai Kitchen, Chicago

Minutes complied by Rhonda Lemke Sanford, Secretary/Treasurer

Dorothy Stephens, President, presiding. Officers and committee members present: Katherine Eggert (Vice President), Craig Berry (outgoing Secretary-Treasurer), Rhonda Lemke Sanford (incoming Secretary-Treasurer), Bart Van Es, Christopher Warley, Jeff Dolven, Jennifer Summit, Joseph Campana, Judith Anderson, and Sheila Cavanagh. Committee members absent: Andrew Escobedo, Jessica Wolfe.

The minutes of the December 2006 meeting were approved.

President Stephens introduced the Society's new Secretary-Treasurer, Rhonda Lemke Sanford. Craig Berry was warmly thanked for his energetic and imaginative service as Secretary-Treasurer.

The committee nominated Katherine Eggert as the next President and Kenneth Gross as the next Vice President of the Society.

The committee discussed possible new members to replace outgoing Executive Committee members Jennifer Summit, Christopher Warley, and Kenneth Gross.

Christopher Warley agreed to continue to serve as the Society's delegate to the Renaissance Society of America.

Outgoing Secretary-Treasurer Craig Berry reported on the finances of the Society. The Society is solvent and has met its goal of having yearly expenses closely match income.

Spenser Review Editor Sheila Cavanagh reported on the Review's plans—prompted by rising costs and by the uncertainty of the level of continued funding from Emory University—to move to a digital-only format. She is exploring options for open or password-protected access for the journal.

The committee finalized implementation of the Society's 2006 commitment to set up a graduate-student grant. Given the current state of the Society's finances, the committee resolved, beginning in 2008, (a) to give any graduate student who presents a paper at a Society MLA session a three-year membership in the Society and a free ticket to the Society's MLA luncheon meeting, as well as the honor of being introduced at the luncheon; (b) depending on the success of future fundraising, to extend these privileges

to graduate students presenting papers in the Society's session at the Renaissance Society of America; (c) also depending on future fundraising, to add a stipend for travel to graduate students presenting in Society-sponsored sessions at MLA and RSA. The committee further discussed possible mechanisms both for fundraising and for advertising the availability of the grant, and resolved that the donation check-off box on the annual dues form will now specify that all such donations go toward the Spenser Society Graduate Student Award.

The committee discussed possible topics for the Society's 2008 MLA Convention sessions and settled on a Roundtable on "Spenser's Environs" to be chaired by Joe Campana, and an Open Session to be chaired by Katherine Eggert. The committee also discussed alternative formats for Spenser Society sessions at MLA and resolved to explore the option for future MLA conventions of organizing a session of papers on a particular Spenserian passage or episode.

President Stephens reported on the Society's spearheading of a response to the MLA proposal to reduce the number of MLA Convention sessions organized by Allied and Affiliate Organizations such as the Spenser Society. President Stephens organized a letter to the MLA from a number of the Allied and Affiliated Organizations devoted to pre-1800 literature. The MLA seems receptive to our counterproposals and will discuss the matter.

Vice President Eggert reported on the MacCaffrey Award for the best book or article on Spenser. Due to administrative difficulties, the book prize has been delayed and will next be awarded in 2008, for a book published in 2005, 2006, or 2007. Simultaneously, an article prize will be awarded in 2008 for an article published in 2006 or 2007. The 2008 prizes will be administered by incoming Vice President Kenneth Gross. Bart Van Es and Christopher Warley will serve as committee members for the book prize, and Jeff Dolven and Jessica Wolfe will serve as committee members for the essay prize.

The committee queried the progress of the Spenserian Stanza prize, and Vice President Eggert offered to make inquiries.

The committee discussed possible future recipients of the Colin Clout Award.

The committee discussed possible future speakers for the Hugh Maclean Memorial Lecture. The 2008 lecturer will be Bruce Smith.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30.

The Spenser Review
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