

## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

## 4I.II

Anderson, Judith H. *Reading the Allegorical Intertext: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton*. New York: Fordham UP, 2008. xii + 436. ISBN 978-0-8232-2847-8. \$60.00 cloth.

Judith H. Anderson's book constitutes a lifetime of scholarship on the authors mentioned in the subtitle, and more importantly it provides (in the final two chapters) a sustained meditation on the literary mode of allegory. Fourteen other chapters reprint previously published work, from her 1971 article on *Muiopotmos* (in *JMRS*) to her "Passion and Patience in Shakespeare and Milton" in the 2007 volume of *Spenser Studies*. In an odd instance of proleptic—or near simultaneous—publication, an additional three chapters are articles that appeared in 2008 and 2009. Eight of the pieces originally appeared in journals, and nine in essay collections. In an era of limited resources one may question if the publication of such a substantial and handsomely produced volume is necessary. Some of the pieces have been updated—in particular the *Muiopotmos* piece—but Anderson hedges the question of when and how to revise: "Comprehensive updating would often have involved my noting another author's more recent publication that overlaps in some significant way with mine and might have included a note to this effect" (23). One could respond that the point of scholarly work over time is to do exactly this, unless the cumulative merit of the pieces outweighs the expectation of bibliographic currency. In Anderson's case the answer is yes, since reading intertextually works as well when applied to her own essays as it does when applied to the primary texts. As befits a scholar of Anderson's accomplishments, her work is consistently insightful, textually grounded, and theoretically informed.

Anderson offers the volume not just as a compilation of her scholarship but as a collection that will enable and illuminate her larger project: to explain how allegory is "tensive," "progressive," and "recursive" (281-84, but the words appear *passim*). The hallmark of a great text is its semantic and syntactic flux, with multiple cases of both/and and almost never either/or.

In "Real or Allegoric' in Herbert and Milton: Thinking through Difference" (one of the new chapters; the title quotes *Paradise Regained* IV.390) I especially like the term "junctional doubling" to describe Milton's "pervasively allegorical patterning of reality itself" (278). The chapter is an excellent presentation of what all careful readers sense about Milton's method but what few of us can articulate so succinctly. To give another example, Anderson takes us into the classroom in "Flowers and Boars: Surmounting Sexual Binarism in Spenser's Garden of Adonis" where she shows us the teacher-scholar at her best. Whereas many of our students seek the definitive meaning of any given passage, Anderson demonstrates the importance of an anti-essentialist dynamic, or in other words the ability to entertain more than one essence (or meaning) at once. The categories of ethics and politics, for example, are indeed "conceptually different" but they inevitably shade into one another, thus "affirming the productive and provocative instability of their relation" (220). Conventional terms (androgyny, bisexuality, hermaphroditism) must go beyond binaries to produce a *tertium* (even a *quartum*, *quintum* and so on) *quid*. Anderson investigates the spaces that create the fruitful ambiguity otherwise known as poetry. At the same time, Anderson defines her critical terms and deploys them with precision and with remarkable consistency.

The sexual binarism essay is one of the more recent ones (2008), and my impression in reading the recent and new material is of a more relaxed critical spirit free to range across texts and critical categories. Anderson's ability both to draw large scale scenic parallels among major works and to include acute asides to metaphysical poems—especially those by Donne and Herbert—again manifest the power and skill of her readings. The introductory chapter reads less easily, but it is difficult to write any such introduction that tries to unite a disparate set of materials over time. In moving from essay to essay, there are also inevitable tonal differences created not just by the passage of time but also by the critical stances adopted in a refereed journal article as opposed to a commissioned piece in an edited volume. To speak in general terms, in the former the state of the question is outlined, critically rebutted, and then a new reading (on a previously argued question) is proposed; in the

latter the stance is more reflective and the choice of material hews to a more idiosyncratic (but original and very worthwhile) topic. Although Anderson never privileges the poetry of Spenser in aesthetic or technical achievement, his work is the fulcrum Anderson uses to balance and assess the earlier and later poems. Spenser is the savvy reader and legatee of Chaucer and he is the teacher of and model for Milton, and even of Shakespeare. Chapter 12, “The Conspiracy of Realism: Impasse and Vision in *The Faerie Queene* and Shakespeare’s *King Lear* (originally a 1987 *Studies in Philology* article, now with *FQ* added to the title) remains a superb—and energetic—demonstration that the art of what is perhaps Shakespeare’s greatest play is deeply allegorical, and hence Spenserian.

The index is comprehensive and includes the names of critics mentioned in the notes. It thus aids the reader who wishes to refer backwards and forwards in the volume as Anderson examines related points and it allows one to follow a network of critical conversations on these major texts. Unfortunately, however, all notes are printed at the back. A comprehensive bibliography would be a welcome addition, both as a way to simplify the notes and as an aid to finding one’s way in the criticism. In producing this volume, Anderson clearly hopes that it will be read as a book, and that readers will benefit from her critical method on these major texts as she has practiced and developed it over time. Students and scholars who are as heavily invested in these poems as Anderson (and that is still, thankfully, a substantial number) will learn much from reading it cover to cover. A project so ambitious might easily have devolved into critical cant and overwhelmed a lesser critic, but Anderson’s command of the subject—including deep familiarity with the poetry—justify the volume. It was awarded the Isabel MacCaffrey prize by the International Spenser Society at the 2009 MLA convention in Philadelphia.

James H. Morey is a Professor of English at Emory U. His main research interests are the Bible in English and medieval vernacular theology.



## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

## 4I.I2

Grogan, Jane. *Exemplary Spenser: Visual and Poetic Pedagogy in The Faerie Queene*. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2009. vii + 217pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-6698-1. \$99.95 cloth.

Jane Grogan's frequently witty, elegantly written book brings a welcome new dimension to the renewed critical interest in Spenserian poetics and humanist pedagogy. Drawing on a now-substantial body of scholarship (see most recently, Jeff Dolven's *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (2007)) that seeks to tease out the impact of the humanists's curricula on Renaissance literary works, Grogan moves away from a continuing emphasis on the textual word to make a case for the importance of visuality, visualization and the rhetoric of sight in Spenser's epic. Who learns and what is learned in Renaissance poetic texts such as *FQ*? How does that learning take place and why might it succeed or fail? More specifically, how and why does Spenser tie these strategies of learning to the discourse of the eye? From the physiology of seeing in the House of Alma and the "fierie beames" of Corflambo's eyes, from the metaphors for illumination in the Letter to Raleigh, to the challenge of iconophobia in Book I, the dilemma of seeing and knowing in the ekphrases of Book III, and the repeated failures of vision in Book VI of *FQ*, Grogan is closely attuned to the language of pictorial didacticism that permeates Spenser's poetics.

This focus on various kinds of seeing in the poem, and their moral and pedagogic purposes makes *Exemplary Spenser* an important and timely intervention on a topic that has largely received sporadic attention in Spenser studies. Grogan argues that Spenserian poetic theory is grounded in a visual hermeneutics, a belief in the epistemological connection between seeing and knowing. Thus, in *FQ*, the "doctrine by ensample" always takes moral and interpretive priority over the "doctrine by rule," so beloved of humanist pedagogues. And yet, Grogan's analysis is subtle and attentive to the complexities of Spenser's particular version of these traditional humanist strategies: she points out that, like many of his contemporaries, Spenser ultimately casts doubt on the epistemological capacities of vision to

deliver knowledge, and consequently, trusts to the less deontic moral universe of historical fiction, where narrative counteracts visual excess. Through the visual nature of his narrative, Spenser seeks to inculcate a "narrative intelligence" in his readers, as they must learn to distinguish between various kinds of seeing, between icons, images, visions and illusions.

Refreshingly, Grogan's Spenser's didacticism is not of the rigid, prescriptive kind, which so often seems to provide an intellectual straitjacket for a reader cowed into subjection by classical authorities; instead, Grogan's Spenser favors flexible examples and contingent lessons which encourage the interpretive liberty of the reader, putting the experience of narrative at the poem's moral center. A case in point is her treatment of the rhetoric of exemplarity in *FQ*, which she argues, derives from the model of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, rather than from Plato. Spenser's knights, like Cyrus, are not ideal exemplars, but complex, fallible figures who demand to be treated not in terms of fixed, easy moral categories, but with a discerning consciousness of their multifaceted histories. Here again, flawed exemplarity through visualized "ensamples" helps to develop narrative intelligence and interpretive acumen. This emphasis on Xenophon is also perhaps the single most original and important contribution of Grogan's book, and in reading, I often wished she had given it the separate, extensive treatment it deserves, rather than allowing it to recede and emerge as a key thread through the texture of her argument. Spenser's debt to Xenophon has been rarely remarked, though it is clearly proclaimed in the Letter to Raleigh where he extols Xenophon as a model over Plato, and Grogan usefully excavates important contemporary debates in which the Xenophon/Plato comparison features prominently. Xenophon is also a crucial node in separating Sidney's poetics from Spenser's (too often treated as the same), and attention to echoes of Cyrus in the epic potentially opens new avenues for scholarship.

*Exemplary Spenser* is divided into four loosely connected chapters, each examining an aspect of Spenser's visual poetics. The first and last chapters are the most interesting, as Grogan discusses the Letter to Raleigh as the key to Spenser's poetic theory at length (chapter one), and then concludes by suggesting that Book VI of *FQ*, with its emphasis on failures of vision,

charts the failure of the didactic visual poetics espoused by the Letter. Grogan's approach to courtesy in particular offers several new insights as she attempts to draw together the politics of the Blatant Beast with a reflection on the inability to see rightly. The third chapter's discussion of the ekphrases in the House of Busirane differs from previous critical treatments in its insistence on Britomart's interpretive agency, while the second chapter provides an "anatomy" of Spenser's visual theory, covering such topics as the physiology of sight in early modern thought, the "theology of sight" in terms of Protestant iconophobia, and the epistemic functions of seeing.

Despite its frequently illuminating readings, however, the juggling act required to keep the book's multiple arguments in view often makes it rather repetitive: details and observations recur across chapters as Grogan restates her thesis regularly. More important, perhaps, the sheer scope of the early modern visual domain, which forms the background of the book, affects the clarity of the argument's exposition. Each chapter considers a distinctly different kind of seeing and visibility, and draws on a diverse array of early modern discourses; by the end, it is not evident that all these fit together comfortably under a single rubric (whether "visual poetics" or something else), though Grogan is certainly right to suggest that they should be considered in relation to each other. Some readers will find in Grogan's wide-ranging research into the various aspects of early modern visual culture a helpful introduction to a complex field. Others may find some of her summaries too brief and simplified, as for instance, with her allusions to the somewhat vague, generalized "visual epistemology" of the period. And yet, *Exemplary Spenser* does not pretend to offer a cultural history, but gazes steadfastly at its chief object, *FQ*, showing us new ways to see and understand Spenser's art.

Ayesha Ramachandran is Assistant Professor of English at Stony Brook U. She has published articles on Spenser, Tasso, Petrarch and postcolonial drama, and is currently completing a book-length project entitled, *The Worldmakers: Poetic Knowledge and Global Challenges, 1580-1700*.

## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

## 4I.I3

Hannay, Margaret. *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*. Surrey: Ashgate, 2010. ix + 363 pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-6053-8. \$99.95 cloth.

Margaret Hannay's impeccably-researched and delightfully insightful *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* has much to offer scholars and students alike. This new biography offers the most comprehensive look at the life and writing of Mary (Sidney) Wroth, beginning with her early life at court, continuing to look at Wroth's married life and writing career, her relationship with her cousin, William Herbert, and finally, concluding with her years of alienation from court and very difficult financial circumstances. Hannay's book follows in the footsteps of other fascinating biographical scholarship on Wroth, including Josephine Roberts's "Introduction" to her poems, but Hannay treats the subject of Wroth's life with a breadth that the others have not. Hannay goes beyond discussions of how Wroth's writing might be understood as a product of her literary family progenitors to create a complex web of material, familial, and social relations that influenced Wroth's writing but that by no means make her work secondary to either aunt, Mary Sidney, her uncle, Sir Philip Sidney, or even her father, Robert Sidney. She manages to capture these varied contexts, that is, all the while demonstrating how Wroth is a subject of interest in her own right.

Hannay organizes the biography chronologically, for reasons that make perfect sense and seem straightforward; but the implications are more subtle and significant than it might at first seem. By doing so, Hannay complicates the biographical connections related to Wroth's writing to complicate the way we see her as a beneficiary of aristocratic privilege and the extent to which, as so many scholars have argue to date, Wroth owed her achievements to family or court ties. For example, the archival research here provides copious evidence of how Wroth's family (and she in adulthood) may have navigated with great success courtly circles, but that financial troubles made it difficult, if not impossible, for her immediate family to experience much material advancement. Through such a

chronology, Wroth's importance as a writer and an early modern woman becomes inextricably bound to her close ties with her aunt, Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, far less to her uncle Sir Philip Sidney; and Wroth's affair and illegitimate children with her cousin, William Herbert, takes on a new context and becomes just one part of her life among many that shaped Wroth's life and her romance, the *Urania*.

One of the most obvious strengths of this book is its attention, even hyper-attention, to archival research. Using materials from the British and Bodleian Libraries, Penshurst Place (Wroth's family home), Essex Records Office, the National Archives, and others, Hannay weaves together a rich and vibrant tapestry that illuminates Wroth's life and work in such a way that is incomparable and will be invaluable to those interested in Wroth, women writers in general, and the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England. Moreover, because Hannay examines such a wide array of materials, she provides insights previously unknown—or at least hitherto undocumented.

But these documents allow Hannay not only to fill in many of the details of Wroth's life that were as yet either unknown or not documented fully. Her research serves to revise some of our previous notions of Wroth's life and work that have become scholarly orthodoxy. Whereas so many scholars have situated Wroth at the court's margin, as an outcast, Hannay repositions her to represent, given the copious archival evidence she amasses in this book, a seemingly more accurate picture of the writer. And so, as Hannay writes, because so much of what we know about Wroth comes from correspondence between her parents, Barbara (Gamage) Sidney and Robert Sidney, when Barbara Sidney dies in 1621, the information we have about Wroth becomes much more scarce. Since her mother's death corresponded in time with the publication of her controversial *Urania* (because of its depictions of court members and members of the aristocracy), scholars have until now concluded that the scarcity of material stemmed from Wroth's marginalization from courtly circles. However, as Hannay writes, "the sense that Wroth disappeared from public view is largely an illusion created by the fragmentary nature of surviving documents" more than fact (229). As Hannay demonstrates, Wroth even continued to receive gifts

from the king himself, suggesting that she remained very much in favor.

While the argumentative and interpretive aspects of this book are less obvious than the strictly biographic, there is an implicit argument that pervades it. Hannay's is a revisionist narrative of Mary (Sidney) Wroth's life and its relationship to her writing that will likely make it one of the most useful resources on Wroth for some time to come. It is ambitious and impressive in its scope, yet meticulous in its detail. At the same time, it remains a highly user-friendly work that would be of interest to scholars and students for whom it will be a valuable reference tool for understanding this important literary figure more fully. Even as we see a turn in our discipline to question the legitimacy of some of the women writers who have only relatively recently been accepted into our literary canon, it is reassuring to see someone treat a writer like Mary (Sidney) Wroth with such sensitivity, breadth, and depth. Materialist scholars in particular, who turn to the archives to recover as much as possible the material and social conditions of early modern women, will find good company with this biography.

Jennifer Munroe is an Associate Professor of English at UNC Charlotte, where she teaches courses on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poetry and prose, Shakespeare, literary theory, Ecocriticism, and film. She is editor of *Making Gardens of Their Own: Gardening Manuals for Women, 1550-1750* and (with Rebecca Laroche) *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity* (forthcoming, Palgrave). She is author of *Gender and the Garden in Early Modern Literature* and numerous essays on such topics as Lady Mary Wroth, gardening manuals, and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Her current book project is an ecofeminist revision of the history of science in the seventeenth century.



## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

## 4I.I4

Levine, Nina and David Lee Miller, editors. *A Touch More Rare: Harry Berger, Jr., and the Arts of Interpretation*. NY: Fordham UP, 2009. xi + 357pp. ISBN 978-0-8232-3030-3 357. \$60.00 cloth.

Nearly every reader of *The Faerie Queene* is beholden to Harry Berger, and many of them, including this author, understand the dazzling designs of Spenser's poem in terms of its great playfulness, moral awareness, and persistent (even paranoid) sense of the hazards of closure, terms which Berger has made available to us. Berger's work is itself generous and generative, playful, and utterly responsive to the claims of a poet "without a world-picture" whose desire to seduce us runs parallel with a wish to unmoor us. In a distinguished career filled with a stream of dazzling (and often surprising) books and papers, Berger has carefully taught us how to admire Spenser's great intelligence and enormous artistry and put our fingers on Spenser's great humanity—demonstrated, Berger suggests—in the poet's ability to read us, or watch us read his poem. So almost every reader of *FQ* will appreciate *A Touch More Rare*, which celebrates Berger's long life and a career in which, as Louis Montrose perfectly puts it, "the project and the person" have been "inseparable." Indeed, this is a rare anthology, a collection of essays which clearly belong together and have their origins in an obviously common purpose, even though they traverse fields of drama, philosophy, art history, cultural anthropology, early modern poetics, classical thought, and the history of ideas.

Berger has been teaching and writing for more than fifty years, and his range of interests is vast, making hungry where most it satisfies. This is because Berger has continually revisited earlier impressions and conversations while making it abundantly clear how Shakespeare, Spenser, Rembrandt, and Plato revise themselves and call attention to their methodologies, implicating their audiences in their machinations, making us complicit in their designs. "Breathtaking," "uninhibited," at once "formative and liberating," "protean" and "not defenseless, but undefended,"

Berger's criticism, the contributors maintain, strenuously engages in conversation with himself and other critics, and inspires the same sense of community in other scholars.

All of the nineteen essays gathered here, some of them revised or expanded from papers given at a 2006 conference at the U of South Carolina in celebration of Berger's career, draw attention to Berger's exceptional powers of close reading and his dialogic approach, his open-ended models, and what Susanne L. Wofford wittily terms his "immaturity," "his learned refusal," she explains, "of things the way they are" (31-44). As Leonard Barkan elsewhere puts it, "Harry doesn't like limits to interpretation" (18). The stakes are very high in Berger's work, as these wonderful essays make extremely clear, but they also tell us that Berger likes to play all of his cards, all of the time.

The book is divided into six parts, including studies of drama, Spenser's Bower of Bliss, and Berger's most recent foray into Renaissance portraiture, followed by Berger's own afterword (an affectionate picture of his career and many friendships) and, finally, a brief photo "album." Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass introduce the volume with a lovely "Sonnet for Harry," in which they proclaim: "His nectar turns to honey in the hive." This kind of praise is repeated throughout the book, in different keys, from different angles: Berger's thought is "energetic," "beatific," and "beneficent;" his influence resounding and overflowing, his approaches ingenious. But the most valuable contributions uncover additional lines of force or places of tension in Berger's thinking. Barkan, for instance, investigates Berger's "brilliant sensitivity to rhetoric" which "hears and sees theater in unexpected places" (14-15). In "Sack Drama," Bradley Greenberg similarly analyzes the importance of Berger's view that dramatic characters are not to be understood as selves or even images of selves, but as a mask through which the dramatic text itself is enabled to speak to us (45), perhaps with more extensive purposes than the playwright knows about. In a remarkable essay on "Harry Berger and Self-Hatred," Kenneth Gross suggests we see Berger as "an acrobat of suspicion" (23), "instinctive[ly] distrust[ful]" of selfhood (23), and eager to expose its "subterfuges, its myriad disguises, theatricalizations, displacements, duplicities, captivities, and abjections,

its impositions on itself and others” (24)—selfish fictions enabled by a rather self-less language. Berger’s work has been psychological and epistemological, cultural and aesthetic but also, Gross notes, “fearless” and “moral” (29). There are other superb contributions, gorgeous tributes to a teacher, performer, and philosopher. Wofford describes Berger as both a classicist and a trickster (32) who is uncomfortable with the “veiled” “moral lessons in New Criticism’s method of close reading” since it offers “no model for how to cure, change, move beyond, erase, or transform evil” (33, 35). Close reading, Wofford persuasively argues, is also closed reading, dangerously indifferent to “our own deep involvement in the structure of pain” (43).

Marshall Grossman gives us a marvelous picture of Berger as the presiding Genius of Harryland, a community of scholars who also actively, regularly read and write about each other (237). We see this firsthand in Judith Anderson’s exemplary discussion of “Acrasian Fantasie,” where she observes that although “[e]nglightened, persuaded, and provoked by Harry’s reading [of Acrasia as the product of male fantasy], I wonder whether there is any female in the Bower and the rich tradition it represents if ‘Acrasia is male’” (78). Anderson goes on to link Acrasia with Chaucer’s Wife of Bath “to raise the possibility of Acrasia’s expression not simply *of* male discourse but subversively also within it” (81). It is important to remember, Anderson shrewdly argues, “that Acrasia is a *female* figure, not *only* objectified misogyny, and that her art, perverse as it is, nonetheless has complex, synthetic power” (83). Katherine Eggert’s essay continues this valuable exploration and extension of Berger’s claims about the Bower of Bliss, claiming that the Bower provides “not a point of entry for the woman reader but a point of entry for a feminine poetics” (103). These two essays in particular made me wonder about the place of Elizabeth Tudor in Berger’s imagination, as Spenser’s auditor, reader, and a rival artist, not merely the implied cynosure of *FQ* but herself an unstable source of value, anxiety, and closure. Space prevents me from commenting on the rest of the contributions, many of which are equally learned, inventive, and indebted to Berger’s examples of close reading, attention to rhetorical surfaces, and suspicions of balance and order. One can only wonder where Harry Berger will take us next, and be immensely grateful for the ride.

Elizabeth Mazzola is Professor of English at the City College of New York. Her most recent book, *Women’s Wealth and Women’s Writing in Early Modern England: ‘Little Legacies’ and the Materials of Motherhood*, was published by Ashgate in 2009. She is currently working on a study of women and literacy in the early modern period.

## ARTICLES: ABSTRACTS AND NOTICES

## 4I.I5

Walkden, Andrea. "Allegorical Insubordination and the 1596 *Faerie Queene*." *SEL* 48 (2008): 93-109. Abstract by Matthew Turner.

This article contends that Scudamore, the shield of love and emissary of Cupid, attempts to break out of allegorical typology and become a psychologically realistic character. His attempt, however, only serves to illustrate his nature as an allegorical type. Spenser bolsters the allegorical complexity of his epic-romance by showing that a minor character trying to become a major character only subordinates himself further to the true hero, or in this case, the true heroine, Britomart. Scudamore tells the story of his choice at the Temple of Venus (*FQ* IV.x) when he decides to become a lover and not a hero, the latter of which roles he sees as compatible with only one kind of love, *philia*. As the reader already knows from Scudamore's failure to save Amoret at the House of Busirane (III.xii), this erroneous judgment is predetermined to fail. Britomart—in befriending Scudamore and Amoret and in achieving heroic success—makes evident "that the amatory and the heroic need not be in conflict with each other." Walkden's essay brings Spenser's ingenious handling of Scudamore to bear on narratology and the development of the novel. Like minor characters in the novel who are typically "flatter" than protagonists and antagonists, Scudamore attempts to become a major character by overthrowing his symbolism or thematicism and gaining authenticity. Spenser forces Scudamore to err in judgment, though, and the character undergoes self-allegorization as the type of person who misjudges the relationship between the heroic and the amatory.

## 4I.I6

Anderson, Judith H. "Britomart's Armor in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*: Reopening Cultural Matters of Gender and Figuration." *English Literary Renaissance* 39 (2009): 74-96. Abstract by Andrea Hewitt.

With a methodology that "engages the process of figuration in allegorical narrative," Anderson's article argues for the development of a "doubled perception" of Britomart's gender throughout Books III, IV, and V of *FQ*. Britomart's armor "participates in—indeed figures—the development of her integrity and its loss," and the mythological sources shift as Britomart's armor remakes her, from Venus in Minerva (*Venus-Virgo*) to Venus in Mars (*Venus-armata*). In Book III, Britomart displaces the weaving tasks of Minerva for masculine armor. She is not only vested in the armor, but also "invested" in her quest to save Artegall. Because the inner Britomart metamorphoses into the cultural form of the armored male, Busirane is able to wound her, the armor now "more fully a part of her in some way." Likewise, she hides her womanly side from Amoret, further allowing her "performance of manhood" to bring the Mars figuration into conflict with Minerva. In Book IV, Britomart's figure evolves when she removes her helmet to expose her "erotic beauty." The chivalric clashes with the erotic as "Britomart's armed form" meets "the outward possession and expression of her own Amoret—Amor, her love." The later battle scene between Britomart and Artegall is also "highly figural—embodied but not simply fleshy." The fighters "exchange the roles of hunter and hunted recurrently." Eventually, Artegall strikes her helmet and she is unmasked, though not "totally divested," which at once inspires not only manly rage but also her eventual concord with Artegall. Britomart's armor diminishes in formative power in Book V when she meets Ragidund, who gravely injures her, denoting that "the armor is now mere armor" and this blow "seals her figural fate." Britomart loses much of her self—her multivalence and integrity—in the battle with Ragidund; her figure now becomes statuesque.

ABSTRACTS OF CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

The following papers and roundtables were given at the 2011 MLA Conference, January 6-9, in Los Angeles, California

SPENSER AND MARLOWE: AUTHORSHIP, AESTHETICS, INFLUENCE

4I.I7

Meghan Davis, U of Southern California. "It's Tough Being a Genius: Bees, Butterflies, and Poetic Stockpiling in Marlowe and Spenser."

My adviser Heather James recently delivered a talk on "Spenser's Aromatherapy," asserting how Spenser spins beautiful lists of flowers as a way of "paying himself first"—that is, since Spenser's poetry must serve various political and practical ends, his flourishing descriptions allow him to personally enjoy the wealth of his own verse before expending it elsewhere. I would add that for Marlowe, too, who laments in *Hero and Leander* that true learning and poverty are intrinsically tied to one another ("To this day is every scholar poor;/ Gross gold from them runs headlong to the boor"), the "coral clasps," the "buckles of purest gold," and all the other "pleasures" he offers to his love exist only in language and can only be enjoyed there. In what ways, then, is the virtuosic crafting of language its own reward for Spenser and Marlowe? And how do the two writers defend themselves against—and poke fun at—the challenge of lesser wits, the "lofty servile clown[s]" that threaten them? The solicitous annotations of *The Shepherdes Calender* playfully toy with the parasitic scholar who functions only in the wake of another's genius, while Marlowe, with his dislocation and farcical misuse of rhetoric and apothegms, mocks the sort of classically-informed, sententious gentleman whose education in rhetoric and dialectic prepared him for political servility, not scholarly exploration. (The imaginative world of *Hero and Leander* is one where the bee, long regarded as a symbol of the commonplace-collecting intellect, gets swatted away.) Of course, playing with beautiful and daring language can be dangerous: as the narrative of Muipotmos reminds us, awe-inspiring wings can incite Envy, the poet's enemy, just as Leander's beauty attracts the lusty and predatory advances of Neptune. If beautiful language is its own

reward, how might it also threaten to impoverish or endanger those gifted with the ability to create it? In other words—does plenty indeed make these poets poorer?

4I.I8

Patrick Cheney, Pennsylvania State U. "English Authorship and the Early Modern Sublime: Spenser and Marlowe."

In this paper, I argue that we can ground the Spenser-Marlowe connection, not in our current political model of ethical authorship as a form of nationhood, but rather on a neglected model of emotional authorship as a figuration of literary greatness. A quartet of points supports this argument. First, a model of heightened authorship emerges powerfully in late sixteenth-century England, and constitutes a bold challenge to the tradition of literary criticism connecting Aristotle to Horace and Sidney. This model was first theorized by Longinus, and known as "the sublime." Second, we can elevate our current lexicon of early modern poetics beyond Aristotle and Company by taking to heart the substance of Longinus's treatise. Above all, the sublime is Longinus's counter-national principle that replaces goodness with greatness, equilibrium with ecstasy, and self-regulated passion with heightened emotion. Under the spell of sublimity, the author tells a story about the making of a great literary work, operating in "the interval between earth and heaven." A work representing the enigma of this interval produces either terror or rapture, leaving the human in the exalted condition of the gods. Third, Spenser and Marlowe perform leadership roles in the late-Elizabethan writing of an early modern sublime. And fourth, it is the Spenserian sublime that fascinates Marlowe to provoke his intense response. Overwhelmingly, Marlowe locates heightened moments in Spenser that feature the boundary between the human and the divine: the way men become gods. At stake in the Spenser-Marlowe connection, then, is how the Elizabethan author will represent human immortality.

## 41.19

Laura Silberman, Baruch College, City U of New York  
 “Duelling Poets: Marlowe vs. Spenser in *Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*.”

I propose to explore how allusions to Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta* interact with allusions to Spenser’s *FQ* in *Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure* as the two Shakespeare plays explore how modes of allegory and conventions of theatricality interact and contend. Shakespeare tempers the stance of ironic critique found in Marlowe’s play with a focus on the complexity and instability of subject position derived from Spenserian allegory. *Merchant* presents the general issue of how personification allegory influences social critique, and *Measure for Measure* uses Spenserian and Marlovian lenses to examine the specific and crucial issue of the closing of the convents and the alienation of Elizabethan England from its Catholic past.

One of the most explicit instances of a Spenser/Marlowe subtext occurs with Shylock’s famous exclamation when told of Jessica’s elopement, “My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!” (II.viii.15) The echo of Barabas’s “O girl! O gold! O beauty! O my bliss!” (II.i.53) when his daughter Abigail throws bags of money from the window of what was Barabas’s house to her father in the street below has frequently been noted. Less recognized is the similarity of Shylock, torn between competing attachments to his ducats and to his daughter to Spenser’s Malbecco, who is immobilized by his inability to choose between saving his wife and saving his money. As I have argued previously, Shylock’s words echo Marlowe but his situation is Spenserian. (“Shakespeare as Spenserian Allegorist.” *MLA*, San Diego, session “Shakespeare Counters Spenser,” December 2003). In this paper, I propose to explore how both subtexts actually interact. Shylock may be understood as an inverted Malbecco. Malbecco diminishes from a man to a noun: Shylock represents a deliberate expansion, a moral and emotional fleshing-out of Marlowe’s Barabas. The Spenserian connection offers a means of reflecting on the process of personification as Shylock joins a series of Machievellian villains, from Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus* through Iago to Iachimo, who imitate the transmigration of Marlowe’s Machevil from one host to another delineated in the Prologue to *Jew of Malta*.

As Patrick Cheney has noted, the transmigration of Marlowe’s Machevil echoes the flight of Pompey’s soul to the eighth sphere in Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, from which vantage point Pompey laughs to see his murdered body being mutilated. Marlowe channels a kind of eighth-sphere laughter through Barabas: that is, adversarial criticism emanating from a problematic subject position. The general tone of unfettered critique projected by Marlowe through his Machievellian protagonist makes for exhilarating theater but at the cost of liberating a potentially corrosive cynicism. When Shylock introduces three-dimensionality to Marlowe’s Barabas, *Merchant of Venice* deploys Spenser against Marlowe as Shakespeare’s play revisits how the issue of subject position impinges on social critique.

Spenserian allegory and Marlovian irony mingle in Shakespeare’s *Isabella* as well. Both *Jew of Malta* and *Measure for Measure* address the closing of convents in Tudor England. Marlowe’s Abigail shuttles into and out of the convent as a hapless pawn in her father’s machinations. Shakespeare’s *Isabella* is summoned from the convent on a quest in which she channels both Britomart the defender of married love and Amoret the object of desire. When Angelo fantasizes about violating *Isabella* as a desire “to raze the sanctuary / And pitch our evils there” (II.ii.174-175) he figures his intended assault on *Isabella*’s body in language that recalls both the literal razing of sanctuaries throughout sixteenth-century England and Scudamore’s aggressive comments in his description in Book IV of *FQ* of ravishing Amoret from the Temple of Venus, “For sacrilege me seem’d the Church to rob / And folly seem’d to leaue the thing vndonne,” (IV.x.53.3-4). Marlowe views the Maltese nuns and the history of religious discord they illustrate from a mordantly ironic perspective. In contrast, Shakespeare presents the plight of *Isabella*, a nun forced out of the convent and exposed to the licentiousness of fictional Vienna, with sympathy, as *Isabella* must negotiate conflicting Spenserian roles in the Jacobean theater of cruelty to women.

## THE POET'S POET: A SPENSER ROUNDTABLE

## 4I.20

The Spenser Roundtable on “The Poet’s Poet” took up five afterlives of Spenser’s work and the lessons learned by his more or less explicit, more or less comradely imitators. Colleen Rosenfeld considered Ben Jonson’s marginal notation on the simile at *FQ* II.iii.35, a case of taking a complex rhetorical figure too simply, reducing it to an instance of “cowardnesse” without registering how the figure of simile is itself under question. Roland Greene took up Milton’s use of Spenser’s word “region:” though the cosmos of *Paradise Lost* is as determinate (mappable) as the *FQ*’s is improvised and unfolding (not mappable), “region” functions for Milton to import a Spenserian sense of romance ungovernance, before survey, reign, or colony (both poets enjoying the irony of the word’s origin in *regere*). James Nohrberg offered a master class in Miltonic echoing of Spenser, focusing on Delos and Paradise, and on angels. Germaine Warkentin introduced us to the Canadian poet James Reaney, and to his reworking of *SC* as twelve anserine eclogues in *A Suit of Nettles* (1958). (Anserine equals gooselike; the characters are geese. What could be gooselike and not be a goose? But we digress). Finally, Joseph Loewenstein sifted James Merrill’s *The Changing Light at Sandover* (1982) for its Spenserianism, finding differences (Spenser is always ashamed when violence escapes the governance of virtue, Merrill not) and kinships (both poets are unanxious about their influences). The discussion afterward turned on the importance, for many subsequent poets, of Spenserian structures and structural ambitions, and also on the question of his openness to influence, which, we hypothesized, might be one ground for the “poet’s poet” label. He is, James Nohrberg concluded, the most “user friendly” of poets.

--Jeffrey A. Dolven, Princeton U

## OTHER MLA ABSTRACTS

## 4I.21

Hassan Melehy, UNC Chapel Hill. “Spenser’s Mutabilitie Cantos and Du Bellay’s Poetic Transformation.”

One of the interpretive challenges of Spenser’s *Mutabilitie Cantos* is their principal paradox, which is that the ostensible finality of the quelling of change is achieved in an “unperfite” or unfinished Canto. If the final canto and its judgment subjugating change to the ends of stasis are unfinished, *FQ* presents itself as open-ended and subject to change on the subject of change. It seems, then, that Change enjoys a certain victory after all, even if Nature forcefully insists on stasis.

In this paper, I will propose a solution to this paradox by looking at how Spenser incorporates prior texts of Joachim du Bellay into his work, especially on the point of the transformation to which poetry is subject over time. Spenser of course translated Du Bellay’s *Antiquitez de Rome* and *Songe* (both 1558), the *Songe* on commission in 1569 and again, along with the *Antiquitez*, in his 1591 *Complaints*, a collection that also contains several variations on Du Bellay and the theme of the decaying power of time. But the relationship between this work and the functions of time and change in the *Mutabilitie Cantos* remains unexplored. For Du Bellay, time is not only destructive but also creative in that its transformative power is necessary for bringing new poetry into being. In his translations of and subsequent variations on Du Bellay, Spenser both addresses and engages in this process as part of his strategy to create a new English poetry.

Since one of the main functions of the new poetry is legitimation of the state and the promotion of a literary canon to support it, the declarations of permanency at the end of the Cantos are necessary to the project. However, the “unperfite” state of this declaration suggests that change is necessary to such permanency, and that the durability of the new canon of English literature must, as did Du Bellay’s poetry before it, incorporate change into its proceedings. Thus, in the very gesture in which he affirms the finality of canonical poetry at the end of his epic, Spenser leaves this poetry subject to the same transformation on which its creation depends. A reading of *FQ* in light of Spenser’s adaptations of Du Bellay’s notions of poetic transformation brings to light the fluid status of early modern English canonical poetry.

## 4I.22

Leslie A. Taylor, Metropolitan State College. “Spenser’s Boethian Moments: Despair and Consolation in *FQ*.”

In 1593, Queen Elizabeth I acquired the distinction of becoming the second English monarch to translate the *Consolatio*. Although Elizabeth did not circulate her manuscript, she did make sure that her undertaking was widely reported. One such courtier who would have taken note of Elizabeth’s intellectual interests was Edmund Spenser, the poet laureate who had already presented Elizabeth with his 1590 edition of *FQ*, and would present her with his 1596 edition as well. John Upton in his 1758 commentary on *FQ* praised both Elizabeth’s and Spenser’s knowledge of the *Consolatio*: “Our poet like his royal mistress, was a great reader of Boethius.” Upton was also a great reader of Boethius, and since his first comprehensive survey, Spenserian scholars have continued to reveal the influence of the *Consolatio* on Spenser’s great epic.

John G. Radcliffe’s two-volume edition of Upton contains eleven instances where Upton referenced Boethius while annotating *FQ*. Much of what Upton found of Boethius in Spenser’s epic is channeled through Chaucer, but in some instances Upton detected an influence that is independent of Chaucer’s work. In his commentary on Book VI, Upton noted only an oblique reference to Boethius through Chaucer’s Wife of Bath’s tale. More extensive influence of the *Consolatio* on Book VI has been well documented in contemporary criticism. Claire Kinney refers to Aldus’s speech at the beginning of canto iii as a “Boethian lament.” Robin Headlam Wells refers to Meliboe’s speech in canto ix as “Boethian counsel.” Michael Dixon focuses on the concept of “Boethian wonder” for his reading of Book VI, and notes that there are approximately 80 references to Fortune, Chance or Fate in Book VI, a ratio of about 2:1 when compared to the other books of *FQ*. Throughout Book VI, Spenser’s use of language and the development of narrative seem to interrogate the overarching questions of the *Consolatio*: Why do bad things happen to good people? Does Divine Providence really hold sway over the vicissitudes of fortune? In addition, the episodic, recursive structure of Book VI contains many Boethian moments paralleling the development of the *Consolatio*—from despair, to comfort, to enlightenment.



## Lectures

## “Bequeathed Care”: Rethinking Spenser's Contemplation

Hugh MacClean Memorial Lecture, International Spenser Society  
8 January 2011

Jennifer Summit

## 4I.23

As Gabriel Harvey saw it, his was a world of action: “scholars in ower age,” he reports in a letter to the courtier John Wood, “[are] rather active then contemplative philosophers.”[1] On the same theme, he rebuked another friend—maybe Edmund Spenser—for preferring “the inward contemplative delightes of the minde” as “most commendable.”[2] Such thinking, Harvey insists, is long outdated—“expired when Dunse and Thomas of Aquine with the whole rabblement of schoolemen were abandoned ower schooles and expellid the Universitye” (78). In their place, he reports, scholars of the active age prefer deeds to thoughts, practice to mere theory.

Harvey’s narrative of intellectual history would become paradigmatic in the twentieth century. For Hannah Arendt, the Renaissance established its modernity by “[reversing] the hierarchical order between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*” that had held in the Middle Ages.[3] A similar account pervades mid-century scholarship on “civic humanism”: for Hans Baron, “the ever-recurring themes in the humanistic philosophy of life were the superiority of the *vita activa* over ‘selfish’ withdrawal into scholarship and contemplation.”[4] Likewise, Quentin Skinner and the “Cambridge School” in the 1970s identified the emergence of civic virtue in the Renaissance with “the growing belief that a life devoted to pure leisure and contemplation (*otium*) is far less likely to be of value—or even to foster wisdom—than a life in which the pursuit of useful activity (*negotium*) is most highly prized.”[5] In the late 80s, the Renaissance was identified once more with *negotium* over *otium* when the new historicism made “negotiation” a watchword for the

period and the critics who studied it.[6] Characterizing its practitioners as “pervasively concerned with writing, reading and teaching as modes of *action*,” Louis Montrose revealed them to be the heirs of Arendt, Baron, Skinner, and other scholars for whom the Renaissance was the age of the *vita activa*. [7]

For this Renaissance, Gabriel Harvey is an apt spokesman. As he notes in his famous marginalia: “It is not bookes, that makes the skillfull man, but the knowledg of bookes: & the memorie of knowledge: & the practis of memorie, both in words, & in deeds. He deserves to be the most cunning man, that can best *negotiate* his Larning.”[8] In the words of Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, Harvey was “studied for action” and thus exemplified, as they argue, a distinct mode of early modern literacy, which “persistently envisaged action as the outcome of reading—not simply reading as active, but reading as trigger for action.”[9]

Yet, pervasive as it is, the Renaissance triumph of the *vita activa* deserves to be revisited with skepticism for several reasons. First, the apparent paradigm shift at its heart exaggerates a distinction between the Renaissance and the Middle Ages that misrepresents medieval treatments of the *vita contemplativa*. Supporting stereotypes of “contemplative life” as passive, idle and narcissistic, the narrative drastically oversimplifies medieval contemplative discipline while overlooking both the robust defenses of the *vita activa* and the increasingly popular doctrine of the “mixed life” in late medieval England and Europe, which belie assumptions about a heterogeneously contemplative Middle Ages.[10]

Second, the very distinction between action and

contemplation on which this narrative draws has been called into question across many fields. Returning to Aristotle, contemporary philosophers like Walter Brogan detect an “interconnection between theory and practice” that reveals “the very bifurcation of philosophy into theoretical and practical endeavors” to be “a modern prejudice.”[11] This philosophical revision of the “theory / praxis” divide invites a similarly nuanced reconsideration of its historical meanings and uses.[12]

But in the modern university that divide has been institutionalized, particularly in representations and self-representations of the disciplines. The effect has been particularly damaging for the academic humanities, which, according to Jerome Kagan’s recent *Three Cultures: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Humanities in the 21st Century*, have been weakened by a “long-standing suspicion of the ‘intellectual’ concerned with knowing, rather than doing.”[13] By identifying modernity with the triumph of doing over knowing, action over contemplation, in other words, humanists and their heirs helped to secure their own irrelevance.

Yet another reason to question the early modern triumph of the *vita activa* is that it misrepresents the experience of scholars from the Renaissance to our own age, whose efforts to establish the instrumental value of literary study have been fraught with uncertainty. While filling his margins with praise of doing over thinking, action over books, Gabriel Harvey wrote just as frequently to express despair over his perception that literate scholarship and practice would never bear fruit in the realm of action. As Harvey observes in his *Ciceronianus*:

If we could only realize in actuality for the public weal what we conceive in mind and imagination for our own delight! . . . So few men in all history—if indeed any men at all—have succeeded in really attaining and making manifest what they grasped in contemplation.[14]

Four centuries later, but in a similar register, Louis Montrose observes that, despite their preoccupation with writing and reading as “modes of *action*,” literary scholars continually experience “a nagging sense of professional, institutional, and political powerlessness or irrelevance” that reflects a profound doubt in their “own very capacity for action.”[15] In short, for Harvey’s “active philosophers” no less than for our own, the insistence that literary scholarship is a mode of action quickly gives way to the very suspicion of uselessness that it strives to avert.

Instead of defining or defending the humanities by locating them on either side of an active/contemplative divide, I propose that literary humanists are ideally

situated to uncover the origins of that divide within our very discipline, and to unsettle, rather than reinforce, its dominance. In so doing, we can begin to reconsider both what the divide meant and how it functioned for those who first deployed it, and from whom we have inherited it. Humanists, and especially literary humanists, have a special stake in this project. In place of the familiar narrative, we need to understand how the Renaissance triumph of the *vita activa* didn’t simply describe but created a history of ideas that separated a contemplative Middle Ages from an active Renaissance in order to endow the latter with positive social value while rendering the former obsolete. Not only does this narrative misrepresent the history of medieval and early modern ideas and practices, it effaces the post-medieval role of contemplation, which was to offset the dominant narrative of the *vita activa* and to generate alternative models of learning and the common good.

With the aim of recovering this history, I want to return to Harvey’s observation that “scholars in ower age ar . . . rather active then contemplative philosophers” by locating a counterpoint in the work of Spenser himself. Despite Harvey’s pronouncement, Spenser gave contemplation a central role in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*. The scene is well-known and much commented-on: having been rescued from his enemies, Orgoglio and Despair, the Red Cross Knight is taken to the House of Holiness, where he is nursed, healed, and finally led up a hill “that was both steepe and hy” to meet Contemplation himself, “an aged holy man” who eschews “worldly busines” and inspires the Knight to do the same (I.x.46).[16]

Literary history features many seekers undertaking similar contemplative ascents, such as Dante’s. But rather than remain with Contemplation, Spenser’s knight returns to earth. For some readers, this return reflects Spenser’s “commitment to the active life.”[17] In the words of Virgil Whitaker, it leaves “no question that Spenser is a typical Elizabethan in valuing both learning and wisdom for what they can contribute to practical affairs rather than for themselves.”[18] If so, then the scene only illustrates and affirms the eclipse of the *vita contemplativa* by the *vita activa* that has been so thoroughly described by Gabriel Harvey and modern intellectual historians.

But I read it differently. Instead of rejecting contemplation, I find that the episode attempts to integrate it into the educational program that Spenser announces in his Letter to Raleigh: the development of “that part which they in Philosophy cal Ethice, or vertues of a priuate man.”[19] Ethics, the pursuit of right action, tends to be defined against contemplation,

following Aristotle, who differentiated the life of “excellence,” consisting of “noble acts,” from that of “wisdom,” directed toward “contemplation of truth.”[20] But just as Aristotle preserves contemplation as the highest aim and standard of human action, Spenser likewise attempts to re-claim it as an ordering principle for an education in virtue. In the process, I argue, he reinvents contemplation for a post-medieval age, recuperating it as a perspective that critiques and corrects the maladies of the active life.

The triumph of the *vita activa*, according to its modern interpreters, began with the redemption of “honor” as a Renaissance ideology of social conduct. For Burckhardt, describing Italy at the height of the Renaissance, “the sense of honour” consisted of “that enigmatic mixture of conscience and egotism which often survives in the modern man after he has lost, whether by his own fault or not, faith, love, and hope.”[21] Burckhardt’s account of honor as a secular compensation for lost faith, love, and hope finds a later counterpart in post-war models of civic humanism, for which the desire for honor drives individual action. As James Hankins observes, “humanistic education is, like chivalry, an aristocratic form of socialization that links good behavior with honor.”[22] The same ideal underlies *virtus*, a key term for the Cambridge School; at its core, in Skinner’s words, was the “humanist belief” that “the fundamental reason for devoting oneself to a life of the highest excellence is the hope of acquiring the greatest possible amount of honour.”[23]

Spenser was no stranger to the Renaissance cult of honor: in *Mother Hubberds Tale* he describes the “courtly Gentleman” whose “minde on honour fixed is.”[24] So it is noteworthy that when Red Cross Knight seeks honor, it’s a dire mistake. Preparing himself for battle with Sans Joy, he “devise[s]” how “greatest honour he atchieven might” (I.v.1), and fights “all for prayse and honour” (I.v.7). But he seeks “honour” in the House of Pride, and no sooner does he achieve it than he falls victim to the giant Orgoglio, whose “masse of earthly slime, / Puft up with emptie wind” (I.vii.9) personifies the human pride to which Red Cross Knight has become disastrously subject. Red Cross Knight’s misadventures dramatize Huizinga’s observation that chivalry itself, along with the ideology of honor that supports it, is a kind of “formalized pride.”[25]

Spenser wasn’t alone among his contemporaries to call attention to the dark side of the Renaissance honor cult: Erasmus’s *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* insists that “the only honour to be sought after by a Christian is to be praised not by men, but by God,” while John Norden’s *Mirror of Honour* (1597) warns its reader that vainglory

“followeth honour, as a vulture to devoure it.”[26] Pride also follows honor in *FQ*, Book I; and, as Red Cross Knight discovers almost immediately upon leaving Orgoglio’s dungeon, it is followed in turn by despair, in whose “darksome caue” he soon loses himself (I.ix.35).

Red Cross’s double fall, first to pride and then to despair, reveals how closely related the two states are—as Isabel MacCaffrey observes, “Despair is Orgoglio turned inside out.”[27] By stressing their kinship, Spenser bears out Bernard of Clairvaux’s observation that pride is the beginning of sin, and despair, its inevitable end.[28] Pride inflates the self, while despair confronts its limits. The two maladies, Spenser insists, bear a special relation to chivalric cult of “honor,” whose apotheosis of the self both compensates the loss of faith, hope, and love (in Burckhardt’s formulation) and secures its affinity with despair. This point is exploited by Despair himself, who appeals to his victims’ chivalric egotism by inquiring after their “knightly deeds” (I.ix.28), the more easily to entrap them.

The antidote to pride and despair, as Red Cross discovers in the House of Holiness, is charity.[29] There, Charissa “instruct[s]” the Knight “in euery good behest / Of love, and righteousnesse, and well to donne” (I.x.33), and leads him to Mercie, who teaches him further to practice “godly worke of Almes and charitee” (I.x.45). This emphasis on charity as “worke” reflects the term’s early modern context. Where medieval *caritas* named a state of being—of “mutual amity, [and] an experience of shared love,” to quote Felicity Heale, or “onehede of cherite,” in the words of Julian of Norwich—early modern charity became a top-down social practice, Heale observes, “of giving to the needy and deserving.”[30] For John Bossy, this emergent concept of “charity as activity” reflects the influence of civic humanism, which made philanthropy a citizen’s duty.[31]

Crucially, though, Red Cross Knight’s training in charity leads him not to action but to contemplation: after learning the “godly worke of Almes and charitee,” the knight is led up a steep hill to Contemplation himself. And after a further climb, he is granted a vision of New Jerusalem, whose angelic denizens, with their “gladsome companee” (I.x.56) and common friendship, embody the shared love that lies at the heart of the medieval *ordinatio caritatis*. [32] By leading the Knight to this vision of divine and human love, Spenser’s Contemplation recalls a medieval tradition that made contemplation the fulfillment of *caritas*. Thus for Gregory the Great, whose *Homilies on Ezechiel* defined action and contemplation for the Middle Ages, “the true contemplative life is to retain with the whole mind love [*caritas*] of God and neighbor” (*contemplativa vero vita est caritatem quidem Dei proximi*

*tota mente retinere*).[33] Similarly, for Aquinas, contemplation is motivated by *caritas*: “the contemplative life consists principally in the contemplation of God under the impetus of charity” (*vita contemplativa praecipue consistit in contemplatione Dei, ad quam movet caritas*).[34]

If we accept, with David Lee Miller, that the House of Holiness represents Red Cross Knight’s extended “reading lesson”—beginning with Fidelia, “that none could reade, except she did them teach” (I.x.19)—we are ready to see how Spenser’s Contemplation completes this lesson.[35] For the Middle Ages, the acts of reading and contemplation were joined in the pursuit of *caritas*. In Hugh of St. Victor’s *Didascalion*, contemplation follows a process of “reading and meditation,” which “inflame[s] the mind with love for its creator.”[36] Likewise, St. Augustine famously advocates reading as a contemplative practice that enlarges the reader’s experience of *caritas*. [37] In Augustine’s well-known formulation, the allegorical reading of Scripture both generates and is generated by *caritas*, since all reading is to be “interpreted for the end of charity, either as it applies to God, to one’s neighbor, or to both.”[38] *Caritas* infuses the reading process not only as the message of Scripture—since “Scripture teaches nothing but charity”—but as the framework of mutual trust that enables any meaningful communication.[39] Thus Augustine envisions a “twofold charity of word and pen” that unites speaker and listener, reader and writer in a shared “motion of the soul.”[40]

In *FQ*, something like this charitable unification of speaker and listener takes place in the crucial passage in which Contemplation helps Red Cross Knight interpret the vision of the New Jerusalem. The stanza marks the completion of Red Cross’s education and his conversion from the *vita activa* to the *vita contemplativa*, as he transfers his desire from “glory” to “peace.” As many readers have noticed, the dialogue frustrates the differentiation of the speakers, since both are identified as “he”:

Unworthy wretch (quoeth he) of so great grace,  
How dare I thinke such glory to attaine?  
These that have it attaind, were in like cace  
(Quoeth he) as wretched, and liv’d in like paine.  
But deeds of armes must I at last be faine,  
And Ladies love to leave so dearely bought?  
What need of armes, where peace doth ay remaine,  
(Said he) and battailes none are to be fought?  
As for loose loves are vaine, and vanish into nought.  
(I.x.62)

The confusion between the two speakers marks the Knight’s reorientation from individual to relational

identity. At the same time that Red Cross perceives his destiny, he also learns (as Carol Kaske has observed of this passage) that he is not unique, that there are others “in like case.”[41] And, while learning to redirect his desire from “glory” to “peace,” he also learns to give up the individual distinction promised by chivalry’s code of honor. Only in so doing, he learns, can he join a community of “peace” whose members live together “as commonly as friend does with his frend” (I.x.56). As this stanza suggests, the process of moving from action to contemplation, and from self to community, produces both self-knowledge, as Red Cross Knight comes to learn his destiny, and self-displacement, as that knowledge replaces the pride of individual distinction with the humility of brotherly love. By teaching Red Cross Knight how to interpret the New Jerusalem as a vision of *caritas*, then, Contemplation fulfills the *lectio divina* initiated by Fidelia.[42]

If Contemplation completes the “reading lesson” that Red Cross begins in the House of Holiness, he also presents him with another when he recounts the story of his upbringing. As an infant, Contemplation reveals, Red Cross Knight was fostered by a “Ploughman,” who “brought [him] up in ploughmans state to byde” (I.x.66) and named him George in honor of his earthy origins. The revelation alludes to an earlier religious allegory, William Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, a literary ancestor that Spenser’s Knight acknowledges just two lines before, when he vows “to walke this way in Pilgrims poore / estate” (I.x.64), repeating the final lines of *Piers Plowman*: “I wil bicom a pilgryme, / And walken as wyde as al the worlde lasteth” (XX.380-382).[43]

Contemplation’s invocation of Langland offers an alternative to the polarized “active life/contemplative life” debate at a moment when it threatens to emerge into *FQ*. [44] Langland’s most explicit engagement with the debate is his portrait of “Haukyn the Actyf Man,” whose afflictions and treatment parallel those of Red Cross Knight. Haukyn’s very name secures his identity: “my name is *Activa Vita*” (XIII.224), he pronounces. Yet his soiled cloak reveals that he is also a sinner, and one who has fallen victim to the very sins that defeat Red Cross Knight, pride and despair. “Whan I may nought have the maistrye, [I am] with malencolye y-take” (XIII.332-3), Haukyn laments; where pride leads him to seek “maistrye,” an exaggerated sense of self-importance, it quickly reverts to its opposite, “wanhope” (XIII.406), a devastating experience of spiritual emptiness.

Also like Spenser’s Legend of Holiness, *Piers Plowman* offers charity as antidote to the afflictions of pride and despair. Following his repentance, Haukyn is

reformed through an education in “charite,” which he is taught to seek within, “[where] parfit treuthe and povere herte is” (XIV.101). As James Simpson observes, Langland’s charity is “essentially a psychological [idea]” involving “self-knowledge of a profound kind.”[45] By recuperating Langland’s Plowman as Red Cross Knight’s lost literary step-parent, Spenser reveals him to be the source of the Knight’s own self-knowledge: if his destiny is the New Jerusalem, his origin is *Piers Plowman*. In Langland, Spenser locates a medieval correction to the literary and intellectual history offered by Gabriel Harvey. In contrast to Harvey’s “reading for action,” Langland’s allegory invites “a nonlinear or contemplative mode of reading,” as Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Denise L. Despres have observed, that encourages self-reflection and meditation.[46] And where Harvey’s early modern *vita activa* replaces and eradicates the medieval *vita contemplativa*, Spenser’s Contemplation finds in *Piers Plowman* a medieval literary text that explicitly critiques the *vita activa* but finds an alternative not in *otium* but in spiritual engagement in the world.[47]

Under Contemplation’s tutelage, Red Cross Knight is able to return to the world and assume his responsibility. But despite his lessons in Augustinian and Langlandian *caritas*, Contemplation sends the Knight off in the name not of “charity” but of “care.” When the Knight expresses the wish to remain forever on the Mount of Contemplation, Contemplation recalls him to his charge:

Ne maist thou yit  
 Forgo that royall maides *bequeathed care*,  
 Who did her cause into thy hand commit,  
 Till from her cursed foe thou have her freely quit.  
 (I.x.63; my emphasis)

In Spenser’s historical moment, “care,” like “charity,” was a word and concept in transition. Maintaining its Old English meaning of worldly “trouble” or “burden” well into the early modern period, “care” is identified in contemporary lexicons with *negotium*: thus *The Dictionary of Sir Thomas Elyot* (1538) defines *negotium* as “business, occupation, sometyme trouble, *care*, or labour of mynde” (my emphasis).[48] Yet for Elyot, the term was also starting to take on a new meaning: among the definitions that Elyot gives for “care” are: “diligence, warke or labour, *also loue*” (my emphasis).[49]

The emerging understanding of “care” as “love” retains the term’s original significance, “burden,” but develops it to include the act of “taking care of” or “caring for” another. This new meaning is reflected in English translations of the Good Samaritan parable, Luke 10:25-37. In the 1526 Tyndale New Testament, the 1568 Bishops’ Bible, and the 1587 Geneva Bible, the

Samaritan is described as “[making] provision for” the wounded traveler (Luke 10:34).[50] But in the 1582 Douay-Rheims Bible, followed by the 1611 King James Bible, the Samaritan “*took care of him*.”[51] “Care” comes to define the Christian ideal of neighborliness by which individuals assume and enact the generosity of their Maker. Thus Miles Coverdale’s 1540 Psalter renders Psalm 40, “*dominus sollicitus est mei*,” as “the Lorde careth for me.”[52]

In modern thought, “care” retains its double meaning of “burden” and “love.” Heidegger differentiates between “*Sorge*,” “care,” or concern, which (like burden or *negotium*) occupies worldly existence, and “*Fürsorge*,” “caring for,” which acknowledges the state of interdependence that comes of living with others.[53] Developing this notion of *Fürsorge* as interdependence, the feminist Ethics of Care emphasizes relationships of mutual obligation and thus departs from traditional virtue ethics, with its focus on the individual agent.[54] For philosopher Harry Frankfurt, “care” as love is not an action but a restriction of agency. If action is “behavior . . . under the guidance of an agent,” care, Frankfurt concludes, imposes a “volitional necessity” that limits free action and compels one to submit “to a power which is not subject to his immediate voluntary control.”[55] If “care” is the burden that accompanies the *vita activa*—the *negotium* that we practice in the world—“caring for” suggests a different model of social life. With its emphasis on relationality, it is closer to medieval *caritas* than to early modern charity. In place of individual agents, it identifies webs of mutual responsibility; in place of a public life founded on *negotium*, it imagines one founded on love.

Spenser marks the lexical and conceptual expansion of “care” from “burden” to “love” by figuring it as a transfer of suffering. In canto i Una “seemed in heart some hidden care to have” (I.i.4), but by canto x, Red Cross Knight assumes that care himself as “bequeathed care”—“bequeath” here as the act of entrusting or committing to another.[56] Care is a burden for one, but, when shared, becomes an act of love: Una’s “care” becomes Red Cross’s “caring for.” In contrast to the “good work” of active charity or the burden of worldly *negotium*, “bequeathed care” marks the limit of individual agency, recalling Frankfurt’s “volitional necessity.” If he could choose his own future, Red Cross Knight would remain with Contemplation forever; but significantly, it is Contemplation who teaches Red Cross the limits of his agency and the relational obligation that he is bound to assume, having accepted Una’s “bequeathed care.” Charity leads Red Cross Knight to Contemplation, but Contemplation leads him to care.

“Bequeathed care,” thus defined as the assumption of another’s burden, is the opposite of the knightly deed undertaken in the name of honor. We know this because such deeds are powerless against the dragon, the source of Una’s “care.” When Red Cross first attacks the beast “mindfull of his honour deare” (I.xi.39) it returns his assault with a blast of fire, sending the Knight to the ground “with dread of shame sore terrified” (I.xi.45). Neither honor nor its negative manifestation, “dread of shame,” will help him in this fight.[57] Red Cross only defeats the dragon when the beast lunges at him “with outrageous pride” (I.xi.53), whereupon the Knight plunges his sword into its open mouth. Red Cross Knight’s success therefore departs from his earlier chivalric exploits because, rather than generating pride, it defeats it.[58]

I have argued that Contemplation offers Red Cross Knight a literary education that ultimately leads him to accept the charge of care. The argument that reading generates care features in defenses of literature in our own age; but I want to distinguish the argument that I am making about Spenser from these. For Martha Nussbaum, for example, the ability to stimulate care is precisely what makes literature valuable to public life: as she argues, realist novels “position [their readers] as people who care intensely about the sufferings and bad luck of others, and who identify with them in ways that show possibilities for themselves.”[59] This model of “care” holds much in common with the traditional humanist rationale for literary education: both insist that reading increases the reader’s virtue by stimulating acts of identification that ultimately reaffirm the centrality of the reading self.[60]

But Red Cross Knight’s acceptance of Una’s “bequeathed care” involves more than identifying with her and thus “caring ... about [her] bad luck.” Indeed (to paraphrase Angus Fletcher), Spenser’s allegory discourages identification by offering no “characters” with which a reader can identify as such.[61] Where Nussbaum’s “care” returns to and fortifies the reading self, for Spenser, the educational moment begins in an act of self-displacement. To the extent that Spenser produces an “ethics of reading,” it resembles less the liberal model of Nussbaum or the pragmatic model of Gabriel Harvey’s “reading for action” than it does the “centripetal” form of medieval *lectio divina* and *lectio spiritualis* described by Brian Stock, through which the reader sheds a “false self,” or the contemplative experience that Hans-Georg Gadamer identifies with *theorein*, as a “looking away from oneself.”[62]

As I have argued, Red Cross Knight’s acceptance of Una’s “bequeathed care” suggests an ethical

framework built not on praiseworthy individual conduct but on the capacity to submit to the “volitional necessity” (in Frankfurt’s words) of “care.” If this “care” is the opposite of pride, it also belongs neither to the active nor the contemplative life; instead, it represents human action that has been chastened and redirected through contemplation. This notion of action corrected through contemplation challenges the triumph of the active life with which I began. Where Hans Baron finds evidence in his civic humanist subjects for “the superiority of the *vita activa* over ‘selfish’ withdrawal into scholarship and contemplation,” my reading of Spenser paradoxically suggests that it is the *vita activa*, driven by an egoistic desire for “honour,” that leads to the selfishness of pride and the solipsism of despair. In contrast, the *vita contemplativa* promotes *caritas* over solipsism and thus creates the groundwork of a caring community. Against Gabriel Harvey’s insistence that “scholars in our age are rather active than contemplative philosophers,” Spenser recuperates contemplation, not as narcissistic idleness or selfish withdrawal, but as the very basis of a new common good.

I am grateful to the members of the International Spenser Society who invited me to deliver the 2011 Hugh Maclean Memorial Lecture. This paper owes a great deal to the Yale English Department faculty and graduate students who heard another portion of the larger project of which this forms part, as well as to Blakey Vermeule, my colleague and fellow teacher of “A Life of Action or of Contemplation?” at Stanford for four years, together with the students and Teaching Fellows who enriched the experience.

#### NOTES:

[1] British Library Sloane 93, f. 42b; transcription in *The Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey*, A. D. 1573-1580, ed. Edward John Long Scott. Camden Society N.S. 33; On John Wood, See J. A. W. Bennett, “Spenser and Gabriel Harvey’s ‘Letter-Book,’” *Modern Philology* 29 (1931): 163-186, 176.

[2] Although Bennett (above) objects to the identification of Harvey’s correspondent in this letter with Spenser, see Evelyn May Albright, “Spenser’s Connections with the Letters in Gabriel Harvey’s ‘Letter-Book,’” *Modern Philology* 29 (1932): 411-436, defending the identification.

[3] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958; reprint, Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998) 289.

[4] Hans Baron, *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of*

*Classicism and Tyranny* (1955: revised edition, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1966) 7

[5] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume I: The Renaissance* (Cambridge UP, 1978) 108; see also J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975), who likewise credits the “conception that it was in action in the production of works and deeds of all kinds, that the life of man rose to the stature of those universal values which were immanent in it. The active man asserted with the total engagement of his personality what the contemplative man could only know, through the inward eye of his intellect” (65). Pocock acknowledges his debt to “terms borrowed from or suggested by the language of Hannah Arendt” (550).

[6] Thus Stephen Greenblatt takes “negotiation” to be a defining textual practice of the age when he expresses the desire “to understand the negotiations through which works of art obtain and amplify such powerful [social] energy” in *Shakespearean Negotiations: the Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 7, my emphasis.

[7] Louis Adrian Montrose, “Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture” in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeger (New York: Routledge, 1989) 15-36; 26. Jean Howard reflects this preference for action over contemplation when she observes of the New Historicism, “many teachers of Renaissance literature simply have grown weary, as I have, or teaching texts as ethereal entities floating above the urgencies and contradictions of history and of seeking in such texts the disinterested expression of a unified truth.” “The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies,” *ELR* 16 (1986): 13-43; 15.

[8] These marginalia are in Folger H.a.2(1), Harvey’s copy of Lodovico Domenichi, *Facetie, motti, et burle, di diversi signori et persone private* (Venice, 1571) fol. 97v.

[9] Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, “Studied for Action’: How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy,” *Past and Present* 129 (1990): 3-78; 30, 40. Similarly, Virginia F. Stern observes, “like many of his contemporaries, Harvey advocates the active and not the contemplative life,” as in his frequent marginal comment, “*Il pensare non importa, ma il fare.*” *Gabriel Harvey: A Study of His Life, Marginalia, and Library* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1979) 154. See also Eugene R. Kintgen, *Reading in Tudor England* (Pittsburgh, PA: U of Pittsburgh P, 1996) 76; 210.

[10] I owe this latter point to Vincent Gillespie, whose work has established the complexity of late medieval devotion and its literacies: see his “Vernacular Theology,”

in *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007) 401-420, and “Vernacular Books of Religion,” in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 317-344. I am also grateful to Amy Appleford for sharing her forthcoming work on the medieval “mixed life” with me: see Amy Appleford and Nicholas Watson, “Merchant Religion in Fifteenth-Century London: The Writings of William Litchfield,” *Chaucer Review* 46 (forthcoming, October 2011) and Appleford, “The Good Death of Richard Whittington,” in *The Ends of the Body: Identity and Community in Medieval Culture*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross (forthcoming). On medieval defenses of the *vita activa*, see M. S. Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1999).

[11] Walter A. Brogan, “Gadamer’s Praise of Theory: Aristotle’s Friend and the Reciprocity Between Theory and Practice,” *Research in Phenomenology* 32 (2002): 141-156; 141. Brogan responds to Hans-Georg Gadamer’s “Praise of Theory,” in *Praise of Theory: Speeches and Essays*, trans. Chris Dawson (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998), 16-36, which poses the question, “are theory and practice correctly distinguished at all when they are seen only in opposition to each other?” (24). For another reading of Gadamer in light of the relationship of action and contemplation, see John Arthos, “A Hermeneutic Interpretation of Civic Humanism and Liberal Education,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 40 (2007): 189-200

[12] While “thought” is not coterminous with “theory” or “contemplation,” the distinction between “thought” and “action” has undergone a similarly productive revision. As early as 1959, Stuart Hampshire’s classic *Thought and Action* revisited the commonplace distinction that “men may think with a view to knowledge, or they may think with a view to action,” concluding that active and cogitative powers are not diametrically opposed but mutually productive. Hampshire, *Thought and Action* (1959; reprint, London: Chatto & Windus, 1982) 53. See also P. M. S. Hacker, “Thought and Action: A Tribute to Stuart Hampshire,” *Philosophy* 80 (2005): 175-197. For a more recent reconsideration of the categories “thought” and “action,” see Derek Melser, *The Act of Thinking* (Cambridge: MIT P, 2007).

[13] Jerome Kagan, *Three Cultures: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Humanities in the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) 223.

[14] *Gabriel Harvey’s Ciceronianus*, ed. Harold S. Wilson, trans. Clarence A. Forbes (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1945) 99.

[15] Montrose, “Professing the Renaissance,” 26.

Montrose goes on to observe: “I am not suggesting that such academic work is nothing more than a psychological compensation for social inactivity and political quiescence, although I agree that it can all too easily become so. Critical research and teaching in the Humanities may be either a merely academic displacement or a genuine academic instantiation of oppositional social and political praxis.” This passage is cited and discussed by Alan Liu, “The Power of Formalism: The New Historicism,” in *Local Transcendence: Essays on Postmodern Historicism and the Database* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 2008) 28-68; 59-60, who concludes, “Made-up or done-up in New Historicist fashion as the age of subversion, oppositionality, contestation, or transgression, the ‘Renaissance’ is the romanticization of the postmodern scholar” (60).

[16] All quotations from Spenser’s text are taken from Edmund Spenser, *FQ*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 1977) with book, canto, and stanza numbers noted parenthetically.

[17] Harold Skulsky, “Spenser’s Despair Episode and the Theology of Doubt,” *Modern Philology* 78:3 (1981): 237-42; 241; John D. Bernard, “Contemplation,” in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990) 190-1.

[18] Virgil K. Whitaker, *The Religious Basis of Spenser’s Thought* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1950) 56-57.

[19] *FQ* 737.

[20] Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, I.4.1215b, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984) 2:1924.

[21] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. Ludwig Geiger (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1904) 433-4. Johan Huizinga cites this passage in connection to his discussion of chivalry, cited below: *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (New York: Anchor Books, 1956) 69.

[22] James Hankins, “The ‘Baron Thesis’ after Forty Years and Some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56: 2 (1995): 309-338; 330.

[23] Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 100.

[24] Edmund Spenser, “Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale,” lines 753-771, in *Spenser: Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1912) 502.

[25] Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, 69. On Spenser’s critique of chivalry, see Paul J. Alpers, *The Poetry of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1967) 334-369, and Harry Berger, Jr., *Revisionary Play: Studies in the Spenserian Dynamics* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 77-78.

[26] Erasmus, *The Handbook of the Christian Soldier: Enchiridion militis Christiani* (1544) trans. Charles Fantazzi, volume 66, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. John W O’Malley (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1988) 121; John Norden, *The Mirror of Honour* (London, 1597) 23, 24.

[27] Isabel MacCaffrey, *Spenser’s Allegory: the Anatomy of Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1976) 175. Similarly, Andrew Escobedo remarks that Spenser’s Despair “reveals the emptiness of pride.” “Despair and the Proportion of the Self,” *Spenser Studies* 17 (2003): 75-90; 77. On this point, see also Andrew King, *The Faerie Queene and Middle English Romance: The Matter of Just Memory* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 2000) 149.

[28] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica Cantorum, Opera Omnia*, ed. Jean Leclercq et al., 8 vols (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957-78) 2:107-108; cited and discussed by Siegfried Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Durham: U of North Carolina P, 1960) 61-62. See also Susan Snyder, “The Left Hand of God: Despair in Medieval and Renaissance Tradition,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965): 18-59; 46-47.

[29] Hankins, “The Baron Thesis,” 330.

[30] Felicity Heale, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 15-16; *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State U, 2006) 155; John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) 140-165. On the changing institutions of charity, see also Susan Bridgen, “Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London,” *Past and Present* 103 (1984): 67-112; Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002) and Judith Bennett, “Conviviality and Charity in Medieval and Early Modern England,” *Past and Present* 134 (1992): 19-41.

[31] Bossy, *Christianity in the West*, 143, 146. As John Bossy observes, modern charity departs from the medieval notion of *caritas* by “intimat[ing] that there was such a thing as an act of charity which did not need a state of charity to take place in.”

[32] On the *ordinatio caritatis*, see Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the 12th Century, The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, volume 2 (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1999) 259.

[33] Gregory the Great, *Homiliarum in Ezechielem Prophetam Libri Duo*, II, 2 (Migne, PL, LXXVI, 948-958, col. 953). This passage is translated and discussed in McGinn, *Growth of Mysticism*, 76, 452, n. 293. On Gregory the Great’s treatment of “the two lives,” see G. R.

Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), especially 106-109.

[34] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Volume 46: Action and Contemplation (2a 2ae, 179-182), trans. Jordan Aumann (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006) 44-45. Thus for Aquinas, charity is a “motive power” that directs the other virtues to God, who is perfect charity. I am grateful to Hester Gelber for elucidating this passage for me.

[35] David Lee Miller, “Spenser’s Poetics: The Poem’s Two Bodies,” *PMLA* 101 (1986): 170-185; 175.

[36] *The Didascalion of Hugh of St. Victor*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia UP, 1991) 44, 128, 132-3. On the *studium legendi* and the “ascent of the steep road toward wisdom,” see Ivan Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text: a Commentary to Hugh’s Didascalion* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993) 52. See also Brian Stock, *After Augustine: The Meditative Reader and the Text* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2001) 6.

[37] Stock, *After Augustine*, 6.

[38] Saint Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: Liberal Arts P, 1958) 91.

[39] *On Christian Doctrine*, 88. Stock describes “the charitable trust that exists between author and reader” in Augustine’s work (*Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* [Cambridge: Belknap P, Harvard UP, 1996], 215).

[40] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 14, 88. See Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, 246. Julia Kristeva offers this reflection on *caritas*: “The unlimited aspect of *caritas* allows us better to understand why, going beyond ordinary feelings and drawing its inspiration from a superior model, it is not dependent upon reciprocity and cannot be understood in the realm of debt, dependency, and gratitude.” *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1991) 85.

[41] Carol Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999) 92-93.

[42] Compare Contemplation’s role here to Mary Carruthers’ discussion of the relationship between *lectio* and meditation in Hugh of St. Victor’s *Didascalion*: “The start of learning . . . lies in *lectio*, but its consummation lies in meditation;” contemplation succeeds meditation. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008) 202, 300. On Augustine, *caritas*, and the New Jerusalem, see Ann R. Meyer, *Medieval Allegory and the Building of the New Jerusalem* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003) 47-68.

[43] Quotations from *Piers Plowman* are taken from *Piers Plowman: The B-Version*, ed. George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson (London: Athlone P, 1975) with *passus* and

line numbers noted parenthetically. On Spenser’s use of Langland in this section, see A. C. Hamilton, “Spenser and Langland,” *Studies in Philology* 55 (1958): 533-548, and Judith H. Anderson, *The Growth of a Personal Voice: “Piers Plowman” and “The Faerie Queene”* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1976). For a more recent reading of Spenser in light of Langland, see also Katherine Little, “The ‘Other’ Past of Pastoral: Langland’s *Piers Plowman* and Spenser’s *Shepherd’s Calendar*,” *Exemplaria* 21 (2009): 160-178.

[44] As S. S. Hussey establishes, Langland’s engagement with the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* is indirect and defies modern polarization of the two terms: “Langland, Hilton and the Three Lives,” in *Interpretations of Piers Plowman*, ed. Edward Vasta (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1968) 232-258.

[45] James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction*, 2nd edition (Exeter: U of Exeter P, 2007) 165; 162. The similarities that link Spenser’s and Langland’s treatment of charity are also counterbalanced by significant doctrinal differences that persist between them, particularly Langland’s insistence that “good works” satisfy “the ‘dette’ that remains even after absolution”; see Simpson, *The Oxford English Literary History: Volume 2. 1350-1547, Reform and Cultural Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002) 363. I am grateful to James Simpson for a conversation about *Piers Plowman* that launched much of my thinking in this section.

[46] Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Denise L. Despres, *Iconography and the Professional Reader: The Politics of Book Production in the Douce Piers Plowman* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999) 127, 147.

[47] On Langland’s rejection of *otium* and invention of “another form of ‘work’ for the community’s good,” see Anne Middleton, “Acts of Vagrancy: The C. Version ‘Autobiography’ and the Statute of 1388,” in *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship*, ed. Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1997) 208-317; 280.

[48] *The Dictionary of syr Thomas Eliot knight* (1538) (Menston: Scolar P, 1970); Richard Huleot, *Abecedarium Anglico Latinum* (London, 1552) 56. This research was facilitated by the invaluable online resource, *LEME: Lexicons of Early Modern English* (<http://leme.library.utoronto.ca/>)

[49] *The Dictionary of syr Thomas Eliot*, 56.

[50] Luke 10:34, Tyndale Version, Bishops’ Bible Version, Geneva Version.

[51] Luke 10:34, Douay-Rheims Version, King James Version.

[52] Miles Coverdale, *The Psalter or Boke of Psalmes* (London, 1540), fol. 34.

- [53] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY P, 1996) 181-2; 185. See Robert Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2008) 1-13, for a meditation on “the vocation of care.”
- [54] Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1984; reprint, Berkeley: U of California P, 2000) 14; Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993) 105. Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005) 14; Mary C. Brabeck, *Who Cares? Theory, Research, and Educational Implications of the Ethic of Care* (New York: Praeger, 1989) xi.
- [55] Harry G. Frankfurt, *The Importance of What We Care About: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 74, 89.
- [56] Thus John Baret defines “to Bequeath” as “to committe or appoint, to assigne or impute” in *An Alveary or Triple Dictionary, in English, Latin, and French* (London, 1574) 497. See also *OED*, s.v. “bequeath.”
- [57] The anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers asserts, “At the basis of repute, honour and shame are synonymous, since shamelessness is dishonourable; a person of good repute is taken to have both, one of evil repute is credited with neither.” See Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status,” in *Honour and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J. G. Peristiany (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965) 19-78; 42.
- [58] In the process, Red Cross Knight comes to resemble Piers Plowman, who is Pride’s enemy: “Piers the Plowman, that Pryde [myghte] destroye” (XX.383).
- [59] Martha C. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon P, 1995) 66. But see Simon Stow, “Reading Our Way to Democracy? Literature and Public Ethics,” *Philosophy and Literature* 30.2 (2006): 410-423, for a critique of this position. See also Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007).
- [60] On humanist reading as an act of identification and imitation, see Peter Mack, “Rhetoric, Ethics, and Reading in the Renaissance,” *Renaissance Studies* 19(2005): 1-23, and Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007) 135-171.
- [61] This is the influential argument of Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1964).
- [62] Brian Stock, *Ethics through Literature: Ascetic and Aesthetic Reading in Western Culture* (Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 2007) 68-9, Gadamer, “Praise of Theory,” 35.

