SPENSER·NEWSLETTER
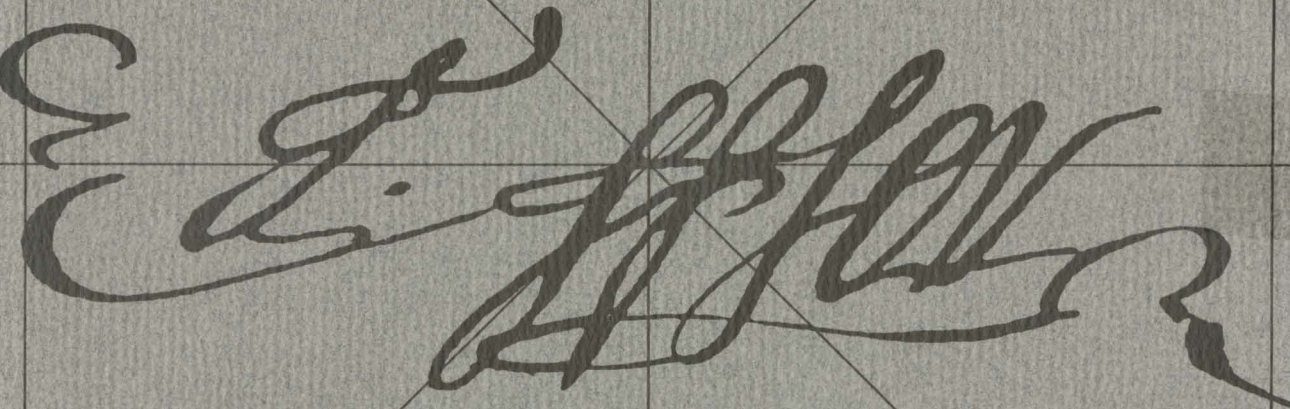
WINTER 1990 • VOLUME 21 • NUMBER 1

EDITOR: DARRYL J. GLESS
ASSOCIATE EDITORS: JERRY LEATH MILLS, S. K. HENINGER, JR.

•

CONTENTS

TO OUR READERS

90.01 Readers may want to note that the review of Sara Mack's book on Ovid (below, item 90.03) appears here in part to draw attention to Hermes Books, an extremely useful but not well advertised series being published by Yale University Press. As the general editor (John Herington) puts it in the Forward, the authors of Hermes Books, all expert classicists, are "possessed of a rather rare combination of qualities" which include "above all an ability to express themselves in clear, lively, and graceful English, without polysyllabic language or parochial jargon." These authors aim to "communicate to nonspecialist readers, authoritatively and vividly, their personal sense of why a given classical author's writings have excited people for centuries and why they can continue to do so." Other volumes so far published in the series are devoted to Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, and Hesiod. The volume reviewed in this issue of *Spenser Newsletter* provides a welcome, readable account, by a first-rate classicist, of an author whose influence on Spenser and his age was as pervasive as it was wonderfully productive.

On the appearance of this issue of *Spenser Newsletter*, the editor's warm thanks are due to the exceptionally able group of Chapel Hill graduate students who have provided abstracts: Kevin Farley, Phebe Jensen, Keith Hall, and Jonathan Simmons.

BOOKS: REVIEWS AND NOTICES

90.02 Kane, Sean. *Spenser's Moral Allegory*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989. 250pp. $34.50 US.

In this thoughtful study, Sean Kane argues that Spenser responds to a resurgence of classical materialism and a Roman "code of power" during the Renaissance by emulating, instead, the idealistic code of Christian ethics propounded by St. Augustine and reinterpreted by the Florentine Neoplatonists. Kane's Spenser is "a Christian Platonist of the old order" (5) who recoils against "new humanist theory, with its ideal of civic fame as the reward of the perfectly virtuous life" (3). These competing philosophical systems are defined schematically by the interrelated metaphors of "hierarchy" and "polarity," which presuppose the openness of visionary insight and spiritual ascent along a vertical scale versus a closed system of oscillation between opposed categories along a worldly, horizontal plane. Within the Augustinian scheme adduced by Kane, the polar oppositions of classical thought may be assimilated into and reconciled with "Christian truth" (8-10). A major example is the episode in which Artegall's vision of "a grand ecological hierarchy" contradicts the viewpoint of the materialistic giant with the scales, who sees the world in terms of the "binary arrangement" of "symmetrically polarized opposites" (14-15).

Within the Neoplatonic frame of reference, Kane attempts to define what he regards as "the meditative impulse that underlies each of the legends of *The Faerie*

2

Queene" (x). Kane therefore contends that while the career of the Redcrosse Knight superficially conforms to the official doctrine of the Elizabethan *Book of Homilies*, at a deeper level it dramatizes the way in which "Protestant militancy" necessarily slides into "the 'fantasies of faith' which it insisted was the error of its Catholic antagonist" (32). Book Two entails a contrast "between polarization and hierarchy in ethical conduct" that results in a transcendence of purely "mechanical temperance" (56). Books Three and Four center upon operations of mutability and change that may be understood by analogy to the ecological cycle within nature and analogous processes at work in human society. Book Five resolves Spenser's effort to reconcile classical reason and Christian revelation by introducing "the Augustinian concept of the fulfilled Christian personality acting in history" (140). Borrowing a phrase from Gregory Bateson, Kane discovers in Book Six a " 'quest for grace' " that "affirms the divine presence in all of creation" (181-82). The *Cantos of Mutabilitie* provide the ultimate response to the classical problem of being and becoming by "showing the polarizations that result from the individual drive for ascendancy, then dissolving paradoxes in the vision of the hierarchy of life that all codes of power try to efface" (224).

Although the reader may encounter many good insights in this book, Kane's reading of *The Faerie Queene* is overly reductive in discovering ubiquitous analogies to Augustinian philosophy, which are based not upon demonstrable influence but upon undemonstrated mediations through the writings of varied medieval and Renaissance thinkers. The Augustinian bias of Spenser's thought and that of the English Reformation in general seems undeniable, but Kane's incessant return to the overly neat paradigms of "hierarchy" and "polarity" tends to reduce the rich diversity of Spenser's artistry into a homogeneous blur. Moreover, this reviewer is not convinced by the view that the Redcrosse Knight engages upon an "excursion into sectarian error" (34) against which the counterbalancing wandering of Una provides a "naturalistic vision of faith" (45). Kane's insistence that Book One "subtly disavows" the "Protestant framework of belief" (40) contradicts the evangelical position of the doctrinal sermons in the *Book of Homilies* that good works function as posterior signs or "fruits" of faith.

Kane's view that his Neoplatonic frame of reference should enable us to encounter in Spenser's verse prophetic solutions to modern problems results in a disconcerting intrusion of ecological and biological metaphors into his seriatim reading of each book of *The Faerie Queene*. Following Ernst Haeckel, Kane posits that Book Three "is about 'the relations of living organisms to the external world' " (84). Similarly, the Neoplatonic migration of souls in the Garden of Adonis is akin to the evolutionary processes of mutation, random selection, and stochasm (98-99). This reviewer wonders, for example, whether it is helpful to assume that the random shot of Cupid (*FQ* 3.11.48) functions as "Nature's throw of the dice keeping the gene pool of humanity mixed and variable" (99). Do we really need to read that Mutabilitie and Jove "participate jointly in the process of epigenesis by which every embryological step is an act of becoming (*genesis*) which must be built upon (*epi*) the immediate *status quo ante*" (213)? What are we to infer from the following contention?

In Spenser's allegory it is Proteus who energetically supplies a variety of possibilities which Florimell rejects. This is proper to a concept of the genetic code as information rather than as a substance. Deoxyribonucleic acid, considered as information, does not cause growth so much as it constrains growth or controls its possibilities. However, while genetic information is passive, it has evolved a special ability to survive by perpetuating itself through generation. (92)

In addition to paying homage to his own teachers in Canada (William Blissett, Northrop Frye, Millar Maclure, and Malcolm Ross), Kane emulates D. W. Robertson in his attempt to recover from *The Faerie Queene* "a four-level allegorical framework of the sort applied by late medieval interpreters to the study of scripture" (43). Along the lines of the Woodhouse hypothesis concerning the relationship of nature and grace, Kane finds that Spenser's romantic epic "is compelled by a quest for the meaning of grace in human behaviour" (x). Kane makes no acknowledgment, however, of the equally obvious precedents of Kellogg and Steele when he discovers in the Palace of Pride an "image of Augustine's earthly city" (42) or Patrick Cullen when he interprets the *Legend of Holiness* as a reworking of the scriptural temptation sequence of the flesh, the world, and the devil (41). Ernest Gilman has covered much of the terrain concerning iconoclasm, idolatry, and the imagination that Kane wishes to travel.

John N. King
The Ohio State University

90.03 Mack, Sara. *Ovid*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988. xii + 180 pp. $27.50 cloth; 9.95 paper.

Unlike many readers of Ovid's poetry, Professor Mack appreciates the fact that Ovid is not Vergil. As she reads the two poets beside each other, for Ovid himself invites the comparison, it becomes apparent that his formal innovations, his "rewritings" of Vergilian themes and styles, are designed to present an alternative view of life and poetry in Augustan Rome. That is, in part, why one sees in his poems a constant tension between form and substance: his un-Vergilian cultural commentary demands new love poetry, new didactic poetry, new epic.

Ovid, designed as an introduction for the non-specialist, first addresses Ovid's critical fortunes and his special appeal to current readers. In his concern with the psychology of human behavior and his insistence on a plurality of viewpoints, in his critique of repressive poetic *and* social conventions, a critique carried out through constant experimentation, Ovid can seem very modern. Early in the first chapter Mack illustrates Ovid's use of varying narrative perspectives by comparing the Orpheus and Eurydice story found in the *Metamorphoses* with that in Vergil's *Georgics*. Ovid deliberately writes his story without Vergilian pathos and drives home that point when he exceeds Vergil's rhetorical effect. And yet, when "Ovid" turns his narrative over to Orpheus, the attitude toward suffering characters changes, within that smaller narrative itself, from "initial hostility to sympathy" (10); thus, the poem frequently transforms its perspectives along with its subjects. This

4

demonstration of the poet's continually evolving technique and shifting points of view focuses the reader's attention on exactly what makes that poetry "Ovidian."

The biography in Chapter II includes a survey of Ovid's poetic career, noting his success, from the early to the exilic poems, in shattering generic conventions. The *Amores*, for example, emphasizes elegy's "capacity for comedy and satire" (17), and the *Heroides* rewrites large sections of mythology from the female point of view. Even more irreverently, perhaps, the *Medicamina Faciei*, the *Ars Amatoria*, and the *Remedia Amoris* also explode didactic conventions with their unconventional content. While writing the *Metamorphoses*, his "epic of sorts," and the *Fasti*, his "Hesiodic-Callimachean-Propertian aetiological poem," Ovid characteristically refuses "to take the Roman and Heroic seriously in his epic, which is supposed to be the loftier genre, while using the less heroic elegiac verse for his more Roman poem" (32).

Although the entirety of *Ovid* is a pleasure to read, Spenserians may find especially interesting the chapters on the love poetry and on the *Metamorphoses*. In these sections Mack argues from necessarily precise readings, stressing the importance of other texts (both Greek and Roman) to Ovid's own sense of what he was trying to accomplish, of the nature of the generic traditions he inherits, and of the historical context in which he writes. Readers can discover here, for instance, that Ovid's frequent allusions to the *Georgics* demonstrate that in his hands various genres, in this case the didactic, will expand to include what would appear to be unsuitable topics. This transformation occurs on a "grand scale" in the *Metamorphoses*, where Ovid plays off Vergil "in order to show that great poetry need not be written in the style and vein chosen by his predecessor" (98).

Although the *Metamorphoses* is Ovid's most memorable poem, the myths are often excised and treated as individual units, a major critical assumption being that the poem lacks unity and cannot control its form. Professor Mack argues instead for reading the poem both as a collection of tales and as an epic, the two models of extended narrative available to Ovid; by experimenting with various styles and voices he produces a hybrid form. Mack first treats the poem as a collective narrative, in which Ovid "often seems to take special pains to emphasize the separateness of his stories" (109) -- by means of geographical and temporal variety, numerous major characters, and a wide array of genres. Although many aspects of the poem thus seem contrived to fragment it, there is also an attempt to link various episodes thematically or to play variations on a particular theme. Most readers, for example, will remember a series of rape victims in the first books, but few may notice the differences in their treatment: it moves from the comedy of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne to the unsavory details of Callisto's lasting humiliation. If any one thing ties together the various narrative strands, it is the visibility, throughout the poem, of "a master storyteller who obtrudes his presence on his story, creating an ever-changing relationship between myth, poet, and audience" (115).

As an epic, the poem expresses a different attitude toward heroes and gods than readers might have been conditioned to expect. In fact, this attitude seems designed "to question the sense of historical purpose and direction that Vergil had imposed on Roman history, and by this means, indeed, to question the whole notion

of heroism central to epic" (121). Like Aeneas, Perseus must do battle with his rival, but Ovid, whose unorthodox hero performs his deeds with mirrors, suggests that such conflicts are less than heroic. A similar view is presented of Nestor and his guests: their interest in the details of battle-wounds questions the butchery also central to the heroics of epic, while revealing that many of Ovid's narrators are unreliable. Furthermore, in his treatment of the Trojan war and the settlement of Italy -- his *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* -- Ovid places Roman history in the context of Greek myth and has Pythagoras suggest that as other empires have flourished and perished, so may Rome.

As one may see with Nestor and Pythagoras, the latter "another burlesque of the didactic" (143), Ovid is interested in the effect of the narrator's biases on the story. When the Muse narrates the contest between the Pierides and the Muses, her version is obviously one-sided, for we hear at great length the song of Calliope only. "Since the attitude toward the gods expressed by the Pierides and the type of scandal they tell about the gods fit well with Ovid's own narrator's views, we are left feeling that we might well disagree with the award of victory to the Muses and perhaps wondering whether this is not a satiric glance at the sort of establishment censorship Augustus and the old Rome approved" (135). Arachne, of course, is another artist who dares to present an Ovidian vision of the gods and whose audacity is severely punished by one of them. Space here limits the examples one could assemble of Professor Mack's insights, but it seems clear that her subtle disentangling of these smaller narratives provides a most important key to reading the *Metamorphoses*.

It may be obvious to Spenserians that Ovid, like Spenser, worked variations on mutability, that for each poet, change alone is constant. Reading *Ovid* might allow scholars to reevaluate Spenser's role in Elizabethan culture. It is clear that Spenser adapted the *Metamorphoses* and the *Aeneid*, among other things, in creating his romance epic, and one could profitably examine the points at which Spenser's narratives, which often seem sprawling or fragmented, lean toward the Ovidian mode. Another important comparison would be the effect of state censorship on narrative technique (who are Spenser's Pierides, his Arachne?). As each poet rewrites the heroic for a world in change, as each narrates the instability of that world from a position made more or less marginal by the state, each poet transforms various genres to expose that world and to reconcile his formal mastery with his inability to prevent change, instability, suffering, death.

As Professor Mack charts Ovid's transformations of received poetic styles and norms, his self-proclaimed challenges and his vision of both the laughter and tears in things, she also clearly enjoys, and demonstrates, the absolute necessity of reading the poems as poems, as groups of meanings, sounds, and rhythms deftly manipulated. Her book is a success because reading *Ovid* sends one to Ovid, where the general or the non-classicist reader will immediately appreciate the precision and breadth of a master teacher.

Ellen C. Caldwell
Clarkson University

90.04 McCoy, Richard C. *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1989). xii + 196. $27.

People of the sort nowadays dubbed "loose cannons" seem to have abounded in England under Elizabeth. Aristocratic freelancers driven by their own ambitions for knightly honor, these irrepressible strivers threatened the unity of an increasingly centralized government because of their proneness to break ranks in pursuit of high-minded ideals of chivalry. In fact, an uneasy compromise between private values of noble reputation and the allegedly greater good of the common weal characterizes the long period of transition between medieval feudalism and the emerging nation-states of early modern Europe. The need for public discipline in increasingly well-organized central administrations imposed ever greater restraints upon individual initiatives and the quest for personal glory among noble over-achievers. Whereas Don Quixote in some ways embodies the poignancy of their dilemma, as well as its potential for humor, Hotspur betokens its danger. There lies behind that unruly English knight, compounded of Tudor historiography and Shakespearean imagination, a long series of ambitious Elizabethan nobles whose biographies combine myth and history in an indeterminate mix that defies generic boundaries and invites interdisciplinary study of the kind that Richard McCoy ably practices in *The Rites of Knighthood*.

This book takes its title and major terms of its argument from *Richard II*, which opens with the exchange of ceremonial defiance between Bolingbroke and Mowbray that leads to their abortive trial by combat in that play's third scene. The conflict between what nobles had come to regard as their "customary rights" and the monarch's claim to "right royal majesty" figures centrally in Shakespeare's second tetralogy, and these increasingly antagonistic principles of authority epitomize key values of the opposing parties in a pervasive struggle for power in Tudor England. Under Elizabeth, gender difference aggravated such strife since chivalric machismo would readily feel the sting of subordination to a powerful female, but the traditions of knighthood also supplied forms of devotion well-suited to promote service on behalf of a woman. Just as Protestant attacks on the "idolatry" of Catholic ritual opened a more commodious place for ceremonies of state and provided an especially felicitous occasion for the Virgin Queen to inherit an ampler share of the worshipful attentions of her faithful subjects, the cultural legacy of feudalism likewise offered literary and other forms of unqualified adoration that Elizabeth could shrewdly turn to her advantage. As cavaliers became courtiers, they could persist in absolute dedication to their beloved lady, who, it now happened, was also running the country. Chivalry, like Petrarchism, became a vehicle for channeling the energies of noble servants to the crown into devout submission. But since chivalry was also a code of militant self-assertion whose proponents most highly prized a reputation for martial valor, the ethics of knighthood contained within the paradoxical extremes of their own terms the very means of subverting the loyal service they promised. The Earl of Essex remains the signal exemplar of the violent contradiction which could promptly transform subordination into rebellion and turn the Queen's champion into her challenger.

In the domain of literature, Spenser's reprise, in *The Faerie Queene* VI.x, of his *April* eclogue's celebratory circle dance in honor of "Elisa, Queene of shepheardes all" effects a similar reversal in notably more subdued terms. When "that iolly Shepheards lasse," Colin Clout's girlfriend, rather than Gloriana, briefly occupies the place of honor on Mt. Acidale, we experience indirectly a kindred gesture of insubordination, since the poem's eponymous heroine, in one or another of her various forms, has heretofore seemed its inevitable cynosure. The poet's initiative surprisingly reorders his poem's ostensible priorities, and personal preference works an unexpected change upon political orthodoxy. But indirection is the crucial quality here and, without significant emphasis upon it, assimilating this conscious disturbance of the poem's prevalent hierarchy of values to the Essex revolt would be an absurd overextension of this passage's political import. Therefore, "the domain of literature," mentioned above, becomes a focal problem in studies like McCoy's. For while his essays on Elizabethan chivalry are thoroughly imbued with an awareness of the methods and approaches characteristic of the "new historicism," they also respect the capacity of some texts to intervene in the conversation of a culture and make their own potent claims upon the terms of that exchange. Clifford Geertz comfortably keeps company here with Kenneth Burke, and "deep play" and "symbolic action" become serviceable heuristic notions in analyses that can strike appropriate balances between "the discourse of power" and "poetic agency." In fact, Spenser's own distinction between "a Poet historical" and "an Historiographer" functions effectively in McCoy's comparative discussion of *The Faerie Queene* and Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars*, which demonstrates how the pressures of contemporary politics overwhelmed the latter poet because of his distrust of the realm of the imagination as a secure enough ground upon which to found a meaningful narrative about Tudor England. The space between the political issues that Daniel's topic forced him to address and the limited poetic means that he allowed himself to use in the process fatally narrowed his options, whereas Spenser's commitment, albeit guarded, to the veiled and indirect terms of allegory freed him from such deadening constraints.

Spenser's assertion that "verses are not vain" finds a skillful expositor and advocate in Richard McCoy as he explores both the politics of Elizabethan chivalry and literary works that represent social issues in forms associated with that cultural phenomenon. Following Roy Strong and, especially, Frances Yates, whose essay in *Astraea* on the Accession Day tilts extends a virtual invitation for a book like *The Rites of Knighthood*, McCoy tellingly examines late Tudor pageantry and the pastimes of the great, both of which employed the ceremonial traditions of knighthood to make known the power and authority of their patrons. But in documenting and explaining the connections between affairs of state and the life of letters, McCoy regularly discerns the difference between heraldry and poetry and thus eschews the damage too often done by recklessly collapsing such categories. McCoy convincingly locates artistic production in a world of public connections and consequences without merging politics and literature to such a degree that the latter activity becomes a series of empty gestures by impotent adjuncts and satellites to the centers of power. On one hand he perceptively "reads" what Francis Bacon called the "dangerous image" of his patron, the Earl of Essex, whose relentlessly hawkish advocacy of militant Protestantism and proneness to flex his political muscles in public display elicited that vain caveat from his dependent man of letters. By

8

interpreting this cultural "text" McCoy fathoms and exposes significant energies at large in a milieu shared by Sidney, Daniel, and Spenser; and he thereby provides analogues to their efforts as writers and clarifies topics and themes which their works address in literary terms. On the other hand he offers readings of those works that discriminate their relative aesthetic merit despite their entanglement in the same political concerns, as the juxtaposition of Daniel and Spenser enables him decisively to illustrate. In fact McCoy's discernment of such value restores positive power to verbal artistry in a way that enables him also to counter critics with a penchant for deconstruction whose despair derives more from problems of language and poetry in *The Faerie Queene* than from its inevitable submission to the absolute hegemony, even in discourse, of the Tudor regime. This highly commendable exercise in "cultural poetics" thus effects an exemplary collaboration between the disciplines of history and literature without falling prey to numerous bogeys that stand in the way of such efforts.

Lawrence F. Rhu
University of South Carolina

90.05 Wall, John N. *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988. xv + 428pp. $40.

"A verse may find him, who a sermon flies,/And turn delight into a sacrifice." In these words from George Herbert's "Perirrhanterium," John N. Wall locates the implicit statement of a specifically Anglican poetics -- assertive, homiletic, transformational, and rhetorical (64) -- that defines the work of Herbert himself, and also of Spenser and Vaughan, each in his own moment of Anglican history. Beginning as early as the mid-sixteenth century, with the publication of Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* (1549, 1552, 1559) and *Book of Homilies* (1547), a distinctly Anglican theology emerges, distinguished from medieval and contemporary Catholicism on the one side and continental Protestantism and English Puritanism on the other. That no single Anglican voice, like Calvin's or Luther's, speaks for this tradition suggests neither historical accident nor the failure of the English Church to establish its own identity. Rather, Wall argues, it is in the intention of the faith itself to obviate the need for such a voice.

Taking its initial impulse from the Erasmian notion of Christianity as a religion "on the way," Anglicanism encourages "interpretive diversity" because it gives "glimpses into a mystery that transcend[s] any single religious doctrine" (11), and thus furthers the progress of the faith. The Anglican perspective insists upon a "conversation" among basic liturgical texts enacted at specific historical moments in corporate worship; through its participation in this conversation, the congregation is "enabled to do God's work in the world" (13) in acts of charity which ultimately transform society itself, bringing it into keeping with divine intention. Literary texts are similarly privileged, extending (through frequent allusion to the language of the Prayer Book, and to biblical passages marked by the Prayer Book) the conversation between the liturgy and the present moment in the life of the church and its people. Literature committed to the Anglican agenda attempts transforming verbal action rather than static depiction, making its goal *praxis,* not *gnosis;* it responds to particular historical moments, but moves out from the moment toward social change

and a future perspective; and in so doing, it yields the power of human words to the authority of God's Word (16-17). The way in which a literary text accomplishes these purposes, formally and thematically, depends upon the time in church history to which it speaks. Thus, Spenser cues his national epic to the moment of Anglican self-definition; Herbert constructs his *Temple* when a solidified church is building the Body of Christ; and Vaughan responds to Cromwell's Commonwealth, keeping the faith alive in the absence of a practicing community of believers.

To define Anglicanism from so early a point in its history as more articulate than a Protestant theology imposed on a Catholic missal is itself a controversial act. I can remember once being told that it was "impossible" to speak of Anglicanism as a normative concept much before the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth century. To my mind (admittedly, already prepared to accept the argument), Wall makes a strong case for his position, and presents it with a care that sometimes sacrifices, he admits himself, "a degree of economy in articulation" (20). In the process he offers at least a useful contribution to on-going scholarly debate about the nature of Renaissance religious literature and the English experience of it. What is more, his argument collapses potentially artificial distinctions between religious and secular texts, allowing a dynamic relationship between them, and in the process complicates the definition -- and broadens the scope -- of didactic literature in this period. Texts we have identified as living in divided and distinguished worlds may, in fact, share fundamental perspectives, and that sharing, as Wall demonstrates it, allows the texts themselves to be mutually informing. To see the theological motive in Sidney's *Defense* (or *Astrophil and Stella*, for that matter) next to a literary motive in Hooker's *Lawes*, and both of them as directing our reading of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* can result in a startling illumination for readers of all those texts.

In addition, Wall's method frees the study of self-identified Anglican poets, like Herbert, from dependence on the works of continental reformers. This effort seems valuable to me in a number of ways. First, and most obviously, for all the basic tenets of Protestantism shared by Protestants, Herbert lived with the Prayer Book in his daily experience. To gloss the "meaning" of *The Temple* through reference to Calvin's *Institutes* (as has been the critical habit of studies of religious poetry in this period) may, finally, obscure this reality in the poet's experience. Quite apart from the possibility that the *Book of Common Prayer* is itself more "literary" than Calvin's *Institutes*, it simply makes sense that the Prayer Book would have an animating influence on Herbert's poetic imagination. To trace that influence in the interdependence of Prayer Book and lyric, to suggest that both participate in an Anglican "conversation" aimed at building the Body of Christ, allows the poems themselves more life. It allows them, in fact, to *be* more fully poems, rather than statements of religious doctrine. What is more, Wall's argument allows English poets a place in a uniquely English tradition.

Of course, to make this case for Herbert is to make a more modest claim; where the claim is modest, the conclusions are, perhaps, less challenging to expectation. To identify Spenser, however, as an Anglican poet (even as a consistently religious one) raises more controversies (not to mention hackles), and the risk of the argument, as well as its potential reward for the study of a poet we

thought we knew, rises accordingly. The conviction of the argument will be carried by the quality of what it allows us to see in the poetry itself. Wall argues, for example, that *The Faerie Queene* offers not praise of Elizabeth but criticism of her (for, among other things, using her church as the agent of social control rather than social transformation), criticism offered under the careful political guise of praise. This reading challenges the traditional definition of Spenser's relationship to his queen, but in the process encourages us to see him as a defter, cagier poet than we could discover in his having written straightforward encomium, however beautifully articulated. I, for one, am willing to grant an argument that allows me to see a poet as "smarter" than I thought he was.

Similarly, Wall resists traditional allegorical readings of Spenser as expressing a "mythic consciousness" which assumes the "presence behind the poem of an ordered, changeless, universally true, atemporal vision of reality," and which seeks "to distance specific experience from the experiencer, to lose it in [those] general, reliable, manageable, universal truths" (99, 100). He argues that Spenser's allegory is, in essence, a rhetorical device -- a mode of depiction that speaks powerfully to an audience accustomed to reading allegorically, who is thus prepared to accept the transformation to which the rhetoric persuades. Using allegory "in a way that undercuts its claims and reveals its inadequacy" to define or locate abstract reality, Spenser "*infolds* the meaning of abstractions into the specific events of his narrative" (101); the proper response to and interpretation of those events comes "in the form of *praxis*, of engaging in charitable action, and not in the form of verbal formulas or *gnosis*" (102). Again, this reading of the poem allows *The Faerie Queene* to *be* a poem, and not a schematic presentation of ideas. Certainly in the teaching of Spenser -- and, I suspect for many of us, in the reading of him -- there is nothing more deadly than rehearsing the abstract "meaning" of its details -- "The lion stands for Henry the Eighth," and so forth.

Rather daringly, I think, Wall locates the "meaning" of the poem in its intention: "making the nation one family and everyone capable of significant devotion." Central to this intention is Spenser's "reinscription of Christian love to include the sexual" -- what Wall calls "the domestication of *eros*" (85) -- a motive consistent with and derived from the definitions of marriage and the family suggested in the English Prayer Book, the Primers, the official homilies, and the biblical texts to which they point. The narrative of the poem, Wall argues, moves consistently toward marriages -- Red Crosse and Una, Britomart and Arthegall, Amoret and Scudamore, Arthur and Gloriana -- that recognize "the realities of human desire" (87) and accommodate them to appropriate social structures. (This same movement is replicated in Spenser's own marriage, as it is presented in the *Epithalamion*, which Wall reads as a kind of "conclusion" to *The Faerie Queene*). In Book I, then, Spenser offers the concrete experience of Red Crosse Knight, individual and national hero, as committing the reader to a process that will shift "*eros* from the arena of fantasy to the arena of fulfillment . . . moving it from the realm of the private to the realm of the public with all its attendant risks" (93). That process involves not simply observing and imitating the character's behavior, but learning to "read aright" the details of his experience and our own, to distinguish false images from the truth that remains necessarily outside the falsification of language itself (96).

If the narrative of this action spoke with particular rhetorical force to England in the sixteenth century, it speaks with no less conviction today. Wall's Spenser lays "claim to the special power of his fiction to remake the meaning of things" (including the classical sources on which he draws) and aspires "not just to enliven old tales but to remake narratives of past authority so they become transforming for the present moment of retelling" (111). Wall's study may well do Spenser's "old tale" the same enlivening service.

Ann E. Imbrie
Vassar College

ARTICLES: ABSTRACTS AND NOTICES

90.06 Alpers, Paul. "Spenser's Late Pastorals." *ELH* 56, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 797-816.

Spenser's return to pastoral late in his career, a move critics have not yet made "sufficiently intelligible," can be illuminated by reading the pastoral cantos of *The Faerie Queene* Book VI *as* pastoral. In this light Melibee and Colin Clout represent two versions of pastoral authority who together offer Càlidore "firm alternatives to life at court." The "narratological character" of cantos ix and x also suggests a move away from heroic narration (associated with the court and world of action) toward lyric (grounded in moments of retreat and repose) since "the moral and spiritual significance of the shepherds' world is represented less by a full range of symbol, setting, and incident, than it is by the utterance of its main spokesmen"; the task of reader and hero is no longer to interpret allegory, but to decode the speech of human poet/shepherds, including that of the now strikingly evident *Faerie Queene* narrator. Since during the 1590s Spenser was criticizing court life in works such as *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* and *Prothalamion*, it seems clear that "the alternatives held out by Melibee and Colin Clout are ones that the poet, like his hero, took seriously." But complete withdrawal from court life proves as impossible within the genre of pastoral as it was for Spenser in his own life. Pastoral is "of the country, but by and for the city"; the only speakers with pastoral authority in *The Faerie Queene* are those who have some connection to court life, whereas true rustics like Coridon are derided by both poet and hero. The tension Spenser felt between a desire to serve his queen and the opposite desire for retreat are in this way also built into the structure of pastoral. Spenser's last two works, *Vewe of the Present State of Ireland* and the *Cantos of Mutabilitie*, seem to "separate the Queen's servant, analyzing the problems of colonial rule, from the poet, writing a summary fable of life on earth." Nevertheless, since the *Cantos of Mutabilitie* "can be thought to have fulfilled the suggestions in *Colin Clout* of poetic authority and of Ireland as the poet's domain," the two, taken together, provide "a fitting conclusion to *The Faerie Queene*." (P. J.)

90.07 Bellamy, Elizabeth. "Reading Desire Backwards: Belatedness and Spenser's Arthur." *SAQ* 88, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 789-810.

The Arthur of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* could have been the "paradigmatic hero" of Lacanian psychoanalysis, so insistently does his story reveal "the extent to which we are always spoken by/through the discourse of the Other." As a Lacanian reading of I.ix.1-17 demonstrates, for Arthur Gloriana "is less an object of desire than the void that constructs desire around a lack that is perceived only belatedly." Desire always precipitates the belated construction of the desired; though the desired object seems to precede its representation, this is a trick of consciousness, a puzzling confusion of temporality theorized in Freud's concept of *Nachtraglichkeit* or deferred action. More fundamentally, the mechanism of *Nachtraglichkeit* also structures primal signification. Only after the mother's breast is taken away from the child is its presence belatedly configured by (and in) its absence; following this initial separation signifiers crowd in to fill in the gap left by the loss of the thing itself, but what they actually fill in for is not the forever unobtainable Real, but intermediary *objects a*, or images of the mother's body, which mediate between the Real and the Symbolic. Understood in these terms, Arthur's revelation that "From mother's pap I taken was unfit" suggests that "the trauma of the limits of representation are the real source of his desire for Gloriana," who now represents "the belated reminder that is the aftereffect of the beginnings of representation in a primal *Nachtraglichkeit*." Since Arthur's character is structured "in terms of an object which has never been entirely given," his mythic role as the Once and Future King, the key player in a Tudor *renovatio*, can never be fulfilled: "Arthur cannot return if the object of his desire may not have been there to begin with."

Arthur's object of desire, like Arthur himself, is always belated, alienated, and spoken by the Other. But this alienation is the pre-condition for both desire and signification. Arthur must wake up from his dreamed union with Gloriana because "To dream on would mean to re-'join' with the Other (mother) -- which would mean that desire, the beginning of the narrative of *The Faerie Queene*, the founding of a Tudor *renovatio*, would never be born" -- nor, presumably, since Spenser, like Lacan, "understood desire to have its roots in the representational," could *The Faerie Queene* have ever been written. (P. J.)

90.08 Bates, Catherine. "Images of Government in *The Faerie Queene*, Book II." *N&Q* 36, no. 3 (September 1989): 314-15.

In Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser literalizes the etymology of the government. From the Greek *kubernn*, the verb *to govern* means "to steer a ship" or "to helmsman." Thus Guyon's quest -- his "voyage" (i.34, v.25, xi.5) -- seeks its conclusic "wished haven" similar to "the 'happie shore' already gained by Una" (i.32, 2). Sp Guyon the governor is, metaphorically, "a tall ship tossed in troublous seas" (ii.24 "rejects the false 'Port of Rest' offered him by the sirens at the Bower of Bliss" becat goal is still unreached. In this context, the Palmer's name is also a literalized met Palmer may derive from the Greek "*palmula*, or oar (used by extension from the wc hand, *palma*)." As a guiding "hand," the Palmer "quite literally steers (or governs) Gu fact that Spenser reiterates insistently." (J.S.)

90.09 Campbell, Gordon. "Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, II.xii.65." *Expl* 48, no. 1 (Fall 1989): 4.

Editors have suggested that the opening four lines of *The Faerie Queene* II xii 65 invoke Venus twice. But though Venus is clearly the "Cyprian goddesse" of line three, she could not also be the morning star of line one because "Venus is not male . . . is not associated with the sea, and does not 'reare,' but rather appears heliacally." Instead, the "messenger of morne" may be the sun, Phoebus, who rises from the sea and is both "faire" and male. (P. J.)

90.10 Greenfield, Sayre N. "Reading Love in the Geography of *The Faerie Queene*, Book Three." *PQ* 68, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 425-42.

The *emboitment*, or "ring structure," disclosed in Book Three's pattern of settings resembles similar architectural or spatial, as opposed to linear, treatments of love employed in *The Divine Comedy* and *The Romance of the Rose*. The symmetrical organization of locales -- in which castles, caves, sea bowers, and woods are arranged around the centrally placed Garden of Adonis and associated with corresponding humors and their respective elements -- suggests a universe "structurally and conceptually" balanced wherein lovers are allowed passage to an atemporal order. Within this "schematized geography," love can be read as "the coordinator of humankind's varied amorous humors and cosmological harmony" and, conversely, as an agent of disorder "creating the unfocused, incomplete narrative and the asymmetries of design." Spenser's use of spatial settings to "reify amorous psychologies," while allowing lovers and readers a means to escape chronology, contributes to a dialectic of stasis and mutability, since the reader is aware not only of synchronic pattern, but of the temporal conditions of reading and "integrating" that pattern.

The reader's experience is a progressive "process of enlightenment" during which a "suspense of integration" similar to that used in reading detective stories contributes to a cumulative awareness of structure. While the sequential experience of narrative contributes to a sense of love as an atemporal ordering "totality," a reading of that totality should not "remove itself too far from human perceptive limitations and so forget the processes that create it." A synchronic overview must "consult" the diachronic experience of reading since Spenser's concentric patterning, while it suggests timelessness, also presents a "degree of obscurity" which emphasizes the "prominence of temporality in human consciousness." Although Spenser cannot expect the reader to see in the physical world a pattern such as his narrative embodies, he expects the reader to "desire such an order." The reader's integration of pattern results from negotiating between sequential, time-bound reading and a "temporally unconfined" perspective. In this medial space, the "uninclusiveness and precarious readability" of the pattern serves to "link the design with temporality," thereby increasing the reader's awareness of the imperfect nature of love in the world. Therefore, Book Three can be read as a pattern of perception as well as a pattern of love. Our dual perception of time and timelessness, pattern and disorder complement Spenser's larger aim of "fashioning" a gentleman by implying that "the knight's and the reader's fashioning is in the world." (K. H.)

14

90.11 Sowton, Ian. "Toward a Male Feminist Reading of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*." *ESC* 15, no. 4 (December 1989): 398-416.

"Should men write feminist criticism?" Do male feminists appropriate feminist discourse -- thus reaffirming the patriarchy? The male feminist must work against this tendency; his credo -- "take as little as possible for granted" -- requires "would-be" male feminists to "realize in practice that no matter what their agendas are they are not the same as women's feminist agendas." The same "start-lines" cannot be assumed between men and women: "the start-lines aren't the same." Feminists -- male and female -- are united, however, in seeking to demythologize gender divisions. In their critical practice, male feminists can accomplish this by establishing the kind of critical voice feminist writing uses: a "personal voice, the trying not to take for granted, the incorporation of programme and process as integral, the emphasis upon who and what else has been among the means of one's own textual production -- all these are characteristic of . . . varieties of feminist writing." A feminist voice circumvents academe's "hegemonic disciplinary dialects" which "elide . . . contingencies of context."

By emphasizing the sexual/textual politics of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, a male feminist reading can demonstrate the poem's inconsistent, and ultimately patriarchal, representations of gender. Such readings show how the *Faerie Queene* "installs, encourages, or blocks off a woman's point of view in respect of both characters and female readers." The end of Book II shows that the power of Acrasia's pleasure "can only appear in the male lexicon as enchantment and witchery," thus a threat "to the masculine need to be in control." The male cannot admit "Jouissance on the woman's terms" and must retaliate by "dis-placing" Acrasia and "un-placing" her bower. Guyon's violence is an "uncontained excess of representation" which, in turn, "ruptures and destabilizes the construction of Guyon as the rationally continent man." While Britomart (and even Radigund) seem more positive representations of women, they are finally defined "in relation to Artegall" - - especially Britomart, who annuls "Radigund's Amazonian polis" and restores male power in Book V. Britomart's abnegation "reconfirms the sexual/textual politics of male domination." By not ending "optimistically" for women, *The Faerie Queene* predetermines its feminist readings, which must likewise dwell on the silencing of women in Spenser's text and in patriarchy. (K.F.)

90.12 Zhang, John Z. *Expl* 48, no. 1 (Fall 1989): 2-3.

As the epitome of chastity in Book III of *The Faerie Queene*, Britomart represents "a fusion of femininity and masculinity in beauty, valor, courage and power." "Femininity" inheres in Britomart's "feeble sense" and "molten hart" (II.ii.15), but "her masculinity is achieved through a narcissistic process in which she identifies herself with her lover, Artegall" (2). Britomart first glimpses her elusive lover in II.ii.24, when his image replaces her own in the mirror. The scene of Artegall reflecting Britomart suggests the Narcissus myth -- mentioned explicitly twenty stanzas later -- but it can also be analyzed in terms of the Lacanian "mirror stage" which marks the "child's first development of an ego, or of an integrated image" (2). In her search for her "unknown Paramore," Britomart is looking for and

developing the masculine elements in her own personality, "trying to find the integrated image of the self in identifying herself with a powerful knight" (3). (P.J.)

SPENSER AT MLA

The annual convention of the Modern Language Association of America, held in Washington, D. C., on 27-30 December 1989, offered many items of interest to Spenserians.

Session 478: Annual Meeting and Luncheon of the Spenser Society.

90.13 Because of the MLA program committee's abundant and carefully crafted scheduling conflicts, the annual luncheon of the Spenser Society was transformed into a brunch, and was held at Mrs. Simpsons's restaurant, on December 29th, at 10 AM. At this occasion, which was as cheering as ever, President S. K. Heninger, Jr. (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) presided there, first, over the election of the officers for 1990. Clark Hulse (University of Illinois, Chicago) was elected president; William Oram (Smith College) was elected Vice President; and John C. Ulreich, Jr. (University of Arizona) officially began his second term as secretary / treasurer. Elected to three-year terms on the Executive Committee were Thomas Cain (McMaster University), Jane E. Hedley (Bryn Mawr College), and Jacqueline T. Miller (Rutgers University).

President Heninger also announced that the Society will sponsor two sessions at the MLA meetings in Chicago in December 1990. One will be an open session on *Edmund Spenser* (chaired by Clark Hulse); the second, titled *Four Hundred Years Later: Publishing the 1590* Faerie Queene, will be chaired by Professor Maureen Quilligan (University of Pennsylvania).

After the business meeting had been speedily concluded, Elizabeth Bieman (University of Western Ontario) delivered a moving address, "'Be Bold . . . Be not too bold': Spenser and the Female Critic," describing her pain at the recent gunning down of women engineering students at the University of Montreal, and her discomfort with her own -- and our -- complicity in antifeminism. Spenserians have been notably slow to respond to feminism. Our responses to *The Faerie Queene* are still conditioned by the androcentric assumptions of epic and romance. We agree with Frye that Britomart is an "irritable" heroine. We are not dismayed when she resigns herself to weaving at home and gives the field over to Artegall. We do not flinch at the Jungian animae which throughout *The Faerie Queene* pass for models of perfect women. Yet for all that, Spenser speaks woman's language: he is witty, playful, equivocal, emotional, fully human. The traditionally feminine virtues he so often praises -- forbearance, forgiveness, sanity in matters of love and sex, the "healing salves" he concocts, the wholeness he works toward -- may suggest, for moderate and humane people committed to the liberation of women, a middle road between resignation and wild tilting.

Session 513, *Later Spenser: England's Arch-Poet in Elizabeth's Last Decade*. Program arranged by the Spenser Society. Presiding: David Lee Miller (University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa).

90.14 Although the 1596 cancellation of *The Faerie Queene* III's hermaphrodite may well frustrate our longing for closure, Dorothy Stephens (University of California, Berkeley) argued in "Into Other Arms," it also recognizes that some readers may desire other types of closure than the hermaphroditic. By moving Amoret from Scudamour's embrace to Britomart's protection, the cancellation undermines Busyrane's idea that heterosexual union should exclude alliances among women. The distance between "Amoret" as a sign of Scudamour's loss in Book III and "Amoret" as a sign to Belphoebe of Timias' lust in Book IV constitutes a space for feminine desire, in which Amoret and Britomart may "wend at will." At the same time, the continual retelling of Amoret's violation places the story of her wandering both before and after that of her rape, effectively allowing her straying from Scudamour not only to invite male damage but also to cure it. Scudamour does attempt through his reminiscences to reconstitute Amoret as the perfectly whole sign of his proprietary loss, but rather than interpreting her failure to reappear in IV.ix-x as her own loss of self, we can read her absence as a resistance to mere contextualization. Here and in Lust's Cave, which oddly protects women's community, Spenser opens his text to a female world not entirely controlled by male expectations. His song to his aging queen colludes with a femininity that has little to do with greatness. (D. S.)

90.15 In "Narcissus Interrupted: Specularity and Succession in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," Linda Gregerson (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) argued that in the Accession Day ceremonies of 1595, the Earl of Essex presented himself as Erophilus, a man in love with love (or in love with the Petrarchanisms that constructed the Queen's patronage system) but frustrated by his lack of acknowledgement from her majesty. He is tempted to turn from the Queen to a new, mirror-gazing mistress, Philautia, or self-love. But Philautia's gender and iconography suggest that she is not simply a mirror of Essex's narcissism: she is "implicitly equated with the Queen in her withholding humor." Essex's clever allegory did not, however, patch up his relations with Elizabeth. Twelve days prior to Accession Day, she had denied him the positions he was trying to procure for Francis Bacon; afterwards, she allowed his monopoly on sweet wines, the main source of his income, to expire.

In his second installment of *The Faerie Queene* in 1596, Spenser proposes similar specular contracts: in Book IV, Proem, he enjoins the Queen to free herself from the "vse of awfull Maiestie" and behold the image of true love, that is the image locked in her own chaste breast, in the mirror of his poem. In the Proem to Book VI, complaining that the forgeries of present-day courtiers deceive those who "see not perfect things but in a glas," Spenser fashions for his Queen another self "in whose pure minde, as in a mirrour sheene" the lost pattern of courtesy may be found. Indeed, epic action itself is enabled by a kind of narcissism interrupted, an invention by the self of a figure which will govern desire and whose origin in the self must be occluded. Epic action cannot outlast recognition of this self-spun figure. Thus the various failures of recognition in the last three books of *The Faerie Queene* -- including Britomart's failure to remove Radigund's helmet and thus recognize their common duality as female warriors, and Duessa's melting away between cantos as Mercilla and the reader avert their eyes.

As for Essex and his last rebellion, the image of himself which he had hoped to see reflected in a dissident public never emerged. Sentenced to a spectacular death, Essex gazed into the mirror of conscience and revived the Erophilus-image he had constructed five years earlier. He renounced his treason, informed on his treasonous friends, and gave himself over to her majesty's pleasure. Love and narcissism once again conjoining, Essex prayed for his enemies because, as he said, "They bear the image of God as well as myself."

90.16 In "'Mutabilitie,' Loathing, and the Authority of Visual Forms," Gordon Teskey (Cornell University) argued that in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche defines the Apollonian image as a luminously concrete, individual form which appears to have proceeded from a hidden unity but which actually conceals the disunity and play which give it being. This formulation can help us understand how Spenser's *Cantos of Mutabilitie* examine the failure of allegory to reveal the truth -- or, rather, the dependence of allegory's success upon its concealing disunity from our eyes by inviting us to attend to images. Such finely imagined details as we meet in the cycle of the months solve the problem of disunity by deflecting our attention. Moreover, Spenser has become painfully aware of the deception. His final stanzas express loathing for the entire cosmology in which his allegory is inscribed. Throughout the cantos his tone swings from self-parody to apocalyptic, as if he had given his own imagination and its products objective status and were now subjecting them to ironic scrutiny or attempting to escape their dubious truth-claims through cathartic vision. The allegorical center cannot hold, and the cantos end with "the bitter wisdom of Nietzsche's Silenus, a wisdom that looks on beauty and laughs."

Session 722, *Edmund Spenser*. Open session arranged by the Spenser Society. S. K.. Heninger, Jr. (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) presided.

90.17 In "History's Most Wanted: Pontius Pilate in *The Faerie Queene*," Sheila T. Cavanagh (Emory University) maintained that Spenser's narratorial silence regarding Pontius Pilate (*FQ* II.vii) -- the only truly historical figure who speaks in the poem -- forces us to view Pilate's crime as so great, so intemperate, that any attempt to elaborate upon it would "overwhelm the most temperate imagination." His crime is, as Foucault would say, the ultimate crime, an act of unimaginable evil. In such a case punishment has no deterrent value. Once committed, the ultimate crime cannot be repeated; it is inimitable. Nevertheless, punishment must be meted out. Failing a body to torture and a state to make its outrage physically manifest, Spenser fashions a site of eternal torment, hell, and represents the unrepresentable by means of the horrifying repetition and filth depicted there. He allows Pilate to speak, briefly and repentantly, and moves on, leaving to the reader the tasks of fathoming the enormity of the crime and of relating the lesson Pilate teaches to the other more fully allegorized lessons of the rest of the book.

90.18 In "Spenser Re-membering Orpheus: The Mytho-Poetic Subtext of Book VI," John Ulreich (University of Arizona) argued that Spenser's Legend of Courtesy derives its fictive coherence from the tragicomic myth of Orpheus. Patterns of this myth, first dismembered and then reintegrated into a new pattern, constitute both the groundplot of Spenser's profitable invention and a theory of poetic composition. Spenser deconstructs his classical sources, redeploying and reshaping their narrative

structures, and then reconstructs *his* myth of the archetypal poet so as to demonstrate the mythopoeic process of his own fiction.

In *Metamorphoses* X and XI, Ovid diffuses the tragedy of Orpheus by postponing his death: between the loss of Eurydice and his own dismemberment occur some 630 lines of extraneous matter. In *Georgics* IV, by contrast, Vergil condenses the tragedy and incorporates it into the tragicomic myth of Aristaeus, whose miraculous recovery of his lost bees is made possible by the revelation of his responsibility for Orpheus' destiny. Spenser exploits both patterns. The narrative development generally imitates Ovid's digressive movement. Orpheus is reflected "in mirrours more than one": for example, Calepine's rescue of Serena from the "saluage nation" inverts and averts Orpheus' dismemberment by the Maenads. Spenser even incorporates some of the peripheral Ovidian matter; the wounding of Arthur's Squire, for example, recalls the death of Adonis. More crucially, however, the structural center of Book VI, Calidore's pastoral adventure (ix-xi), recreates and transforms the enclosed structure in Vergil. Calidore's encounter with Colin Clout makes explicit the interdependence of Aristaeus and Orpheus that is only hinted in Vergil. Like Aristaeus, Calidore attempts a kind of rape when he violates Colin's vision, but its consequences are not fatal, for the recovery of Pastorella is also the recovery of Colin's "shepheardes lasse." By re-membering the myth, Spenser transforms the tragic figure of the failed poet into a tragicomic archetype of the poet redeemed. And, finally, the rescue of Pastorella from the underworld -- the re-membering of archetypal unity -- symbolizes both the redemption of poetry and the redemptive power of poetic mimesis. (J. U.)

90.19 In *Amoretti*, William J. Kennedy (Cornell University) argued in "Versions of Petrarch in the *Amoretti*," Spenser's Petrarchan conventions call into play two very different sorts of 16th-century interpretations appended to editions of the *Rime Sparse*: the biographical (put forth by Sebastiano Fausto da Longiano, Sylvano da Venafro, and Antonio Brucioli) and the rhetorical (Andrea Gesualdo, Bernardino Daniello, and Lodovico Castelvetro), emphasizing Petrarch's civic and amatory ambition, and his spiritual allegorizations, respectively. The jostling of these figures of Petrarch is replicated in Spenser's sonnet sequence as the conflict between the pull of courtly ambition and the less aristocratic longing for mutual love. The two Elizabeths, queen and beloved, are rival referents for the "lodestar" of Spenser's life (34). The rivalry is not surprising, for the Petrarchan ship-image around which Spenser builds his sonnet was interpreted both as "the ship of state" and as the poor lover himself tossed in the storm of his beloved's wrath. For the poet of *Amoretti* 34, the "hidden perils" placed about him may refer to the perils of courtly life, from which the beloved wishes to secure him. Her success in this enterprise can be measured by the single alteration Spenser makes in his second Narcissus sonnet (83). The pre-betrothal reading, "having it, they gaze on it the more" (35), projects an idea of the speaker onto his beloved. But in the repeated sonnet -- significantly placed, like the first, after a poem describing the poet's willingness to plough ahead with another few books of his queen's epic -- the word "seeing" replaces "having" and suggests an effacement of the courtly Petrarchan narcissism, and a new awareness,

equally Petrarchan but far more Protestant in its focus on marriage, of the beloved as someone *other*.

Anthony M. Esolen
Furman University

ANNOUNCEMENTS

90.20 Information requested -- on the *other* Longman *Faerie Queene*. *Choice*'s review of The Yale edition of *The Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser* reports that: "With its publication, and the prior publication of the Longman (ed. by M.C. Jussawalla, 1982) and the Penguin (ed. by T.P. Roche and C.P. O'Donnell, 1978) editions of *The Faerie Queene*, students of Spenser and 16th-century poetry -- from undergraduates to mature scholars -- at last have available to them a complete Spenser adequate for both classroom use and scholarly citation." A welcome situation. But many of us are eager to learn more about the Jussawalla *Faerie Queene*. Since enquiries at Longman's have proved unhelpful, anyone who knows where a copy might be located should feel morally bound to pass that information along immediately to Professor A. C. Hamilton, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

90.21 During the Spenser Society luncheon at the Modern Language Association meetings in Washington DC, (December 29, 1989) the Isabel MacCaffrey Award was presented to Professor Jane Tylus, for her article "Spenser, Virgil, and the Politics of Poetic Labor," *ELH* 55, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 53-78 (see items 89.65 and 89.89). As reported in the *Newsletter*'s last issue, the MacCaffrey selection committee "was impressed by the article's learned and thoughtful reconsideration of the tradition of Vergilian georgic, as well as by its bold formulation of a poetic solution to important social and political problems in Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*."

90.22 The Spenser Society announces the sixth annual ISABEL MACCAFFREY AWARD. The award consists of a medallion together with the sum of $100, to be presented for a significant article on Edmund Spenser published in English. The sixth annual award, for an article published during the calendar year 1989, will be presented at the Spenser Society luncheon during the 1990 MLA Convention in Chicago.

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

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

To be considered for the award this year, articles must be submitted to Professor Ulreich, for the attention of the MacCaffrey Award Committee, *not later than 15 September 1990*. Authors are encouraged to submit their own articles and are requested to forward three copies to Professor Ulreich. Those who wish to direct the Committee's attention to important articles by others should submit a single copy of each recommended article. Committee members this year are Elizabeth Bieman (University of Western Ontario), A. Leigh DeNeef (Duke University), and William Oram (Smith College).

90.23 CALL FOR PAPERS. The Conference on Christianity and Literature invites papers on "Edmund Spenser and the Scriptural Tradition" for a session at MLA 1991. Please send abstracts by 1 March 1991 to Margaret Hannay, Department of English, Siena College, Loudonville, NY 1221.

90.24 Patrick Cullen has sent along the following announcement, which will interest many readers of the *Newsletter*:

> The Society for the Study of Women in the Renaissance is an interdisciplinary discussion group now in its fourth year at the CUNY Graduate Center. The schedule for Fall 1990 is:
>
> October 4, Electra Arenal, "Life in a Seventeenth-Century Convent."
>
> November 1, Ann Crabb, "The Widow in Fifteenth-Century Florence."
>
> December 6, Margaret King, "Missing Mothers in Italian Renaissance Writing."
>
> For further information, contact Betty Travitsky, Chair (718 645-3950) or Joan Hartman, secretary-treasurer (English Department, College of Staten Island/CUNY, Staten Island, NY 10301).

90.25 CORRECTIONS. Professor Richard A. McCabe has written to point out that his surname was omitted from the first entry in the Spenser Bibliography Update, 1987 (89.91). He also mentions the helpful point that the title of the journal in which his article ("Gabriel Harvey and Edmund Spenser: A Pembroke Friendship") appeared should read *"Pembroke College Cambridge Annual Gazette,"* to distinguish it from its Oxford counterpart. The editor regrets these errors.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
CB #3520
GREENLAW HALL
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHAPEL HILL NC 27599-3520

David L. Miller
Dept. of English, Drawer AL
Univ. of Alabama
Tuscaloosa AL 35487   22.3