All Theses and Dissertations (ETDs)

January 2011

Spenser's "Inward Ey": Poetics, Lexicography, and the Motivations for Edmund Spenser's Linguistic Idealism

Lawrence Revard
Washington University in St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/etd

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of English & American Literature

Dissertation Examination Committee:
Joseph Loewenstein, Chair
Robert Henke
Dillon Johnston
David Lawton
Jessica Rosenfeld
Gerhild Williams

SPENSER'S "INWARD EY":
POETICS, LEXICOGRAPHY, AND THE MOTIVES FOR EDMUND SPENSER'S
LINGUSITIC IDEALISM

by

Lawrence B. Revard

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2011

Saint Louis, Missouri

Table of Contents

"Casella mio, per tornar altra volta
  là dov' io son, fo io questo vïaggio;"
  diss' io, "ma a te com'è tanta ora tolta?"
Ed elli a me: "Nessun m'è fatto oltraggio,
  se quei che leva quando e cui li piace,
  più volte m' ha negato esto passaggio;
chè di giusto voler lo suo si face:
  veramente da tre mesi elli ha tolto
  chi ha voluto intrar, con tutta pace.
Ond' io, ch'era ora alla marina volto
  dove l'acqua di Tevero s'insala,
  benignamente fu' da lui ricolto.
A quella foce ha elli or dritta l'ala,
  però che semre quivi si ricoglie
  quale verso Acheronte non si cala."
E io: "Se nuova legge non ti toglie
  memoria o uso all' amoroso canto
  che mi solea quetar tutte mie voglie,
di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto
  l'anima mia, che, con la mia persona
  venendo qui, è affannata tanto!"
"Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona"
  cominciò elli allor sì dolcemente,
  che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi sona.
Lo mio maestro e io e quella gente
  ch'eran con lui parevan sì contenti
  come a nessun toccasse altro la mente.

—Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio* 2.91-117

Introduction:
With and Without Dictionaries:
Explaining Spenser's Motives for his Idiosyncratic Ideas of Language

> Yet every attempt to cross the gulf of language remains so partial, even illusory, a task always to be recommended. The reality of language difference to me means so much that I occasionally think I have remained addicted to the English Renaissance so as not to lose sight of that fact. In the early modern period, languages keep their sharp edges, their strangeness to one another, in a way that seems less defined in this century of cribs and instant guides to alien cultures. (572)
> —Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, *Acts and Monuments of an Unelected Nation: The* Cailleach *Writes about the Renaissance*

Everyone teaching English, and every English-language writer whom I know, depends almost unthinkingly on the authority of dictionaries. I say "almost" because the dependency does not itself stop writers and teachers from recognizing the cultural and historical context upon which defining words and accepting the authority of definitions depends. I speak an American dialect with a variety of differences from what I might find in a dictionary's English, even a dictionary for Americans. Though the dictionary's authority is rarely worth disputing when I write, ignoring its authority is crucial to my day-to-day identity in speaking with some Americans—especially those with whom I share bonds to which the scholarly world is alien. My present stance, being perhaps a little reflective of the sensibility expressed by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin above, raises a natural question about a past to which I have a scholarly attachment: What was it like for Renaissance authors to compose *without* the authority of English dictionaries or grammars and, instead, *with* the presence of Latin and Greek grammars, lexicons, and education? In the present, my Latin, French, Greek, and Italian language education informs my own sense of grammar, but not profoundly. I may in my general thinking compare and thus transfer ideas about foreign word meaning and foreign-language grammar to my English, but I ultimately turn to English dictionaries and usage guides for

decisions. Such guides may in fact bear the influence of patterns of thought that originate in the study of classical languages, but little that I can immediately sense. Edmund Spenser, however, would have had to assert the meaning of words in English in anticipation of the arrival of fully English grammars and lexicons whose rules were being shaped, during the sixteenth century, by the example of Latin and Latin-English lexicons. What would this have meant?

Spenser's use of the verb "perform" in one stanza from *The Fowre Hymnes* illustrates one way in which writing without an English dictionary and with the presence of Latin lexicography would have influenced him and his approach to his readership. *The Fowre Hymnes*, as I will show in my first chapter, dramatizes the problem that language itself cannot accommodate understanding adequately. The failure of language, Spenser reveals, is related to its materiality, the physical "tongue" that infects the purity of mind. In the passage below, we find Spenser trying to explain how the immaterial mind is comparable to earthly matter in the way it may be mis-shaped. A revealing quality to Spenser's use of the verb "perform" appears along the way:

> Yet oft it falles, that many a gentle mynd
> Dwels in a deformed tabernacle drownd,
> Either by chaunce, against the course of kynd,
> Or through unaptnesse in the substance fownd,
> Which it assumed of some stubborne grownd,
> That will not yield unto her formes direction,
> But is perform'd with some foule imperfection.
> (*An Hymne in Honour of Beautie*, ll. 141-7)

As the O.E.D. makes plain in its entry on "perform," the English use of the word to mean "to carry out an action" was quite old and common by Spenser's time, while the meaning

of "to make, construct, or build" was rarer.[1] The word "perform" in either case was an old

and clear English word in Spenser's time, not an obscure loan-word from Latin. The

Latin equivalent of the word "perform" appears in Thomas Thomas' Latin lexicon from

1589, though, and Thomas observes the less common of the two meanings: "Performo,

[…] to fashion out a thing." Both Thomas Thomas and Robert Estienne (in a 1536 Latin

dictionary) define "performo" based on *one* participial instance in Quintilian. Thus, the

word has only the slimmest basis in Latin, as there is no "formo" verb. From English

usage, Spenser's readers likely knew the commoner English meaning of "perform."

Spenser clearly chooses a rarer meaning, though, and it is worth thinking about why. For

Spenser to say the ground is "performed" with imperfection is to say it is "completed" or

"made" with imperfection. "Imperfect" means unfinished in roughly the same way as

"unperformed" might—especially if we are thinking in terms of the Latin root of the

common Latin word, "perficio." After all, "perficio" in Latin means what "perform" does

in English, encompassing both the commoner and rarer meanings that I just pointed out.

Seen in these limited terms, then, Spenser's choice to draw out the rarer meaning of the

word "performed" by the word "imperfection" seems dubiously opaque or tediously

paradoxical. That is, he seems to mean the ground is completed with incompletion,

perfected with imperfection, as if both *perform* and *perfect* were only to be read darkly

through a Latin mirroring they enact.

---

[1] The O.E.D. online notes that the word *perform*'s meaning of "To carry out in action, execute, or fulfill" originates from the French "parfourmer" and has English uses dating from 1300. This is, then, the first meaning of the word in English, which is quite distinct from the Latin meanings that might have prompted its French origins. The O.E.D. cites 16th-century instances of this first meaning of "perform" from the Coverdale bible in 1535 and Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* in 1600. Less common, but dating from as early as 1395 is the English meaning "To make, construct, or build (an object); to create (an artistic work)." This meaning (and a variety of others close to it) certainly existed into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though it disappears afterward.

Several further linked ideas from Latin, English, and philosophy make what Spenser is doing with the word "performed" playfully ironic rather than dully opaque, though. The philosophical context is essential: Spenser wishes his readers to see that Platonic "form" in the mind is imposing its "formes" on matter. As William Oram and his fellow editors comment in the notes, Spenser's "reasoning has extended the logic of Platonism" in finding that the "inherent recalcitrance of matter" corrupts the beauty that exists in the world (713n). That context clarified, ironies embedded in parts of the word "perform" emerge. Mainly, Spenser suggests that to complete beauty in the world undoes what is form in the mind. This irony is clearer from the Latin rather than any meaning associated with the English: "forma" in Latin is a common word for beauty. Ironically, the beauty of the mind's form has been "performed" out of place by coming to a material home. Yet another possibility appears: the "ground" (or the mind itself, depending on how you read) is "perform'd" in the sense that it is corrupted throughout, *overformed*. In the latter reading, "per" acts as a Latinate intensifier to the English verb "form" in a manner that will be more apparent to those who know Latin. "Performing" in this sense implies excess rather than exact completion, and as such it bends the meaning of "perform" well outside of what we find in any dictionary meaning even in the present. It changes even the kind of meaning that might be available to a word like "perfect" in English or a word like "perficio" in Latin. Altogether, then, Spenser adapts Latinate and Latin meanings to the end of his English imagery, calling on a reader's awareness of the parts of the verb "perform" to see several possibilities. The possibilities are larger than a simple transfer of meanings from Latin to English.

The case of "perform" in the *Fowre Hymnes* illustrates how Spenser was using English in a way that acknowledges differences with Latin, then harnesses such difference *for* English. This is precisely *how* Spenser writes in anticipation of English lexicography and with an awareness of existing Latin lexicons. Spenser's readers might readily consult the meaning of "per" and "forma" in Latin, and even "performo" in the sense of "fashion." However, *they would not find* an entry for a Latin "perform" in the sense of "act" that had come into existence in English unless they looked under "perficio." Spenser's readers had to imagine an *English* word with whose meaning he plays using Latin tools. My argument here is that such complex circumstance, one requiring the anticipation and deduction of meanings in English with tools and ideas from well outside of English, frames Spenser's compositional authority as an English poet in the late sixteenth century. His choices in diction must be strategic in part for being directed to audiences that would need to deduce meaning in the absence of English dictionaries. They would know bonds of native speech on which no academy had laid firm claim, and yet they could move toward very academic thinking about their language through ideas about Latin and Greek grammar and word definition. That said, I do not want to begin an argument that uses a form of *Other/Or* reasoning to discuss the disturbing presence of the alien or foreign or ancient within the native. Long before his contemporary readers would have arrived at an understanding of Spenser's language at any level, they must have figured out the in-woven meanings that Spenser produced with his words. We may term such meanings literal or metaphorical, old or new, foreign or native in a comfortable retrospect, but we must recognize greater semantic complexity for past audiences and for the author. That is, for words like "perform" we must recognize

an uncomfortable continuum of simple, complex, playful, obscure, foreign, familiar, and so forth. Spenser's process of managing his readership's sense of lexis in this circumstance is thus bound to equally complex ideas about language itself that had proliferated before and during his time. Monumental humanists like Lorenzo Valla, Desiderius Erasmus, Ambrogio Calepino, Robert and Henri Estienne and others saw deeply into the history and culture of words and set themselves forth as pedagogues on just such matters.

Even though Spenser likely shared some reverence for the words that classical-language humanists defined with their influential notions of meaning and culture, Spenser and such humanists did not necessarily see the action of language or the authority of lexicographers in the same way. In this thesis, I will explain how the evidence in Spenser's poetry suggests that he did *not* in fact conceive of linguistic meaning in the same way as many other humanists, especially lexicographers. Spenser's poetry itself offers a view different from theirs of the relationship between language and knowledge (or even more broadly understood: language, society, and the individual mind) that was central to some humanist classical-language lexicography and to some broader ideals of humanism. The difference is most palpable in Spenser's ideas about an individual's sense of language as we find it depicted in the idealistic and Platonic imagery of *The Fowre Hymnes* and in *The Legend of Courtesy*, Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*—works from late in Spenser's career. Yet the difference radiates through all of Spenser's work, especially the management of diction in *The Shepheardes Calender*, and in my thesis as a whole I argue that understanding this difference should change our view of the ambitions of his poetry.

The importance of Latin and Greek lexicons in defining the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century views of humanist Latin diction, in presenting an encyclopedic understanding of ancient culture, and in developing structured ideas about the relation between language and mind has already been recognized. Ann Moss, in *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn,* has explored the influence of figures like Valla and Erasmus and the nuanced difference between their ideas and those present in the lexicons of Ambrogio Calepino and Dominico Nanni Mirabellio—works which I will examine in detail in the second chapter. John Considine, in *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe: Lexicography and the Making of Heritage,* has provided detailed assessments of the influence of works by key figures like Robert and Henri Estienne, as I will consider in my third chapter. Furthermore, scholars have already provided evidence of Spenser's dependence on lexicons as sources for the material of his poetry. In *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries*, DeWitt Starnes and Ernest Talbert have shown that lexicons were key sources about classical culture for Spenser. My own argument develops a more complicated understanding Spenser's feeling about the lexical sources themselves and the humanist arguments about meaning in language that lay with them. Naturally, my most basic interest is to find out Spenser's feeling about such lexicons in a way that answers to the depth of their cultural importance as Moss and Considine, among others, have revealed it. However, I am also answering to scholars who have characterized Spenser's reaction to various sixteenth-century manners of conceiving of linguistic meaning, including that of lexicography—finding each scholar insightful and yet problematic in specific ways that contribute to the development of my arguments. As my reader, you will not be able to overlook my concern with the compounded faults and

insights I notice in these scholars, as my disputes with them frequently occupy much space in my chapters. In order to summarize the basic arguments of each of my chapters, then, let me address the kind of approaches that Richard Waswo, Judith Anderson, Daniel Fried, Paula Blank, and Andrew Hadfield provide for analyzing Spenser's view of linguistic meaning. My assessment of the limitations of each of these thinkers is, after all, instrumental in the progress of my thesis as a whole and precisely what is *new* about my sense of Spenser's poetry.

1. Richard Waswo

In her survey of the opinions about Spenser's linguistic choices, Dorothy Stevens writes that "Spenser's idiosyncratic modifications of Elizabethan English diction demonstrate that he followed neither Continental linguists nor the English linguists slavishly, instead formulating his own blend of practices" (376). This idiosyncrasy, she stresses, makes it difficult to assess Spenser's motivations as responses to the very authorities he appears to neither follow nor reject. Not surprisingly, then, Richard Waswo's *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance* draws upon philosophical ideas that promise yet fail to place Spenser's reaction to lexicons in proper historical and intellectual context. Waswo, in his own words, uses "a composite version of some present theories [of language and meaning] in order to disinter the competing semantic assumptions of the Renaissance" (ix). As should be evident, my project is narrower yet related to Waswo's in that I hope to understand Spenser's theories of language partly by comparison to Renaissance as well as later and earlier theories relevant to Spenser's practices and interests. However, my project diverges from Waswo's in an important respect. Waswo depends heavily upon the idea that Saussurean linguistics presented a

9

revolution in which "relational meaning" became distinct from "referential" meaning, a fact he stresses in his introduction to "notions of meaning" (6). Using this basic dichotomy—whose limitations for his own interests and alternative versions in other disciplinary "domains" he acknowledges—he comes to argue that versions of this Saussurean division existed in the Renaissance:

> By thus divorcing meaning from reference and regarding it as a function of the manifold relations of words with each other, Saussure proposed in his domain (independently developed in other domains, as well) what has become one of the major revolutions in twentieth-century thought: the shift from referential to relational semantics, from regarding the meaning of language as a given object of reference to regarding it as a dynamic function of use. This revolution did not begin with Saussure—I shall be arguing that it is a definitive feature of the Renaissance—and it is by no means complete. (13)

Waswo is right that Saussure did not initiate the idea or distinction. Even so, Waswo himself depends on a radically reductive notion of "reference" whose exponents could only be extremely naïve empiricists. This failure is important because it effectively creates part of the historical context with which we need to see Spenser's possible disputes with other humanists. On the one hand, Waswo is right, as I will consider in a little more detail presently, that Spenser, like other humanists, is more concerned with *relational* meaning—a sense of the way a word's meaning fits into a web of syntax and the contrasting and comparative elements of other words. On the other, Waswo does not go far enough in his acknowledgment of the limitations of a specifically Saussurean method of analyzing the formerly-existing debates about or struggles over the nature of meaning, its relation to knowledge, mind, language, material, spirit, learning, and a variety of other factors—all things useful to assessing the degree of difference or similarity between Spenser and his contemporaries. Thus *what* Waswo overlooks about

10

Spenser specifically reveals some things we should focus upon to deepen our appreciation of the nature of Spenser's idiosyncrasy.

Waswo situates Spenser within the intellectual history which, as explained, is even now shaped by the shift from a view of linguistic meaning dominated by referential elements to one dominated by relational elements. In the chapter on the "Challenge of Eloquence," Waswo cites Erasmus as the figure spearheading a change in the view of linguistic meaning—a change that manifests itself, Waswo argues, in Spenser's choices and the humanistic appeal of Spenser's choices as an allegorist. For Waswo—as indeed for other scholars like Ann Moss—Erasmus follows and extends the arguments and ideas of Lorenzo Valla which were crucial to a redefinition of how ancient Latin was to be taught and understood, how its meaning was to be seen as functioning: "Erasmus, by defending Valla," Waswo writes, "is articulating the motives and the principles of what will become a large part of his own life's work" (214). Waswo examines Erasmus's *De Ratione Studii* for the proof, concluding that for Erasmus and his follower humanists "the whole humanistic focus on language as a socio-historical product implied what Valla sporadically inferred from it: that semantics is epistemology, that language does not reveal or reflect reality but constitutes it" (219). Regardless of how accurate this comment about humanism may or may not be,[2] it sets up Waswo to consider examples of literature that shift from stiff scholastic ideas of reference to fluid, flexible humanist ones of relation.[3] But were poet and humanist simply and wholly aligned in acceptance of this

---

[2] See my later comments on John Leonard's analysis of the reception and use of the Cratylus for a sense of why Waswo's view is faulty.

[3] To be sure, Waswo's depiction of Erasmus's attempt to change how poet, rhetorician, philosopher, and theologian operate is just, for we find many scholars remarking upon the concomitance in Erasmus's change of the hermeneutic process and the blending of the roles of poet and rhetorician in particular. Arthur

shift? To bridge the difference between the scholar Erasmus's vision and the poet

Spenser's choices, Waswo imagines that the courtier-poet Philip Sidney, himself so

clearly influential on Spenser, was responsive principally to the Erasmian influence in his

defense of poetry. That is, Waswo reasons that Sidney's sanctification of the poet's

interpretive role is consistent with what Erasmus demands (226). He concludes: "The

particular new way employed by Erasmian exegesis and advocated by Sidneian criticism,

arrived at by unifying the text's emotional power and its instructive value, ultimately

postulates what might be called an 'affective semantics'" (229). Waswo's observations

come at the expense of seeing a key difference between Sidney's and Erasmus's attitudes

toward what constitute model languages. As my reading and notes on Sidney's *Defence*

of Poesie will show in my third chapter, Sidney's advocacy of a powerful use of language

in poetry comes with championing English as particularly available to his

recommendations for the sanctified poetic activity of an English person. Erasmus, as was

generally acknowledged, did not like the European vernaculars. Indeed, Erasmus's view

of language depends upon a systematic discovery of ideal modes of thinking implicated

in classical texts that in many ways stand above the modes assumed to be part of

vernaculars. Setting that complex matter aside, though, we still cannot join Sidney's and

an Erasmian exegetical process because Sidney's plans for poetry are not simply a

reflection of humanism and not indistinct from what we might find in Spenser.

Kinney remarks specifically on the origin of Erasmus's desire to see a close relation between the roles of
poet and orator in Cicero's inestimably popular *De Oratore* (29). Waswo sees it similarly, arguing that
Erasmus transferred the "rhetorical techniques" to general tasks of interpretive analysis "in the…
Ciceronian/Horatian tradition" (225).

Just as Waswo sees Sidney's ideas about language as harmonious with those of Erasmus, he forces Spenser's entire allegorical method away from the complex philosophical influences of Platonism and Christianity and into the historical shift that he has argued into dominance. The approaches to language that figures like Erasmus and Luther propose, he argues, shift the nature of allegory itself away from medieval or scholastic patterns, and Spenser follows that pattern:

> Spenser himself speaks of allegory, in the letter to Raleigh, as a "method" for achieving the Sidneian delight that is instruction. The method, however, is subordinate (and hence can vary, as the twelvefold 'Aristotelian' scheme in the letter does not appear in the poem) to the purpose. The meanings pointed at through the story are inscribed within the meaning enacted in the story. (230)

Unfortunately, Waswo's description of the specific actions of Spenser's allegory does not distinguish it from the action of normal language. What Waswo finds to be "relational" here is the way meaning can be contained within and distributed among the units of the language—that is, amid the syntax of its parts and within the function of each part—as part of the process of thought circumscribing language. All languages are more than simply referential by nature, and Spenser's awareness of some idea of relational meaning in his use of allegory is not inevitable. Figures like Gottlob Frege, among others, have observed that relational meaning (what Frege calls a word's "sense" as opposed to its "reference") is a common property of language and/or thinking generally, not a special property of a given linguistic example.[4] Even if this property may become more evident

---

[4] Though I use the reference/relation distinction to help build a basic argument, I do not consider it entirely adequate to describing the symbolic action of words. See Terrence Deacon's summary of the relevance of Gottlob Frege's ideas to thinking about meaning in language, and his ensuing discussion of C.S. Peirce and interpretants, in *The Symbolic Species* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997): 61-68. Deacon's ideas are foundational to my own realization that words do not necessarily function like definitions (or according to definitions), and thus to my realization that Spenser or any writer, unlike a lexicographer, need not have thought so as he manipulated word meanings for his readers. However, Deacon's ideas are only part of a

in allegory, this alone is not sufficient to make any kind of reasonable argument that Spenser designed the poem to register this effect in, as it were, unconscious compliance with the trends of humanist theory.

Further important reasons why Waswo's approach is ineffective for Spenser in particular become clear in the work of two writers who have made more precise studies of intellectual history for Spenser, Martha Craig and John Leonard. Early on in his argument about meaning, Waswo rules out the significance of Platonic philosophy. He acknowledges that the *Cratylus* and the *Phaedrus* explore fundamental questions about language, but he dismisses the explorations as just a way for Plato to discredit "mere 'jugglers' of words" (30) and to privilege a rational discourse beyond language. My analysis of the *Phaedrus* (in my first chapter) will present reasons why this is an untenable position about the influence of Platonism itself, but fuller rejections of Waswo's approach come from two scholars whose works straddle Waswo's in time. In 1967 Martha Craig pointed out that Plato's *Cratylus* provides an abstract understanding of Spenser's strategies of archaism and name-crafting in his later work, his very manner of negotiating what his allegorical figures "point" to within and outside of his work (451). She notes that the relevance of the *Cratylus* to lexical definition had been ably indicated by none other than Spenser's former headmaster, Richard Mulcaster (449). Craig's work was cited, in 1990, by John Leonard, in the long introduction to his *Naming in Paradise,* to show how and why scholarship had proved inept in its estimation of what the *Cratylus* had to offer theorists of meaning in Spenser's and Milton's time: "Literary critics and even historians of linguistics too frequently assume that the debate initiated in

range of ideas from linguistics that I have not brought into my thesis with the degree of precision I would prefer. Further discussion is here omitted, simply to shorten what is already a lengthy argument.

the *Cratylus* has long been resolved," he explains. Leonard shows clearly that this mistaken assumption simplistically reduces the Platonic debate within the *Cratylus*, making it seem as though the dialogue granted final victory to Cratylus or Hermogenes, rather than Socrates or Plato (5). Leonard goes on to show that the essential issue of the *Cratylus* addresses the question of how naming was a key part of the systematic and productively rational arrangement of language. The latter concern is evident in both Spenser and Milton, and indeed it could easily play a part in any humanist discourse about how to craft a vernacular literary language in relation to classical languages. What Craig and Leonard show, therefore, is that humanist and Renaissance thinkers about language, presumably including Spenser, were by virtue of their familiarity with the *Cratylus* often well beyond the shift away from simple referential thinking about language that Waswo makes central to his argument.

2. Judith Anderson and Daniel Fried

It is helpful at this point, for my concern with how intellectual histories are constructed, to consider a remark by Raymond Williams. Speaking of dichotomies in the use of the term "history," Raymond Williams observes that it can slip unstably from meaning simply a "knowledge of events" into denoting a "systematic array of trends."[5] In my own experience, I have found that the latter is a deeply tempting proposition for

---

[5] In *Keywords*, Raymond Williams points out that the early sense of the word *history* that involves a "narrative account of events," which is considered to perform a knowledge-seeking task, may be distinguished from a sense of the word *history* that traces a "continuous and connected process" of events that is directed and universal (146). In the former sense, there is an effort to find the causes and effects; in the latter, the historical causes and effects are sometimes abstracted into "historical forces—products of the past which are active and present and which will shape the future in knowable ways" (147).

scholars. It allows us to show off a mastery of a period, to claim that we can predict the development of one person's ideas according to the influence of particular *trends*. I have just shown why Spenser does not fit into Waswo's intellectual history; throughout this thesis I must go on to show the limitations of other much-respected scholars by clarifying Spenser's complicated relationship with intellectual and historical patterns—whether in the first chapter's description of Spenser's problematic play with Platonic and Neoplatonic ideals or the second chapter's analysis of the faults with Daniel Fried's theory of the Calepino lexicon and the character of Calepine. My necessary task is to show why I have come to doubt that the trends to which scholars fitted Spenser's choices actually *matched* some plausible motivation—one specific enough to be Spenser's and thus more than the political or intellectual ambition that might be generalized to any colonial administrator or humanist in the period.

The most flexible exploration of the ways in which Spenser's thinking about language fits into the period's view of defining words and language comes from Judith Anderson's 1996 *Words that Matter*. In a long chapter on the status of lexicons in the period, she notes a potent irony in the difference between present and past lexicography. While the "summary and analytic" form of lexical definition was in a fluid "early stage of codification" (92) in the sixteenth century, she explains, lexicons then often offered more robust faith in the materiality of words as constituent determiners of reality: "Paradoxically, while modern words may more clearly constitute meaning, they also may be less substantial than Renaissance ones" (96). Anderson notes that literary figures participate in some of these paradoxes and ironies as they find different means of conceiving of the substance of language. She says of Spenser and Ben Jonson:

> Characteristically, if variously, both poets give distinctive weight to the word, even though both also typically compose a poetry that represents a distinctive content—*res*, or subject matter—Spenser favoring Neoplatonized ideals, and Jonson favoring the Baconian "nature of things," a rationally perceived reality. (102)

Anderson's reference to the "early stage of codification" and then to two figures who seem to represent a backward-looking, Platonic view of language (Spenser) and a forward-looking view of language (Jonson) shows that she too is constructing a trend-line. Her conception of Spenser's place in this trend-line is the reverse of Waswo's. Waswo, as noted, tracks a change from referential to relational conceptions of language in which Spenser's allegory casts us forward from the Erasmian ideas towards the Saussurean revolution. Anderson comes to argue that Spenser represents a Platonist holdout against the coming "codification" of language by lexicographic powers.

I am skeptical of Anderson's view of the historical trend-line, and presently I will highlight a point of dispute, but in truth my own argument about Spenser takes its soundest beginnings from her observations. For example, Anderson sees deeply into Spenser's choice of the word *scrine* (127-132). As she points out, Spenser first uses the word to describe the history, the "everlasting scryne" (1.pr.2.3) that the Muse embodies and keeps for the sake of his entire epic project in *The Faerie Queene*. Later Spenser uses the term to describe the materials in Alma's library in Book 2, where Eumnestes infallibly keeps the history itself "laid up in his immortal scrine" (2.9.56.6). Reviewing the information about the word *scrine* available from period lexicons, Anderson concludes:

> From the ancient Roman past through the Middle Ages to the early modern period, the fortunes of the word *scrine* suggest, in addition to its association with books and archives, equally persistent associations with memory or with things worth remembering—things worth keeping *in mind* and things of value.

> Repeatedly and specifically *scrine* is associated with secrecy or seclusion (*secerno, secretum*), with a need to guard or preserve, and with the word and idea of a *thesaurus*, a treasure or treasury of writing and, more fundamentally, of words. One moves easily, induced by the context of Spenser's usage, from these associations to Sidney's commonplace observation that, "memory being the only treasure[r] of knowledge, those words… fittest for memory are likewise most convenient for knowledge"; and then back in time to Plato's more mystically oriented idea that all knowledge is memorial, a kind of remembering, an idea reflected variously in turn by Aristotle, by the Neoplatonists, and by Saint Augustine. (129)

With this, Anderson strikes felicitously upon a description of Spenser's linguistic idealism that resonates fully with Martha Craig's 1967 insistence that Spenser's work must be read as an embodiment of the *Cratylus'* ideas about language. Anderson goes on to suggest that the "network of ideas latent in words like *scrine*" (132) is the essence of Spenser's approach to defining the word itself, and that in Spenser's later books of *The Faerie Queene* he continues to envision language by such idealistic terms without using the word *scrine* itself (131-2).

From my point of view, Anderson and Craig are right about Spenser's Platonically-colored idealism, and Anderson all the more right that Spenser's use of the term "scrine" evokes the notions evident in lexicons and roughly parallel to his idealistic priorities for the preservation of culture and knowledge in language. However, Anderson leaves much to explore. It is not clear from Anderson's or Craig's approach just where Spenser differs from such a general Platonic idea of meaning and language—especially one that seems so nebulously harmonious with ideas synthesized from a host of period lexicons. To identify Spenser's conception of language fully, we need to be able to consider what he embraced from humanism, lexicography, and philosophy *as well as* what he rejected. My exploration will thus begin by considering Spenser's priorities as a poet and rhetorician relative to his expressions of linguistic idealism. In my first chapter,

I examine Spenser's persistent dichotomy between imagery of the tongue and imagery of the mind. This examination is fruitful first because it reveals, in *The Fowre Hymnes*, how Spenser envisioned the relationship of an individual author's mind to both language as writing and language as speech. It details, in other words, Spenser's conception of the very memorial site of the cultural "scrine" that Anderson discovers. As I will show, however, this relationship and its site bear relevance not to the ideas about naming and language in the *Cratylus*, but to the far more specific notions about rhetoric, persuasion, poetic inspiration, and the technology of writing available from the *Phaedrus*—the philosophical backbone of *The Fowre Hymnes* and a text openly referred to at the opening of the fourth book of *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser's nomination of the *Phaedrus* rather than the *Cratylus* evokes Spenser's ideas about language as a poet in ways unnoticed by Craig, Anderson, or other commentators. This is perhaps unsurprising if we consider the fitness of the *Phaedrus* as it addresses the spiritual and vatic connection of poets to language as well as the larger question of how to craft language in ways that help it obtain or reflect a truer, deeper knowledge. Where the *Cratylus* concerns a scientific sort of knowing, the *Phaedrus* concerns methods of persuasion with which Spenser often found himself concerned as a poet dealing with the erotic and chivalric themes normal to his epic work and related to the *Phaedrus*'s discourse on the influence of eros. Even more saliently, through its discourse on the growth and development of the soul in exactly such erotic circumstances, the *Phaedrus* addresses the questions of artistic and intellectual growth in a manner harmonious with the thematic concern with marital, filial, and devotional love that concern Spenser from the beginning to the end of his career as a

poet—matters that, as I will then show in my third chapter, relate to Spenser's concern with Greek influences in *The Shepheardes Calender*.

My philosophical critiques offer nuanced ways to break from while making good use of the studies of Craig and Anderson, and my critique of the recent historical investigation of Daniel Fried allows me develop a better historical account of a specific thread of humanist intellectual history to which Spenser's work in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* arguably responds in greater detail than Fried allows. Fried, in "Defining Courtesy: Spenser, Calepine, and Renaissance Lexicography," considers how the character of Calepine forges a commentary on the Latin-language Calepino lexicon. He argues that the lexicon by Spenser's time was mainly known for helping people achieve "the more worldly goals of humanistic education" (234). Fried seems right: the lexicon was indeed a pedagogical guide for a young man going from basic Latin to courtly civility in a cosmopolitan Neo-Latin-mediated world—and, without doubt, Spenser's Calepine is a young man abroad struggling to understand. Yet Fried also claims that Spenser is using the character of Calepine to mock the limitations of a humanist education represented by the Calepino lexicon, particularly the dependency of that education on an "exclusively linguistic competency" (242). From my point of view, Fried's argument is useful for pointing out the ways in which Spenser's work was potentially at odds with humanism. To the degree that Spenser's Calepine character is an example of haplessness itself, I think that Fried is right that the allegory presents a criticism of humanism. However, in my second chapter I sharpen Fried's argument by examining a fuller version of the Calepino lexicon's history as well as Spenser's implicit comparison of Calepine to the troubled figure of Mirabella, who in part arguably

20

represents the *Polyanthea* lexicon of Dominico Nanni Mirabellio. Fried argues that the

original version of the Calepino in 1502, though "meant as a fairly advanced reference

tool for scholars and students" (230), had degenerated in late-century polyglot editions.

Such editions, Fried notes, were full of mythology, geography, and history and "served

partly in the role of what we could call an encyclopaedia" rather than a dictionary.

However, this is a problematic distinction in the period: as Judith Anderson points out in

Words that Matter, the "tradition of lexical definition" that culminates in the modern

analytics of the dictionary and its contrast with encyclopedias had not truly developed in

this century. Spenser's objections to the lexicon did not therefore likely derive from such

a distinction. In his haste to explain how in later editions the Calepino became a messy

encyclopedia of linguistic competency, Fried neglects the Calepino's messy beginnings.

The Calepino was from the start embedded in humanist debates about how to find and

use the best forms of Latin, as Ann Moss and John Considine both point out. It is in this

same humanist history at the beginning of the sixteenth century that we find the

Polyanthea—a lexicon that Ann Moss in *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language*

Turn points out was originally designed by its author, Mirabellio, in 1503 to compete

specifically against the Calepino lexicon (24-5). In putting a character named Calepine

and a character named Mirabella near one another in Book 6, Spenser has echoed an early

humanist debate about authority over language in his epic. Evidence for this appears in

the parallels between Spenser's two characters and the character of the ideas and

arguments advanced by Ambrogio Calepino and Dominico Mirabellio in their respective

introductions to their works. Especially in the terms of their contrast, I argue, these

Book-People characters of Calepine and Mirabella reveal that Spenser in his late life

crafted a complaint against lexicography in which he effectively argues that poetry plays

a more crucial role than lexicons in the shaping of cultural knowledge.

3. Paula Blank and Andrew Hadfield

In constructing poetry to provide model language, surely Spenser did not wish his

work to be a passive container of linguistic samples to be manipulated at will by scholars.

Spenser's nomination of the *Phaedrus* and his play with ideas about tongues and mind in

Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*, as I show in my first chapter, present ideas about the

relation of language and mind that offer poetry's *method of thought* as part of its

example. Unfortunately, this method of thought, if aligned with the notion of relational

meaning identified by Waswo, seems indistinguishable from allegory's didacticism—

especially in its manipulation of name and etymology. Thus, in my third chapter, my

attention turns to Spenser's earlier work, *The Shepheardes Calender*, to consider what it

might tell us of Spenser's notions of meaning. Examining *The Shepheardes Calender* in

the context of a long line of Renaissance works that address the very idea of linguistic

dialects, Paula Blank in *Broken English* argues, "Spenser estranged his language from

more traditional forms of courtly discourse in an effort to solicit the very attention that

his diction immediately received" (124). Blank places this contrarian Spenser outside the

tradition of writers that sought to craft a central prestige dialect itself as a source of a kind

of proto-nationalistic distinction. Figures like Dante, she argues, sought to craft a

language that would lead readers and Italians toward an "illustrious vernacular" central to

but different from the various regional dialects (9-10). In contrast, Spenser's early vision

of the vernacular in *The Shepheardes Calender* does not propose a central, elite dialect as

the point of reference by which all others are to be judged, but instead complexly foregrounds regionalisms, foreign terms, neologisms, and archaisms for an indeterminate purpose. Blank notes that Spenser's vision of the pastoral vocabulary retains its distinctiveness especially by comparison to Shakespeare and Jonson, but not for any special method so much as a defiance of method. In other words, while scholars like Waswo, Anderson, Craig, and even Fried choose to find out how Spenser's system of managing diction complements humanist ideas about language in their focus on his later work, Blank finds him unassimilable in such an intellectual history, even declaring that Spenser's use of dialect is not comparable to the use of composite literary dialects among Greek and Latin predecessors (116-7).

What Blank presents is a worthwhile quandary for me to emphasize here because, as before, we can see that the historical trend-line has in this case dominated again and even *excluded* Spenser as though, as a poet, he were striving to place himself outside of an intellectual history. Yet it is precisely the seemingly non-methodical approach that Blank identifies which in fact reveals that Spenser's diction is crafted to force readers to see a relational notion of meaning *rather than* a denotative one. Relational meaning essentially *is* the poet's method. Andrew Zurcher, in his analysis of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* and its annotations (in his recent *Spenser's Legal Language*), finds that this work affords us a rich argument for a view of linguistic meaning as precisely so relational instead of simply denotative or referential (37-40). Zurcher assimilates Spenser to his period for the purpose of showing how Spenser's work interrogates the construction of legal language so essential to the English culture at the end of the sixteenth century. It is a compelling argument with wider implications, but I

must differ slightly from Zurcher in order to address the larger frame of argument about

language (and not just law) that plays a key part in Blank's treatment of Spenser's poetics

and management of dialect. As explained in my third chapter, I stress general ideas from

philosophy and more specific ideas from lexicography. Spenser's management of diction

of all sorts—not just dialect—depends upon his own relational notion of meaning

strategically expressed throughout the *Shepheardes Calender*. The shared intentions of

Spenser and his glossator E.K. in the revelation of that relational idea of meaning are, in

my view, not coincidental, but rather reflect a motivated crafting of an authority

strategically above that of lexicography. In his prefatory materials, E.K. demonstrates an

anti-definitional and hence anti-lexicographic sentiment regarding the spelling and

meaning of a key title term "æglog"; thereafter Spenser's poetic treatment of words in

The Shepheardes Calender shows that he shares the same sentiment, even enacts its

linguistic consequences in a way that E.K. does *not* comment upon. Put another way, in

the *Shepheardes Calender*, Spenser develops usages of words that combine archaism and

neologism in productive ways that demand a readership figure out word meanings

relationally rather than through gloss or lexicological interpretive actions. Sixteen years

later, Spenser's complex stand against different kinds of lexicons in Book 6 of *The Fairie*

Queene announces the same priorities that E.K. and the poet of the *Shepheardes*

Calender evince in a different and broader context that is Spenser's alone. Even so, E.K.

in the earlier work conspires so closely with Spenser in revealing an authorial power and

responsibility so reminiscent of Sidney's view of the poet from *The Defence of Poesie*

that it is hard to believe E.K.'s views of language are separate from Spenser's. Spenser

appears to position E.K. as a persona announcing loudly the Sidneian incantation that the

poet is a better teacher than the mere historian-scholar-rhetorician. Add to this the basic

evidence cited by Thomas Cain in his introduction to the *Shepheardes Calender*:

> The suggestion that E.K. is a Spenser persona has at least two bits of evidence in
> its favor: the translation of Cicero in the Maye glosse on "Tho with them" is the
> same as in the first of Spenser's *Three Proper Letters* to Gabriel Harvey (1580);
> and the obvious mistake of "Persephone" for Tisiphone in the *November* gloss on
> "Furies" is repeated in *Teares of the Muses*. (9)

My examination of Spenser's and E.K.'s management of diction therefore suggests that

they were either cooperating closely or the same person—the latter seeming the stronger

likelihood. I find in this examination an intention that gives Spenser motive and place in

the intellectual history: Spenser's advocacy for a relational idea of meaning appears in his

management of diction in the *Shepheardes Calender*, and such a relational idea of

meaning depends upon the different view of dialect which Paula Blank herself shows that

he supplies. Indeed, the *Calender*'s approach to dialect *contrasts* with the famed French

lexicographer Henri Estienne's ideas about how to enlist dialect for the French people,

showing an example of precisely the sort of foreign figure against whom Spenser might

have been competing in his attempt to define a freer idea of the English language's use of

dialect and its poetic example. With that in mind, it is clear that Spenser's later linguistic

didacticism in allegory is an outgrowth of an earlier and more anomalous form.

Blank's historical displacement of Spenser into an isolated poetics implodes in

such a way that it furnishes a more complex picture of Spenser's resistance to some

forms of hermeneutics as a political and social act incidentally revelatory of his ideas

about language. My effort with Blank, in other words, is of a piece with my effort to

supplement the work of Waswo, Craig, Anderson, and Fried. It is an effort that, in the

third chapter, elevates the importance of lexicography, making it seem the bogey feared

and countered by Spenser's ideal poet-teacher-rhetorician. But this fear is overstated to some extent, for it certainly pales by comparison to what we know of Spenser's fear regarding issues of language related to his long tenure in the environment of colonial Ireland. So, as I turn in my final chapter to confront arguments made about how to interpret Spenser's intentions in thinking about language and education in Book 6, I encounter problematic questions. To what degree are Spenser's political motivations regarding language consistent with his intellectual motivations regarding language? Is there a conflict or difference between Spenser's place in an intellectual history and his place in the political history?

In characterizing Spenser's manner of dealing with Irish words in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* and in the negatively-charged picture of the Irish implicit in Books 5 and 6 of *The Faerie Queene*, Andrew Hadfield makes broad assertions about history, language and Spenser. His arguments are relevant to the problematic questions I have framed above. In an introduction to a recent edition of Book 6, he argues that "Spenser is making a neat link between criticism of the hard-line policies of his erstwhile patron, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton—who argued for and practiced the suppression of the Irish—and *the abuse of language itself*" (viii, Introduction, my italics). Such an argument obviously narrows the focus of Spenser's criticism of ideas about language far more than my investigation of Calepine and Mirabella suggests is legitimate. Yet Hadfield strongly supports his assertion that Spenser's conception of language is hopelessly embroiled in the politics. In *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience*, he argues, based on a careful reading of *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, that Spenser participates in a propagandistic set of meanings

available to him to such an extent that he yields his individual agency on such matters of language in all his works: that is, Hadfield argues that Spenser's use of the terms "Briton" and "Scythian" are strategic to a racist ideology that itself produces the certainty Spenser exhibits about the language of the Irish and the nature of their language as an expression of physical identity inferior to the that of the British in both *The Faerie Queene* and in his treatise on Ireland (108).

Is Spenser's view of the nature of language entirely subordinate to his political views? Is it even sufficiently subordinate that we should give the vision of language and identity we find in *A View of A Present State of Ireland* wholesale precedence over the complicated vision of language and identity that, I have argued, Spenser displays in Book 6 and in such works as *The Fowre Hymnes*? My answer, bluntly, is *no*. Hadfield stalls in the face of the quandaries posed by Spenser's body of work. In my fourth chapter, I study Spenser's imagery of learning at the opening of Book 6, establishing its relation both to the attack on Irish culture and language in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* and to the politics of Book 5, *The Legend of Justice,* in such a way as to explain the balance we must strike in acknowledging the racist and propagandistic elements of Spenser's work while seeing the nuances of his view of language within and outside such elements. Spenser uses Book 5 to illustrate its hero Artegall's successful but slandered effort to achieve justice. The slander against Artegall crucially situates language-use in political practice. Yet when it comes to Spenser's ideas about language, this effort to situate language-use in political practice does not lead simply to the uncontrolled tongue of the Blatant Beast in Book 6. The dog-like beast is indeed a condemnatory association of colonial disorder with Irish culture and language—a speech imagined to be as base as the

critics of policies that Spenser advocated in Ireland. However, Artegall's difficulties first

emerge from quandaries that explore the relations of power both to the will and to

popular support while exposing the rhetorical functions of law. Book 5's diplomat-

messenger Samient, figure of the *good* dog, anticipates Spenser's idealistic sense of

speech, identity, and learning in Book 6.

The character of Samient is a messenger-maiden whom Spenser associates with

positive dog imagery in Book 5. She brings the characters of Artegall and Arthur

together while exhibiting a harmonious relationship between power, individual will, and

communication—a harmonious relationship conspicuously lacking earlier in the book.

She is, in effect, a poetic rhetoric that guides law in ways that slight or force cannot. The

idealism she sustains is necessary to understanding Spenser's criticism of the mechanical

elements of humanist educators' ideas about speech that we find alongside the case

against the Irish in Book 6. There Spenser adopts imagery of planting and growth (a

"nursery" of virtue) in Book 6 not only to advance his political interests as a colonist, but

also to respond to and adjust humanist ideas of education. As I show, figures like Francis

Clement, Roger Ascham, and Richard Mulcaster use similar imagery even as they reserve

powers to the scholars in guiding language development. In contrast, Spenser is careful

to reserve the powerful guiding force of poetry as an instigator of personal growth to "the

muses," while his depictions of Calidore and Calepine show that he is questioning

simplistic ideas about the interrelations of identity, language, and education. Spenser's

view thus differs not only from that of humanist educators but even from his own

arguments about the material basis of language in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*.

Exploring Spenser's motivations for this inconsistency returns us to the motivations

behind Spenser's ideas about language in the previous chapter—ideas deeply influenced by the dedicatee of *The Shepheardes Calender*, Sir Philip Sidney. By understanding the type of courtier-poet Spenser felt compelled to defend, we can understand his logical importance in Spenser's serious questioning of ideas about lexicography. Spenser's view of language both in his epic and his political tract defends the didactic orator-poet imagined in Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poetry*, yet in the political tract it distinctively bows to the interests and imagery of humanist educators with a vested interest in a more mechanical set of notions about language tied up with lexicography. The debased ideas about language (debased from the point of view of a writer of *The Fowre Hymnes)* most instrumental in the arguments of *A View* cannot be taken to be the full substance of Spenser's thinking about the interpenetrations of language, knowledge, identity, and culture—and in fact should be understood to run counter to some of his thought on the subject.

Spenser's allegory about language, particularly its representation of Samient, does nothing to change the political case advocating the use of greater force in Ireland that is implicit in his work. Thus my effort toward revision of the view of Spenser's ideas about language is not an attempt to isolate Spenser's aesthetics at all. Instead, it is an attack on an historical mode in which an utterly harmonious view of Spenser's ideas about language emerges from the suppression of his intentions. To cede a full sense of Spenser's psychological freedom on the matter of thinking about language in order to produce an understanding of the roots of Spenser's political ideology as a member of a colonizing group proves misleading. For me, this is the most interesting part of trying to develop an intellectual history that accommodates the capacious thought associated with

epic: here the intellectual and theoretical elements of defining language play a role in how we should place praise and blame in estimating what Spenser's work has to offer us now and what any artistic work has to offer as a view of history. In this respect, I see quarrels with each of the scholars as essential to a larger moral sense of literature's place in history, especially one that acknowledges the evolution of the vital relationship between poetry and scholarship in which, for one key example, lexicographic authority is not simply a neutral tool.

4. Works Cited & Consulted

Anderson, Judith. *Words that Matter: Linguistic Perception in Renaissance English.* Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1996.

Blank, Paula. *Broken English: Dialects and the Politics of Language in Renaissance Writings.* New York: Routledge, 1996.

Cain, Thomas. "Introduction: *The Shepheardes Calender.*" *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser.* Eds. William A. Oram et al. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.

Considine, John. *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe: Lexicography and the Making of Heritage.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008.

Craig, Martha. "The Secret Wit of Spenser's Language." *Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism.* Ed. Alpers. New York: Oxford UP, 1967.

Estienne, Robert. "Performo." *Dictionarium, Seu Latinae Linguae Thesaurus.* Paris, 1536.

Fried, Daniel. "Defining Courtesy: Spenser, Calepine, and Renaissance Lexicography." *The Review of English Studies, New Series*. 58:235 (2007) 229-244.

Hadfield, Andrew. Introduction. *The Faerie Queene: Book Six and the Mutabilitie Cantos*. Eds. Andrew Hadfield and Abraham Stoll. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007.

Hadfield, Andrew. *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1997.

Leonard, John. *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve*. New York: Oxford UP, 1990.

Moss, Ann. *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.

Ní Chuilleanáin, Eiléan. "Acts and Monuments of an Unelected Nation: The *Cailleach* Writes about the Renaissance." *The Southern Review* 31.3 (1995): 570-580.

Oram, William. Ed. *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Eds. William A. Oram et al. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.

"Perficio." *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*. New York: Wiley, 1968.

"Perform*, v.*" *The Oxford English Dictionary.* 3rd ed. Dec. 2005. *OED Online.* Oxford UP. 19 March 2011 <http://www.oed.com/>.

Stephens, Dorothy. "Spenser's Language(s): Linguistic Theory and Poetic Diction." The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser. Ed. Richard McCabe. New York: Oxford UP, 2010.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. New York: Longman, 1977.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Eds. William A. Oram et al. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.

Starnes, De Witt and Ernest W. Talbert. *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries*. Wesport, CT: Greenwood P, 1973.

Thomas, Thomas. "Performo" *Dictionarum Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae*. Cambridge, 1589.

Waswo, Richard. *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Revised ed. New York: Oxford UP, 1983.

Zurcher, Andrew. *Spenser's Legal Language: Law and Poetry in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007.

Chapter 1:
"Menaging the mouthes of stubborn steedes":
Spenser's Conceptualizations of Writing, Speech, and Mind

1. Finding Buried "Threasure": Historical Context for An Intellectual Dispute

Edmund Spenser's 1596 continuation of *The Faerie Queene* (Books 4-6) begins with an address to William Cecil, Lord Burghley. In the first stanza of the proem of Book 4, Spenser responds to Burghley's reported disapproval of his themes of love from the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*. As Spenser puts it, Burghley's disapproval arises from seeing the "vaine poemes" (4.Pr.1.9) as clothed in "false allurements" (4.Pr.1.7) "that better were in vertues discipled" (4.Pr.1.8). Spenser counters the charge in the stanzas that follow, suggesting that his themes of love and friendship are in keeping with the philosophical history of learning. His reference there to Socrates (and to the *Phaedrus* in particular) apparently shows that Spenser means to justify his dispute, and conciliate Burghley, with the classical arguments about the relations between poetry, rhetoric, and philosophy familiar to scholars of the period.[6]

Spenser's conciliatory pose disguises what we know about the difference between Spenser's intellectual circles and Burghley's even as it reveals the seriousness of his underlying intellectual dispute. Among Burghley's teachers in his first year at Cambridge, Stephen Alford reports, were Roger Ascham, the renowned author of *The*

---

[6] In the lines in question, Spenser strangely refers to "the father of *Philosophie*" speaking to one "Critias" (4.Pr.3.6-7). As A.C. Hamilton is quick to point out, "there is no simple explanation for why he should name Critias" in this context (426n). (There is no Critias in the *Phaedrus*.) However, as Hamilton also notes, the contextual clues make clear that Spenser can only be thinking about the *Phaedrus*, where a conversation in the "shade of a plane tree" about the links between erotic love and rhetoric takes place.

Scholemaster[7] and tutor to the future Queen Elizabeth, and John Cheke, famous reformer

of Greek and tutor to Edward Tudor (17). They were "mentors and friends" to Burghley.

Burghley's first wife was Cheke's sister. Burghley was schooled by authorities on

learning and culture from this earlier period, one which defined and put Queen Elizabeth

on the throne. For well over thirty years, after Elizabeth gained that throne, Burghley

was effectively in control of state propaganda even as he was in control of courtly

patronage: B.W. Beckingsale notes that he "wrote and published propagandist works" in

1559, 1560, 1563, 1583, and even as late as 1596 (225). Towards the end of Elizabeth's

reign, Burghley had increased influence over court patronage "as other trusted courtiers

died"—a power that did not ebb "until Essex began ruthless competition" (227, 229).

Spenser clearly has all these things in mind as he describes how Burghley's "rugged

forhead that with grave foresight" manages the "affaires of state" (4.Pr.1.1-2). But the

intellectual difference between Spenser and Burghley is inextricably bound to a

generational, political, and cultural divide emergent under Elizabeth's reign. Beckingsale

comments:

> Burghley did belong to that group of Protestants and humanists who rejected the
> chivalric and romantic strain in literature as "open manslaughter and bold
> bawdry." He was apt to see with the censor's eye. But at the age of fifty, a
> statesman who had been brought up in "the Drab Age" of English writing could
> hardly be expected to have much confidence in the vernacular and to be
> enthusiastic about new movements among young poets. Burghley was not alone
> in his indifference to the new poetry for as late as 1595 Philip Sidney's *Apologie
> for Poetrie* was first published. The patronage of creative writers was not
> sustained or lavish in Elizabeth's reign. They did less well than the utilitarian
> authors and translators. (253)

---

[7] Ascham's widow dedicated *The Scholemaster* to Burghley.

Spenser's increasingly vivid criticism of Elizabeth, as for example in Book 5's depiction of Mercilla, targets the advisors who defined her finesse, her calculated delay and deferral, as much if not more than her. (In fact, Beckingsale points out, Burghley was the principal developer of the propaganda surrounding the execution of Mary Queen of Scots [226].) At Cambridge Spenser associated himself with the provocative Gabriel Harvey, and the court figures with whom he allied himself from the start were such as the fiery Sir Philip Sidney. His readership did not come from Burghley or his stolid contacts, and neither did his intellectual inspiration. By around 1580, Burghley styled himself, as Alford puts it, as an agent of "moderation, probity, age, wisdom, experience, the values of the philosophers and politicians of ancient Rome" (238). Spenser, in crafting an epic that is designed to use allegory to teach young nobles, was bringing himself into intellectual contest with those who were the authorities on teaching, their most powerful court ally, and the queen who had been taught by them. It would have been vexingly petty for Spenser to target scholars like Cheke or Ascham. It would have been dangerous to his life to overtly attack Elizabeth for her education or intellect. However, Burghley, who occupied the post of Chancellor of Cambridge from 1559 until his death, was a rich target for his control of propaganda and patronage since his delaying, deferring methods there could be linked to his preferences for classical languages and their methodical forms of study and learning. Again, as Beckingsale points out, Burghley "was numerically and mechanically minded" (261); he "did not endorse the linguistic jingoism which vaunted the supremacy of the native tongue" (253). Because "he rarely read in English" and his "preference was for works in Latin, Greek, French, Spanish and Italian," he was associated with foreign lexicography: "John Baret and Thomas Thomas

recognised his linguistic skill by dedicating to him their French and Latin dictionaries"
(250).

The deep political and cultural difference between Burghley and Spenser puts
Spenser's glib citation of the *Phaedrus* into sharp relief. This citation is a tactical
departure from the sort of texts we see cited in Spenser's prefatory Letter to Raleigh
about *The Faerie Queene*. It is for this reason an all the more vivid attempt to contrast
his thinking with Burghley's. In that earlier letter, he sketched out an intellectual position
on literary and moral authorities that is quite in keeping with Burghley's likely
preferences. He cited Homer, Vergil, Ariosto, and Tasso as models for epic, but when it
came to the question of moral arguments about civic order he named Xenophon over
Plato:

> … and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune
> sence. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one, in the
> exquisite depth of his iudgement, formed a commune welth such as it should be,
> but the other in the person of Cyrus and the Persians fashioned a governement,
> such as might best be: so much more profitable and gratious is doctrine by
> ensample, then by rule. (737)

So when Spenser later cites the *Phaedrus*, with its witty and clever banter about love
serving as a preface to serious questions about rhetoric, it is risky text to cite in response
to a powerful government minister's preference for the "common sense" Spenser has
previously professed as the political and rhetorical ground of his work. We have, then,
in Spenser's basic reference to the *Phaedrus* in Book 4, particular cause to investigate
precisely what value he saw in that text for defining his position on rhetoric and placing
himself in contrast to Burghley and associates from his earlier generation. (It is a point
we will return to in considering just what sort of a Platonist Spenser was.)

If we had missed the charged nature of Spenser's reference to the *Phaedrus* in

Book 4, Spenser's acid treatment of Burghley at the close of Book 6, whose thematic

focus is courtesy itself, would sharply remind us that the intellectual and didactic

concerns of his epic poem are tied to a contentious courtly environment, Spenser's

reputation as a satirist of Burghley himself, and Burghley's crucial position in the

government. "Ne may this homely verse […]/," Spenser complains as he closes Book 6,

"hope to escape [the Blatant Beast's] venomous despite […]/ more then my former

writs…" (6.12.40.1-3). Spenser then quite disingenuously reminds us how such "former

writs" had raised "a mighty Peres displeasure"—namely, Burghley's. Spenser slyly

implies here that only by the slander of others has he been brought into Burghley's

"displeasure" (6.12.40.6). But he knows full well that what provoked Burghley was in

his *Prosopopeia: or Mother Hubberds Tale*. As Rachel Hile reminds us in her essay

showing how that satire influenced Shakespeare's depiction of Polonius in *Hamlet*,

Mother Hubberds Tale had been recalled for its satire on Burghley, but this only led to

"the wide popularity of the poem in manuscript in the two decades between printings of

the poem" (188-9). In other words, Spenser understood that referring to Burghley in his

additions to his epic in 1596 might supply continued and equal interest from his

readership.

Spenser's frustration with Burghley was rooted in worries about his dependency

on state patronage, but the popularity of his satirical complaint also relied upon the

broader consciousness of Burghley as a monitor over patronized artistic careers. Michael

Graves' historical work on Burghley notes that "Burghley was accused of securing his

own position for personal gain by favouring unsuitable men and blocking the promotion

of talented careerists" (119). Graves stresses that this complaint is largely without foundation. However, as Beckingsale's nuanced earlier portrait of Burghley indicates, certain "careerists"—those who were not, like Thomas Thomas, Latin lexicographers— might have felt more threatened, given the kind of *thinking* Burghley embodied about language and art generally. What position among these careerists did Spenser himself take? If we turn back to Spenser's characterization of Burghley in *Mother Hubberds Tale*, we find that Spenser has a complicated satirical attack. In controlling access to the crown, the fox who represents Burghley dislikes other nobles, men of arms, common men, and learned men all equally. He is *equally* unfair. Yet for learned men in particular, Spenser indicates that the fox saw his "wisdome" as a source of superiority: "For men of learning little he esteemed;/ His wisdome he above their learning deemed" (1191-2). Spenser clearly tells us that he prizes a form of learning that he thinks Burghley does not. In light of this, it is at least easier to see why Spenser turns so quickly in Book 4 to sketching out his defense based upon Platonic philosophical ideas about poetry and rhetoric. He has a specific intellectual fight in mind based partly in what that classical text makes available to him in quarreling with an authority on classical learning.

Mother Hubberds Tale does not entirely leave us in the dark about its prized forms of learning and Platonism in particular. The fox and the ape are parodies of the good versions of many power-holders, and so it is predictably difficult to pin down what Spenser might truly be criticizing in the image of Lord Burghley. Yet it seems clear that the fox is a parody of the elder statesman—the courtier of highest rank, who would have been Lord Burghley. Logically, then, the ape must be a parody of the kinds of courtiers that a figure like Burghley patronizes. In order to construct parodic versions of bad

courtiers and the statesmen who patronize them, Spenser has to show his readers the right

version. For this reason, in *Mother Hubberds Tale* Spenser offers us a more precise

account of why he objects to Burghley on intellectual grounds linked to the political ones.

When he describes the ideal courtier and court, he shows us the very forms of "learning"

that are being falsified and despised—and *how* such things are to be distinguished as false

or true. For the most part, the description of the typical bad courtier is one in which he is

a "good bold face" (645) without any substance. He can perform tricks, woo ladies, use

complicated words, follow the latest style, dance, sing, all while poisoning the court

environment with lies and flatteries. The true courtier, while likewise a master of such

outwardly beautiful performances, possesses and uses them with inward truth:

> Yet the brave Courtier, in whose beauteous thought
> Regard of honour harbours more than ought,
> Doth loath such base condition, to backbite
> Anies good name for envie or despite:
> He stands on tearmes of honourable minde,
> Ne will be carried with the common winde
> Of Courts inconstant mutabilitie… (717-723)

The emphasis upon the sound mind of the good courtier, his beautiful thought, depends

upon a systematic contrast with the wild speech and physicality of the bad courtier. The

good courtier is busy "menaging the mouthes of stubborn steedes" (739) as part of his

good physical exercise. The "gentle minde" of a good courtier would even "bite his lip"

rather than "gybe and fleare" as bad courtiers do (711-714). For the good courtier, art is

a mental retreat: "His minde unto the Muses he withdrawes" (760) so that he has "wise

discourse" (763) because "all his minde on honour fixed is" (771). In summing up the

Ape's resistance to the possibility of becoming a good courtier, Spenser again refers to

mind: "Such is the rightfull courtier in his kinde: / But unto such the Ape lent not his

minde" (793-4). Thus we have four careful repetitions of "minde" among many other

references to thought or spirit within less than a hundred lines, most of them meant to

contrast with the tongue, the lip, the "open eare" (713) of a disordered being and state.

Spenser is at pains to link court, education, rhetoric, and his poetry in his opening

response to Burghley in Book 4 of *The Faerie Queene*. It is the same in *Mother*

Hubberd's Tale. The lengthy systematic contrast between a spiritual and mental

steadfastness (as a source of the ordered courtly life) and speech-related and mouth-

related physical mutability (as the root of evil in courtly dissembling) is immediately

extended to an effort to define the role of the good and bad poet. The ape could "play the

Poet oft" (810). Indeed, as a bad poet, he does precisely the thing that Spenser, in Book

4, suggests that Burghley has charged *him* with:

> Yet he [the ape] the name [of poet] on him[self] would rashly take,
> Maugre the sacred Muses, and it make
> A servant to the vile affection
> Of such, as he depended most upon,
> And with the sugrie sweete thereof allure
> Chast Ladies eares to fantasies impure. (815-20)

Bad poetry is reduced to physical taste (sugary taste!) and to an appeal to the physical

ears. Good poetry, we are immediately told hereafter, would not drive away from "noble

sprights/ Desire of honor, or brave thought of armes" (824-5). That is, good poetry is

related to the spirit and thoughts even as good courtiers are concerned with the mind and

thought rather than the speech and tongue.

So, in *Mother Hubberds Tale* Spenser crafts ideas about rhetoric, learning, and

poetry relevant to court and to his critique of Burghley. Though his attacks upon

Burghley are political, they depend upon intellectual positions—they are meant for a man

whose beliefs about learning, while probably not representing the sort of blatant

falsehood we find in the personified fox and ape, nonetheless seem to Spenser repositories of error. Spenser considers his manner of valuing and understanding the links between good governance, good rhetoric and good poetry so important as to weave them into court satire, even extending their role in the popular work of satire to his final efforts toward three new books of his epic. However, in *Mother Hubberds Tale* he had not clarified the philosophical foundations of these attacks. Discovering those will give us a far deeper appreciation of the politics which they complement.

For this discovery, we must look to others of his works—and ones that prove to have similar sets of contrasts between "mind" and "speech." Spenser's manner of concluding Book 6 provides a powerful hint about these matters. Here, in a parting shot at Burghley, Spenser advises his own rhymes "to keep better measure/ And seeke to please, that now is counted wisemens threasure" (6.12.41.8-9). The line suggests that appeasement is one way to keep out of trouble as a poet and receive patronage. This alone is an insult to Burghley. However, if the "treasure" here is simply the avoidance of displeasing powerful authorities, Spenser's advice to himself to avoid trouble in the future is a clear indication that he has *not really* avoided that in the past or in the work he just completed. Earlier in the stanza he has said that his "former writs, all were they clearest/ From blameful blot" (6.12.41.3-4) nonetheless had been labeled spiteful attacks. They in fact were attacks, but he means us to understand that they were justified rather than spiteful or libelous. Bearing in mind that "treasury" is a term long associated with great literary and lexicographic works by and before Spenser's time,[8] we should

---

[8] I am thinking broadly, of course, of such great works as Brunetto Latini's *Li Livres dou Tresor*, instrumental in the establishment of valuing the vernacular for Dante and part of a long chain of works constructing the metaphorical understanding of languages as a treasuries. However, in Spenser's century

recognize that Spenser has asked us to wonder what *real* literary treasuries we should see at this late stage of the epic. Remember, the object of his censure, Burghley, is associated with a methodical classical learning that has made him a dedicatee of lexicons themselves. (He is also, of course, the "Lord High Threasurer of England," as Spenser's dedicatory sonnet recognizes.) Part of Spenser's "treasure" at the close of Book 6 is simply speaking truth to power, as he illustrates. However, there is much more that teaches us about Spenser's conceptions of the relations between language, mind, and reality, and particularly Spenser's sense of how an individual relates to language.

For the remainder of this chapter, I hope to explain just what Spenser hoped to prove about the relation of an individual to language in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* and in his late work, the *Fowre Hymnes*. Without doubt, his attack on Lord Burghley and reference to Plato's *Phaedrus* at the opening of Book 4 of his epic sets him and his conception of vernacular poetry in contention with the scholarly ideas of an earlier generation of humanists represented by the powerful lord. I have so far shown that Spenser drew upon essentially similar Platonic ideas about rhetoric to suggest good versions of poetic work in contrast to the bad habits of courtly rhetoric emblematized by Burghley. Yet Spenser's considerations in Book 4 and in *Mother Hubberds Tale* address

---

the term had become linked fast to language that provides a more specific context. The great *thesauruses* of the 16th century like Robert Estienne's *Thesaurus linguae latinae* and Henri Estienne's *Thesaurus linguae graecae* were not idly named treasuries. "Treasure" is a term that has come to be associated with cultural collections for particular languages by Spenser's time because it was a matter of political and social urgency. The English vernacular had just begun to lay claim to being a treasure in the sixteenth century, but already in 1599 Samuel Daniel, as Stephen Greenblatt was quick to point out in *Learning To Curse*, referred to "the treasure of our tongue" (qtd. in Greenblatt 16). Eighteen years earlier Spenser's former headmaster Richard Mulcaster put it bluntly in *Positions* that "the tongues […] are the ways to wisdom, the lodges of learning, the harbors of humanity, the deliverers of divinity, the *treasuries of all store* […]" (33, emphasis mine). A phrase like "wisemens threasure" in the context of a reference to a minister as important as Lord Burghley draws the reader to understand that Spenser is contemplating the literary enrichment of his nation with great energy and deliberation.

rhetoric generally and not language formally. To understand the details of Spenser's

conception of the relationship between speech and his own poetic identity that are part of

the attacks on Burghley, we may turn to the *Fowre Hymnes*, his fullest expression of

Platonic ideas related to the *Phaedrus*. There Spenser conceives of writing, in contrast to

speech, as part of an individual's fixed identity as a poet. This work in the *Fowre

Hymnes*, like similar work to be found in the *Amoretti*, adjusts Platonic principles,

undoing the original mistrust for the technology of writing that is a contingent part of the

Phaedrus. Thus Spenser suggests a novel view of the relationship between mind and

language with a novel form of Platonism. Ultimately, Spenser's allegorical work in Book

6 of *The Faerie Queene* with the figures of the Salvage man, Calepine (a somewhat

deficient courtier named after the Calepino lexicon), Calidore, Colin, and Pastorella relies

upon the same ideas about language presented in the *Fowre Hymnes*, which was

published in 1596, shortly after the publication of Books 4-6 of *The Faerie Queene*.

Unlike the later work, though, Spenser's epic plays out the significance of questions

about language not just with regard to the individual, but also with regard to larger social

questions. The Salvage man's wordlessness and Calepine's wordiness provide a means

of asserting the essential value of interpretive mental acts to language in social situations.

Calidore's interaction with the poet Colin and attachment to Pastorella allow Spenser to

redefine the relationship between mind and language in a way that accounts for the

meaningfulness of an individual's use of language as a necessary self-recognition in

social contexts. Having employed these means to explore concepts of language and

society thoroughly, Spenser concludes Book 6 (as above noted) with a pointed reminder

of his feud with Lord Burghley. His final gesture is as impudent as it is confident in its

assertion of a sense of the value of his manner of understanding court and courtly language. It is my starting point for a course of inquiry into the treasury Spenser envisioned as language and the investment he felt himself to be making with his own poetry—as further chapters will show more fully.

2. *The Writing on the Soul*

Some wisely skeptical part of my audience has questioned my insistence that we study the philosophical patterns at the root of Spenser's reference to the *Phaedrus*: "Isn't Spenser's pattern just basic Platonism? And isn't the reference to mind/body valuations and distinctions in *Mother Hubberds Tale* purely reflective of the same basic Platonism?" The short answer to that challenge runs thus: "No, it is a modified version of Platonism with its own distinctive values." To justify the short answer requires a long study of just how Spenser modifies Platonism to his own ends in the *Fowre Hymnes*, a work with complicated ties to the *Phaedrus* and thus to issues of love and friendship that Spenser is so concerned to mention in the proem to Book 4. The *Hymnes* not coincidentally were published shortly after Spenser's 1596 continuation of *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser's modifications of Platonism in them change basic conceptions of language and rhetoric themselves, and thus the place of such things in the larger social schemes that attend his arguments. With knowledge of such changes, we may examine with greater ease and precision how he defines writing and speech by resuming our examination of Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* in a later segment.

Spenser's persistent attention to conceptualizing the mind is an enormous part of

his work in the *Fowre Hymnes*. Even so, his early references to mind seem innocuous.

For example:

> Great god of might, that reignest in the mynd
> And all the bodie to thy hest doest frame
> […]
> Who can expresse the glorie of thy might? ("Hymn to Love," 43-49)

In this first mention of "mind" early in the "Hymn to Love" (the first of the four),

Spenser's emphasis upon the greater power of mind over the expressive power of

language seems—indeed, *is*—a basic ineffability trope. Nonetheless, with each return to

the concept of mind he increases the significance of this early mention. As I will show,

this mention foreshadows an ugly tension between words and thoughts. It warns of a

troubled relationship between the idealized power of form and order, the Platonic or

Neoplatonic understanding of the intelligible reality governing our sensed reality, and

what Spenser conceives of as the shadowy, disturbing property of spoken language.

Robert Ellrodt has shown that Spenser's version of Platonic and Neoplatonic orders is not

orthodox, noting in particular how Spenser shifts the foundations of "mind" (Latin *mens*

or Greek *nous*) away from earlier conceptions by asserting that man's "more immortall

mynd" ("Hymn to Love" 103) plays a part in the specifically Christian conception of the

duty to "multiply the likenesse" (100) of its own kind.[9] So "mind" is a tense if

---

[9] In *Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser*, Robert Ellrodt, after considering in detail the likely commonplace influences on Spenser's form of Platonic thinking, argues convincingly that Spenser's depiction of the "more immortall mynd" referred to in the "Hymn to Love" follows this Christian pattern. He explains: "Had he followed the renaissance interpreters, he would have contrasted the immortality attained through propagation of the species with the immortality conferred by the productions of the mind or the love of virtue" (128). Ellrodt's basic assertion that Spenser modifies tenets of Platonism to suit Christian ideals is inarguably right. The assertion of a "monogamic idealism about sex" (360), as C.S. Lewis describes it, underwrites Spenser's depiction of the spiritual union of the flesh, and the view thus represents a slightly different class of Platonic thinking, whatever the influences from which Spenser drew

productive definitional site for Spenser as a Christian at play with Platonism. But the first, the "Hymn to Love," hints at a vulnerability of mind that plays upon the already-agonized relationship between mind and language in Platonic and Christian thought.[10] Spenser soon describes how the "refyned mynd" (192) is a mirror of the higher intelligible order. On the one hand, this good mind is "affixed" (204) in visionary contemplation of that intelligible order, and in such a stable state fulfills its customary function as part of the soul.[11] On the other hand, Spenser distinguishes between such "stedfast mynds" (171) attached to "heavenly beauties" (169) as to polestars, and the "baseborne mynds" (173) which are guided by an earthly desire instead of love. If Spenser were not calling upon classical philosophy so explicitly here, we might consider his use of "baseborne mynds" a simple reference to appetitive aspects of the soul that are separate from the rational *mens* or *nous*. Given the rather strict focus on such philosophically idealistic categories, though, we might justly ask why Spenser continues to call this appetitive irrationality a "mind." If it is merely part of attraction to lower order, it can be and has been defended by others (Ficino among them) as a simple earthly

---

his reasoning. However, as Carol Kaske has shown in "Neoplatonism in Spenser Once More," the doctrine of preexistence provides one way in which Spenser's view of the "propagation of the species" can be made to fit the prescriptions of stricter Platonism and Neoplatonism's view of the soul (162-167). Thus we need to view Spenser's approach as a flexible, adapted version of Platonism whose roots, at least on some issues, reach backward to the type of inquiry proposed by philosophy as much as by religion or poetry.

[10] Both the *Phaedrus* and the *Cratylus* consider the limitations of language as a medium by comparison to pure knowledge, the former dialogue under the heading of rhetoric and the latter under the heading of naming. In both, Plato asserts that the best linguistic methods, whether discourse or not, can give us is an approximation or likeness of true knowledge. The *Phaedrus* has specific relevance to our concerns because Socrates there describes the way in which speech is more valuable than writing. This I will consider at length later in this chapter. In my introduction and in my third chapter, I will provide further information explaining the particular relevance of Plato's *Phaedrus*.

[11] See my later comments on Ficino's definition of the mind's contemplative function.

love, a lust we would say.[12] It is to some degree, then, an oxymoron (in Platonic terms) to

speak of a "base mind." And while it is indeed a general and standard philosophical

conundrum to discern what parts of the soul are vulnerable to the darkness of the body,

for this very reason "spirit" (or "spright"), as the part of the soul conventionally liminal

for Christians,[13] would have been a more appropriate term to use in order to depict the

problematic meeting between the intellective and the bodily.[14]

Why then does Spenser dignify the mindless with a mind? Robert Ellrodt has

partly answered this question by showing that Spenser wishes to adapt a "chivalric ideal"

to the Platonic reasoning (139-40). But more than that is involved here. Spenser places

particular emphasis upon the effect of the tongue as a troubler of the mind. When the

lover imagines his or her competition, according to Spenser he has a "troubled mynd"

(253). Envy rather than desire besets this lover, and the "thousand shadowes vaine" that

confuse the light of the mind have highly specific traits:

> The gnawing envie, the hart-fretting feare,
> The vaine surmizes, the distrustfull showes,
> The false reports that flying tales doe beare,
> The doubts, the daungers, the delayes, the woes,
> The fayned friends, the unassured foes,
> With thousands more then any tongue can tell ("Hymn to Love," 259-264)

---

[12] There is precedent for Spenser's contradictions of Platonic reasoning about the soul. Sears Jayne points out that Ficino, in his *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love* (or "Sopra l'Amore"), "states both the heretical Platonic view that the soul descends from a previous existence (IV.4) and the orthodox Christian view that the soul is created by God directly on earth and rises toward bliss in heaven" (19). Ficino according to Jayne intended to "defend the property of personal love by showing that it is merely a natural part of a perfectly respectable cosmic process" (12). Ellrodt concludes that it is precisely this portion of Ficino that has influenced depiction of the soul in general (139-40).

[13] See John 3:8, a speech of enormous importance to the Christian view of spirit.

[14] John Quitslund has argued precisely this about the nature of the use of the word "spright" in *The Faerie Queene* (176-7).

In this passage, Spenser complicates the previous logic of the "Hymn to Love" in which the great glory of the intelligible form of the divine agent was inexpressible. Here, the "tongue" is unable to describe the thoughts and words that constitute the nature of envy and fear. This is a curious problem, of course, because the tongue itself is responsible for a good proportion of them in the "false reports" and "flying tales," if not also in the "surmizes" and "distrustfull showes." What function does the tongue have if not to account for the limited range of mortal defects since, as the opening of the poem indicates, expressive description of the *ideal* is not possible? After all, Spenser is not just limiting the purview of poetry or speech as a means of describing the good, true, or beautiful; he is fixing the tongue in the body and making the assaulted, dark, sense-riddled body incapable of giving proper voice to the very things it either does or is.

Spenser does not always associate speech with the mind in the next two stages of *The Fowre Hymnes*. However, he takes key moments in the "Hymn to Beauty" and the "Hymn to Heavenly Love" to re-assert the problem of the defective mind itself. As he does so, he reveals that the mind's failure is one in which, like the tongue, it becomes unable to sense or express its own natural products—literally, the "unmindful" mind cannot see its own self. In the "Hymn to Beauty," Spenser first stresses that the "inward mynd" (76) and the "minds of men" generally are vulnerable to the "outward shew of things, that only seeme" (91), but he is careful to note that the outwardly dazzling influences are not beauty itself, but merely sensual influence. As he goes on, Spenser insists that "soule is forme" (133), as is "spirit" (127), and that beautiful bodies are essentially fit vessels for such purity (120-140). As expected, there are all kinds of wrinkles, figurative and physical, in the relations between form and substance. These

variations enable a set of confusing relations between mind and world. However, when

Spenser turns to the cause and nature of corruption, he warns:

> Yet oft it falles, that many a gentle mynd
> Dwels in a deformed tabernacle drownd,
> Either by chaunce, against the course of kynd,
> Or through unaptnesse in the substance fownd,
> Which it assumed of some stubborne grownd,
> That will not yield unto her formes direction,
> But is perform'd with some foule imperfection. (141-7)

Here we find that some "unaptnesse" in the substance impedes *even* a good mind.

"Mind" here has taken the place of spirit, the traditionally vulnerable and liminal part of

the soul. This would logically have to be the case on every occasion when the immortal

soul fails to lend its perfections to its body or to shed the imperfection of the body itself.

But as Spenser turns to justify his position philosophically, he makes a novel distinction

between the sensual and the intellective.[15] Before he does so, his advice to those women

he wishes to turn to love instead of lust is to "be mindfull still of your first countries

sight" (166). The choice of the term "mindful" here signals that Spenser is deliberately

making mind part of a crucial distinction regarding its own identity. The "first country"

here is the soul's origin—God. And Spenser has posited a "mind" that can forget this

God, its own pure origin—in effect, becoming unable to recognize itself. This work is

part of what Carol Kaske has shown to be a pattern of calling upon the somewhat

unorthodox (and un-Christian) Platonic ideal of the soul's pre-existence (162). A similar

philosophical struggle over the mind's identity surfaces again, and with unmistakable

intent, in the "Hymn to Heavenly Love." There mind assumes a wholly paradoxical

position unjustifiable even via a theory of pre-existence: Spenser describes how the self

---

[15] Again, see Ellrodt's argument concerning this distinction (128-9).

whose mind is fouled with "durty pleasures" (220) "un"-minds mind: self is "unmindfull of that dearest Lord" (221) which made it.

By the time a reader reaches the last of the four hymns, Spenser returns pointedly to his earlier assertion that the great glory of the intelligible form of the divine was inexpressible, but now sets up a close correspondence between the tongue and the mind. The first stanza foregrounds the incapacity of language itself: Spenser senses his "tongue to fold" (7) in anticipation of the difficulty of his proposed subject, much as it did before. Yet in this case he calls for divine aid—a gesture conspicuously absent from the earlier segment. He calls upon the "Almighty Spright" of Heavenly Beauty itself to aid his speech. Then he concludes the next stanza with an image of the mind's failure that is set neatly parallel to the tongue's in the previous stanza, describing the faintness of the image of "immortall beautie…/ which in [his] weake distraughted mynd [he sees]" (13-14). We are meant to know that language is the absolute servant of the mind's sight, but we are even so provoked to recall that language has been, up to this point in the poem, merely the symptom of the mind troubled by a variety of other possible sources of ineptitude. Or, more simply, we are meant to wonder at the obvious underlying problem of a poem—of *words*—conveying what has been described as solely available to the mind's insight, which seems if anything weakened by the service of language.

Spenser forces the issue of mind and language to a dramatic crisis in the final hymn, repeating in the fifteenth stanza that his subject (the angelic ranks of heaven, in this case) is "beyond all telling" (101) and then asking: "How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse/ The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?" (104-5) His answer at the opening of the sixteenth stanza appears nihilistic, dismissive, a total Platonic *cave-in*:

"Cease then my tongue, and lend unto my mynd/ Leave to bethinke how great that beautie is…" (105-6). Spenser has previously demonstrated that he is not directly in line with Platonism, but in this case he is, like Platonists, rebelling against all sensuality, opacity, and materiality in language, finding that it is an obstacle to truth. Even so the "Hymn to Heavenly Beautie" subtly asserts the value of scripture in a way that makes a breathtaking suggestion about Spenser's attitude toward poetry more generally. Spenser's call for inspiration from heavenly sources asks that this inspiration might improve the mind itself—the very agent that has been stripped of language. He hopes to look upon God's face, he informs us, by seeing it reflected in God's works:

> The meanes therefore which unto us is lent,
> Him to behold, is on his workes to looke,
> Which he hath made in beauty excellent,
> And in the same, as in a brasen book,
> To reade enregistered in every nooke
> His goodnesse… (127-132)

Reading the ultimate intelligible form as a reflection rather than directly apprehending it recalls, indeed, the allegory of the cave, and it just as powerfully figures the Christian scion of the Platonic cave: the Pauline image of the mirror or glass through which the divine is indirectly apparent to mortals. Spenser has already conveyed to his reader a specific interest in 1 *Corinthians* 13 by bringing up God's "looking glasse" (115) and the invisibility of his "face" (117) two stanzas previously. He improves upon the image of the book by making it a form of writing reflected in the surface of a "brass book." Thus he neatly preserves the Platonic ideal while engaging writing and reading as the agent of mind's improvement to an adequate perception of the divine. Spenser writes that "gathering plumes of perfect speculation/ to impe the wings of [the] high-flying mynd" (134-5) is the means to improve communication and make it adequate to the task of

capturing the image of heavenly beauty. "Speculation" in this context means, like its root, a sort of essential mirroring. "Plumes" meanwhile double as the quills that are the instruments of writing.[16]

Having made us sensitive to the plight of mind in self-identification in the previous hymns, and having so carefully connected this plight to the problem of language's bodily corruption in the first hymn, Spenser has neatly found his point of resolution in making the very image of scriptural perfection its mystical Pauline mirror-form. If we are in doubt that this is his intent, he confirms it in a more dramatic manner as part of a description of the apparition of Sapience and general contentment in heaven:

> So full their eyes are of that glorious sight,
> And senses fraught with such satietie,
> That in nought else on earth they can delight,
> But in th'aspect of that felicitie,
> Which they have *written in their inward ey*;
> On which they feed, and in their fastened mynd
> All happie joy and full contentment fynd. (281-7, italics mine)

With this passage, Spenser brings the crisis of mind and language to resolution. The material and bodily apparition of language has vanished into an "inward ey" that perceives the imprint of the divine on itself. This reflexive capability of self-inspection should remind us of nothing so much as an author contemplating and recognizing his or her own work and investing it with his or her identity. To make us sure that this kind of improved tool of perception has relevance to his previous concerns about the failure of the tongue and the ineptitude of the mind, Spenser actually refers to the "fastened mynd," implying that the permanence of writing itself enables self-recognition. Writing, which

---

[16] This insight comes courtesy of Dr. Joseph Loewenstein and not, as has sometimes been reported by my colleagues, of a visionary dream involving Sir Plume of Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock*.

has the convenience of representing authorial presence outside the body, can elevate language from the shadows of reality into the forms of the intelligible.

Spenser's dogged contrasts between tongue and mind and his ultimate emphasis upon a novel conception of the relationship between mind and writing in the *Fowre Hymnes* re-works some elements of Platonism. The revision of Platonism is consistent with the emphasis placed on the contrast between mind and tongue in *Mother Hubberds Tale*. That is, it gives a more precise view of the function of good poetry as it is touched upon in that satirical work. Therefore this philosophical pattern of belief about language appears to be exactly what he had in mind when he set out to rebuke Lord Burghley for supposing that Spenser's poems were no more than "false allurements." However, there remain two important technical questions. First, setting aside the apparent parallel to *Mother Hubberds Tale*, how can we be sure that Spenser subscribed to this change of viewpoint on writing and mind in or for works other than *The Fowre Hymnes*? Second, if we are going to consider the ramifications of this intellectual matter for social matters, what consequence does this change have for the conception of a social and communicative identity generally—not just for poets or writers? In the next section, I will turn to answering those questions to prepare the way back to Book 6 and its more complicated visions of mind, language, and reality.

3. "You stop my toung": The "Platonic Coloring" of Spenser's Work

So Spenser uses Platonic theory; so he also uses modifications of Platonic or Neoplatonic systems of thought. So what! my skeptic announces: such modification and use was common enough in his period and not important in and of itself. My response is again quite simple, though. It is, rather, important because he modifies it for discernible

rhetorical goals that fit into the larger contexts of his work as a political and social message about language. After all, Platonism itself is not a rigid unified doctrine, but a flexible set of assumptions based on methodical inquiry with particular benefits in view. How Spenser modifies Platonism tells us more about his beliefs and interests particularly with regard to language. For this reason, our first question about the *Fowre Hymnes'* use of Platonic assumptions about mind, writing, speech, and reality tests the nuances of the change he has made so that we can better explain the purpose of its intellectual and literary manufacture.

Let us first turn to a key source for the *Fowre Hymnes*, the *Phaedrus*, and its relevant assumptions. Long after his detailed discussions about the influence of love and the fit choices for those trying to make right decisions while in love, Socrates in the *Phaedrus* criticizes any form or school of rhetoric that reduces its art to a mere partial and instrumental exercise of influence—a catalogue of specific ways to sway a given audience, for example. To illustrate his reasoning, Socrates asks Phaedrus whether he would believe a man to be a doctor who merely is able to "raise or lower […] the temperature of people's bodies" (68, 268B). Naturally, Phaedrus says no, and Socrates thereafter freely argues the logical analogy: just as we would not call a man a physician for such simple instrumental knowledge, we would not call a man a playwright or an artist for simply possessing technical knowledge for how to make an audience laugh or cry.[17] Moreover, Socrates continues, in order that a speaker have secure knowledge of his audience, he or she must know the most essential character of each member of his

---

[17] In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates makes similar stipulations about knowledge: namely, that it must be understood in abstraction from particular trades or skills.

audience because the site of influence for a rhetorician's art is the *soul* of the addressed person—that is, rhetoric is "the art of directing the soul by means of speech" in any circumstance (55, 261A). Thus, we are meant to understand by the physician analogy that just as a physician must know the whole body and the general goal of bodily health in order to practice medicine, the rhetorician must have a complete conception of the soul and psychological health in order to practice persuasion. But Socrates also reveals here that language touches upon the soul in ways that are, like the subject of the psychagogic erotic love and beauty dominating the first half of the *Phaedrus*, subject to moral inquiry and dependent upon complex theoretical understandings of how the soul is structured. Socrates' conception of the soul's "structure" as two horses and a charioteer is famously contingent, a product of a similitude he immediately suggests could be improved upon both by a perfect divine agency or, in a more accurate similitude, by the human: "To describe what the soul actually is would require a very long account, altogether a task for a god in every way; but to say what it is like is humanly possible…." (30, 246A).

After Plato, it was often of central concern to come up with ways to describe the soul's structure. In that way, how the soul is influenced for good or ill, like the body, could be more thoroughly understood. This manner of thinking about rhetoric may seem alien to us in the present for its trespass into areas we now consider medical, biological, and scientific. Yet Renaissance Neoplatonists like Ficino were concerned to represent the soul portioned into powers called mind, will, reason, anger, and passion (*Gardens*, 15) in order to come up with broad recommendations about diet, exercise regimens, and

reading practices.[18] In his shorter summaries of Platonic dialogues, Ficino observes that

"the first power of the soul is the mind, whose action is the eternal contemplation of

truth" (*Gardens*, 15) and that "mind… perceives all the principles of nature not by

discursive reasoning but by simple steadfast observation" (44). An individual with a

disturbed mind, then, could not make informed and proper decisions about how to direct

the will. Thus the observation of beauty, which from the Platonic perspective presents an

externalized form of the inner form of truth in the soul, can condition the mind.

Exactly this logic about the structure of the soul is at play in Spenser's

characterization of mind in the *Amoretti* when he describes the influence of his beloved in

the terms of the ordering power of heavenly beauty over the "thoughts":

> … Angels come to lead fraile mindes to rest
> in chast desires on heavenly beauty bound.
> You frame my thoughts and fashion me within,
> you stop my toung, and teach my hart to speak… (8.7-10)

Of the poem in general, Kenneth Larsen writes, "Sonnet 8 embodies the standard Neo-

Platonic […] doctrines that love aspires after beauty […] and that virtue overwhelms

passion" (134). Indeed, we see the vulnerability of the mind is a Platonic or Neoplatonic

subject whose formula Spenser preserves. However, the relation of the "hart" and the

"toung" that ensues does not fit the Platonic pattern without some adjustment. Clearly,

the influence of beauty itself (as a reflection of the true forms) "fashions" the soul of the

speaker for the better. But part of that process is evidently the *silencing* of the speaker's

corporal manner of speech, the tongue, in favor of the heart's speech. This is not just the

---

[18] For a fuller picture of Ficino's assumptions about the curious and comical-seeming interpenetrations of
physical and mental phenomena, see his *Book of Life (De Vita)*.

theme or point of Sonnet 8 in isolation. We find precisely this logic at work in the earlier

Sonnet 3:

> So when my toung would speak her praises dew:
> it stopped is with thoughts astonishment:
> and when my pen would write her titles true,
> it ravisht is with fancies wonderment:
> Yet in my hart I then both speak and write
> the wonder that my wit cannot endite. (3.9-14)

In this earlier poem, mere speech is inadequate and fails in particular when thought is not

adequate to inform it. The form of the beauty he sees before him, though, as we learn in

Sonnet 8, can "teach [the] hart to speak." Writing, legitimized speech, and thoughts have

conveniently joined forces in some interior state that is somewhat apart from mere

reactive thought and distinctively apart from the physical body.

The pattern of emphasis in the *Amoretti* matches what we find in the *Fowre*

Hymnes, suggesting that we should indeed identify a truer heart's speech with the written

poems themselves. In the *Amoretti*, the heart apparently contains the stillness necessary

to receiving the effect of the beloved's heavenly beauty transmuted through the mind and

pen of the lover. That the heart should prove to have an attachment to such a specialized

conception of writing cannot surprise us, given that stillness and silence are part of

reading and writing, the interchange between beloved and lover in this case. However,

the "reading" and "writing" in both Sonnet 3 and 8, and arguably in the *Fowre Hymnes*,

qualify as a sort of special higher intellectual function linked to the very interior beings of

the people perceiving and understanding one another. In the scheme of preference we see

in Sonnets 3 and 8, the tongue itself and physical speech are inadequate. Interior speech

and writing, meanwhile—the speech "in the heart"— is sufficient and clearly closer to

what we find in the printed material Spenser lays before us. The product registers what is

even beyond the individual thinking process, what the "wit cannot endite." The clear

winner here is the writing and reading material itself, which is the ending beneficiary.

The physical tongue is "stopped" twice while the heart's speech is encouraged and paired

with writing. Indeed, in both poems the act of contemplating beauty strengthens the

expressive and perceptual ability of spirit in Sonnet 3 and mind in Sonnet 8. In Sonnet 3,

the speaker's "fraile spirit" is "from basenesse raysed" as part of the process leading to

the poem (3.4). We find the word "frail" repeated in Sonnet 8 in order to emphasize the

same process: the "fraile mindes" of those witnessing beauty may have their physical

sight damaged, but they are granted visions of eternity itself through that same beauty:

"well is he borne, that may behold you ever," Spenser's speaker concludes in Sonnet 8.

The sonnets do not devalue speech so much as more closely link writing or any form of

beauty-contemplating writing to ideal eternal truths that can come to exist in a properly

ordered mind.

Consider one further hint about the valuation of writing embedded in these

sonnets: Larsen notes that Sonnet 8 was probably written in "friendly rivalry" with

Sidney (132). Spenser's view of the heart's relationship to the author's language in this

rivaling sonnet sequence has in all likelihood been specially conditioned by what Sidney

figures in the first sonnet of the first sonnet sequence in English: following Sidney's

advice in the first Sonnet of "Astrophel and Stella," an author inspired by heavenly

beauty should "bit[e his] truand pen" and "look in [his] heart and write" (1.13-14). If

Spenser pursues Sidney's advice, and it seems he does, he is shifting the conception of

mind's relationship to speech, writing, and the orders of the world in a direction that is a

development or extension of the assertions about rhetoric and the soul found in the *Phaedrus*.

Spenser's preferential redemption of writing and reading in Sonnets 3 and 8 as themselves elements of the contemplative process and his much more pronounced argument for writing in the *Fowre Hymnes* rely on the same notions of the soul we might find in Plato's discussion of the relationship between the soul and speech; however, in the end Spenser produces a *new* definition of the relation of language to the soul (figured through this idea of the printed object), and thus to the intelligible forms, by virtue of producing a new likeness of the soul's relation to the world. The apparent break with Plato on such a point is not a simple turning away from Platonism or Neoplatonism, for it is not just a shift in beliefs but a reasoned adjustment of them that even Socrates might follow. The *Phaedrus,* with its extensive commentary on the relationship between beauty, love, and rhetoric, is clearly the most relevant ancient source text for Spenser's handling of precisely these topics in the *Amoretti* and the *Fowre Hymnes*. Yet in that same text Socrates questions the flexibility of *writing* as an instrument of learning or inquiry, asserting that "words that have been written down [can do no more than] remind those who already know what the writing is about" (80, 275 D). Socrates also refers to the need for the rhetorician to gain access to the "discourse that is written down, with knowledge, in the soul of the listener" (81, 276A) via speech and dialectic in order to have any authentic influence. For a Platonist interpreting the *Phaedrus* in a strict manner, writing is a technical skill like painting: what it represents in the physical world is a shadow of the true forms. Spenser proposes an end-run around such limitations on writing by reversing the preferences expressed in Platonic philosophy and adjusting the

conception of how the soul is constructed, a key part of which involves what kind of processes (like writing or speech) give us sure knowledge of it. In Sonnet 8, for example, speech alone has no special access to the soul, as writing *can* just as well reflect what the mind has contemplatively perceived in the heavenly beauty of the beloved. In fact, stopping the "tongue" seems to be an instrumental step in getting to such a contemplative act, and thus writing and reading have a clear advantage. In the *Fowre Hymnes*, similarly, humans can gain access to the purity of divine knowledge by *reading* the divine light that is reflected into the "inward ey" of the soul. The soul here has Platonic writing on it, but for Spenser that writing can be observed and outwardly expressed without the reason-driven dialectic—that is, the extensive process of spoken dialogue and debate—that Plato and Socrates find essential to finding any knowledge. The external expression in writing of an internal and metaphysical writing on the soul that Spenser proposes is a radical notion at first blush. However, the idea of dialectic has not disappeared, particularly if we consider the importance of the very culture of writing to Spenser's conception of its presence within and outside the body. Presumably, as I noted earlier of Spenser's reasoning in the final sections of *The Fowre Hymnes*, the author's relation to the script outside his or her body makes a kind of dialogue possible between the inward visionary speech and the outward reading. An author producing, then contemplating and recognizing his or her own work, especially when investing the work with his or her identity (which has its origin in the divine), engages in a dialectic process that is in keeping with Platonist thinking.

The interpretation I have proposed gives us an understanding of Spenser's likely reasons for choosing Platonist ideas and his method of adjusting them. My work here is

first responsive to the limitations on such arguments imposed by Robert Ellrodt. Pointing

out the problems with trying to find Platonic or Neoplatonic philosophical turns in

Spenser's poetry, particularly the *Fowre Hymnes*, Ellrodt argues that the "seething mass

of confused thinking" (9) associated with Neoplatonism in the period does not have the

consistency to produce one definitive result; and that "mere source ascription is

dangerous and unrewarding" (11) since possible influences are countless and variable

and, in the case of the *Fowre Hymnes,* "the cosmogony […] is very largely made up of

commonplace notions" (127) patched together in a way that, for example, "never so

much as suggests the Neoplatonic scheme of emanations." He adds that "at the very

heart of Spenser's Platonism lurks a Christian ideal, quite irrelevant to the Platonic

conception of the immortality of the soul" (129). Ellrodt puts up sizeable and necessary

obstacles to thinking of Spenser as a simple Platonist or Neoplatonist. However, Ellrodt

leaves room for seeing more precisely *what* Spenser chose or used from Platonism. In the

Phaedrus itself Socrates is careful to base his prescriptions for language on the

contingencies of the soul's structure. Regarding this specific feature, Spenser's new

reversal of the positions of written and spoken language abides by Socratic reasoning

even if it breaks with its one-time conclusions. Certainly Christian thinkers did not see

their similar adjustments of Socratic approaches as illegitimate. Thus Ellrodt's sound

skepticism better illuminates the reasons *why* Spenser was adapting Platonist and

Neoplatonist ideas infused with Christian values. As a writer interested in distinguishing

the value of his work and how he was doing so in strict philosophical terms, Spenser

framed writing relative to the powerful philosophical and religious interests of his time.[19]

---

[19] Humphrey Tonkin has an excellent insight on the matter of Spenser's Platonism that I am not including

In pursuing an interest in authentic and trustworthy rhetorical principles, Spenser remains

consistent with Platonic thought and Christian thought, including Neoplatonic variants, in

one crucial way. The consistency remains because all are concerned with the self's or

soul's construction as part of their arguments about how it may be influenced.   The

traditions submit various claims about the constitution of individual identity (self, soul,

etc.) as part of a larger argument about how to define the meritorious exercise of

influence through linguistic means.[20]

---

here but which is indeed relevant to my course of thought. In his commentary on the nature of Spenser's handling of Platonism in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*, Tonkin first observes that, considering the *historical* specifics with which Spenser was explicitly concerned, it matters less that Spenser makes his use of one brand of philosophy or another, and more what meanings he produces with his typically idiosyncratic approach: "Viewed in this light," Tonkin comments, "the evaluation of the precise extent of Spenser's Platonism, or the precise influence of Aristotle, one of those traditional battlegrounds of Spenserian scholars, recedes in importance" (7-8). Tonkin naturally concedes that Spenser's crucial concerns, however, are often framed in allegorical language that may "confuse the […] categories" (23) of real and ideal as Platonists or Christians would see them. Yet this confusion can be remarkably minor. In Spenser's allegorical work, Tonkin asserts, his inquiry differs from Socratic inquiry by concentrating on the individual as a means to understand society rather than on the society as a means to understand the individual: "When Socrates wished to define the qualities of the just man, he chose to describe a just society […]. Spenser […] begins with the self and moves gradually outward toward society" (29). The differences in their approaches, considered this way, have some grave consequences for general moral inquiry, but not for our concerns regarding language (or, as Tonkin is more interested to argue, for the concerns of those interested in historical matters).

[20] Carol Kaske and Elizabeth Bellamy offer some support for this point of view about Spenser's flexibility. Kaske has contended that classifications of Spenser's approach as Platonic, Neoplatonic, or neither are misleading because "Spenser's thought is not as monolithic as that of, say, Dante, Herbert, or Milton" (157). With similar vigor, Elizabeth Bellamy proposes "reading Orphically," subjecting the Spenserian text to the particulars of Plotinian thought in order

> to understand the pervasive intellectual range of Neoplatonism, its delight in the cosmic rhythms of emanation and reversion, its refusal to limit the essence of the gods to anything less than a simultaneous and dispersed network of images and associations. (174)

These approaches presume to re-construct what Spenser means in terms ideally suited to him, but they do isolate his poetics as a solipsistic and highly general exercise of mytho-poetic narration. Yet in taking up such stances Kaske and Bellamy wish to do more than skeptically set aside general links to Platonism and Neoplatonism that Ellrodt convincingly showed to be limited. Having isolated a *specific* and reasoned point of continuity between Platonism and Spenser's work that threads *The Faerie Queene*, *Mother Hubberds Tale, The Fowre Hymnes*, and the *Amoretti*—though principally the latter two at this stage—we can now go further than Kaske or Bellamy by simply examining Spenser's poetics relative to his conceptions of rhetoric and language and to other figures in his time period. Such practical focus may fall short of the Orphic reading proposed by Bellamy, but fortunately the loss of Eurydice accustomed that reader to the vicissitudes of fortune.

How then should we deal with Spenser's conceptualizations of language in a way that recognizes his motivations for such Platonist borrowings in his late-life works? We cannot, on the one hand, afford to reduce Spenser's position to that of a mere idealist. Consider Judith Anderson's conclusions about Spenser's idealistic objection to "winged words" (5.2.44.9) from Book 5 of *The Faerie Queene*—poetry completed during the time Spenser also forged the *Amoretti* and *The Fowre Hymnes*. Seeing Artegall's argument with the egalitarian Giant as partly a debate about how to assess words and verbal value, she concludes:

> …Artegall's words—materially tripping him up, perhaps—further indicate not just the truism that human beings have minds as well as senses but a far stronger privileging of the "inward mind," repeatedly in this poem a phrase that implies the recesses of memory in Neoplatonic and Augustinian senses. Artegall opts for both a subjective conception of truth as against an external and quantifiable one and for an interiorly valorized conception of language as against one that is material. (183)

Anderson rightly points us to the same crucial idea about "mind" that we have seen at play in the *Fowre Hymnes, Mother Hubberds Tale*, and the *Amoretti*. However, as I was also at pains to discuss in my readings of those works, Spenser's "mind" is no simple and untroubled creature whose privileges stay in place, nor simply a memorial construction. It is true that Anderson reads the term "mind" itself as convenient for generalizing about Spenser's attitude toward language:

> …Artegall's views, which are neither those of the proem to Book V nor necessarily co-extensive with Spenser's, are touched by the antilinguistic extremism of Platonism and by what I would imagine to be the projected anxieties of the poet. (184)

For Anderson's purposes in discussing the ways in which Renaissance writers found words to be material, it is eminently useful to show how Spenser is the idealist exception that proves the rule. Her findings here fit Spenser into a historical trend that she is

tracking among many authors.[21] Yet this approach leaves us in some doubt about just how to understand Spenser except by contrast with materialists, and on this matter Anderson's approach leaves a great deal of room for new work. We already know from Ellrodt that any simple association of Neoplatonism and Spenser's arguments is insufficient, so Anderson's assertions here fall short of explaining why or how Spenser chose such essentialist and idealist positions except as echoes of ideas about memory brought to bear in Book 2. Anderson's assertion that Artegall's "choice distinctly favors the Platonic end of the spectrum" (183) simplifies the complex metaphysics into an Idealist/Materialist binary momentarily at this stage in her argument.[22] However, Anderson also takes pains to show that Spenser's ideas about words—most notably the word "scrine"—depend upon a complex conception of the play of ideal forms deeper than any simple Platonism and heavily reminiscent of the sixteenth-century struggle in lexicons with defining whatever might be substantial in words. Anderson is *not wrong* to suggest that Artegall's misgivings about words, and the misgivings about language abundantly in play in Book 5, are "projected anxieties." She is right, too, that there is an "indictment of language" going on in various places in Book 5 that relates to the many episodes where words fail, as I will more fully examine in my fourth and final chapter. Yet, as we shall see soon enough, Spenser addresses this topic in Book 6 in a way that is uniquely beneficial for extending the inquiry I have begun about *The Fowre Hymnes*.

---

[21] See my introduction for a fuller consideration of how scholars track such trends in the development of ideas of meaning and struggle with Spenser's place in particular.

[22] See my introduction for a consideration of the significance of Anderson's argument from *Words that Matter* as a whole.

Barbara Strang's analysis of Spenser's language in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*

shows a line of thought to add to my own thinking about the *Fowre Hymnes* and develops

Anderson's line of thought about *The Faerie Queene*. Strang argues that Spenser's

"Platonic coloring" (428), as she terms it, relates to his conception of language and his

poetics. According to her, Spenser does not "cheat" as a poetic stylist either in the way he

chooses words, spells words, or rhymes them. She continues: "I would suggest that there

is a quality in Spenser's exploitation of variability that nearly always protects it from the

appearance of license or mere contrivance." Strang suggests that the systematic quality of

Spenser's handling of language in this way is akin to his constrained use of names—his

attempt to have them retain key-like meanings. She refers to this as a "Platonic coloring"

and comments in detail:

> In each case, the etymological meaning [of a word like "Faerie" e.g.] is the
> immutable essence; vagaries in time, in form or meaning, are mere accidents. In
> proportion as the poet's goal is the permanent in language, variable surface
> realizations are functionally a matter of indifference. Contemporary variation in
> the standard language, advanced, even slangy colloquialisms, dialect forms, and
> archaisms are all on a par. To Jonson, this meant that Spenser writ no language,
> and in a surface sense this is undeniably true. But it is not a relevant sense.
> Spenser's exploitation of variation gives him great license, but the sympathetic
> reader does not perceive him as taking liberties or the easy way out because his
> freedom is in accord with a deep, pervasive, and coherent intuition about the
> nature of poetic language—at least for poetry of this kind. (428)

Strang here is essentially looking at formal properties as evidence of a confidence in the

structure of works as a reflection of the true underlying forms of reality. For the

Platonist, this would be the real "material," of course, and thus Strang's idea of Platonism

echoes what Martha Craig and John Leonard argue about the influence of the *Cratylus*—

a matter I noted in my introduction. In other words, Strang argues that both Spenser's

method of structuring his prosody and his methods of choosing and thinking about words

conforms to his broader beliefs about the *forms* underlying the productivity of language.[23]

This is not just a matter of good naming, but of developing a systematic framework for

---

[23] Strang's arguments about formal properties of language bring up a number of issues about how and why ideas from linguistics, cognitive studies, and philosophy of mind are appropriate and necessary for discussing Spenser's work. One of the most difficult problems with the desire to examine the conceptions of language in an author from Spenser's period concerns the differences between our present conceptions of language and theirs. We need plausible ways to explain Spenser's choices for defining language, but there is no established way to define language in the present or past. Spenser's manner of sketching out an idea of the permanency of an individual's use of language in the *Fowre Hymnes* highlights more generally his complex understanding of relations between language, reality, and mind. We might in the present day find his understanding puzzling not simply for its Platonic and Neoplatonic overtones. Over the last fifty years, biology, medicine, and technology have taught us that language is a specially human faculty which may be defined in part by the structures of the brain. But when Spenser, Platonists, Neoplatonists, and Christians argue about language in the sixteenth century, it is *not* our language but a much stranger amalgamation of mind, brain, language, and body with threads of similarity and difference amid each of these additional ideas/terms and ours. Some in the present consider language as pure matters of rhetoric in disconnection from the body (which is to say, the physical body rather than some generalized notion of it as a figure); some do not, of course, but they are located in scientific fields now radically separate from those engaged in the study of English literature. For the sake of a coherent inquiry into a period in which the disciplinary conventions about defining mind, brain, and body were not set as they are today, it is sometimes necessary to consider *both* differences in the view of language from Spenser's period and ours *and* some of the subtle and problematic commonalities. The commonalities mainly exist between our contemporary fields of scientific inquiry and Spenser's inquiry. For the sake of setting reasonable disciplinary boundaries, English studies has moved apart from the welter of arguments in linguistics while remaining dependent in a variety of obscure ways on the sorts of conceptions of language that linguistics expertly debates. Such matters from philosophy and linguistics are logically central to an appreciation of Spenser's motivation in handling Platonic ideas for his description of language, then, but my readers within my discipline find them unfamiliar and distracting, particularly since they are tinged with empiricist and scientific thought. The notes I provide below are simply a gesture in the direction I think the study of concepts of language should go, but they are also logically central to my larger argument and interest in the fields of linguistics and philosophy of mind.

       The defining linguistic and psychological assumptions in Spenser's poetics such as I will begin to detail them in this thesis have never disappeared from academic inquiry, but rather have been recast in the terms of contemporary disputations about the relation between individual thought and language mostly located in the fields of linguistics and philosophy. That is, Spenser's doubts about the adequacy of spoken language, the corporal "tongue," and his corresponding envisioning the "inward ey" of the mind remain part of current critical considerations of mind and language. Just as Spenser is concerned with features of mind that are beyond immediate physical representation in words, so some parts of linguistics are concerned with structures in the mind, namely idiolect, whose appearance in printed or spoken language is only residual. Robert Hall explains:

> …all phenomena of language exist only in the 'know-how'[…] of individual speakers, i.e., their idiolects. For something to exist at all, it has to have a *locus existendi*. It must be given a local habitation and a name, or else it remains airy nothing. (353)

The "locus existendi" of Platonists and Neoplatonists was the soul, and in Spenser the place was just as often the division of the soul termed the "mind." As Hall further explains, the essential idiolect is in many ways more important than the variable expressions of language in print and speech: "Any supra-linguistic entity (dialect, language)," Hall notes, "is only an abstraction built up by observation of two or more individuals' language-activity" (353). The "supralinguistic" comprises all the visible or heard entities we loosely term language itself. The model Hall describes, while *not* being a Platonic one, preserves for linguistics the concept of an underlying reality whose shadows, in the form of our outward expressions of language, merely reflect an inner generative formula. Hall even goes so far as to point out that materialist

conceptions themselves are not essential to his concern with structure of idiolect: "The *locus existendi* of the correlation between signifier and signified is in the 'minds' of individual speakers (however we define the term *mind*, whether a non-physical entity or as the activity of the brain and central nervous system of the human body)" (354). Spenser would be deeply gratified that the "non-physical entity," though only a ghostly alternative to material science, still merits consideration. However, for our purposes what remains important is that Hall's idiolect closely parallels the inward writing on the soul (even in its defective forms) that Spenser hypothesizes in the *Fowre Hymnes*, while the "supralinguistic" features of language (which Hall defines as a limited and somewhat misleading external set of representations) are consubstantial with all forms of signified order (things we would consider relatively non-linguistic) outside the individual mind in Spenser's estimation. Unlike Hall, however, who sees supralinguistic order as inherently disconnected from the idiolect, Spenser sees the material "tongue" as the source of that disconnection.

(A side note: We will ultimately find that Spenser is concerned with the connection between supralinguistic order and the essential sources of meaning deep in the mind. Hall's essay is principally aimed at showing the problems with establishing such a connection. Ian Lancashire's scholarship, on the other hand, attempts to get around such problems at least when it comes to the essential identity people develop in and through language. I will not be addressing the entire difficulty here in any detail. However, the reader should recognize that there are some variables in any conception of supralinguistic *order* for present and past thinkers because of the nuances of conceiving of meaningful orders inside and outside language. I cannot account for all of these variables. Mainly, though, the difficulty resides in understanding to what extent general meaningfulness, especially thought, is extralinguistic, which is to say wholly averbal, and to what extent it governs or is governed by language, being supralinguistic or intralinguistic. We do not need to resolve all these difficulties so much as *recognize* the different possibilities with precise terminology so that both differences and similarities between present and past conceptions can be detailed as necessary. "Supralinguistic" order is, for example, virtually the entire concern of those who see meaning as principally communally or socially held. The "extralinguistic" addresses not only those things that are meaningful outside of language, but necessarily those mental processes such as sensuous perception itself. For Platonists, however, such sensuous perception is *not* necessarily part of a mental or intellective process. These differences are important but larger than my concern in this study.)

While Robert Hall's essay on the "Idioseme" from the middle 1980s ultimately points out that linguistics is severely limited so long as it cannot gain access to the actual neural structures that establish correspondences between signifiers and signified, the more recent literary theorist Ian Lancashire contends that idiolect itself remains central to our humanist interpretive enterprise in a variety of practical ways that have further relevance to Spenser's work. In his 1999 essay on Shakespeare's idiolect, Lancashire argues that "mind is now analyzable biologically by scientific methods" and that "in the humanities, authorship attribution uses quantitative profiles of lexical, grammatical, metrical, and syntactic regularities […] as markers of idiolect" (728). More importantly, though, Lancashire recognizes the importance of the different "language modes" of "writing, oral speech, and inner speech, a subvocal utterance expressed in words audible only in the mind" (728-9) to our conception of language itself and a more distributed ideal of idiolect: "Idiolect embraces the textual, auditory, and subvocal traits of 'uttering'" in such a way that it cannot "be separated from how authors think averbally, using images mentally, and feel emotions" (729). In short, then, Lancashire argues that idiolect can be approached by looking at the use of language (broadly understood as supralinguistic elements ultimately tied to structures of mind presumed to be "neural networks" [729]) as a reflection of individual cognition or "cognitive style." Lancashire's entire approach reveals a deep continuity between the Platonic conception of the individual soul's construction and his and others' current attempts to find and define identity in the brain. Neuropsychologists, by looking for structures of the brain that condition perception, thinking, and response crucial to linguistic processes, are fundamentally engaged in the development of new similitudes—like the Socratic one of the soul as a charioteer—by which to describe the limits of our volition and the susceptibility of our mind to influence. They are looking for individual identity there, among other things. Spenser's conceptions of language and mind rest upon Platonic criteria, too, and arguably his poetry itself and the poetics that guide it pursue the same goal of constructing new similitudes descriptive of a reality centered upon the mind. As with Lancashire, so also with Spenser: the basic material features of language are no more than clues to mind's structures of meaning and identity that guide and determine the material shadows and trivialities.

the generation of stable meaning. What Strang's arguments label "intuition," moreover, has a rudimentary philosophic expression in the Platonic argumentation of the *Fowre Hymnes*. There, Spenser's condemnation of the "tongue" as essentially licentious ultimately produces a panegyric for a writing that is spiritually linked to God and intimately linked to an individual consciousness of stable identity. Such writing linked to identity is what we would call idiolect or simply an individual mind, but it is much more than that in Spenser. Spenser posits an idiolexic essence, one necessarily self-conscious as a "mindful" thing, situated within a greater intelligible order of the world. True, the writing of value is all "inward," but such inward writing nonetheless constitutes an ideal vision of individual expression that may, in the shadow reality of human day, struggle against the limitations of the flesh insofar as it comes into alignment with the eternal. In other words, what you say is what you are in flexible and contingent ways.

Strang's argument shows us two kinds of evidence we should be looking for in order to understand the significance of the distinction between speech and writing that appears in *The Fowre Hymnes* and its relationship to questions of identity. First, we should look for evidence that Spenser saw language as defective in speech because of problematic relations to mind. Such evidence can show us more fully how Spenser envisioned the writing on the soul or mind as he was conceiving of it. Second, we should look for further evidence that he saw individual language as ideal if crucially tied to a larger order—an order in which a poet might distinguish his or her own identity and place. Such evidence can show us how Spenser conceived of the overarching order of things in reality that he may have felt was connected to language—namely, the social and political practicalities associated with figures like Lord Burghley. Strang's observations

about Spenser's sense of the value of language lying in immutable forms clearly has some links to features of Spenser's poetics. However, Spenser's poetics as seen through these Platonic lenses also reveals a potential source of his anxieties about the place of poetry in a society dependent upon excellent discourse and limited by the seemingly inherent defects of speech. In other words, Spenser's work on language is not just a matter of idealism and form; it has political and social contexts. It is a matter of good and bad forms tied to good and bad material realities. Upon this point Judith Anderson's analysis is apropos: she rightly finds defective speech and language are a key focus in Book 5—and one which is made all the more active by contrasting references to a superior *mind*. Anderson writes of the appearance of the Blatant Beast at the end of Book 5:

> …this ugly episode acknowledges the biting reality of words, figurally, affectively, and also historically, since it blatantly alludes to the fate of Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton; that is, it acknowledges the reality of words in terms that are fully material. Thus this episode, too, bitterly reattaches the narrative "to the events of the world." At the same time, however, this disfiguring end of Book V might also be seen to enable Book VI, in which words have real effects, whether physically, as when the Beast bites Timias and Serena, or ideally, as when the Graces materialize to dance on Mount Acidale. (189)

How does the allegorical work of Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* manage the issue of language, then? Is it really for language that the Graces dance? And, if so, how can it be a "material" language? Anderson's concluding gesture on Book 5 raises the questions I propose to answer about Book 6.

4. Good Reading Leads to Good Selfhood

A casual survey of the Spenser concordance shows that Spenser rarely uses the word "tongue" with positive connotation in *The Faerie Queene*. The tongue is often an

instrument of flattery or deception. Archimago can "file his tongue as smooth as glas"

(1.1.35.7) to fool Redcrosse, and he has a "faire filed tong" (2.1.3.6) for Guyon, too.

Despair has a "subtile tong" (1.9.31.5). Britomart even accuses Redcrosse of having a

"courteous tongue" (3.2.12.5) that unfairly favors Artegall's reputation. When not an

instrument of deception, the tongue seems a source of instability or evil. There are

"fawning" (1.3.6.2), "foltring" (1.7.24.7; 1.9.24.9; 2.1.47.4; 3.11.12.3), "sad" (1.7.25.3),

"babling" (4.7.45.6), "burning" (5.8.49.2), "vile" (5.12.42.7; 6.1.8.8; 6.12.38.4), and

"venemous" (6.1.8.8) tongues in human and monstrous hosts. Spenser finds fault with his

own tongue at the outset of the epic, imploring the muse to "sharpen [his] dull tong"

(1.pr.2.9). Book 6 preserves and adds to this demotion of the tongue in part because, like

the *Fowre Hymnes*, it develops the Platonic tension between the ideal quality of the mind

as a site of virtuous identity and the problematic variability of speech as the shadowy un-

real world plaguing and confusing the mind. In the Proem, Spenser asserts that "vertues

seat is deepe within the mynd,/ And not in outward shews, but inward thoughts defynd"

(6.Pr.5.8-9). The steady virtuosity is idealized in Calidore's trial by the endlessly

proliferating variables of rumor and slander embodied, but not idealized, in the "Blatant

Beast" that "with vile tongue and venemous intent/ […] sore doth wound, and bite, and

cruelly torment" (6.1.8.8-9).

　　While many sections of Book 6 show the tension between mind and language,

cantos four to seven in particular dramatize the negative influence of misreport, rumor,

and lying upon the minds of various characters. The Salvage Man, who lacks language,

begins this process. He first focuses our attention on both mind and language in the

fourth canto. "For other language had he none nor speech…" (6.4.11.6), Spenser tells us.

Spenser uses the word "other" here, but he immediately stresses that the "soft murmure, and confused sound/ Of senselesse words" that the Salvage does have is not a *human* language, but only that "which nature did him teach" (6.4.11.7-8). The words are not really words at all. And this is the only use of "language" in the singular in Spenser's poetic works. It hints at the importance of the Salvage's language-lack to his allegorical position in the story. Indeed, as we read the succeeding cantos it becomes clear that the Salvage's invulnerability to words represents his greater purity of mind, which furnishes some of the reasons why Spenser elevates reading over speech. The Salvage is described as having a "gentle mynd" by both the narrator and Serena (6.6.1.8; 6.5.29.9), a mind that Serena claims "plainely may […] be red" (6.6.2.1) in his actions and self. Being so "plain" has a value that appears most starkly when the Salvage understands the situations and people immediately before him so well. At the beginning of the fourth canto, for example, he hears Serena's cries for help and, arriving on the scene, rightly judges Turpine as a bad man at one glance (6.4.2). His quick, violent response to and defeat of Turpine contrasts the Salvage with Calepine, who fails to deal with Turpine and, though evidently quite the courtier, generally proves inadequate to the circumstances in which he finds himself before running into the Salvage.[24] The contrast between the wordless Salvage and Calepine is made deeper because complex dialogue and social interchange

[24] In "Defining Courtesy: Spenser, Calepine, and Renaissance Lexicography," Daniel Fried observes exactly the contrasts between the Salvage and Calepine that I examine in this paragraph, considering Calepine in the light of his association with questions of "linguistic competency" (242) that are the primary association with his probable namesake, the lexicographer Ambrogio Calepino. Fried also notes the role of Turpine (and the passages from the end of canto three that illustrate Calepine's incompetence) in setting up the contrast between Calepine and the Salvage. Though his consideration of these things is briefer and serves different interests, I have drawn on it for my analysis here. I have left the discussion of Fried's work on this subject for later since I am here concerned more with discussing the complex network of allegorical meanings in the sequence of cantos and not simply with the question of Calepine as courtier. In addition, in my second chapter, I consider more deeply the limits of Fried's arguments and the intellectual significance of the name.

play an enormous part in Calepine's circumstance and character right up to the point that

he meets the Salvage. First Calepine is caught in an awkward and embarrassing situation:

Calidore surprises him while he is dallying with his love, Serena, in the woods (6.3.20).

Then he and Calidore, engaged in extensive tale-telling and polite discussion, are caught

unawares by the Blatant Beast (6.3.22-24). Afterwards, trying desperately to get help for

Serena, Calepine is snubbed by Turpine (6.3.31-43) and ultimately left out in the cold.

Turpine's words to Calepine even indicate that proper interpretation of one's

circumstance is the essence of courtesy and social status: "Perdy thou peasant Knight,"

Turpine says in refusing Calepine's request that he allow Calepine to ride with him,

"mightst *rightly reed*/ Me then to be full base and evill borne,/ If I would beare behind a

burden of such scorne" (6.3.31.6-9, italics mine). As A.C. Hamilton points out, Turpine

has, probably willfully, misunderstood the circumstance, not realizing that Calepine put

Serena on his own steed (645n), and thus assuming that Calepine is a mere peasant not

worthy of help. Ironically, while not reading the situation properly himself, Turpine

frames the situation as one in which a correct reading of the circumstance would produce

socially appropriate results. The Salvage's right reading and successful intervention

without the benefit of speech clearly contrasts with the wrong readings of Calepine and

Turpine, both of whom have the power of speech and appear unrewarded by it.

Moreover, the events of the end of canto three follow mostly from the arrival of the

Blatant Beast, who allegorically represents the free reign of rumor and libel, linguistic

products that it is logical to conclude the Salvage does not recognize. Serena's and

Calepine's suffering stem from social impropriety reported and distorted. That is, their

suffering represents the consequences of speech gone wrong. Turpine's addled reading,

too, is a product of his own social impropriety, albeit one separate from Serena's and Calepine's. The Salvage's silent, attentive listening, intuitive reading, and forceful action represent one necessary response to this social Babel—though not one fully adequate to treating the whole range of social ills implied.

In canto five, we learn that the Salvage man's wordlessness is hardly adequate to the complexity of Serena's plight and a variety of other circumstances. Only Serena's timely intervention with speech, after all, prevents Timias and the Salvage from killing one another during an initial meeting (6.5.26-7). A fuller exploration of the inadequacy of the speechless mind of the Salvage emerges in canto six, though. There Timias' and Serena's struggle to achieve an ascetic plainness (recommended to them by the Hermit) in the restoration of their reputations (after the Blatant Beast has bitten them) offers a more nuanced sense of how to respond to the social and linguistic disaster of proliferating rumor and scandal. For it is only through the diagnostic power of the Hermit that Serena and Timias figure out how to cure themselves of the Blatant Beast's bite-wounds— allegorically understood as wounds to their reputations. Spenser stresses that the Hermit "in the mindes of men had *great insight*" (6.6.3.6, my italics) and that he was able to provide "counsell to the minde" (6.6.5.9). The Hermit is not without the power of speech, of course, "as he the art of words knew wondrous well" (6.6.6.3), good courtier that he once was. (And thus Spenser is not "antilinguistic" in any simple sense.) However, the Hermit's therapeutic advice consists principally in telling Timias and Serena to exercise inner control of their senses, among which senses he includes their speech and tongue repeatedly: "your eies, *your ears, your tongue, your talk* restraine" (6.6.7.8, my italics), he advises. The Hermit even prescribes that they should only "talke

73

in open sight" (6.6.14.8). In this way, the Hermit's insight (emphasis upon the "in")

properly accounts for *interior* problems. Such insight is not linked to masterful use of

language, but rather linked to curtailing the use of language to certain forms.   The

Hermit prefers forms of speech that permit self control. Naturally, if ironically, such

forms are the most public ones. Such public speech facilitates a private and interior

dignity closely linked to identity, the self writ large. To be sure, Spenser goes to great

pains to stress the Hermit's understanding of interiority by pairing the relatively newer

and anomalous use of the word "self"[25] with a foremost power of the soul, the will: "For

in your *selfe* your onely helpe doth lie,/ To heale your *selves*, and must proceed alone/

From your own will…" (6.6.7.1-3, my italics). Thus Serena's and Timias' plight deeply

contrasts with the Salvage's, and the Hermit represents a limited parallel to the Salvage.

The Salvage reads situations correctly, but he requires no interior power or understanding

of others' exterior power: Serena notes that the Salvage cannot "conceive" others' minds

(6.5.30.4), for example. Spenser thus uses the rehabilitation of Timias and Serena to

stress the superiority of the power of a quiet interpretive act (the Hermit's, especially) to

any form of powerful speech, courtly or not. Such a quiet interpretive act, we might note,

has important parallels to reading as an intellectual activity, a form of interiority, and a

self-defining discipline. And to "talke in open sight," similarly, might be thought of as

---

[25] The O.E.D. lists Spenser as the first to develop one more recent sense of the word "self": "An assemblage of characteristics and dispositions which may be conceived as constituting one of various conflicting personalities within a human being." It cites Sonnet 14 in the Amoretti as one crucial use: **"**And in my selfe, my inward selfe I meane, Most liuely lyke behold your semblant trew." The use of the word "self," like the use of various other terms like "heart," extends and complicates the vocabulary of Platonic representation of identity. I cite this here rather than provide a full argument on the subject, but it is clear a fuller one could be made. I owe thanks to Carter Revard for pointing out to me the historical significance of Spenser's use of the word "self."

published writing, the natural complementary discipline to reading, though such an interpretation appears as yet unwarranted.

The Hermit's work with Serena and Timias at the opening of canto six better defines an understanding of the tension between mind and language: it shows the way in which an ideal mind, through control of language and self, can respond to the problematic variability of speech in the community. Correspondingly, the conclusion of canto six shows that the natural purity and a-linguistic state of the Salvage does not suffice for answer to the complex corruption in characters like Turpine and Blandina. The villainy of such characters is closely bound not just to their use of words, but also to the distortion of their minds (and identities) in a way that Arthur, but not the Salvage, can interpret. Spenser carefully casts Blandina as the opposite of the Hermit when it comes to the direction of the willpower of those around her through controlled uses of language:

> For well she knew the wayes to win good *will*
> Of every wight, that were not too infest,
> And how to please the *minds* of good and ill
> Through *tempering of her words* and lookes by wondrous skill.
>
> Yet were her *words and lookes but false* and fayned… (6.6.41.6-9, 6.6.42.1, italics mine)

Blandina's mastery of words and appearances (words, we have just learned, are of secondary importance to the diagnostician Hermit) is sufficient to infect rather than correct the interior will—her own and Arthur's. The will in this instance is the very thing that, with the mind, would guide the soul (or, in Spenser's use, the self) in the proper moral direction in a Platonic scheme. It is essential to the Hermit's sense of self-control. In this way Spenser takes the opportunity to remind us of the *absence of meaning* in mere physically expressed words. This absence, curiously, is a problem wholly irrelevant to

the Salvage, who was just prepared to tear up the inherently bad Turpine at mere sight. Yet what becomes plain in this instance is precisely that the Salvage does not really *hear* words in the way people must. He constructs meaning in a way that Spenser does not define but suggests is simple and wordless: Serena explains that "he cannot expresse his simple minde,/ Ne yours conceive, ne but by tokens speake" (6.5.30.3-4). However, this is a logical conundrum in the instance of Blandina, whose speech is integrally bound to her will and falsehood. What, then, does Spenser intend his readers to see about the virtue of courtesy that the allegory surrounding Blandina, the Salvage, and Arthur addresses?

Spenser theorizes in the Salvage a kind of perfect noble being with a perfect perception; this reading of the signs itself ends up adequate in the case of Turpine and Blandina, who later prove to richly deserve the punishment the Salvage initially wants to give. Unlike Arthur, he does not hesitate. Yet the Salvage man serves an allegorical purpose much like that of his mechanical predecessor of the previous book, Talus. Talus' justice is too ideal (too brutal) for the social world and needs to be restrained or informed by Artegall. The Salvage's rough courtesy is similar. Its application would be too brutal for us to come towards any greater understanding of the convolutions of courtesy as a human social matter. To show this to us, Spenser emphasizes, as Canto 6 draws to a close, that Blandina's words and looks are more part of the sensory, transient world than part of any stable reality: "Yet were her words but wynd, and all her tears but water" (6.6.42.9). Obviously, the Salvage would see such material things for what they were. He would see them as absent of significant meaning. However, the Salvage *cannot see any meaning in them in any case* and thus cannot conceive of the use of language to feign things, only the general malignity he conceives altogether. Spenser's fantastical wild-

man shows us that to be justly social, to be *courteous*, we need the consciousness of the potential for false words. At the close of canto six, it is obvious that Arthur possesses a consciousness of just such a kind of falseness that the Salvage does not. Only Arthur's, the Hermit's, or another human's capacity to *choose* to disregard spoken language and then construe meaning from an array of more trustworthy, intelligible signs could serve in this situation. The Salvage can only disregard speech. Arthur, in regarding falsehood and its mechanism, has a broader consciousness of the villainy before him and a more gracious command of the social situation. Such graciousness is, to be sure, the essence of courtesy in this context—and thus a core part of this book's concern. Through its emphasis upon the virtuosity of the Hermit and Arthur and the deficiency of the Salvage, then, canto six brings the question of perceiving virtue in the mind to a crisis centered on thorny matters of the perception and communication of stable facets of identity. Spenser in effect makes the social situation complex enough that we as readers see that the Salvage's abilities are insufficient. At the same time, though, Spenser makes plain that words and language are not sufficient in the way that interpreting and understanding must be.

Canto seven commences with continued attention to the question of mind, but now Spenser shows how the mind's self-revelation and self-recognition is crucial to the matter. "The baser mind it selfe displayes,/ in cancred malice and revengefull spight" (6.7.1.3-4), he tells us, and then refers to this sort of mind as a "vile donghill mind" (6.7.1.6). The reader is meant to question how Spenser intends to model the relationship between identity, speech, and action: Can a mind *be* a mind without recognizing its principal rational observational power? And if it lacks that, is it really a mind? This same

crisis develops in the *Fowre Hymnes*: there, as I noted earlier, mind's un-mindfulness

cannot be cured by communicative words, only by the reflective inspiration from a higher

order of beauty. Spoken discourse alone—the tongue—proves fruitless. In the *Fowre

Hymnes*, the question is restricted to the speaker's or poet's concerns; it is not

complicated by a vision of morally complex social choices. Having been faced with

Turpine and Blandina, we know that Spenser is bringing into focus the most complex

social situations possible in order to unfold questions of self-knowledge. Canto seven,

moreover, introduces us to Mirabella who, though she recognizes her fault, cannot

improve her low-born status or her bad habits. Arthur himself ultimately must allow her

to suffer. Naturally there is much more to the psychology of these passages than is

relevant to the question of language. Even so, the problem of good reading or writing as

general interpretive acts, Spenser indicates, devolves upon the individual's mind itself

and its capacity for proper interior communicative acts—that is, thinking well by

reflecting fully upon one's identity and position in the world and coming to recognition

of such things. Blandina, Turpine, and Mirabella have conspicuous problems with such

activities.

We might be able restrain ourselves and imagine that Spenser's work remains

broadly philosophical on points about the mind, self-recognition, and speech (not linking

them to broader questions of language) were it not for the name of one of the key

characters: Calepine. As we have seen, Calepine is meant to be understood as a young

courtier who is, unlike Tristram or the Salvage, made of words much more than of

actions. This interpretation follows from further evidence. Calepine's name, as

Humphrey Tonkin observes, comes "from Friar Ambrogio Calepino, author of the

famous *Dictionarium*" (66), a polyglot dictionary. Daniel Fried's research into

Calepino's well-known lexicon and its editions reveals why this name suits a young,

inept courtier:

> From a late sixteenth-century English perspective, then, Calepino would likely have been viewed as a sort of long-term guide through one's education, the early modern equivalent of a *pedagogus*. One would have consulted Calepino through the course of one's basic schooling in Latin grammar, continued using the work until just below the level of serious scholarship, and then took it along (or found it abroad) when one graduated, on one's travels that were supposed to finish and perfect the grace and elegance of the young nobleman, and prepare him for court. It is this latter characteristic—the importance of Calepino to achieving the more worldly goals of humanistic education—that rendered the lexicographer useful to Spenser, and that hence make the character of Calepine a useful scholarly index to understanding the internal hermeneutical acts required by the period patronage system. (234)

Fried here assumes that the Calepino lexicon's central significance in this reference must

be its role in helping people achieve "the more worldly goals of humanistic education," a

limited understanding I will discuss in detail in the next chapter. However, Calepine is

indeed a young man abroad struggling to understand who must be understood as a kind of

reflection of the lexicon itself. Calepine's clumsiness in Canto Three, as I described

earlier and Fried also observes, blazes into significance by comparison to the direct action

of the inherently noble Salvage (242). Thus Spenser sets up an obvious contrast between

a Salvage who lacks words and a courtier who cannot pursue his basic occupation

without them. This contrast informs the events that surround Calepine by making the

question of good reading a matter of identity and identification. Reading as a form of

interpretation and understanding informs our appreciation of Turpine's misreading of

Calepine, the Salvage's perfect yet inadequate perception of Blandina, and the Hermit's

therapeutic and diagnostic recommendations. All these instances offer a reformed view

of proper adult courtiership that most clearly stands to inform a figure like Calepine.

Spenser's choice of the name Calepine shows that he intends readers to see precisely this map of good and bad reading as crucial to the play of allegory in the book.

Linked to all the questions of speech, reading, mind, and identity that have built the commentary on court culture, Calepine's character also helps Spenser construct a larger conversation about the links between identity and writing because he is crucial to understanding the book's central hero, Calidore. Looking ahead to canto eight, Fried concludes that "the frailty" of Calepine's and Serena's condition as they escape from danger in canto eight is meant to demonstrate the vulnerability of the humanist figure to the depredations of a society hostile to and perverting of education (243). Thus, Fried argues, Calepine, as a model of courtiership, is meant to be "transcended by the more complete heroism of Calidore, who has the same external attainments but adds physical prowess" (243). In such a scheme, Calidore is the fully mature version of the callow, book-learned Calepine. As we move on to consider Calidore in detail, it will become apparent that this simple point is not sufficient to explain Spenser's meaning in contrasting the two. Fried does not observe any distinctions between types of language or visions of the mind; and he does not pursue the question of Spenser's concept of language at all. Since both those distinctions and questions are implicated in Spenser's work with the name and character Calepine, they are essential to understanding the larger context of meaning. We can pursue that question shortly by considering how Calidore adjusts and continues the thematic concern with the tension between mind and language in which Calepine's character is tangled.

But before we move on, it is important to observe just how appropriate the reference to Calepine is to the intellectual argument Spenser has generally engaged with

Lord Burghley—a contest which, as I mentioned at the outset of my chapter, forms a

crucial starting and ending point for the 1596 continuation of the epic. This

characterization of Calepine is not relevant to court simply because Calidore's physical

prowess evokes ideas of martial strength that contrast with the bookishness of Calepine.

As an artifact of intellectual and educational concerns, the Calepino lexicon is linked to

humanist efforts starting at the beginning of the sixteenth century, efforts circumscribed

by an effort to reform the use and vocabulary of Latin. As I will explore and consider in

my next chapter, the work became the basis for the first English language lexicon of Sir

Thomas Elyot, and it was associated with all the efforts to systematically define and

improve English use, too. It is part of the English effort to become part of the humanist

learning generally—and a *very old* and conservative part by the 1590s. Making fun of

Calepine's wordy ineffectuality indicts the stolid tradition of Latinity on which it was

built. This tradition and the "treasuries" of Latin and English being developed for

education and for cultural improvement in the sixteenth century constitute precisely the

old movement with which Lord Burghley's Cambridge contemporaries were associated.

Thus Calepine the character extends our understanding of just what kinds of intellectual

and courtly figures Spenser targeted with his satiric attacks at the end of Book 6: they are

not just people who cannot control their speech or avoid gossip, nor just the people

slandering Spenser's ally Lord Grey, but those whose culturing of speech, like Calepine,

was not entirely suited to the tasks faced by them in the establishing English language

culture. Calepine reflects aspects of courtly education, and specifically *language*

education, that are crucial to Spenser's view of the relevance of his epic to court itself.

Again, though, we will have to examine the strategic contrast between Calepine and

Calidore to understand the most basic aspects of Spenser's conception of language and

mind before being able to give vivid color to the political dimensions of the work.

5. Naming Pastorella

Calepine's name and identity fit neatly into Spenser's adaptation of Platonism and

continue to illustrate the problematic nature of the relations between mind, speech, and

identity in Canto Eight. His name and identity do these two things because his character

is instrumental to promoting silent interpretive reading over physical speech and tying

this promotion to the question of naming and inspiration itself. The link his character

makes between identity and speech is then essential to Spenser's move toward the

assessment of poetic inspiration in Canto Nine. When we last see Calepine in Canto

Eight, he is contrasted with a new collective form of the salvage. The "salvage nation" of

Canto Eight, unlike its noble predecessor, speaks plenty. They debate among themselves

what to do with Serena (6.8.37-43); their priest advises them, makes an oath to their gods

(6.8.43.7-9), and "mutter[s] […] a secret charme" (6.8.45.6) in anticipation of sacrificing

Serena. However, all their linguistic preoccupations are like their cannibalistic physical

appetites for immaterial beauty: perversions of the spiritual into the bodily. "The peoples

voyce" is "confused" (6.8.46.2-3) like the "religion" (6.8.43.9) that guides their

cannibalistic ceremony. Harry Berger's extensive analysis of the Neoplatonic dimensions

of the scene in "A Secret Discipline" concludes that this nation, in its encircling of

Serena, its ritualistic worship, and erotic zealotry, push toward Spenser's basic goal of

tracing the evils we have seen cropping up in characters like Turpine, Blandina, and

Mirabella to their origin in a failure to perceive or use the greater power and reality of the

mind (57-8).[26] To be sure, Berger's is an accurate understanding. Just as he argues, Spenser wishes his readers to see that this cannibal's circle around Serena is a defective version of the rings we will soon see around Pastorella and around the unnamed figure on Mount Acidale. So too we are meant to see Calepine's transformation from a courtier of words to a man of action as a prelude to Calidore's transformation. But part of this transformation occurs despite the complicating and resistant powers of speech, which are set in contrast to contemplation and action. Calepine was initially set in contrast to the silent Salvage. Here he is set in contrast to the "voyce" and "noyce" (6.8.46.2-4) of the cannibals. Calepine rushes to the scene, spies upon it, and then without words dispatches the cannibals. Even after this point language does not serve him. Once Calepine rescues Serena from the nation, his attempts to "question" her and then to "cheare [her] with speaches kind" meet with failure (6.8.50.6-7). Serena will not speak "one word" (6.8.50.9) and remains naked and silent as the canto closes. Formerly voluble, Serena has been reduced to the silent meaningfulness—or meaninglessness!—of the noble Salvage. Similarly, the formerly inept courtier, whose significance in the allegory has been his linguistic association, attains the power of the noble Salvage in the face of the Salvage nation, but as he does so his knowledge of Serena awaits the coming day: "But day, that doth discover bad and good/ Ensewing, made [Serena] knowen to him at last" (6.8.51.8). Thus Spenser forcefully separates identity-revealing meaning from speech and places the whole of it in the revelatory power of "day"—of the light and the properties of vision.

---

[26] Berger's approach, which I will examine again momentarily, rests upon the assumption that Spenser's work in Book 6 depends upon a thematic consideration of a necessary detachment between the world's (or nature's) order and the mind's more poetic, perfect and independent order—one reflective of the divine. He sees Book 6's Neoplatonic imagery—the repeating circles, for example—as linked to an effort to assert the power of this imaginative order, "the behavior of the poetic mind" itself (36). He argues that Spenser wished to argue that "the poetic mind must confer upon the world its mythic forms" (37).

Calepine's silent and evidently limited success has many possible implications, of course. However, seen as an instance of some of the Platonic ideas we have been so far tracking in Spenser's works, this silent revelation of a character's true identity by "insight" (instead of through speeches or simple declaration) is mightily important. Such insight, unlike language, rests in an ultimate knowledge of which Spenser clearly wants his readers to be observant. It is a knowledge that will have the same diagnostic and therapeutic potential accorded the character of the Hermit.

In so far as his character Calepine retains symbolic force associated with his namesake dictionary, Spenser delivers a message about the power of mind that is more specific to Calepine: with the character of Calepine, Spenser hints that he does indeed view words as in need of a complicated interpretive shaping in the mind. Calepine's name is key to his identity, yet this key is constituted, we can only presume, by the total properties of language available to the lexicon itself, its swirl of words. His name and identity are defective when considered only in these linguistic terms, though. Indeed, in Book 6 the character is not successful with speech or action alone. His actions do not make him dramatically more complete. Yet in the final scene Spenser takes us right to the brink of some transforming possibility with Calepine. A limit or threshold is crossed somehow as the two characters, Serena and Calepine, wordlessly recognize one another in the "day" after speech and action have not sufficed. Once the words and acts have been *contemplated*—that is, placed under the ordering and revelatory influence of the intellective power—they attain, even in the awkwardness of the circumstance, a sort of power and dignity not possessed before. It is as if words were being protected by the mind—or finding their composed meanings there. This association between mind and

language in the allegory suggests that Barbara Strang's sense of the "Platonic coloring" inherent to Spenser's poetic strategy is accurate. Spenser's depiction of the man named after a lexicon is one in which he hopes the very naming is fitting and logical in ways that a simple matter of speech could not be. Calepine's fate as a name and word is contextualized by intellectual interpretive acts.

Those who have paid close attention to the nature of Calepine's move toward better self-definition in canto eight are amply rewarded in cantos nine to twelve. There, a parallel pattern in the story of Calidore's discovery and rescue of Pastorella reinforces the ideas about language dramatized in Calepine's redemption. This final narrative of the book follows Calidore's assumption of his own true identity and the revelation of Pastorella's matching noble identity. The cantos address not just the humanist learning with which Calepine's name and fate is associated, but also the foundational edifice of humanist poetics as it relates to the question of spoken and written language, more thoroughly developing the sort of assertions about language and its relation to poetics that Strang proposes. As with previous cantos, Spenser here situates the term "mind" in ways designed to signal problems with language and identity. Early in the canto, Pastorella, who is to prove of noble stock, is set in a ring of maidens (6.9.10). Like Serena surrounded by cannibals, she attracts attention, though in a more positive way. Pastorella's ring of women exhibits and ornaments her beauty, while the ring of slavering men around Serena perversely hopes to ingest her beauty. Spenser is careful to foreshadow Pastorella's value as an object of observation—if not a lens with which to focus the reader's gaze on higher intellective knowledge—when he refers to the other maidens around her as "lesser lamps" (6.9.9.5) of a firmament and then asserts of

Pastorella that "higher did her mind ascend" (6.9.10.9). In that great Platonic and
Neoplatonic tradition, then, Calidore views Pastorella and is attracted to the nobility
which inherently he himself is—that is, he is attracted to the form of beauty whose truth
he himself contains.

Though his gaze will eventually be focused on the proper object, Calidore's
immediate view of himself is far from clear, and thus his mind, speech, and identity are
confused. Calidore is struggling with a desire to abandon his quest to overcome the
Blatant Beast and settle down in the ideal pastoral landscape with the ostensibly country-
born Pastorella. Spenser foregrounds the tension between desire, language, and mind in
Calidore's conversation with Meliboe and viewing of Pastorella: "That twixt his
[Meliboe's] pleasing tongue and her [Pastorella's] faire hew/ He [Calidore] lost himselfe,
and like one halfe entraunced grew" (6.9.26.8-9).   Here we cannot miss the presence of
the ill-working material "tongue," and Spenser is careful to pair it with a lost sense of
identity. Immediately after, Spenser describes how Calidore tries "to worke his *mind*,/
And to insinuate his hart's desire" (6.9.27.1-2, my italics). By even trying to move the
mind from its needed stability, Calidore errs, and Meliboe appears to warn him of it: "It is
the mynd," the old man says, "that maketh good or ill" (6.9.30.1). As in *The Fowre
Hymnes*, the worst problems occur when the mind un-becomes itself and fails in the
essential task of self-recognition. This task has been part of our understanding of
Calepine and the work of the Hermit, so it is familiar at this stage, and it is deeply bound
up with the idea of the mind as a site of virtue that is a general theme of the book. By the
beginning of Canto ten, Spenser signals that just such a problem has occurred for
Calidore, who is described as "unmyndfull of his vow and high beheast" (6.10.1.3). He

has begun to lose himself, his own identity, and we shall see that what will ideally transpire in Cantos Eleven and Twelve is his return to his role as representative of courtesy through his match to Pastorella, soon revealed to be of noble birth. In fact, as Calidore composes himself to rescue Pastorella in canto eleven, Spenser describes how he "in his mind with better reason cast" (6.11.34.4).

Before Calidore can resume his identity, though, he suffers a serious setback. Other authors might have let the already-complicated thematic pattern of the book ride smoothly towards the conclusion, but Spenser takes the opportunity in Canto ten to complicate Calidore's situation by introducing Colin Clout and, necessarily, himself and his poetic interests. Harry Berger describes the dance of the Graces on Mount Acidale as "an evocation of an ideal […] community, completely unified and controlled by the mind" (50) through which Spenser himself asserts that "poetry's true work and pleasure require detachment rather than involvement" (41). Yet even Berger, drawing upon Neoplatonism to characterize the broad trends of the book, finds something amiss in this community of the mind. Berger finds the vision of the Graces, as it is described by Colin in stanzas 25-28, to be disturbing for what it says about poetic method itself in part because "they imitate the movement of figures around a center *beyond the reach of language*" (67, italics mine). The scene remains pastoral, he says, though it "resonates with the full amplitude of cosmic harmony" (67) and yet ultimately teaches us only what poets cannot understand until it is actually achieved:

> And in this movement it is not simply the described figures but the vision itself which seems stanza by stanza to shift and revolve, expand and contract, unfolding as if *the poet does not know what he thinks till he sees what he says*. (68, italics mine)

What disturbs Berger, however, improves my own interpretation. The nameless figure at the center of the dance that is beyond linguistically-accessible description confirms the case in Book 6 against any language other than that achieved by or constructed by the inward intellect. Indeed, to "see what you say" happens most concretely in writing and reading, interpretive activities par excellence. Colin even asks "Who can aread?" this central nameless figure. By "aread," Colin intends the older meaning, "arede," which means "to decree" or "to divine," arguably an archaic and archaistic meaning that was in use in Spenser's time and later. But the word's archaic meaning overlaps significantly with its more prosaic meaning, "to read," and thus at the least contains the sense of "to interpret."[27] Calepine, as we have lately seen, only attains dignified knowledge in action followed by a deeply shamed silence under the light of day. Calidore interrupts a vision for a linguistic report from Colin whose value, as a mere reflection of the original sight, Spenser encourages us to question. Calidore's description of himself as "the author of [Colin's] bale" (6.10.29.4) provokes us to see the vulnerability of the authorial position itself here, among other things. In the description of the "discourses" between Colin and Calidore that follow in the thirtieth stanza, Spenser also provokes us to realize that Calidore's delight with Colin's poetry has been a serious distraction from his duty to Pastorella and his true identity. "Such discourses […Calidore's] greedy fancy fed," Spenser tells us, adding that Calidore's "sences" are "ravished" by the circumstances

---

[27] The Oxford English Dictionary online cites the archaistic meanings of "arede" as essentially extensions of the basic root word, "read." Aside from "to decree," the oldest meanings, and perhaps the ones Spenser wanted us to consider, have three overlapping denotations that the OED provides: "To divine the meaning of (obscure words), interpret (a dream), solve (a riddle or enigma)." These meanings are somewhat broader than the term "read" as we currently take them. In support of this approach to the complexity of the word, Ann Ferry in *The Art of Naming* points out that the meanings of the verb "to read" (not just Spenser's use of it) were quite broad in the sixteenth century (9-11) and argues that "Spenser's uses of the verb *to read* in *The Faerie Queene* create a special relationship among the narrator of the story, the characters in it, and its audience all of whom are called on to perform acts of reading of every kind" (39).

even though Calidore "with reason red" the words themselves. In other words, in his abstracted state without proper identity, he lacks the essential steadiness of mind to achieve the silent contemplative form of interpretation rewarding to the Hermit and Calepine. Calidore's inattention to his own identity during this dalliance proves to be the near loss of Pastorella herself, as his desire to delay with Colin results in his absence while Pastorella is carried off by the Brigants. In such respects, Spenser's work is adjusting rather than simply conforming to the sorts of cosmic Neoplatonic visions and values that underwrite a great deal of his imagery.

Berger's interpretation focuses exclusively on the passage in which Colin re-tells what happened—the point after Calidore's interruption. Yet it is not in the re-telling of the scene that Spenser presents his most vibrant depiction of poetic agency, but in the initial description and, from Calidore's view, experience of the event. Canto ten provides in stanzas ten to seventeen a description of a scene whose particulars, had Calidore interpreted their meaning rather than interrupted to ask for explanation, would have provided him all he needed to know about the noble nature of Pastorella and the nature of his own response to her as someone still bound to his "high beheast." But more than that, the scene describes vatic inspiration itself. It shows how the mere interruption of a bungling man curious to ask what is going on divests language of its requisite power of contemplative interpretation. In the fifteenth stanza, what Calidore sees in Colin's devotion to the central figure is a reflection of his own necessary duty to Pastorella, the central figure in Calidore's drama:

> …But that faire one
> That in the midst was placed paravaunt,
> Was she to whom the shepheard pypt alone,
> That made him pipe so merrily, as never none. (6.10.15.6-9)

In the vision, Colin's service in music lies with this central figure to whose beauty he responds with his own virtuosity. This is the well-established pattern of love in the Platonic study. Since we have learned in cantos nine and ten that Calidore is conscious of his legitimate attraction to Pastorella, here indeed is a foreshadowing (or forebrightening?) of the nature of her identity and his response to it that he *should* see. After all, we are never to learn Pastorella's real name, only the name bestowed on her as a foundling. After her true identity is discovered, she remains nameless. However, even though Calidore could not anticipate such events, he does not *read* the scene before him by understanding that his position is parallel to Colin's. He does not see that they are reflections of one another. Calepine as a figure, following Fried's interpretation, signifies a deficiency in the humanist social position that requires a stronger arm, which Calidore is fated to provide. Similarly, Colin represents the vulnerable poetic ethos that, when properly aligned with a power like Calidore who understands their sympathetic identities, *can* be "read" and defended. What happens instead of this reading and defense, however, is instructive both in terms of what it tells us about Calidore's powerful role and Colin's relationship to it. Calidore interrupts and turns Colin's devotions into a deluding circus, distracting his own power or authority from its truer purpose and forgetting himself. The scene thus dramatizes the relationship between psychology, sociology, and poetics; the production of poetic work is linked to the establishment of a political and social identity sufficiently conscious of itself—its position in a universal order and its duties in that order—to interpret the identities of others properly.

The scene on Mount Acidale also presents an image of the reflective dialogic nature of writing, as a conversation between author and author's self on the page, in a

curious and subtle way. Spenser's interjection ("Who knows not Colin Clout?" [6.10.16.4]) refers to his own published authorial identity. The dialogue that ensues between Colin and Calidore, therefore, suggests if not enacts a conversation between public selves. On the one hand, such selves could depict Spenser's double public authorial selves as the author of this work and the mind behind Calidore. On the other, they could represent Spenser and one of his powerful allies in court—like Essex, perhaps—as the selves whom Calidore and Colin represent. While all such figures and contexts are appropriate, it is most clear that Spenser has already suggested a political context for this book in particular and for his own role as a poet serving political powers. Spenser had chastised Lord Burghley in the beginning of Book 4 for *misreading* the intent and usefulness of his visions of love and beauty. Here in Book 6, we have a scene of love and beauty. We also have an example of a bungling power interrupting a poet's vision—and thereby revealing his own failure to interpret what is before him properly. Burghley's criticisms of Spenser's themes of love and beauty from his earlier books were, in the scheme of making writing public, an instance of meddling in the poetic vision even as it was constructed. Colin would have felt interrupted; Spenser certainly did. At the close of Book 6, Spenser directs our attention specifically to the failure of communication between himself and Lord Burghley. The implications are ready: by this particular scene of allegory Spenser means to show how a properly self-conscious political agent will not get distracted, as Calidore does, by not recognizing what is important in a poetic vision or by trying to meddle in its process. Spenser intends this advice to Burghley specifically and to other court patrons generally as a way of defining the relationship of political power to poetry. It is a more appropriate piece of model

advice if we observe that Spenser has made his contest with Burghley not just a matter of

political culture but one of intellectual and academic culture. The scene *justifies*

Spenser's critical rebuke of Burghley by asserting that he, as Colin, knows his role as

poet as well as Calidore, as Burghley or any statesmen, *must* know his role relative to the

poet if he is to interpret the work and deal in the matters of public image and reputation

that poets do.

Setting aside the likely political and intellectual contest between Burghley and

Spenser, we can see that the scene presents Colin and Calidore in the idealized pastoral

landscape projected by their poetic and heroic endeavors. Such "selfly" agents need not

be named, naturally, as in the course of the allegory they become Platonic essences that

Spenser does not need to name. These ghosts of identity behind the bold imposition of

Colin illustrate a view of the mind as a singular place of meaning that can host multiple

words and identities, a deeply Platonic ideal. Canto ten presents the assertion of

Spenser's own authorial identity as an un-named essence at the core of the intellectual

product of his verse, suggesting that he sees an extension of the order of the mind or soul

into the publications themselves. He retains some of the paradox of Neoplatonist

philosophy, which suggests that this physical material owes its significance to a soul, a

soul which in turn owes its meaning to a reflection of the light of creation in the

hypostases exterior to time and space. However, Spenser's position here differs from

Platonism or Neoplatonism because he invests identity with so blatant a connection to

publications of a specific kind rather than the abstractions of philosophical dialectic.

Colin is Spenser's signature character—knowledge of him is complete in the implied

estimation of the rhetorical question "*Who knows him not?*" Everyone must know him in

a way that transcends the simple personal knowledge of physical association because published work exists outside the author's immediate physical being and can multiply endlessly. The oral dialogue between Colin and Calidore is cast as the corruption and downfall of the vision. Yet the written character (Colin) tied to the vision itself is outside the temporal and sensual decay typical of the dialogue between Colin and Calidore. Needless to say, all of what Spenser provides is written. But the consistent assertion of the value of writing and reading (as contemplative activities) over speech sets up canto ten's depiction of individual identity's authenticated link to the printed media. It does so by figuring the importance of sympathetic recognition to the power of a mind reacting to and organizing language as a part of an idealized social order.

The assertion of Platonically-determined values of language with some identifiable political contexts in canto ten amounts to the development of a poetics with several important features. In this poetics, individually produced meaning (the work of one poet or another) ideally proceeds from the essential properties of the productive mind—the individual speech and mind of the one person producing it. Such poetic meaning nevertheless confirms its own value and function by falling into alignment within a greater order made up of psychological, social, historical, and cosmological forces. Naturally, that greater order can break down, annulling poetic meanings. If someone like Calidore, who ought to be true to his own identity in assuming positions of leadership, should fail to pursue what is basically his own identity, then that order breaks down. (Brigants arrive and dissolve civil society. Clumsy courtiers interrupt and dissolve visionary order.) However, if the order does not break down, the poet too may be true to

his or her own identity, making it possible for him or her to sing truly of and exist harmoniously with what he or she depicts.

The play of ideas surrounding Colin and Calidore makes it easier to understand the nuances of Spenser's treatment of Pastorella's birthmark in the final canto of the book, and then to show how the two sides of the final canto link together in allegory. Spenser stresses the security with which the birthmark links Pastorella to nobility, associating its symbol with a sort of fixed personal identity rather than a merely arbitrary sign. First, he stresses that it is a beautiful mark in and of itself, a "rose" (6.12.7.9). Then he notes that Melissa, the nurse, "well […] markt" the birthmark upon abandoning the infant in a field. The mark is meaningful even to those that might not themselves be noble, it appears. Pastorella's identity is thus not a matter to be established by loose speculation or story, which is convenient precisely because Spenser's readers would have been so highly conscious of the problems posed by rumor and talk for hereditary monarchy. Words, whether of story, rumor, poetry, or rhetoric, are not only insufficient grounds for the establishment of legitimate identity in a hereditary monarchy, but they are also the perennial source of problems for the legitimacy of a monarchy. As if to signal his sensitivity to such problems, Spenser has Melissa describe Pastorella herself as though she were mere gossip in the mouths of the people: Pastorella, she says, "in misfortunes mouth was plaste" (6.12.16.9) when abandoned. Similarly, Claribell, on initially receiving Melissa's report, questions "how mote [Melissa's] words be understood" (6.12.17.3.) and Spenser notes that she is "troubled at that speach" produced by Melissa. The doubt over spoken report is palpable, and Spenser's intent becomes clearer once he shows how it is resolved. He contrasts the doubt of speech with the "most certaine

markes" (6.12.18.3) that Claribell sees herself and then further confirms with "very certaine signes" (as if astrological signs) and "speaking markes of passed monuments" (6.12.20.3-4). The "speaking markes" in particular evince the value of writing in this context. Moreover, the presence of these marks puts Pastorella's position, as a foundling, in profound contrast to the earlier example of the child adopted by Sir Bruin and Matilde. That foundling's association with the bear's infant/whelp-shaping tongue (and hence, in an allegorical way, with the shaping power of rumor and language generally) is complemented by the manipulation of a prophecy and the truth in his adoption—as A.C. Hamilton puts it, Sir Bruin "believes that his wife bears the child that she in fact received from a bear" (652n).

At stanza 22 in the final canto, Spenser shifts from the subject of Pastorella to the subject of the Blatant Beast's capture. However, the two subjects together provide an allegorical message about writing and public speech: if legitimized, writing fits into an established order in such a way as to quell and defeat the instability of the kind of talk that so easily slides toward the very defamation the Blatant Beast represents. Pastorella's resumption of her true identity is a securing of communication itself which in turn creates a more secure social order, where defective uses of language may be tamed. This interpretation makes yet better sense if we remember that Mount Acidale presents an assertion and justification of the place of poetry in writing and publication, not mere speculative speech and fancy, but as an instrument deserving the sympathetic and intelligent readings of agents of power and public order. The book's concluding gesture toward Lord Burghley confirms this view. Spenser there contrasts the "wicked tongues" (6.12.41.5) with "rimes" in "better measure" (6.12.41.8), showing off his own preference

for writing and his high opinion of published poetry's potential. The irony that Spenser attacks Burghley with this speech is certainly not meant to be lost on us. Rather, it is clearly meant to help us envision both the ordered state, wherein that comment is true praise for Burghley, and the disordered one, in which it functions as a timely rebuke.

Book 6 argues, quite conventionally, that the proper recognition of individual identity is inevitably virtuous. However, there is a twist which ties the matter of self-recognition to communication and meaning of a different sort. Book 6 simultaneously pins the means by which virtuous identity is assumed to the metaphysical question of naming as an un-spoken and inwardly read or written form of being much like the vision of identity presented at the end of *The Fowre Hymnes*. We never know Pastorella's name, but we know that her true identity is, like Calidore's, made possible by her achievement of her proper place in society through the reading of unerring signs. Once in her place, she is—perhaps—as good as named. In such work, Spenser adjusts Platonic theory's view of speech and writing in terms of their relation to the soul in a manner parallel to that developed in the *The Fowre Hymnes*. Yet in the "Legend of Courtesie" his emphasis upon naming, such as with Calepine, Pastorella, and the unnamed central figure on Mount Acidale, urges a Platonic view of the essences from which meaning proceeds as the means by which to understand if not regulate poetic effort and inspiration. Mind in all its silence rules language. Poetic effort insofar as it is connected to a good cosmological order must fit in with the society in such a way that powerful figures, like Calidore, understand its relevance to their public identity well enough to protect it.

6. Conclusion

96

The problematic relationship between mind and words laid out and resolved in the *Fowre Hymnes* establishes and asserts a great value for the interpretive or mental aspects language in the form of a kind of metaphysical writing. This figure of the writing on the soul is Spenser's method whereby to describe the soul's ideal relation to language. While in some respects this approach violates Platonic reasoning on the subject, and while it is a mistake to think of Spenser's approach as rigidly Neoplatonic or Platonic, in other respects his reasoning about writing conforms to the assumptions about investigating the soul laid out in Plato's *Phaedrus*, though not its specific conclusions. Just as importantly, Spenser's approach to language generally takes on a sort of "Platonic coloring," as Barbara Strang calls it, which forms a useful means of thinking about how he sees an individual poet's relation to the collective phenomenon of language. Examining these strategies reveals more completely the intellectual basis for the challenge Spenser issues to Lord Burghley both in Books 4-6 of *The Faerie Queene* and in *Mother Hubberds Tale*.

Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* reflects the view of language presented in the *Fowre Hymnes*: Spenser routinely promotes writing and reading over speech by establishing tensions between the ideal state of the mind and spoken language, particularly in cantos four to eight. But Spenser does not simply rest in this Platonic or Neoplatonic territory. He is struggling to redefine the relationship between mind and language in a way that accounts for the meaningfulness of an individual's use of language as a sort of self-recognition. In the crucial scenes of cantos ten through twelve, Spenser asserts a poetics in which artful language use (ideally figured in Colin's vision) is attached to the virtuous expression and recognition of identity not just among poets, but among those figures in society who should be in a position to defend poets. Spenser uses

Calidore's failure to recognize his sympathetic relation to Colin as a critical vehicle for such a view. Then Calidore's ultimate "mindfulness" of his true identity "marked" in his bride, Pastorella, corrects errors of identity. Pastorella's silent naming—her "reading" into her proper place—becomes the final hurdle to clear before the courteous task of taming rumor and slander is achieved. The proper order of society, we can only assume, enables the exercise of virtuous self-expression for a Calidore, Colin, Calepine, or Pastorella.

Book 6 does not resolve the question of language's role in exactly the way that the *Fowre Hymnes* does. In the latter, we come to see that insight into the language on the soul, converted into writing itself, is the honorable source of stable knowledge in the world. Such an honorable source in the soul is also revealed in the *The Faerie Queene*, but access to and acknowledgement of this source is no longer a matter solely of individual redemption. With Calepine, Calidore, and Pastorella, language, mind, and identity are public, political, social, and military matters. The Blatant Beast of slander and rumor is merely one symptom of an illness within this larger dimension of acculturating material interests. The Beast is a mutt, not a great unholy dragon, after all, which is perhaps why his capture is so anticlimactic and why the failure to tame him in that present is part of a secular problem larger than Spenser is willing to address at the end of his treatment of the virtue of courtesy. Moreover, the shamed if potent silence of Calepine, the unnamed figure at the center of the dance in canto ten, and the namelessness of Pastorella suggest that the writing on the soul which comes so clear in an individual song of devotion to love and beauty is, in the public realm, far more elusive. The ideal order for language and society is *not* achieved. The defective state clearly owes

to Spenser's recognition of the defective English colonial project of which he was a part—and, indeed, this is a troubling recognition that scholars like Richard McCabe have ably sighted and linked to Spenser's misgivings about the Irish language and culture, as I will consider in my final chapter.

Because such questions remain unresolved and indeed cannot be resolved by simply understanding the idealist Platonic patterns, they need to be understood partly in the already-established political and social framework Spenser provides with his complaints against Lord Burghley. Thus far I have a sufficient basis for understanding those complaints as rooted in the sententious, conservative typing of Lord Burghley himself. However, as the direct reference to lexicography through Calepine's name reveals, Spenser's intellectual concerns are ever broader than one figure and his political power. In the next chapter, I will turn to a more detailed description of Spenser's ideas about lexicography and how they fit into the artistic and educational interests addressed in Book 6.

7. Works Cited & Consulted

Alford, Stephen. *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I*. New Haven: Yale
	UP, 2008.

Allen, Michael J.B., Valerie Rees, & Martin Davies, eds. *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology,*
	His Philosophy, His Legacy. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

"Arede." Defs.1, 2, 4, 5, 7. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989.

Beckingsale, B.W. *Burghley: Tudor Statesman*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967.

Bellamy, Elizabeth. "Colin and Orphic Interpretation: Reading Neoplatonically on

    Spenser's Acidale." *Comparative Literature Studies* 27.3 (1990): 172-192.

Berger, Harry. "A Secret Discipline: *The Faerie Queene* Book VI." *Form and*

    Convention in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser. Ed. William Nelson. New York:

    Columbia UP, 1961.

Ellrodt, Robert. *Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser*. Geneva: E. Droz, 1960.

Ferry, Ann. *The Art of Naming*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.

Ficino, Marsilio. *Gardens of Philosophy: Ficino on Plato*. Trans. Arthur Farndell.

    London: Shepheard-Walwyn, 2006.

Ficino, Marsilio. *Marsilio Ficino's Book of Life*. Trans. & Ed. Charles Boer. Woodstock,

    Connecticut: Spring Publications, 1996.

Ficino, Marsilio. *Marsilio Ficino: Platonic Theology, 3: Books 9-11*. Trans. Michael J.B.

    Allen & John Wardon. Eds. James Hankins & William Bowen. Cambridge, MA:

    Harvard UP, 2001.

Ficino, Marsilio. *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*. Dallas: Spring

    Publications, 1985.

Fried, Daniel. "Defining Courtesy: Spenser, Calepine, and Renaissance Lexicography."

    The Review of English Studies, New Series. 58:235 (2007) 229-244.

Graves, Michael A.R. *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley*. New York: Longman,

    1998.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Learning To Curse*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Hall, Robert A. "Meaning and the Idiolect: The Idioseme." *Scientific and Humanistic Dimensions of Language: Festschrift for Robert Lado*. Amsterdam, PA: John Benjamins, 1985.

Hamilton, A. C. Ed. *The Faerie Queene*. New York: Longman, 1977.

Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992.

Heninger Jr., S.K. "The Aesthetic Experience of Reading Spenser." *Contemporary Thought on Edmund Spenser*. Eds. Richard C. Frushell & Bernard J. Vondersmith. Carbondale: SIU Press, 1975.

Hieatt, A. Kent. *Short Time's Endless Monument: The Symbolism of the numbers in Edmund Spenser's Epithalamion*. New York: Columbia UP, 1960.

Hile, Rachel E. "Hamlet's Debt to Spenser's *Mother Hubberds Tale:* A Satire on Robert Cecil?" *Shakespeare and Spenser: Attractive Opposites*. Ed. Lethbridge. New York: Manchester UP, 2008

Jayne, Sears. Ed. "Introduction." *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985.

Kaske, Carol. "Neoplatonism in Spenser Once More." *Religion & Literature*. 32.2 (2000): 157-169.

Lancashire, Ian. "Empirically Determining Shakespeare's Idiolect." *Shakespeare Studies*. 25 (1997): 171-85.

Lancashire, Ian. "Probing Shakespeare's Idiolect in Troilus and Cressida, 1.3.1-129." *University of Toronto Quarterly*. 68.3 (1999): 728-766.

Larsen, Kenneth J. Ed. "Commentary." *Edmund Spenser's Amoretti and Epithalamion, A Critical Edition*. Tempe: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997.

Moss, Ann. *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structures of Renaissance Thought*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1996.

Mulcaster, Richard. *Positions*. New York: Teachers College P, 1971.

Plato. *Phaedrus*. Trans. & Eds. Paul Woodruff and Alexander Nehamas. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995.

Quitslund, Jon A. *Spenser's Supreme Fiction: Platonic Natural Philosophy and The Faerie Queene*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2001.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. New York: Longman, 1977.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Eds. William A. Oram et al. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989. Though I consulted Larsen, all quotations from the *Amoretti* and the *Fowre Hymnes* come from this text.

Strang, Barbara. "Language." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. Buffalo: U of Toronto P, 1990.

Tonkin, Humphrey. *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book Six of The Faerie Queene*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1972.

Chapter 2:
Consulting Spenser's References:
The Significance of the Lexicography of Dominico Mirabellio and Ambrogio
Calepino to Spenser's Views of Language

In the first chapter, I argued that Spenser's adjustments in Platonic theory inform

his figural engagement with ideas about speech, writing, and mind in Book 6 of *The*

Faerie Queene. At the center of that effort lies his characterization of Calepine, a heroic

but not entirely elegant or admirable figure. As a representative of the lexicographic work

on Latin from the early sixteenth century of which the Calepino lexicon was part,

Calepine tangentially serves some of Spenser's criticism of Lord Burghley's aged

intellectual and scholarly associations. Burghley's milieu had methodical intellectual

priorities, and Burghley conspicuously aligned himself against an English vernacular

poetic effort of which Spenser was a part. Of course, a reference to the lexicon is more

than just a reference to Lord Burghley or his associates. As Daniel Fried points out, the

Calepino lexicon was subject to many changes in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

Fried believes that Spenser and his readers would have associated the Calepino with a

"linguistic competency," among other things, and he focuses on how the text was likely

used in order to explain just what the character of Calepine signifies. And Fried's work

is just a start. In the present chapter, I sharpen our understanding of what Spenser means

in referring to the Calepino lexicon by comparing its history to that of the *Polyanthea*

lexicon of Dominico Nanni Mirabellio. Spenser refers to the *Polyanthea* and its

lexicographer with the character of Mirabella, who is placed right alongside Calepine in

the allegory of canto eight of Book 6. As I show, Spenser's choice of the names Calepine

and Mirabella as references to the Calepino and Mirabellio lexicons helps him define his

ideas about the relationship between language and knowledge that each lexicon evinces. They do so in part because they reveal his attitudes toward the lexicography of his time and its bearing on English-language issues in the sixteenth century. The Calepine character is meant to reflect and comment on the troubled and yet useful features of the Calepino lexicon: troubled because it could not serve English-language lexicography well, useful because it provides a more reliable model of how to define good and bad language use roughly in line with humanist thinking. Spenser expresses more reservations about Mirabellio's *Polyanthea*, though. His far more negative characterization of Mirabella, given the history of the Mirabellio in rejecting classical language poetry and rhetoric, shows he intends to satirize Mirabellio's scornful condemnation of love poetry *and* the attendant stance on how to understand and craft a good language. Together, I argue, references to the lexicons through these allegorical characters reveal Spenser's general dislike of lexicography's work in defining language, turning us toward a more serious examination of his advocacy of the role of poet and poetry as the means to understanding and defining how language should be studied and learned.

1. Problems with Lexicography

Bo Svensén begins his recent *Practical Lexicography* by emphasizing the difference between dictionaries and encyclopedias: both are "arranged in an arbitrary way" for "a user who needs to fill a gap in his knowledge on a very specific point," but whereas an encyclopedia "communicates knowledge about the world," a dictionary "gives information about individual units in the communication system (i.e. the language) by means of which people exchange messages about the world" (2). Svensén afterward

104

recognizes problems with the distinction: "encyclopedic" dictionaries exist, dictionaries

offer information that is purely about the world (not about language alone), and

encyclopedias offer purely linguistic information as well (2-3). Nowhere in Svensén's

commentary, however, does he explain why such distinctions are so problematic. Rather,

he immediately supplies a "concept" of a "linguistic sign"(3) in order to distinguish the

interest of contemporary lexicography from any broader practice. Such a sign can be

isolated from other signs and be tracked in terms of its "expression" and "function" such

that a dictionary maker would simply desire to describe its "formal characteristics"

separately from its basic meaning, its "semantic characteristics," and its "combinatorial

characteristics" (2-3). Interestingly, despite such careful definition, he also suggests that

the dictionary-maker should supply information about the "pragmatics" that "includes the

non-linguistic facts that are involved in the use of the words" (3). At every stage in his

description then, we are led to see the difficulties in trying to separate linguistic from

non-linguistic knowledge.

Svensén's view is, as the title of his book stresses, practical. As such it tells us a

great deal about lexicography generally. It tells us what sacrifices enable studies in

words for those wishing to construct manageably small texts for a "user," as he puts it,

with specific interests: a dictionary for someone who wants to learn conversational or

literary French, for example. On the one hand, then, Svensén constructs a vision of an

autonomous linguistic essence of knowledge—the "linguistic sign" he refers to.

Conceiving of languages as independent systems, formal communicative devices with a

set of operational laws, renders a dictionary's function more or less comparable or

parallel to that of grammars (the meta-linguistic devices, to be precise) with which the

systematic properties of any given language, but not all languages, may be understood. A

grammar, of course, is not the *actual* and complete system whereby a language generates

meaning, though. No linguistic study or philology has managed to describe that

system—if indeed it is a formal logical system.[28] Therefore, on the other hand—and in

complete contradictory defiance of even *positing* the autonomous linguistic sign-

system—Svensén accedes that practical information and knowledge from outside that

formal system is necessary to explaining words. That is to say, grammar alone is not

enough: both a special semantics and "non-linguistic" elements must be understood to

explain the sign system. *What's practical about this?!* the observer of so obvious a

contradiction might ask. In the face of ignorance about how knowledge and language

work together (how thoughts and minds are related to linguistic expression and

understanding, for example), Svensén suggests a focus on the systematic properties of

language presumably *for the construction of texts explaining words* in isolation. In other

words, Svensén's choice is made for those who want to *do* lexicographic work—books of

lexicography, dictionaries of languages and translation. For practical purposes, then, he

insists that they try *not* to produce encyclopedic works describing the whole of

knowledge itself, but rather works limited to a view of what can be said of the system of

---

[28] This is not to say that recent lexicography does not have good reasons for supposing that languages have
special systematic features. It is simply to say that lexicography currently takes faith in the systematic
nature of words and languages as a whole and our potential to gain access to the system through study and,
in particular, works whose organization lay bare the system's function. This potential is a realistic one.
After all, the last two hundred years of philology and linguistics have revealed an enormous amount. I in no
way wish to dismiss it or the value of lexicography's alliance with linguistics and philology. Rather, I wish
to make plain how difficult it is to understand the relationship between knowledge of a general kind and a
specific, language-bound knowledge *for* lexicography historically. Understanding that circumstance makes
Spenser's reactions to lexicography and quarrels among lexicographers about Latin easier to explain.

words in languages and a few additional non-systemic matters helpful to imagining that system.

The vision of a word existing in isolation, of a text designed to expose the world of meanings in complete disconnection from the world of things, has a whiff of madness easily detected amid the enthusiasm of lexicographers. Consider Sidney Landau's comments on the same subject in *Dictionaries: The Art & Craft of Lexicography*: after stressing the split between encyclopedias and dictionaries by dismissively citing the "apothegm, 'Dictionaries are about words, encyclopedias are about things,'" (7) and even acknowledging exceptions to that very distinction, he pauses to reassert what he has not been able to assert. That is, he writes, Dictionaries "are not encyclopedias" and bustles onward to define their essential identity. Such discreet nonsense suggests that the lexicographic scholars do not want to admit that words might be nothing more than especially complicated *things* whose special uses for and relation to minds accounts for that complexity. After all, a dictionary that simply explained a special set of complex things would be nothing more than a type of encyclopedia or history book. The value of a lexicographic and linguistic formal expertise would dip noticeably. Perhaps more upsettingly for the devoted lexicographer, such a demotion might reveal the prescriptive force behind language dictionaries to be more obviously culturally embedded and thus less intrinsically authoritative. Naturally, lexicography has much support for the view of language as an autonomous system from the extensive and persuasive work of philology and linguistics. However, to acknowledge such theory-bound arguments about language and their histories might risk demoting the value of independent lexicographic work further.

This problem with lexicographic theory and practice as I have outlined it above merits my sustained attention because it plays a part in understanding of the Calepino lexicon (and, perhaps more importantly, the Mirabellio *Polyanthea)* and its relevance to Spenser's allegory. Daniel Fried, as I pointed out in my first chapter, produces a just and swift appraisal of "the role which the Calepino dictionary played within" early modern culture (230). He first indicates that the original version of the Calepino in 1502 and shortly thereafter, although it was "meant as a fairly advanced reference tool for scholars and students" (230), was in fact full of mythology, geography, and history since it "served partly in the role of what we could call an encyclopaedia." Fried immediately makes a distinction that has all the perils Bo Svensén's and Landau's distinctions illustrate. That is, Fried distinguishes the Calepino as encyclopedic in nature even if lexicographic in design; he does so with the presumption that a true dictionary somehow performs a purer analytical and less culturally-bound work. Moreover, in his haste to explain how the many later printings of the work after 1550 or so converted the lexicon into a "true polyglot dictionary" (231) that associated the work strongly with "exclusively linguistic competency" (242), Fried neglects to account for the purpose of the original work and its conspicuous place in the history of humanist learning. As John Considine reports, "the dictionary was a response to the new dissemination of classical Latin texts, and aimed to document their vocabulary while excluding that of the post-classical world" (29). And indeed, as Ann Moss shows in her *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn*, the work was crucially embedded in humanist debates about how to find and use the best forms of Latin: she points out that Ambrogio Calepino's own introduction recognizes the debate by citing a dispute with Lorenzo Valla (23). Fried, in his haste to

characterize the general history of the work's *use*—the very concern that crucially directs Svensén's "practical lexicography"—overlooks the work's original design and that design's value to the very pedagogical interests of which it later became a part. Such a matter would have been, as I shall show in more detail later, of great interest to Spenser and contributed to his reasons for assigning its name to a character in his epic.

As I made plain in my last chapter, I do agree with Daniel Fried that Calepine's character is deliberately associated with matters of language, reading, interpretation, etc. He is right that the lexicon was chosen because it, like Book 6 in general, is "naturally contextualized by the problematic mix of education, travel, ambition, and display that was felt to dominate the early modern royal court" (236). However, I was at pains in the last chapter to provide an interpretation of language issues that accounted for the flexible Platonic ideas Spenser uses in conjunction with them: it is difficult to explain Spenser's ideas about speech, reading, or semiotics without taking into account the notions and figures for mind and thought that condition them. Fried takes a much blunter approach to the issues of language and mind: he argues that Spenser chooses the name Calepine because he recognizes that the theme of the book, courtesy, "is fundamentally semiotic" (237).[29] By "semiotic," though, Fried means that the book focuses on interpretive acts that are larger than simply those in the system of language. Here we have a sensible-seeming yet anachronistic distinction. Linguistic knowledge and general worldly knowledge associated with representations or signs to be read are not easily disentangled—even, as Svensén's example illustrates, for the lexicographer. Certainly

---

[29] Fried goes on to suggest that the other books of the epic do not concern the level of semiotics we find in Book 6. This claim seems particularly questionable in the light of Spenser's rather deliberate investigation of the meaning of justice relative to words in Book 5.

Spenser does not make the distinctions easy—he does *not* distinguish a linguistic sign and a sign for general cognition. Fried goes on, however, to argue that the "course of humanist pedagogy with which the [Calepino lexicon] was so closely associated" enables Spenser to criticize a sort of "bookish and philological side of humanistic education" that, without the physical prowess of a Calidore, was merely "courtesy as a form of elite culture only" (242). There are some problems, though, with Fried's characterization of the Calepino's significance. First, how can this "encyclopedic" work be reduced to a question of language competency when Spenser, as Starnes and Talbert show, so extensively relies upon it and its ilk for mythology? Spenser's view of the work could not be so narrowly critical considering his long relationship with it and considering the complex and competing facets of humanism itself. Second, how can the failures and problems of the lexicon be made to fit a character, Calepine, who is relatively successful? After all, if we are to see the Calepino lexicon trapped in a downward spiral of polyglot courtesies, it would be awfully strange to have its representative courtier performing a successful and silent rescue mission of Serena among savages, as we find in canto eight. Clearly, Fried is right that Spenser means his readers to envision in the character of Calepine some criticisms of pedagogy, language-learning, and the relationship between those things and courtesy. (I will address precisely those in fuller detail in my fourth chapter.) But Fried does not supply a nuanced idea of Spenser's discourse about semiotics or language to explain Calepine's position in the book. He presents a notion of the Calepino lexicon's evolution and position relative to other lexicons that is loaded with undefined ideas about language, knowledge, and their relations. He provides only the most cursory overview of the significance of the Calepino lexicon and the significance of

lexicography to the poetry for which it was one of his most crucial sources. I have addressed some of the problematic complexities of Spenser's views of language in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I now turn to a more thorough accounting of lexicography as a set of ideas and histories to which Spenser found himself reacting.

2. *Ambrogio Calepino's Barks and Bites*

What if Spenser named Calepine not just after a lexicon, but also after the author and person responsible for that lexicon? I raise such a question because I think Spenser provokes it as part of a reaction to the problems with lexicography as a means of understanding knowledge in language. As allegorist, Spenser provocatively transforms this man, who had been transformed into a book by his association with it, back into a man in a book. It is a playful poetic metamorphosis of word and thing, even a blurring of difference between word and being, with a range of implications. As Fried argues, naming the character after the lexicon directs the reader to consider the use of the lexicon, its familiar cultural place in the school and library as a pedagogical tool. Similarly, the name also allows Spenser to acknowledge the importance of a source and a class of sources. In *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries*, Starnes and Talbert document Spenser's reliance on information from the Calepino lexicon and others— many of them, like Thomas Cooper's *Thesaurus*, heavily reliant on the Calepino (44-110). "Even if [Spenser] did not actually consult the Calepine," they write, "it is sometimes the best illustration of allusions in his poems…" (77). This is earliest evident in E.K.'s notes for the *Shepheardes Calender*. Starnes and Talbert show that E.K.'s comments in the April and October eclogues translate key terms from the Calepino

lexicon's entries on the subjects they address, suggesting he did indeed consult it (78-9). This use of the Calepino and other texts as sources is, as I will argue later in the chapter, crucial for understanding the implicit argument in Book 6 about lexicography and language.

Of course, Spenser blurs the lines between things and words in *The Faerie Queene* long before we encounter Calepine. He does so in ways that are arguably part of an interest in commenting on the nature of language and use philosophical ideas about language. In *The Art of Naming*, Ann Ferry considers how Spenser introduces the character of "Shamefastnesse" in Book 2, Canto 9. Like many other characters in the epic, Shamefastnesse is given characteristics before being given a name, and the reader is clearly expected to guess at her identity by observing those characteristics. In the case of Shamefastnesse, though, Spenser creates an extended scene designed to emphasize how the words and the thing are intertwined. In the scene, Guyon meets Shamefastnesse, and, like a modestly befuddled reader so often confronted by Spenser's deliberately veiled meanings, he is unable to identify her—though he, like the reader, is given a description of her modest and bashful appearance—blushing cheeks, shy demeanor, etc. At that point in the text, Alma explains that Guyon should be able to see in the character the very things he himself *is*. That is, as a virtuous knight, Guyon is supposed to be "shamefast"; and so he *should* easily identify the character who is, as Alma tells him, "the fountaine of [his] modestee" (the source of characteristics he himself possesses) (2.9.43.8). Pointing out that Spenser appears to apply Aristotelian distinctions between accidence and substance through the distinctions between adjectival properties and noun-based identity, Ann Ferry explains:

By evoking the distinction between substance and accident, Alma's words express the notion that the blushing lady's visual appearance—her "rosie red," "bashfull bloud," "flashing bloud"—is composed of accidents or qualities enabling Guyon to read her in the senses of seeing, knowing, and judging her substance. At the same time, by invoking the analogy between substance and noun substantive, accident and noun adjective, Alma's speech embodies the conception that the pairings of adjectives with nouns in the description which enable the reader to visualize the damsel's "rosie red," "bashful bloud" are analogous to the visible blushes that Guyon is supposed to read. This is yet another instance where words are likened to nonverbal phenomena, as this allegorical episode makes their function identical. (81)

Ferry goes on to argue that for Spenser and his contemporaries, "words are not consistently distinct from nonverbal things; [and] reading is not clearly differentiated from seeing" (81-82). Setting her specific ideas about language and philosophy aside, there is no doubt that Spenser means this scene to be "read" in the broad sense of intellective apprehension, and that he means Guyon's mimetically real experience to be filtered into the literary readership's experience in reading the epic and thinking through the issues present there: Spenser wants readers to see Guyon's reading of reality alongside their own reading of the text. Therefore Spenser's intention in this earlier case evokes the same spirit of play we are later to see in the choice of the name Calepine where we read of a book that was a man. It confirms the need for concern about what Spenser might be thinking about by referring to such a figure in the world rather than simply referring to some pure figural essence of bookishness or book use.

The views of language and of the Calepino lexicon presented by Spenser's former headmaster at the Merchant Taylor school, Richard Mulcaster, begin a further, crucial context for understanding the what is at stake in any general reference to the Calepino. As he is warming up to offer a "table alphabeticall" of English words to his readers in his patriotic and pro-vernacular *Elementarie*, Mulcaster cites his desire to, like the classical

authorities, "[expound his] own words in [his] own language" (188). Yet Mulcaster then

does a curious thing. He cites "Stephanus, Perot, Calepine" (189)—the creators of two

Latin-language lexicons and a humanist Latin grammar—as scholars who have created

works that illustrate the "tungs, they have gained by labor" *and* as examples for English-

language lexicographers and grammarians to follow. Having followed those examples,

"we should then know what we both write and speak," Mulcaster explains. Mulcaster's

decision to praise those Latin lexicons as models for how to investigate and authorize the

English language identifies a larger part of what Spenser might have had in mind with his

reference to the Calepino lexicon in Book 6. The Calepino lexicon is a natural starting

point of comparison for Mulcaster when he wants to enable any political and social

interests behind developing the English language in a way that would permit knowledge

of how it is rightly or wrongly to be used. Yet Mulcaster's Calepino lexicon does not

resemble the complex character we find in Book 6. His Calepino is a simply good

example, not a clumsy, tongue-tied, polyglot courtier. This raises a relevant question:

Does this difference mean that Spenser disagreed with Mulcaster's view of the Calepino

lexicon?

It is not surprising that Spenser might not share Mulcaster's precise view—

indeed, that he might fault the Calepino lexicon in particular as a model pattern or book

for developing the legitimacy of English as a national language. Consider the dramatic

nature of what Mulcaster says about the book itself as a tool for political and social

definition—to "know what we both write and speak," he says, we must create the

equivalent of these works on the Latin language. Yet obviously the Calepino was not the

source of the authority or linguistic identity for the imperial *Romans*. No one wishing to

imitate the greatness of Roman literary culture would necessarily reason that a lexicon

would be the ideal tool. And, indeed, Ambrogio Calepino's book uses a method that is

profoundly dissimilar from those used and recommended by Lorenzo Valla or Erasmus.

The latter two relied upon considering fuller Latin phraseology in combination with

authoritative reference to build works—the *Elegantiae Linguae Latinae* of Valla and the

Adagia of Erasmus—that were considered more definitively instructive than the Calepino

lexicon about Roman culture by virtue of not being organized like lexicons.[30] The works

that helped these authorities learn were the original texts. Even if the Calepino lexicon

seemed like the right *form* with the wrong content to Mulcaster, it might easily have

seemed like a problematic mixture of both to Spenser.

     Ambrogio Calepino's introduction to his lexicon shows just how troubled and

unusual this text itself was at its genesis, just how striking its humanist concern with

language and society are. In his elegiac distichs directed to his book itself, Calepino

starts by impugning the customary usage of language: "Custom is rotten" ["Mos est

putidus."].[31] This gesture appears to make his work unified with others of its time, like

those of Valla or Perotti, attempting a reform of medieval Latin gone rotten with

customary usages, distortions of original meaning of earlier Latin. However, in his

dedicatory preface, Calepino is careful first to cast his interests as *religious* to avoid

wholly aligning himself with Latin purists. He explains that he writes "contemplating in

---

[30] See Chapters 2-4 of Ann Moss's *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn* for a fuller description of the difference between basic alphabetical lexicography and the more culturally-bound approach of humanists like Valla.

[31] All citations from the prefatory poem are from the 1510 edition of the Calepino *Dictionarium*. All citations from the *preface* are from the 1518 edition of the Calepino *Dictionarium*. All translations are my own.

some way the salvation of souls."[32] Moreover, he specifically rebukes Lorenzo Valla's

approach, writing, "What's more, for me the seriousness and learning of Ambrose,

Jerome, or Augustine--and of the Greeks—are more valid than the eager censure of

Lorenzo Valla."[33] Calepino's work is thus from the start involved in a highly specific

effort to direct a humanist rehabilitation of Latin without sacrificing the authority of

patristic literature. As Ann Moss points out, Calepino's lexicon abides by this approach

in more than spirit; the lexicon, she explains, adopts some innovations in the

understanding of how language is to be defined from Perotti and classical/pagan sources,

but in other ways retains definitions of the relationships between words, mind, and reality

developed in sources like Augustine (23). In other words, the Calepino lexicon and

author present complicated stances on the proper way to develop a language tradition; as

part of those stances, Calepino stakes out a specific view of the way to understand the

relationship between words and things, a matter at issue in Spenser's very naming of the

courtier after a book named after a man. Like Spenser's courtier Calepine, then, the

namesake author was *not* the heroic ideal, but one with complicated, perhaps realistic

flaws. More specifically, like the fictional courtier, he appears to have a difficulty with

language in terms of managing its relation to the world. But is this language/world

correspondence accidental or intended?

We can in one way show the parallel is intended with just a slightly deeper

reading of Calepino's preface to his lexicon. Key points of emphasis in Ambrogio

---

[32] "…quo de salvandis animis tantummodo cogitandum foret."

[33] "Plus enim apud me Ambrosii Hieronymi vel Augustini gravitas et doctrina valet et graecorum quam Laurentii Vallae studiosa repraehensio."

116

Calepino's introduction to his lexicon match key figural elements of Book 6. This match in turn shows that Spenser drew some inspiration from the lexicographer and honored some of his efforts toward defining Latinity in the face of detraction. First, Calepino is particularly sensitive to verbal detractions and names the physical tongue itself as a metaphorical agent of detraction—a move that closely resembles what we find in Book 6. Calepino writes:

> So I know that there will be those who disparage my work. For so it happens that whatever mortals do privately or publicly is sure to be subject to calumny. Nor does a slanderous tongue ["maledica lingua"] spare divine works. Such great store the human intellect places in itself! [34]

As my last chapter makes plain, Spenser routinely emphasizes the negative features of the "tongue," nowhere more so than Book 6. Here in the Calepino *Dictionarium* introduction we find a similarly negative view of the physical "lingua." More importantly, though, Ambrogio Calepino uses this negative image of the physical tongue to emphasize the positive features of another, more spiritual form of reading and speech that he indicates constitutes his primary labor—that work of saving souls, of extolling patristic literature, of defending holy texts. Spenser does not take on exactly that task in Book 6. However, he does create a similar contrast between silent reading or vatic reverie (in the case of Colin, for example, in canto ten) and uncontrolled physical speech or talk in Book 6; and he uses Book 6 generally, as I explain in Chapter 1, to explore questions of public and private speech. In the quote just provided, Calepino touches emphatically on the way invasive slander crosses private and public realms in crafting the image of the cursing

---

[34] "Scio namque futuros esse qui labori nostro detrahant. Ita enim sit ut quaecunque agant sive privatim sive publice calumniae subiacere certum sit. Nec divinis operibus maledica lingua parcit. Tantum sibi humanus arrogat intellectus."

tongue. Similarly, the whole of Book 6 is concerned with slander, naturally, and emphasizes that a retreat into private realms—as with the Hermit in canto six or with Calidore's retreat to the pastoral realm from canto nine—is an imperfect defense against slander. It may be a commonplace notion that slander invades all places, but it is unusual that the fictional courtier Calepine's real namesake uses precisely this notion in the introduction to his own work about language.

It is not just the "lingua" that matches Spenser's interests in Book 6. As is well known, Spenser represents the holder of calumnious tongues as a great dog. In claiming that his dictionary is itself a form of praise for those in his homeland that might defend it, Calepino does exactly the same by referring to the complaints or attacks of the foreign slanderers—the fanged remarks of the Lorenzo Vallas of the world—as *barkings*:

> For to what place the most potent work to be conferred about literature [meaning his lexicon] was owed except to a homeland and indeed to that homeland in which there are men with such a great and excellent nature, who for seriousness, for jurisprudence, and for all kinds of knowledge stand out by merit; which, as if fences, I have relied upon to keep back the barkings![35]

The "fences" make it obvious that Calepino is comparing his detractors to attack dogs. More importantly, though, the word used for barking is not the casual "latro," but the beautifully malleable and intense "oblatro." In this word we can more easily hear in the Latin word which was the likely root for the "Blatant Beast" of Book 6: "blatero."[36] Indeed, the definition word "blatero" in the Calepino lexicon reads so: "the ancients [used

---

[35] "Nam cui potissimum conferari opus de re literaria debuit nisi patriae et illi quidem patriae in qua magno et excellenti ingenio viri sunt qui de gravitate de iuris prudentia deque omni scientarum gengere praeclare merit essent quose ego tamque obices oblatrantibus constitui opponere."

[36] In his edition of *The Faerie Queene*, A. C. Hamilton quotes the Cooper lexicon and explains in a note: "the Blatant Beast: from Lat. *blatero*, 'to bable in vayne" (Cooper, 1565)…" (618n). Note that the definition is from Cooper who is, as I note later, heavily reliant on the Calepino lexicon.

this word] about speaking confusedly and vainly."[37] Not only does Calepino think of the tongue, the barking beast, slander, and language in the same way Spenser does, but he is also almost desperately concerned with enlisting the defense of his countrymen for his lifelong work, a preoccupation with Spenser from his first work in *The Shepheardes Calender*. Yet here lies a difference, too: Calepino sees his great opus as one representative of the wisdom and knowledge of his countrymen, *not* their linguistic resources, linguistic type, or literary achievement in a particular language. Is this a meaningful difference, though? Should we think that Spenser would have seen a difference between his efforts as an English-language poet and Calepino's monumental effort as a Latin-language lexicographer?

Such parallels between Calepino's introduction and Spenser's project in Book 6 explain basically why Spenser chooses to portray Calepine sympathetically. Calepine already fit the interests we find in Book 6. But now the tougher question is this: What did he find fault with in Ambrogio Calepino or his work? Daniel Fried identifies the degrading metamorphosis of the lexicon into a functional but undignified polyglot dictionary (the "exclusively linguistic" work) to be the source of Spenser's desire to make Calepine a somewhat hapless, tongue-tied courtier. Fried's argument makes some sense, but the deeper limitations and problems with the Latin lexicon as a model for how to fashion English (indeed as an example of how to develop and support a language and the literary traditions tied to them) are just as conspicuous and just as likely responsible for Spenser's handling of the courtier's characterization. Indeed, Spenser likely chose Calepino because his resistance to some of his humanist contemporaries, among other

---

[37] "Veteres dicabant pro incondite et inaniter loqui."

things, well represents the troublesome nature of some humanist plans for language and literary development linked to interests in vernacular grammar and lexicography. To show how and why this is so, though, we need to return to Spenser's teacher, Richard Mulcaster, and reconsider how and why this influential headmaster was willing to name the Calepino lexicon an example for how to develop the English language.

There are some clear compromises in Mulcaster's nomination of Calepine (alongside the Perotti and Stephanus works) as a model for his own project based in English language teaching. These compromises limit the clarity of Mulcaster's arguments about language. In particular, they reveal his struggle to find a plausible way to divide a type of cultural knowledge (a knowledge that is essentially part of a specific language like English or Latin) from a type of pan-cultural knowledge (a knowledge that may be transferred from Latin to English, for example). Such arguments about language have a context I earlier identified and to which I hope to show now that Mulcaster was sensitive: to name a Latin-language work as an example of how to create a powerful means for authorizing materials for vernacular English, Mulcaster has to reconcile his respect for what the classical languages offer (in terms of existing literary sources, established grammatical structures, and pan-European audiences) and his patriotic desire for his own language to rise to the same level of distinction. Before Mulcaster could preface his own listing of English words with this praise for the Calepino lexicon, he had to justify his interest in the English without jeopardizing his reputation by impugning the integrity of the Latin or its status as lingua franca and source par excellence.

In the tenth Chapter of the *Elementarie*, Richard Mulcaster specifically addresses what makes "the entrance of language, and iudgment thereof, which is wrought by

grammer," a key part of education (55). Note first that he thinks of grammar as a means of judging language, ascertaining what is meant by language. However, he also means something further—that grammar's logical processes *refine* language use itself in specific ways advantageous to or complementary to matters of judging and understanding: "For by the course of natur and use of antiquitie," he writes, "grammer travelleth first to have the naturall tung of ech cuntrie fined to that best, and most certain direction, which the ordinarie custom of that cuntrie which useth the tung, can lead her unto…" Note how Mulcaster uses "travel" to mean "labors" in this instance, and how he puns on the other meaning, "travel," since grammar has crossed national boundaries. He is clearly aware that cultural importations are at hand. In the first half of this sentence, using the terms "ordinary custom" and "use," Mulcaster establishes the standards from ancient sources like Quintilian, whom he cites soon thereafter. He is advocating the construction of English grammatical norms along the same lines as those that were being established for Latinity by humanists. He continues:

> …As how to reduce our English tung to som certain rule, for writing and reading, for words and speaking, for sentence and ornament, that men maie know when theie write and speak right. Which direction was both the first, and the most ancient use of the original grammer. (55)

Note the subtle omissions from Mulcaster's reasoning on the points above. Grammar established by observing "custom" becomes a set of rules for judging the rightness of speech more broadly—customs that in "antiquitie" and through "natur" came into being. Yet if it were only custom as produced by nature, that would not be enough for refinement. "Fining" for Mulcaster means that the language is worked toward a better state. In such a process, presumably a sort of *reasoning* is applied in order to construct the grammar itself. "Custom" may be the starting point, but refinement requires reason,

too, which Mulcaster at length partitions into three separate functions of grammar itself—

and then one unnamed function placed in the power of a "professor." Mulcaster

continues:

> [Grammar's] professors because of their iudgment were called *Critici*, as
> *Aristarchus* among the grekes, Palaemon among the Romanes. Secondlie
> grammer, as it hath been used sence, seketh to help us to the knowledge of a
> foreign language, as the Latin, the Italian, and such other tungs, which at this daie
> is the principall use thereof. Where it serveth in the natur of an anatomie, for the
> resolving of the writen speche: in the natur of an interpreter, for turning the foren
> into the naturall; in the natur of an artificer, for making up the habit of a foren
> tung in the studious learner, by writing and speaking. Now in either of these
> kindes, whether to fine our own tung, or to learn a foren, we are much bound to
> grammer, even for it self alone, but a great deall more in respect of hir professor,
> which must perform the three things, that I named before of his own abilitie. For
> grammer of it self is but the bare rule, and a verie naked thing, but the professour
> must have somwhat more then his rule. (55-6)

The reader should be justly confused now since Mulcaster is stringing him or her along

towards ideas about language and learning and rules that have "somwhat more" than can

be identified. Note, however, that grammar's function is to reveal the knowledge inside

these other languages. The "naturall" qualities of a language are important in ways that

even so cannot be reconciled to its function as a carrier of knowledge. As the succeeding

paragraphs prove, there are two things at hand that professors must acknowledge in

addition to grammar. First, Mulcaster asserts that a "grace" exists in each "tung" (each

people's language, he clearly means) (56):

> …and he [the speaker or teacher] onlie hit the right in everie tung, which could
> both waie the rules [the grammar], and pease the force of speche according to that
> grace, which everie tung hath.

Mulcaster offers an essential linguistic identity special to English people. And yet

Mulcaster contradicts himself. On the earlier page, he says it is the duty of grammar

itself to refine that essential quality. We must ask, if that quality is beyond the grammar,

how can grammar be bound up by it? Mulcaster evidently thinks that grammar is a sort

of adjunct labor force for shaping what is essential to the identity of a language—a

linguistic identity being an entirely other thing than grammar, we might guess. This is

the first unknown quantity for grammar and part of a consistent if confusing approach on

Mulcaster's part. The second, Mulcaster comes to tell us, is knowledge itself, whose

importance looms large because of the great respect the knowledge of the ancients

certainly commanded. To get at this question of the mind's relation to language and

grammar, Mulcaster explains it with a kind of parable:

> When learning, and knowledge came first to light, those men, which were the
> autors thereof, uttered their mindes in that same speche, which theie then used,
> when theie bred the things. And as theie neded no forein tung for the matter bred
> at home, so had theie no other use of anie grammer, but onelie that, which
> endeavoured to find their natural speche at home. But after that the same their
> devises, being first set out in their own tungs, were afterward sought for by foren
> students, to encrease their learning, and to enrich their cuntrie with foren wares,
> the foren students were then driven to use the assistence of grammer in the second
> kinde, because theie could not understand those things which were written in a
> foren tung, without the knowledge of the tung it self. (56-7)

Grammar is not needed without foreign tongues, it seems, and yet the whole issue of

correct speech for native speakers is also at stake! Correct speech requires grammar

before Mulcaster addresses the business of translation, but later it apparently does not

require it! After all, Mulcaster has been at pains earlier in his text to explain the value of

reading both as a source of basic knowledge and a language-based knowledge of "perfect

utterance": "…doth not Reading then which is the first principle seme to season verie

sure? enriching the minde with so precious matter, and furnishing the tung with so perfit

an utterance?" (24).

In sum, Mulcaster's *Elementarie* aspires to the purity of Euclid's *Elements*, but its

reasoning is conspicuously troubled on matters of knowledge, mind, and language. Such

issues, as his parable shows, pit a signature humanist desire to understand the information in classical texts—ineluctably foreign in their cultural trappings—against the patriotic and teacherly desire to have students proud of their own language and what it might offer to the learner. As the argument of his book progresses, he ultimately describes the way English might borrow *words* from other languages without losing its essential purview and identity as "enfranchisement":

> Wherefor I think it best for the strange words to yeild to our lawes [of pronunciation &c.], bycause we ar both their usuaries & fructuaries, both to enjoy their frutes, and to use themselves, and that as near as we can, we make them mere English, as Justinian did make the incorporate peple, mere Romanes, and banished the terms, of both latins & yieldings. (174)

Mulcaster's reasoning here addresses a few rough ideas about word meaning and ownership, but it does not address the larger questions of grammar or cultural knowledge that he mentions. That is, it appeals to an English reader's desire to see his or her language as appropriating others just as Imperial and Christian Roman culture appropriated other tongues and cultures. Nonetheless his stop-gap "enfranchisement" does not prevent us from seeing how the conflict culminates in Mulcaster's confident citation of the Calepine lexicon as a model. He clearly does not see the conflict as debilitating, but Spenser very well might have. That is, while this conflict might not have been conspicuous or problematic for someone with equal interest in the classics and the development of English-language reading skills—a teacher or scholar—it would have been far more likely to have troubled an English-language writer who felt himself in direct competition with classical and Neo-Latin authors and authorities, especially one who is recreating their style and its links to the kind of cultural knowledge that works Vergil's *Aeneid* contained and dispersed.

Mulcaster presents a very special case in that he illustrates the problems with thinking about language that accompany initial efforts toward adapting lexicons to vernaculars. The general problems with adapting the Calepino lexicon to the English language had a conspicuous history that was already specifically associated with the Calepino lexicon's use by earlier lexicographers. The first Latin-English dictionary for classical Latin was Sir Thomas Elyot's 1538 *Dictionarium*. As Dewitt Starnes puts it in his *Renaissance Dictionaries*, "…the chief source of Elyot's *Dictionary* is the Latin *Dictionarium* of Ambrosius Calepinus, of Bergamo, Italy" (51). Starnes, like others, mentions that "scarcely an important dictionary was published" (52) in the Renaissance that did not owe a conspicuous debt to the Calepine. But the patriotism of the Calepino *Dictionarium*, Starnes argues, made it an even more attractive model for Elyot:

> Proper names are distributed alphabetically among other entries throughout the text. These are names of countries, islands, cities, rivers, mountains, and persons mythical and real, with descriptions or biographical sketches as the terms may require. The Calepine was thus at once a dictionary abounding in grammatical and etymological information and an encyclopedia especially instructive about men and matters of antiquity. It is not strange that Sir Thomas Elyot, seeking for his own dictionary a more satisfactory model than his country had to offer, should turn to the *Dictionarium* of Calepine. (52)

Indeed, it is not strange. It was an expedient and logical choice for a man like Elyot interested in creating a culture where the youth could educate themselves in the classics. Elyot wished the classical sources to be seen as the place of powerful, life-altering knowledge for noblemen—and he more or less says so in his earlier *Boke of the Governour*. Even so, we cannot fail to notice here that a proud Englishman creates a Latin-English work based upon the Latin work of a proud Italian. Questions of cultural propriety and ownership were perhaps *not* as severe during Elyot's time. However, questions of ownership, of whose fidelities are where, are bound to occur as a question of

English or Italian identity becomes more conspicuous in matters of literature generally. We have already seen Mulcaster struggling to identify an essential Englishness. (And, indeed, we should privately consider, in the light of this, what more clever and witty way to comment on such an lexicographic history than to name a proud Faery courtier Calepine and cast clouds of suspicion over his suitability?) Fortunately, we do not have to speculate about the inevitability of such questions about the Calepino lexicon as a source. Elyot *himself* recognized his dependence on the Calepino lexicon as problematic. In his own introduction, he concedes the faults in his work and attributes them specially to the Calepino lexicon:

> All be it for as moche as partely by negligence at the begynnynge, partly by untrue information of them, whom I trusted, also by to moche trust had in Calepine, some fautes may be founden by diligent redynge… (A iv)

It was not unusual to fault the Calepino lexicon. Indeed, Robert Stephanus made the same sorts of complaints even as he constructed a new classical Latin lexicon in the 1520s.[38] However, Elyot has chosen to announce a complaint about a work upon which he is conspicuously dependent. Starnes points out "eleven successive definitions in which Elyot is freely translating Calepine" (53) and argues that "almost any opening in Elyot's text will show that the English compiler follows the Latin of Calepine." More strikingly, "Elyot not only derives much of the content of his *Dictionary* from Calepine but also adapts his method of presentation" (54). Ambrogio Calepino's comments about slander seem almost prophetic when we consider what transpires, then, as Elyot carps about the man whose labors and techniques he steals.

---

[38] In *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe*, John Considine describes Robert Stephanus' (a.k.a. Robert Estienne's) process and reasons for composing his new lexicon in the 1520s & 1530s to replace the Calepino (40-41).

Spenser, using the Calepino lexicon and others as sources, could not have avoided

seeing the quarrel about the Calepino lexicon itself. The contempt for the Calepine, and

the dependence upon it, is recognized ten years later in Thomas Cooper's title page for

the 1548 augmentation of Elyot's lexicon, which announces that the new edition provides

"the true significations of wordes, whiche were greatly amisse by over muche following

of Calepine." Yet Cooper was just as fundamentally dependent on the Calepine as Elyot

had been. As Starnes observes, Cooper was lifting his improvements in part from Robert

Estienne (73), who had in turn relied upon the Calepine. It is instructive to consider,

therefore, how Robert Estienne himself referred to such happenings in a 1553 edition of

the Calepino lexicon produced by his press. In the introduction, he begins:

> It is amazing that among men some should find the audacity and impudence to
> transfer another's labor freely to themselves and to manifest that they have in
> their writings done that which was accomplished by another.[39]

Stephanus chastises both those who have lifted material from Calepine and from his

emendations of Calepino lexicon while he himself acknowledges his own borrowing.

Yet Stephanus goes on to note the deficiency of the Calepino lexicon—*the very work,*

albeit an emended version, he is introducing! In this way, the identity of Ambrogio

Calepino and his lexicon are consistently and rudely thumped; meanwhile, the

lexicographers are almost comically over-concerned about Calepino's influence and their

own failed independence. Moreover, the influence of the Calepino lexicon on active

lexicography was felt even into the 1590s in a manner that had very direct bearing on

definitive English lexicography and Spenser's likely awareness of it. As Starnes reports,

---

[39] "Permirum est quod inter homines aliqui reperiantur ea audacia & impudentia, ut alienum laborem ad se libenter transferrant: ostendantque scriptis suis, id quod ab alio factum est, se fecisse."

Thomas Thomas' 1587 *Dictionarium linguae latinae et anglicanae* "seems to have won immediate popularity and, if we can judge by the number of printed editions which followed, to have maintained its vogue for many years" (115). This lexicon would have had an effect upon English culture during the time Spenser was actively writing *The Faerie Queene*, then. This is, moreover, the very lexicon that Thomas dedicated to Lord Burghley, the lord whose control of patronage and preference for Latin and foreign language over English vernacular works was well known. As I explained in my previous chapter, Spenser mounts an attack upon Burghley in the final lines of Book 6. There he is plain about his scorn for the common idea of "treasure," a word whose etymological link to "thesaurus" is closely associated with the lexicon in the fifteenth century. This lexical treasury, too, as Spenser well might have known, was compiled out of the Cooper and Calepine works, sharing in the Calepine legacy (Starnes 115, 123). Thus the main lines of English lexicography bear not just the influence of the Calepino lexicon, but also a predictable resentment of that influence.

The issues of identity and language in the Calepino lexicon's introduction and in the history of its influence upon English lexicography suggest that Spenser's choice of this name educes a quandary about Latin lexicography's service to English language and English humanist goals. Calepine the character is a positive and yet imperiled identity. This suggests that Spenser would have been sympathetic with the original Calepino's statements about language—and certainly to the desire to advance knowledge. However, Book 6 presents many figures that reflect Calepine's deficiencies as a *book-man* in a manner that obliquely complements what we know of the lexicon's and lexicographer's problematic influence and identity. In the main hero of Book 6, Calidore, we by contrast

find someone whose identity is obviously more stable than Calepine's. Calidore is a man of action capable of great discretion. And he is not the only one who fares better than Calepine. In Colin Clout, we find a poet whose direct vatic vision is superior to any form of meddling inquiry intrinsic to lexicographic study and citation of poetry or mythology. In Pastorella, we find a heroic female whose identity is written upon her being in ways that transcend linguistic terms—she is an identity that only has a borrowed name, but her claim to nobility is assured. In surrounding Calepine with those who excel him in such ways and in concentrating on Calepine's and Serena's susceptibility to the calumniating Blatant Beast, Spenser apparently envisions the limits to what the Calepino lexicon could do for English identity. In all probability, he envisions such limits not only because, as Fried argues, the lexicon had become associated with a sort of mindless polyglot expansion, but because it could offer no certain identity for scholarly practice and hence for the establishment of *English* grammar and eloquence—and because the work was under assault even among the lexicographers. For Spenser, then, it would seem that Calepine finds himself silenced in canto eight because the *Latin* Calepino lexicon, whatever its basic worth, could be at best a sort of mute testament to civility for a true *English*-language courtiership. That silence appears to house an implicit critique of Spenser's old headmaster, Richard Mulcaster, and his faith in Latinist humanism, but, as my succeeding chapters will show, Spenser's argument about the authorities over language and learning is much broader than this single implicit critique. Finally, then, the deliberate confusion of word and thing in the identity of Calepine arises from Spenser's desire to produce a figure whose tangled idea of language and reality are a potential good but a sometime hindrance to realizing that potential.

3. Dominico Nanni Mirabellio and the figure of Mirabella

As the evidence I have compiled so far shows, the name Calepine in Book 6 makes complicated references to the lexicon, its author, *and* the lexicographic history of which the name was a key part. The history the name refers to involved more than simply gaining or creating access to information about language in a neutral or transparent sense. That tradition, as Richard Mulcaster's commentary within it shows, involves arguing for a cultural sensibility about language by explaining a possible relationship of knowledge to language. However, we need not rely exclusively on Mulcaster's opinion and citation of the Calepino lexicon to see that Spenser was concerned with how lexicographic work defined the relationship of knowledge to language in culture. In Book 6, Spenser also makes a comic and critical allegorical reference to Mirabellio's *Polyanthea*, a text that was, during the sixteenth century, linked to this issue of the relationship between knowledge and language.

In her essay examining the knowledge-organization systems of the period, Ann Blair describes Dominico Nanni Mirabellio's work of "florilegia," the *Polyanthea*, as "the most widely printed Renaissance florilegium"; she further explains that it "started at c. 500,000 words and grew in successive editions to about three million words by 1600" (302). Like the Calepino lexicon, then, the *Polyanthea* experienced great growth during the century. Blair's essay focuses upon the value of such kinds of work (the tradition of *florilegia)* to philosophy rather than to literary interests. However, this distinction between issues of knowledge and language would not have been so clear in the sixteenth century. Her description of the expansion affecting *Polyanthea*'s class of encyclopedic

texts describes a class logically including the Calepino lexicon. Blair explains the

methods of data collection relevant to the *Polyanthea* and its results:

> Renaissance scholars faced an unprecedented growth of content in [a variety of
> fields of knowledge], largely through the accumulation of discrete chunks of
> information (similar in many ways to what we call "facts"), but the methods they
> deployed to organize all the material were medieval in origin. Selecting or
> summarizing from textual sources and sorting and storing these passages under
> topical headings constituted the basic operations underlying medieval florilegia
> and the compendia conventionally called "medieval encyclopedias." The size and
> sophistication of these collections increased in the thirteenth century, during an
> earlier period of knowledge explosion, thanks to new practices of alphabetization
> (starting with the biblical concordances of the thirteenth century, then spreading
> to the alphabetical indexes for many kinds of texts) and textual layout which
> facilitated reading by consultation rather than straight through. Collections of
> historical material in print experimented with new techniques (e.g. dingbats,
> different fonts and formats, greater use of centering and blank space) to increase
> the consultability of volumes which became steadily larger in size without, thanks
> to printing, becoming prohibitive in price. (294)

Once-exclusive texts, in other words, were becoming cheaper and more compendious at

the same time and in roughly the same way that the Calepino lexicon was becoming

cheaper and yet more full of information from and in other languages. The expansion

trend included the first English-Latin lexicons. Thus Mirabellio's work suffered much as

the Calepino lexicon did. Like the Calepino lexicon, the material in Mirabellio's work

was being altered even as it was claimed by others. Ann Moss describes a "spectacularly

successful afterlife" of the *Polyanthea* that culminates in 1604 with Joseph Lang's

Polyanthea Nova (*Renaissance Truth…* 27). Ironically, this "vastly expanded form […]

served a humanist rhetoric" that Mirabellio had earlier designed the work to avoid.

On the question of humanist rhetoric itself, there was a key difference between the

Calepino and the original work of Mirabellio. In the *Polyanthea,* Mirabellio took a

position opposite to Ambrogio Calepino's lexicon on humanist language ideals while

attempting to create a rival to its predecessor's position as an authoritative text on

language itself. Editors like Josse Bade took advantage of this difference. As Ann Moss

explains:

> In 1512, Josse Bade published yet another alphabetical Latin dictionary
> emanating from Italy, the *Polyanthea* of the secular cleric, Dominico Nanni
> Mirabellio, which had its first printing at Savona in 1503. This compilation,
> strictly contemporary with Calepino's, also attempts to be a resource for both
> Latin language communities [Moss means scholastics and humanists, who regard
> Latin's intellectual and cultural function differently], but it has a slightly different
> agenda, which to Bade obviously made it seem a sound commercial proposition.
> Whereas Calepino edges Christian language into the humanists' lexis by making
> accommodations, Mirabellio confronts the issues involved rather aggressively.
> He has a very ambivalent attitude to Latin poets and historians, the authors
> favored in the humanist enterprise. The subject matter treated by poets, in
> particular, is morally dubious in his eyes, however fine their rhetoric of praise and
> blame… (*Renaissance Truth*… 24-5)

The *Polyanthea* was thus a work with a mixed message. On the one hand, it presented an

abundant resource for both those of religious concerns and those with professional

ambitions to speaking and writing well. On the other, it presents a distinctive scorn and

distrust for the resource it provides. Mirabellio is explicit about the subjects of his

distrust in his preface. He names a humanist orientation toward copious, eloquent speech

and Vergilian/Ciceronian Latin as a source of intellectual weakness:

> I don't doubt that a wealth of good speech [*dicendi copiam*] may bring more of
> good than evil to men. With it they equip eloquence with a sword of no small
> value so that we are be able to both defend and attack well or poorly. Yet I have
> seen some people scorning [*irridentes*] sacred scripture and disdaining
> [*dedignantes*] whatever lacks Maronian or Ciceronian charm, having chosen only
> by the pleasuring of the ear—with the result that they felt contrary to Catholic
> truth in the meanwhile. I have seen many shunning Aristotelian writings because
> of the obscurity of the reading itself—and also being scared of the difficulty. (a2)
> [40]

---

[40] "Non me latebat dicendi copiam boni ne an mali hominibus plus attulerit dubitari posse. Unde non immerito quidam gladio eloquentiam aequipararunt quo et ad oppugnandum et ad propugnandum tam male quam bene uti possumus. Videbam nonnullos scripturam sacram irridentes et quicquid Maroniano Ciceronianoque caret lepore ita dedignantes ut etiam contra catholicam veritatem interdum sentirent. Videbam multos Aristotelica scripta devitantes ipsius lectiones obscuritate ac difficultate perterritos." [All my citations and quotes for Mirabellio come from the preface and prefatory poem for the 1508 edition.]

Thus Mirabellio aligns himself against orators, Cicero in chief, and poets, particularly

Vergil, and alongside Aristotelian scholastics. In this, Mirabellio was being true to the

roots, or perhaps the stems, of his labor, but he was also choosing to behave scornfully

about the problematic behaviors of scorn and disdain themselves. *Polyanthea* is more

conspicuously conservative because of its reliance on an earlier source aligned with

medieval tradition. In the substance of the *Polyanthea*—and in the very name he gives to

it—Mirabellio drew upon the earlier work, the *Manipulus Florium* [Handful of Flowers]

of Thomas Hibernicus ("Thomas of Ireland"). This text, as Ann Moss notes, was a "well-

known preaching manual" (26) as well as a key early *florilegium*. Thus the *Polyanthea*

takes up a form of conservative religion that is overtly hostile to poetry when it comes to

issues of language—a marked distinction from the Calepino lexicon.

Like Ambrogio Calepino himself, Mirabellio is outspoken in his prefatory poem

and preface in ways that powerfully characterize the work and associate the author's

attitudes with the work itself. In particular, Mirabellio is hostile to love and anything that

might feminize men. In the Latin poem for the reader on his title page, Mirabellio

identifies the classical sources with indecent Venereal leanings:

> Whoever [you are who] loves to decorate the temples [of your head] with a
>   flowery crown
> And desires to ring your hair with various flowers,
> Come into these gardens and rosy scents. Nanus
> With the composition gives roses to your alert brow.
> This is what may suit boys and youths and old men.
> No Venus for us, no loves are sung of here,
> Nor Jove, nor the thefts of Mars will there be.
> That is shameful to do: Who expects to speak honestly thus? (ll. 1-9)

For all that he rejects the feminine and love, though, Mirabellio lays claim to things associated with women and love. His "no Venus for us" phrase signals an odd desire for a kind of verbal chastity given the luxuriant floral imagery that precedes it. That is, while conspicuously "ringed" with pastoral imagery and in the Latin elegiac distichs natural to pastoral verse, Mirabellio takes pains to tell us that his is *not* a playful Ovidian work. No "amores" for him, indeed! The author militates against any kind of poetic or mythological means toward knowledge of language even as he is using it. Similarly, a few lines later Mirabellio's statements about women and flowers enact a somewhat perplexing description. Punning on "legere," which means both "gather" and "read," he tells his male reader: "You will not read sedge and monk's hood [here in my book]./ A woman and a little girl can collect these flowers."[41] For Mirabellio, women evidently are meant to collect the useful and common herbs of speech, while the more difficult and rare products of language are like flowers meant to adorn men. Mirabellio appears to think that men need more protection from potentially crude topics or language than women do and seems to scorn women as a result.

Exactly like Ambrogio Calepino, Mirabellio uses self-deprecating humor and the image of the bad and physical *tongue* itself as a key part of the rhetorical chastisement of his learned detractors. Just at the end of his preface, he writes:

> For who am I? I am not Atlas. I am Nanus ["Nanus" in Latin means "dwarf" and so is a show of punning humility here]. Whoever bites me doesn't steal the club from the hand of Hercules. Why, meanwhile, should I flatter or elevate myself

---

[41] "…non tribulos non aconita leges./ Hos matrona potest legere et virguncula flores." (ll. 16-17)

among such a great variety of judges when I see that the tongues of my detractors do not indeed spare the fonts of the Latin language, Cicero and Vergil?[42]

In this passage, the biting critics have actual tongues. With Calepino, the cursing tongue did not even spare sacred works. For Mirabellio, the detractors' tongues do not "spare of" their sanctified Cicero and Vergil. The Latin verb "parcere" has the same potential double meaning as the English verb "spare" in this context. In this case, though, it suggests that the Ciceronian and Vergilian advocates are arrogant in ways that Mirabellio is not. Such advocates are unsparing of their verbiage; they lack control of their speech; they are blathering, biting beasts.

With the complex character of the Mirabellio lexicon and its author in mind, it is possible to see a witty and pointed criticism implicit in Spenser's characterization of Mirabella in Book 6, cantos six, seven, and eight of *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser's reference to the Mirabellio lexicon there is subtle but unmistakably deliberate. To tease out the subtleties, we must first consider all the different features of Mirabella that, like the equally complex factors relating Calepine to the Calepino lexicon, appear to be appropriate to commentary on the reference work and its author.

When we first see Mirabella, she meets Timias and Serena as they depart the Hermit's hospitality. She is described simply as a "faire Mayden clad in mourning weed" who is "unmeetely set" on a "mangy iade" and led by a "lewd foole" (6.6.16.7-9). She appears to be a threat of some sort to the fragile stability Timias and Serena have achieved by their stay with the Hermit. Spenser puts off the description of her character

---

[42] "Nam quis ego? Atlas non sum. Nanus sum. Qui me mordebunt, clavam de manu Herculis non subtraxerint. Quid est praeterea quod in tanta iudiciorum varietate mihi blandiar aut arrogem? quum videam detractorum linguas ne ipsis quidem latinae linguae fontibus Ciceroni et Vergilio pepercisse."

until later, a delay designed to heighten our curiosity about just what sort of threat she represents. He is first engaged in dealing with the overt figures of courtly deception, Turpine and Blandina, who are obviously vicious for all their wily designs. Mirabella is not so simple as they are. Indeed, her figure is immediately imbued with contradictions when she reappears in canto seven. She is a woman "of great dignitie" (6.7.28.1) but low birth. She is "proud and insolent" herself, and she is accompanied by personified forms of Scorn and Disdain that strip her pride and render her obviously miserable. Since the word "dignity" comes from the Latin meaning "worth," we are in part meant to see that any actual worth is mirrored by an outward or inward feeling of being without worth: after all, "Dis-dain" comes from "De-dignor," a verb that describes the action of stripping worth, devaluing. The clever use of a possessive in the opening quatrain of canto seven foreshadows the reflexive relationship between her pride and her punishment: it states that her "punishment" is "for love[']s disdain." This use implies that she disdains love as unworthy of her, and it implies that she is, consequently, disdained or de-valued by love.

In canto seven, Cupid's disregard for Mirabella enacts reciprocal disdain. Her relationship to Cupid naturally becomes a tissue of resistance and denial. Cupid discovers that men who were supposed to be in love were missing from his rolls; he creates a grand jury in which the characters of Infamy and Despight give "evidence… that they were all betrayd/ And murdred cruelly by a rebellious Mayd" (6.7.34.8-9). Mirabella is then named and called to court, but she still refuses love. Cupid sentences her to a penance in which she is to wander the earth saving as many loves as she formerly denied, but as a result of "her dispiteous pride" she fails just as rigorously to find love

(6.7.38.7). Though Arthur even rescues her in canto eight, she refuses this, too, claiming her penance despite its futility.

At a psychological level, Mirabella's character is meant to illustrate a vicious cycle of pride native to those who early on learn to resist love in order to assert their social superiority. That is, she illustrates a problematic dependency of a low-born woman on her own misplaced pride in the rewards brought to her by superficial beauty. It is easy to understand why this character would be valuable to a study of courtly behavior as we watch, in canto eight, Mirabella refuse to be rescued from Scorn and Disdain by Arthur. She explains that she had learned to love herself "in schoole," had "triumphed long" in her youth at such self-love while she was "sitting carelesse on the scorners stoole" (6.8.21.5-7). Though nominally she earns penance for past wrongs, it is only her continued respect for her once powerful position of disdaining which makes her endure Scorn and Disdain themselves as her companions and victimizers. Mirabella is a perversion or simply an extreme version of a court beauty.

Spenser makes a careful contrast between Mirabella's case and the more successful one of Serena and Calepine that immediately follows. In the conclusion of canto eight, just as Spenser turns our attention back to the case of Serena and Calepine from Mirabella, he somewhat comically stresses the goodness of Calepine despite the blame Serena accords him. As Serena wanders toward the den of the Salvage nation, site of her future rescue, she "evermore… blamed Calepine, / The good Sir Calepine, her owne true Knight" (6.8.33.1-2). We are meant to see that there is something good and true about Calepine, whatever his faults, once we see her rescued. Calepine is as good—if not entirely reliable—as Mirabella is unredeemable. Serena's flight was precipitated,

after all, by Mirabella's arrival with the bullies Scorn and Disdain. This obvious

juxtaposition and character contrast has more weight when we consider that the name

Calepine refers to a standard and comparatively reliable lexicon. Presumably Mirabella is

the opposite of Calepine: a trouble-brewing and essentially bad thing. Presumably, too,

with this contrast Spenser hopes to suggest things about the books to which each name

refers and the linguistic and philosophical issues they address. But what?

I am not the first to note that the names Calepine and Mirabella both concern

Italian lexicons, and my forerunners have identified the importance of Spenser's *choice*

of the names without actually exploring it. In *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral*, Humphrey

Tonkin, after commenting on the name of Calepine, writes:

> Perhaps Spenser's eye next [after Calepine] lighted on Mirabellius's *Polyantheae*
> (1503), a less-known but influential dictionary which he may have also used.
> This would give him a very suitable name for the proud Mirabella. (66)

Tonkin only adds that he does not think it coincidence that Spenser begins to name the

"products of Italian publishers," and that DeWitt Starnes and Ernest Talbert have

commented more on Spenser's possible use of the Mirabellio text. Turning to Starnes'

and Talbert's *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries*, though, we find

an informative detail. Starnes and Talbert identify the *Polyanthea* as one of a set of

possible sources for Spenser's information about Cupid, Venus, the Graces, their origin,

traits, and order of appearance, as well as information about Mount Acidale, all crucial

elements of Spenser's mythology in canto ten of Book 6 (88-91). They also provide

Spenser's other candidates for this information: the Calepino lexicon, Perotti's

Cornucopiae, and Robert Stephanus' *Thesaurus*…, Cooper's *Thesaurus*, Alciati's

Emblemata, Textor's *Officina*, and Cartari's *Imagines Deorum*. While information about

the specific mythology would have been available in some classical sources, too, Starnes

and Talbert conclude that the role of the sixteenth-century reference texts was essential:

> Spenser would have found much more information [in the Renaissance lexicons],
> as, for example, why there are three graces, why they are painted naked and with
> hands joined, why one has her face turned away from us and two have theirs
> turned toward us, why they are depicted as youthful and laughing. (91)

Colin Clout's descriptive report of the graces, "Venus['] Damzels" (6.10.21.4) from

canto ten, stanzas 21-24, provides exactly such mythological information. With this,

then, Starnes and Talbert show us that Spenser knew about the information available

from the encyclopedic texts. They make it possible for me to credibly claim, too, that

Spenser *acknowledged* his sources—and his critical interest in the nature of these sources

themselves—with the names Mirabella and Calepine even if he does not mean us to think

that the Mirabellio and Calepino lexicons are the key or sole sources for Book 6 itself.

More likely, indeed, Spenser intended for readers who recognized the references to see

just how elegantly he was re-shaping the raw information from those source texts into the

narrative and allegory of his work—and into the moral messages of them. Yet since he

sets Calepine and Mirabella in contrast, and sets them both in starker contrast to the

information that follows about the graces in canto ten, stanzas 22-25, he more than likely

acknowledges, too, what is evident from the basic contrast between Calepine and

Mirabella as figures. That is, he acknowledges that the *Polyanthea* was one significant

rival to the Calepino lexicon, with rival information about classical subjects and, quite

possibly, a rival *stance* on matters crucial to the development of English and crucially

known to humanists with interests in Latin idiom. It is therefore logical, as a first step, to

add up the parallels between the Mirabellio lexicon and Mirabella, then to consider what

Spenser meant by the condemnation of Mirabella and Mirabellio relative to the tempered view of Calepine and the Calepino lexicon.

As I have already shown, the lexicographer Mirabellio clearly disdained to include love poetry in his description of Latin words, and he rejected poetry in particular as a source for knowing word meanings. Ironically, though, Mirabellio complained of the disdain of others for his work, and just as ironically he embraced poetry and pastoral imagery as a means to characterize his lexicographic work in a prefatory poem. First, then, Spenser means Mirabella as a witty mirror-image mockery of Mirabellio: in her own pastoral setting, Mirabella shares the lexicographer's disdain and scorn for love, and she is, presumably like him, scorned and disdained by love itself in return. Second, the gender change emphasizes these parallels all the more: Spenser has converted a *man* who wishes to hold himself aloof from love poetry and women into the passive, aloof *dura puella* of Latin love poetry as if to suggest that Mirabellio is rejected by the very language he attempts to capture. Just as importantly, Spenser identifies Mirabella as a woman of low status aspring to a status she does not deserve. As I stressed earlier in my quotes from Blair and Moss, it was apparent in the late sixteenth century that the Mirabellio text and other reference texts with such proud authorial prefaces were in fact the humble and common sourcebooks for courtiers and scholars consulting them for working knowledge of Latin commonplaces. This characterization of Mirabella and the Mirabellio lexicon grins and wags with yet more toothy wit than the one of Calepine and the Calepino lexicon, then. Consider: Spenser takes pains, in stanzas 32-37, to indicate that Mirabella is punished because she refuses to take part in Cupid's court despite the love of many courtly denizens for her. Her lovers do not show up in the rolls because she

does not show them love. Thirdly, then, if we look at the character of Mirabella as a representation of the products and practices of those who ambitiously acquire speech and knowledge about speech from the Mirabellio book, we can see that Spenser means to criticize a specific set of courtiers. That is, he means to criticize those who used their education in, say, the love poetry of Ovid and its intense Latin-language refinement, a matter of wondrous beauty, toward an ugly set of practical, self-serving personal ornaments in letter-writing or Latinate speech appropriate to court but not in keeping with any true moral self-improvement or desire for true courtship of women or men. Such people would, like Mirabellio himself, deny the worth of the verses whose material they drew upon constantly to craft the beauty of their work. With this in mind, it is plainer why Spenser has Mirabella describe herself "in schoole." This was the place of her first triumph, and indeed there was a corresponding basic triumph for those seeking basic information like schoolboys learning about the Graces without *being* graceful in their use of language. And so, the harder work of learning how to live *gracefully* was beyond Mirabella or Mirabellio, Spenser appears to argue.

Of course, we should not forget that some graces are beyond Calepine, too, not just Mirabella. The Calepino lexicon and Calepine himself are benign but troublesome figures. What accounts for the greater condemnation of the Mirabellio lexicon, though, and what does it tell us about Spenser's view of lexicons and language? First and most directly, on the matters of poetry and love, Dominico Mirabellio is unequivocally condemning, whereas Ambrogio Calepino is silent. This is the core difference between Mirabella and Calepine, too. We can reason that Spenser finds the authority of these texts on language inadequate when they do not properly relate to poetry's function as part of

language. He subtly praises the Calepino on this point even as he suggests that Calepine is a clumsy but well-intentioned lover to Serena. However, we can go further than such matters of love poetry. Both Ambrogio Calepino and Dominico Mirabellio are concerned with their own reputations as authorities on language. On this subject, the difference is correspondingly more delicate and relates to their comments about the defective physical tongue itself by contrast to the value of their efforts to understand and authorize language uses of specific kinds. Both lexicographers use terms and consider matters of language relevant to Spenser's theme of courtliness and the problem of controlling speech, thought, and language use, a theme that is crucial to Book 6. Yet to interpret and authorize linguistic use and structure, Mirabellio relies upon an Aristotelian philosophical tradition that is steeped in a source *associated* with Ireland (Thomas of Ireland) and associates good language use with that kind of general communal interest, artistic or not.[43] In contrast, Calepino, while not abandoning religion, associates his view with the Valla- and Perotti-associated effort to prize out the valid or best use from periods in which the language produced the best material. He has nothing bad to say about the authority of the virtuosos of Latin literature and oratory, Vergil and Cicero. Spenser's decision to condemn Mirabella (and by extension Mirabellio) so strongly and to affirm Calepine (and thus Calepino, though with some evident misgivings) suggests that on the crucial matter of correct or good language use, Spenser sides with those who seek the best and most elegant periods of use as models. The Calepino lexicon was created as a reaction to the spreading knowledge of the Latin idiom in the classical texts. To side with the Calepino

---

[43] Bear in mind that Spenser throughout his epic communicates deep suspicions about the Irish culture and language, associating his sense of the racial defects of the Irish with their language. This matter has been detailed in Richard McCabe's ninth chapter of *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment*, but it is a subject I will put off until I analyze the significance of *A View of the Present State of Ireland* in my fourth chapter.

against the Mirabellio text is a strong gesture towards its particular humanist leanings associated with defining an independent kind of linguistic knowledge. However, the ardent quality of the condemnation of Mirabella and her rejection of Cupid/Venus, considered in the light of the association between valuable poetry and the divine inspiration described in canto ten, suggests that even as he is siding with the Calepino lexicon, Spenser sees a more crucial role for poetry in the shaping of the English language rather than the one he appears to associate with the lexicographic effort typified by Mirabellio and Calepino. Colin Clout and his vision of the graces are, after all, strongly positive and superior by comparison to the portrayals of Mirabella or Calepine.

4. Conclusion

Partly out of self-interest, no doubt, Spenser prefers the role of poet to the role of grammarians or lexicographers in the shaping of a language. Yet Book 6 when seen as engaged in a debate about lexicography and poetry presents a more detailed rationale for his preferences in which Spenser effectively responds to specific elements of the ideas of prior authorities on language. Consider again Mulcaster's views. Before advocating the Calepino lexicon as a model (among other lexicons) in his *Elementarie*, Mulcaster defines a crucial element of his beliefs about language. He argues that a "soulish substance in everie spoken tung […] fedeth this change [the instability of languages over time]" (177). Mulcaster intends to define his own period as the one in which that peculiar pattern of language identity and change meet in the ideal and best rules for writing and speech: "I take this present period of our English tung to be the verie height," he explains. This rationale is crucial to Mulcaster's citation of the Calepino lexicon; indeed, it is crucial to his own effort to list and define English words. However, this "soulish"

thing is clearly an evasion of the problem of how knowledge is related to or transmitted in language that, as I showed previously, dogs his work. What Mulcaster refers to as a "secret misterie" or "quickning spirit in everie spoken tung" is both a source for instability and a source of identity.

Spenser's decision in Book 6 to address the question of how to control public speech and how to link speech to a personal identity relies heavily on an idea of mind that is at once spiritual and material. The physical tongue is considered degraded while the spiritual elements of vatic reverie and written identity, as I argued in my first chapter, are elevated. In these respects, Spenser is dealing with much the same questions about knowledge, language, and identity that Mulcaster addresses. His decision to use allegorical references to two famous lexicons suggests that he is not only engaging the same questions, but sketching out an intellectual response on the matter that Mulcaster engages. Spenser's decision to align himself so strongly against the Aristotelian scholastic view represented by the Mirabellio lexicon shows that he does not disagree with Mulcaster's humanist notion of such an idealized state of language. More specifically yet, Spenser's decision to show qualified approval of the Calepino lexicon, a text proposing a method of re-constructing ideal Latinity from past models, suggests that he agrees in principle with the vision of ideal language it proposes. Finally, though, Spenser's obvious qualification and hesitation over Calepine suggests a disagreement, too.

In my first chapter, I argued that, in the crucial scenes of cantos ten through twelve of Book 6, Spenser asserts a poetics in which artful language use (ideally figured in Colin's vision) is attached to the virtuous expression and recognition of identity not

144

just among poets, but among those figures in society who should be in a position to defend poets. One person who he clearly believes has sided with lexicography over poetry is Lord Burghley, and some of the satire of the Mirabellio and Calepino lexicons seems to be directed at the staid, methodical steward of the court. Clearly, Spenser's expression of reservations about lexicography, his prominent figuring of problem-stricken Mirabella and Calepine, complements this vision of poetics: he intends us to see that the lexicographers were not in a position to defend an English courtesy in which poetry might have a place. Moreover, Spenser's use of information about mythology from the lexicographers in his idealized poetic vision puts him *in competition* with those lexicographers for the defense and defining of English. Not surprisingly, he believes that lexicography fails as an enterprise for defining the relationship of language to knowledge in a way that poetry does not. Spenser intended for readers who recognized the references to the lexicons to see just how elegantly he, as poet, was re-shaping the raw information from those source texts into the narrative and allegory of his work—and into the moral messages of them. In this way, Spenser's work sets the horse of model uses of language itself back before the cart of lexicographic catalogues of model use—even the Calepino. Lexicographers like Calepino and Mirabellio complain of detraction and are vulnerable to it, but Spenser's use of language is shaping language in ways that provide the good examples in vernacular that English dictionaries need in a manner that is shielded from detraction. Spenser's manner of handling the Calepino lexicon thus recalls the complaints that figures like Thomas Elyot had about their dependency while Spenser himself asserts the value of English vernacular quite *independently*. Spenser's approach is a crucial forerunning action to an independent English lexicography. While his

teacher, Mulcaster, had urged that students of English model their ideas by using the Calepino lexicon as a guide, Spenser has suggested that the model of both humanists and those skeptical of humanism is insufficient to the language and the poetry needed by English civilization. In short, poetry, in this view, seems a primary kind of evidence *for* valuable language use. Yet if this were the case, we should find Spenser's attempts to have poetry play this role in more than the allegorical play with names. To address this matter, we must turn to Spenser's earlier work, *The Shepheardes Calender*, to study the kind of proposals he there makes about poetry, language learning, word meaning—and, indeed, what such things have to do with lexicography or supplanting it.

5. Works Cited & Consulted

Calepino, Ambrogio. *Dictionarium…* Ed. Jodocus Badius et al. Argentoraci: J.
      Grüninger, 1510.

Calepino, Ambrogio. *Dictionarium…* Ed. Jodocus Badius. Paris: Per N. De Pratis, 1518.

Calepino, Ambrogio. *Ambrosii Calepini Dictionarium, quarto & postremo: ex R.
      Stephani Latinæ linguæ thesauro auctum*. Geneva: Robert Stephanus, 1553-4.

Colish, Marcia. *The Mirror of Language*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1968.

Cooper, Thomas. *Bibliotheca Eliotae: Eliotis Librarie*. London: Berthelet, 1548.

Considine, John. *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe: Lexicography and the Making of
      Heritage*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008.

Elyot, Thomas. *Dictionary 1538*. Facsimile. Menston, UK: Scolar P, 1970.

Elyot, Thomas. *The Boke Named the Governour*. Ed. Donald Rude. New York: Garland,
      1992.

Estienne, Robert. *See* Stephanus, Robert.

Ferry, Ann. *The Art of Naming*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.

Fried, Daniel. "Defining Courtesy: Spenser, Calepine, and Renaissance Lexicography." *The Review of English Studies, New Series*. 58:235 (2007) 229-244.

Hamilton, A.C. Ed. *The Faerie Queene*. New York: Longman, 1977.

Landau, Sidney. *Dictionaries: The Art & Craft of Lexicography*. 2nd Ed. New York: Cambridge UP, 2001.

McCabe, Richard A. *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment*. New York: Oxford UP, 2002.

Mirabellio, Dominico Nanni. *Polyanthea*. Venice: Georgij de Rusconib, 1508.

Moss, Ann. *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structures of Renaissance Thought*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1996. Moss provides background information on the *Polyanthea* which confirms its significance and character as I have described it.

Moss, Ann. *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.

Mulcaster, Richard. *The Elementarie*. Ed. E.T. Campagnac. London: Clarendon P, 1925.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. New York: Longman, 1977.

Starnes, De Witt. *Renaissance Dictionaries: English-Latin and Latin-English*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1954.

Starnes, De Witt and Ernest W. Talbert. *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries*. Wesport, CT: Greenwood P, 1973.

Stephanus, Robert. "Rob. Stephanus Lectori." *Ambrosii Calepini Dictionarium, quarto & postremo: ex R. Stephani Latinæ linguæ thesauro auctum*. Geneva: Robert Stephanus, 1553-4.

Svensén, Bo. *Practical Lexicography: Principles and Methods of Dictionary-Making*.

New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

Tonkin, Humphrey. *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral*. London: Clarendon P, 1972.

Chapter 3:
Relational Meaning, Authorial Intention,
and the Poetic Diction of *The Shepheardes Calender*

Do not trust in another god
—Inscription translated from an Assyrian stone
statue from the Temple of Nabu (God of Writing)
in the city of Nimrud, circa 810 B.C.E.
(The work sits in the British Museum.)

What would it have been like for the *artificer* of the stone statue of a god of writing to see

his or her work placed in the alien context of a museum? I began wondering this almost

as soon as I saw the statue in January of 2004, and it has colored my understanding of

acts of "translation"—of moving items from one cultural place to another—ever since.

Would the creators or the scribes from the temple view the meaning of the statue in the

museum as the same as the meaning it had in its original place? Would they trust the

translation? The translator? Surely, no—or at least not immediately. I can only assume

that they would at first resist the collection and definition of their statue's purpose

because it was meant to confront visitors to *their* temple—people who would have had an

interest in making decisions about whom they should trust. The collection and

explanation of culture in a systematic way in a museum enlists museum-goers in a

complex process of understanding cultural objects divorced from their original context.

The museum places all such objects in a new organizing matrix or library of influence. It

is unlikely that the creators of a *religion* of writing (presided over by a God of Writing)

would have failed to be flattered by the important placement of *their* image and writing in

so conspicuous and prestigious a place as the British Museum. So with time they might

accept the re-orientation of their cultural work. Still, at any moment in history before

such a removal, they would have resisted the organizing principles and ideas about meaning behind the very drive for the museum's collection and display.

Spenser must have been a little like those scribes in the temple of writing. For him, poetic work was partly a process of response to prior work. Thus he would have been suspicious of attempts to create a system into which his efforts might be placed for the very way it might change the meaning of his works. He also would have been able to craft his poetry to resist that process of placement. In general, it is not hard to believe that poets could build a form of resistance into their work, an interior voice as it were, that responds to those who will take a volume of poetry and sooner strive to find its place in the library than find a place for it in the service of the society. Indeed, it is very easy to see that Spenser, given as he is to complicated and hidden architectures of meaning like that so recently unearthed in his *Epithalamion*,[44] would strive to guide the interpretation of his work in anticipation of its translation into the larger spheres of English and international culture.

This chapter explores Spenser's resistant diction in *The Shepheardes Calender*, a vocabulary that has been long acknowledged for its idiosyncrasy. In focusing on Spenser's diction, my enterprise builds upon the efforts of scholars like Andrew Zurcher. In *Spenser's Legal Language,* Zurcher shows how Spenser was concerned with "lex"— the constituent meaningful unit of law and the word as an instrument to the construction of a legal code. He is focused on Spenser's desire to shape and comment on the law through lexis. However, I am more concerned to consider how Spenser addressed the

---

[44] I am referring to Kent Hieatt's late 1950s discovery of the diurnal chronology coded into the lineation of Spenser's poem. See Hieatt's book, *Short Time's Endless Monument: The Symbolism of the Numbers in Edmund Spenser's Epithalamion* (New York: Columbia UP, 1960).

hermeneutic process that preceded the establishment of meaning in a national language instrumental to legal codes and other regulated and regulating social institutions. That is, I am in pursuit of a broader understanding of Spenser's conceptions of how language functions. In trying to describe Spenser's views of language, I cannot avoid seeing his poetic diction in *The Shepheardes Calender* as particularly resistant to the invasive authority of lexicographers. This group in Spenser's lifetime was doing the work of writing the history of language and defining the way it worked. Moreover, lexicographers were—at least in one clear instance involving Henri Estienne for this chapter, and certainly in the much earlier case in history of Mirabellio noted in the previous chapter—citing poets even as they were in some sense striving to replace them as definers and teachers of what a language is and does. Lexicographers were, for example, part of a bid to have an effect on the laws that would be written in the languages they struggled to define. Latin and Greek were key sources for technical languages and nomenclature in English and other European vernaculars.

How would Spenser have resisted interpretive practices that accompany a lexicographic authority? In a nutshell, I will be arguing that Spenser resisted a view of word meaning more dependent upon accepting denotation as natural to language. The idea of denotation benefits the authority of glossators a little and lexicographers a great deal.[45] It is implicitly referential. As a result, a denotative idea of linguistic meaning may be separated from an idea that meaning emerges from the relations among words and

---

[45] Please consult the comments on Richard Waswo's *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance* on pages 9-15 of my introduction, where I outline Waswo's basic ideas about the difference between relational and denotative meaning. I rely on that same distinction, though I believe Waswo's explanation of its relevance to Spenser is insufficient in some ways. In *Spenser's Legal Language*, Andrew Zurcher accepts the idea that Spenser depends upon a notion of relational meaning for his works in general. See my later note on Zurcher for more details.

things—their contexts and web of texts. The latter is what we roughly call a relational

notion of meaning—"roughly" here for it contains many different assumptions about

mind, reality, language, thought, and knowledge.[46] If reader and poet submit to a

glossator's or lexicographer's approach, they accept a denotative/referential notion of

meaning more readily than they accept the relational notion of meaning. In such

acceptance they also hazard acceptance of what meaning *has been* in preference to what

it might be. A glossator's work with poet and readership thus potentially anticipates the

dictionary-maker's advances toward getting a readership to accept his or her definitions

as binding, normative, and even as the way words themselves "work" with other words or

within the mind. As I noted in the previous chapter, this is the *prescriptive* force behind

lexicography that a lexicographer might be uncomfortable acknowledging. Removed

from the context of poems, placed in numbered and/or alphabetized lists, words may be

learned differently because their function is re-contextualized by the lexicographer and

re-considered, often with an efficient sense of reference to things in the world

dominating. For example, the dictionary-maker defines the noun "pig" in a way that

separates the reference to the animal from the metaphorical or associational idea of the

greedy human. Once a lexicographer has defined a word, the ensuing work of a poet with

the meaning of a word may be restricted: the real "pig" and the metaphorical "pig" are

never to be confused. Of course, the poet's response depends on the poet's beliefs about

language and sense of his or her own authority over it.[47] In any case, the poet's response

---

[46] For a detailed assessment of a variety of assumptions about the relations between thought and language, see the first three chapters of Jerry A. Fodor's *The Language of Thought*. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1975).

[47] As my first chapter has already shown, Spenser's adaptation of ideas from Greek philosophy in his later work contain some powerfully idealistic visions of the relation between words and mind. I construct the present chapter's argument with the reasonable assumption that Spenser's ideas about an individual's mind

to the lexicographer is not necessarily the same as his or her response to a former poet. A prior poet may provide a sample use of a word in a context, but the poet does not control the meaning of a word. Whatever is to be metaphorical or literal about a term defined by a lexicographer, though, may be explicitly pre-set by the act of definition in a manner that restricts the liberties of poet and reader in the future.

Spenser's poet and his glossator, E.K., carefully manage the terms by which Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* is to borrow from tradition and shape a poetic diction reflective of the interests of the growing English nation. Though this management on its surface appears the effort of two separate individuals, I take the position that E.K. is much more likely a persona employed by Spenser. For me, as I have already argued in my introduction, this is a reasonable if not incontrovertible position—and, indeed, it is one shared by scholars like Edward Armstrong, whose arguments I consult for this chapter and the next. Thus Spenser's and E.K.'s management constitutes the force of resistance I examine as a product of Spenser's skepticism about denotative or referential notions of meaning. My study of their effort as a whole brings us repeatedly back to their concern with the influence of Greek culture because Renaissance humanists learned about how to borrow from other cultures in part from the way in which Romans learned about how to borrow powerful ideas from Greek rhetoric and philosophy. The work done by Henri Estienne, the premier Greek lexicographer in Spenser's time, participates in the political process of defining what it means to borrow from the Greek language and culture. And Estienne is a figure whom Spenser simply could not have avoided had he

---

and language did not appear from nowhere in his later life, but emerged organically from earlier ideas that would be consistent with the thinking about poetic authority over diction I am here outlining.

spent any time reading the Greek he so frequently refers to. Indeed, as I will show, Greek philosophy, poetry, and language is the obsessive focus of E.K.'s comments in the *Epistle*, the *Generall Argument*, and the glosses to *The Shepheardes Calender*. Ultimately, it is by attending closely to Spenser's and Estienne's shared focus on dialect and particularly the Doric dialect of Theocritus that we can see most clearly the nature of the difference between Spenser's view of how language should be shaped and interpreted for poetry and Estienne's view of the same.

My chapter is divided in two parts. The first addresses E.K.'s arguments about poetic diction in his *Epistle* and *General Argument*. I begin by examining the problem of the meaning and spelling of the term "æglog" as E.K. considers it in the *Generall Argument*. This choice of spelling rejects the wisdom evident in standard lexicons of the period, amplifies the authority of Theocritus (and Greek culture generally), and asserts the value of the poet's and annotator's joined authority above all else. The choice effectively defends the privilege of the poet's intention in naming. In this way, E.K. establishes the preeminence of the poetic effort over any attempt by scholarly gloss or lexicographic definition to intervene. In the *Epistle* that precedes the *Generall Argument*, moreover, E.K. mixes pragmatic and idealistic approaches to defending Spenser's poetic diction. E.K.'s effort there shows why Spenser is so concerned to preserve the poet's authority over language, for E.K. imagines a vatic poet with a responsibility to the English culture specifically. This is precisely the kind of poet defined by the dedicatee of the *Shepheardes Calender*, Sir Philip Sidney, in his *Defence of Poesie*. All these factors taken together show that Spenser is concerned to preserve a relational notion of meaning

in place of a denotative one, and they show that his reasons tie his authority as a poet to the idiosyncratic diction he produces.

The second part of my argument focuses upon the play between E.K.'s notes and the text proper of *The Shepheardes Calender*. This play reproduces and extends the ideas about diction and relational meaning from the prefatory pieces. To show that, I produce a close reading of the April, August, September, and October æglogs (and their annotations), first considering a variety of factors that lead us to see how and why Henri Estienne's lexicographical view of how to define the value and power of language in three of his texts from the 1560s & 70s provides an ideal contrast with Spenser's modeling of poetic meaning in *The Shepheardes Calender*. Spenser's use of dialect and regional terms in the September æglog and elsewhere follows the prescriptions for a composite dialect accepted by vernacular French poets like Ronsard, among others. Henri Estienne's views on poetic uses of dialect and studying dialect in French in his 1579 *La Précellence du Langage François*, and his complementing views of how to study language in his 1565 treatise on the similarities between Greek and French, illustrate a quite different approach to hermeneutics. The overall contrast reveals that Spenser's approach to the composite literary dialect asserts the importance of relational meaning over the kind of denotative meanings and grammatical structures essential to lexicographic projects. Indeed, Spenser's use of dialect compels the reader to resist or reject the agency of a glossator or definer alone.

1. Reading E.K.'s (and Spenser's) Prefatory Argument About Diction As Implicitly Dependent on Ideas of Relational Meaning

In *Broken English*, her book-length consideration of the concept of dialect in Renaissance literature, Paula Blank notes in passing that each of E.K.'s glosses for *The Shepheardes Calender* "participates in the politics of early modern lexicography generally, where 'understanding' must be mediated by a master of words" (104).   As my previous chapter showed, by the 1590s Spenser's awareness of lexicography was refined in ways that made it responsive to nuances of the humanist tradition: that is, Spenser reacted to the *specifics* of the Calepino and Mirabellio lexicons and placed that reaction within a sophisticated and equally specific understanding of language and mind. This naturally raises the question of what specific issues about lexicography might have been at play in *The Shepheardes Calender*. How in this earlier work did Spenser consider himself the "master of words," particularly in his use of or positioning of himself relative to his annotator, E.K.? Was Spenser the same as we later find him in Book 6?

In his *Epistle* to the reader, the explanation that E.K. offers for the diction of *The Shepheardes Calender* stages a sort of mocking combat with the classicizing traditions associated with early modern lexicography.[48] This combat in turn suggests Spenser was already distrustful of what early modern lexicography might provide and sought to assert what he likely felt was a more complicated and resistant model for linguistic skill. E.K.'s commentary requests a readership attentive to the details of word definition. Consider one part of E.K.'s "argument":

> …But for the word Æglogues I know is unknowen to most, and also mistaken of some the best learned (as they think) I wyll say somewhat thereof, being not at all impertinent to my present purpose.

---

[48] As noted in the previous chapter, Starnes & Talbert show the ways in which the lexicons were used as sources of information on classical authors, myths, and beliefs.

They were first of the Greekes the inventours of them called Æglogai as it were αἴγον or αἰγονόμων. λόγοι. that is Goteheards tales. or although in Virgile and others the speakers be more shepheards, then Goteheards, yet Theocritus in whom is more ground of authoritie, then in Virgile, this specially from that deriving, as from the first head and wellspring the whole Invencion of his Æglogues, maketh Gotehards the persons and authors of his tales. This being, who seeth not the grossenesse of such as by colour of learning would make us believe that they are more rightly termed Eclogai, as they would say, extraordinary discourses of unnecessarie matter, which difinition albe in substaunce and meaning it agree with the nature of the thing, yet nowhit answereth with the ἀνάλυσις and interpretation of the word. For they be not termed Eclogues, but Æglogues, which sentence this authour very well observing, upon good judgement, though indeed few Goteheards have to doe herein, nethelesse doubteth not to call them by the used and best knowen name. (22)

E.K. hopes to correct the "learned" class by this commentary on the spelling of *æglog*.

Indeed, his thinking is contrary to what we might find in Latin lexicons, but not in a way

that is likely to persuade. If we turn to a 1518 or 1553 Calepino lexicon (the latter edited

by Robert Estienne) to the entry for "Aegloga," we quickly discover that this spelling has

been rejected in favor of "eclogue": "[Aegloga] means the speech about pastoral things or

goats, as if αἰγῶν λόγος [word of goats]. But Ecloga ἐκλογὴ, without the diphthong,

means selection or interpretation or tasteful parts, as in Pliny, Book 4…"[49] The Calepino

clearly shows that spelling authorized by the classical sources cited (Pliny and Eusebius)

is preferable. Similarly, in the 1536 edition of his own thesaurus, Robert Estienne simply

writes "vide Ecloga," much more airily excluding the legitimacy of the spelling E.K.

defends. In a 1598 11-language Calepino, we find that the editors append to the Aegloga

entry: ""But the Aeglog word for the Bucolics which our ancestor Virgils wrote now is

---

[49] The whole entry: "Aegloga, εἰδύλλιον, pen.cor. Caprarum seu rerum pastorialium sermo dicitur, quasi αἰγῶν λόγος. At Ecloga ἐκλογὴ, sine diphthongo, electio vel explanatio, elegantia dicitur, ut inquit Plinius lib. 4 Epist. & Eusebius lib.4. Eccl. hist. contra Tortellium."

rejected by learned people."[50] The Latin term "explosa" or "exploded" suggests just how definitively learned people rejected the term, but it also reveals that the effort to shrug off the AEG spelling had been ongoing for long enough that so forceful a term seems necessary. The EK spelling is clearly the most reasonable.[51] Yet E.K. misrepresents the "learned" understanding for eclogue as "extraordinary discourses of unnecessary matter." He interprets the word eclogue as we might "extraneous." He is, in other words, deliberately overlooking the reasonable possibility, a meaning used by classically authoritative texts and a derivation easily possible in Greek language—the very language of origin and poetic authority he selects for context. Naturally, sixteenth-century humanism does not share the all the values of nineteenth-century philology, which would insist on extremely methodical forms of word derivation. E.K. all the same departs with obvious and impetuous irrationality from the norms of sixteenth-century views as represented in the lexicons. He has, it would seem, picked a *losing* fight with lexicography of his period.

Assuming that E.K. either *is* Spenser or is acting under his direction and approval, and assuming E.K.'s argument is not exclusively for a kind of comical, pedantic effect (like what we might find in Shakespeare's Holofernes from *Love's Labors Lost*), we have to wonder what is intended by his artificial dispute. E.K. grounds his dispute in the

---

[50] "…sed vox Aegloga qua majors nostri Virgilii Bucolica inscripserant, jampridem est a doctis explosa."

[51] Given the ridiculousness of his argument, we might even speculate that E.K. rejects the EK spelling because it transgresses upon his initials as an identity. However, I think we should avoid thinking of all the comical possibilities in E.K.'s comments. Pedantic though he may be, I will be treating the bulk of his argumentation seriously rather than deal with all the possible ironies or duplicities of his material. There is little question in my mind that E.K. in part serves to satirize glossators, and Spenser may have had a specific edition of poetry in mind for the bulk of his work with E.K. Again, though, I will be treating the glossator seriously in terms of what it tells us about Spenser's views of language and his view of how lexicography and glossing influenced language-defining thought.

authority of the poetic tradition itself, not so much in any lexicographic or linguistic tradition, but he calls upon the original status of Greek as part of his thinking about the poetry itself. That is, he places Theocritus as the oldest of pastoral poets, the originator of the tradition, and notably Greek. It is a significant choice because Spenser in a letter to Gabriel Harvey, as Richard Helgerson notes in *Forms of Nationhood*, cites Greek culture as possessing linguistic autonomy with respect to its verse choices. Spenser wrote, "For, why a Gods name may not we, as else the Greekes, haue the kingdome of oure owne Language, and measure our Accentes, by the sounde, reseruing the Quantitie to the Verse?" (16) Helgerson interprets the comment's political and semiotic ramifications, arguing that Spenser hoped to "separate himself from himself to become a self-dominating other" (25) as part of a general effort to distance English from its Gothic racial roots and establish it as an equal to classical Greek. Helgerson may be right, but we do not need to resort to the paradox of a "self-dominating other" to think through the implications of E.K.'s reference to Theocritus. E.K.'s comments about a conspicuously Greek word in *The Shepheardes Calender* are not simply an attempt to distance English from its Gothic roots. Rather E.K.'s opinions cast a patterned illumination upon how Spenser composes his authority in and with language. After all, these opinions do distance English from the Gothic, but they also distance the problem that they address from a resolution by linguistic expertise alone. The AEG spelling has some Greek associations, but certainly no more than the EK spelling. Either spelling might associate English with Greek. Thus the spelling choice foregrounds an independent and fanciful etymology not for its own sake but rather because it reserves autonomy to the poet-linguist over the linguist-lexicographer.

159

In case readers might overlook the autonomy granted the poet by the approval of the spelling choice, E.K reminds them in an almost teasing way. He states: "For they be not termed Eclogues, but Æglogues, which sentence this authour very well observing, upon good judgement…" In this sentence, we are meant to wonder at an ambiguity: Who is the "authour" doing the "observing" in this sentence of E.K.'s? Is it Spenser, who *very well observes* and *judges necessary* an AEG-spelled, goat-associated name? Or does E.K. observe Spenser's choice and interpret it? To my mind, the phrasing deliberately joins editor and poet in a way that playfully suggests that these two are not in fact separate people. Nonetheless the logic which E.K. uses does not equate glossator with poet. It defers to the author-poet's independent right to choose a spelling that reinforces a specific *intended* message for the poetry in deference to a conceived status of originality granted to the Greek Theocritus. And the sentence tackles one further dimension of the problem: if we consider how that sentence ends, we see that E.K. has defended the choice as one based in the customary spelling and language of the period: "…this authour," he writes meaning himself and/or Spenser, "nethelesse doubteth not to call them [the poems] by the used and best knowen name." E.K. and Spenser share in a choice that appears to conform with reasoned judgment and custom. On close inspection, however, their choice relates less to reason and much more to questions of authorial privilege as deferred to by a willing editorial commentator. Even so, Spenser has clearly chosen not to announce his preference in such a way that readers might see his choice as an arbitrary assertion of the will for individual choice or convention. If Spenser or E.K. had hoped to make a conspicuous stand on the matter of custom against, for example, the orthographers who

hoped to change spelling to conform more closely to sound,[52] neither would have chosen

to stage the dispute over a word, æglog, where custom's hold was so firmly undermined

by reason among the learned. If the glossator had hoped only to highlight the author's

power, he hardly would have chosen to make a statement about the matter which

apparently confused their positions. What is E.K. (and Spenser) up to? Clearly, the

"æglog" justification raises a specific complication to the politics of lexicography and

language. It demands a broader context for articulating Spenser's view of language and

linguistic epistemology for the empowered poet. After all, in staking a conspicuous battle

over "æglog," Spenser argues about the meaningfulness of words themselves in the very

word he chooses to describe the genre of his poetic work.

<p align="center">* * *</p>

In 1932 Bruce McElderry expertly showed that Spenser's use of language in *The*

Shepheardes Calender was not a set of immoderate experiments as was often thought.[53]

Spenser's archaisms, reliance on regional dialect, and neologisms are explicable to

McElderry in terms of the poet's desire to create a certain effect upon the accepted and

standard idiom of the time: "The main poetic effect is latent in the standard idiom, and it

is the poet's business to bring it out. This is what Spenser did" (169). Though

McElderry relies heavily on a veiled notion of what the "poet's business" should be, his

sense that Spenser wants to show off what poetry can do for English diction is important.

---

[52] For a full description of such advocates, see the ample description of 16th century orthographers the fifth chapter of R.F. Jones *The Triumph of the English Language*.

[53] McElderry's assertions in his 1932 PMLA article, based on a careful study of diction, are exceptionally precise: "I have contended thus far this article: (1) that Spenser's deliberate archaism, traceable in not more than 320 words, has been greatly exaggerated; (2) that his reliance on dialect, slight even in *The Shepheardes Calender*, is almost negligible in later poetry; and (3) that his innovations, though they number nearly six hundred words, forms, and meanings, are only very incidentally reckless or ignorant" (168).

If we are to understand E.K.'s decision to sanction the poet's authority over words, then, we must know how E.K. situates that poet relative to the sort of pressures the poet might feel from his society about English itself.

From R.F. Jones's *The Triumph of the English Language*, which lays out a crucial set of conditions under which the conception of and beliefs about English vernacular took shape during the sixteenth century, we can see just where Spenser's goals as a poet influencing the language would have needed to fit. One the one hand, Spenser would have seen much anxiety among his fellow Englishmen about the adequacy of English by comparison to other languages. Jones notes, for example, that English authors and translators considered English in varying degrees adequate to convey basic meaning. He cites Richard Shacklock's emphasis upon the adequacy of English to support translation as typical, saying that Shacklock believed "the mother tongue can adequately express the meaning of an original" (23). However, such authors and translators, Spenser's predecessors and contemporaries, still did not consider English *eloquent*: "Until the last quarter of the sixteenth century the mother tongue was consistently considered devoid of eloquence" (30). In other words, they considered it to lack the sophistication of classical languages, and they considered it to lag behind French and Italian in this same regard. Such eloquence was considered an integral element for language by many humanist scholars of Latin and Greek, who may be considered one strong faction and potential influence on Spenser's view of English. On the other hand, some Englishmen shared the sense that English was adequate while being deeply skeptical of a humanist desire to import greater eloquence. Among those not given over to the beliefs of humanists about the meaningfulness of eloquent stylistic essentials such as those to be found in classical

languages, Jones informs us, "we discover an ascetic distrust of beauty of expression"

(31). This latter distrust was particularly typical of those concerned mainly to make

English instrumental to general education and religion. Even as this division caused

anxieties, the general pressure to use the vernacular on behalf of education was

ubiquitous—it was shared by humanists and those skeptical of humanist efforts alike.

Jones notes that those looking to make English vernacular a source for education were

quite common by the end of the sixteenth century:

> One characteristic of the sixteenth century worthy of considerable emphasis was
> the unceasing, if not universal, desire to educate those people, high and low, who
> did not possess the linguistic keys to learning. The Renaissance Englishman,
> looking around him, saw, on the one hand, the richest stores of knowledge in
> constant process of being increased, but confined within the strict limits of the
> learned tongues, and on the other, a vernacular which, as regards learning, offered
> for the most part only a vacuum. To fill this vacuum became his earnest desire
> and deep-felt duty. (34)

This is indeed a pressure that Spenser would have felt directly through instruction from

Richard Mulcaster, his former headmaster at Merchant Taylor's School, who expresses

this sentiment in his writings.[54] If, as McElderry saw it, Spenser was trying to use his

---

[54] A sampling of quotations from Mulcaster's educational treatise *Positions* illustrates the case fully:
> The parents and friends, with whom I have to deal [as a teacher], be mostwhat no Latinists; and if
> they were, yet we understand that tongue best whereunto we are first borne, as our first impression
> is always in English, before we do deliver it in Latin. (29)

> Of the which two [Latin or English] at whether it were better to begin, by some accident of late it
> did seem somewhat doubtful; but by nature of the tongues, the verdict is given up. For while our
> religion was restrained to the Latin, it was either the only or the onliest principle in learning: to
> learn to read Latin as most appropriate to that effect, which the Church then esteemed on most.
> (61)

> But now that we are returned home to our English ABC's, as the most natural to our soil and the
> most proper to our faith, the restraint being repealed, and we restored to liberty, we are to be
> directed by nature and property to read that first, which we speak first and to care for that most,
> which we ever use most, because we need it most; and to begin our first learning there, where we
> have most helps to learn it best by familiarity of our ordinary language, by understanding all usual
> arguments, by continual company of our own countrymen, all about us speaking English and none

163

poetry to enhance English, he would have been sensitive to the pressures I have noted

from Jones's survey. That is, he would have been responding to an educated faction

interested in developing the sophisticated eloquence of the language, to a more anti-

intellectual faction skeptical of such humanist ideas of developing English, and to an

enormous and most embracing faction hoping that English could become integral to

education.

When E.K. refers to Cicero's *De Oratore* as a defense for his use of English-

language archaisms in his *Epistle*, he details particular sensitivity to the historical context

that R.F. Jones provides:

> And firste of the wordes to speak, I graunt they be something hard, and of most
> men unused, yet both English, and also used of most excellent Authors and most
> famous Poetes. In whom whenas this our Poet hath bene much traveiled and
> thoroughly redd, how could it be, (as that worthy Oratour sayde) but that walking
> in the sonne although for other cause he walked, yet needes he mought be
> sunburnt: and having the sound of those auncient Poetes still ringing in his eares,
> he mought needes in singing hit out some of theyr tunes. (14)

E.K. justifies the use of difficult words by noting that they are used by earlier English

authors. E.K has already noted that Lydgate called Chaucer the "Loadestarre of our

[English] Language," reasoning that such a star must be accepted as a legitimate point of

guidance for present writers if it could guide an earlier poet's diction. Thus the

justification for the use of these words by the authority of earlier poets comes as no

surprise. Even so, E.K. frames his choice as equivalent to that of a humanist scholar of

---

uttering any words but those, which we ourselves are very well acquainted with, both in our
learning and living. (61-2).

Though the Latin tongue be already discharged of all superfluities, exempt from custom to change
it, and laid up for knowledge to cherish it, and of long time hath been smoothed both to the eye
and to the ear, yet in the course of teaching it doth not naturally draw on the English, which yet
remaineth in her less unracked and not fined, though it grow on very fair. (62)

Latin by reference to a practical justification from Cicero's *De Oratore*, perhaps the best

known work on rhetoric in the Renaissance next to Quintilian's *Institutes*. In *De Oratore*,

a dialogue about how to be the ideal orator, Antonius combats his interlocutor Crassus,

justifying his use of older diction from Latin and borrowed diction from Greek in a

variety of clever ways: principally, though, in the passage E.K. alludes to Antonius

constructs the guiding analogy between the sun and influential literature in a way that

initially makes it seem like a mere excuse for the archaisms as trivial vices: "It is just as

when I take a walk in the sunshine: even if I do so for another reason, it is only natural

that I get tanned." (Antonius is concerned with many other matters besides this, but for

now let us concentrate upon that alone.) E.K. calls upon similar reasoning not just in the

allusion on its own. E.K. has made the "loadstarre" (13) of Chaucer, Lydgate, and other

poets into precisely such sun-tanning influences—magnetically sun-tanning, one might

say. Therefore Spenser's glossator has naturalized the influence of former authors and

older diction in a way that suggests it should be, firstly, forgiven by those who distrust

the classical eloquence it pays homage to and, secondly, respected by those who demand

that the language develop precisely such resources. This compromise reflects the

factions as well as the unifying interest in having English assume an educational role

simply by being so demonstrably parallel to Latin as a literary language.

Yet E.K. does more with the reference to Cicero than pacify potential critics and

appeal to patriots. While E.K. later in the *Epistle* also justifies his renovation of archaic

terms with the xenophobic charge that foreign loan-words are less respectable, his early

reference to *De Oratore* contains an appeal to those who understand the necessity and

peril of the influence of literatures in other languages. After all, as Cicero's mouthpiece

in a dialogue considering how to assert Roman authority over the Greek domain of rhetoric, Antonius executes a delicate office. The character must acknowledge the Greek influence over specifically linguistic matters—especially poetry—while preserving the authority of the Roman orator in using such linguistic material. He says,

> …when I have devoted a fair amount of attention to reading such books at my villa in Misenum (for there is hardly any opportunity to do so in Rome), I am well aware that my speech, through its exposure to them, takes on a different color, so to speak. But I don't want you to think that this has any wider implications: of the things I find in Greek writers, I merely understand what the authors themselves intended to be generally understood. Whenever I happen to come across philosophers, misled by the labels of their books […], then I don't understand a single word—so entangled are they by their narrow and minutely detailed discussions. The poets I do not even attempt to touch: it is as if they speak a different language altogether. (139)

In this passage, Antonius tackles questions of language, rhetoric, philosophy, and poetry at once. He suggests that he has avoided any philosophical and poetic battle over language, for he *says* that he simply picks up important Greek *ideas* in preference to the language while retaining negligible traces of their language's influence. It is lightly treated, but it is not a weightless subject. The "sun" of these sources is that of Greek philosophy and poetry together. Yet those two forces were at odds with one another and with oratory over the way they viewed language's place in culture and the position of language relative to mind—a matter acknowledged in Plato generally and in the *Phaedrus* particularly. The basic understanding of such cultural matters meant bloody battles for Romans, who were in the business of subjugating the Greeks in Cicero's era even though Antonius is speaking from an earlier era. Antonius speaks with a consciousness, too, that Plato's *Phaedrus*, with its complex imagery of conversations held in the countryside shade on a sunny day shot through with an association between light and knowledge, as the very sun-stroke upon which *De Oratore* began. The setting

166

for Cicero's dialogue emerges when we hear Scaevola ask Crassus, "Say, Crassus, why don't we follow the example of Socrates as he appears in Plato's *Phaedrus*? For your plane tree here suggests this to me, by spreading its broad boughs…" (63). Cicero's Antonius effectively claims for Latin the knowledge of Greek philosophy, but he does so in such a way that he de-values Greek language even as he stresses that his own Latin is not denatured by the "color" of that predecessor.[55] Antonius's entire approach to the

---

[55] My argument is principally about how we may understand Spenser's view of language itself, not the more general questions about rhetoric involved in E.K.'s reference to *De Oratore*. However, scholarship has said much independently about *De Oratore's* significance that in turn reveals just how provocative E.K.'s reference is. At the most general level, Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine's analysis of *De Oratore* in their appendix to *From Humanism to the Humanities* confirms my emphasis upon the questions about language and rhetoric that Antonius' comment touches. Grafton and Jardine explain clearly that Cicero's *De Oratore* was very much about the anxious appropriation of Greek philosophy and poetics, as they were embedded in Greek language, by Roman statesmen who needed to affirm the independent efficacy of their Latin. Cicero's text addresses the formative period in educating an orator who, having "reached proficiency in the erudite language, Greek (acquired painlessly by the well-born from Greek nurses and slaves)" (212) and then, having conducted basic studies of various texts, is turned over to a teacher called a "rhetor" whose duty is "to teach the student eloquence" (214). As the rhetor attempts to form this creature of perfection, however,

> …the problems implicit in the liberal arts programme grounded in the heritage of a foreign language become explicit. For the model of an alien culture is just that: an ideal, an archetype. Its power is its suggestive aesthetic/moral content, its ability to inspire what is felt to be a more mundane culture by its shining example. But if this is the case, where is that "original material" to come from, which the orator is to deploy astutely as the occasion demands…? (214)

Cicero, after all, lived in a Roman world where Vergil did not yet exist as an emblem of original Latin cultural eloquence! By alluding to Antonius' speech, E.K. and Spenser have together evinced an awareness of precisely this Roman pedagogical problem as representative of a similar problem bearing upon English culture in its adaptation of classical rhetoric to its ends. However, by deviating subtly from Antonius' metaphor, as I note in my main argument, E.K. has achieved two additional goals. First, he has removed the English people from the position directly equivalent to that of the Romans. He achieves this by emphasizing that the requisite "content" or knowledge for eloquence—foreign Greek, for the Romans— is, for the English within the English language's history and essential identity, not outside it. By doing that, and by acknowledging the eternal and sanctified poetic knowledge of that "eternall image," he has enlisted the philosophical basis of Greek culture as the root of English poetic culture. (This should not be a surprising gesture for Spenser who is later to make such serious claims on Neo-Platonism, as is widely recognized.) E.K. and Spenser are clearly shifting the grounds on which we are to understand the relationship between language and knowledge even as they are placing poetry—instead of rhetoric—into rivalry with philosophy.

Edward Armstrong in his recent *A Ciceronian Sunburn* produces an analysis of E.K.'s reference to *De Oratore* that appears quite different from my own. He argues that Spenser devises E.K. to engage the reader in a dialogic contest over Ramist refigurings of rhetoric, philosophy, and poetry. As part of his argument, Armstrong insists that "E.K.'s many citational and interpretive failings suggest that we should be suspicious of subscribing to all he has to say about the eclogues" (42). I agree. E.K. allows Spenser to comment on how poetry should and should not be interpreted. E.K.'s tendentious arguments about the spelling of "æglog," as I have already noted, make it quite plain that Spenser's sixteenth-century readers

matter and the metaphor that he chooses is loaded with the question of how the Romans

will deal with the way the old, powerful Greek ideas are embedded in the Greek

language.

Antonius' position is a complex one regarding rhetoric with fairly straightforward

implications regarding Cicero's ambitions for Latin: that is, Antonius frames Latin-

language rhetoric as an easy and necessarily eloquent inheritor of Greek-language poetry,

rhetoric, and philosophy by ignoring the value of the Greek language and society to its

forms of learning and speech. Naturally, Antonius's view of rhetoric as a whole is not

---

were not meant to receive his arguments uncritically. Armstrong, however, reads the "æglog" passage as one meant to satirize E.K. exclusively as a sort of Ramist—that it is meant to make us see the "absurdity" of E.K.'s approach where "meaning is not learned in the act of reading, but by the act of explication" in annotation or definition (60). As I will consider later in the chapter, Ramism is not the only possible culprit, but potentially part of a larger range of problematic humanist practices. E.K.'s argument about "æglog," like other references to the Greek culture and dialect, direct us toward Spenser's larger ambitions for English vernacular. Just as the allusion to Cicero's Antonius makes us highly conscious of the Greek original influence, so the "æglog" justification passage turns us back towards the Greek original form.

Armstrong's approach to explaining E.K.'s allusion to Cicero's *De Oratore* has problems similar to those we find in his interpretation of E.K.'s absurd "æglog" justification. Armstrong requires that E.K.'s reference be specifically directed towards making us see that E.K.'s "assessment of poetry is analogous to Antonius' assessment of rhetoric" (56) in ways geared to make us sensible of a criticism of the reductive logics of Ramism. I do not doubt that E.K. was a means to many different critical commentaries on the classicizing glosses he makes and the way in which they frame and re-frame the goals Spenser has in setting himself up as a poet responsive to his kingdom. In other words, I do think that Spenser likely advanced some criticism of Ramism through E.K. for the same reasons that I think he addresses criticism toward humanist practice such as that to be found among lexicographers. However, as I have already pointed out, E.K.'s handling of the metaphor of "sunburn" is not fully analogous to the metaphor used by Antonius. E.K. changes it to make it fit the issue of the English vernacular he is addressing. This makes the position of English poetry relative to its influences very different from the position of Latin rhetoric relative to the Greek. E.K., like the Spenser who writes to Harvey demanding that the English attain linguistic autonomy like the Greeks, places English vernacular poetry in the position of the *Greek* by means of the emphasis upon archaism and upon the English-language syntactical "knitting." Antonius' failings simply cannot be the object of satire *and* the means by which to position English poetry so flatteringly because the former interpretation demands that the two analogies, Antonius' and E.K.'s, be equivalent in ways that they simply are not.

In both the case of the "æglog" spelling and the case of the crafting of the analogy, then, Spenser's E.K. stakes out a position that reflects the matter of Roman cultural anxiety over Greek influence that, for its resemblance to the issues of cultural adaptation and mimicry undertaken by humanists, animated the Renaissance understanding of *De Oratore* that Grafton and Jardine stress. However, the way E.K. adjusts his use of analogical reasoning from *De Oratore* addresses the relationship of language, poetry, and knowledge in ways that cannot be simply critical of Ramist agendas, but rather must address the larger ambitions Spenser entertained for poetry and for the English-language poetry Spenser hoped to cultivate.

perfectly consistent with Cicero's likely views. As Antonius' interlocutor, Crassus defends quite contrary views about philosophy, knowledge, and other details that show the range of Cicero's opinions. However, regarding the *linguistic* question that is under consideration by E.K., and the question that is eminently relevant to the historical context that E.K. and Spenser together confront with *The Shepheardes Calender*, Antonius's quite Roman/Latin attitude toward the authority of Greek language and culture is representative of what Cicero's *De Oratore* had to offer Renaissance artists. It offers a way to deal with the influence of classical languages and their culture on vernacular languages and culture. It is of enormous significance, then, that Spenser's and his speaker E.K.'s position *does not logically match* what we find in Antonius! E.K. decides to use Antonius's position on the need for eloquence even under the influence of foreign language and culture. However, E.K.'s argument seeks to justify the use of archaic diction *from English* without explicit acknowledgment of the need for rhetorical eloquence. The essential quality of the language has taken precedence. The "sun" of Spenser's annotator is English, certainly in the case of Chaucer. Moreover, the matter of poetry, far from being abstruse or untouchable and damaging to good speech, is the primary substance of craft. E.K. stresses that the "knitting" (14) of the words is a matter of poetic skill. Perhaps more tellingly, E.K. points not to his practical restraint from philosophical abstraction, as Antonius does, but to the "eternall image of antiquitie" (15) that is to emerge from the use of archaic diction in an effective manner. In focusing our attention on that "eternall image," E.K. is directing us toward an unchanging ideal rather than a practical rhetorical or linguistic shading. He is concerned with *eternal* knowledge as the substance of linguistic rendering. The core of E.K.'s justification thus emerges

from poetry and philosophy, the Greek arts that Antonius merely wants to draw upon incidentally.

The details of the allusion to Cicero hint at an ambitious leap over the Latin and even the basic question of the vernacular to the more sophisticated realm of Greek philosophy and poetry as a model of original linguistic and cultural integrity. E.K. returns to Greek models regarding naming practices, as with the reference to Theocritus as an authority on the word *aeglog* in the *Generall Arugment*—as I already discussed—and with his reference to Theocritus' ideas about naming in the August æglog's notes—which I will discuss in detail later. Such references and others form a fuller proof that what we find in the allusion to Cicero is substantially concerned with the Greek question addressed in the original. Yet E.K.'s continuing argumentation about diction in the *Epistle* recognizably develops this pattern of interest in the Greeks. He relies on idealizing and philosophical notions of language broadly first struck with reference to Greek poetry, then steeped in appeals to practical or compromising ethics. Language must "blaze a portraict […] of beautye" as much as ugliness, he first tells us, explaining that the ugly words "enlumine and make more clearly appear the brightness of brave and glorious words" (15). The imagery of light mixed with reference to rustic or rural subjects (the "naturall rudenesse" of the pastoral subject) retains the reminder to the reader of the intellectual and antiquarian "sunburn" even as it skillfully embraces the contrary notion that such same words are "hard" or "dark" rather than bright. The reference to beauty evokes the Neoplatonic ideals associated with the Renaissance poetry particularly, yoking these to the larger philosophical and rhetorical issues. His principal ensuing example, the early Greek poet Alceus, makes this reasoning by complex

association and analogy yet more palpable: "So oftentimes a dischorde in Musick maketh a comely concordaunce: so great delight tooke the worthy Poete Alceus to behold a blemish in the joint of a wel shaped body" (15). This imaginative complex of references sets up E.K.'s insistence that "this Poete [Spenser] hath labored to restore, as to their rightfull heritage such good and naturall English words" (16). The Greek reference thus precedes an understanding of a natural, original condition for the English language, which is then counted to possess "of it self"—without any effort toward augmentation— property "ful enough for prose and stately enough for verse." Disparagement of the influence of Italian and Latin loan-words succeeds E.K.'s insistence upon the independent worthiness of English. Amazingly, though, E.K. then carefully tempers his criticism of such practices by placing himself largely in a defensive position that turns into an apparent acceptance of the possibility of loan words from other languages. He likens those who would criticize his reliance on archaisms to "the Mole in Aesopes fable, that being blynd her selfe, would in no wise be perswaded, that any beast could see" (16-17). Yet these people whom he derides for holding their "natural speach" (17) inadequate, he ridicules too for being unwilling "that of other it should be embellished." The reader can only guess now that "other" may mean poet or may mean language in this context, which on the whole seems strategic to the farrago of E.K.'s assault on the subject. He rounds out a paragraph by likening any critics of the use of archaisms or, presumably, foreign loan-words, to dogs that bark at bulls for eating the hay they themselves cannot consume. This "currish kind […] cannot be kept from barking" (17). We are meant to see that he will accept any means by which the English might be improved so long as that end of improvement is realized.

In reserving crucial authority to the poet, prizing an obscure and idealized original source, and likening a set of pedantic detractors concerned with individual words to barking dogs, E.K.'s position deeply resembles what we are later to find in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*. (Perhaps in returning to a pastoral landscape, Spenser renewed his interest in the questions of language begun with his pastoral eclogues.) At this early stage, though, E.K. also appears to be choosing his references to the Greeks for reasons that are not restricted to matters of diction or humanist lexicography. That is, he is setting up a definition of poetry as both divinely inspired and rationally guided, an approach specially effective against Plato's attack on poetry's irrational basis from the *Ion* and Plato's dismissal of its potential role for knowledgeable governors in the *Republic*. After all, having cited Alceus, he has apparently allied himself with the pre-Socratic Greek poets of irrational vatic authority, but through his reference to *De Oratore* he has also allied his notion of language to that of Roman rhetoricians who sought to gain control of that authority. These interests seem more natural if we consider the dedication of the work as a whole to Sir Philip Sidney. That is, the question of how to frame the poet as philosophically responsible is particularly apt because Sidney identifies Plato's criticism as the most singularly troublesome one for defining the rhetorical agency of poetry in his *Defence of Poesie*.

* * *

Before we consider the way in which E.K.'s definition is like to Sidney's defense and positioned to answer Greek philosophy, consider how at the most basic level it stresses the rationality and control of Spenser's poetic technique as reflected in the syntax that makes up for any loaned or archaic diction. E.K. notes that "the knitting of the

sentences" has the kind of physical integrity of a well-made body such as he before has us observing in Alceus' musical/anatomical metaphor. And E.K. then observes that "this Authour [Spenser] is well grounded, finely framed, and strongly trussed together" before going on to point out that some "ragged rymers […] which without learning boste, without judgement jangle, without reason rage and fome, as if some instinct of Poeticall spirite had newly ravished them above the meanenesse of commen capacitie" (17). He likens these uncontrolled poets, by now seemingly classed with other barking detractors to his author's inspired use of language, to "a woman in childebirth or as that same Pythia," then quotes half a line from the *Aeneid*: "Os rabidum fera corda domans etc." (17). The reference to Pythia, whom we know to be the Cumaean Sibyl by the line from Vergil, is further strategic to the positioning of Spenser's work relative to the classical tradition it draws upon and the vernacular English interests it otherwise pursues. In the scene from the epic alluded to, the Cumaean Sybil is about to advise Aeneas about how to go about fulfilling his destiny as founder of the Roman line. The term "Pythia," to be precise, evokes the Greek prophetess of Delphic Apollo as well as the Cumaean Sybil, and in this respect E.K. has inserted yet another original Greek cultural identity into a Roman setting. Moreover, E.K. has chosen this quote from Vergil not just because it reveals the Sybil as analogous to a poet without control, but because the Sybil is *mastered* in that particular scene by Apollo in order that her poetic enigmas may guide the founding of the empire. The full context of the quote runs so:

> But, not yet enduring Phoebus, the prophetess raves
> Wildly in the cavern as if she could shake the god out
> Of her breast. So greatly he wearies her raving mouth,

Taming her wild heart, and shapes her by reining her.[56]

The Latin verbals "domans" and "premendo" (meaning "taming" and "pressuring") are the verbs used in chariot-driving and horse-riding. With some wily duplicity, E.K. has chosen to locate *within* an example of a Italian priestess who has lost control of her body and voice to the controlling power of a Greek God, a criticism of poets who lose control and a praise for those who maintain Apollonian visionary status. In Vergil's work, her prophecy, not surprisingly, twins the seminal Greek myth of the *Iliad* to the concluding narrative of the final six books of the *Aeneid*. For the Roman reader, this was a transmission of Greek culture to Roman control. But for E.K., the context is shifted to suit his preference for the original Greek power as something to be found parallel to the essential English linguistic and cultural identity. To be sure, E.K. has us understand that the necessary context is *Pythian*, not Cumaean, and so the Greek culture is privileged here much as the Greek sunshine and Alceus were. Logically, then, since E.K. has (up to the point that he quotes) stressed that the poetry of the *Shepheardes Calender* will be controlled and measured, he has implicitly suggested that Spenser's poetry will be the controlling force—the Greek God—rather than the native female virgin. Furthermore, that native female virgin, like Queen Elizabeth who is soon to be implicitly seen as a subject matter to play upon in the April æglog,[57] appears to be both the native language

---

[56] "At Phoebi nondum patiens, immanis in antro/ bacchatur vates, magnum si pectore posit/ excussisse deum; tanto magis ille fatigat/ os rabidum, fera corda domans, fingitque premendo" (6.77-80).

[57] In the "Lay of Eliza" in the April Eclogue, as William Oram explains, Eliza as the "child of Pan and Syrinx" becomes "identical with the oaten reeds or panpipe that conventionally symbolizes the pastoral poet's ability to compose" (68-9). Less flatteringly understood, the metaphorical turn suggests a pattern of reasoning by which Queen Elizabeth is to be seen as the passive subject material upon which the poet plays to produce a national music or art. Such a darker message is quite plausible because, as Oram also observes, "the lay speaks, though indirectly, against the queen's possible marriage to the French prince Alençon" and in doing so also "affirms the concept of the mystical marriage of the Virgin Queen and

and the essential English identity. Thus the logical political context of these arguments

shows that E.K.'s and Spenser's conception of the English language's identity is central

not just to his aesthetics of diction but to his sense of how a poet is to square up to

national interests in the manner of a Roman rhetorician. Seen in this way, it is a

breathtakingly ambitious statement that a poet would much rather have an anonymous

editor contribute: the veiling of this message about politics is like the safe veiling of any

message to governing powers.

Patrick Cheney provides an interpretation of *The Shepheardes Calender* that

reinforces my understanding of the careerist vision of the poet—that is, the vision of the

poet that becomes so much plainer with E.K.'s quotation of Vergil. Cheney argues that

Spenser's contribution to "Western poetics […] lies in Christianizing the Virgilian idea of

a literary career" (22).[58] But even for Cheney this career points back to the "Orphic" and

---

England that Elizabeth herself had initiated" (69). Louis Montrose argues precisely this in "The
Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text." *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*. Eds. Patricia Parker and
David Quint. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986). I will return to this issue in when I examine the April
æglog in the second half of this chapter. Additionally, though, Spenser could have depended on his
Elizabethan contemporaries to identify the sibyl with Elizabeth for quite specific reasons: certain events in
1575 involving Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. In a recent article in *English Literary Renaissance*,
Jessica L. Malay describes the salient event and context:

> In his famous description of the Kenilworth entertainments of 1575, Robert Laneham describes the
> presence of a group of mythical figures who, in the last decades of the sixteenth century, enjoyed a
> final resurgence of attention and authority. The Queen, as she entered the park near the first gate of
> the castle was met by "one of the ten Sibills . . . cumly clad in a pall of white sylk, [who]
> pronounced a proper poezi in English ryme and meter . . . with prophecy certeyn, of mooch and long
> prosperitee health and felicitee." By choosing one of the sibyls of classical and early Christian
> mythology as part of his entertainments, the Earl of Leicester engineered yet another opportunity for
> flattery. More importantly, he drew the attention of the audience, including the Queen, to the
> sibylline prophecies. These foretold a ruler appointed to lead God's people into a golden age.
> Leicester could be certain that Elizabeth would recognize and appreciate the connection. It was this
> same hope of recognition that moved a young Elizabethan woman to choose the sibylline prophecies
> as her subject matter, this time in her hand-crafted gift book, intended for the Queen, entitled *The
> Divine Prophesies of the Ten Sibills*. (173)

Spenser, as is well known, closely allied himself with Leicester and his faction. Thus E.K.'s choice of
imagery from Vergil is fitting on many political levels that suit the argument about language presented.

[58] "Western poetics" is a field to which he apparently attributes some canonical unity. I should note that I
do not support his choice of the term or his generalization about "christianizing."

ostensibly Greek origin of poetry as a practice. The very reference to Greek precedence

complicates the Christianizing mission with a classical sense of originality. To be sure,

E.K.'s references to *De Oratore*, Alceus, and Vergil's "Pythian" Sybil place

extraordinary emphasis upon an Orphic original authority for a poet who is simply

presumed Christian for being prophetic.[59] E.K. is unquestionably seizing upon the idea of

an Orphic poet as one who will be identifiably serving the faith of his day. (Such a poet,

as I will consider in greater depth momentarily, will not be as vulnerable to the kind of

charges of irrational enthusiasm that a Platonist might make against him.) This leads us to

the imagery that E.K. uses to qualify the Orphic Greek poet as Christian. Cheney argues

at a more specific level about *The Shepheardes Calender* that the imagery of birds and

nascent flight as a vatic poet is key to Spenser's conception of his career: "…Spenser

uses a major avian image to signal each stage of the four-part experiential process [of a

man becoming a vatic poet]…" (79-80). Cheney goes on to point out that of the "forty-

eight avian images" brought up in *The Shepheardes Calender*, the "nightingale emerges

as Colin's bird" (80). Setting aside the various ways in which this choice might be

important for the matter of Christian symbolism, Cheney rapidly concludes:

> By associating his persona with the "sovereigne of song," Spenser appears to be
> identifying the nightingale as the bird of pastoral poetry; the myth of Philomela,

---

[59] Cheney's argument comes with taxonomical baggage: that is, he makes distinctions between the careerist, theological, and/or philosophical interests that might be guiding Spenser's characterization of the poet. He writes, "Spenser's immediate goal in writing *The Shepheardes Calender* is thus career based. He aims to establish his authority as England's new national poet—an heir of 'Tityrus,' that figure who evokes both his native medieval heir, Chaucer, and his continental classical one, Virgil, as the two descend from a common archetype, Orpheus. Spenser's career-based goal implies that he defines pastoral poetry (or redefines it) in careerist terms—as a genre that contributes to a literary career. He understands pastoral as a genre in which the young poet demonstrates his authority to wear his country's laureate wreath" (77). I share some of Cheney's desire to point out the ambitions of Spenser's self-definition, and indeed I think it useful to observe the career itself that E.K. sees as part of poetry, but I do not wish to place too much confidence in his specific taxonomy at this stage in my argument.

as the arch-myth of pastoral. In doing so, he is returning to a Theocritan identification of the pastoral poet that Virgil evidently rejects by identifying the pastoral poet as a dove… (80)

For my most basic purposes, Cheney's observation provides additional reasons why E.K. defers to Theocritus as the key source of original authority on spelling: in the subsequent *Generall Argument*, E.K. is effectively deferring to a poetic authority that he has previously cited in the *Epistle* as central to the poetic career. Just as importantly, though, the citation of Theocritus' poetic preeminence aligns neatly with the emphasis E.K. generally places on Greek culture's philosophy and rhetoric earlier in the *Epistle*, that oratorical and poetic context that, like the "loadestarre" English canonical precedents, will bolster the language. Indeed, E.K. is open about stressing that Theocritus is central to the poetic tradition as he sees it, stating outright that Theocritus is the "full fledged" predecessor to Vergil: "So flew Theocritus, as you may perceive that he was all ready full fledged" (18). This metaphorical maturity follows quick on the heels of some overt anxiety about the need for the poems to help the language and culture grow out of immaturity. E.K. writes that Spenser was "mynding to furnish our tongue with this kind [pastoral eclogues, that is], wherein it faulteth, or following the example of the best and most auncient Poetes, which devised this kind of writing" (18). Note that E.K. makes "this kind of writing" beneficial to the language as well as the poetry. It is *not just* a matter of poetic diction, but a matter of the health and prestige of the cultural holding of language. We might justly wonder what justifies such grand purview.

For Cheney, the imagery of wings and references to Theocritus in the poem proper complement E.K.'s efforts to define and justify poetic work in the *Epistle*. Cheney wishes to show that Spenser is aiming through the nightingale at "the arch-myth

of pastoral" (81) in order to demonstrate his superior and now Christian claim to the

career that Vergil defined as the progress from pastoral to georgic to epic. This turn of

reasoning requires a long history of the nightingale as an image, the place of pastoral and

elegy relative to Theocritus, and the long swath of English, Italian, and French poets who

precede Spenser in the business of defining the "arch-myth" (81-86). Naturally, Cheney

comes to the conclusion that E.K.'s imagery about wings and fledging fuse a variety of

traditions into a political and careerist justification:

> Together the classical and biblical matrices of Spenser's myth form a
> characteristic Spenserian synthesis that situates the divine poet in a political
> context. He is a fledging poet, in need of parental protection because he is
> vulnerable to abuse. The avian image permits Spenser to subordinate himself to
> Sidney in order to arouse Sidney's sympathy; it also places the New Poet with the
> great courtier in the only training ground capable of launching a winged career:
> the patronage system. (87)

In describing such political and careeric interests, Cheney frames an essential context for

Spenser's inaugural work. To this frame I hope to add a precise understanding regarding

the way he and his glossator, E.K., situate the poet's authority on and for language. In

what way, we might justly ask, is this "fledging poet" serving and subordinate to Sidney

in crafting such a specific position on the original Greek as a model for English? And

what can our observations about the intersection between those two things show us?

    When it comes to matters of language, as my argument as already shown and as

the detailed argumentation of Cathy Shrank has shown, Spenser and his *Shepheardes

Calender* meet the interests of specific English predecessors and meet the pressures well

defined by R.F. Jones' study.[60] But the work of Sir Philip Sidney and the Greek

---

[60] In *Writing the Nation in Reformation England: 1530-1580*, Cathy Shrank traces the widest range of
influences on the character of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*. To do this, she analyzes Spenser's work as
a literary man engaged in the larger national effort of "improving the national tongue" (220). She sees his

philosophy upon which Sidney's efforts depend have a more precise relevance to the passages that we have been examining from E.K.'s prefatory materials. Earlier I took note of the philosophical interests raised by the superficially simple reference to Cicero. The superficial reference was Spenser's means of talking about justifiable and practical choices of diction. Ultimately, though, as I have shown, the simple reference leads us to bolder claims about the essential identity of English as, like Greek, an origin, a source of authority for poets. Similarly, E.K.'s seemingly innocuous reference to Vergil—political in some measures already identified—shortly turns E.K. to references to imagery necessary to much larger, more ambitious frames of argument about rhetoric, language, and poetry in the deepest ranges of Plato's thought. After all, the "wings" and enthusiasm of the poet referred to in this segment are not an overt turn toward the myth of the nightingale or Theocritus, even if such is true later. In the immediate context, E.K. turns our attention toward the oracular Greek poets who were objects of scorn for Socrates in the *Ion*. The mystical prophets and Greek epic poets who were the objects of reverence for Vergil in the *Aeneid* constitute objects of enormous anxiety for Christians

---

work as responsive to specifically English intellectual and political interests, but also as representative of a "fusion of classical, Continental, and vernacular cultures" (221). For example, she points out that Harvey and Spenser together in their letters exhibit a concern with preserving a "natural" English speech that is related to the similar concerns of such patriotic predecessors as Thomas Smith (228). Yet she stipulates that Spenser's actual choices in *The Shepheardes Calender*, while adhering to custom with unreformed orthography, "is a far more eclectic English" that "draws on the language of the period that saw the fusion of Anglo-Saxon and Norman French, and the demise of inflected Old English" (229). She explains that Spenser's choice in this regard reflected a complex version of the influence and interest of English predecessors like Thomas Wilson as well as the influence of continental ideas like those of Castiglione:

> Where Wilson wanted to unite a nation of English speakers by banishing regional terms and providing them with "one maner of language,'" Spenser is eager to encompass a range of different Englishes and the language of England's Irish territories. Like Castiglione, Spenser chooses "woordes out of every part" ("parole […] d'ogni parte"). (229-30)

Thus Shrank also sees the book design of the *Shepheardes Calender*, its "old fashioned printing techniques, diction, and orthography" as a celebration of " an English literary aesthetic rooted in history and spreading across its geographical dominions" (230). Her argument thereafter compiles a great many more examples of political and cultural influences that explain the eclecticism and indeed the "elusiveness" of Spenser's dialogic work (239).

who cannot assume the pagan stoicism of Roman *pietas*. For some in the Renaissance, the important question was how to turn the vatic power of poets into rational means that might serve a government and people. This is indeed precisely what concerned Sir Philip Sidney, the dedicatee of the *Calender*. In his *Defence of Poesie*, Sidney intimately links a reverence for Greek culture, an identification of the central role of the poet as vatic in a way that draws upon that culture, and a redefinition of some of the terms of that poetic role to include a natural or easy understanding of the native tongue.[61] Shortly after

---

[61] I am in my main argument concerned with showing that Sidney links a theory of diction, a kind of anti-intellectual notion of the English language, and a preference for Greek culture over Latin as the most original one. However, it is worth showing in a little more detail how Sidney arrives at and thoroughly over-determines the value of Greek culture and philosophy to his conception of English poetry in his *Defence* in order to more fully illuminate the ties between Sidney and Spenser.

Early and late in the piece, Sidney relies heavily upon references to the Greek culture in which its poetry and attitudes toward poetry figure as an original and strong source of information about the value of poetry generally. He also strives to show that the English were specially parallel to the Greeks in their linguistic choices, writing, "…I know not whether by luck or wisdome, we Englishmen have met with the Greekes in calling [the poet] a Maker" (7). Towards the end of his treatise, he more formally declares that English "is particularly happy in compositions of two or three wordes together, neare the Greeke, farre beyond the Latine, which is one of the greatest bewties can be in a language" (44). Throughout, his interest in the Greeks partially stems from a desire to absorb their philosophical terms into a description of the special achievement of poetic work. Sidney is careful early on to describe poetry as a rational art with special claims to aiding the development of knowledge in culture. For example, he notes that poetry "hath been the first giver of light to ignorance, and first nurse whose milke litle & litle enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges" (4). Moreover, Sidney lets the poet usurp the philosopher in having a special duty to advance knowledge itself by formulating a conception of ideal things based not upon perception alone but upon reasoning about the most perfect state. He writes:

> Onely the Poet disdeining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow in effect into an other nature: in making things either better then nature bringeth foorth, or quite a new, formes such as never were in nature. (8)

Here Sidney transparently uses the word "formes" in a way that suggests the poet's function is to *see* through his work the *ideas* that are the essential interest of a Platonic philosopher. He even more plainly states this: "And that the Poet hath that *idea* is manifest…" (8). He bases this more or less on the notion that the Greeks gave the poet the name of "maker," and he blithely ignores the problem, well detailed in Plato's *Cratylus*, that names themselves are insufficient grounds for understanding the things they refer to completely. Rather, he turns to Biblical grounds, arguing that the Biblical prophets were effectively poets given to "imitate the inconceivable excellencies of God" (9). The essentials these vatic poets create, he is careful to note, are preserved in the *languages* they used: "These… may justly be termed *Vates*: so these are waited on in the excellentest languages and best understandings" (10). Eventually, it is precisely the poet's activated and actualized linguistic testament, a form of demonstrated knowledge that *teaches* and that is part of no specific profession, that makes Sidney feel the poet can lay claim to greater virtue than the Platonic philosopher. He reasons that the philosopher's "vertue is excellent in the dangerlesse *Academy* of *Plato*: but mine [the poet's] sheweth forth her honourable face in the battailes of *Marathon*, *Pharsalia*…" Sidney simply affords the vatic poet a place in advising actual governance which Plato explicitly denies him in the *Republic*.

countering the main charge against poets as it emerges from Plato's *Republic,* Sidney

focuses on the adequacy of English itself for poetry and the question of poetic diction.

These happen to be the matters E.K. also raises, and it is not surprising that Sidney

actually addresses *The Shepheardes Calender* in particular:

> The Sheepheardes Kalender, hath much *Poetrie* in his Egloges, indeed woorthie
> the reading, if I be not deceived. That same framing of his style to an olde
> rusticke language, I dare not allow: since neither *Theocritus* in Greeke, *Virgill* in
> Latine, nor *Sanazara* in Italian, did affect it (37).

Clearly, Sidney disapproved of the archaism in Spenser's work, and yet too much has

been made of this difference. The difference of opinion should not cause us to overlook

the enormous commonalities of reasoning about diction, Greek philosophy, Greek

---

More and more as his argument moves on, Sidney posits a didactic element to poetry in order to elevate poetry and poet to equality with the philosopher. Sidney reasons that poets like philosophers are active in theorizing about abstract things and that like historians they also track specifics. Therefore he believes they excel both specifically in that they offer better instruction to potential *learners*. Didacticism is thus essential to his elevation of the poet over the philosopher and historian, but it is also the source of poetry's primacy culturally, and this cultural primacy becomes an integral part of Sidney's interest in the equivalence of English culture to others. He links the pre-historical antiquity (poetry is "of al humane learnings the most ancient"[25]) and its relative universality ("it is so universall, that no learned nation doth despise it") to this essential didacticism. Poetry's beneficial political function for allegory is secondary to this quality tied to the argument about teaching and learning because the attractive way poetry helps the right ideas grow is something that Sidney believes the philosophers rely upon despite their access to greater truths. Christ's poetical parables are his further example of his reasoning on the matter.

In long, complicated concluding passages, Sidney attempts to refute four charges against poetry: That there are "other more frutefull knowledge's"; "that it is the mother of lyes"; that it leads people to licentious and appetitive behaviors rather than intellective ones; "And lastly and chiefly [...] that *Plato* banished [poets] out of his Commonwealth" (28). The last of these dominates his response. Having set up poets as fulfilling the roles of rhetorician and philosopher, and having made the learning process itself part of their necessary appeal, Sidney is in a good position to blunt the edge of the final accusation. He has made the poet politically and socially worthy for his or her ability to help people learn and retain knowledge while never actively addressing the nature of that knowledge. He has, that is, wholly avoided the question of how a thinker might test or tease out the validity of that knowledge—a cornerstone of Platonic criticism of rhetoric and poetry in, among other places, the *Phaedrus*. Rather than reject philosophy's value or fully address Plato's reasoning, then, Sidney simply claims that Plato is "Poeticall," then claims that it was not poetry itself that the philosophers were meant to banish, but "the abuse" of which poets in Plato's time were guilty. Sidney does not really encounter or address the foundational ideas about knowledge, reasoning, and ascertainment of truth that are central to Plato's criticism of poets who claim divine guidance and more general authority. Rather, he has simply made the poet into a kind of philosopher with special didactic tools in language and some legitimate claim to inspiration—a claim an atheistic Socrates might have rejected, but Sidney's contemporaries might not.

culture, and the vatic poet.[62] Sidney has focused, like E.K. on justifying English poetic

culture with Greek precedent *and* linking that precedent to distinctive linguistic choices.

After his comment on Spenser, Sidney complicates the matter substantially:

> But let this be a sufficient, though short note, that we misse the right use of the material point of *Poesie*. Now, for the outside of it, which is wordes, or (as I may tearme it) *Diction*, it is even well worse: so it is that hony-flowing Matrone *Eloquence*, appareled, or rather disguised, in a Courtisanlike painted affectation. One time with so far fette words, that many seeme monsters, but must seeme straungers to anie poore Englishman: an other time with coursing of a letter, as if they were bound to follow the method of a Dictionary: another time with figures and flowers, extreemlie winter-starved. (41-2)

This passage defines the place of poetic diction between three tense interests. First, with

his reference to "Matrone Eloquence" he brings up the central interests of classical

humanists and rhetoricians. Second, with his reference to the "dictionary," he raises

specter of those who will find ways to impose meaning by simply organizing the

language arbitrarily. Finally, Sidney refers to the common reader—"anie Poore

Englishman"—who needs to take ownership of the language, a figure who stands for

those who wish to tap into the power of the vernacular as a means to educate and

empower and those who are skeptical of the ornamentation of language as dissolute.

These are roughly the same interests that E.K. frames with his reference to *De Oratore*,

his refusal of the approved definition of "Eclogue," and his reference to the natural, latent

resources of English. To address all those interests and to establish the value of the

language to poetry and the poetry to the language, Sidney *sanctifies* the link between the

---

[62] Later in the chapter I will examine just why it was, contrary to Sidney's suggestion, *not* unreasonable to suppose that Spenser was imitating the Doric literary dialect that is central to Hellenistic Greek eclogues Theocritus wrote.

two in a way that suggests a poet has a just and honorable inspiration through the English language:

> Since lastly, our tongue is most fit to honour *Poesie*, and to bee honored by *Poesie*, I conjure you all that have had the evill luck to read this inck-wasting toy of mine, even in the name of the nine *Muses*, no more to scorne the sacred misteries of *Poesie*. (45)

Sidney is only partly joking. He goes on to cite the defenders of vernacular poetry—Bembo, and Landino among them—and to insist that "poets are so believed of the Gods, that whatsoever they write, proceeds of a divine furie." Yet it is this reciprocally-acting suture between the language communally understood and the inspired poetry itself that makes the assertion logical. Before we can have this justification of the vatic, Sidney has insisted that English is the equal of *Greek* in this regard:

> But for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceit of the minde, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world. And it is particularly happy in compositions of two or three wordes together, neare the Greeke, farre beyond the Latine, which is one of the greatest bewties can be in a language. (44)

Indeed, the passage should indeed remind us of Spenser's words to Gabriel Harvey about the freedom and independence of Greek.

Sidney's effort to sanctify the link between the English language and its poetry relies upon twisting the terms of Greek philosophical rejections of poetry into English- and *language-based* justifications of it. Like Sidney, Spenser relies upon an emphasis upon Greek culture as part of his development of a specific idea of English diction and poetic handling of that diction. The association between the two authors seems less surprising if we consider this commonality rather than their difference of opinion about archaism. More importantly, though, in this commonality we have a tool to explicate the logic of E.K.'s choice for using "wing" and bird imagery as he is justifying the vatic poet

after so much work establishing the political and social relevance of the poet as a controlled and controlling power. Seemingly ready to abandon the notion of vatic power in general in favor of some grounded approach at the point he condemns the uncontrolled enthusiasm, E.K turns to a variety of ways of justifying a Christian enthusiasm while making careful nods toward the relevant parts of the Greek philosophical tradition. E.K.'s reference to the poets filled with a "Poeticall spirite" (17) relates to Socrates' complaint against the "inspired" poets in the *Ion*—men whose credentials as poets depend upon inspiration in precisely the way E.K. disparages. Socrates says to Ion the rhapsode:

> You know, none of the epic poets, if they're good, are masters of their subject; they are inspired, possessed, and that is how they utter all those beautiful poems. The same goes for lyric poets if they're good: just as the Corybantes are not in their right minds when they dance, lyric poets, too are not in their right minds when they make those beautiful lyrics, but as soon as they sail away into harmony and rhythm they are possessed by Bacchic frenzy. […] For the poet is an airy thing, winged and holy, and he is not able to make poetry until he becomes inspired and goes out of his mind and his intellect is no longer in him. (27)

Socrates roughly describes E.K.'s "rakehellye route of our ragged rhymers" that "without reason rage and fome" (17). We might think that E.K. would simply prefer a rational poet, but within the next page he simply insists upon humility in poets: "As for Colin, under whose person the Authour selfe is shadowed, how furre he is from such vaunted titles and glorious showes…" (18). The poet whom E.K. prefers (the one he says "Colin" and Spenser effectively *are*) hopes to prove his "tender wyngs" in order to take a "greater flight." E.K emphasizes that the first of those to fly, the one he emulates, is *Theocritus,* who was "full fledged," while Vergil "as not yet well feeling his wings." We are meant to understand, much as Patrick Cheney sees, that poetry is a matter of spiritual maturity that brings with it a legitimate career aspiration, a legitimate place in the society and culture. "So finally flyeth this our new Poete," E.K. says of Spenser, implying by

"our" a national and collective spiritual achievement equal to that of the Romans (19). Again, like Sidney's, E.K.'s sanctification of the poet has come by suturing the poetic wings to the language and writing that has been the body of the argument all the way up to this point. E.K. asserts that "Colin, under whose person the Authour selfe is shadowed" is a strategic figure whereby to exemplify the power of poets over language. But E.K.'s approach to sanctifying the poet takes on an individual color: he states that it will be through a conscious and reasoning effort to ornament language that Spenser will work, arguing that Spenser is "mynding to furnish our tongue with this kinde, wherein it faulteth, or following the example of the best and most auncient Poetes, which devised this kind of wryting" (18). Most surprisingly, E.K. argues that the ancient poets rehabilitated vatic poetry through *writing* conventions. Like the good part of the soul that is characterized as growing wings in the *Phaedrus*, these authors tried "to prove theyr tender wyngs" in a literary flight with such written forms. The first to try this precise method was not Alceus or any archaic Greek poets who might fall short in the Platonic estimation, E.K. finds for us, but Theocritus—the Greek figure for whom all pastoral work in Latin under Vergil will ensue.

My readers will rightly hesitate here and ask: "How can you be sure the 'wing' imagery moves from a reference to the *Ion* to a reference to the *Phaedrus*?" In fact, I am quite sure that E.K. and Spenser *do not necessarily intend a reference* to the *Phaedrus* specifically so much as a reference to the Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Christian idea of the soul's development. However, it is next to impossible to understand the logic that E.K. and Spenser turn to without examining matching patterns and isolating key differences between the Platonism relied upon and the philosophical ideas engendered. In this case,

Spenser is, like Sidney, substituting the poet for the philosopher and adding Christian religion, writing, and the artistic and historic essence of vernacular English to a rough pattern based on the *Phaedrus*. As I argued in my first chapter, *The Fowre Hymnes* is overtly concerned with the question of how poetic inspiration emerges relative to language and writing. The ascent to higher consciousness with "wings" and the vision of writing on the soul are key to that late work, and indeed the relevance of that late work was key to explicating the visionary ideas of poetry, language, and identity in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*. Here in E.K.'s prefatory materials, though, we find portents of Spenser's later philosophical interest: the ubiquitous emphasis upon Greeks, a reference to orphic/vatic inspiration and enthusiasm, and the wing imagery circumscribe the scholarly argument about what the *poem* and the *poet* are trying to do for the reader with the language. But E.K. has also steered us to the idea of *growing* wings because this form of imagery counters the proud and irrational vatic poet of the previous page—the poet of the *Ion*. Here E.K. is indeed turning us toward a vatic poet that usurps the provinces of rhetorician and philosopher in much the same way Sidney would have it. The *Phaedrus* is the natural point of interest and relevance for both because there Plato used a vivid description of a dialogue in a rural setting to upset the cultural centrality of poet and orator in favor of the philosopher. The *Phaedrus* was exactly the same point of interest for Cicero in *De Oratore*, though more for its rural setting and sunny imagery than for its imagery of wing-growth.

The descriptions of the spiritual elevation attained by the poet in the *Phaedrus* give us precisely the "wing" and maturation imagery with which we find E.K. preoccupied. Socrates, in defending a key vision of the development of the soul in the

186

rhetorical voice of Stesichoros (the *good* speaker rather than a sophist), presents a notion

of the philosopher as growing wings as a consequence of being re-awakened to the ideal

form of the good planted in the soul by the divine forces that forged it:

> …it is fair that only a philosopher's mind grows wings, since its memory always keeps it as close as possible to those realities by being close to which the gods are divine. (185, 249c)

As the *Phaedrus* shows, the philosopher is only first for pursuing these ideals directly,

not for being the only one to pursue them. Somewhat earlier, Socrates has specified (via

some creative spelling and etymology) a historical past in which the nature of truth has

emerged from prophecies. The priestesses of Delphi and poets, Socrates explains, pursue

the same ideal truths by trying to gain access to the same divine source, though in

madness. This source was available to the *name-making* or language-making groups, he

says; and this source is what poets use *because* it arises from an ancient origin:

> The people who designed our language ["those who made names" more literally] in the old days never thought of madness as something to be ashamed of or worthy of blame; otherwise they would not have used the word "manic" for the finest experts of all—the ones who tell the future—thereby weaving insanity into prophecy. They thought it was wonderful when it came as a gift of the god, and that's why they gave its name to prophecy; but nowadays people don't know the fine points, so they stick in a "t" and cal it "mantic." Similarly, the clear-headed study of the future, which uses birds and other signs, was originally called *oionoïstic*, since it uses reasoning to bring intelligence (nous) and learning (historia) into human thought; but now modern speakers call it *oiônistic, putting on airs with their long "o."* To the extent, then, that prophecy, mantic, is more perfect and more admirable than sign-based prediction, oiônistic, in both name and achievement, madness *(mania)* is finer than self-control of human origin, according to the testimony of the ancient language givers [n.b. the Greek simply reads "the ancients," referring back to the earlier specification of their name-making role] (180-81, 244b-d)

This etymological jugglery is not altogether different in spirit from what we find in

E.K.'s dogged reliance upon the specious AEG spelling or his insistence on the value of

the earlier source. More importantly, though, Socrates spells out a connection between

an essential original linguistic form and an authoritative rhetorical position precisely as

E.K. would have it.[63] Thus Plato casts the poets and visionaries as defective philosophers

and gives wings to the philosophers. Like Plato, E.K. casts the mantic enthusiasts as

defective. However, unlike Plato, when he improves upon these defective visionaries, it

is with a poet using the best English in a structured way. For E.K., it is this poet, rather

than a philosopher, who grows wings and ascends towards a truth. Finally, E.K.'s poet is

also deeply invested in the serious contemplation of love and beauty as a means of

assuring the value of the new vision of rhetoric: the author and "new Poete" who has

wings, we learn, has "long wandred in the common Labyrinth of Love" and wishes to

"allay the heat of his passion" (19) in the *structured* nature of the eclogues themselves.

The growth of wings comes from the contemplation of love and beauty in what was

clearly a well-chosen Greek mythological site—a *labyrinth*. No place could better be the

site of contest between bestial passion and spiritual elevation than the daedal

mythological site of the contest between the minotaur and Theseus!

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

We are now ready to conclude my first part by explaining why E.K. strives to

justify such an ostensibly unreasonable position as *The Shepheardes Calender* employs

about the spelling of the genre, Æglogs. Before we arrive at that justification which so

prominently features Theocritus, a vatic but rational Theocritus has already been made, in

the *Epistle,* the foundational Greek example for the twinned linguistic and poetic interests

of Spenser in his innovating effort. This is why, when accounting for the choice of the

---

[63] As Jean Nienkamp says of this stage of the *Phaedrus*, "the discussion later in the dialogue suggests Socrates' second speech about the beloved leading the lover to a vision of Beauty is an archetype for true rhetoric leading its audience to the Good" (163).

spelling and name Æglog, E.K. cites the Greek in preference to the Roman and defers to an authorial decision-making. E.K. evinces an awareness of the interpretive challenge posed by *The Shepheardes Calender* as one posed *by* the author *for* the readership, not as a general puzzle of culture or language. The *Calender*'s reader must decode a variety of signs—from the emblems, the woodcuts, the shifts in fonts, and the shifts between languages and kinds of English—that circumscribe an English identity as it is linked to a poet's *making*. E.K.'s *Epistle* and *Generall Argument* together insist upon a complex position on how the author intends language itself to be understood. This same position challenges historical and methodological authority we would find in a dictionary. E.K.'s argumentation allows the reader to see the potential inadequacy of the dictionary's prescriptive power as it is asserting the author's power over language in particular. In the *Epistle,* the overlap between Spenser's (the author's) concepts of poetic authority and its links to linguistic identity determines his management of the linked issues of archaism, regionalism, nationalism, innovation in the poetry. Considering the Greek philosophy and Latin rhetorical theory he replies to, Spenser as E.K. finally compels the reader to imagine the value of a word choice, *æglog*, as an alignment of authorial inspiration with a meaningful past. That meaningful past is a source of custom and reason, but only when the author makes concerted choices to which the reader may be sympathetic. E.K's comments therefore block rather than affirm the relevance of classicized lexicographic authority, whatever Spenser's general allegiance to humanist philology. Nonetheless Spenser does not risk allowing the author pure license, else there were simply no need for E.K. or the kind of readership practice the annotator encourages. As we shall see in the next segment, questions of poetic authority over innovation, archaism, and dialect in the

poem and its notes are handled in a way that encourages the reader to see meaning

emerging relationally, rather than in definitional terms—not, that is, as products of

established denotation. In the larger frame of the work, then, Spenser is asking, even

challenging the reader to trust the editor within measure and to trust, more importantly, to

trust in his or her own ability to discover the meaning of the unfamiliar. He is asking

most of all for a reader capable of seeing the English language (like the *original* Greek

language that is "made" by original architects in a way that Socrates finds rational) in an

originating and pure mental refraction that accepts the authority of the mind over the

material word. The stress falls heavily upon what we must see as a relational idea of

meaning.[64]

---

[64] As I noted in my introduction, my view of Spenser's use of E.K. to advance this notion of meaning in language as I have outlined it above has in some ways been advanced by Andrew Zurcher in his recent book, *Spenser's Legal Language*. After an exhaustive analysis of E.K.'s *Epistle*, Andrew Zurcher argues that the relational model of meaning is essential to understanding both *The Shepheardes Calender* and Spenser's work in *The Faerie Queene* (28-41). He notes that there is a difference between "denotative" and "relational" ideas about meaning that plays a key role in Spenser's time period and is an essential part of the verbal analysis E.K. expects of his readers: "Although intellectual historians have debated the relative prominence of relational versus denotative structures of meaning in early modern linguistic and hermeneutic theory, particularly in relation to Lorenzo Valla, the relational model was a fairly standard part of sixteenth-century rhetorical theory, if in a slightly restricted sense" (37). He concludes, much as I do, that E.K.'s reliance on this idea of meaning constitutes a challenge to the readership:

> E.K.'s virtuoso account of contemporary language theory and hermeneutics, coupled to his, and Spenser's, promise of a recoverable, pre-existent meaning guaranteed by the author's Sidneian "fore-conceit", creates a strong emphasis on interpretation as a kind of game, governed by rules, that the reader has a chance of winning. (40)

There is, however, a key difference between our approaches. Like me, Zurcher sees E.K. as full of "insouciant cleverness" (32) but fundamentally performing an "irreverently appropriative defense of Spenser's diction" (34). Unlike me, though, Zurcher sees Spenser's insistence upon relational meaning as an exception to his adherence to the trends of humanist philological practice (34-37). As previous chapters have shown and as the present chapter will show, Spenser was busy situating his resistance to some ideas from lexicography and placing those in a specific philosophical and rhetorical context. So, while I agree with Zurcher's ideas, I place much more emphasis upon the role of more general ideas from philosophy and more specific ideas from lexicography as the motives behind Spenser's use of E.K. and his conceptualization of language.

There are, of course, further differences between the approach Zurcher takes to the significance of Spenser's notion of meaning and my own. Zurcher chooses, for example, to see this idea of language as a sort of relational *game* as a means of explaining Spenser's larger literary intent. Thus Zurcher takes on ideas of total formal systems, even closed ones, that liberally conflate ideas from Plato and Aristotle which Sidney and Spenser and their contemporaries were struggling to redefine. Zurcher, for example, makes the following argument about Spenser's "hermeneutical game":

So, in his time when humanist and scholarly authority could itself easily tend toward the acceptance of the lexicon as the fixed site of linguistic knowledge and thus cultural identity, Spenser offered a glossator who is trusting of his readership and *barks back* in answer to the "currish kind" he sees quarreling over the authority of literary effort. Yet to confirm that the *Shepheardes Calender* encourages a notion of relational

---

The hermeneutical game that Spenser and E.K. invite readers to play in *The Shepheardes Calender*, and to which Spenser again invites us, serially, in *The Faerie Queene*, then, echoes on a large and more diffused scale the same tension subsisting in the use and interpretation of individual words: is reading an *ars*, or a *scientia*? From the author's vantage, too, a similar question hovers over Spenser's work: is writing a gift, conferred by the Graces or taught by the Muse, or a skill, conned by learning and practice? The confounding of hermeneutics and exegesis has a way, in Spenser's poetry, of mediating the psychological, moral, and political questions that perplex his thought, so that the ability of a reader to learn how to be dazzled by Spenser's verse becomes—by a series of conceptual relations involving, say, Aristotle's ethics—a justification for the suppression of Irish customs and cultural identity. The tendency to analogize systems of human learning and wisdom in the reading of Spenser's poetry and prose is occasioned, or made possible, by the recurrent preoccupation of his writing with the relation between instance and rule, or *sensus* and *sensus germanus,* what one might call a meta-structure inherent to most disciplines and, indeed, human experiences. Whether we construe or identify this relation as Neoplatonic (phenomenon: form), as hermeneutical (verba: res), as linguistic or allegorical and hence synchronic (signifier: signified), as prophetic and diachronic (omen: event), as moral (action: virtue), as legal (judgment: principle), in any other number of other locally compelling ways, we find ourselves engaging with a problem that freighted the minds of early modern philosophers and poets, and one that penetrates to the core of how we construe the relation of ourselves : world. (41)

I hesitate at these conflations between different philosophies and systems in part because I believe that Spenser's eclecticism does not necessarily join their elements, certainly not completely and smoothly—a point I was at some pains to prove in my first chapter by showing the specific elements of Platonism that he adjusts. That is, I simply do not accept Zurcher's suggestion that Spenser hoped to engage a "meta-structure inherent to most disciplines" via his play with meaning. Spenser's work often operates at a site of thoughtful contest over language, as with his partial praise for Calepine or his complicated satirical jibe with Bon/Malfont. The contest and the site in each case simply demands anything but a closed and formal outcome for the interpreter. Zurcher labors with an idea of how readers *should* respond and what meanings are essentially right, but I think Spenser's intent is much more deliberately veiled than revelatory for a host of reasons related to the difference between poetics, philosophy, and oratory. My basic interest, like that of Zurcher, lies in explaining what Spenser thought about language, why he likely thought it, and then how this constitutes a formative part of *some* of his notions of what poetry should and can do. However, I am not interested in a more total explication of Spenser's effort, particularly one that relates it to one formal system of hermeneutics that embraces a range of disciplines outside poetry. Zurcher wishes to interpret Spenser's ideas of meaning, his challenge to readership, and his poetry as a matter rooted to the question of establishing law—that is, he wishes to draw upon the "contribution of common law hermeneutics to any reading" of Spenser's allegory (48). My examination of Spenser's conceptualization of meaning in language, focused as it is upon ideas about writing and the mind, will, I hope, reflect and support Zurcher's general and larger method and its ramifications for our understanding of Spenser's intent and his place in history. However, I am much more interested in being able to distinguish the particulars of how Spenser defines his model of relational meaning while resisting the urge to see philosophies and poetries so indistinctly as subordinate participants in a larger socio-political and historical enterprise.

meaning as essential to the language to be used as part of a national literary effort, and to describe accurately how Spenser would have defined such an abstraction, I need to study his æglogs themselves in greater depth.

2. *Relational Meaning Understood as a Key Part of the Idea of Poetic Vocation and Diction in* The Shepheardes Calender

Spenser's choice to feature a glossator so prominently for *The Shepheardes Calender* is explicable within a larger frame of history surrounding sixteenth-century classical lexicography. This frame concerns quite basic didactic and intellectual issues. As Hans Sauer's brief history of glossing and lexicography in the medieval period reveals, the Western European tradition of glossing was closely connected to Latin language explication and the general learning process associated with literary study. Quoting Hüllen, Sauer notes that "'glossing and the use of glosses was at the heart of the intellectual life' in the (early) Middle Ages" (19). Sauer explains that dictionaries emerged out of the practice of glossing hard words and then collecting those glosses (21). On the one hand, then, glossing and glossary are fundamentally didactic enterprises that carry with them a presumption that collective authority over linguistic meanings is natural and necessary. These enterprises were in place before sixteenth-century humanism took hold of them. However, on the other hand, the glossaries themselves are authorial and culturally-defining achievements that enlarge the presumption they carry about meaning and funnel responsibility for determining meaning into more distinct groups and individuals. With regard to the Latin-language lexicography that had been essential to the English connection to general European religion and culture, Sauer

explains: "From around 1000 onwards, large Latin-Latin dictionaries became popular for learning Latin; some of them were imported to England from the continent, some were compiled by Englishmen" (30). The authors of such works, like Ambrogio Calepino, were acknowledged in ways that indicate their achievements stirred particular theories about how the languages and meanings they defined *functioned* as parts of society and functioned relative to the minds of individual learners.

What does this foregoing general history mean for us? Spenser surely knew that the scholarly gloss and lexicography were linked. Thus the achievements of lexicography in accumulating a culture of learning and literacy out of simple glossing practice would have been clear to Spenser as he positioned E.K. to furnish the reasons behind poetic diction. However, his approach to the figure of the glossator—the polyglot scholar with a penchant for Greek—reveals Spenser's anxieties, even likely jealousies, about that scholarly culture of lexicography. In Spenser's lifetime, lexicography and its associated scholarship was almost exclusively focused on classical languages. That scholarly culture was in fact the handmaiden of learning and using those classical languages for the Neo-Latin poetry that was one important model for vernacular work. The specific history around Spenser's 1570s is instructive in this regard. Cathy Shrank has pointed out that the "'triumph of English'—manifested in the literary achievements of Spenser, Shakespeare, Sidney, and their contemporaries—was not as sudden as it appears […] if we look to the writings of the earlier years of the sixteenth century" (25). Rather, Spenser's predecessors carried on the "search for a national language and literary style" in a way that "asserted their Englishness" even while they did so "in relation to Latin and the continent." Shrank focuses on just a few of Spenser's humanist predecessors—

Andrew Borde, John Leland, William Thomas, and Thomas Smith—in order to explain

how Englishness as Spenser defined it emerged from a complex of continental and Latin-

language humanist influences. J.W. Binns' exploration of Latin writings from the period

confirms Shrank's insights even as it points to the broadly-planted respect for a

humanism distinctly associated with Neo-Latin verse as a centerpiece of intellectual and

artistic life in Spenser's England. Binns' reports on the specifics tell us what this would

have meant to Spenser in 1579 as he dedicated his first major work to Sidney while

courting more general royal favor. For Spenser, the centrality of such Neo-Latin and its

attendant humanism would have been more conspicuous in his own intellectual efforts as

a poet because, as Binns writes, "Neo-Latin poetry becomes a significant part of English

culture from about the middle of the sixteenth century onwards"—in other words, as

Spenser was growing up, going to university, and learning the place of poetry in society

(11). He would have known, then, that Neo-Latin verse at the university was seen as

deeply appropriate to currying royal favor and speaking to powerful individuals. Such

verses were composed regularly in honor of the Queen, and they were particularly

associated with her visits to the university itself. During Queen Elizabeth's visit to

Cambridge in 1564, for example, the Provost presented a book of Neo-Latin verses to her

(35). An identical gesture was made at Oxford in 1566 (36). Gabriel Harvey himself

composed "a [Neo-Latin] poetical record of the Queen's visit to Audley End" in 1578

(37). Binns puts the matter plainly: "Latin poetry, in effect, is here at the service of

politics as a celebration and reinforcement of royal power." Like the Latin tributes to

Elizabeth's visit, the largely Neo-Latin verses from in the commemorative volumes

commissioned in 1587 at Oxford and Cambridge for the death of Sir Philip Sidney indicate the honored place of Neo-Latin verse in the society.

It is tempting to view these Latin tributes to power as mere formalities, while assuming that English was fast becoming the true and pure voice of a larger range of people in the period. However, those Latin tributes were frequent and circumscribed by a broad-based effort at Neo-Latin verse associated with the legitimacy of the university as well as the principal literary models of antiquity that were held in serious esteem. "The amount of Anglo-Latin verse printed from the mid-sixteenth century onwards is so great that no detailed account of its literary history can be given here," Binns cautions before registering a survey of its characteristic features (46). Clearly, no English people *then* knew what the future of the vernacular would be, but they did know and have a common trust in the established value of Latin as the language of Europe. There is a further evidence of this trust in the poetic choices of Neo-Latin versifiers that is key to understanding the character of the Neo-Latin effort that Spenser would have been so conscious of: the work of the period, as Binns tells us, is varied mainly in response to "devices popular in classical Greek literature from its earliest roots and emphasized strongly in the Hellenistic period" (46). The rediscovery of the *Greek* influence on Latin poetic forms and inspiration made humanist scholars engage in a revival in which they re-lived that imitative and emulative Latin activity. Under the influence of Julius Caesar Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem*, English Neo-Latin poetry took on a particular cast. "There is nothing remarkable," Binns explains, "in a learned Latin poet knowing [the devices of Hellenistic Greek poets]. What is notable, however, is the extent to which the craze for them developed in the Latin poetry of Englishmen" (46). With this historical-

literary context, we may explain why Spenser's E.K. places such extraordinary emphasis upon the adaptation of Greek models to English in the manner of a Roman or Latin poet/rhetorician: Spenser as E.K. is doing *precisely* as his Neo-Latin competitors were in a manner that, for English poetry, placed his work squarely in line for the kind of political and courtly significance he saw attributed to the public and university-sponsored efforts around him.

Returning to the matter of lexicography itself, though, there is a further context which explains both the English craze over Greek influence and Spenser's willingness to acknowledge that Greek influence in his glossator's preferences. Even as English vernacular poetic efforts were in their infancy and Neo-Latin efforts held a conspicuous legitimacy sanctioned by the Queen and such royal personages as Lord Burghley, the finest effort in Greek lexicography was being completed by the most famous of French lexicographic sources—Henri Estienne, child of Robert Estienne, author of the most important Latin lexicon of the century.

Here some further history is in order before we discuss Henri Estienne or the nature of the Greek lexicography or Greek-language studies. Henri was brought up in a printer's household where Latin was regularly spoken by the polyglot inhabitants (Considine 57). He was keenly aware of his heritage, and indeed his works of Greek lexicography bore the traits of his father's efforts in Latin lexicography. As John Considine reports, Robert's production in 1531 of the *Thesaurus linguae latinae* had improved upon the commonly-used Calepino lexicon in several key ways: most crucially, though, by presenting an "internal history" of the Latin vocabulary that "forces the reader to consider the productivity of language" —that quality of *copia* so crucial to fellow

humanists like Erasmus (46). Even with this ambitious approach to defining the rational

qualities of meaning in the Latin language, Robert's work "was meant to be marketable

to students and learned persons" (43) rather than simply linguistic scholars. John

Considine makes plain that "Estienne's self portrayal as a hero was […] shaped by

technology" in the creation of a dictionary so meticulously organized and marketed (53).

Part of the technology of this book in terms of its appeal to people generally, thus,

involved its potential for *teaching* the person who consults the work the very systematic

and productive qualities of the Latin language—not just an idiom, but the broadly-spread

and culturally-bound processes of reasoning that come with the language and its famed

texts. In this respect, Robert Estienne was going beyond the humble aspirations of a

mere glossator hoping to enlighten an individual on a single point of meaning. He was

taking responsibility for the larger scholarly, poetic, literary, and political habits of mind[65]

that come with a language whose qualities from historical examples of use can be

internalized and duplicated in such a way that it exactly resembles or exceeds the

potentiality of a first language or vernacular.

Henri Estienne had the task of living up to the family reputation and improving

upon his father's legacy with regard to Latin lexicography. As Considine again explains,

it was to his passion for Greek that he turned in order to meet expectations; and as part of

that interest, Henri attempted to figure out "the relationship between the vernacular and

classical languages" (61). This effort resulted in his 1565 *Traicté de la conformité du*

langage François avec le grec. In this work, Estienne was not attempting to prove that

---

[65] I use the term "habits of mind" for the moment as a stand-in for matters of epistemology, knowledge, compositionality, intentionality and others that capture the difficult relationship between mind and language at stake here.

French was a direct inheritor of the Greek language's words and syntax, but rather that there was a strong likeness between the two that justified a high opinion of the Parisian French that he himself loved. "If French was to be shown to be the noblest language of the contemporary world," Considine explains, "then it must be shown to resemble Greek," the language of greatest renown (62). This concern led Estienne to make a number of claims about how Greek poetic uses of dialect and French poetic uses of dialect should be similar in his 1579 *La Précellence du langage François*—a matter we shall return to later in more detail. Suffice to say, then, that Henri Estienne shared the view promoted by his father's dictionary that lexicographic study could *teach* vernacular-speakers a way of improving the *value* of their language in concrete structural and semantic ways. His arguments about the similarity of French and Greek are aimed at the same humanistic goal and share the same assumptions about the nature of meaning, knowledge, and language. Not surprisingly, then, Henri Estienne's monumental work to establish himself, like his father, was a lexicon begun under his father's direction: the *Thesaurus graecae linguae* completed in 1572. Henri Estienne dedicated the work to several rulers: Charles IX, Maximilian II (the Holy Roman Emperor); Elizabeth I of England; Frederick III of the Palatinate; and John George, Elector of Brandenburg. The manifold dedication speaks to the ambition of the work and to the kind of prestige the Estienne family carried as language experts with a necessary influence on the humanist academic environments dependent upon state management and protection. Estienne rightly saw himself constructing a work to enhance the expertise of scholars who were to produce lawyers, diplomats, administrators and the like in a pan-European network.

Consider carefully now the political and intellectual forces that converge upon Greek-language study and lexicography in the decade when Spenser is finishing university studies and aspiring to be an English poet of national distinction. First, Neo-Latin poets around Spenser were imitating Greek models. Second, they were deriving much support in the university environment from Queen Elizabeth. Third, the interest in Greek language was a competitive one that ironically helped sanction or improve the standings of vernacular language efforts. (Henri Estienne did not idly dedicate his work to an English protestant queen!) From the 1550s through the 1570s, these three issues were particularly relevant to French poetic and humanistic culture insofar as the Estienne family had made a name for itself. Spenser *had* to know that name and its significance. In fashioning a theory of his own about poetic and enriched national diction for *The Shepheardes Calender*, Spenser's E.K. refers to Greek culture openly and frequently. He does so not only to address the classical philosophy that potently addressed issues of language, but also to situate an English appropriation of Greek poetics responsive to competitive French and continental claims on Greek poetry and language. Part of those claims against which Spenser struggled were those circumscribed by a humanist scholarly expertise. That expertise defined language in ways bound to be advantageous to scholars and disadvantageous to the authority of poets—the very point to which E.K. appears to respond in his disingenuous defense of the AEG spelling. Spenser in all likelihood therefore knew that the French models for the vernacular and French lexicographic claims on the classical were connected. We already know that it was to French-language poets of the Pléiade that Spenser turned for one model for his vernacular

work.[66] That is, we know very well that he was translating Du Bellay during his early years for Jan van der Noot's 1569 *A Theatre* […of] *voluptuous Worldlings*. From E.K.'s notes, we know that one model for Spenser's principal shepherd, Colin, comes from Clément Marot. Spenser could have easily understood that the French were in complex competition with the English—as indeed were Italians, Spaniards, and other Europeans—over an ongoing European poetic and scholarly process of establishing links between classical and vernacular languages. Moreover, as I will show in greater depth soon, the competition over the improvement of the vernacular through comparison to the classical involves complicated conceptions of meaning and language. Since he later proves so acutely aware of the Mirabellio and Calepino lexicons (as I showed in Chapter 2), Spenser would not have overlooked the Estienne family's works and their claims on classical languages. Therefore he very easily could have apprehended the significance of their pursuit of authority and its potential conflicts with his own. But what evidence do we have that Spenser was directly responsive to the sort of lexicographic claim asserted by the Estienne family? And what does it tell us about Spenser's theory of diction and language? To answer these questions, I first need to explain how Spenser's composite literary dialect is modeled on the literary Greek Doric, then why that modeling is *contrary* to the process Henri Estienne proposes in two of his books addressing the subject. Having shown those two things, I can better explain the ways in which the poetry and glossing of *The Shepheardes Calender* mirrors the contrast between Spenser and

---

[66] In *The Grammar of Spenser's Faerie Queene* (Philadelphia: Linguistic Society of America, 1936), Herbert Sugden observed that Spenser's management of grammar and style in *The Faerie Queene* is systematic, conservative and guided by theories about language that must emerge from Du Bellay and Ronsard rather than his English influences (9-12).

Estienne's approach to language and dialect, defining a resistance to the denotative power of the glossator even as it trains the reader in an awareness of the need for relational meaning.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Paula Blank calls the claim that Spenser crafted the English diction of *The Shepheardes Calender* to resemble the Greek Doric dialect a "reasonable" but "mistaken" approach to the matter (116). In defense of her skepticism, she cites among other things Sidney's negative comments from the *Defence*, and then she states that Spenser's motives in using dialect could not indeed have been a simple imitation of the Greek precedent (117). Sidney's comment suggests to her that Spenser's use of dialect was quite unacceptable to Renaissance humanist views of custom and artistry. Blank's is a rather isolated view, and she explains her opposition to current in scholarly thinking thus:

> There have been numerous scholarly efforts to assimilate Spenser's poetic diction to sixteenth-century literary practice, but these, perhaps, have overlooked a simpler way to understand his purpose: Spenser estranged his language from more traditional forms of courtly discourse in an effort to solicit the very attention that his diction immediately received. (124)

As I will show, Blank's skepticism and the problems with it ultimately lead us to a new way of understanding what Spenser might be after in imitating a Greek dialect. In one way, her view seems quite wrong: Spenser was almost surely imitating Greek Doric in ways that conform to standards in thinking about dialect from his period. However, she is quite right that his construction of Greek Doric does not follow some principles of thinking about language and dialect more generally—those, as I shall show, more appropriate to a Greek lexicographer like Henri Estienne. In resisting a model that would

have been appropriate to a lexicographer like Estienne, Spenser was indeed being contrarian about dialect in ways that further define his view of language and poetics.

Spenser's view of language depends upon a combination of philosophical and literary concerns so deeply embedded in the culture of his time that it is hard to imagine how he could have been only trying to be contrarian in his choices. Sheldon Zitner points out that Homer, Ennius, Vergil, and similar classical sources were using "composite literary languages" mixing terms from dialects and archaisms in order to achieve the dignity of their genre (366). (We will return in a moment to a fuller description of classical Greek literary dialects.) Similarly, Zitner notes, figures cultivating comparable ambitions for the vernacular (Ariosto, Tasso, Du Bellay, and Ronsard) urged "departures from currency in diction" in order to meet the demands of epic and heroic verse (367). Altogether, Zitner argues, the *effect* sought by the poet derives from a philosophical belief in the "metaplasm" sanctioned by Plato and Aristotle (368). That is, Plato and Aristotle sanction adopting older forms of the language in various changed spellings and adaptations to "create the epic world, radically different from the world implied by common speech" in a manner that fixes language more ideally to its referents. Andrew Zurcher cites Zitner's views, rebuking in particular "the curiously negative, and famous, responses of Sidney and Jonson to E.K.'s argument" as inadequate and misleading given the kinds of precedent we find in classical sources to which E.K. refers; "Theocritus and Vergil *did* affect a rough and dialect diction in their eclogues" (32n).

So Spenser, as Zurcher concludes, does evidently create a "rough and dialect diction" following the thinking of his time, and this conclusion is supported by the ideas from a range of other scholarly sources. But some key questions remain. Just how did

Spenser understand *his* construction of dialects of English relative to the artificial literary dialects recognized from Latin and Greek writings? Is it possible he was deliberately trying to produce a more artificial effect than such predecessors? Or some other effect? Blank's study of Spenser finds him contrarian (and his diction deliberately awkward) in part because his "poetic diction had no material effect upon the development of a national language in sixteenth-century England"—rather, she explains, it had an effect upon later "literary" diction (125) and mainly in that it found later writers avoiding the example he set.[67] Yet if Spenser had any understanding of the tradition he imitated, he was crafting diction with a view to its influential place in the larger cultural force of the nation. There likely was no solely literary diction for him, no firm barrier between the literature of a

---

[67] On balance, Blank's analysis is insightful for showing just how deeply literary and artificial Spenser's effort at "dialect" is from our perspective. However, her approach is heavily slanted toward a contemporary perspective in ways I feel obliged to explain in more detail because the changed views of what constitutes language, as I noted in the first chapter, are so inherently confusing. Blank rejects the possibility that Spenser is following the ideas of the Pléiade, Mulcaster, and/or Puttenham in his construction of provincial dialect in *The Shepheardes Calender* on two grounds, both rather clearly mistaken. First, she argues that because "he did not seem concerned that the provincial dialect gain general currency"(119), he could not have been committed to the same interest as the others. Blank's reasoning on this matter proceeds from a clear misunderstanding of period ideas about literary dialects. Spenser, like his contemporaries and even like much earlier figures in European history like Dante, simply did not view literary dialects as irrelevant to the larger project of contributing to the legitimacy of vernacular. Second, she argues that Spenser's decision not to continue "the [provincial dialect] project into his later works, especially *The Faerie Queene*" signaled a similar difference from his possible influences. However, since it is clear that Spenser's decision to change his management of dialect reflects a change in genre from the pastoral to the epic—and since Spenser's diction even in *The Faerie Queene* remains distinctive in its own right—the decision makes sense in a larger context. Blank has simply ignored the arguments of figures like Zitner and Craig that explain that larger context. In both of these cases Blank's ideas about language, literary dialects, and genre are muddled by anachronistic presumptions. She argues that "*The Shepheardes Calender* does not, finally, represent a project of linguistic reconstruction but of linguistic innovation, an effort to produce an 'original' English—at once old and new—that would have even greater claims to a national status than the 'common' vernacular of London and the court" (120). For Blank, it cannot be a true "reconstruction" project *because* it is literary. Yet Spenser had, stretching for over a century before him, the evidence from humanist lexical studies of how the Romans had adjusted their language using the Greek precedent, and he had the advice and consent of humanist figures and English scholars indicating that his literary approach was a key part of a larger set of interests. Put another way, Blank rejects the idea that people of Spenser's period could believe in *improving* the standing of a vernacular language (a clear interest of Spenser and his predecessors) through literary exercise. Yet clearly many of the figures Blank cites *did* believe precisely that.

cultural group and its traditions of speech and thought. Greek poetry, after all, had

sustained artificial dialect conventions long before Romans appropriated those traditions.

Like his philological predecessors in Italy who conducted the debates regarding the

questione della lingua, Spenser probably understood that the day-to-day speech of

Romans and Greeks was different from what is represented in their literature.[68] However,

he did not likely contemplate a language wholly separately from literary traditions, but

rather saw the latter implicated in the value of the former, however subtly. This turns us

back to consider more carefully the model—the Greek literary dialect—that Spenser and

others were turning to in order to construct English literary dialect. Richard Hunter ably

describes the linguistic conventions that Theocritus' Hellenistic poetry in particular drew

upon:

> The language of later Greek hexameter poetry is based upon the inherited poetic
> language of Homer and early epic; within this heritage poets innovated and added,
> by means of analogy (i.e., the creation of forms that "could have appeared" in
> Homer), by the inclusion of material from other "high" poetic registers, such as
> lyric and tragedy, and under the influence of regionally specific morphological
> and lexical items and the requirements of particular genres. Theocritus is no
> exception to this rule. His position is, however, made more complex by the fact
> that most of his poems show a Doric linguistic texture, of greater or less
> thickness, in contrast to the Ionic language of the epic tradition. […] Doric forms
> do not merely offer linguistic variation but have ramifications for poetic self-
> consciousness and, ultimately, for the meaning of a poem. ("Introduction," 54)

Theocritus' Doric, therefore, participated in a general pattern of Doric literary dialect,

one that existed by virtue of contrast with other literary dialects.[69] From this brief

---

[68] See Angelo Mazzoco's *Linguistic Theories in Dante and the Humanists* for a fuller description of the
various ways in which humanists were aware of such possibilities.

[69] C.D. Buck explains the nature of Greek literary dialects and their reflection of real social divisions in *The
Greek Dialects*. It is important to understand that "ancient grammarians […] had in mind solely literary
dialects" in their studies, but that those dialects did exist and "reflected ethnic divisions which also existed,
or had once existed" in Greece and Asia Minor (3). The literary tradition of dialects involved manipulating
existing ideas about the peoples associated with the language variations. Within the literary tradition, as

description, we can guess *why* Spenser's literary dialect must appear awkward even as it is also designed to be in careful conformation with sixteenth-century thinking about genre and language. Following Theocritus' model use, Doric was *supposed* to invoke such contrariety, such "thickness," in varying degrees. Unfortunately, though, Spenser faced a problem in attaining such invoked difference. He lacked a forerunning epic tradition with a well-defined dialect—an Ionic epic dialect against which to contrast his Doric bucolic dialect. Vergil faced a similar quandary, but Vergil had as literary forerunner Ennius, whose *Annales*, though lost to us, were the epic against which Vergil's first eclogues might contrast themselves. Vergil likely only needed to draw upon his own regional dialect, a northern Italian dialect that would naturally contrast with the southern Italian dialect of Ennius, for that achievement.

Spenser does not slavishly imitate Vergil's strategy in using dialect. However, he certainly appears to strive for some imitation. In the September æglog, he attempts to make his readers conscious of dialect differences as flexible matters of literary form rather than strict ways of identifying regional speech patterns. For example, the September æglog opens with Diggon Davie repeatedly using the pronoun "her" in place of "he" or "him" following the general pattern of a native Welsh speaker's English (ll. 3-

---

Herbert Smyth points out, Doric is mainly associated with early Greek lyric poetry (Pindar in particular), with Theocritus, and with choral parts in Attic plays (4). Doric was thus chiefly associated with lyric rather than epic poetry, especially since "there is no Doric, as there is no Aeolic, literary prose." For Theocritus in particular, the use of Doric dialect was notable, as Richard Hunter explains in *Theocritus and the Archaeology of Greek Poetry*. Hunter argues:

> ….the Hellenistic concern with dialect glosses and poetic language […] made contemporary poets particularly sensitive to these issues. The fact that the language of most "high" poetry was traditionally determined by generic, rather than geographic considerations (i.e. "Doric" for choral poetry, "Ionic" for epic) was an obvious focus for the attention of the new poets. (31)

In short, then, we have no reason to believe that Spenser or his contemporary humanists would have had trouble understanding the general function of Theocritus' Doric as dialect specially affiliated with poetic labors that stood in need of contrasting Ionic and Attic forms for other kinds of literature.

5). William Oram explains: "The dialect of its opening […] imputes Welsh coloration to the rest without actually carrying it through, but it helps make the association of Diggon Davy with Richard Davies, bishop of St. David's in Wales, a progressive Protestant…" (149). Yet Spenser's E.K. broadens the interest of the matter beyond politics into an idealized notion of dialect difference. In the preface to the notes, E.K. suggests that "The Dialect and phrase of speache in this Dialogue, semeth somewhat to differ from the comen" (161). E.K.'s ensuing suggestion that the Welsh-ism is a result of Diggon being "long in forraine travels" would not have fooled any English readers (161).[70] It is clearly a Welsh dialect. But in that way E.K. indirectly shows us that Spenser does not want to "carry through" the Welsh dialect traits so much as register the dialect difference itself—the *literary* thickness of a stylized rustic speech in the ideal pastoral place. The glossator furthers this implication by glossing "Wae" (l. 25) as "Northernly" (162) rather than suggesting it, too, is foreign or Welsh. We are not meant to think these rustic speakers are true representations of shepherds; we are, however, meant to be conscious of linguistic representation of difference fitting the pastoral form. The regional identifications help Spenser employ an English pastoral dialect form somewhat as Chaucer might have. After all, Chaucer's characters, such the Reeve and the Host, use distinctively contrasting regional speech patterns. This strategic possibility provides another cause for E.K.'s careful emphasis upon Chaucer as a Vergilian father figure from the outset of his *Epistle*—an emphasis that is not exclusively a matter of defining the literary genre or the tone of the æglogs.

---

[70] The representation of the Welsh speech in Shakespeare's *King Henry V* and in Jonson's masque *For the Honor of Wales* suggests that English audiences were familiar with the traits of Welsh dialect. Paula Blank extensively considers both examples in *Broken English*.

Despite some thorny contrariety, Spenser's construction of dialect fits very well

into the sixteenth-century traditions of framing the vernacular in ways that relate it to the

literary and linguistic conventions of the classics. Indeed, Spenser's view matches

Ronsard's comments about dialect in his 1566 *Abbrégé de l'art poetique françois*.

Somewhat like E.K., Ronsard turns from the Roman to the Greek, beginning by noting

that borrowing from the Romans is a matter of choosing words that reflect devotion to

craft: "You ought not reject the words of our old Romans, thus to choose those with care

and prudent selection. You will practice the artifice of every trade of sailing, hunting,

falconry, and principally those which owe perfection to their works… and from that you

will draw many beautiful and sharp comparisons…" (48). As he goes on to discuss more

artful variations in diction for poets, he draws a tense comparison between Greek and

French dialect:

> You will know how to rightly choose and appropriate to your work the more
> significant terms from the dialects of our France, when those [dialects] of the
> nation will not be sufficiently fitting nor significant, and to not trouble oneself if
> they are from Gascon, Poitiers, Normandy, Manceau, Lyon, or another area
> provided they should be good, and that fittingly they express what you mean,
> without affecting too much the speech of court, which is sometimes very bad for
> being the language of Demoiselles and young Gentlemen who are more of the
> profession to fight well rather than to speak well. And you will note that the
> Greek tongue would never have been so rich and abounding in dialects and in
> words like she is, without the great number of republics which flourished in that
> time, each of which was a lover of its own of its own [dialects, people, etc.], and
> wanted that its own learned citizens should write in the language peculiar to their
> nation… (48-9)[71]

---

[71] The complete passage: "Tu ne dois reietter les motz de noz vieux Romans, ains les choisir avecques
meure & prudente election. Tu pratiqueras les artisans de tous mestiers de Marine, Venerie, Fauconnerie,
& principalement ceux que doivent la perfection de leurs ouvrages aux fourneaux, Orfeures, Fondeurs,
Mareschaux, Minerailliers, & de là tireras maintes belles et vives comparaisons, avecques noms propres des
outils, pour enrichir ton oevre & rendres plus aggreable: car tout ainsi qu'on ne perdire un corps humain
beau, plaisant, & accomply, s'il n'est composé de sang, venes, arteres & tendons, sur tout d'une nayve
couleur, ainsie la Poesie ne peut ester plaisant, vives ne parfaitte sans belles inventions, descriptions,
comparaisons, qui sont les ners & la vie du livre, qui veut forcer les siecles pour demourer de toute
memoire victorieux du temps. Tu sçauras dextrement choisir & approprier à ton oevre les vocables plus

Ronsard continues by asserting—with some provocative elaboration—that since the French are under one king, they need to have one tongue that unifies such dialectal variation. Still, what we have here in Ronsard's argumentation about dialects and language is a complex set of suppositions about how a poet represents the nation fairly and artfully. Ronsard positions the poet to contribute to a national unity while drawing on the precedent of Greek dialects as a way to legitimize variation. That is, Ronsard obviously recognizes how Greek dialects enable a poetic diction to register a range of social stations and interests relative to their regions. His view of Greek dialect conforms quite comfortably with the description of Hellenistic Greek language variation. Therefore he is also clearly recommending a "composite literary language" such as we are to find Spenser writing in *The Shepheardes Calender*. Even so, the comparison Ronsard draws between Greek and French dialect is one that elevates the French *above* the Greek for naked political reasons. Ronsard encourages the general program of linguistic improvement that figures like Henri Estienne engaged. Spenser similarly constructs a composite literary dialect in imitation of Latin and Greek models for roughly the same reasons Ronsard expresses. The question we need to be asking is whether Spenser differs in any *significant* way in his effort. The work of most of Spenser scholarship (that offsets the value Blank's argumentation) assimilates Spenser to the

---

significatifs des dialects de nostre France, quand ceux de ta nation ne seront assez propres ni significans, & ne se faut soucier s'ils sont Garscons, Poite-vins, Normans, Manceau, Lionnois ou d'autre pays pourveu que ils soyent bons, & que proprement ils expriment ce que tu veux dire, sans affecter par trop le parler de la court, lequel est quelques fois tresmauvais pour estre le langage de Damoyselles & jeunes Gentils-homme qui sont plus profession de bien combattre que de bien parler. Et noteras que la langue Grecque n'eust jamais esté si faconde & abondante en dialects, & en mots comme elle est, sans le grand nombre de republicques qui fleurissoyent en ce temps-là, lesquelles comme amoureuses de leur bien propre, vouloyent que leurs doctes citoyens escrivissent au langage particular de leur nation."

period in a way that makes him roughly indistinguishable from Ronsard on the matter of dialect even if the contrariety of his construction of a Doric is more pronounced. Clearly, Spenser's E.K. does differ in that he refers to English dialect and archaism without explicit reference to Greek dialect, only to Livy and Sallust, then to the general business of imitating Greek forerunners like Alceus and Theocritus. This leaves us at a seeming impasse until we consult Henri Estienne's comments about dialect.

The contrast between Estienne's view of language and dialects and Ronsard's is actually quite a subtle one that former scholarship has largely overlooked in linking the two. Gigliola Sacerdoti-Mariani notes that Estienne in his 1579 *La Précellence du Langage François* agrees with Ronsard about dialects (21). She cites Estienne's words: "For just as the Greek poets help themselves at need to unusual words from a certain part of the land of Greece, so our French poets should be able to make a profit from several words which in any event are only in use in certain areas of France" (168).[72] In this and in many other regards, Estienne's view is the same as Ronsard's. Yet Estienne's comments about the nature of the French language and dialect are more extensive than those of Ronsard. They include a much more concerted effort to assert an understanding of the way to identify and describe the structural elements intrinsic to the pure form of the language in a way that Estienne argues cannot be done in other languages and cultures. He writes,

> …if the Italians wish to boast of receiving an equal accommodation with their dialects, I would respond to them that those of the French are by reason not only more greatly extended, but also more greatly authorized than theirs are. For we know yet that all which is not Tuscan language (which alone is held for the good

---

[72] "Car ainsi que les poetes Grecs s'aidoyent au besoin de mot peculiers à certains plusieurs vocables que toutesfois ne sont en usage qu'en certains endroits de la France."

and pure) may not be Bergamasque, however well it may be that one wishes to mix it with Tuscan a little: and there are many other kinds of language than Bergamasque, which one would not want to mix any more than iron with gold. (168-9)[73]

Estienne goes on to explain that there is a harmonious and ordered political state allied to the harmonious and hierarchical state of French and its dialects—a state in which the French, he says, reserve "first place" to Parisian dialect, leaving the others to vie for first place in an unsettled but civil way.[74] French is one uniform language by virtue of an intrinsically complementary relationship between the language and its people. He continues by insisting that the establishment of proper understanding of French dialects and their place will come with a systematic and proper registering of each of the variations in speech. It is clear that he sees ambitious humanist lexicographers fulfilling the role of arbitrating these matters.

Thus Estienne's earnest humanist lexicographic interest promotes a thinking about language that is distinctively less flexible than that "composite literary dialect" advocated by his countryman, Ronsard. Both authors are quite patriotic, but Estienne, as I will show more fully in a moment, wishes to study and expose precisely what is best at the grammatical and semantic level as evident from records. In doing this, he assumes a power that might otherwise be reserved to the poet while transferring what is poetic into

---

[73] "Que si les Italiens se vouloyent vanter de recevoir une pareille commodité de leur dialectes, je leur respondrois que ceux de François ont par raison beaucoup plus grande non seulement estendue, mais aussi autorité, que les leurs ne peuvent avoir. Car nous sçavons qu'encore que tout ce qui n'est pas langage Toscan (lequel seul est tenu pour le bon et naïf) ne soit pas Bergamasque, toutesfois y en a bien peu qu'on vueille mesler avec ce Toscan: et y-a mainte sorte d'autre langage que la Bergamasque, qu'on n'y voudroit mesler non plus que du fer ave de l'or."

[74] "Mais quant au langage de nostre France, il en va bien autrement [than with the Italians], car nous donnons tellement le premier lieu au langage de Paris, que nous confessons que celui des villes prochaines, que sont aussi comme du coeur de la France, ne s'en esloigne guere. Et pource qu' Orleans voudroit bien avoir le second lieu, Tours aussi, pareillement Vandosmes […] à fin que les unes ne portent point d'envie aux autres, nou laissons ceste question indecise…" (169-70).

the ordinary and essential speech of his own country. From his earlier 1565 *Traicté de la conformité du langage François avec le grec*, Estienne makes equally clear how he intends to investigate and prove himself in the study of language: that is, he sets himself up as a grammarian rather than a poet for his later thinking about dialect. In that work, Estienne methodically examines distinctive features of noun, verb, adverb, adjective, participle, and so forth before coming at last to syntactical and phrase patterns. In other words, he studies each part of speech for its similarity to the idealized Greek forms in a manner that prizes all form without clear thought for its relationship to any larger realm of knowledge or mind. His interest and his approach complements his lexicographic study and confirms his authority in that form of study, turning readily to examples of dialect from poetry to assert that authority. For one example, Estienne writes: "Greek does not use its adjective in the neuter for a substantive only, but also for an adverb. This usage is also familiar in the French language" (22).[75] Estienne goes on to cite an example of such a usage from French and from Theocritus' idylls, clearly thinking of Theocritus as an eminent and exemplary form of speech. Yet Estienne is much more notably interested in the shared disposition of the languages (French and Greek) as it is evinced in trivial turns of phrase.   In one case, that triviality is distinctly associated with the Doric dialect in Theocritus:

> There is nothing more common in our language than these ways of saying, Come here a bit, Listen a bit, Tell me a bit. But I find (what I'd never thought) that the Greeks have shown us the manner for this speech, too. Theocritus in the fifth Idyll,
> --ἴθ᾽ ὦ ξένε μικκὸν ἀκουσαν [/] Τῆδ᾽ ἐνθών.
> [O neighbor, come over here and listen a bit to us]

---

[75] "Le Grec n'use pas de son Adjectif au Genre neutre pour un Substantif seulement, mais encore pour un Adverbe. Lequel usage aussi est familier au language François. Car comme ceste assettee qui est en Theocrite dit au paoure Pasteur…"

> But one must note how much this adverb seems to be completely superfluous (just as the *parum* of the Latins wouldn't be useful for anything, being added in some places, but would rather be ill-fitting) yet if one considers it closely, one will find some little secret hidden, for it brings some demonstration of modesty… (79)[76]

There is no mistaking that Estienne here means to match the essence of what makes Greek good to the essence of what he finds charming in Latin and French. The colloquial language of the Greek affirms the structural and essential goodness of the French.

Taking these comments about languages from the 1565 work into account, Estienne's comments on dialect from his 1579 *Précellence…* describe a kind of authority about language that is distinct from what we find in Ronsard or Spenser's E.K. To be sure, E.K. has a patriotic view of the resources of English literature, and his view of dialects may not be distinct in any particular way. However, as already noted, E.K. flouts lexicographic authority with obvious resistance to the "EK" spelling. That indeed is a lonely instance of bucking lexicography, but for good reason. Spenser's target is a kind of authority over language, not lexicography itself. His glossator's position is resolutely secondary to the poet's in ways that affirm what that particular flouting of lexicography means. In his *Epistle*, E.K. acknowledges the poet's role in shaping the use of dialect and archaism alongside a careful staging of classical precedent, but the nature of that precedent is a poetic manipulation of the terms and language of the political state. He barks back at the curs who resent and encroach upon his authority (as poet-glossator)

---

[76] "Il n'y a rien plu commun en nostre langue que ces façons de parler, Venez un peu ici, Escoutez un peu, Ditez-moy un peu. Or je trouve,(ces que je n'eusse jamais pensé) que les Grecs nous ont monstré le chemin quant à ceste locution aussi. Theocrite au cinquieme idyllie,

ΐθ' ὦ ξένε μικκὸν ἀκουσαν [/] Τῆδ' ἐνθών.

Mais il fault noter que combienque cest Adverbe, semble ester du tout superflu, (car mesmes le *parum* des Latines ne serviroit de rient estant adjousté den tells entroicts, mais plustost seroit inepte) si est-ce que si on le considere de pres, on y trouvera quelque petit secret caché, car il emporte quelque demonstration de modestie…"

over dialect, even as he asserts equal control over his eager powers of inspiration, that

"Poeticall spirite" (17) he identifies with the sibylline origin of poetry's matter.

Predictably, then, the æglogs themselves maintain this emphasis upon a question of

poetic control over the material of propaganda, suggesting that the language of the state

itself must follow suit. For example, in the April æglog, by having Eliza as the offspring

of Pan and Syrinx (ll. 91-4), Spenser makes his queen the instrument upon which the poet

plays in order to issue the poetry itself. In the poem, Spenser emphasizes the careful

control of the imagery that comes with the song itself:

> Ye shepheardes daughters, that dwell on the greene,
> 　　hye you there apace:
> Let none come here, but that Virgins been,
> 　　to adorne her grace.
> And when you come, whereas she is in place,
> See, that your rudeness doe not you disgrace:
> 　　Binde your fillets faste,
> 　　And gird in your waste,
> For more finesse, with tawdry lace. (ll. 127-135)

The subject matter here may be sartorial, but the political and social context is

acknowledged firmly. This passage concerns a courtier poet's responsibility to the

Queen and for the image of court, even his power over that set of identities. He has been

describing the dress of the queen and all who surround her, controlling their appearances.

For this reason, this passage in the poem hearkens back to the *Epistle*'s discussion of how

the poetry suits and improves the language. E.K. notes on the Pan and Syrinx references:

"So that by Pan is here meant the most famous and victorious King, her highnesse Father,

late of worthy memory K. Henry the eyght" (80). E.K. stops short of completing the

allegorical sequence the poet presents: If Henry is Pan, and he chased down Syrinx (who

becomes reeds when caught), then the "song" is the issue of their union—Queen

Elizabeth is the *song*, obviously. E.K. explains the context reasonably well, but the essential meaning is left untouched in part because it designates the political power of poet over Queen in organizing an expression of what constitutes her identity.[77] In connection with the *Epistle*, though, this allegorical play is as relevant to language as it is to politics. It is the precision of control over that song, the "finesse," of which Spenser most clearly boasts, and that boast mirrors the boast over his control over a vatic priestess from E.K.'s *Epistle*. The poet's authority over this unstated meaning is primary and controlling. The glossator's meaning merely defends the poet against misprision—and, as such, presents a conspicuously insufficient interpretive aid. E.K.'s gloss on the lines about attending and "binding" the virginal queen "for more finesse" is even more obviously insufficient and deprecating: "Binde your) Spoken rudely, and according to shepheardes simplicitye" (83). If this is rude or simple speech, it is only so for being associated with an archly rude literary dialect that demonstrates a control of meaning the glossator can only serve to help along.

Fairly seen, then, *The Shepheardes Calender* places glossating in a losing competition with the generously imprecise poetic fashioning of language. Just as E.K. is merely assuring the poetic control over political language in the April æglog, E.K. later is assuring the poetic control over the dialect variations in the September æglog. This process can be much better understood by seeing precisely the model Spenser might have desired to resist—and that model is not the general one of literary dialect, the "Doric" of Greek, but rather the aggressive appropriation of that poetic and literary dialect by

[77] As noted earlier, Louis Montrose argues precisely this in "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text." *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*. Eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986).

lexicographically-minded authorities like Estienne. Thus it is toward competitions

among humanist visions of meaning that I wish to turn our attention. Lexicography in

particular *required* certain understandings of how to define and value a language.

(Glossating as a didactic practice is historically associated with such understandings.)

The Estienne family and Henri in particular cultivated such understandings of language in

order to secure the didactic function, the selling-point of their work as a teaching tool.

People like Sidney and Spenser were aware of such matters when they considered the

value of English relative to Greek. Consider: Sidney observes the structural similarity

between Greek and English as part of his reasoning about why he disregards any

organized didactic structure of grammar for English. First, he rejects a methodical

approach to grammar as not sufficient to the interest of improving the standing of English

and poetry together, even as he is approving the composite nature of the language:

> I know some will say [English] is a mingled language: And why not, so much the
> better, taking the best of both the other? Another will say, it wanteth Grammer;
> for Grammer it might have, but it needs it not, being so easie in it selfe, and so
> voyd of those cumbersome differences of Cases, Genders, Moods, & Tenses,
> which I think was a peece of the Tower of Babilons curse, that a man should be
> put to schoole to learn his mother tongue. (43-4)

Then, after this passage, he notes that English is "neare the Greeke, farre beyond the

Latine," which is precisely Estienne's contention for French. Unlike Estienne, though,

Sidney is not concerned with specific structural features or phrases that show the

likeness. Rather, Sidney argues that English is superior to others "for the uttering sweetly

and properly the conceit of the mind." For Sidney, the authority of the poet as maker is

key to the framing of the style and the language together, not the authority of the

grammarian, orator, or philosopher. In making such comments, Sidney made it clear that

he understood quite well that proponents of English and proponents of other languages

were competing over which one was more Greek-like. He might have had Estienne's ideas in mind; he might have had a work like Leon Trippault's 1582 *Celt'hellenisme*, an etymological dictionary asserting the likeness of French and Greek (Considine 62). He might have more generally understood the trend to try to claim the heritage of Greek poetry in English versifying of his time. Clearly, though, he seeks a way to make English superior through the agency of *poetic* authority and expresses its identity by contrast to a grammarian's or lexicographer's authority.

With his comment to Harvey about the "the kingdome of oure owne Language," Spenser expressed an understanding of the competition between different strands of thought about authority over language similar to what we find in Sidney's *Defence*. Granted, Spenser and Sidney differed in their view of the Doric dialect's intended effect, but Sidney likely had misgivings about how to engage in the quarrel over which language was more like Greek. That is, we can understand his rebuke to Spenser's use of dialect as an evocation of his anxiety that simply imitating Doric might not gain English the kind of credibility that lexicographers and etymologists might. Even so, in modeling itself after the Greek Doric dialect as a composite *poetic* language, Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* asserts a conception of meaning in language that is like what Sidney advocates. Spenser's conception is not antagonistic to what we find in Ronsard's vision of a poet's use of dialect, though. Rather, his conception is antagonistic to what we find in Henri Estienne's vision of dialect in the 1579 *Précellence*, to his systematic approach to examining language in the 1565 *Traicté*, and—as I will show momentarily—with the specific notion of the value of poetry to language studies expressed in the preface to his 1572 *Thesaurus graecae linguae*. Ironically, though, without my having reconsidered the

value of Paula Blank's vision of Spenser's contrarian assertion of a composite literary

dialect, a vision that was doggedly dismissive of earlier assertions that Spenser imitated

the Greek Doric, this particular contrast (Spenser/Estienne) might never have come to my

attention.

* * *

The October æglog overtly addresses many of the concerns about how a poet

organizes and interprets the material of language. Not surprisingly, the same passages

that help Spenser address ideas about language and poetry also help Spenser discuss the

politics of patronage. For example, the young and learning poet, Cuddie, appropriately

laments:

> But ah, *Mecoenas* is yclad in claye,
> And great *Augustus* long ygoe is dead:
> And al the worthies liggen wrapt in lead,
> That matter made for Poets on to play:
> For ever, who in derring doe were dreade,
> The loftie verse of hem was loved aye. (ll. 61-66)

Cuddie laments the lack of present-day equivalent of Vergil's patrons, but as part of that

argument, Cuddie also continues to explain how the lack of such patronage is related to

the quality of the poetry itself. As he continues this line of argument Cuddie complains

that poetry has descended from a high art to one that merely strives to flatter or please.

Yet these lines also implicitly frame the manner in which poetry can organize life,

thought, and speech itself, detailing the method by which poetry is to achieve its

meaningfulness. The "dead" poets of the past are also "worthy," the dignified material

"for Poets on to play."   Spenser is using Cuddie to frame the larger question of how

English poets can manage the tradition of foreign and native poetry with which they have

217

to work. On the one hand, this tradition directs poetry to speak to the existing political

powers: just before the passage quoted above, Piers had urged Cuddie to return to the

April æglog's address to Eliza or to "advaunce the worthy whome [Eliza] loveth best,/

The first the white beare to the stake did bring" (ll. 47-8). (The "white beare" refers to

Leicester's family, as E.K.'s note explains.) However, on the other hand, Cuddie sees

patronage as related to preceding models of his pastoral poetry, the arguably good

material that is to be reworked to further good effect. By this material, he means a range

of model works—Pindar, Theocritus, Vergil, Mantuan, or even the English translations of

Mantuan—and not, as he stresses, the "rymes of rybaudrye" of a "Tom Piper" (ll.76, 78).

E.K. is keen to mention such models in the notes to the October æglog, as I will consider

presently. The interpretation of such models is, we know from E.K.'s *Epistle*, key to the

organizing of verse in such a way as to avoid making the poet merely one of the

"rakhellye route of our ragged rymers" (17) and key to the poet growing those

philosophical wings of power. And so, as Cuddie mentions this "matter" with which he

must "play," we are meant to wonder about the more earnest game of developing the

language and poetry together. That is, the question of how English is to raise the value of

its language and literature, we are meant to see, hinges upon the catalytic or at least

complementary operations of the political and patronage forces enabling poets and the

action of enabled poets upon the material of speech itself.

It is not just E.K., Cuddie, and Piers who align themselves on the subject and

problem of enabling poetic speech. Using a more directly authorial voice, Spenser in his

introduction to the October æglog echoes E.K.'s concern with the problem of poetic

enthusiasm—which is to say, irrational but vatic inspiration—in order to position the

figure of Cuddie to address that very problem yet again. He argues that "in Cuddie is set out the perfecte paterne of a Poet," but we know already that Cuddie is an aspirant rather than an accomplished poet like Colin. Cuddie's own speech about his manner of enthusiasm in fact reveals his lower status. While complaining of an inability to rise to the challenge Piers sets before him, Cuddie begins his soon-to-be-cut-short ascent to that challenge by claiming that drinking wine, as per the traditional Greek bacchic source of god-possessed frenzy, will aid him:

> Thou kenst not Percie howe the ryme should rage.
> O if my temples were distaind with wine,
> And girt in garlonds of wild Yvie twine,
> How could I rear the Muse on stately stage… (ll.109-112)

Cuddie gets no wine and does not produce any marvelous rhyme. Such enthusiasm is explicitly criticized by E.K. in the *Epistle*. But such an enthused poet also falls short of what Spenser's argument at the head of the æglog prescribes. The October argument describes the best poetry as a "divine gift not to bee gotten by laboure and learning, but adorned with both: and poured into the wit by a certain ἐνθυσιασμὸς." Cuddie has the enthusiasm, but he lacks the power to further the enthusiasm into learned adornment. Colin's more perfect song in the November æglog, particularly by its address to "Dido," raises the stakes of bucolic to a suggestion of a greater career of poetic work. Yet by addressing Cuddie and enthusiasm in the argument and in the poem itself returning the reader to those formative grounds of Greek culture, Spenser is using the "paterne" of Cuddie to raise again the question of how English poetry is to appropriate Greek poetic and linguistic precedent to the advantage of the English language. After all, Cuddie's dialogue with Piers also returns us to the question of the influence of and appropriation of Greek culture. Piers gives the impression that Greek culture is central to the question of

poetic power by invoking the myth of Orpheus. In the course of the æglog as a whole, he

and Cuddie appear to come to an agreement that a sanctified devotional love rather than

the pagan *eros* is the answer to the matter, suggesting that Christian modifications of the

classical tradition are in order. However, they disagree about the results for present

poetry. Piers argues that "love does teach [Colin & the poet generally] to climbe so hie"

(l. 91). Cuddie agrees, but he points out that "lordly love is such a Tyranne fell:/ That

where he rules, all power he doth expel" (ll. 98-9). In making this claim, Cuddie in part

appears to misunderstand willfully or petulantly Piers' faith in the Christian devotional

ideal. However, in so far as the argument about how poetry can effectively draw upon

the Greek tradition, it is clear that converting the tradition to Christian ends alone does

not solve the problem of the "power" that may manipulate the poetry—whether it is a

question of patronage or the ends to which a particular tyrannical patronage may turn the

poetry. Cuddie is a mouthpiece for complaints about the direction (meaning method,

subject, etc.) a "loving" patronage or political defense may turn poetry toward. Just as

the Colin Clout of Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* is beset by a problem with the invasive

worldly power of Calidore, who interrupts his vision of the Graces and compels him to

degrade it in a backward-looking recount of the experience, Cuddie's aspiring poet is

concerned with how temporal powers corrupt a vision of the past that requires him to find

"the matter made for Poets on to play."

The October æglog thus revives questions about poetry that come up in the

argument about poetic diction from E.K.'s *Epistle*. What, then, is the upshot of this

æglog's vision of poetry's situation? How does that place affect the linguistic matter it is

to control following the Greek Orphic pattern to which it hearkens? If the poetry is to be

"raised" by the inspiration of a perfect love—that is, if it is to grow the philosophical wings theorized by E.K. in the *Epistle* and use this new instrument to the betterment of the tradition that Spenser crafts—where will the authority be located to achieve this end? It is not enough to say that Spenser responds to such a question by asking for better patronage alone. Rather, Spenser's October æglog refuses an answer to this question, choosing to frustrate any sense that there is an authority outside the mindful and inspired manipulation of the poet. Piers asks, "O pierlesse Poesye, where is then thy place?" (l. 79). The æglog answers only by demonstrating that poetry achieves a place by adorning itself with learning and labor, by *putting on* what it is to be without locating a specific originating authority. Its power is located amid a play of originating forces, but not in one specific tyrannical one. Clearly, the poet needs some help. To be fair, Piers himself presents a reward in the form of a kid to Cuddie to indicate that poetry writ large should have some reward adequate to the struggle it takes to make it. But the bulk of the æglog echoes the concerns from the *Epistle* while suggesting a strong need to resist a specific *site*—material or political—from which the authority for the poetry springs. Just as the September æglog used a composite dialect with no specific regional basis, whether Welsh or northern, the October æglog locates poetic material and authority somewhere and everywhere while suggesting a need to resist a specific rewarding authority. It is logical to ask, who and what are poets meant to resist?

To understand how Spenser identifies the types of poetry-making and language-making authority he wishes to resist in the October æglog, we need to return to a close reading of E.K.'s annotations as they lead up to it. In the *Epistle*, the *Generall Argument*, and then in the February, March, and April æglogs, E.K. refers to Theocritus. As I have

already shown, his reference to Theocritus in the *Generall Argument* is part of a strong push to have the author's power over the name to the poems, the so-called "æglogs," recognized despite the contrary authority of lexicography. E.K. builds up to that declaration of authority by situating Theocritus amid the crucial line of poets in many languages, suggesting thereby that the English language's authority will come from a sophisticated emulation of these examples. In the notes to the æglogs themselves, E.K. cites Theocritus amid the other authors of bucolics. For example, in commenting on the use of the name "Phyllis," E.K. reasons, "The name is usuall in Theocritus, Virgile, and Mantuane" (49). The note of Theocritus amid those influences on the tradition is not on its own usual. Throughout the notes to the æglogs, E.K. is at pains to show that Spenser's work suits the tradition to which it aspires, imitating and emulating all details of the forms. However, name-making is key to thinking about language in general in Spenser not just because he is later to prize allegoresis for his epic, but because in Greek the notion of original language-making is, in the *Phaedrus* and *Cratylus*, called "name-making"—a matter particularly salient to the thinking about poetry and language from the *Epistle*, as I discussed earlier in the chapter.[78] In the April æglog, E.K. hints further at the

---

[78] Spenser's contemporaries viewed the idea of a name with much the same flexibility as Plato did—as a noun with a complex relation to the system of language and reality. When Richard Mulcaster in his *Elementarie* brings up the *Cratylus*, which explicitly concerns questions of naming, he does so in the context of explaining the way in which words may be understood to function systematically in English usage in an English-language lexicon. First he writes, "For the matter of speech is a thing well thought of, whether ye waie the words and the forces these have, or the uttering thereof by pen & voice" (188). The "forces" of the words that he refers to, he soon makes plain, is part of a relation among words that is exactly like to the question of right naming in Plato's *Cratylus*. After he makes a quite explicit connection between the "cunning" of name-giving and the crafting of language generally:

> We need not to prove by *Platoes Cratylus*, or Aristotles proposition as by best authorities […] that words be voluntarie, and appointed upon cause, seeing we have better warrant. For even God himself who brought the creatures, which he had made, unto that first man, whom he had also made, that he might name them, according to their properties, doth planelie declare by his so doing, what a cunning thing it is to give right names… (188)

importance of such name-making when he links the honorific naming of Colin's *dura puella*, Rosalind, to the tradition of idealized beautiful objects of naming found in Stesichorus, Theocritus, and Petrarch:

> […the woman named Rosalind] should be commended to immortalitie for her rare and singular Vertues: Specially deserving it no lesse, then eyther Myrto the most excellent Poete Theocritus his dearling, or Laruetta the devine Petrarches Goddesse, or Himera the worthy Poete Stesichorus hys Idole. (78)

The passage emphasizes a process whereby the designated name becomes a means of approaching the ideal more nearly. We know from passages in the *Epistle*, the poetry of the October æglog, and a whole host of passages from Spenser's later work (as detailed in my first chapter on Book 6, the *Fowre Hymnes*, and the *Amoretti*), that the beloved ideal becomes a highly specialized sort of name whose marking represents an un-nameable, which is simply to say ineffable, place in the mind. Therefore it is not particularly surprising to find Spenser as E.K. here using the figure of Colin and the naming of Rosalind to model an idealized way of using names in poetry. The beloved object is tyrannical in its power there much as it is later to be in Cuddie's somewhat flawed acknowledgment.

While E.K. mingles references to various model poets in the April æglog, he is much more specific in the August æglog. In fact, E.K.'s commentary has a direct bearing

---

And it is not just Mulcaster who thinks in this manner. In his 1589 Latin-English lexicon, Thomas Thomas defines the Latin "nomen" as "a name's honor, authority, renowme, fame, bruit," thus extending the meaning from a simple referential identifier into a broader network. Earlier Latin dictionaries, like the 1553 Stephanus version of the Calepino lexicon, begins its definition of "Nomen" by an etymology from "nosco" or "recognize/know." While it goes on to say that a name is given to a single thing, the definition begins by recognizing that names are part of mental processes, their systems. The name and noun is therefore the abstract site at which the question of relational and denotative meaning becomes evident in lexicons, and we should not be surprised if it bears unusual importance in E.K.'s commentary or Spenser's poetry. This isn't, of course, to say that lexicons could afford to offer strong support to the complex idea of naming and language in the *Cratylus*—after all, Mulcaster rejects the work's authority in order to advocate for an English lexicon. It is to say that we need to view Spenser's handling of issues of naming as likely related to questions of language under some conditions, especially those I adduce above.

on his citation of Theocritus, his arguments about naming, and the connection of both to larger concepts of relational and denotative meaning. In the argument, E.K. explains that the contest between the shepherds represented in the poem itself is "made in imitation of Theocritus" (137), while a note on the engraved vessel that is the prize adds an essential understanding of the relationship between the genre Theocritus devised and the name he gave it:

> Such pretie descriptions every where useth Theocritus, to bring in his Idyllia. For which special cause indeed he by that name termeth his Æglogues: for Idyllion in Greke signifieth the shape or picture of any thing: whereof his booke is ful. And not, as I have heard some fondly guesse, that they be called not Idyllia, but Hædilia, of the Goteheards in them. (146)

E.K.'s comments somewhat reverse what we found in his statements about genre names from the *Generall Argument*. There, he simply refused the customary and logical etymology for the "EK" spelling associated with a scholarly-minded word for "eclogues" meaning "selections" in favor of a name associated with the goat-heards—goat-song, as it were. Here, he rejects the fanciful spelling associating a logically-chosen name associated with the goats—the Latin "haedus" in this case—in favor of a more scholarly-minded notion of the Greek word for figure or form. It is a crucial move: *E.K.'s reasoning about meaning shifts the meaning to suit the context of the poem. He does not impose a systematic reasoning from outside the poem upon it in order to determine or illuminate meaning, but rather shifts the external or circumambient realm of philosophy, language, and rhetoric in close complement to the poem's interior realm of meaning.* Moreover, the description of Theocritus' picturing and figuration obviously is a close match for the mixture of emblems, pictures, notes, and multi-font text that we find in *The Shepheardes Calender*. The glossator helps the poet to appropriate Theocritus's method

and to make a statement about the *right* way for the poetry to fashion the language for and with readers. After all, he here associates Theocritus with a strategy of naming and language-making.

Despite the careful help he affords the author through Greek etymology, E.K. remains abstracted from the simpler name of the work upon which he comments. Much of this play about naming arguably relates not only to the words æglog, eclogue, idol, and idyll, but indirectly to Spenser's playfully ambiguous choice of name for the work as a whole. In the name *Shepheardes Calender*, reference to Christ as a shepherd of mankind is unmistakable, but the form and name hearken back to the central characters and speakers in the original forms—pagan though they be. Naturally, too, the name retains a profitable ambiguity in the difference between singular and plural—the calendar is both a work for the collective and a work for an individual entrepreneur. The note on Theocritus from the August æglog therefore both reveals and obscures the function of Spenser's naming strategy. For the most part, though, it affirms the authority of his naming and language-crafting through the prized precedent of Theocritus.

There is an additional enlightening complexity to Spenser's depiction of the prize for the singing contest in the August æglog. The figural *prize* that E.K. provides more detail on is fundamentally claimed by Spenser: that is, Spenser as poet is responsible for crafting the material that is here to win. However, E.K. certainly asserts his own ideas and authority within the notes. As readers, we are challenged to perceive that the notes on their own furnish a kind of contest over the process of identifying precedents and authorities for poetic meaning—the work in which E.K. engages. Since E.K. has been asserting himself for quite some time and particularly on the matter of the value of

225

Theocritus and Vergil as models, this is quite obvious. Here again, though, we should briefly turn back to the poem itself rather than just the notes for a fuller perspective. Spenser all but assures us of the compromises and complementarities that circumscribe such contests over meaning in the way he manages the actual singing contest in the æglog. After the singing contest between Willye and Perigot, Cuddie declares that "ech have gayned" (l. 131) in the contest. He awards a lamb to Willye and the engraved bowl to Perigot. The engraved bowl becomes the subject of E.K.'s note, but it is hardly the more symbolic or valuable thing, given the positive Christian associations with a lamb. Then at the conclusion of the æglog, Cuddie steals the thunder from the contest by reciting Colin's sestina, thereby unsettling any obvious sense of victory. All these factors are recognized in the Latin and Italian emblems that conclude the æglog: Perigot's "Vincenti gloria victi," Willye's "Vinto non vitto," and Cuddie's insouciant "Felice chi puo." In the first (roughly translated "To the winner the glory of the defeated"), it is impossible to avoid the ambiguity. The glory of the defeated hardly seems any reward! The second emblem compounds the comedy of the first by declaring the "conquered not conquered." Cuddie's emblem makes him appear blithely ignorant of the question of defeat or victory, declaring only that "Let him be happy who can be happy." Clearly, the æglog refuses to acknowledge a winner in the poetic contest. Even so, putting the poem together with its notes reveals a faith in the synergistic production of meaning from competing forces. Such a vision of meaning depends not at all on positing an indeterminate sense of authority as responsible for producing meaning but rather on positing a *composite* structuring of meaning out of honored precedents with a powerful

authorial will behind it as the source. So careful an approach begs the question: Why such care?

Let us return to the October æglog in order to understand how Spenser continues refining his commentary on how and why a poet shapes the raw matter of language. E.K.'s notes to the æglog affirm and develop the argument about Greek linguistic and cultural influence from the *Epistle* and *Generall Argument*, pointing again to the precedent of Theocritus. By this point, E.K. has made plain that Theocritus is central to the notions of naming and language-crafting that underlie the pastoral form Spenser engages. Moreover, in the September æglog Spenser has further prepared the grounds by more conspicuously using dialect, that hallmark of Theocritan pastoral. As we arrive at the October æglog notes, E.K. makes the reader acutely conscious of how political speech nests amid allusions and literary influences. He there pre-emptively claims the influence of Theocritus as a way to underscore the political commentary of the particular æglog: "This *Æglog* is made in imitation of Theocritus his xvi. Idilion, wherein hee reproved the Tyranne Hiero of Syracuse for his nigardise towarde Poetes, in whome is the power to make men immortal for theyr good dedes, or shameful for their naughty lyfe" (176). Readers who have been attuned to the political commentary throughout the æglogs will be ready to accept this claim, of course. However, E.K.'s claims about that influence and the actual substance of the October æglog itself are not perfectly aligned. As William Oram's comments point out, E.K. in part claims the influence of Theocritus in order to diminish the more apparent influence of the Neo-Latin Mantuan (176n). Indeed, a cursory study of Idyll 16 shows that Theocritus' poem is not in dialogue form as, for example, Mantuan's Eclogue 5 and Spenser's æglog are. Yet Spenser has good reasons for

imitating Mantuan if he was to appeal to an English audience of his time. Mantuan's

Neo-Latin pastoral was already familiar to English readers and even translated into

English by George Turberville in 1565. Spenser's work therefore looks considerably less

arcane or pretentious for imitating the widely-adopted "moral" Mantuan. Moreover, by

seeming to take over the Neo-Latin style with which Mantuan was so successful, Spenser

appeals to those who considered Neo-Latin more authoritative and even to those who

desired English to supplant Latin.

Of course, E.K.'s reference to Theocritus is not in vain. By modeling his work on

this Neo-Latin predecessor while calling upon the original work of Theocritus as the

ultimate source, E.K. again addresses the same range of interests he appealed to in his

comments about *De Oratore* and diction from the *Epistle*. As in the *Epistle* and the

Generall Argument, then, E.K.'s reference to Theocritus intimates that the poetry itself is

poised to leap over the Roman into the originating Greek influence. And truly, looked at

as an emulation rather than a slavish imitation of Greek poetry, the verse of the October

æglog is laying claim to the power of Theocritus' commentary on patronage together

with the Platonic ideas about rhetoric that suffuse E.K.'s concluding pages of the *Epistle*.

Cuddie and Piers address the forces that rule over poetic work, both temporal and

spiritual. This becomes more plain as Piers and Cuddie address the relation between

idealized love and the inspired poet: as noted before, for Piers, Eros is a true Platonic

inspiration, and for Cuddie Eros is a "Tyranne fell." In this respect, their dialogue

reflects Idyll 16's address on the potential good or ill of a poet to the Syracusan tyrant,

especially considering that Idyll's constant emphasis on Hiero's dependence upon the

divine inspiration that guides the poets. After all, Theocritus there argues that "all good

fame comes to men from the Muses" (l. 58)[79] and stresses the responsibility of the poet to

the high ideals of such divine forces. Spenser's reasoning in the April æglog has made

roughly this same point already. E.K.'s allusion to the specific Idyll 16 allows the

annotator to locate Spenser's philosophical priorities for a reader attuned to the earlier

political commentary.

E.K.'s gloss on Piers' suggestion that good poetry is "good advice" intended "to

restraine/ The lust of lawlesse youth" (ll.21-2) complicates the initial reference to

Theocritus even as it foreshadows and intensifies the effect of Piers' later rhetorical

question about poetry's "place." Responding to Piers' suggestion, E.K. glosses:

> To restraine.) This place seemeth to conspire with Plato, who in his first booke de
> Legibus saith, that the first invention of Poetry was of very vertuous intent. (177)

E.K. here and in an ensuing note challenges the reader to see Theocritus' address to a

specific political power as part of a larger project within Greek poetic and philosophical

tradition. With this reference to Plato's *Laws*, he recognizes multiple types of poetic

"making" with different appeals to people's better and worse natures. Most strikingly,

though, E.K. identifies both Piers' exhortation and the Greek philosophical/poetic

tradition as "this place." The place is both imagined and institutional, being both the

abstract guiding of virtuous actions that poetry undertakes as well as the concrete roles in

society. E.K. spends much time thinking through the historical details, too. Instead of the

poem simply being advice about the necessity of vatic poetic craftsmanship to a ruler's

virtuous reputation—that is, instead of poetry being an instrument for the exercise of

virtue and power simultaneously—E.K. now considers Plato's argument that poetry

---

[79] "'Εκ Μοισᾶν ἀγαθὸν κλέος ἔρχεται ἀνθροποισι..."

229

began with wholly "vertuous intent" and was thereafter turned to "lighter musick" that could "diversely […] affect the mynds of men" (177). The *Laws* historicizes the vatic poet, but E.K.'s reference to the work asks the reader to imagine a separate (if wholly unclear) history. It is a history in which English joins Greek, as part of Piers' and Cuddie's quite English oblique visitation of the terms imagined by Plato. In the *Laws*, Plato gives poetry a more fundamental place than the *Republic* does in the didactic processes leading to the foundation of a just state. But is E.K. right? Is Piers conspiring with Plato in trying to construct this place for poetry?

Even though Piers and E.K. are both relatively confident of what place good poetry is to assume, E.K. strains much harder than Piers to claim that place as part of his response to Cuddie's lament about a lack of proper patronage. Cuddie describes the need for patronage and Vergil's career beginning at line 55, and in notes for lines 55, 57, and 65 E.K. considers this instance of patronage. He explains that Maecenas "moved" Vergil "to write in loftier kinde," then explains how this propelled Vergil's progress from his Eclogues and Georgics to his "divine Aeneis" (179-80). E.K. is tutoring the reader as to how an English poet should properly imitate the Vergilian and Roman model. Even so, this tutoring is graceless for being no more than a prosaic iteration of Cuddie's comments *sans* the lament about the *lack* of proper patronage. Awkward and immature as Cuddie may be, his description of the "matter" that a poet is obliged to fashion, as well as his argument about the ideal quality of past examples and the sad state of the present, speak more eloquently than the copious argumentation of E.K. The latter's comment on the significance of Cuddie's choice of the words "for ever" illustrates the case:

> For euer) He sheweth the cause, why Poetes were wont be had in such honor of
> noble men; that is, that by them their worthines & valor shold through theyr

230

famous Posies be commended to al posterities. wherfore it is sayd, that Achilles had neuer bene so famous, as he is, but for Homeres immortal verses. which is the only aduantage, which he had of Hector. And also that Alexander the great comming to his tomb in Sigeus, with naturall teares blessed him, that euer was his hap to be honoured with so excellent a Poets work: as so renowmed and ennobled onely by hys meanes. which being declared in a most eloquent Oration of Tulies, is of Petrarch no lesse worthely sette forth in a sonet

     Giunto Alexandro a la famosa tomba
     Del sero Achille sospirando disse
     O fortunato che si chiara tromba. Trouasti &c.

And that such account hath bene alwayes made of Poetes, aswell sheweth this that the worthy Scipio in all his warres against Carthage and Numantia had euermore in his company, and that in a most familiar sort the goode olde Poete Ennius: as also that Alexander destroying Thebes, when he was enformed that the famous Lyrick Poet Pindarus was borne in that citie, not onely commaunded streightly, that no man should vpon payne of death do any violence to that house by fire or otherwise: but also specially spared most, and some highly rewarded, that were of hys kinne. So fauoured he the only name of a Poete. whych prayse otherwise was in the same man no lesse famous, that when he came to ransacking of king Darius coffers, whom he lately had ouerthrowen, he founde in a little coffer of siluer two bookes of Homers works, as layd vp there for speciall iewells and richesse, which he taking thence, put one of them dayly in his bosome, and thother euery night layde vnder his pillowe. Such honor haue Poetes alwayes found in the sight of princes and noble men. which this author here very well sheweth, as els where more notably. (180)

This passage is consistent with E.K.'s earlier concern about the influence of Theocritus and the relevance of Plato's *Laws*—instances in which E.K. imposed his own interpretive thinking on the poetry. But E.K. goes further with this gloss. Here he tries to stand in for Piers in advising Cuddie not to despair. We know that E.K. goes further because it is in response to the same passage that Piers declares, "O Pierlesse Poesye, where is then thy place?" That is, in contrast to E.K., Piers *accepts* Cuddie's charge that poets are not given a fair place in the court in the present day. Contrary to what E.K. says, "this author" and his poetic spokespersons do *not* show that poets have "always" been esteemed of rulers. As E.K.'s disquisition on Plato's *Laws* made plain, the "place" of poets can be imagined through a programmatic push on the part of the state. E.K. is not

out of alignment with Piers and Cuddie about poetry as a whole. As E.K.'s note on line 67 shows, "the cause of contempt of Poetry [is] an idlenesse and basenesse of mynd" (181). Piers would not disagree. Yet E.K. in the process of his argumentation seems to take on assurance that poetry's place has never been challenged, and this is not an assurance Piers, Cuddie, or Spenser share.

It is in his commentary on the immature poet from the October æglog that E.K. most strives to compete with the authority of speaker-poets, Cuddie and Piers, for recognition. He is striving to be recognized as an advocate for poetry. Yet even as E.K. is producing a note which extols the honor due to poets from rulers, he is presuming upon his own argumentation as the rhetoric that will win such honor to the poet. That is, E.K. wants his own rhetoric to take poetry's place, his own argument to be instrumental to the laureate work. This trespass is the more obvious because E.K. has been competing for the "prize" and trying to control the understanding of the naming process in previous instances—and especially in two previous cases when the influence of Theocritus has been raised. Here in appearing to claim the heroism of the poet that Cuddie seems unequal to, E.K. makes an appeal to patronage *in place* of the poet. Since the very heart of the matter in Cuddie's lament is the question of how patronage enables poets to *shape* the inert matter of precedents—and arguably the composite language that is essential to the poetry—E.K.'s challenge is exactly like the trespass of those scholarly magnifiers of annotation and glossing, lexicographers. Ill-defined as they may be as a group, lexicographers are, after all, one group that E.K. has been implicitly quarreling with over the subject of poetic diction from the start. The quarrel has been about the interpretation of poetry and the role of poet, but the questions of naming and language have been

carefully woven into that subject as well. The quarrel and its crucial issues come to a head here.

It should come as no surprise then that elements of E.K.'s appeal on the subject matter of line 65 are similar to those in the appeal made by Henri Estienne, one crucial representative of lexicography, as part of the dedication of his 1572 *Thesaurus graecae linguae*. In that work, Henri Estienne claims the very role of Theocritus in making rulers immortal. A few sentences into his dedication of his work to Elizabeth (and other rulers), Estienne justifies his effort with the claim that "[his works] not only could increase your [the patron's] honor, but also could join you to immortal glory" (4). As he continues, he cites Theocritus' Idyll 17, the "Encomium to Ptolemy," in order to establish the value of his own work, obviously stressing that his work in Greek literature gives people access to such riches:

> However, about the effort of such material which befits princes, the Syracusan poet [Theocritus] already once sang to king Ptolemy in these verses (in as much indeed as my Latin Muse can follow Greek):
> > -- for what, great prince, is worthy
> > To furnish immortal honor for you and yours?
> > This remains salvation to the sons of Atreus: in contrast in the gloom
> > Those things now lie hidden, buried, whence nothing is given return,
> > Whatever had been won from the sacking of Priam's city.
> Wherefore he sings about the Atrides, that nothing else of immortal glory remains safe for them, and the same concerning all other heroes (I omit countless other brave men), but by name he had been able to sing about Achilles: when Alexander stood by his grave, he said, "O Fortunate young man who finds a Homer herald of your virtue." But you have in your academies a sure repository of heraldric praise… (4)[80]

---

[80] The Latin for the entire passage, including the previous quote:
> Minime enim verendum fuit (opinor) ne, si vobis eas consociarem, tantum illarum honori addere, quantum vestro detrahere iudicarer: quum illae non solum honorem vestrum amplificare, sed etiam immortalem vobis gloriam comparare possint. Huius autem comparandae studium prae quovis alio principes decere, iam olim Ptolemaeo regi cecinit Syracusanus poeta, his versibus, (quantum quidem Musa mea Latian Graecam assequi potest)
> > --quid enim mage principe dignum
> > Hoc manet Atridis salvum: caligine contra

This passage is similar to the one we find in E.K.'s comments on Cuddie's view of poetry

and patronage in several ways. Both stress that the poetry affords immortal glory to the

rulers—that indeed the "treasury" of the poetry is greater than material treasury, and thus

is a kind of cultural wealth to be transferred from antiquity forward. Both cite Plutarch's

report of Alexander visiting the grave of Achilles, and thereby connecting Alexander's

imperial success and respect for verse to a sort of spiritual superiority of the Greeks over

the wealthy, decadent cultures in Asia Minor (the Trojans) whom they conquered.

Indeed, both Estienne and E.K. (for the æglog as a whole) call on Theocritus, as though

he himself were a monument to the duration of Greek literature's success, to help them

describe why patronage is essential to their enterprises while their enterprises are

arguably essential to the construction of the national richness identified with empire.

Despite such similarities, there are notable differences in how E.K. and Estienne

describe the value and place of poetry. The differences relate to the languages used in

their appeals and the implied status of poets or humanist scholars as users or interpreters

of language. For example, E.K. uses the Italian of Petrarch for the poetic rendering of the

scene at Achilles tomb. In contrast, Estienne reports in his own Latin translation of the

Greek—that is, he supplants the Greek poetry with a Latin version. Estienne's Latin

suggests the pan-European and educational nature of his enterprise. E.K.'s (and

---

Nunc adoperta latent (nullus datur unde regressus)
Quacunque obtigerant Priami populantibus urbem.
Ubi quod de Atridis canit, nihil aliud illis quam decus immortali salvum manere, idem de reliquis
omnibus heroibus, (ut alios innumeros fortes viros omittam) ac nominatim de Achille, canere
poterat: cuius ad tumulum quum Alexander astitisset, O fortunate, inquit, adolescens, qui tuae
virtutis Homerum praeconem inveneris. At vos in academiis vestris non solum certum vestrarum
laudum praeconium repositum habetis, set etiam in illis, non secus ac patres in liberis, vobis ipsis
quodammodo superstites esse potestis: quandoquidem tanti vicissim in earum alumnos liberalitas
ac munificentia vestra extitit, ut vobis, secundum deum, omnia debere dici possint.

Spenser's) choice of Petrarch foregrounds the vernacular, and hence English's obligation

to compete with the rival Italian tradition. Moreover, as Estienne continues his argument,

he links the entire development of the language and national power to the academies. He

asks:

> Where truly will you find a food of liberality more distinguished and fitting to
> princes than in those places which (as M. Tullius called the house of Isocrates the
> laboratory of eloquence) are just like certain laboratories of all the liberal arts?
> Which could be said to be the seed-stores [seminaries] to the literary republic?
> Which at last can seem in several places of your realms not otherwise than as
> souls are bound by bodies? (4)[81]

For Estienne, the academies are the spiritual force behind the development of the matter

of culture and language. They are the *place* in which his work will be a gift empowering

those whom he believes deserve his praise and the praise of the poets his work will

empower. This *places* the researching lexicographer in an implicitly powerful position:

he or she provides a work to the academies that will help guide the education of those

who will contribute to this "literary republic"; he or she effectively is responsible for

what Theocritus formerly attributed to the Muses. There is no such placement fixed in

Spenser's poem, only in the ambitions of E.K. as glossator speaking for his poets. So we

can immediately appreciate the difference between what Estienne recommends as the

social structure for the enforcement and development of an enriched national language

and the more elusive depiction of that place and process that Spenser, his speakers, and

E.K. compile in their relationships as poet, characters, and glossator. On this basis,

moreover, we can appreciate why Spenser (on his own or as E.K.) has chosen Theocritus

---

[81] The Latin: "Ubi vero insigniorem & principibus convenientiorem liberalitas materiam invenietis quam iis
in locis quae (ut M. Tullius domum Isocratis, officinam eloquentiae vocavit) omnium liberalium atrium
velut officinae quaedam sunt? quae literariis rebuspublicis seminaria esse dici possunt? quae denique
caeteris ditionum vestrarum locis non aliter quam animae corporibus inclusae videri queunt?"

Idyll 16 in place of Idyll 17 as the most suitable allusions. The former, as I explained

earlier, attributes power to the poet through the inspiration of the Muses. The latter refers

to poets as "intermediaries"[82] between the Muses and the ruler, a ruler with a virtually

God-like status. The former is a song of praise for the tyrant Hiero on the poet's home

island, a context more resonant for an Englishman. The latter is a song of praise for the

regent of Egypt—not the place of Theocritus' origin, though certainly his land-locked

academic home—that translator Anna Rist characterizes says "proceeds duly and dully

through the obvious themes" (152). Summarily put, Estienne and Spenser have elegantly

contrasting visions of how poets work with patrons toward the establishment of an

enriched national language.

My point in this extended comparison of Estienne and Spenser is not that Spenser

has designed the similarities and differences to lead us specifically from E.K.'s passage

to Estienne's. That is to say, Spenser did not craft a veiled allusion to the *Thesaurus*

graecae linguae. Rather, the correspondence in argumentation leads us to a larger

understanding of Spenser's effort to *resist* the kind of hermeneutics available from

lexicography. Spenser's October æglog has been designed to present the reader with a

crisis over the "place" of poetry within the society that turns especially towards a

problem with the function of poetry within the society. How, Spenser is asking, do we

want poetry to work for us? And, indeed, a huge part of that question has been the matter

of shaping the English diction, its use, its interpretation. Spenser—not just E.K. alone,

but the combined force of Spenser's speaking agents within the poem and his annotator—

presents the citation of Theocritus and the modeling of meaning from precedents in other

---

[82] "Μουσάων δ' ὑποφῆται ἀείδοντι Πτολεμαῖον/ ἀντ' εὐεργεσίης" (l.115)

236

languages as a matter that needs careful attention. As E.K., Spenser appears to struggle

with the significance of the patronage issues raised by Theocritus' Idyll 16 after

struggling to lay claim to the Greek Doric of Theocritus and the pastoral tradition of

Theocritus. It is not accidental that Estienne would try to claim the same poet's

relationship with patrons or that he would cite the same Greek poet. The competition

here is not just over who gets to claim this model, but also who gets to demonstrate *how*

this model works. For Spenser, the linguistic and cultural inheritance from the Greeks

works without a name or place and with considerably less strain within the poetry as an

active process of thought. It works within the example of the poetry that is read and

fashions the reader's mind and sense of language as a kind of rhetoric. He resists a claim

that simply names or cites authorities; Spenser un-names the authority, effectively

showing that his poetry can work through allusions to multiple authorities. To assert the

value of English, such a strategy is eminently useful. He never needs to apologize for

English's inferiority to classical models, and he can assert its equality in fashioning new

vernacular poems that work with readers to improve their minds in much the same way as

Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy prescribes. Moreover, he can use words that are as-

yet undefined in ways that call upon original model patterns (like the pattern of the Doric

literary dialect) in order to command the reader to fashion that place in his or her mind

where the poetry can become meaningful by virtue of meaning being more than the

servant of a defining authority. For Estienne, though, the cultural and linguistic heritage

works much more broadly as part of the society and its institutions—and much more

rigidly in relation to his task of re-constructing diction one lexical item at a time. That is,

for Estienne Theocritus' warning to rulers is one that lexicographers can claim inasmuch

as they are poets of reconstruction in the Vergilian tradition. Estienne claims the role of poet just as he claims the poetry as material that he may shape for patrons. In comparison, Spenser stakes a claim on poetry that is exclusive, yet by asking where poetry's place is and what matter it may legitimately shape he speaks out against those who would trespass on poetry's function in shaping the language and linguistic reading practices of his audience.

Spenser's complex view from the October æglog sets his approach to Theocritus and language in contrast to one of the most famous lexicographers of his day. And in this view of patronage, of poetic diction, and of a grasping glossator, we find the author reacting to ideas that would have been important to the academic and political forces at play about Cambridge in the years before he constructs *The Shepheardes Calender*. They are not coincidentally ideas deeply embedded in Estienne's work, his specific appeal to patrons, and the assumptions about hermeneutics that the work and its appeal to patronage carry. Indeed, it is remarkable to consider that Estienne had dedicated two of his works to Sir Philip Sidney (Considine 90-1). Thus the primary political force behind Spenser's first major work was a dedicatee and patron that the poet shared with Henri Estienne. In sum, Estienne's heroizing of lexicography appears essential to an understanding of Spenser's almost certainly competitive, resistant, and contrasting view of the poet's role in defining the English language.

* * *

Of what value is this realization that Spenser's work compels the readership to take on a different view of the hermeneutic process than Estienne's lexicography does? That is, of what value is it that we can see both the correspondences and contrasts

between the two in terms of the competition for patronage, the use of Greek authorities like Theocritus, and the effort to redefine the role of the poet relative to scholarship? There are three relevant responses to this question, and one general thread of reasoning emerging from those responses that leads us into the next chapter.

Spenser decides to continue the struggle that E.K. begins over matters of poetic diction into the body of the poem. The decision relates to *poetry's* capacity to define diction. Inasmuch as his glossator E.K. defends the authorial intent against a general scholarly intrusion well exemplified by lexicography, Spenser indicates that the scholarly and poetic roles need to complement one another. However, insofar as there are limits to how a scholar's glosses can aid the readership in understanding the poem and differences in terms of how patronage is viewed by scholars and poets, Spenser privileges the role of the poet in defining how *diction* itself works. This claim on diction reflects how seriously Spenser takes any claim on defining national diction and discourse, explaining much of what we find in the conflicts between E.K.'s glosses and the sophistication of Spenser's comments on the Elizabethan poet's command of political language in the April æglog. This claim on diction also reflects Spenser's strategy in fashioning the composite literary dialect in the September æglog. Commenting on the nature of attempts to augment the English language through revivals of archaisms in *The Triumph of the English Language*, R.F. Jones writes,

> …the field in which archaisms were chiefly employed was poetry, and the motive of the practice was not concerned with increasing the number of words in the language, but with utilizing the poetic force and imaginative suggestiveness of old expressions. (120)

Clearly Jones fairly appraises the value of the "poetic force" that Spenser wishes to employ at the level of diction alone. However, in such comments Jones also strives to

diminish our expectations regarding the ambitions of the poetic effort to use archaisms in order to frame poetry itself as a means to affect the larger sphere of language and rhetoric. He adds,

> So revival came to have more to do with poetic diction and style than with the language per se, though it might be considered as a means of adding eloquence to a language by increasing its poetic vocabulary.

Where Jones says it "might be considered," we can now for Spenser's case say it *must* be considered a means of increasing eloquence *by proving the potentiality of poetic manipulations as primary sources of meaning in language*. While it is perfectly true that archaisms become elements of poetry mainly in "subsequent discussions" about language, Spenser's use of regionalisms, foreign loan words, and archaisms are not a blunt-force attempt to augment the language piece by piece, but a flexible method to be applied and understood generally. As I noted earlier in rejecting Paula Blank's view of Spenser's literary ambitions and the significance of his composite literary dialect, there is no reason to believe that Spenser thought language could not be deeply defined by exemplary literary pieces that model the ideal rhetoric and uses, especially if he considered the thousand years during which Homer's or Vergil's composite literary dialects provided samples by which to understand Greek and Latin as languages "per se."

Spenser's contest with scholarly authority thus explains why and how Spenser places weight upon the mental actions required of readership in order to decode his play with diction. Gigliola Sacerdoti-Mariani acknowledges this in particular in her analysis of Spenser's innovative handling of archaic diction. For example, Sacerdoti-Mariani notes that Spenser uses the verb "hight" in the past tense "hote" not to mean "call," but to mean "recall" or "remember" (17). In the July æglog, Thomalin says:

> This had a brother, (his name I knew)
>   the first of all his cote.
> A shepheard trewe, yet not so true
>   as he that earst I hote (ll.161-4).

Here Spenser has not recovered the older word "hight" since he already uses it abundantly. His purpose also cannot be to add a new word to English, one that it lacks or needs: "to remember" is not, to be sure, a special addition to English. He instead profitably conflates two quite different meanings in order to force the reader to do the work of an innovation *seemingly* only for the sake of innovation. The word "hight" simply means "to call" or "to name," but in this new use describes an act of remembering—a "re-call." Instead of the prefix that suggests the repetition, Spenser uses a tense shift. To understand such an innovation, the reader cannot simply refer to a designated definition or grammatical category. He or she must think through the way time and action are being conceived relative to memory. Even so the reader cannot think of the change in meaning as a *figurative* use of language. Spenser does not guide the reader along with any colored explanation of "calling in the mind" or the like. And E.K. is of little help. For line 161, E.K. writes: "His name) he meaneth Aaron: whose name for more Decorum, the shephearde sayth he hath forgot…" (133). E.K. notes the obvious, that memory and naming are at issue, but he conveniently overlooks the innovative use of tense. For a lexicographer like Estienne, such an innovation can be *found* in classical languages and even *matched* to an existing use, but it cannot be created in the way that Spenser is showing us here. If we were in doubt about Spenser's play with this word, he makes sure—again, as Sacerdoti-Mariani notes—that we are aware of it by innovating once more with the same word within the September æglog: "Say it out, Diggon, what ever it hight" (l. 172), says Hobbinol. In this context, "call" has come to

mean "means" or "purports." While in this case and the previous, the word use aids with a rhyme, the shift in meaning itself in the latter case gets no notice or explanation from E.K. at all. This deliberate innovation reinforces the sort of message Spenser has been emphasizing about the poet's primary responsibility for meaning. It is a technique that outstrips the lexicographer even as it depends upon a readership sensitive to its methods. Most notably, perhaps, it depends heavily upon contextual clues essential to a notion of relational meaning.

Finally, then, Spenser's fight against lexicographic authority propels him into the labors of didacticism—the heart of the allegorical thinking about language which is to dominate his career and *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser is not just indicating that a poet can change word meanings and thereby begin to define the language of the nation *rationally*. He is acknowledging the role of learning language in the development of thinking and the role of thinking in the development of language. This is the reason why Spenser's E.K. spends such time describing the "growth" of the poet's wings. The imagery of the *Phaedrus* from which such flying imagery partly proceeds is useful for Socrates teaching a young student about how philosophy outstrips rhetoric in teaching us how to persuade one another. The imagery and word-play that Spenser supplies regards poets being "fledged" even as their language is made sufficient to enable them to surpass philosophers in how they persuade. It is imagery that closely reflects the basic prescription that the dedicatee Sidney has for poets in his *Defence*. In the simplest analysis, by taking up an anti-denotation stance on word meaning, Spenser resists a larger social authority's terms for how word meanings work—he resists competing scholar rhetoricians and ambitious lexicographers like Henri Estienne. However, by defending

Cuddie rather than Colin from those who might trespass on the role of the poet, he is defending a learner-poet along with a learner-reader. In that way, he is questioning systematic and productive potentialities of lexicographic tomes as maps of the generative powers of a language. We know from the history of the Estienne Latin and Greek lexicons that an appeal to a readership hoping to acquire a sort of powerful system for thought and speech was central to their fame. Such works are aimed at students, but they are of no help to Cuddie and mainly seem, if we take E.K.'s word on it, to infringe upon the necessary role of Piers or Colin in teaching.

Through E.K. and through the competitive, striving characters in the poem, Spenser presents learning about their word-use not just as relevant to his effort to define the composite literary dialect he uses, but as a process relevant to the ambitions of other authors. He tells poets and writers not to trust in the forces of those outside the temple of his own profession much as the Assyrian priests once warned the faithful not to trust in a God other than Nabu. And so Spenser effectively argues that authorial intent and complicit (if not always compliant) readership precedes the ideas that generate meaningful and persuasive discourse in the society. Ultimately, though, Spenser could not have failed to be aware of the larger meaningful orders of his social world. There were things he could not change, and there were processes of learning he needed to understand more fully in order to make a career move from acknowledging the centrality of didacticism to teaching a readership what he felt to be most important. It is in Books 5 & 6 of *The Faerie Queene* and in the *View of the Present State of Ireland* that Spenser tackles what language-learning can and cannot change about thought and culture. And so it is to those materials I turn (and return) in the next chapter.

3. Works Cited & Consulted

Armstrong, Edward. *A Ciceronian Sunburn: A Tudor Dialogue on Humanistic Rhetoric and Civic Poetics*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2006.

Binns, J.W. *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age*. Leeds, UK: Francis Cairns, 1990.

Blank, Paula. *Broken English: Dialects and the Politics of Language in Renaissance Writings*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Buck, C.D. *The Greek Dialects*. Ed. John H. Betts. Eastbourne: Bristol Classical P, 1999.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *On The Ideal Orator*. Trans. James M. May and Jakob Wisse. New York: Oxford UP, 2001. I quote from May and Wisse's translation.

Considine, John. *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe: Lexicography and the Making of Heritage*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008.

Craig, Martha. "The Secret Wit of Spenser's Language." *Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Alpers. New York: Oxford UP, 1967.

Estienne, Henri. *La Précellence du Langage François*. Ed. Edmond Huguet. Paris: Armand Colin, 1896.

Estienne, Henri. *Thesaurus graecae linguae*. Geneva, 1572.

Estienne, Henri. *Traicté de la conformité du langage françois auec le Grec*. Geneva, 1565.

Estienne, Robert. *Dictionarium, Seu Latinae Linguae Thesaurus*. Paris, 1536.

Grafton, Anthony and Lisa Jardine. *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986.

Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1992.

Hunter, Richard. Trans. and Ed. Introduction. *Encomium for Ptolemy Philadelphus*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003.

Hunter, Richard. *Theocritus and the Archaeology of Greek Poetry*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Jones, Richard Foster. *The Triumph of the English Language*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1953.

Leedham-Green, Elisabeth S. *Books in Cambridge Inventories: Book-Lists from Vice-Chancellor's Court Probate Inventories in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*. 2 Vols. London: Cambridge UP, 1986.

Malay, Jessica L. "Jane Seager's Sibylline Poems: Maidenly Negotiations Through Elizabethan Gift Exchange" *English Literary Renaissance* 36.2 (2006): 173-193.

Mazzocco, Angelo. *Linguistic Theories in Dante and the Humanists*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993.

McElderry, Bruce Robert, Jr. "Archaism and Innovation in Spenser's Poetic Diction." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 47.1 (1932): 144-170.

Montrose, Louis A. "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text." *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*. Eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986.

Mulcaster, Richard. *Positions*. New York: Teachers College P, 1971.

Nienkamp, Jean, Ed. Introduction. *Plato on Rhetoric and Language: Four Key Dialogues*. Trans. Paul Woodruff, Stanley Lombardo, Karen Bell, Donald Zeyl, and Alexander Nehamas. Mahwah NJ: Hermagoras P, 1999.

Oates, J.C.T. *Cambridge University Library: A History*. London: Cambridge UP, 1986.

Oram, William et al., eds. *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.

Plato. *Plato on Rhetoric and Language: Four Key Dialogues*. Ed. Jean Nienkamp. Trans. Paul Woodruff, Stanley Lombardo, Karen Bell, Donald Zeyl, and Alexander Nehamas. Mahwah NJ: Hermagoras P, 1999.

Rist, Anna. Trans. Introduction. "Idyll XVII." *The Poems of Theocritus*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1978.

Ronsard, Pierre de. "Abbregé de l'Art Poëtique François." *Oevres Complète de P. de Ronsard*. Revised Eidtion. Vol. 7 of 8. Ed. Paul Laumonier. Paris: Lemerre, 1914-19.

Sacerdoti Mariani, Gigliola**.** *Il linguaggio poetico dello Shepheardes calender di Edmund Spenser e le sue premesse teoriche*. Florence: Valmartina, 1971.

Sauer, Hans. "Glosses, Glossaries, and the Dictionaries in the Medieval Period." *The Oxford History of English Lexicography*. Vol. 1. Ed. A.P. Cowie. Oxford: Clarendon P, 2009.

Shrank, Cathy. *Writing the Nation in Reformation England 1530-1580*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.

Sidney, Philip. "The Defense of Poesie." *The Defense of Poesie, Political Discourses, Correspondence, Translation*. Ed. Albert Feuillerat. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963.

Smyth, Herbert Weir. *Greek Grammar*. Rev. Ed. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. New York: Longman, 1977.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Eds. William A. Oram et al. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.

Spenser, Edmund. "Three proper wittie familiar Letters, lately passed between two Universitie men, touching the Earthquake in April last, and our English reformed Versifying." *The Works of Edmund Spenser: The Prose Works*. Vol. 9. Ed. Greenlaw et al. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1949. 15-18.

Sugden, Herbert W. *The Grammar of Spenser's Faerie Queene*. Philadelphia: Linguistic Society of America, 1936.

Summit, Jennifer. *Memory's Library*: *Medieval Books in Early Modern England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2008.

Theocritus. *Bucolici Graeci*. Ed. A.S.F. Gow. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1952. All Greek text is quoted from this edition.

Theocritus. *Encomium for Ptolemy Philadelphus*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003.

Theocritus. *The Poems of Theocritus*. Trans. Anna Rist. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina

    P, 1978. I consulted but did not quote Rist's translations.

Thomas, Thomas. *Dictionarum Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae*. Cambridge, 1589.

Vergil. *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI.* Trans H. Rushton Fairclough.

    Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1978. While I used this text for consulting the

    Latin, I did not use Fairclough's translations.

Zitner, Sheldon. "Spenser's Diction and Classical Precedent." *Philological Quarterly* 45

    (1966): 360-71.

Zurcher, Andrew. *Spenser's Legal Language: Law and Poetry in Early Modern England*.

    Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007.

Chapter 4:
Finding Spenser's Good Bitch:
How the Figure of Samient in Book 5 Anticipates
Critiques of Humanist Notions of Learning and Language in Book 6
and Complicates Comparisons to *A View of the Present State of Ireland*

Much of this chapter represents an effort to forestall a view of Spenser as a

fatalist. Such a view, which emerges partly from knowing the grim colonial politics in

which Spenser participated, accompanies the most condemning present-day

interpretations of Spenser's handling of issues of language and politics in Books 5 & 6 of

The Faerie Queene and *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. Part of the justification

for such a sense of his fatalism *seems* to appear in the Proem to Book 5. There, Spenser

points to the degeneration of the world as a problem in which "vertue" comes to be

identified as "vice" (5.Pr.4.1-2). Words, we are intended to see, have fallen wholly out of

alignment with the things. From this we might be tempted to believe that Spenser sees

language as hopelessly degenerated, and that his linguistic idealism simply emerges in

response to observing the inevitable physical degradations of the tongue. Given the

connection between language and poet, and the connections between this specific poet

and the rhetoric of the colonial mission, we may find ourselves plying a logic that starts

from this cosmic desolation and makes it of a piece with the political disconsolation of

Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. (The latter political tract, after all,

surrounds its wolfish recommendations for overwhelming military action with a herd of

wooly arguments about how Ireland's laws, tongues, bards, and culture are hopelessly

degenerated.) The Proem to Book 5, however, unseats the hopelessness that initiates

such reasoning. Despite the changes that shift the nature of things and their names,

Spenser honors "those Aegyptian wisards old,/ which in their Star-read were wont have

best insight" to whom he suggests "faith may be given" (5.Pr.8.1-3). The "wisard's" interpretive act is given heavy but not unconditional emphasis—not the emphasis of despair in the last option. Spenser argues that the "Soverayne Goddesse"—his queen— must just such a "righteous doome aread" (5.Pr.11.1,4) to the people as the priest-like interpreters might offer. Such "reading" is not an immediate judgment that cannot be judged in turn or shaped, however binding and enforcing an impact Spenser advocates. After all, the queen's ability to "aread," which means to interpret or narrate, is met with Spenser's claim that he will "dare discourse of so divine a read" (5.Pr.11.7) to his own readership in Book 5. The peril and boldness of this line comes from how close "a read," being a passive reception of the Queen's narration, is to "aread," which is an active and usurping fashioning of interpretation. Spenser argues for a poetic responsibility to the Queen's *image* in *The Shepheardes Calender*, but here he goes a step further in arguing a rhetorical or communicative responsibility for characterizing law and judgment more broadly. Reader, readership, and poet are embroiled in this together, responsible for imagining the state and choosing its best courses. The passage is not about dictating the right choice or right interpretation in the face of dire conditions or disordered rhetoric. Indeed, such bold claims on interpretation do not force us to see lawmaking or the executions of power as a uniform re-alignment of the heavens in which thing and name are forever purely to be seen and understood, but rather a delicate and diplomatic process more reflective of the push-and-pull of persuasion. It is not *possible* to view that position on language as one consistent with a fatalist despair over the loss of a prelapsarian order.

The nuanced, diplomatic tissue of thought, speech, and reality at that opening of Book 5 forms a pattern closely matching one implicit in the quandaries about mind,

language, culture, and meaning that have animated my dissertation's investigation of Spenser's linguistic idealism. In my last chapter, I addressed Spenser's strategy of evoking a form of poetic resistance to classicizing lexicographic authorities over language. To reveal this strategy, I focused upon his habit of controlling matters of word origin, history, and the kinds of organizational patterns that make it possible to deploy a word's meaning and function flexibly as a part of a poetic tradition rather than simply a scholarly museum of meaning. Such resistance in Spenser's habits with lexis in the *Shepheardes Calender* logically emerges from the mixed influences of patronage anxieties, his reaction to the prestige of lexicography and classical languages, and an earnest desire to establish a prestigious national vernacular. Yet the mixture itself and the resistance emerging from it in the early work help us explain Spenser's more dogged resistance to the *material* word and tongue we find in his later work. That is, it also allows us to explain how the negative apotheosis of the material word, the Blatant Beast, in Book 6, roars forth to address lexicons, politics, language, and poets together. Here is a creature relevant to concerns about how to control a national language, and thus relevant to the issues of knowledge and language that are raised by the differences between the Calepino and Mirabellio lexicons. To provide the fullest picture of the origins of this vocal dog, though, the present chapter considers how education and learning have a special place in Spenser's thinking about language and its relationship to political power. Indeed, the problematic identity-shifting possibility that people grow and change as individuals, that they are shaped by language, has a crucial role for those who wish to explain anomalous features of Spenser's work in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* as well as in Books 5 & 6 of *The Faerie Queene*.

In the first segment of this chapter, I show that Andrew Hadfield and Richard McCabe both use the political perspective of *A View of the Present State of Ireland* to forge a faulty depiction of Spenser's ideas about language. The two scholars hobble Spenser's intentional control of the argument being presented about language, stressing that he is so psychologically complicit in the colonial program that his ideas about language split in the chimerical contradictions of colonialism itself. I study the logical problems with Hadfield's and McCabe's sense of Spenser's intentions, turning in particular to the alternative perspectives on Spenser that are offered by M.L. Stapleton and Edward Armstrong. Then, in the next segment of the chapter, looking closely at the opening to Book 6, I argue that Spenser adopts imagery of planting and growth (a "nursery" of virtue) there not only to advance his political interests as a colonist, but also to respond to humanist ideas of education. Specifically, Spenser there *questions* simplistic ideas about the interrelations of identity, language, and education. Armed with a better sense of the divisions between the pedagogical poet that Spenser hopes to be and the humanist scholars he takes issue with, I study *A View of the Present State of Ireland* in the third segment of my chapter. *A View* appeals to English humanist educators in ways that Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* simply does not. Indeed, likening the ideas about language in the two texts was bound to create the kind of faults and contradictions we find in Hadfield's and McCabe's analysis on the subject.

In a fourth and concluding segment of my chapter, I make manifest the advantage of seeing the difference between *A View* and *The Faerie Queene*. Studying the role of Samient, the diplomat and messenger who helps Artegall and Arthur in cantos eight and nine of Book 5, I show that she is the beginning of the dog imagery that grows into the

language-associated Blatant Beast. However, rather than being a bad example, she is a good one. As such, Samient's cooperation and willingness contrast with and more powerfully reveal the sequence of problems with communication and justice that begin with Artegall's failure to persuade Sanglier and continue throughout the book. Artegall's education in dealing justice to animals proves unequal to his communicative needs as an instrument of justice. Samient, in other words, shows how complex Spenser's conception of the relationship between rhetoric and power actually is, how necessary the individual will and mind is to the arbitration of their relationship. Spenser's conceptualization of language therefore does not simply become, with the Blatant Beast, a treatise on colonial dysfunction designed to address propagandistic detraction. Instead, the beast plays a part in a broader critique of humanist interests and methods than what we find in *A View*. I conclude with an extended justification for the value of my observations in this chapter, drawing attention to Erasmus's influential theories about education and the tongue, among other things. Samient may seem a minor figure in that she in no way undermines our sense of Spenser's support of brutal policies in Ireland. However, she shows how Spenser's work fits into the intellectual history of his period in a way that preserves our understanding of his intentions. If we fragment or unseat this idea of Spenser's intentions with a figure like Samient, we lose sight of what Spenser hoped to do for poetry as much as for language in the didacticism he crafts in his epic.

1. Spenser's Intentions in his Thinking About and Figuring of Language

Andrew Hadfield and Richard McCabe have created powerful arguments that define Spenser's view of language as we find it in Book 6. They see a view geared to

promote colonial and imperial recommendations for English policy in Ireland. However, each author struggles with the way that Spenser's nuanced engagement with Irish culture and language is paradoxically suited to recommendations for its brutal suppression. In *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience*, Hadfield acknowledges this paradox as Spenser's "double movement" (77). In studying it, Hadfield ultimately finds that Spenser is simply aligned with the hypocrisies and contradictions of his racist colonial agenda. Addressing the same issue in *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment*, McCabe finds that Spenser's view of language is informed by a "morbid" psychological state. Through linguistic borrowing and hybridizing, McCabe argues, Spenser unintentionally evinces interest in assimilating rather than displacing the native Irish and Old English factions, undermining his own "search for absolute linguistic purity" (193). By focusing on the paradoxes of the colonial circumstance, though, McCabe and Hadfield limit any more nuanced understanding of Spenser's intention in his detailed accounts of culture and language. This limitation is problematic for me because it obstructs an investigation of the purpose of precisely such figures of Spenser's view of language that I have already found in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* and in *The Shepheardes Calender*.

Naturally, Hadfield and McCabe are not the only ones to observe the contradictions of Spenser's attitude toward Ireland. Abraham Stoll recognizes precisely the idea of a "double movement" in his comments on Book 5. He argues that the brutal policy recommended by *A View*—a policy enacted by Lord Grey de Wilton's military actions while Spenser was his secretary in Ireland during the Desmond rebellion—is represented in Book 5: "Talus recreates these slaughters in Book Five, and Spenser may well want them to feel excessively violent" (xiv). Stoll points back to the sympathetic

depiction of Irish culture in the *View* with the suggestion that Spenser *must* have seen the problems of English imperial suppression of Ireland: the *View*'s "detailed use of Irish history, mythology, ethnography, social custom, and language combine to make a nuanced humanist engagement with the Irish and the problems of the emerging British empire" (xv). Yet it is precisely on the matter of language that Hadfield finds that the "double movement" is less towards sympathy and more towards brutal suppression. He writes, for example, that Spenser's use of the word "translate" to describe the transfer of English culture to Ireland in the *View* reveals a desire to eradicate the Irish language wholly (23). Hadfield's contention specifically addresses Irenius' claim that the mother's milk and Gaelic-language tutelage of Irish nurses corrupts the English:

> Irenius conceives of a dialectic process whereby speech both introduces and reinforces a processes already started in the infant's life by fostering; the belief that the influence of the mother tongue cannot be eradicated implies that all subsequent efforts will be doomed to failure. (25)

Quite brilliantly, Hadfield also explains Spenser's honoring of the power of the Irish bards as a sophisticated critique of the way in which Irish society is topsy-turvy. "Irish society inverts English society," Hadfield explains, because whereas poets are powerless and placeless in English society without the defense of powerful lords—as, indeed, Spenser argues often enough in *The Shepheardes Calender*—Irish bards are overly powerful, propagating rumor without control and contributing to a culture of lawlessness. Hadfield's argument about the representation of language in Book 6 depends heavily on his observations about *A View*. He argues that the appearance of the Blatant Beast as the major critic of Artegall corresponds to English and Irish criticism of Lord Grey and the uncontrolled rumor about the English tactics in Ireland itself. Of the shift from Books 5 to 6, Hadfield writes,

Spenser is making a neat link between criticism of the hard-line policies of his erstwhile patron, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton—who argued for and practiced the suppression of the Irish—and *the abuse of language itself*. The implication is that failure to accept what must be done to make Ireland governable—for Spenser, the deployment of a huge army that will crush Irish resistance and enable the English to spread law, government, and civil society—is a form of unreason, *an inability to think in proper human terms*. And because such voices have triumphed in Book Five, Calidore's quest is impossible: without the foundations of social order, the establishment of courtesy is not just difficult, but is a meaningless enterprise. (viii, italics mine)

Hadfield connects this view of language back to Spenser's willingness to distort Irish word meaning and etymology shamelessly for England's propagandistic purposes. For example, Hadfield reads Eudoxus' and Irenius' comments about the etymology of Irish words carefully and comes to the conclusion that Spenser's dialogue is mainly concerned to "refute and displace the false history of the Irish": "A true etymology is opposed to a false one and the frontiers of language are established whereby English truth stands opposed to Irish falsehood" (98).

Hadfield's neat understanding of Spenser's view of true and false language categories, while obviously appropriate to illustrating colonial and racist hypocrisies, is too simple to explain Spenser's views of language as I have described them in previous chapters. This is all the more strange because Spenser's suspicion of spoken language, clever treatment of lexicography, deliberately inconsistent usage of dialect terms, and subtle advocacy of poetic identity as linked to language must predate *A View*'s arguments about language and colonial policy. Thus it is all the more important to consider how Hadfield strives to justify his position—as, for example, when he points to Spenser's treatment of etymology in a section of the *View*'s dialogue where Spenser ridicules Richard Stanihurst's historical etymology. In considering that passage, Hadfield treats Spenser's ideas of language in terms that fit the polemical discourse of the *View*:

The fact that Eudoxus can invent a spurious etymology through using his Classical, humanist learning to ridicule Stanihurst […] suggests that the whole enterprise [of using etymologies and language histories], often regarded as a key strategy in humanist history-writing by historians of ideas, was seen by Spenser himself as a bit of a cheap trick, albeit useful for propaganda purposes, perhaps like the Arthurian legends. […] Or is it more likely that [Spenser's audience is] being given a series of strategies whereby they can fool the public they wish to persuade, the joke being one shared among the audience of the text but not to be taken lightly by those on whom its arguments will be used, i.e. an English audience. (99)

Hadfield's struggle raises some questions. If Spenser is relying on an audience to acknowledge the fluidity of language history *and* the nature of propagandistic uses of language history, how can he be relying on that same audience to treat his historical speculation on Irish terms as without bias? And why then would Spenser have so simple an approach to language in the much more complex allegorical play of Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene?* Is his etymology and his project there no more than a "cheap trick"? Hadfield's approach to the ethical contradictions of the *View* undermines his own later argument that Spenser uses *The Faerie Queene* to lay out a straightforward treatment of Irish speech as labile and false, English as stable and true. For precisely this reason, Hadfield has to take up an extreme position on Spenser's view of language—one in which Spenser's ethical and intentional identity is subsumed in the implications of the politically- and racially-charged words with which he propagandizes. His choice of this extreme position is not immediate, and is framed with a key concession: Hadfield acknowledges that Eudoxus's and Irenius's treatment of the etymology associated with Ireland's identification as the holy or sacred island[83] suggests that the Irish are not

---

[83] Irenius says that Ireland "not Called amisse Banno or Sacra Insula, taking sacra for accursed" (145) in *A View*. He is explaining to Eudoxus that Ireland was called this name ironically in view of the political struggles over its control, which were complicated by changes in power in England itself. See my later note on A.C. Hamilton's comment on the use of the term "sacred" in Book 2 of *The Faerie Queene*.

irredeemable, writing, "In this case, the etymologies point both ways and it might seem as if a possible acknowledgement of a hybrid colonial scene has opened up where identities are fluid and certainties challenged" (107). Yet Hadfield steps back from precisely this judicious understanding of the linguistic side of the "double movement" and argues that Spenser is merely an advocate of a racially pure "English peace which excludes the native Irish." Such a view problematically suggests that Spenser's acknowledgement of vicissitudes in conceptions of race and language is somehow *not* real—as though it could not count unless the "hybrid" it posits were fitted with the additional present-day *certainty* that race is a largely fictive construction. Hadfield wants us to treat Spenser's political masters and interests as the determining factors in the understanding of his thought. Spenser could *not know that race was entirely a fiction*, and it is comically anachronistic to suppose we may attain any ethical insight into ideas about race in that way. Still, Hadfield holds Spenser responsible via his vocabulary:

> The two key terms [in Spenser's vocabulary] are "Briton" and "Scythian." The history contained in these two words, their etymologies, and the parallel discovery that they lie behind the history of so many other words and social practices, serve to validate the notions of identity and difference upon which the political discourse of *A View* depends. (108)

In this passage, Hadfield yields his own interpretive responsibility as he says that the words themselves have a pre-existing meaning which rips the disguise from Spenser's true intention. He writes that "the word itself provides an authoritative history and history is made up of a series of words" (108). The latter is obvious and leads to no salient judgment: history is made up of events that are transmuted into both language and its adherent symbolic systems—math, thought, etc. Words are complex symbols whose

interpretation is always subject to change, not invariant even in and of themselves in a given period. Even if Spenser uses these two terms, and even if his use complements English interests and biases, his history as allegorist, poet, and thinker challenges and hybridizes word meanings before we find him discoursing on word meaning in *A View*.

Hadfield's approach, it should be noted, ties an analysis of Spenser's political view of language to Spenser's choices as a language-user. In its faults, though, this approach reveals that there are some tangles to Spenser's view of language that complicate our view of his politics. With this complication comes not just a more nuanced view of language and politics, but also of Spenser's *intention*—a matter that I hope to show is linked to the didacticism of Spenser's approach and the questions of language learning he confronts as a humanist and someone changing both humanism and Platonism in various ways. Of Spenser's intention and language we find the most robust account in Richard McCabe's chapter on "Irenius's Mother Tongue" in *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment*. McCabe also finds a sort of double movement, though he terms it a hybridity that is less Spenser's intention (or the non-thinking product of the history of his words to which we are jointly subject) than the accident of his subconscious allegiance to Ireland as colonial homeland. McCabe requires us to view Spenser's idea of language as inherently linked to the ideology of the anxious colonist and colonialist: "Spenser's outlook is everywhere informed by a morbid fear of infiltration—both territorial and sexual—but the very language in which he expresses such anxieties increasingly illustrates the process it deplores" (178). This leads him to describe Irenius as one of the most powerful exponents of Spenser's view of language and conclude that Spenser's remarks with this speaker reflect a "contemporary debate as to whether 'meaning' was in

some sense imminent in language or solely a matter of arbitrary attribution, but he was

well ahead of his time in recognizing how language functions to shape, rather than

merely express, familial and political bonds."[84] Despite the sophistication of Irenius and

his puppeteer, Spenser, McCabe envisions the political and social context as

determinative of Spenser's view of language:

> Implicit in New English attacks upon the Gaelic language is the dreadful
> suspicion that it articulates "English" nature better than the "mother tonge" by
> words derived from the language of the Irish. The subtle alterations in Spenser's
> own language, the infiltration of his "mother tongue" by words derived from the
> language of the Irish, bears witness to an unconscious process of assimilation of
> which his conscious polemic fights shy. (196)

Yet McCabe's presumption is that Spenser as an exponent of the English language insists

on a need for an inalterable English nature that is to be expressed in a pure English

tongue; his presumption is that Spenser's thoroughly *composite* style of English—a

tongue overtly under Greek, Latin, French, and other influences—is not in fact intended

to be recognizably composite or influenced. As was the case before with Hadfield's

approach, McCabe's depiction of Spenser' idea of language does not match what I have

found in Book 6 or *The Shepheardes Calender*. Rather, for McCabe a pressing need for

ethical insight into the position of Spenser's literature in past politics (relevant to a clear

legacy of colonialism) determines that Spenser was merely out of command and

unintentionally revealing of his fears. There is no question that the New English colonists

were morbidly afraid of the Irish and the Gaelic influence on Old English groups, and

---

[84] McCabe acknowledges that his thinking on this matter owes much to Richard Waswo's *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987). However, Waswo's report does not do full justice to the flexibility of humanist thought on this matter in the period, especially since he relies on anachronistic features of Saussurean linguistics to advance his basic argument. Andrew Zurcher's ideas in *Spenser's Legal Language*, as I considered in the last chapter, offer a more nuanced understanding that informs my skepticism. See my introduction for a fuller comment on Waswo's ideas about Spenser.

there is no question that Spenser hoped both to denigrate and to use Irish language and culture for English purposes. And, following Hadfield's observations, Spenser was quite aware that Irenius' fanciful etymology and history could only be made to serve a rhetoric tailored to the interests of the factions that Spenser spoke on behalf of to the English crown in the dialogue. Indeed, McCabe points out that Spenser's animus toward the Irish bards arises in part from the bards' perfect awareness that "translation" from Gaelic language into English represented both a corruption of the essential Gaelic and a total destruction of their culture and way of life:

> In the Gaelic mind "translation" of the sort Spenser promoted [in the *View*] was tantamount to cultural annihilation, and the bards viciously satirized all those who "corrupted" their speech with English vocabulary. (191)

Here, though, intrude some serious problems. McCabe creates a misleading parity between the bards' beliefs about language and Spenser's. The fact that the *bards* believed in such a cultural essence in language does not mean that *Spenser* believes in it. Spenser would not have to believe it to play upon such English or Irish fears, or to believe in it to advocate the use of humanist learning to propagandize. In fact, as I argued in my last chapter, his apparent indifference to corruption and hybridization of language in his management of Greek etymology (particularly evident in E.K.'s frequently flawed understanding) and his slipshod borrowings from Welsh phrases in *The Shepheardes Calender* suggest he believes not that an essential nature in a language can be easily identified, but rather that it must be proved in the action of the poetry itself and the hermeneutical actions of the readership. This complicated view of heterogeneous linguistic authority, ironically, stands in conflict with a view of *cultural and linguistic purity* likely espoused by the Irish bards and knowingly championed by some present-day

261

thinkers about language who see culture (rightly in some cases) as to varying degrees

dependent upon and forged from language. This does not mean that Spenser did not

intend to combat the Irish and their bards at a cultural and at a material level by enlisting

troops to destroy them and their supporters—and teachers to strip their names and

language from them once they had been militarily suppressed. It also does not mean that

Spenser was not an advocate of English empire. However, it does mean that we cannot

force his view of empire or politics to agree with his view of language quite so readily,

and that therefore we must step back from declaring him guilty of an "unconscious"

desire to be assimilated. The very suggestiveness of the terms of assimilation, in fact, will

depend upon how the different sides view what might happen to language as part of its

relations to identity and knowledge in the process. Spenser's conscious archaisms and

manipulation of lexis depend intrinsically upon a recognition of language as partial,

composite, and relational. His choices propose that language might be improved, and

indeed they depend upon a culture willing (as ours is for the most part not) to accept that

languages may be judged to be better or worse in instrumental ways. Spenser's composite

idea of language is not one of a cultural essence that might provoke its cultural defenders

to chimerical pronunciations. To the contrary, Spenser's idea of language as we have

seen it in my previous chapters is of a wily poetic chimera poised to devour the defenders

of any cultural essences that stand in its way.

My point about Spenser's general view of language becomes clearer if we

consider a specific instance from *The Shepheardes Calender* and the problems with

McCabe's commentary on that material. When Spenser borrows the word "kerne" from

Irish in the July eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*, E.K. provides a decidedly

misleading gloss: "a Churle or Farmer" (133). In the *View*, Spenser shows that he perfectly well understands that the term refers to an Irish footsoldier.[85] McCabe goes far in exploring the issue. He begins: "'Kerne' is an Anglicization of the Gaelic 'ceithearnach' or 'ceithearn,' meaning a foot-soldier or band of foot-soldiers, and its occurrence demonstrates the chimerical nature of the search for absolute linguistic purity" (193). As already noted, it is not clear that Spenser is searching for linguistic purity—a guiding presumption in McCabe's approach here! Even so, McCabe goes on to present a compelling analysis based on the political motivations of Spenser's language choices:

> Yet the matter is a good deal more complex than may at first appear for, as E.K.'s gloss recognizes, the primary Gaelic sense is quite inappropriate in the context. Rather, the word is being used, as the OED indicates it sometimes was, in a derivative sense. One might even argue that it was only Spenser's subsequent contact with genuine "kernes" that transformed a loose derivative usage into a more semantically accurate, if polemically aggressive, one. […] The use of loanwords in English was countenanced by Spenser's schoolmaster, Richard Mulcaster, provided that they obeyed the rules of "enfranchisement" or naturalization by which they "becom bond to the rules of our writing… as the stranger denisons be to lawes of our cuntrie." The kerns of *The Shepheardes Calender* have been assimilated, those of *A View* remain "salvage."

I cannot help but admire the beauty of this explanation. The perfect match between colonial mission and linguistic policy bursts ripely into the fruition of Spenser's role in the empire as he perceived it. Yet there are points of weakness. First, it seems quite unusual that Spenser had conceived of a program of linguistic assimilation for the Irish as

---

[85] Irenius proposes a severe need for the reformation of Irish customs and the practices of the "kerne" soldiery in particular. He states: "Both [the old customs] and the kerne allsoe (whome I toke to be the proper Irish soldiour [)] Cane I allowe soe that they use that habitt and Costome of theirs in warrs onelye when they are led forthe to service of theire Prince, and not usually at home in Civill places…" (123). Shakespeare's similar uses of the word show that it was not unknown to the English. However, Spenser's Irenius goes on to say that kernes are "ravishers of weomen and murderers of children." The comment nakedly appeals to the worst xenophobic English assumptions.

early as 1579. At that earlier date, as his use of Welsh-like speech in the September

eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender* shows, he was willing to have non-English speech

unassimilated, relying on forms of syntax that are distinctly non-English for a variety of

non-English terms. So Spenser does not seem keen to "domesticate" either English or

other foreign terms in *The Shepheardes Calender* or elsewhere. In fact, as I observed in

the last chapter, he seems intent on using English in ways that invoke French, Latin, and

Greek usages, weaving a composite language that improves English by many subtle

means that are not, to be sure, distinctly *English*. But if this criticism does not deeply

trouble McCabe's argument, a second one must: E.K.'s interpretation of the word

"kerne" in the July eclogue *does not* offer a correct reading for the context that we find

the speaker Thomalin providing. In the passage, Thomalin describes Palinode's

unfortunate journey to Rome, where he found that wealth had corrupted the religious

men. The "fatte kernes and leany knaves" (199) that we find in the passage guard the

hapless flocks of these corrupted priests—more precisely put, they maintain the flock's

"fasting" while the "wisards weltre in welths waves,/ pampred in pleasures deep" (197-

8). Such men are not farmers or clownish "churls" as E.K. would have it, but rather the

martial muscle enforcing the Papal authority to collect money from the "flock." In other

words, Spenser's poetic voice has not domesticated the word "kerne" into an English

farmer appropriate to the pastoral verse. Rather, Spenser's *glossator* E.K. has done so.

The word's Irishness has been preserved in the context of the poem rather than the notes.

As I showed in the previous chapter, the glossator strategically both competes with and

yields to the poet over the authority to define the terms in ways that suit the larger project

of the *Calender*. In this case, E.K.'s choice shifts the term's meaning in a way not suited

to the task of commenting on the Irish language; rather, the shift strategically exonerates

and authenticates the poet's commentary on politics, religion, and power that the

additional implication of savage Irish soldiery allows.   With this better reading, we know

that Spenser did not have so tailored a view of the loan word as McCabe desires. And

this in turn suggests that we need to hesitate over the degree to which Spenser's

management of lexical meaning in loanwords betrays "an unconscious process of

assimilation" for a hated Other's and Outsider's language. The "unconscious" here is an

idea that is betraying present scholars more than it is aiding them in a pursuit to

understand Spenser's politics and poetics!

It is futile to dispute whether Spenser was part of a colonial mission, or to dispute

that this mission and its imperial apparatus was deeply influential on *The Faerie Queene*,

including the vocabulary choices therein. Some of Spenser's work in that regard is deep

and subtle, and to be sure the exploration of it was muted in the early years of Spenser

study. On the whole, McCabe's analysis is sound in terms of the political and social

agendas he reveals, particularly as they become part of the political will of *A View of the*

Present State of Ireland. I do not mean my argument about language to form an apology

for Spenser's decision to lend his voice to extreme, even genocidal policies in Ireland.

Yet at some point we must *temporarily* separate this political and/or social agenda in

Ireland from Spenser's argument over questions of the relationship between culture,

knowledge, language, and identity in such a way that we lose neither intellectual nuance

nor ethical seriousness. The intellectual nuance informs the Irish policy Spenser

advocated, but it is not easy to condemn as the policy itself. It certainly cannot be

explained as an accident of his psychology, the group psychology of the colonists, or the

265

simple prejudicial position of aspiring imperialists. My goal thus far has been to demonstrate that the arguments about language based in a reading of colonial Irish policy are not adequately consistent in their approach to Spenser's ideas about language—Hadfield and McCabe both clearly falter. Spenser's intention must be more complicated than the political agenda that apparently dominates some portions of his work, and for this reason we must re-think the relationship between culture and language that Spenser proposes in *A View* by considering how it might emerge out of the more complicated and nuanced versions we find elsewhere. My previous three chapters brought me to this position *because* I have been re-thinking the humanism, idealism, and nationalism of Spenser's approach in some detail already.

In the course of defending Spenser's project from arguments like those of McCabe and Hadfield, M.L. Stapleton and Edward Armstrong have provided the beginnings of the more complex model of Spenser's intentions in part by resisting the lure of characterizing them in terms of his politics. Considering the ways in which Spenser's circumstance in Ireland was thought to resemble Ovid's, Stapleton writes that "it does not seem justified to read Ovidian intertextuality as entirely political" (44). Drawing on the work of Richard Helgerson and quoting Louis Montrose, Stapleton goes on to assert that Spenser's resemblance to Ovid should be seen in terms of the way Spenser adapts the broadest powers of the authorial role:

> Spenser learned from Ovid's exil[ic] works that poets should claim the status of *auctores*, authors of venerable antiquity and unquestioned authority. This phenomenon gives them great power over the readers who peruse their wisdom. Since their opinions, biases, and language define the world that we try to enter by reading, we rely on them almost exclusively for information and can hardly escape them. […] As Montrose says, "In claiming the originative status of an author, a writer claims the authority to direct and delimit the interpretive activity of an elite community of readers by whom he himself is authorized to write." (46)

From my own reading of E.K.'s and Spenser's play with authority over word meaning, I think it is clear that much of what Stapleton argues here is correct: Spenser was indeed appropriating ancient ideas of authorial responsibility as he was advancing political thinking to his community, and this appropriation of an authorial voice creates troubling paradoxes. Still, some of those paradoxes are resolvable: my last chapter showed that the motivations for doing so lay in a resistance not just to the will of a tyrannical patron, but also to humanist authority over language.

Edward Armstrong takes Spenser's intertextuality and extends it to a larger humanist enterprise of defining author and reader. For Armstrong, Spenser consistently engages in Ciceronian dialogue; Spenserian authorial voices—including E.K., the narrator of *The Faerie Queene,* and the interlocutors of *A View*—not only bear witness to a bold authorial persona, but develop a larger interplay between Spenser and his intended reader. He argues that "the poetic practices of Spenser are grounded in a Ciceronian moral philosophy that takes as its fundamental principle that human beings are, as Kenneth Burke puts it, 'Bodies that Learn Language'" (183). Spenser's "poetry acknowledges and exploits poetry's capacity to shape culture values and, significantly, to challenge and reform cultural conventions" because, Armstrong argues, it forms a "sophistic"—a method of using language to acquire or produce *ethical* knowledge. On the latter basis, Armstrong even conducts a defense of the policy recommendations of *A View*, arguing that it models a "process of deliberation" (163) that he believes is parallel to the poetic process enacted by the didacticism of *The Faerie Queene* itself.

For my concerns, the merit of Armstrong's and Stapleton's approaches lies in their willingness to push aside the ponderous ethical judgment provoked by Spenser's

political recommendations ever so briefly in order to talk about what else he intended. This willingness allows us to entertain more precise visions of his conceptualization of language as an instrument of good. Even so, both of them seem to respond more forcefully to Spenser's work as an ideal case, a formal experiment rather than an embedded and inescapable historical piece with clear prescriptive force. For example, Armstrong believes that Spenser's poetic method creates an "ethical imperative" for shaping language into stories that make a collective history intelligible: "Telling (hi)stories is the quintessential rhetorical act informing the poet's method" (162). This emphasis on historical narrative-making itself is what he believes Spenser achieves in place of a specific history. Armstrong and Stapleton contend that poetic rules are more than simply those of the imagination and have, rather, an independent, forceful narrative value in which the poet's authority is deeply though not transparently ethical. This view of poets reflects what Sir Philip Sidney advocates in his *Defense*: the combination of historical and philosophical ethics in a poetic praxis. Such a Sidneian view of Spenser's intentions, therefore, is perfectly in keeping with the Spenser's priorities for poetry and language as I have considered them in the previous chapters—his handling lexis, glossators, authorial privilege, the importance of the mind and knowledge, the difficulties of lexicons, and the mysterious link between language and identity. With this approach to Spenser's intentions in mind, we can better consider how he intended us to see education's part in the ethics of language—an ethics in which figures like the Blatant Beast and Calepine play cooperative parts.

    2. What Book 6 Intimates About Education, Language, Virtue, and Poetry

Book 6 evokes the language of educators in ways that relate directly to the colonial circumstance in Ireland, but Spenser's focus is at once broader and more specific than that colonial matter. That is, Spenser uses the pastoral and farming imagery associated with classical poetry, and also associated with humanist educators, to justify the colonial work of supplanting the barbarous uncultivated land and people. However, Spenser also subtly questions the terms of humanist educators as and because he advances his own didactic poetics. Examining the work of William Kempe, we can see how Spenser uses similar terms, and indeed how deeply educators relied upon poetry's cultural legitimacy in thinking about the growth of linguistic skills. More crucially though, we can also see the similarity between Kempe's agenda and that of lexicographers and glossators: like E.K. or Henri Estienne, Kempe appropriates the cultural legitimacy of poetry to advance the scholar's legitimacy. In his drive to control the conditions under which children develop linguistic facility, Kempe ignores the questions of materiality and spirituality that dominate Spenser's thinking about poetry, language, thought, authorship, and inspiration in Book 6 and elsewhere. With this in mind, it is clear that Spenser, in the way he characterizes Calidore and Calepine, attacks the kinds of ideas that Kempe's view of education represents. Yet more subtly, Spenser eliminates one of the crucial habits of humanist thought about education—a view of the long-lasting nature of early influences. This view is directly connected to pithy Horatian adage which appears in different forms in the works of Kempe, Francis Clement, Richard Mulcaster, and the famous Roger Ascham. Indeed, by looking closely at Ascham, we can see a potent irony in Spenser's case against humanism if it is understood to implicate educators: like Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser had to fight the general notion that poets were

intemperate and more physical and bodily than mental. Therefore we can see why

Spenser's preoccupation with the tongue, language, and mind are guiding images and

figures in his ultimate decision to bring up questions about poetry's place that attend the

depiction of Colin and his vision in Book 6, canto ten. Putting all these factors together,

we can see why Hadfield's view of the depiction of language in Book 6 is seriously

inadequate, which in turn will allow us to take a fresh look at *A View*.

What, then, does Book 6 teach us about learning language? For one thing, we

could only conclude that a good form of courteous speech is a foregone result of the inner

goodness of the noble heroes of this book if we read with painful naiveté. Spenser does

heroicize poetry and a secure nobility, of course. As I argued in the first chapter,

Pastorella's inherent, embodied nobility itself is the communicative mark that allows

recognition of her true identity in Book 6. Certainly, as I also argued, this mark has been

placed there by the poetic and the prophetic agent together. Yet for Spenser and for his

reader the progress toward such an ideal has been marred by carefully recognized

political and social complications—the fumbling intrusions of Calidore into Colin's

vision, for example. Moreover, matters of intellectual history as they are recognized in

characters like Calepine and Mirabella complicate our understanding of how Spenser is

arguing that linguistic authority is to be achieved. Clearly, Spenser does not believe in a

pure speech so much as the potential for its existence within a purer mental form. One

additional way he complicates our understanding of poetry and speech in this book

involves how he addresses *growth* and change. Spenser begins Book 6 by addressing

"learnings threasures" as stored up in the mind (6.Pr.2.3), but we find quickly that

Spenser is concerned with the growth of such treasures in a "sacred noursery/ Of vertue"

(3.1-2). Imagery of vegetative growth dominates for an ensuing stanza. Spenser's point about virtue here is that we are not in a Garden of Eden where plants and the people are already grown to perfection and balance, nor in a Garden of Adonis in which there is a constant cycling of form and matter. Here "seeds of bounty soveraine" are "long with carefull labour nurst" (6.Pr.3.7-8). It is the work of the Muses to "revele" this nursery to Spenser, but they are also expressly in the business of *teaching*—and there is something curious about their teaching. The stakes are high, the choices difficult as ever. Spenser says to the Muses: "Guyde ye my footing, and conduct me well/ In these strange waies, where never foote did use,/ Ne none can find, but who was taught them by the Muse" (6.Pr.2.7-9). Why, though, does Spenser emphasize that *only* the Muses can so lead to virtue? We will be able to return to this choice of emphasis as we consider Spenser's likely and certain responses to humanist educators.

Spenser's concern with crafting this image of a garden of learning anticipates the figural work to be done with Calepine in ensuing cantos. I have already dealt with the intellectual history to which Calepine's figuration apparently responds in my first and second chapters: Spenser's decision to use the term "treasury" at the outset, and to indicate that access to these treasuries is the *right* of the muses, suggests already that mere lexicons (identified by the word "treasury" frequently enough) with their scholarly, glossing producers alone cannot serve the good student as well as the enthusiastic poet of inspired divinity. That said, the colonial political context suits the intellectual context with seeming perfection: as a book-man, Calepine's linguistic learning cannot help him with the foreign, savage environment in which he finds himself. Calepine's partial failure as a courtier abroad occurs because like his namesake he is someone trained in

continental humanist lore who adapts poorly to the "salvage" land.[86] From this

perspective, Spenser's choice of vegetative imagery is in keeping with the interest in

colonial plantations, just as the use of the word "soveraine" signals a constant and dutiful

attention to the Queen that is part of the colonial subject's interest. Further, we may

plausibly argue that Spenser's reference to the "sacred" nursery is meant to invoke the

idea of the "Sacra Insula" ("Sacred/Cursed Island") of Ireland. This sacred yet cursed

place is what we find Spenser referring to in *A View*—an ironical matter that, as I

mentioned earlier, Hadfield takes note of. The sacred yet cursed place is also the

problematic "sacred soile" of Acrasia's bower from an earlier canto.[87] Indeed Spenser

shortly and cannily directs our attention to the genesis of the "bad" speech of the Blatant

Beast, in effect assuring us of the relevancy of the colonial and political context. Calidore

undertakes a description for the sake of Artegall, and in it he matches each of the positive

"garden" growths engendered by the muses with a negative, degenerated rhetorical

product elicited by a hellish environment:

---

[86] So many lines of inquiry intersect upon Calepine that it can be difficult to keep them in mind. My arguments here began with the observations of Daniel Fried, which I considered and expanded upon in my first and second chapters. Let me here add the most concise political argumentation about Calepine's significance to Spenser's work: Lisa Jardine argues in "Encountering Ireland: Gabriel Harvey, Edmund Spenser, and English Colonial Ventures" that Spenser "was familiar with a particular influential model" for colonizing Ireland—a classical humanist model—and wrote to express his dislike for the impracticality of that model (61). She argues that Spenser's (or, rather, Irenius's) negative reaction to naïve humanist plans for conquest of Ireland in *A View* finds expression in his poetry: "…in Spenser's poetic works there is a similar offsetting of a theoretical ideal civility (exemplified by the gentleman knight/courtier) against a belief in the culturally constructed gentility to the pressures of the uncivilized" (61-2). Clearly, as a model of a courtier Calepine fits well into this pattern. Spenser's ambivalence about the place of this book-man explains the "double movement" of his sympathies in the most purely political terms.

[87] A.C. Hamilton notes of the Palmer's reference to the "sacred soile" of Acrasia's island and bower (2.12.37.8, 287n) what has often later been observed: Spenser's Irenius refers to Ireland as "Banno or Sacra Insula, taking sacra for accursed" (145) in *A View*, which suggests that all references to "sacred" things need to be carefully considered as veiled references to Ireland. Clearly, the term "sacred" has an irony when Spenser applies it to Ireland in the *View*, and thus there is good reason to see its possible ironies and difficulties as Spenser addresses questions of humanist education in Book 6.

> What is that Blattant Beast? (then [Artegall] replied.)
> It is a Monster bred of hellishe race,
> (Then answerd [Calidore]) which often hath annoyd
> Good knights and ladies true, and many else destroyd.
>
> Of *Cerberus* whilome he was begot,
> And fell *Chimaera* in her darkesome den,
> Through fowle commixture of his filthy blot;
> There he was fostred long in *Stygian* fen
> Till he to perfect ripenesse grew… (6.1.7-8.6-9, 1-5)

The passage frames the relationship between civil speech and a civil society; it suggests that sloppy "fostering" of children leads to a dysfunctional social order. We find such a result because Spenser has carefully matched the Beast's vegetative "ripenesse" to the flowering and growing courtesy from the proem's garden. The "fen" in which the Beast grows is suggestive of the Irish peat bogs, the retreats of Irish rebels.[88] Therefore Spenser means us to understand precisely this dynamic whereby civility and savagery may be contrasted, and he certainly locates civility with the English and savagery with the Irish.

Powerful as Spenser's commitment to the Irish colonial project is, we should not let it obscure his handling of correlated figural aspects of the "sacred nursery." There is another context in which Spenser's theories of learning and speech, both politically inflected and not, also fit. In choosing the term "nursery," in referring to "seeds" and plantation, Spenser not only evokes the colonial context, but produces language and argumentation recognizable in the childhood educational treatises of figures like William Kempe, a Cambridge graduate and associate of Spenser's friend, Gabriel Harvey.

---

[88] In *Irish Demons: English Writing on Ireland, the Irish, and Gender* (2000), Joan Fitzpatrick points out that Spenser's image in Book 2 of the "fennes of Allan" (2.9.16.2) associates the central bogs with the Irish rebels (84-5). Such impenetrable territories were threatening for harboring such rebels; for colonizers like Spenser, they also represented places that could not be profitably farmed—a waste of resources that forms an excellent parallel for the pastoral imagery of vegetative growth that characterizes virtue and civilization in the proem.

Kempe's 1588 *The Education of Children* joins poetry, education, and the task of crafting

virtue in a way that deepens our understanding of Spenser's poetic didacticism. Kempe

writes:

> Now, when learning had taken a little roote in Greece, it spred foorthwith farre
> and wide very wonderfully. Here then a little before the time of Debora,
> Phemonoe commonly called Sybillia, invented the arte of Poetrie, and wrote her
> Oracles in hexameter verse; whereof some peeces remayne to this day. Then
> florished Orpheus the Thracian, and Linus a Thebane, two Poets, that for their arte
> and passing wit, were reputed to be the issue of the Gods: Which Virgils words do
> import […]. Orpheus with his cunning harmonie, as Poets sayne, tamed wilde
> beastes, and made stones to move at his pleasure: that is in very deede, with his
> sweet eloquence and wisdome, he mollified the fierce manners of unreasonable
> men, and induced their stonie hearts to embrace vertue. Whose Scholler Museus
> was a princely poet also. [...] Linus wrote much of natural Philosophie, as well
> touching celestiall as terrestriall creatures, and had two noble Schollers... (199)

There is no need to believe that Spenser refers to this specific author or these specific

ideas in Book 6. However, the abundant parallels show us the *kind* of ideas about

education, poetry, and language that Spenser has in mind, allowing us to understand his

precise position more clearly. For example, in the quote above, Kempe creates a history

centered on humanist poetics in order to trumpet education's ancient pedigree. Kempe

presents an argument to which Spenser would be sympathetic, and he is careful to note

that learning and poetry are a joined process which begins with oracular poetry associated

with the Bible (Debora). It is in Spenser's interest as a colonial agent with militant

protestant connections to see his poetry in such terms. In *The Shepheardes Calender* and

its notes, as I considered in the last chapter, Spenser and E.K. address precisely the

oracular, educating function of the poetry. Kempe trumpets just such Orphic shaping

power of poetry as the civilizing force of poetry itself, which happens to have a clear

educational value in the humanist estimation. For Kempe, effective poets are not

courtiers. They are princes or leaders. This seems a positive thing, also likely to gain

Spenser's support if he is hoping to have an impact on English government of any sort. Kempe sees the primary function of the poetry as a kind of universally civilizing action that flows outward from the scholar-poet to the people, and then is passed down as a responsibility from one scholar-poet to the next. These ideas abundantly relate to Spenser's concern with the virtue and character of Calidore and Calepine as civilizing agents in a "salvage" land. Those two figures, who play dramatic roles in a larger project of teaching readers to *read* deeply (in the broadest sense of the term), were considered in my first and second chapters.

Yet there is much evidence that Spenser would have disagreed with some humanist visions, and thus perhaps with Kempe. In my second chapter, I showed that the characters of Calepine and Mirabella embody critical ideas about lexicography. In my third chapter, I pointed out ways in which Spenser as E.K. and as the poet of *The Shepheardes Calender* confronts the question of the poet's authority over language. In both cases, Spenser is firmly in command of what and how he hopes poetry will teach. As for Kempe, there is a serious way in which his treatise, like those lexicons, trespasses into the work of claiming poetry's educational value, presenting the *sort* of thinking about language and education that Spenser would have been logically disposed to resist.[89]

---

[89] To see the depth of the similarity of Spenser's imagery to Kempe's and what it may show us about Spenser's intentions, it may be worth quoting a few of Kempes remarks and considering Spenser's intentions in light of them. (Spenser is not borrowing from Kempe, but from the same sentiment and thinking about education that Kempe considers.) As he moves to describe "The Method of Schooling," Kempe uses a diction of planting, seeds, and vegetative growth that closely resembles the pastoral terms we find in Spenser's opening to Book 6:

> Now because our life heere is but a short flourishing floure, and our understanding in our Childhood verie slender and feeble, such as shall be perswaded to follow this counsell, would knowe also the breefest and easiest way to be used in this discipline, which by the helpe of God we will indevour to search out, if first we consider what children are fit for the same. For as the tillage there is required not only a good husbandman, and good seede, but also a good soile to sowe it in: so in teaching, there is required not only a learned Maister and good doctrine, but also a Scholler both apt and willing to receive the seede of this good doctrine. (217-8)

Life is a brief flower, the author seemingly somewhat wearied; children are "tillage" that must be fertilized and planted with "the seede" of "good doctrine." It is a labor-intensive vision. We can sense in Kempe's rhetoric much of the weariness evident in Spenser's opening reference to his "weary steps" and its progress through stock references to seeds, flowers, soil, ripeness, etc. It is a shared world-weariness of the aspiring professional who nonetheless sees himself engaged in the most humble and paradoxically most exalted of tasks—much as Vergil in his *Georgics*. That is not the only paradox, though. Kempe's interest is in creating princely leaders among the commonly educated, and he appeals to individuals who wish to see themselves as landholding lords whether they are or not! The stress that falls upon the need for *appearing* to be literate and cultured in the passages that follow is clear, and it strikes upon concerns about class and status that were integral to English society.

> Children therefore are vertuously trained up in good learning, partly by the helpe of the Parents, and partly by the diligence of the teacher. The parents first care is, assoone as his child beginneth to speake, to provide that he use none other companie, then such as are both honest and civill, aswell in behavior, as in language. He shall therefore seclude from his child barbarous nursses, clownish playing mates, and all rusticall persons: neither shall he himself speake in the hearing of his Child either wantonly, other otherwise, any rude or barbarous speech, much less shall he teach him any leawde or unhonest talk, as many do, or suffer him to be in the companie of unthriftie and unhonest persons. For a Child like an emptie new vessell being voide of all learning, is most apt to receive that which is first taught, and that which is first taught, sticketh deepest in memorie, whether it be good or bad. (218-9)

The most sensitive point in the art of such "cultivation" is the provision of an environment that is essentially not crude in terms of behavior *and* language. True to the period, there is not a firm distinction between language and other kinds of communicative actions in Kempe's estimation. Even so, as Kempe twins behavior with language, it is clear from the description of the potential playmates and nurses that the manners to be learned are crucially signaled in linguistic forms. After all, in Kempe's manual so far the evidence of good or bad learning has been understood so dominantly in terms of literacy and rhetoric that it must be what is at issue for a child's early learning. Again, on the surface, it does not appear that Spenser would differ from this approach—just as we would have no reason, on the surface, to think that Spenser might be ambivalent about the Calepino lexicon.

Kempe's treatise, its similarity to the concerns and imagery at the opening of Book 6, its dominantly linguistic concern even, provoke larger questions about Spenser's intentions with such material. Spenser adopts vegetative imagery that echoes the educational treatises in an appeal to his sovereign queen, clearly desiring to maintain the high seriousness of poetry's claim to a pedagogical function. By comparison, Kempe's elitist appeal on the same rough topical area is ironic: Kempe's work is not, as Robert Pepper notes, "intended as guides to the proper education of the sons of nobility and gentlemen," but rather to the "Everyman" (vii). Indeed, as Pepper explains, this is one of the principal differences between Kempe and other sixteenth-century writers on education, including Mulcaster, Ascham, and Elyot. This is important, I think, for showing one of many reasons why Spenser would have been adopting the imagery of educators: the humanism of the Calepino and Mirabellio lexicons had been made part of educational systems, but evidently Spenser did not think either sufficiently effective—though, of course, he thinks the Calepino lexicon *relatively* successful by comparison. This should lead us to think carefully about the total intention of Spenser's effort in Book 6 by comparison. As is most clear, Spenser's didacticism in the epic pronounces in this part a concern with how a civil society might be developed reliably through the kind of learned sophistication emblematic of humanism. The failure to establish basic civil order in Book 5, Hadfield contends, propels Spenser to characterize just such a humanist task of creating civil speech as impossibly futile in Book 6. Yet the opening of Spenser's Book 6 seems to stress the opposite: without civil, educated individuals, the great garden cannot be made to function properly. This stress is not just a matter of creating an irresolvable paradox in which nature and nurture are impossibly tangled. Artegall's justice depends upon a better state of civil and national order. Spenser contends that civility or courtesy must be *grown* socially, and that poetry such as he writes is central to that formative process. To that end, Spenser evokes the imagery of educators, particularly humanist educators, and—as we shall see in greater detail soon—suggests the cause of their deficiency even as he advances the superiority of the poet's methods.

With such resistance in mind, we can see how and why Spenser might be claiming the

educational "nursery" to push back against the humanists who usurp what *only* the muses

may develop. In its busy pedantry, Kempe's treatise tangles with the familiar ideas that

Spenser's E.K. engages in his preface to *The Shepheardes Calender*. Kempe is forceful

about the didactic value of poetry to such an extent that the poetic seems as much a

matter of scholarship as of successful poetic skill. The poets themselves form an

unbroken chain of teaching and learning that is foundational to a good society. Musaeus

is Orpheus' "scholar"—his student. Musaeus is also a "princely poet"—a leader of poets

and of society. We cannot miss the importance of this sentiment to an understanding of

the *courtly* virtues that Spenser tangles with in Book 6. Yet Spenser's courtiers are not

succeeding with such ease, and not simply because they are in Ireland—Calidore's

trespass on Colin, for example, is clumsy for reasons that have little to do with Ireland.

As Kempe makes his argument, he does not dwell on the way the culture, whether Greek

---

Again, presumably Spenser has it that the muses are the only sure scouts for virtue because they teach forms of inspired speech as well as the patterns of thought behind the organizing of such speech. Thus Spenser assumes a high seriousness about what poetry can do. He assumes no such seriousness about humanism altogether. Spenser is appropriating the imagery used in education and then advancing a criticism of specific forms this education has taken: as we already know, Calepine and Mirabella represent dumbed-down forms of eloquence—alphabetized definitional systems that cannot teach how to speak well or how to craft knowledge, but which become associated with them as necessary aids or inevitable functionaries in the society. They are in Spenser's contemporaneity the degraded forms of a *once* elite educational appeal—aged and slow like Lord Burghley, for example, and with misplaced faith in the Latinity that cannot help English people develop their own systems of useful knowledge. Precisely put, humanist preceptors and their books are engaged in codifying knowledge in ways that do not suggest the sort of flexibility of speech and thought Spenser consistently entertains—a linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural deficiency to which his allegory is geared to respond. In a period of potential changes in the way educators work, Spenser's didactic poetry stages assaults on many fronts to maintain claims to the relevancy of poetry and the role of poet as teacher. As I argued in the last chapter, E.K. stands, as a glossator, for part of a nascent tradition of educating through such authority of which lexicons are a part. Glossators were the beginnings of lexicons, and educators like Mulcaster as well as important Cambridge authorities were recognizing lexicons. Spenser hoped to establish (or maintain, depending on your point of view) a different kind of discursive authority through poetic work: only *the muses* teach. It stands to reason that Spenser would be skeptical of the efforts of humanist educators like Kempe and others who were attempting to systematize language learning even as the arbitrary definitional systems of lexicons did. Nevertheless, Spenser and Kempe for the most part agree about the higher importance of poets in the history of civility.

or Latin or other, is linked to the poetry, nor to what is intrinsically poetic in any ancient or present philosophical estimation; his view of poetry has few cultural vicissitudes or differences owing to language or disposition. Naturally, Kempe is not obliged to provide such nuance for *our* sake or for the sake of other, well-disposed readers. Yet Spenser's absorption with precisely such nuance is logical. Spenser is prejudicially concerned with the poet's preeminence as a teacher. For him, Kempe's faults in laying claim to poetry would be plainer.[90] Even as Kempe is appropriating poetry as a scholar and for scholarship, then, and even as he is nominally doing this in order to join the English to an ancient tradition, he is not acknowledging any sacrifices of English identity or language, any concessions of native English to Latinity or Greek culture. In contrast, Spenser's E.K. *does* note such concessional matters, as I showed in my last chapter. Moreover, Spenser aims at such precision not just in that early work, but, as I will now show, throughout Book 6.

Looking broadly at Book 6, many things prompt us to see Spenser's effort to drive a wedge between his idea of learning and that of humanist educators' views of poetry and language in particular. It is a wedge perfectly similar to those he developed by characterizing his glossator E.K. (and producing an argument over lexis and the nature of poetic authority with that character) in *The Shepheardes Calender,* and by producing a studied ambivalence about Calepine. First, from his careful characterization of Calidore and his emphasis upon the depth of inner self in Book 6, it is clear Spenser does not need

---

[90] In my conclusion, I will briefly return to considering other ideas from Kempe that are relevant to Book 5's concern with law. The point there, as here, is not that Spenser is attacking Kempe specifically, but that it is easier to understand Spenser's ideas about language and learning as motivated by a desire to resist identifiable competitors for authority over such subjects. In my conclusion and even later in this chapter, I will show that Erasmian ideas about education are also likely competitors.

to protect against the influence of any superficial notion of barbarity or corruption. For example, Spenser is artfully careful to show that he is hedging about the "nature" of Calidore as a courteous knight:

> But mongst them all was none more courteous Knight
> Then Calidore, beloved over all,
> In whom it seems, that gentelnesse of spright
> And manners myld were planted naturall;
> To which he adding comely guize withall,
> And gracious speech, did steale mens hearts away.
> Nathlesse thereto he was full stout and tall,
> And well approv'd in battelous affray
> That him did much renowme, and far his fame display.
>
> Ne was there Knight, ne was there Lady found
> In Faery court, but him did deare embrace
> For his fair usage and conditions sound
> The which in all mens liking gayned place,
> And with the greatest purchast greatest grace… (6.1.2-3)

Note that Calidore's education in this practice of courtesy is never mentioned. Unlike Artegall, he has no companion, no mentor, no practicing grounds. This is highly ironic given the emphasis on farming and cultivation that starts the work. Spenser's assertion that Calidore's "manners myld were planted naturall" shows that the author is conscious of the irony. Rather than argue that Calidore is *truly* innately courteous, Spenser strives to show that it is his "comely guize" and other superficial features—gracious speech, even—that is "added." We can only suppose that Calidore's inborn traits have been developed by an unspecified education. Yet Spenser's narrator suggests that even that education must be thoroughly suspect and superficial in any case—a matter of his appearance, his "fame," and communal approval. Spenser's decision to have the "Salvage man" appear, save Calepine, and become companion and aid to Arthur in the

fourth canto shows that he has a sense of humor about just what may or may not be innate, what may or may not be savagery in cultural terms.[91]

The case might be made that this indecision on Spenser's part is no true recognition of the uncertain origins of truly good cultural identity. That is, Spenser's evident doubt about Calidore's courteous *nature* and how it was shaped might not be seen as part of a broader skepticism on Spenser's part. Yet there is an important warrant for his skepticism and willingness to entertain such uncertainty: he conspicuously omits one secure humanist analogy for the education process. Kempe, as he is stressing the need to control the influences on a child's speech, writes: "For a Child like an emptie new vessell being voide of all learning, is most apt to receive that which is first taught, and that which is first taught, sticketh deepest in memorie, whether it be good or bad" (219). Spenser does not use this reasoning in Book 6. Spenser preserves the garden, the seed, the importance of poetry, the problem of barbarous influences, recognizes the superficiality of courtesy and artful behavior, but in the *poetry* he does not examine this particularly pithy idea about the long stay of early influences. This is the more notable because of what we find in other educators. If we turn to Kempe's contemporary and fellow Cambridge graduate, Francis Clement, we find in his treatise on schooling the basic point not only expressed by quoting its origins in Horace, but his own English verse translation of the saying:

> The institution of discipline by so much the lesse should be neglected before thy
> riper age, by how much the more thy tender yeares do readily receive, firmely

---

[91] I am not, of course, overlooking the ways in which the Salvage Man plays a part in a polemical joke about the uneducated and refractory Irish who are, as Spenser takes such pains to say in *A View*, yet much better in their essential nature than the retrograde, mixed-race, and duplicitous Old English factions. Nonetheless, Spenser's intention in one context should not supplant our view of the meaning of it in another one.

retaine, and hardly loose what then first though shalt conceive and learne be it good or evill: of experience surely said the Poet:

> Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit oderem testa diu.

> The liquor that the vessel is
> first seasoned with withall,
> Will give thereto the surer tast,
> And last the longer shall.

> (82)

If we turn to Spenser's much-consulted former headmaster, Richard Mulcaster, who is more learned, judicious, and thorough than Kempe or Clement in his description of educational principles, and whose work is aimed at a yet more elite class of learners attending his London institution, we find that there are planting/vegetative growth images distributed in his work such as we find in Kempe. Mulcaster, however, almost invariably surrounds such metaphors with more complex ideas that carefully define the relationship between material activities and spiritual growth. For example, in *The Elementarie* Mulcaster contends that structured process of "reading, writing, drawing, singing, and playing […] be the only artificiall means to make a mind capable of all the best qualities, which ar to be engraffed in the mind, tho to be executed by the bodie" (27). The "engraffed" suggests a grafting process—one that in the horticultural world would produce fruit-bearing trees, among other things. It is an apt way to look at the natural and artificial, the mind and the body, and evidence of just how resourceful Mulcaster was in his rhetorical turns. Nonetheless, in arguing that a good early training gives children long-term advantages, even Mulcaster turns to a familiar truism:

> Therefor the tender minde of the young infant being first embrewed with these principles as the best, for the first liquor: and then furnished with their store, as the most for all helps, facilitie must nedes follow in all that doth succeede. (45)

The "liquor" in this case is the unmistakable stuff that is to fill the child, as a vessel, and

to "embrew" that child with a certain character. It is the same Horatian advice.

My contention here is that Spenser omits the Horatian motto because, first, it too

firmly settles a debated matter about education that comes down from the authority of

Erasmus and through the English humanists,[92] and, second, it supplants the role of the

---

[92] The Horatian motto was so well known that it could be part of the logic of emblems in a way that, for
example, Daniel Russell has associated with a response to Erasmian humanism. In the course of explaining
the flexible sort of thinking and understanding asked by emblems according to the cultural context they
invoke, Daniel Russell briefly considers Jean Jacques Boissard's 1593 emblem depicting the motto
"Educatio prima bona sit." The emblem uses a vegetative metaphor (a tree's growth) to describe the stakes
for educating children early and well. Much more powerfully, though, the text from the book gives a
marvelously flexible context for understanding the tree, the child, and nature itself as it relates to the
artificial educational process. Given humankind's fallen nature itself, Boissard argues that "Educatio est
secunda natura." Education is a *second* nature that can effectively change a given state of corruption.
Russell argues that this philosophical work, the work to be part of the understanding of the emblem itself,
teaches us about the Renaissance generally. And in explaining how Boissard might have arrived at such
images in this specific case, he argues that the image is possibly connected to the work of figures like
Erasmus, who derive their adages from a mixture of ideas from Horace, Vergil, and Aristotle:

> The reader is directed to equate the education of the child with the early training of young shrubs
> and the proverbial warning that any vessel long retains the odor of its first contents. Boissard
> could have arrived at this configuration of imagery in a number of ways. Erasmus gives some
> clues in his adage *Quo semel est imbuta* [Long will the crock, II, iv, 20], where he notes this image
> comes from Horace (Epistles 1, 2, 69-70), links it to Quintilian's remarks about early childhood
> training, and adds references to Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and Virgil's *Georgics* on the
> same subject. (79)

Russell is alive to the significance of this kind of "second nature" as an element of early modern
understanding of the "realia" of the world that determines their thinking and their method of referring ot
and arranging significant symbolic units, and he differentiates between the early modern understanding
conditioned by that sensibility and a later notion of nature conditioned by a firmer sense of the independent
taxonomies of plants and people, etc. He writes: "In an age before Linnean classification animals were not
named with the precision we are accustomed to today, and those names reflected concerns quite different
from the naturalistic ones that push us to distinguish between species on scientific grounds" (89). He
concludes: "Emblems and iconographies provide a particularly privileged means of access to the way
Renaissance men and women 'saw' nature and the world around them because these works consciously
attempt to describe the plants, animals and other realia pictured in them" (89). One thing that we should be
careful of here is the essential flexibility built into the word "nature." It is to this term precisely that Sidney
turns when he wishes to describe the "second nature" that poetry can use as part of its didactic mission in
his *Defense*:

> And that the Poet hath that Idea, is manifest, by delivering them foorth in such excellencie as he had
> imagined them: which delivering foorth, also is not wholly imaginative, as we are wont to say by
> them that build Castles in the aire: but so farre substancially it worketh, not onely to make a Cyrus,
> which had bene but a particular excellency as nature might have done, but to bestow a Cyrus upon
> the world to make many Cyrusses, if they will learne aright, why and how that maker made him.
> Neither let it be deemed too sawcy a comparison, to ballance the highest point of mans wit, with the
> efficacie of nature: but rather give right honor to the heavenly maker of that maker, who having
> made man to his owne likenes, set him beyond and over all the workes of that second nature, which
> in nothing he sheweth so much as in Poetry. (14)

flexible poetic method and the more flexible way of viewing language that Spenser's

didactic and allegorical poetry encourages. To put it another way, it is too material for

the spiritual and mental poetic method for which Spenser argues—a method earlier

defined by Philip Sidney in his *Defense*. Before we turn to the case of Roger Ascham to

get a grip on charges against the educational value of poets to which Spenser was

responding, let us turn briefly back to the text of Book 6, particularly the comments about

the upbringing of the foundling that Calepine gives to Matilda and Sir Bruin.

In a remarkably brief episode from the end of canto four, Calepine chases after a

bear carrying a squalling baby, defeats the bear, retrieves the baby safely, and happily

stumbles across a childless noble woman, Matilda, who adopts the child in order to

secure her royal line with the appropriately named Sir Bruin. The implicit word-play

involving the name "bruin" and the bear has long been noted,[93] but it is Richard McCabe

who most concisely explains the relevance of Irish politics and naming:

> Among the Old English families that Spenser regards as "degenerate" were the
> Fitz Ursalas, now allegedly calling themselves the "MacMahons," who "did quite
> caste of theire English name and Allegeance… and have still sithens bene
> Counted mere Irishe." Spenser associates the two surnames by means of a
> questionable etymology whereby MacMahon is rendered as "the bear's son" to
> better correspond with its supposed equivalent (Prose, 116). Through

And, as my considerations have shown so far, it is to the idea of nature that Spenser turns in Book 6 as he is crafting a message about virtue and the way the *muses* give access to virtue. If this book is deeply engaged with questions of language, and it is clearly also engaged in an investigation of the "nature" of learning, what does it tell us about the two of them together? Were my focus more deeply philosophical, my argument in this chapter might be that the mixture of these two interests produces a critique of the irresolvable problem of physical speech's relation to identity alongside a call for a mentalese form of language more firmly linked to identity and more reliably geared to create this "second nature." Whatever the case, this concern with the nature of learning and poetry's claim to it echoes Spenser's earliest concerns about learning and poetry from the *Shepheardes Calender* while more elaborately building upon its implicit critique of glossing as the mere physical tongue of a more complex process—a process that is an entire mental world of representation in his didactic epic.

[93] A.C. Hamilton notes that Bernheimer's 1952 work on Wild Men saw the correspondence between Spenser's allegory and Spenser's reference to the Fitz Ursalas in *A View* (652n).

acquaintance with the Gaelic Irish, John Derricke alleged, "civil" persons degenerated into "bores" and "beares." A similar conceit supplies the subtext for the episode in which Sir Calepine rescues an infant from the clutches of a marauding bear […]. Sir Bruin and the "bear" represent twin aspects of the one persona, the latter indicative of the savagery latent within the civil knight, just as Fitz Ursala and MacMahon are taken to *mean* the same thing but to *signify* contrary things. The reclamation of the child from the trackless woodlands may, therefore, be seen to reflect the hope that a number of Old English families may also be reclaimed, perhaps through the intervention of the Court of Wards... (189-90)

The first thing we need to see about such a claim is just how undeniably accurate it must be in its political insights and in its expressed understanding of Spenser's view of the problem with Irish and any sympathy for the Irish language. Immediately after this passage, McCabe points out that Spenser's argument in *A View* is that "to translate a bardic poem or a daily conversation from Gaelic to English is to decode a criminal cypher, to expose the treason that lies hidden in the sinister jargon of the enemy" (190). Yet McCabe has to some degree dressed Spenser's understanding of a political situation in a way that prevents us from seeing the episode's value in a larger intellectual history. In *A View*, Spenser clearly sees the Irish language, law, and culture as bound together in ways that, when it is translated, will give the English an advantage against those that are set against the English dominion itself. And, of course, Spenser was *right* within the confines of his own time: the Irish did differ from the English in culture and did use their claims on their own language and law to enforce this difference even as the English sought to use it to enforce their desire to suppress the Irish.[94] Naturally, Spenser is

---

[94] R.R. Davies in a brief history of the language and culture of the British Isles comments that the view of the Irish language as an essential marker in ethnic difference and the political fight was quite old by the time Spenser came to codify it in *A View*:

> It was in Ireland above all that tension about language became an important ethnic identifier. Ethnic tension was more crudely confrontational in Ireland from a fairly early date of English settlement and colonization than it had been in Wales, and language was a part of the explosive mixture. […] Much more serious [than simple knowledge of ethnic difference in language] was

wrong in his deliberate misrepresentation of the Irish as Scythian heathens, and in his

suspect etymological work with Gaelic and English—a case made well and broadly by

McCabe and Hadfield together. This granted, though, Spenser's view of the Irish's

heightened awareness of their culture's difference through its language was accurate

enough, and his sense of an arguable need to attack the Irish on this level becomes

Irenius's unsentimental if, from our point of view, vicious identifying trait. McCabe's

view of Irenius is appropriate and accurate, and he has correctly found a revealing

correspondence between Irenius and Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*. Yet just as

McCabe's view of Spenser's polemical use of the term "kerne" required a narrowed

reading of *The Shepheardes Calender*, McCabe's view of the allegory about language in

Book 6 is narrowed toward the purpose of illuminating a matter of political and ethnic

bias. A reading settled within the broader context of questions of education and language

learning entertained by the book suggests different ethical grounds. Calepine's speech to

Matilda overtly raises these issues:

> the assumption that knowledge of Irish and political disloyalty to the English establishment went inevitably hand in hand. Such a view had been expressed from the early days especially in ecclesiastical appointments, because (as it was said) "Irishmen maintain their own language (= nation)"; the good citizens of Cork put it even more bluntly, declaring that "those of Irish speech are enemies of the king and his subjects." (12-13)

Davies goes on to stress that Spenser's Irenius inflames just this existing perspective (14-15). By just expressing any knowledge of Gaelic, though, Spenser risked being seen as disloyal—and this above all necessitated that he never been seen to express the specific view that the Irish language or its words had any intrinsic value or any value exceeding that of English, however vaporously propagandistic he felt such history to be. The more important question here, though, is not whether Spenser intended just such polemical readings or to what degree—he most certainly did as a matter of personal survival. Rather, we must ask whether he subscribed to such a narrow view of language as a matter of ethnic identification in his larger descriptions of language, thought, education, and culture. That the narrowest version of this, as an expression of national loyalty, was important to people of his time is without doubt, and that Spenser employs it to his polemical advantage is not subject to doubt. However, given Spenser's flexible and skeptically-enforced Platonist view of language in Book 6, it *is* doubtful that he would subscribe to such a simplistic view for the purposes of his poetry or for the interests of his implicit criticisms of humanism. Does the author who doubts Calepino's and Mirabellio's authority put such confidence in linguistically-founded ethnic difference when he proves so willing to play fast and loose with etymology? It seems unlikely.

285

> If that the cause of this your languishment
> Be lacke of children, to supply your place,
> Lo how good fortune doth to you present
> This litle babe, of sweete and lovely face,
> And spotlesse spirit, in which ye may enchace
> What ever formes ye list thereto apply,
> Being now soft and fit them to embrace;
> Whether ye list him traine in chevalry,
> Or noursle up in lore of learn'd Philosophy. (6.4.35)

We are certainly meant by this imagery of shaping an unshaped thing to realize that the bear (if representing the Irish) or Sir Bruin would in either case have been in the business of bringing up this child, each having its own wild or civil effects. The bear, after all, was in mythology thought to shape its cubs into bear-identity with its tongue. Calepine seems to have the right general idea for what to do if we think of him as a colonial courtier removing a wild Irish child to the care of more civil parents—or, as the case may be, an English child from the influence of barbarous Irish nurses. The use of the term "noursle" additionally reminds of the central mission of the book to address the "nursery" of virtue, that educational mission, while the bear itself reminds us that the "tongue" or language is the central question here in education itself. A little thought, though, reveals some startlingly humorous irony framing the event. Calepine's recommendations about raising the child really tell us next to nothing—they are the nonsense of well-meaning educators who vaguely address a shaping process of a material thing. We know they are nonsense securely because Calepine turns out within a few lines to be "right glad… to be so rid/ of his young charge, whereof he skilled nought" (6.4.38.1-2). He was *bluffing!* "Skill" here is active, practical knowledge that should make a difference, and he has none of it. Spenser tells us that Calepine knows nothing of one of the very things that his namesake book is supposed to achieve. We are *meant* to see this as funny: Calepine's

declaration of ignorance, as A.C. Hamilton notes (653n), is after all preceded by his

falsely sage summary echoing with the truisms about the nature/nurture duality that may

be found, among other places, in Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*. Scorn for such ideas of

continental refinement, whether directed at Castiglione or not, is appropriate to an

English book about courtesy, but even more appropriate to one calling humanist ideas

about education forth for inquiry:

> And certes it hath oftentimes bene seene,
> That of the like, whose linage was unknowne,
> More brave and noble knights have raysed beene,
> As their victorious deedes have often showen,
> Being with fame through many Nations blowen,
> Then those, which have been dandled in the lap. (6.4.36.1-6)

Were Calepine not named after an agglomeration of humanist wisdom about language,

and were this not a re-play of the question of Calidore's essential identity and education

from the second canto, this would not be so funny. Calepine speaks well, but the

substance of his thinking is questionable at this early stage in the book. Later, Calepine's

decisive confrontation with the salvage cannibals as he rescues Serena suggests that his

civility is the best alternative to savagery despite any incidental falsifications, and

certainly better than the ruinously mistaken example of Mirabella's form of knowledge

and learning. Yet here his tongue, while not in the head of an angry bear, is apparently

an equally useless instrument.

Considering Calepine's depiction, then, the bear-child episode does not produce

an unequivocal vote for English civility over Irish savagery: the episode comes with too

great a dose of doubt about humanist civility. We risk misunderstanding Spenser's doubts

about education and language if we only see his incentives for prescribing against the

Irish "savage" care of children. And there is yet another cause for seeing Spenser's

doubts about the matter: Matilda's decision not to reveal the truth to Sir Bruin shows that

Spenser is well aware that a kind of fiction and social trust floats around the rights of

heirs that is central to monarchic and aristocratic system on which England depends. The

complex allusions of the name "Matilda" reassures us that Spenser was thinking of such

matters. In his edition of Book 6, Hadfield tries to emphasize the name's relevance to an

early English queen: "Matilda's childlessness indicates the vicissitudes of power in a

society that based wealth on the possession of land, especially for monarchs. Matilda

(1102-1167), the daughter of Henry I, was a troubled queen of England who had to fight

a series of civil wars and left behind no stable heir" (63n). A.C. Hamilton points out the

name could refer to either the Matilda in Tasso's *Gerusalemma Liberata*, who is the

nurse of the hero Rinaldo, or to the Matilda who is Merlin's mother (652n). Either way,

what we find here is that Spenser's patrilineal concern with politics has a matrilineal and,

with Calepine, a fostering and courtier-related concern that evokes the intellectual history

in which the nature or nurture approach has remained complex and variable. It is not just

the Irish who are labile and false here—though they remain the primary party

slandered—but the well-meaning but unknowing educators and the unstable social

structures themselves which do not provide a clear view of what happens to be an ideal

pattern of behavior. Spenser's willingness to show us that Bruin's state is founded on

falsehood and Calepine's advice based on ignorance reveals a complicated critical stance.

Whatever the case, he does not think the question of formative educational influences is

as simple as a division between a false cipher and a true speech.

 Roger Ascham's arguments against the potential for poets to teach language

would have motivated Spenser to design Book 6 to contest humanist authority over

poetry. Ascham was author of the very-well known if posthumous work on education entitled *The Scholemaster* as well as personal friend to William Cecil, Lord Burghley. In his work, he, like Kempe and other educators, is deeply concerned with the way in which an initially poor learning of a language—Latin in particular—makes any later reformation far more difficult. In arguing thus, he clearly thinks that certain forms of speech are superior specifically for being the products and producers of good thought. He cites the eminent authority Guillaume Budé's experience of learning to *speak* unreservedly and without discipline in general as leading to a poor understanding of how to speak well (16). Then Ascham notes that *if* good habits were engendered first, then the learners would be fine, but the uncontrolled nature of speech itself (and the "smally regarded" question of how to choose the right words) makes the situation one in which the natural or existing course of learning cannot be followed:

> …if children were brought up in such a house, or such a school, where the Latin tongue were properly and perfectly spoken […] surely then the daily use of speaking were the best and readiest way to learn the Latin tongue. But now commonly, in the best schools in England, for words, right choice is smally regarded, true propriety wholly neglected; confusion is brought in, barbarousness is bred up so in young wits as afterward they be not only marred for speaking but also corrupted in judgment, as with much ado, or never at all, they be brought to right frame again. (17)

From this, Ascham goes on to argue that students could only learn proper Latin speech via a special method. It is clear that he is arguing that only through a large-scale set of social changes *or* reform of schools can the "nature" of people be brought to a better development in terms of their *thinking* and thus in terms of their capacities as speakers.

> All men covet to have their children speak Latin, and so do I very earnestly too. We both have one purpose; we agree in desire, we wish one end; but we differ somewhat in the order that leadeth rightly to that end. Other would have them speak at all adventures and, so they be speaking, to speak, the master careth not, the scholar knoweth not, what. This is to seem and not to be, except be it to be

bold without shame, rash without skill, full of words without wit. I wish to have them speak so as it may well appear that the brain doth govern the tongue and that reason leadeth forth the talk. Socrates' doctrine is true in Plato and well marked and truly uttered by Horace in *Arte Poetica*, that wheresoever knowledge doth accompany the wit, there best utterance doth always await upon the tongue. (17-18)

The uncontrolled speech that concerns Ascham is clearly similar to the root social ill that Spenser addresses in setting up the pursuit and capture of the Blatant Beast for Book 6. Spenser's concern with growth and change, and his concern with speech in general in Book 6, thus answers to what we find Ascham addressing. Moreover, Ascham's concern with making the mind govern speech conforms closely to Spenser's poetic view, as explored in the first chapter, of the best poetry and speech emerging from an inspired and disciplined mental state. Ascham even alludes to the *Phaedrus*' teaching on rhetoric above—the text that has great relevance not just to E.K.'s vision of the wings on a growing English-language poet, but to Spenser's vision of transcendent poetic effort in *The Fowre Hymnes*. When Ascham describes the method that creates better rhetorical discipline in the language of students, he preserves the demotion of the tongue and elevation of the brain that is so common to Spenser's work in Book 6. For example, Ascham criticizes the effect of rote oral learning on children: "Their whole knowledge, by learning without the book, was tied only to their tongue and lips, and never ascended up to the brain and head, and therefore was soon spit out of the mouth again" (79). This criticism is framed by a description of the approved system of double translation with books and its likely benefit to efficient knowledge of the "hard points of grammar" (78).

Ascham and Spenser think in highly similar terms about language itself, but obviously Ascham contemplates Latin rather than English. Their agreements are many, then, but the conflict between them looms large. Ascham is willing to appropriate the

best poetry, but he is a hard-line Platonist in his demotion of poetry itself. For Ascham, the didactic function of poetry is insufficient for the very ordering purposes that he imagines necessary for society generally:

> Quick wits commonly be apt to take, unapt to keep; soon hot and desirous of this and that, as cold and soon weary of the same again; more quick to enter speedily than able to pierce far, even like oversharp tools, whose edges be very soon turned. Such wits delight themselves in easy and pleasant studies and never pass far forward in high and hard sciences. And therefore the quickest wits commonly may prove the best poets but not the wisest orators—ready of tongue to speak boldly, not deep of judgment either for good counsel or wise writing. (21)

For Ascham, poets are too fast to speak and so make poor statesmen. For Spenser, the slowness to act and the haltingness of speech, as with Calepine's hedging about his ignorance, is itself questionable and dangerous. Reading such passages from Ascham explains in some measure why Sir Philip Sidney strives to justify the didactic value of poetry and to demonstrate its harmony with Platonism in his *Defense of Poesie*. Sidney's self-deprecating decision, for example, to compare the pride of horse-trainers to his own pride in the art of poetry at the very start of his work stems in part from an awareness of how poetics may be seen as a base physical training rather than a rarefied mental one, especially as he favors a poet who is poised to act in ways historians and philosophers are not. Spenser's reference in *Mother Hubberds Tale* to "menaging the mouthes of stubborn steedes" (739) shows an equal wit and awareness. Thus this passage above from Ascham unveils what is significant in Spenser's emphases on language and learning in Book 6. Spenser stresses that *only the muses* do the work of teaching virtue to reassert the centrality of poetry in teaching about courteous, ordered, and *timely* speech—not simply materially-bound action, and not simply contemplative distance. He spends such effort showing that the mind, not the tongue, is the home of the true force of good speech and

poetry, precisely in order to refute a general perception of poetry's rhetorical limitations. And, finally, he eschews the Horatian adage about the vessel that is tainted by its first taste of a particular liquor (or any other clear analogy of that kind) in order to distance himself further from the overly physical conceptualizations of language and the sorts of educators who might prize just that. Ascham, for all his stress on the mental, makes language learning a physical process so that it is easily subject to control: that is, he locates the power over this process in an ideal teacher rather than in the interplay of reader, writer, and text that is central to Spenser's characterization of the ideal learning and authorial process. Spenser's decision to adopt and manipulate the *Phaedrus*, to stress the many-tongued beast as the enemy to the true vatic Colin of Book 6,[95] reasserts the centrality of a Sidneian poet in society.

Book 6 envisions the functioning of an educational process and theory that was well over a century old, deeply immersed in Latin, and only beginning to shift to the vernacular by the time Spenser decided to address it; *A View*, as we will see presently, to a great extent espouses humanist educational ideals. Such ideals are broadly associated with pedagogical tools like the Calepine and Mirabellio lexicons. From such superficial evidence, it would seem that Spenser dispenses with the kinds of nuance and complaint about language, identity, and education he was developing in Book 6 in order to conduct the polemic of *A View*. But if so, why? Why would Spenser abandon a more complex view of language for a simpler one—how, that is, do Spenser's intentions logically shift? My answer: Spenser was strategically responding to the general humanist implication,

---

[95] In Chapter 1, I have discussed at length how Colin's vision is related to Spenser's commentary on language in Book 6.

stated so bluntly by Ascham, that poetry *was* the foundational cultural material but not adequate to the active needs of rhetoric and governance.

3. *The Intentions Behind* A View of the Present State of Ireland

With this more nuanced understanding of how education is handled in Book 6, we may examine Spenser's handling of questions of identity and language-learning in *A View* from a fresh perspective. Without doubt, one segment of Irenius's comments on language and learning is cited more often than others in assessing Spenser's opinions. Here it is:

> *Iren:* I suppose that the chief cause of bringing in the Irish language, amongst them, was specially ther fostering, and marrijng with the Irish, which are twoe most dangerous infections; for first the child that sucketh the milke of the nurse, must of necessitie learne his first speach of her, the which being the first that is enured to his tongue, is after most plesing unto him, insomuch as though he afterwardes be taught English, yet the smacke of the first will always abide with him; and not only of the speach, but of the manners and condicons. For besydes the yonge children bee like apes, which affect and Imitate what they have seene done before them, specially by their nourses whom they love soe well: moreover they drawe into themselves, together with their sucke, even the nature and disposition of ther norses: for the mind followeth much the temperature of the body; and alsoe the wordes are the image of the minde, soe as, the[y] proceeding from the minde, the mynd must be needes affected with the wordes. Soe that the speach being Irish, the hart must needes be Irishe; for out of the aboundance of the hart, the tonge speaketh. (119)

Irenius's comment that "the smacke of the first will always abide with him; and not only of the speach, but of the manners and condicons" appeals to, and echoes, language educators like Kempe by paraphrasing the Horatian motto that Spenser, as we have seen, avoids in Book 6. Just as importantly, in such comments Spenser's Irenius sets up an interrelationship between mind and body that echoes the arguments of Ascham and

Mulcaster in particular: his comment that "the mind followeth the temperature of the body; and alsoe the wordes are the image of the minde…" announces the radical simplicity of the educational program that, beyond a mere motto, Spenser was so careful not to endorse in Book 6: it proposes a view of the relation between words, mind, and reality which is reductive of the possibilities explored in *The Fowre Hymnes* and elsewhere. The educators we have been examining in Spenser's time sought a method for education that offset any negative early influences in a child's acquisition of language. This effort was particularly attuned to the problem of creating fluency in classical languages, as we find in Ascham, or, as Mulcaster has it, matching a fluency in the vernacular to a good thinking process in general. So Irenius chooses a more militant and assured pose on the humanist educational methods than Spenser does in Book 6. Why?

Tempting as it may be, we cannot conclude that Irenius represents Spenser's "true" opinion—the position that he was only suppressing in Book 6 in the interests of having his readership gently led by the poetry to the understanding of what was wrong with the uncivilized Irish and how to fix it. The difference between Book 6 and *A View* is not a matter of true or false, right or wrong, but of complexity and intention. Even if Irish politics play a more muted part in the allegory of Book 6, Spenser is no less dismissive of the Irish as savages in Book 6, no less urgent in his sense that the colonial project needs to be supported.[96] In both texts, the sense that the Irish are barbarous outsiders is sustained, and this presumption is what makes it possible, in *A View*, to argue against their early influence on English children. However, in Book 6 Spenser has a more

---

[96] See Chapter 12 of Richard McCabe's *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment* for a detailed assessment of how Book 6 sustains many of the themes of Book 5.

complex view of learning, the mind, and language than we find here in Irenius. Hadfield

accepts a mechanical idea of language learning and education that Spenser seems

determined to avoid in texts other than *A View*. For this reason, Hadfield declares that

Spenser's "belief that the influence of the mother tongue cannot be eradicated implies

that all subsequent efforts will be doomed to failure" (25). Even within *A View*, though,

Spenser elsewhere details reservations about too simple a view of language. While his

reservations are lesser than an enlightened championing of the Irish and rejection of the

role of oppressor the English had chosen, nonetheless they deserve attention. My

counterargument here begins by noting that Irenius's simpler version is expedient for a

political appeal. In such a political appeal, Spenser compromises: he is attempting to gain

the alliance of English humanist educators as a political voice despite a complex of

qualms he announced about humanism in his poetic voice. Spenser wrote his epic to

stake out a claim of importance for poetry and poets even against the humanist poetics in

some matters. His *View*, by comparison, must win over even those whom he might argue

against—especially the English who have never been to Ireland. Spenser is willing to

sacrifice the nuances of his view of language, but not the authority of poet over language

and culture. Thus Spenser strives in *A View* to acknowledge the role of poetry in

fashioning history and law. This effort draws strength from two sources: his strategic

compromise to flatter the humanist view of language learning and identity; and his

desperate desire, as a poet with a political voice, to prove their assessment of the poet's

role wrong. Clearly, Spenser is trying to achieve two things that conflict:

> a) Spenser wishes to conciliate an aged humanist view of language education by
> accepting its simpler approach to language's relation to identity.
> b) Spenser wishes to retain a complex notion of poetry's and language's social
> and individual function in shaping and evoking identity.

To achieve the second of these goals, Spenser must avoid materialist ideas of the tongue as itself rooted to language. But to achieve the first goal, he must admit precisely such ideas in some measure. From the outset of the dialogue of *A View* itself, then, Spenser tangles with the task of defining the poet's social function in ways that risk associating poetry's benefits with physicalized senses of language. On the one extreme, Spenser risks making poets into the hotheaded orators who appeal to the senses; on the other, he risks associating them with the mechanical historian/scholars like the lexicographers. Philip Sidney's death on the battlefield a decade earlier had helped the cause of the courtier-poet by showing great commitment to action, but it cut short any opportunity for statesman-like oratory justifying the poet's worth. As one self-appointed inheritor of that legacy, Spenser needs to avoid a charge against his poetic approach when he in fact quite hotheadedly wishes to advocate greater military intervention—an intervention that would be expensive to the English and seem part of a misleading if idealistic imperial cause bound to draw them into deeper colonial mires. *A View of the Present State of Ireland* shows his strategy: he amasses evidence explaining that a practical, slow, large-scale reform is *futile*; at the same time, he aggressively argues that any moderating theories about education or culture would best serve the English efforts in an ensuing colonial project rather than any advance reform. The approach hammers in the centrality of poetry's social place for seeing what is wrong with Ireland in the present—for identifying the nature of the illness Ireland suffers and the radical reform required— and ultimately for reforming after the military intervention.

Spenser's appeal to humanist educators is vividly realized in Irenius's initial handling of Eudoxus. *A View* begins by addressing questions of history and law, but

through various machinations on that subject Irenius convinces Eudoxus to concede that

"it is in vane to speake of plantinge of lawes and plottinge pollicies till [the Irish] be

alltogeather subdued" (55). That is, Irenius gets Eudoxus to think in terms of the need for

outright war as a logical response to intractable problems of culture and education that

manifest in a variety of individual cases. Such cases are, as we will find out, more

matters of physical being than mental ones. To be sure, Irenius narrates a history in which

the English have a secure claim to sovereignty that the Irish reject out of willful and

proud claims to their own native rights. But Irenius's main job is to shift the grounds of

"planting" from the laws in the nation to cultivating individual bodies receptive to

English law. It is, so we are led to believe, the paramount need to have individuals

capable of accepting English cultural rule that necessitates an initial brutal military rule.

This is why Irenius's appeals to humanist educators are important. On the subject of just

why the Irish or the English families who were long in Ireland would could become

disposed toward disloyalty, Irenius stresses that the carelessness about the *upbringing* of

children in Ireland stirs up such disloyalty among the nobility:

> It is allsoe inconvenient in that realme of Ireland that the wardes and marriadges
> of gentlemens Children should be in the disposicion of anie of the Irishe lordes as
> now theye are by reasone that theire landes are helde by knightes service of those
> Lords, by which means yt Comethe to passe that those saide gentlemens children
> being thus in the warde of thseo Lordes are not onely theareby brought up
> lewdelye and Irish like but allsoe for ever after soe bounden to theire services as
> that they willl run with them unto anye disloyall accion. (73)

Irenius's attention to "the bringinge up of those wardes in good nourture" here stresses a

long-time humanist preoccupation with controlling the nursing of nobility that, as

William Kempe and Mulcaster have already shown us, is felt to be equally needed among

the general populace to assure civil order. Sir Thomas Elyot's recommendations for such

careful control in *The Boke Named the Governour* echo Erasmus's similar stress.[97]

Rather than allowing this matter to remain one of education, though, Irenius quickly goes on to address the origin of specific linguistic terms that instigate and maintain loyalty among the Irish. In the long-term political context, Spenser's argument for reform of the Irish requires stripping them of any familial names and language traditions that instill loyalty among the Irish (against the English) and define the culture.[98]

Not surprisingly, Eudoxus is skeptical of Irenius's insight into Irish culture for reasons that appear to arise from his confidence in the efficacy of humanist methods of education generally. For Eudoxus, one key puzzle regards how the Irish, who are evidently and generally civilized from contact with the civilized English, can have such a flawed culture as not to absorb the good influence (legal, religious, etc.) of the English in peace. Why has reform so far failed? At one point, he claims that the Irish were "allwaies without Lettres but onely bare tradicion of times and rembraunces of bardes which use to forge and falsefye every thinge as they liste to please or displease" (84). From this, he reasons that Irenius has no sound basis on which to advance history or historical etymology. In response, Irenius stresses in response that he does his "owne readinge" of a variety of sources in order to find a "likelyhode of truethe" (84-5). Irenius' consciousness of his own power in constructing a history and culture should not be underestimated: it signals Spenser's abandonment of purist notions of cultural or linguistic origins *and* his practical attitude toward the methods by which any individual

---

[97] For details, see William H. Woodward *Studies in Education during the Age of the Renaissance* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965) 272-5; and see also my concluding comments about Erasmus in this chapter.

[98] For details, see Richard McCabe's *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment* (240-41).

or collective cultural identity might be understood. Irenius then corrects Eudoxus's faulty

history, emphasizing that the Irish were learned and civilized long before the English

(87). Naturally, Eudoxus must then ask what has gone wrong: if humanism is effectual,

then the Irish cannot logically be both a learned class and so barbarous—else the same

might easily be true of the English! This latter threat must be defused else Spenser

himself will seem traitorously disloyal to English culture. To show us that Eudoxus's

question regarding this matter appeals to an accepted humanist formula, though, Spenser

has this speaker frame it in terms of learning, poetry, and classical scholarship: "How

comes it then that they are so barbarous still and so unlearned being soe olde schollers:

for Learning, as the Poet saiethe, *Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros...?*" Eudoxus sounds

exactly like Kempe or Clement: the quotation from Ovid's exilic poetry is pedantic and

appropriate, evoking through "emollit" ["softens"] the idea that children and people need

to be physically *shaped* by culture. Spenser has been careful to put the most specifically

humanist Latin-language appeal in the voice of the impractical Englishman rather than

the experienced colonist, Irenius. Later, after Eudoxus has fully accepted Irenius's

argument, Irenius ironically parrots the Latin-ensconced adage in an English translation,

commenting that "learning hath that wonderful power in itselfe that it cane soften and

attemper the most sterne and salvage nature" (218). Initially, though, Irenius answers

Eudoxus (through a patchwork of observations about etymology, customs, and history)

that the Irish have essentially reverted to their barbarous Scythian racial stock, and that

they are at best *imitating* the habits of Gauls or others to disguise this reversion. Irenius

trusts the basic record that the Irish were once civilized and literate, but claims legitimate

interpretive license "by these oulde Customes and other like Coniecturall circumstances"

(105). His argument culminates in an example of the Irish drinking blood in imitation of

the Gauls that follows an example of their borrowing Gallic shield design to conceal their

Scythian origins. The concluding example is potent because it draws on an account of a

distraught mother drinking her son's blood—taking a bold warrior's custom and

perverting it even as she perverts the mother's duty:

> Allsoe the Gaules used to drinke theire enemyes blodd and to painte themselves
> therewith So allsoe they write that the owlde Irishe weare wonte And so have I
> sene some of the Irish doe but not theire enemies but friendes blodd as namelye at
> the execucion of A notable tratour at Limericke Called murrogh Obrien I sawe an
> olde woman which was his foster mother take up his heade whilste he was
> quartered and sucked up all the blodd running thereareout Saying that the earthe
> was not worthie to drinke it and thearewith allsoe steped her face… (112)

Here Spenser intends to characterize the Irish in terms rooted in the body and, when

possible, to link such imagery of the body to the tongue and mouth. The perverted

motherhood, the earlier references to the importance of upbringing, and the pointed cry of

humanist confusion precipitate an appeal to a humanist desire to gain intellectual and

political control over such anomaly, and Eudoxus responds to Irenius's provocation in the

ensuing passages much as Spenser hoped English politicians, like Burghley, would be

swayed by the kind of emergency of physical and mental disorder portrayed.

In the ensuing dialogue about the effect of the Irish on the English, Spenser's

interlocutors exchange terms that evoke the most definitively material and bodily aspects

of language. Eudoxus questions Irenius's assertion that the Irish have caused the Old

English settlers to "degenerate from theire firste natures" (114). Irenius explains that the

English do just that by giving up their English surnames and putting on Irish ones.

Without any show of doubt, Spenser has here equated ancestral names and essential

nature. Eudoxus exhibits proper and continued doubt, of course, saying that this

abandonment of English names is a "moste dangerous *Lethargie* muche worse then that of *messala Corvinus* whoe being a most learned man thorowe sicknes forgott his owne name" (115). Eudoxus seemingly instinctually invokes medical terms and a reference to classical Roman culture, physicalizing issues of language and naming even as he demonstrates his humanist credentials. He is in effect challenging Irenius to pathologize the Old English as infected by Irishness by imagining that a form of the disease has some precedent in Latin texts! Irenius responds with examples of those who have forsaken their English surnames for Irish ones, but Eudoxus asks yet again for a physical and pathological explanation: "Coulde they ever Conceave anye such divillishe dislike of theire owne naturall Contries as that they woulde be ashamed of her name and *bite at the dug from which they sucked life*" (116, italics mine). Such plain material and maternal terms prompt Irenius's declarations about the "the Abuse of language" (118); it prompts Irenius's most famous declarations, too, about how Irish language from Irish mothers' and nurses' fostering create "dangerous infeccions" in the minds of children (119). Thus Irenius's case—and Spenser's—has been geared to appeal to educators eager to understand and control the physical mechanisms by which language and culture are absorbed and transmitted. Irenius was long preparing the terms for characterizing the Irish as cases of physical disease, and Spenser certainly shares in that imagery of the Irish in *The Faerie Queene*. Nonetheless, the characterization of Eudoxus and the facile appeals that Irenius directs to him reveal the extent to which *A View* panders to a kind of humanist educator. I say "panders" here because the pathological terms do not enhance the status of a poet or a poetic insight into culture and language, but yield them to a more mechanical view of realia and identity. Thus, in their diagnostic thrust, the terms of

investigating the relation between culture and language in *A View* contrast with Spenser's delicate and even enigmatic methods of handling the significance of name, language, and identity for the readers in *The Faerie Queene*. In particular, Spenser's spiritualized ideas about naming in Book 6 form strong counterpoints to any physical "tongues." Spenser's nuance in his epic serves his vanity: his authority as a poet depends not upon letting humanists help him, but making his art larger and more central to the social order than theirs. Here in his polemical tract, we can see the expediency of his sacrifice: it is necessary to urge the crown to send more troops to defend land that he now owns.

The evidence showing that Spenser has made a strategic compromise follows Irenius's and Eudoxus's declarations about tongue and mind. Irenius must now make the case that the Irish bards who may contribute to the infections are not the same as the English poets—indeed, that the Irish bards are all "mouth" while the English poets are definitively concerned with the mind. First, Irenius distinguishes the "bardes" from poets generally even as he concedes that "suche poetes as in theire wrightinges do labour to better the manners of men" (124, 125). Writing is in such a distinction a more cerebral and less physical activity than song or speech, being distinct from the vilified tongue just as we have found in a variety of Spenser's late works in the first chapter. As if to cement just such an interpretation of the imagery of writing, tongue, and mind, Irenius adds: "But these Irish Bardes are for the moste parte of another *minde*" (125, italics mine). In describing the influence of the Irish bards, Irenius stresses how the bardic musical and vocal methods will sway "a yonge minde." Within a page, he has repeated the use of the word "minde" strategically and evoked the educational responsibility that must attend "a yonge minde [that] Cannote reste" (126). As I earlier noted that Hadfield argues, the

influence of the Irish bards in Ireland is an inversion of the influence of good humanist poets in England. Two important additions to Hadfield's insight are necessary, though, to see the full implications in the context of the rhetorical design of *A View*. First, Spenser's approach to the pattern of imagery is *most* recognizably stamped with the contrast between body and mind that also marks his work in Book 6. It is a contrast essential to his efforts in defending the value of poetry, so we should pay close attention to its appearance here. Second, the potentially redemptive power of poets stands in direct and naked contradiction to the fatalistic view of the ineradicable influence of mother's milk on the tongue, speech, and identity of young English and Irish alike. In the contradiction between the fatalism and the poetics, and in the motivation for it inhering in Spenser's prejudicial defense of his own art, we can see precisely the break between Spenser's poetic definitions of language from *The Faerie Queene* and the prosaic compromise he settles upon in *A View*. It is not a slight matter because it means we must be much more careful about confusing views of language and identity found in *A View* with the work in Spenser's epic or elsewhere. The care helps us distinguish the relation Spenser intends to have with an audience for his epic from the relation he intends to have with influencing specific policymakers. Neither humanism alone, nor its educational recommendations, back the policy or vision of society and the poet's role in society, for Irenius positions himself as the poet-maker of a Sidneian legacy who betrays a portion of what Spenser's nuanced view of language has to offer. To investigate this subject, we must in the final section of this chapter turn to study the way in which Spenser's vision of the political poet in Book 5 informs his vision of language from Book 6.

4. Finding Samient, "Mayden Messenger" and Good Bitch

If the Blatant Beast of Books 5 and 6 represents the bad form of speech—the abuse of speech, the bad-dog villain or anti-hero of detraction, slander, and a concomitant failure of thinking when it is supplanted by the mere physical machinations of the tongue—where is the heroic form of language? Where is the *good dog!?* In finding Spenser a fatalist and pessimist on the political front, McCabe and Hadfield have implied that this dog does not exist or does not have key significance. Looking solely at Book 6, they appear justified. The heroic speaker cannot be Colin. Undefended by his society, intruded upon by the questionable courtesy of Calidore, Colin seems far too haplessly sacred to fulfill so secular a function even as he seems vulnerable to bad speech like others, and thus seems to inform a fatalism promulgating the extreme choices of *A View*. Moreover, like the voice in Spenser's *Fowre Hymnes*, he performs a religious and private labor. Truly, defending this holiness is central to an ideal beyond easy ascertainment or development, and so it is part of Spenser's poetics, but such poetics is not the whole of Spenser's idea of language. The book-man and book-woman, Calepine and Mirabella, clearly do not fit the roles of good dogs even as they are linguistic and non-poetic. Calidore as a hero serves a kind of expedient courtesy and leadership that is so distinctly in line with the compromises of *A View* and its headlong advocacy of military action as to be out of line with the question of language we are addressing. (More importantly, the good dog, as we shall see, deals with issues of consent and persuasion that Calidore simply does not.) Pastorella's inherent nobility looks more like good luck than good speech. The Hermit of canto six, an advocate of silent reading and inward devotion, fits the role more neatly, but even then he does not answer to the demands of true, controlled, and directed speech we might hope for in the political arena. Such an absence of a

definitively good speaker outside the poet in Book 6 is precisely what prompts the

conclusion that Spenser sees the project of courteous speech as futile in the absence of

civil order, and indeed what prompts Hadfield and McCabe to turn to *A View* for the

most definitive ideas about political speech and identity.

The testimony of Book 6 assuredly reveals Spenser's anxieties about language,

and to some degree his anger at his political and military opponents, but it does not hide a

beam of optimism in Book 5, indeed a very practical idealism about language that the

whole of my thesis has been a labor to discover. The Blatant Beast neatly addresses the

relation between legal order and civil speech implicit in the motion of Book 5 to 6. But

Spenser first raises the question of political and civil speech as he addresses the problem

of establishing social order in Book 5. The Blatant Beast, rather than appearing purely as

a reaction to the conclusion of Artegall's quest, emerges out of a pattern of similes

involving dogs. One of the dogs figured is definitively good in a manner that answers to

the problems with asserting justice in a world in which fraud and force seem the only

options available to a figure like Artegall.[99] Samient, the good bitch, not only forms a

neat counterpoint to the Blatant Beast, but she suggests that Spenser was more open-

minded about the relationship between political power, learning, and language than what

we have found in either Book 6 or *A View*. Her character in the context of Book 5

explains why Spenser so rapidly focuses on the question of education in Book 6; and the

imagery of her episode and previous ones helps us ascertain just why Spenser leaves a

---

[99] In the notes to his edition of Book 5, Abraham Stoll lists these instances of dog similes:1.29, 2.25, 6.26, 8.7, 8.22, 8.36, 8.49, 9.6, 11.12,12.38 (15n).

definitive position on the matter of language and identity more open than what we find Irenius arguing in *A View*.

When Artegall and Arthur stumble upon Samient in canto 8 of Book 5, she describes how Adicia has cast her out of her palace unfairly. Samient is a diplomat, and her name, originating from the word "sam" as it is used in Book 1 (10.57.8), means "bringing together" (Hamilton 584n). In "bringing together" Artegall and Arthur in this book, she helps to signal to the reader the surpassing cultural importance of the meeting of the two types—the one (Artegall) emblematic of the sternest features of a justice largely without equity in a colonial wilderness, the other (Arthur) of the binding national mythological figure. In such terms alone her significance is monumental despite the brevity of her appearance. Her identifying association with speech or language and her joining of the forces of myth and justice are powerfully resonant actions in terms of how we should read the episode. Samient's significance as a communicative agent in this book is cleverly revealed by her seemingly comical comparison to a shamed dog. The simile, however, dwells pointedly on the self-appointment of the comparison: Samient *herself* chooses this simile as she describes how Adicia threw her out of the palace after arriving, an emissary sent by Mercilla to seek peaceful terms:

> But this proude Dame disdayning all accord,
> Not onely into bitter terms forth brust,
> Reviling me, and rayling as she lust,
> But lastly to make proof of utmost shame,
> Me like a dog she out of dores did thrust,
> Miscalling me by many a bitter name… (5.8.22.3-8)

The emphasis upon names, terms, and Adicia's lack of self-control foreshadows all the features that will come to fit the Blatant Beast. Adicia is to be described as a "mad bytch" with a "burning tongue" (5.8.49.1-2). There is thus an apposite irony to Samient's

306

decision to call herself a dog, for she is doggedly, gratefully loyal not only to Mercilla throughout this episode and one that follows, but to Artegall and Arthur as well. She does not simply bring them together physically as her name indicates, but rather also brings the message of Mercilla together with suitable actions of honorable servants. Speech and being are joined by her in a way that they are not by the Bonfont/Malfont figure we see at Mercilla's court. Bonfont/Malfont, indeed, has been stripped of his name's significance by force. Bon/Malfont seemingly takes no actions that would, like Artegall's actions toward creating justice, reflect a complementarity between name and being found in the will of the named being. In contrast, Samient's cooperative doggishness does not disappear in the process of this victory—and her baying becomes meaningful as artful speech does not seem to be. Certainly she is as much diplomat as spy in the way she helps Artegall and Arthur undo the Souldan and Adicia, but Spenser returns to the imagery of the dog in the ensuing canto in a way that deepens our understanding of the artfulness of her communicative significance. Malengin is described as being so carefully hidden within his lair that "scarse an hound by smell/ can follow out those false footsteps of his" (5.9.6.7-8). Samient *is* that hound, though: she is able to "spy" him and then to warn Arthur and Artegall (5.9.8). Then, at their behest, she sets up such a racket outside his cave, tempting him out into the open where Artegall and Arthur may block his retreat (5.9.8-15). The action is cooperative and conspicuously like to a good dog's work in manipulating more aggressive creatures—bears, for example— for hunters. Ironically, the episode with Malengin shows that as a messenger she can mislead the bad even as she leads the good. This wily adaptive quality, we will find, stands in marked contrast to the fraud or force that dominates the strategies of others in

the wake of rhetorical or diplomatic failure, and it speaks to a vision of power that is ultimately allied to neither fraud nor force.

In the larger context of the book, Samient's appearance as a dog corresponds to Sanglier's humiliation in the first canto at the hands of Talus. The correspondence reveals how power, communication, and individual will relate. When Sanglier is reluctant to be shamed as part of his punishment in canto one, Talus forces him. Sanglier is then described as appearing like a chastised dog: "…when [Sanglier] saw it bootelesse to resist [Talus],/ He took it up [the head of the woman he had unjustly killed], and thence with him did beare,/ As rated Spaniell takes his burden up for feare" (5.1.297-9). The similes which implicitly compare Samient to Sanglier deliver a powerful punch: Samient is a good dog, made to suffer shame unjustly, who is without fear, while Sanglier is a bad dog who suffers just and shameful punishment only out of fear. The use of *force* to achieve just resolution in the instance of Sanglier initiates a series of problematic ironies about will, power, and communication. In canto one, we have been led by the instance of Sanglier to think that Artegall, by employing Solomon's wisdom, has been successful in his bid to peacefully resolve a dispute. He has, after all, divined the truth by means of a rhetorical sleight. Since we have seen that Artegall had practiced his form of justice "upon wyld beasts" (5.1.7.8) in place of humans before, the first case of Sanglier (meaning "wild boar") seems appropriate. Yet Sanglier's unwilling doggedness (like the simple willfullness of many other figures to ensue) necessitates violent actions on Artegall's or Talus' part. Such cases show that Artegall's initial victory is specious—as, similarly, Redcrosse's initial victory over Error. We are meant to realize that he has used fraud to win his way, that he has not altered Sanglier's nature, and that he has had to

resort to an undignified and robotic means of compulsion. The episode implicitly criticizes the failure of law.

Artegall's disappointing victory foreshadows more distressing situations in which his superior understanding is without advantage and his rhetoric without effect. The so-called "egalitarian" giant in the next canto, for example, is distressing for bringing open violence rather than mere threats of violence to the functioning of justice. The giant is identified as "admired much of fooles, women, and boys" (5.2.31.5), making clear that he is simple-minded but effective as a rhetorician. Significantly, Artegall cannot convince him or his followers that a radical social egalitarianism is manifestly unfair and illogical. The course of this conversation turns openly to the philosophical question of the relationship between language and thought: Artegall defies the giant to weigh words, or even to "weigh the thought, that from mans mind doth flow" (5.2.43.3). Because human physical means for attaining understanding is not godlike, Artegall explains, the giant in hubris tries "to call to count or weigh [God's] workes anew" (5.2.42.6). The hero's reasoning, though based on the familiar principles of distributive justice from Aristotle's *Ethics*, meets with a rebellion. The giant simply does not wish to yield to the right cause or even reason itself: "it was not the right, which he did seeke" (5.2.49.2). Talus thus must destroy him, and Talus must bloodily repress the multitudes that riot afterward because of their "certaine losse of so great expectation" (5.2.51.5). The refusals of both parties to accede to better reason or justice illustrates the practical problem: the difference in understanding available from the extended dialectic process used by fully educated philosophical individuals, and that used by or available to a less educated polis. Plato addresses the problem as he is differentiating rhetoricians and philosophers in the

Phaedrus and the *Gorgias*. Aristotle's technique in the *Rhetoric* is founded on the need to

deal with such a practical difference between addressing the empowered/educated and

umempowered/uneducated. Both philosophers roughly agree, as do many classical

sources including Cicero, that it is difficult to argue for the morally right or true thing

without having firm knowledge, and that a rhetoric that simply strives to win arguments

by an appeal to interests or biases of an audience ultimately tends to mislead.[100] Spenser

is blunt about the violent results here for the same reasons that he is blunt in his initial

characterization of the giant's ignorance. First, he in this way dramatizes a recognizable

and common philosophical problem to make his reader acutely aware of the practical

need for persuasion. Such persuasion, of course, happens to be precisely what Spenser's

poetic allegory offer in this instance. Like the Sidneian poet-rhetorician-philosopher,

Spenser here can show us how much a poet's persuasion has to offer a culture that might

be fooled by bad rhetoric—or even a culture that simply discounted the need for it.

Second, though, Spenser by this example pushes his readership to recognize the

enormous and insurmountable obstacle of the wills, the perceptions, the very forms of

knowledge that guide people. Sanglier can be pushed to a false shame through fear,

appearing dog-like in the process, but not to a true shame. The giant and his followers,

---

[100] Aristotle addresses these issues in the first book of his *Rhetoric,* declaring at one point that "in dealing with certain persons [those that Aristotle later specifies are uninformed, uneducated, unempowered persons], even if possessed of the most accurate scientific knowledge, we should not find it easy to persuade them by employment of such knowledge" (1.1.12, 1355a, Trans. Freese). Jasper Neels describes the implications extensively in "The degradation of Rhetoric; or, dressing like a gentleman, speaking like a scholar." *Rhetoric, sophistry, pragmatism*. Ed. Steven Mailloux. (New York: Cambridge UP, 1995). His argument deals with English studies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the summation of Aristotle and Plato is quite precise for anyone wishing to understand the relevance of such ideas to Spenser's concern with adapting poetic allegory to the demands of philosophical problems about organizing the state and powerful speech in the state. Neels explains: "Aristotle describes those who require rhetoric as ʼτοῦτο δὲ ἀδύνατον'… ʼτοῦτο δὲ ἀδύνατον' implies persons 'unable to do a thing,' persons without strength or power" (71). Neels goes on to show that Plato and Xenophon possess the same sensibilities regarding reasoning with groups of people (71-2).

similarly, cannot possibly concede it unless they understand Artegall's point. What are we meant to realize by the progress from the Sanglier episode to the Egalitarian giant? We are meant to see that the august mystery of Solomon's wisdom has been wholly undone, while the question of how to compose the law and how to administer rhetoric in defense of the law remains in all its complexity.

At this stage, it is important to recognize that the Egalitarian giant episode does not simply defend Artegall's actions as though they were the exertion of an all-too-necessary and all-too-regrettable force over foolish *inhuman* masses.[101] The allegory of "Sanglier" the boar and of the "swarme of flyes" (5.2.53.6) that rebel after the giant's demise do not instruct the reader to see animalized colonists or colonial subjects because Spenser is not uniformly negative about animality. For Spenser, animals are not consistently imagined as inhuman so much as variously human. For example, in the very next canto Spenser narrates Guyon's reclamation of his horse that was stolen in Book 2. The episode furnishes further important wrinkles in the problem of rhetoric, power, and justice. To prove his horse was stolen by Braggadocchio, Guyon takes advantage of a

---

[101] Richard McCabe argues that the violence used to solve the problem of the giant and his followers "mounts a defense of moral compromise" like other such instances in the work (218). Spenser clearly wishes to defend his political allies in this work, but it is difficult for me to appreciate so simple a reading of the questions of morality that Spenser addresses. The failure of Artegall's rhetoric shows the reader the value and nature of rhetoric in a manner that anatomizes morality and legality broadly, not simply in advocacy of the practical need for violence. As I am trying to show throughout this segment, Spenser constantly pushes us to see the limitations of force just as hard as he pushes us to see the limitations of rhetoric. The unflagging focus not on the nature of an ordered society but on the means to know or represent that society does not lend itself to a unilateral argument such as we find in *A View*. McCabe's hermeneutic error is to cut the allegory of Book 5 down to the size of a political speech in favor of specific policies—for which end, selecting imagery without concern for anomaly, McCabe finds that Spenser's epic richly obliges. For this reason, he can see the *bad* beasts but not the good ones, the defense of moral compromise but not the question about the need for trustworthy intermediaries, willing messengers, and shared communicative means. The examples of Brigadore and Samient address this deficiency even as they complicate our understanding of the depth of Spenser's allegory and intention. They show the conditions of Artegall's empowerment as an agent of justice are not simply the material means dispensed by a regal overlord or a perfect social order.

secret "blacke spot" in the shape of a horse-shoe inside the horse's mouth—a "secret marke" that the horse will only allow Guyon to reveal when Guyon speaks the horse's true name, "Brigadore" (5.3.32-34).[102] True identity and reliable communication make for just resolution. Brigadore's case therefore offers a response to the foregoing problems of rhetoric and knowledge occasioned in the former case of the giant *even though* the animal and human agents have switched places. It does not matter that the animal who models truth and honesty is a horse: rationality and animality or humanity are not the salient issues. So with Sanglier, the giant, and the giant's followers, and then with Samient: persuasion and practical issues of communication are at stake in complex coordination with the identity of the creatures involved, human and otherwise.

The issue of animality put in proper context, let us turn to Brigadore's willful obedience to Guyon and the way it continues rather than simply resolves the problems of rhetoric and persuasion brought up by the giant. Guyon and his horse have a shared but secret communicative link. It is the kind of link we expect between a horse and a rider. Nonetheless, this link has large political ramifications, for it enables the demonstration of a case just like Solomon's wisdom—a trick to resolve problems of fraud and to empower the good and true against the fraudulent.[103] Rather than encouraging us to see identity and truth as secure, though, the story of Brigadore's occult mark and true name challenges us to see the contingency of communication and rhetoric in understanding and

---

[102] The name Brigadore, A.C. Hamilton points out, means "bridle of gold" and connotes the golden mean, the Aristotelian ideal of ethical harmony (548n). My point, however, is that Spenser has cleverly layered over that meaning with continuous attention to the links between communicative acts and the action of justice.

[103] The secret name and secret mark on the horse, I think, humorously foreshadow the story of Pastorella's birthmark.

being. After all, the case has a hugely negative effect on Artegall, who so hotheadedly wishes to murder Trompart that Guyon must appropriately temper the knight of justice toward equity. Why is Artegall enraged? As a human who learned how to administer justice to animals, he has been upstaged by an animal administering justice to humans, but this is merely the trimming of irony. More direly, as a rhetorician, Artegall has found himself ineffectual against lies unless enabled by a clever occult sign system of his own—one he has not apparently conceived despite his initial borrowing from Solomon. Just as pointedly, Artegall's judgment is yet again powerless save in the administration of punishment or enforcement. And even that punishment falls into the hands of Talus, a mere functionary adjunct of justice. The Brigadore episode thus complicates the questions of the relation between identity, language, law, and persuasion that it could resolve in the hands of a simpler author.

Spenser does not let his readers rest idly in the supposition that, had Artegall been able to know of such occult marks, he would have been more empowered. In the next canto, a treasure under dispute that can be "known by good markes" (5.4.15.8) suffers a transfer of ownership due to legal precedent, keeping the peace while dispossessing the more rightful parties. In this case of Bracidas and Amidas, Artegall gains their consent and thus peaceful resolution. Yet, as before, Spenser has made clear the point that Artegall is relatively powerless without such support. In *A View*, Spenser's Irenius may pander to the desire of humanists to have access to the "criminal cipher" of Irish language, as Richard McCabe has it.[104] And, indeed, much of the material in Book 5,

---

[104] Though I have isolated Hadfield and McCabe, others have come to argue like them that Spenser's work rests upon an appeal to those hoping to exert such control of and through language whose problems he only recognizes inadvertently. Brooke Stafford in "Englishing the Rogue," for example, argues that Spenser's

including the example of Bracidas and Amidas, relates to questions of Irish language, to legal language, and the need for the English to be in command of such matters. Nonetheless, the emphasis that Spenser places on Artegall's disempowerment without the consent of the governed shapes an unmistakably conscious attempt to show the reader the limits of any "translation" of Irish or even secret, cabalistic terms into a form of empowerment for political authority.

Artegall's failures as a communicator lead to a crisis: his undoing by Radigund and his salvation from her illustrate problems of obedience, the will, and intermediary messengers as well. Artegall's decision to yield to Radigund announces precisely these terms: "So was he overcome, not overcome,/ But to her yeelded of his own accord;/ Yet was he justly damned by the doome/ Of his owne mouth, that spake so warelesse word,/ To be her thrall" (5.5.17.1-5). His decision not to exert force here is preceded by ample cases in which his choice to use it was ineffectual in ways we have been asked to note. Thus it is significant that Talus does not save Artegall here because of Artegall's own "doome"—a judgment that must be signaled by a "word." To emphasize the nearly independent character of the speech, Spenser has gone so far as to make the *word itself* incautious rather than the person who speaks it. The link between justice and language is correspondingly clarified as the need for a conscious, rational, interpretive will guiding language and justice toward one another. After all, the unthinking obedience of Talus in

---

work in *A View* resembles the desire to control speech exhibited among English educators. Moreover, like McCabe and Hadfield, she emphasizes that any recognition of the problems with such a project by Spenser is inadvertent. She quotes Hadfield's comment that Spenser's whole argument turns toward 'the troubling possibility that one may not be able to distinguish the problem from the solution with any degree of confidence,' causing Spenser to undermine his purpose *despite himself*" (330, italics mine). Yet this cannot be the case: Spenser simply cannot be constructing these problems with Artegall as well as their links to Samient, the Blatant Beast, and questions of educational practice *by accident*.

this circumstance *is* his deficiency, the clear reason why Artegall fails. Though described

in canto two as "like a limehound" (5.2.25.3), he is *unlike* the good bitch, Samient, in that

he is not really sentient. Such consciousness is clearly necessary to giving words weight;

it is structured by detectable intention *unless* you are a robot or, as we see in Book 6, a

telepathic Salvage man. In case we had missed this point, Spenser reminds us with a

further case in canto five: Artegall's salvation under Radigund is owed to the willful

disobedience of a messenger, Clarinda.   It is *not* the case that the injustice of Radigund's

social order must be solved by the violence that Britomart in a much later canto employs

despite her femininity. That is, the episode of Artegall's capture does not argue for the

inherent justice of violence against unnatural social order. Rather, it clearly argues

against the vulnerability of any administration of justice that cannot garner the proper

form of thinking, willed support for and from its enforcers. It is possible, of course, to

see the difference between Artegall and Talus as an advantage for the administration of

justice. Indeed, if we foolishly hope to see the case of Sanglier, the giant, and others as

optimal for those moments when Talus executes brutal punishment, such would be the

case. Yet to choose that reading, we must imagine that Spenser feels the cause of the

messenger to be distinctly lesser rather than inextricably joined to that of the forceful

executor. That is anathema to him and to us. Spenser states that in the fallen world the

"mightie hands" of force are necessary, but in the very sentence in which he announces

that approval he requires that the agent of justice "with righteous doome decide" (5.4.1.2-

3). In the same stroke he stresses the contingency for the use of force: "to maister wrong

and puissant pride" (5.4.1.5). Artegall proves flawed in his rhetoric and decision-making,

while Talus, an emblem of force, proves subject to the *message* Artegall provides in the

same measure that Artegall proves vulnerable for being unable to make decisions without

adequate intelligence. We have seen the problem of powerful pride in Sanglier, the first

bad dog, and then in the giant, his followers, and even Trompart. Yet we have seen the

problems with decision-making and rhetoric paired with each of these instances even up

to the point that we find Artegall captured by Radigund.

In light of all this evidence, it is safe to say that Samient is a minor character with

enormous resonance for our understanding of Spenser's *deliberate* evocations of a variety

of doubts about words, language, law, justice, and the mind. She represents a nuanced

view of the limits of power and the relation of power to language, consent, and thought.

My argument about her significance, however, in no way unseats the general case that

Book 5 as a whole inveighs against an unwillingness to use force when necessary—a case

complementary to the political argument of *A View*, and a case that Richard McCabe has

abundantly illustrated. Her animal-like properties do not unseat the insidious

identification of the Irish as bestial and degraded that pervades English rhetoric against

the Irish. But Samient as a willing dog preceded by an example of unwilling ones shows

us that Spenser's conception of language, communication, and identity is more flexible

and broader *for* its part in an indictment of the deficiency in Artegall's education. In

corresponding terms, Samient shows us that Spenser's view is broader than what we find

in Irenius. Spenser's decision to return to questions of growth, change, education,

identity, and speech in the opening of Book 6, rather than responding solely to the figure

of the Blatant Beast, addresses the larger question of how to cultivate consenting loyalty

in a speech that propagates and unites without undue force. From his argument, it

appears that Spenser thinks that methods of humanist education (like the methods of

Platonism and Neoplatonism he freely adjusts to his poetic purposes) need to change. The decision to cast Calidore's nature and mind as problematic—as *not* "naturally" courteous—without detailing how they had been shaped to such good is thus just like Spenser's decision to illustrate Calepine's ignorance about how to "shape" a child's mind: both decisions owe to doubts about humanist plans for education, especially the sort that will shape language habits as the Calepino lexicon does. Spenser desires that his readership appreciate those doubts. All this stands in the way of Hadfield's stress on the colonial origins of Spenser's view of language as we find it in Book 6. Spenser's qualms about language, orality, and even learning *do not* arise *solely or necessarily primarily* from his concern over a failure to suppress a slanderous Blatant Beast—that "neat link" to the rhetoric of those who delay against "hard-line" policies in Ireland. Rather, the Blatant Beast arises from a complex of social and intellectual failures to which the visibly lonely instance of Samient responds. And so, definitively understood, Samient cannot represent the success of forceful policies of suppression any more than the Blatant Beast can represent the failure of the will to impose them.

5. *Conclusion: Understanding Both Spenser's Linguistic Idealism and Didacticism*

My focus on issues of learning and language in this chapter was meant to show that the progress of Book 5 towards illustrating Artegall's deficiencies or the incompleteness of his victory does *not* lead directly to the Blatant Beast. Rather, it leads through a series of quandaries regarding language that, instead of justifying violence and force outright, illustrate the relation between the will and a popular support as well as the insufficiency of any occult system of communications to preserving or destroying order.

This conclusion is a great deal easier to appreciate when we know two further things, as I have argued in the two sections preceding my examination of Samient. First, there is much evidence to suggest Spenser's focus on educating towards the virtuous use of speech in Book 6 does not support a uniform humanist view of how that education transpires—not at least if we examine Kempe, Mulcaster, and Ascham as examples. That evidence partly appears in the delicate handling of Calidore's identity, the subtle mockery of Calepine's ignorance about how to raise a child properly, and the general tilt of Spenser's imagery toward the power of the muses and away from material ideas of the tongue as good. Spenser's idealism and preference for the mind over the tongue is not simply a humanist preference. The tilt of his imagery especially fits with Spenser's wholesale case against the Mirabellio lexicon and partial case against Calepino lexicons, and with the deeply spiritual idea of the relation between poetics and good speech that is encouraged in parts of Book 6 and in works like *The Fowre Hymnes*—as illustrated in my first and second chapters. Second, Spenser's much-relied upon assertions as Irenius in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* only imperfectly match the intent and nature of Spenser's argument in Books 5 and 6. Specifically, Irenius's characterization of the relation between the tongue, mother's milk, and the minds of infants should be seen as a direct appeal to the very humanists whom Spenser might otherwise question. His pandering to a materialist view of language in *A View* illustrates part of that case. Spenser's unwillingness to cede the role of poetry, though, reveals why his case in his epic and in his political dialogue differ: Spenser can bear to yield a point of principle about the nature of language, but he cannot bear to yield the centrality of the poet as a kind of Sidneian rhetorician. He cannot bear to have the poet become party to the

318

materialist mission for he would, by that, risk having the "quick wit" of poets reduced to the negative influence that educators like Ascham would wish for.

I have roughly summarized the whole of my argument thus far in this chapter, but I wish now to strengthen my hand in terms of showing why such a precise understanding is worthy. My approach, I mean to argue further, pays its highest dividends by improving the understanding of how Spenser's work fits into the intellectual history of his period. Whatever his qualms about humanism Book 6, Spenser's learned wit in *The Faerie Queene* is a product of a humanist educational system in which poetry was claimed but not necessarily honored. For this reason, Spenser was for the most part allied to a figure like Kempe, and for this reason a wide range of influences on English education is relevant to my considerations in this chapter. T.W. Baldwin in his compendious work on Shakespeare's educational experience stresses how the ideas of William Kempe in his 1588 *The Education of Children* set forth "a fully coordinated and philosophized scheme of the contemporary grammar school" (76). More importantly for our interests, though, Baldwin notes that Kempe advocates "four stages of education before university," the first of which involves "preliminary training in the vernacular." At first blush this appears to give the vernacular an honored position, yet we know the vernacular was still subordinate to the classical language studies in this educational system. After all, Baldwin goes on to stress a key feature of the design of the educational system that Kempe advocates: "He who wishes to understand the principles upon which the sixteenth-century grammar school was founded in England would be very unwise to begin anywhere else than with Erasmus" (77). The point here is not that Erasmus's influence determined the entire fate of the English schooling system. The point is that

Erasmus, who was no fan of the vernacular, provides a key point of reference for understanding conflicts between the use of classical languages and the use of vernacular in education. Naturally, Erasmus is long before Spenser's time, and we cannot afford to tangle with the entirety of Erasmus' humanism if we are to address Spenser's humanism. Even so, to understand Spenser's view of educational systems that taught the very principles of language he was to adhere to or deviate from, and to understand the complex didacticism inherent in Spenser's poetry, we should conclude here with a consideration of just Erasmus thought about education and language to see how Spenser fits into the history of which he was a shaping influence.

T.W. Baldwin details both the specifics of Erasmus' influence on English educational practices in particular (77-80). However, Baldwin also must consider some of the specifics of Erasmus' beliefs about how good *language* and speaking abilities are acquired, as those are part and parcel of Erasmus' dialogue with John Colet and others about how to teach and how students must learn. As Erasmus' correspondent on the founding of St. Paul's school in London, Colet is concerned enough to assure Erasmus that the Greek and Latin poets be taught despite the objections of other religious authorities: "I hear that a bishop […] said that I had founded a useless and indeed a mischievous thing, […] a house of Idolatry. I believe that he said this, because the Poets are read there. Observations of this sort do not anger me, but make me laugh" (qtd. in Baldwin, 78). We see in this comment an echo of the difference between the Calepino and Mirabellio lexicons—the former accepting "the Poets" and the latter disdaining them, the former carefully aligned with humanism and partially against scholasticism, the latter more conservative. It is precisely this aspect of humanism that interests Spenser in his

project as a vernacular poet because it relates to the authority of his work with a humanist *poetic* vision of a vernacular language. Baldwin turns to Erasmus' *De Ratione Studii* in order to flesh out the belief about how students were to learn from such Latin and Greek poetic models. Predictably enough, there Erasmus stresses that language is an individual learner's conduit to larger knowledge, and indeed such knowledge is surpassing and transcendent of any language in and of itself: "Erasmus believes in language as an imitative art acquired by habit from contact with the best rather than a science to be acquired by analysis" (80). In such a scheme, the systematic treatment of language in a lexicon is inadequate to helping the learner. Baldwin's assessment continues to seem just, but there is a twist in the logic about language. According to Anne Moss's general argument about Erasmus from *Renaissance Truth and The Latin Language Turn*, it is his defense of such a non-systematic approach to the interconnections of ancient knowledge and thought as represented in language that prompts Erasmus' to arrange his giant and lexicon-like *Adagia*.[105] Thus, looked at objectively, Erasmus' ideal teacher seems as

---

[105] Ann Moss argues that key humanist figures like Erasmus were deeply implciated in debates begun and defined at the level of lexicography and pedagogy. She writes of Erasmus' Latin and rhetoric that his idiom "negotiates meaning from proximate words freighted with a cultural history and bearing a signifying relation to the context in which they are uttered" (9). Erasmus could assert this kind of linguistic authority, she shows us, as a consequence of the collective work of previous humanists, most notably figures like Lorenzo Valla, who in the mid to late fifteenth century was working feverishly to establish a new philological order. According to Moss, "Valla's approach […to Latin…] was grounded on a systematically argued attack on the late medieval Latin of lawyers, theologians, and philosophers" (36). The attack brought with it a new linguistic education and, consequently, a new way of prescribing usage:

> Valla's extraordinary undertaking was to make this [canonized Latin vocabulary and usage drawn from select authors] the common and customary language of intellectual discourse in fifteenth-century western Europe and to ensure, concurrently, that *the conceptual habits built into that language*, together with the culture that was its context and its referent, should become the universe of thought inhabited by his educated contemporaries.(42, emphasis mine)

Under the pressure of Valla and his contemporaries, Latin as a whole came to be conceived in a new way. This new conceptualization valorized a greater, more natural form of fluency in the idiom of Latin because in that state the language itself could arbitrate questions of taste, propriety, even ideology. "Elegance" became Valla's core ideal, Moss notes, a property intrinsic to the language and compounded of other criteria like clarity and regular usage (41). Thus the emphasis fell upon a form of imitation of the earlier style that could rise to emulation by retaining a "natural" process:

challenging indeed as the epic poetry of Vergil (and other Latin sources) that was to inform the education of the children. Examining the teacher that draws on the copious work of antiquity *De Ratione Studii*, Baldwin describes him thus: "No mere plodding drillmaster is this ideal teacher of Erasmus, nor yet a walking encyclopedia of information. He drills encyclopedic knowledge into himself that he may always be able to adapt information to the particular need of the individual student" (85).

Like Erasmus' ideal teacher, Spenser's *Faerie Queene* depends on a didactic encyclopedism in its epic scope and concern with founding English-language poetics equal to the classical heritage. While Erasmus' encyclopedic cultural machine of the teacher dwells in the ideal Latin language and the ideally rational ancient culture, ironically, he has students who are prepared for his teaching by having basic instruction in the vernacular. Erasmus' program is bound to create a conflict if we begin to have any notion that languages are anything other than tools for discovering knowledge. Moreover, his program is bound for conflict in being promulgated in England and other nascent *nations*. In his study of humanist educational practices, Woodward writes of Erasmus: "A universal language—Latin—a universal church, a uniform standard of culture, and a perpetual peace formed his social ideal" (113). Thus, continues Woodward, "Nationality he disliked, vernacular he despised, racial creeds and churches were utterly

> Their [Erasmus's and Valla's] common sense of a seamless web of words, of the interconnectedness of language, and of the culture woven by it and into it, is apparent in all the works of compilation by which Erasmus transmitted Latin sayings, elegant expressions, and the reference points of classical culture: his collection of adages, similitudes, apophthegmata, his *copia verborum ac rerum*. The order he adopts is generally a browsing order that leads the reader into paths natural to the language and the culture… (49)

What Valla hoped for, and Erasmus tried to achieve in some measure through influence on education and through a *disorganizational* strategy, has a bearing on the kind of work that we find Spenser doing in *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser tries to construct a didacticism that answers to the demands of Latin humanism, English national pride, and his own view of the poet's centrality. Such a view of the poet as rhetorician is relevant to Artegall's failure as a rhetorician lawmaker.

abhorrent to him…" Spenser comes forward as an iconoclastic Protestant with an ardent

nationalistic urge. Even if Spenser's view of the vernacular was of a degraded material to

be improved exactly as Latin was improved, he has a strong incentive to propose a

different set of relations between language, knowledge, poetry, and educational practice.

Moreover, Spenser's view of the physical tongue itself, and his decision to spend so

much time crafting imagery of that in *The Faerie Queene*, answers to an equal focus on

this precise image and term in Erasmus. Erasmus's dour text on the tongue, *Lingua*,

could easily be a source of Spenser's interest in such terms for engaging his educated

audience.[106]

---

[106] Erasmus composed his *Lingua* in 1525, a work whose preoccupation with the tongue as an instrument of evil, as his translator Elaine Fantham explains, testifies well to the tumultuous political and religious issues circumscribing him at the time and testifies poorly to any faith Erasmus might have had in the virtues of good speech ("Introductory Note," 255). The work is preponderatingly a catalogue of the possible evils of the tongue; only in its concluding ten pages of one hundred and fifty does he turn toward some sort of educational or ameliorative purpose. Fantham reasons that the imbalance owes to Erasmus' "recent experiences" and a desire to announce "his personal grievances against friars and theologians (naturally left unnamed) and his sensitivity to charges of intellectual dishonesty and heresy" (255). Yet there is clearly an additional reason. Anyone who has surveyed Erasmus' copious writing and activities amongst humanists knows that he had already been instrumental in coming up with systems of education and thought that channel the power of the tongue before writing this treatise. Indeed, Erasmus was devoted to eloquence and to the teaching of an eloquence founded in rediscovered classical texts. His long cataloguing diatribe against slander hardly needs to be balanced against a description of good speech since, after all, so many of his works have been devoted to them. Describing the *Lingua* overall, Erasmus writes:

> Now no one can make proper use of anything without understanding its nature and capacity, just as in other circumstances most people learn to distinguish between healthy and harmful things only by trial and error, at great cost to themselves. I would not like this to be your experience in dealing with the tongue, and so I will first reveal to you what terrible scourges in life are inflicted by an ill-governed tongue, and then describe the great benefits to us if it is given play only as God intended when he bestowed it upon us. Finally, I will offer a sort of manual or method of controlling this part of the body. (264)

Erasmus' rather sanguine sense that he can offer a short manual for the tongue—a manual that will cover our understanding for proper use of speech in all cultures at all times—is founded on a humanist view of language that was not entirely accepted, and certainly could not have been fully accepted by Spenser as an advocate of the vernacular. This attitude toward language could not have fared well in a century during which vernacular languages and a variety of cultural identities were coming into angry and proud competition among the European nations. Erasmus and his condemnation of abuses of the tongue thus put my discussion of language-learning and Spenser's attitude toward language in general in proper perspective.

Erasmus's influence on education, his engagement with issues of lexicography, his focus on the physical tongue, and his encyclopedism combined with an antipathy for the vernacular show well why Spenser's work and Spenser's lifelong arguments might have set him in competition with the sort of humanists following in the Erasmian tradition. And what we find, when we look at reform-minded educators who call upon the legitimacy of poetry, is crucial for its reflection of what Spenser would have disputed in Erasmus. In the course of his argument, William Kempe points out of the poets after Orpheus:

> Linus wrote much of natural Philosophie, as well touching celestiall as terrestriall creatures, and had two noble Schollers, Thamaras, who wrote three thousand verses of their Divinitie; and Hercules, who enterprised and achieved with incomparable exploytes for the common profite of mankind, that he was taken for a god on earth. (199)

From this, we can see that poets and heroes are alike engaged in civilizing by heroic actions that produce "profit." Kempe's assertion of an equality between the poet Thamaras and the active hero, Hercules, should inform our reading of Spenser's characterization of Artegall as a Hercules.[107] While some lexicographers had likened themselves overtly to Hercules[108] and to Tyrant-mollifying poets, in Spenser we find a poet crafting Hercules in a way that slyly suggests the language and reputation *of* the hero is as important as the actual deeds he commits on behalf of others. Spenser controls the fate of a Hercules as he controls the fate of lexicographers or lawmakers. Kempe furnishes Homer as a primary example of what Spenser might have had in mind:

[107] For extensive considerations of how Artegall invokes comparison to Hercules, see Jane Aptekar *Icons of Justice: Iconography and Thematic Imagery in Book V of* The Faerie Queene. (New York: Columbia UP 1969).

[108] In *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe*, John Considine points out that Erasmus characterizes himself as Herculean in his labors on the *Adagia* (22-3).

> After all these, in the dayes of Elie, Homer the prince of all Poets wrote his excellent workes, by the which all good Schooles have been much furthered even unto this day. For all those that excelled in learning, all those that were sage Lawmakers, discreet rulers, either at home or abroad, in peece or in warre, set their precepts and examples of instruction out of Homers workes. His workes therefore made Lycurgus and Solon good lawmakers… (199-200)

Kempe then furnishes further examples. We see here a connection between poet and lawmaking hero like Artegall. Just as importantly, though, we see in Kempe a profound respect for how *Greek law* was fashioned in accordance with *Greek-language* poetry that was "eloquent" in the tradition that ran before it. The poet has made the deeds of the Godlike heroes logically available to those who would be taught, and from this the law has been fashioned. This is a basis for Spenser's widespread interest in legal language as Andrew Zurcher has found it—and it would depend, logically, upon a notion of language that was profoundly *relational* rather than simply referential.[109]

What does all this tell us? It tells us that the problems of lawmaking raised by Book 5 for Spenser do not simply speak to the general educational project of his work, certainly not simply to a question of organizing a political state, but rather to an argument in favor of viewing a specific role for poetry and language in society as the means by which to identify and then *make functional* a social order. The preoccupation in Book 6 with questions of language and the court turns to the imagery of growth and gardens because Spenser recognized the complementarity of learning and language. He did not recognize it as an advocate of standard imperial-minded humanism. He was instead an advocate of national interest, objecting to the practical limits of the Latin-language humanism and meeting the challenges of the vernacular humanism without sacrificing the spiritual and immaterial qualities of the mind. These were projects of establishing

---

[109] See my notes on Andrew Zurcher in Chapter 3.

knowledge and techniques for acquiring knowledge dependent upon the sort of educational effort his epic would foster, yet not bound to what we today might call a naïve empiricism. Thus, again, the allegory about language and learning in Book 6 should not be read as a reflection of the iron-clad declarations about identity found in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* in which the question of how to impose order dominates and offsets any question of the relation between culture and law.

The intellectual history that Baldwin studies, that Erasmus fleshes out for the English, and that Kempe spikes with his treatise on education together make a case for seeing nuances in Spenser's *intentions* for how poetry was to be educational. We should not understand all education or learning to be political, nor all his ideas about language to be servants to a naïve trust in English power. Rather, we should see that Spenser's poetry enables deeper critical thought about power, the individual, culture, language, and mind even when his political appeals did not. My extended considerations of the faults in McCabe's and Hadfield's works have been justified by an interest in proving such a point, for it is a point easily lost. Whatever Spenser's reservations about the Irish policy, whatever his humanity and compassions, we cannot sacrifice the complex of motivations that emerges from his work in its response to many sources. To do so is to over-write the subtle and essential legacy of a good bitch with a popular and obvious tirade against a bad dog.

6.Works Cited & Consulted

Aptekar, Jane. *Icons of Justice: Iconography & Thematic Imagery in Book V of* The Faerie Queene. New York: Columbia UP, 1969.

Aristotle. *The "Art" of Rhetoric*. Trans. John H. Freese. New York: Puttenham, 1926.

Armstrong, Edward. *A Ciceronian Sunburn: A Tudor Dialogue on Humanistic Rhetoric and Civic Poetics*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2006.

Ascham, Roger. *The Scholemaster*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 1967.

Baldwin, Thomas Whitfield. *Small Latine and Lesse Greeke* Vol. 1. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1944.

Clement, Francis. *The Petie Schole with an English Orthographie*. 1587. Rpt. in *Four Tudor Books on Education*. Gainesville, Fla: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1966.

Considine, John. *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe: Lexicography and the Making of Heritage*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008.

Davies, R.R. "The Peoples of Britain and Ireland, 1100-1400: IV Language and Historical Mythology." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th ser. 7 (1997): 1-24.

Dunseath, T.K. Spenser's Allegory of Justice in Book Five of *The Faerie Queene*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968.

Erasmus, Desiderius. "Lingua." *Collected Works of Erasmus*. Vol. 29. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1989.

Fitzpatrick, Joan. *Irish Demons: English Writings on Ireland, the Irish, and Gender by Spenser and His Contemporaries*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000.

Grafton, Anthony and Lisa Jardine. *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986.

Hadfield, Andrew. Introduction. *The Faerie Queene: Book Six and the Mutabilitie Cantos.* Eds. Andrew Hadfield and Abraham Stoll. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007.

Hadfield, Andrew. *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl.* Oxford: Clarendon P, 1997.

Hamilton, A.C. Ed. *The Faerie Queene.* New York: Longman, 1977.

Jardine, Lisa. "Encountering Ireland: Gabriel Harvey, Edmund Spenser, and English colonial ventures" *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534-1660.* Eds. Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993

Javitch, Daniel. *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978.

Kempe, William. *The Education of Children in Learning.* 1588. Rpt. in *Four Tudor Books on Education.* Gainesville, Fla: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1966.

Maley, Willy. "How Milton and Some Contemporaries read Spenser's *View.*" *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534-1660.* Eds. Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.

Montrose, Louis Adrian. "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text." *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts.* Eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986.

Moss, Ann. *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.

McCabe, Richard. *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference*. New York: Oxford UP, 2002.

Mulcaster, Richard. *The Elementarie*. Ed. E.T. Campagnac. London: Clarendon P, 1925.

Mulcaster, Richard. *Positions*. New York: Teachers College P, 1971.

Neels, Jasper. "The degradation of Rhetoric; or, dressing like a gentleman, speaking like a scholar." *Rhetoric, sophistry, pragmatism*. Ed. Steven Mailloux. New York: Cambridge UP, 1995.

Pepper, Robert D. Introduction. *Four Tudor Books on Education*. Gainesville: Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints, 1966.

Russell, Daniel S. "Perceiving, Seeing and Meaning." *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory 1500-1700*. New York: AMS Press, 1999.

Sidney, Philip. *Defence of Poesie*. Ed. Risa S. Bear. U of Oregon: Renascence Editions, 1995. Electronic Rpt. of *Defence of Poesie*. Ponsonby, 1595. Accessed online 12-1-2010.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. New York: Longman, 1977. All citations in the text from *The Faerie Queene* are from this edition of Spenser unless otherwise indicated.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Works of Edmund Spenser, Vol 9:The Prose Works*. Ed. Greenlaw et al. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins P, 1949. All citations of *A View of the Present State of Ireland* come from this text.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Eds. William A. Oram et al. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.

Stafford, Brooke. "Englishing the Rogue, 'Translating' the Irish: Fantasies of

    Incorporation and Early Modern National Identity." *Rogues in Early Modern*

    English Culture. Eds. Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan

    P, 2004.

Stapleton, M.L. *Spenser's Ovidian Poetics*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2009.

Stoll, Abraham. Introduction. *The Faerie Queene, Book Five*. Ed. Abraham Stoll.

    Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006.

Waswo, Richard. *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton UP,

    1987.

Woodward, William Harrison. *Studies in Education during the Age of the Renaissance:*

    1400-1600. New York: Russell & Russell, 1965.