

An In-Depth Exploration of The Faerie Queene: Book 1

by

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Abstract

Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* exhibits a complex array of detail that cannot be overlooked, from the description of Red Crosse Knight and Error to the successful completion of his quest for holiness. My thesis will carefully examine Book 1, with the most attention given to Cantos 1, 2, and 11. Within these sections, a solid foundation is established, and the other cantos rest heavily on this groundwork. More significantly, answers to the following queries will be revealed both through my lens of interpretation as well as relying on other scholar's previous work: What does the encounter between Red Crosse Knight and Error represent, and how does it denounce the Catholic Church? What were the reasons for Spenser's decision to use Medieval diction and a variety of character names from several languages within his work? Who, aside from Sidney, were the other writers that inspired Spenser's epic, and in turn, what knowledge did Spenser gain from each of their works? How does the encounter between Red Crosse Knight and the dragon compare to the temptation of Jesus in the desert, and why is this event integral to the epic? Finally, how does the epic both "delight and teach" readers, to quote Sidney, and what are the means/conventions used to accomplish this task.

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An In-Depth Exploration of The Faerie Queene: Book 1

Throughout Sir Phillip Sidney's work *The Defense of Poesy* he develops the idea that all poetry illustrates "goodness" and teaches the reader more effectively than ordinary philosophy. He also states:

For the poets indeed merely make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach; and delight, to move men to take that goodness into hand, which without delight, they would fly as from a stranger; and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved-- which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed, yet want not there idle tongues to bark at them (Sidney, 959).

More specifically, there is a dynamic connection between Sidney, Spenser, and finally Aristotle. These three individuals believed there is an identifiable connection between virtuous actions, memorable settings with dialogue, and finally, the capability to connect to the personality of an individual character. Two major articles decipher the interweaving of Sidney and Aristotle, and how, in turn, their effective writing style inspired Spenser. In "The Relations of Spenser and Sidney," T. P. Harrison claims even though Sidney and Spenser were contemporaries, they did not possess a long lasting friendship; however, Spenser's most profound inspiration was reading Sidney's *Defense* as well as his epic *Arcadia*. Sidney's

intention for his epic arose from his fascination with the King Arthur canon, which also includes Greek and Spanish romances with alternative characters. Like Sidney's progressive genres ascending from pastoral to epic, Spenser in turn proceeds in like manner. Originally, this necessary progression began with Virgil and was popular for epic poets spanning several centuries. Though the extent of this entwined "plagiarism" is uncertain, it is obvious through Sidney's "reverence" of poetry and detailed explanation of its teaching component, Spenser was greatly impacted through his contemporaries' words (713-714).

Harrison continues by discussing a few specific techniques present in the *Faerie Queene* that were acquired from the Classical Italian and Latin epics as well as Sidney. First, the poem begins *in medias res*, or in the middle of the action. The underlying details and character descriptions are given in due course. Secondly, Spenser bases some of his books on a specific plan where episodes of various characters are woven into one another. To give a clearer dynamic of this concept, the author claims the only way for a reader to comprehend the themes of each book is by example; therefore, the pace and undercurrents which bring each hero to his/her knees and upward to the fiery mountain must be gradually conceptualized by the reader (718).

Aristotle's influence on Spenser is much more complex than Sidney's. In "*The Faerie Queene and the Medieval Aristotelian Tradition*," H. S. V. Jones believes Aristotle's virtues, which form the *Nicomachean Ethics*, are exactly the same virtues that correspond to each of Spenser's books of the *Faerie Queene*. However, he goes further to illustrate that in order to understand the *Faerie Queene's* virtues, it is

integral to understand both the Aristotelian and Christian aspects, since they are “interdependent.” Finally, in Aristotle’s major work, polytheistic views were present; therefore, the Christian triumvirate and the Greek god’s mischievous deeds against humanity were already well-known to Spenser. As a reflection of Christianity and Greek thought, Spenser’s epic incorporates both civilization’s beliefs in an equally balanced relationship. Through the passage of thousands of years, Aristotle and Spenser still had similar viewpoints; as Spenser was composing the *Faerie Queene*, he consistently incorporated Aristotle’s diagram for every virtue (286-287).

As previously discussed, the link between Aristotle and Sidney in regard to Spenser’s work is profound and complex with use of virtues from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and allusions taken from Italian and Spanish romances. Besides these two elements, the epic, in its entirety, is also laced with adventure and danger faced by Red Crosse Knight and other major characters. In the following pages, I intend to discuss various aspects of the epic in general from book 1, which include: the complexities of the Spenserian stanza and the arrangement of episodes, Spenser’s implementation of Holiness, and lastly, a more in-depth view of Chaucer’s and Aristotle’s influence on Spenser.

Before delving into Book 1, it is necessary to explain a pretext for Spenser’s poetic style as well as common devices he uses throughout to make the epic three-dimensional in scope. Using the word “invention” isn’t the most effective phrase to incorporate when discussing the Spenserian stanza; instead, poets who create their

own stanzas go through the process of modification and experimentation, and in this manner, the heroic meter was later used by English, French, and Italian poets.

In developing his style, Spenser incorporated numerous literary devices as well as integrated French and Italian diction for satirical purposes. Similar to his forefather Chaucer, Spenser acquired his own poetic license, and desired to preserve the imaginative and powerful forces surrounding the English language. An aspect related to Spenser's diction is the satirical way in which he decided on names for the various places and characters, which make up his virtuous, adventurous, and allegorical universe. Several brief examples include the following: Duessa, Fidessa, Fraelisa, Ogoglio, etc. For learned/scholarly characters, he chose the Greek language as their namesake: Eumnestes, Amonestes, and Phontastes; lastly he incorporated names from Latin and French. His orthography, on the other hand, was considered proper throughout his lifetime, since Elizabethan society hadn't laid the groundwork for the exact spelling of every word in English. All of the words used within the epic are spelled based on their phonetics, not connected to complex rules (Pope, 614- 615).

One final subject where scholarship has reached two distinctly contrasting conclusions is the manner in which Spenser uses "ancient diction" to illustrate his complex themes within *The Faerie Queene*. A few decades after its publication in 1609, critics were already chastising Spenser's poor decision to capture a Medieval-Old English style that was hundreds of years past their minds. Emma Pope thoroughly discusses the two sides that have been taken in this matter. She observes William Davenant stated the following that Spenser's "use of obsolete language is

grown the most vulgar accusation that is laid to his charge” (576). This brief snippet from Davenant’s essay demonstrates his support for Spenser’s archaic language and the Medieval ambiance it mirrors. In the 1620’s another scholar Alexander Gill, wrote a similar study about *The Faerie Queene’s* diction, where he uses phonetic spelling within specific examples to determine if Spenser used “dialect or orthographic modification to aid his rhymes” (576).

Connected to the two opposing schools of scholarship in relation to Spenser is the theory of poetic diction itself throughout the Renaissance Period. There were three specific criteria for the diction itself: the capability of empowering the mother tongue, the use of archaic words and phrases as literary derives, and the need to uphold decorum. Throughout the Renaissance, poets viewed Aristotle and Horace as their guide when it came to the most effective language to use within the confines of a poetic work as well as how to maintain these strict rules.

In his prefaced letter to Raleigh, Spenser lays out his intention for part of the plot sequence of the epic as well as his intention for the allegory:

Sir, knowing how doubtfully all allegories may be construed, and this booke of mine, which I have entituled *The Faerie Queene* being a continued allegory or darke conceit, I have thought good, as well as for avoyding of gealous opinions and misconstructions as also for your better light thereof (being so by your command) to discover unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned without expressing of any particular purposes or by accidents therein occasioned. The generall end

therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentlemen or in noble person
in vertuous and gentle discipline: which therefore I conceived should
be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historical
fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for
variety of matter then for profite, of for example, I chose the historye
of King Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being
made famous by many mens works, and also furthest from the danger
of envy... (Prefatory Letter to Raleigh)

His treatise in laymen's terms is simple and yet incomplete, as various
scholars claim; within each book all of his characters—both antagonists and
protagonists-- have a specific role within the framework of the plot. Some of their
positions are more obvious than other. For example, Una is considered as Red
Crosse Knight's guide and spiritual leader: in essence, she is considered as the One
Church and the Ultimate Truth. The Knight, however, is an independent spirit who
believes he can defend himself without aid. The reader gains a clearer perspective
behind Spenser's epic in an allegorical sense with its virtuous aspects, and the
individual's shortcomings become more complex. As Spenser also reminds his
audience, he has put unimaginable work into the variety of the episodes and his
plots in order to teach and delight simultaneously.

Numerous poetic elements emerge throughout the epic itself, including the
attitude and impact of the major characters and the use of an allegorical style. In
Book 1, Spenser describes the virtue of holiness, or the ability of an individual to
make the correct decisions and to gain the spiritual presence of God. The first two

books of *The Faerie Queene* are a common starting point for various scholars, and this material is the springboard for what is to occur in later books. Not only is Holiness the unification of one church and discovering God's power, but also it branches out into unending alleyways of adventure and discovery for Red Crosse Knight. At this juncture between the Knight's pursuit of his ultimate quest, the query encroaches reader's minds: what is the "one true" definition of Holiness, and how does Spenser represent his character's paths of epiphany and dishonor? How is the virtue of Holiness disjointed but then repaired once the dragon is slain at the end of Book 1, and aside from this, how is his intention of allegory fulfilled? In "What Spenser Meant by Holiness: Baptism in Book One of *The Faerie Queene*", Harold Weatherby defines the meaning of Holiness; for a Christian knight who seeks adventure, revenge, and the ultimate realization, Holiness is attained through combat and integration of his downfalls and positive qualities into his future quests in Fairy Land. The other components of Holiness include fortitude, repentance, and baptism, which will be explained in depth later in this thesis (293).

The tale itself commences immediately *in medias res*, where Red Crosse Knight is described as "pricking on the plain" (1, Penguin Classic). Another significant aspect of Red Crosse Knight's description is his battered silver shield and the red cross emblazoned upon his armor. Through this stanza, it is obvious that the knight has encountered previous enemies and untold adventures. It would be unnecessary for Spenser to include exposition for the epic, since it can be inferred that Gloriana has already assigned him a quest. Spenser turns to the primary stage of the quest, where Red Crosse, Una, and the dwarf must defeat Error. Una warns

him: “Be well aware,” quoth then that Ladie milde/“Lest a suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:/The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde” (100-102). This short piece of dialogue from Una represents one of the first of numerous passages that offers explanations and visual representations of the subject matter. This section illuminates the value of one character teaching another. Una prepares Red Crosse for the danger lying ahead of him. She discerns his rash actions and personality, which demonstrates the moral of thinking before acting.

In this area, Spenser puts his method of teaching into the form of characters teaching others, such as those involving Error and Archimago.

The plot begins with Red Crosse Knight and Una riding through a quiet forest and meeting the allegorical beast herself. Error, as her name implies, places Red Cross Knight on the wrong footing. Red Crosse experiences both shock and determination while he is in her presence; however, through this experience Red Crosse realizes he is not yet capable of accomplishing all of his deeds on his own. The symbolism of the light from his sword blade as well as Error’s thousand younglings plays an integral role within the fictional and virtuous outcomes of the Canto. In fiction as well as reality, light and darkness are viewed as two extremes: hope, experience, and the glory of God, and the uncertainty and hopelessness that lies within Hell’s raging flames or an enlightened pathway. Since Error fears the light, it is obvious she is a dark allegorical creature who is ready to entice her followers into her black universe. The thousands of other beings that surround her are an allegorical symbol of the Catholic Church. Red Crosse, on the other hand, is an individual of the light—or the Protestant Church who is an imperfect being;

therefore Error's sentiments briefly persuade the knight into dark waters. Whitney further establishes this conclusion and links the allegory of Error to the Reformation era, noting that the Church had been recently established only a few hundred years ago. By this time, there were already schisms within the community, as well as the threat of creating Protestantism. Since this is a fictionalized account and not a history book, Red Crosse Knight easily defeats Error with his sword (44).

The article "Error's Den and Archimago's Hermitage: Symbolic Lust and Symbolic Witchcraft" by Douglas Waters discusses the two specific differences between Error and Archimago. He states that Spenser uses two of the Greek epic elements within his work: a serpent woman and a forest enclosure. The following brief passage describes Error and Red Crosse Knight's encounter through colorful language:

She lookt about and seeing one in mayle
And armed to point, sought back to turne again;
For light she hated as the deadly bale
Ay wont in desert darknesse to remaine,
Where plain none might her see, nor she any plain. (140-144)

The stanza suggests not only does Error flinch at the source of light around her, but that Red Crosse also takes advantage of her momentary weakness during their encounter. In other words, the encounter brings forth Error's undesired Catholic beliefs, and through physical and mental strife, Red Crosse Knight breaks the shackles of darkness (284). Waters considers Error as a figure who portrays the

wrongdoing—the belief in the unpopular Catholic community rather than the newly formed Protestant Church (293).

Stanzas flash past at a frightening pace, and in an instant, the reader is being transported from the immediate sight of Error to the ultimate battle itself. This closing section defines each move the two enemies hurdle at one another. The following quotation is taken from the midst of the battle where Una warns Red Crosse Knight for a second time, improving his combat style dramatically:

His ladie sad to see his sore sonstraint
Cride out, Now now, sir Knight, show what ye bee
And faith unto your force and bee not faint:
Strangle her, or else she sure will strangle thee,
That when he heard in great perplexitie
His gall did grate for griefe and high disdain,
And Knitting all his force, go one hand free,
Wherewith he gript her gorge with such great paune
That soon to loose her wicked bands did her constraine.
Therewith she spewed out with her filthie maw. (163-171)

This passage demonstrates with both irony and dialogue that Una is simply referring to Red Crosse Knight using not only his strength but also his faith in God to accomplish his task of defeating Error. In an allegorical sense, this scene is portrayed through Ultimate Truth instructing him not to be perturbed by opposing beliefs from an opposing religious sector. Error's release of poison from her gigantic maw relates to the anger and necessity of destroying Catholic documents.

Once he defeats Error in Book 1, Canto 1, Red Crosse Knight approaches Archimago's house and rests there for the night. Archimago's desire influences Red Cross Knight's fictitious dream. The following passages describe Archimago's cleverness and the struggle of Red Crosse Knight during the dream:

Then choosing out few wordes most horrible,
(Let none them read) thereof did verse frame,
With which and other spellles like terrible,
He bad awake blacke Plutoe griesly Dame,
And cursed heaven and spake reprochfull shame...
Thus well instructed, to their worke they hasten
And coming where the knight in slomber lay
The one upon his hardy head him plast,
That made him dreame of loves and lustfull play,
That night his manly hart did melt away,
Bathéd in wanton blis and wicked joy:
Then seeméd him his Lady by him lay,
And to him playnd, how that false wingéd boy;
Her chast hart had subdewd, to learne Dame pleasures
Toy. (327-331, 415-422)

Though Archimago may appear to successfully wield his magical abilities, without this advantage he is a weak being in order for his victims to visualize false images, he transforms himself from an old man into a magician. Throughout the second stanza, Spenser uses the method of trial and error for all of his protagonists to

enhance his teaching each virtue, such as Holiness. Therefore, Sidney's advocacy for teaching moral philosophy and other sciences of nature has a strong connection to Spenser's epic.

Waters again refers to Archimago's witchcraft as extremely detailed and well defined. Throughout Archimago's hermitage, items such as his magical books—which again represent false religious doctrine—and the decision to place the chapel close by are significant plot points within Canto 1. Archimago's living well could represent “the word of God, which has been carefully preserved” (287). It also becomes apparent within Red Crosse Knight's dream the variety of emotions that overspread him like a multicolored canvas. Spenser wants to incorporate these various human levels into each individual character so each of them appear to the reader as realistic. Red Crosse turns from awe to fright and nervousness, and therefore experiences the need to nearly succumb to the false Una's presence. Portrayed like any individual character, he abounds with the unnecessary anguish that overburdens him through Archimago's clever arts. At last, exhausted by this false reality, he falls asleep without any spirit or memory.

During the first two trials Archimago imposes on him, he is able to resist the “low” and “high” lusts—in other words, these “high lusts” refer to the images within Red Crosse Knight's dream, such as the false Una finally. The low lusts are the sentiments that Red Crosse experiences within his dream including his love for the fictitious Una. However, this doesn't place Red Crosse Knight into a situation where his pride has been untouched. In fact, he reveals that Archimago's power profoundly changes his mind through witchcraft symbolism—his dominating powers over Red

Crosse Knight. Archimago's role in Canto 1 is similar to Satan tempting Jesus, and in Archimago's case, he uses the sprites to accomplish his task (287). At the commencement of Canto 2, Spenser briefly discloses Red Crosse Knight's fitful sleep once Archimago and the Sprite vanish from sight:

Returning to his bed in torment great,
He saw divided into double parts,
And Una wandering in woods and forests
Th' end of his drift, he praised his divelish arts,
That had such might over true meaning harts. (75-79)

Within this passage, Red Crosse Knight mulls over his encounter with Archimago and his minions, and he even scoffs at his own foolishness. The Knight's lustful dream is a time for him to reflect on his errors and at the dream's culmination, he overrides Archimago's desire through his physical and mental faculties.

Spenser's intention to create an allegorical epic with memorable characters, events, and emotions reaches deeply below the surface. However, there lies one further piece of knowledge: his actual narrative style throughout the course of the work. Although some scholars debate the true order of the episodes within each book, others suggest there was actually an intended plan and refer to this as a Romantic epic. John Draper's article "The Narrative Technique of the *Faerie Queene*" illustrates these intentions with extremely profound details. He defines the differences between Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and that of other epic poems:

The antecedent action is to form the climax at the end of the poem; in the Classic epic, it forms an extended episode, narrated by one of the

characters, in the middle. Milton appreciated this arrangement and imitated it in *Paradise Lost*; and any poet modeling his work directly on the classics could not fail to so obvious a matter of construction. Spenser's perversion, however, might have arisen from the biased or inept version of the principle set forth by some critic of reputed authority; but a source of the classical sources to which he would have been likely to go, yield no very positive results (312-313).

His explanation of this very dilemma lies in similar territory as the understanding of Spenser's style of diction. *The Ethiopica*, however, is one of the few epics where a general hypothesis may be extracted and the framework appears somewhat similar. Like Spenser's epic, it too begins *in medias res* and the antecedent events occur first. Interestingly enough, Sidney also used this form when writing his poem *Arcadia*. A more apparent connection lies in the thread of Spenser's narrative technique and settings from the medieval romances and other writers throughout this period. The tales of the Middle Ages were usually arranged in a cyclic nature, such as in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* and other works. The "gestes" of Arthur were originally created from ballads and tales, which became a popular Medieval genre within the High Middle Ages. Once this fiction began to wane, the gestes also incorporated episodes and deviations from the original plot (Draper 314-315).

Spenser delves further by including certain aspects of human life, such as sin and obedience after inappropriate actions have been committed. Another integral portion of Book 1, Canto 2 is Red Crosse Knight's encounter with Duessa for the first time; she becomes the primary antagonist for him within his journey. Merilee

Cunningham's article "The Interpolated Tales in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* Book 1" discusses how the narration style within the story appears in an ironic mode. This change in narration style also impacts Duessa's personal motives and dialogue throughout the Canto. The introductory stanzas incorporate her ironic motives: falsifying a tale that is not her own and forcing Red Crosse to believe in her convincing emotional mindset, only to bestow pity on a trickster.

Before that angry heavens list to lower,
And fortune false betraid me to your power,
Was, o what now ausileth I was
Borne the sole daughter of an emporour,
He that the Wider West under his rule has,
And high hath set his throne where Tiberius doth passé.
He is the freshest flower of my first age,
Betrothed me unto the onely haire
Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage (193-198).

Duessa's false claim is both an effective and significant aspect within the epic. Duessa had cunningly laid a trap for Red Crosse Knight that he is unaware of, as she is trying to ensnare him with her lies. Readers experience various levels of emotion throughout Duessa's tale of sorrow and loss, and they can comprehend the similarly complex emotions as Red Crosse Knight had done. These two experiences by a character entwined within the story as well as the average reader appear to make her point even more effective: though there is only one stanza which mentions her father, it is obvious Duessa experiences pride and overconfidence for his esteemed

position as Emperor. With this familial upbringing, she learns from a young age the strategy for falsifying information and enticing other individuals to do her bidding. Red Crosse Knight listens to her story through the lens of wonder and awe and fails to witness her repeated rhetorical phrases. Duessa acts as an unreliable narrator, and unlike Spenser's physical description of other characters, here Duessa only gives a falsified account of her life-story. Una and Duessa are two starkly different women who represent the Ultimate Truth and the unreliable; Una's plot lines are solely connected to Red Crosse Knight, and Duessa represents an alternate universe of individuals who continually make false claims (Cunningham 99-100).

Later in the Canto, when the two are traveling together, Red Crosse spies a group of trees and begins to realize the Witch's true nature. Similar to Archimago, she can hide her realistic self behind her magic and lies. Duessa is in fact Fidessa, who has taken on a new identity which is not her own. The following stanza reveals Fradubio's story and forces Red Crosse to think twice about his other companion:

But once a man Fradubio, now a tree
Wretched man, wretched tree; whose nature weake
A cruell witch her cursed will to wreake
Hath thus transformed and plased in open plaines,
When Boreas doth blow full bitter bleake
And scortching Sunne does dry my secret vaines;
For though a tree I seem, yet cold and heat me paines. (251-257)

Unlike Duessa's tale, Fradubio's story isn't tainted with the lies of unlawfulness or false occurrences. Fradubio's metamorphosis into a tree pains him

every day throughout his life. He is similar to Una and is willing to aid Red Crosse Knight in his quest, though he has just had a branch cut off by Red Crosse Knight. Fradubio interprets the mistake, and within the allegory, he acts as a character who foreshadows what is to follow on Red Crosse Knight's adventures. In the last moment, fearing that Red Crosse Knight has discovered her true nature, Duessa pretends to faint from nervousness so neither Red Crosse nor Fradubio will speak to her (100). Duessa has transformed Fradubio into a tree, but she has failed to take possession of his emotional faculties; she believes she is still the all-powerful one who can command other characters to fulfill her wishes. This isn't realistic, though, since Red Crosse and Fradubio have the capacity to think for themselves and eventually come to realize their errors in believing the witch.

During Canto 7 of Book 1, Red Crosse Knight discovers a character who possesses similar intentions to Duessa: Orgoglio, the Giant of Pride. It would make sense to classify him specifically in this realm, as Red Crosse Knight has since left the House of Pride with Duessa, but S. K. Henniger's "The Orgoglio Episode in *The Faerie Queene*" claims that he is more than solely the Giant of Pride. He also represents an earthquake, and I am in agreement. There are a few alternative levels to his character, appearance, and actions and should be viewed in a more specific frame of reference. He begins by stating his name from Italian does indeed signify pride; however, Spenser doesn't give him this name until Red Crosse defeats him. The following two stanzas discuss his appearance and his parentage:

But ere he could the armour on him dight,

Or get his shield, his monstrous enemy

With sturdie steps came stalking in his sight
An hideous geant, horrible and hie,
That with his tallnesse seemed to threat the skye,
The ground eeke groned under him for dread;
His living like saw never living eye,
Ne durst behold: his stature did exceed
The high of three: the tallest sonnes of mortall seed.
The greatest Earth his uncouth mother was
And blustering Eolus his boasted Syre
Who with his breath, through which the world doth pas
Her hollow wombe did secretly inspire;
And fild her hidden causes with stormie yre,
That she conciev'd (65-76).

These introductory stanzas convey the same message about the Giant: he is a creature who was born out of unwillingness by his Mother Earth, and the birth may have been accidental. He isn't accustomed to the light of the surrounding world in which Red Crosse and the others reside, and even the ground he tramples upon fears his every step. Henniger suggest that the Giant was actually created by an earthquake mentioned in a letter Gabriel Harvey wrote to Spenser. Throughout the Renaissance and the Elizabethan Era, people believed that the mythological connection of wind, dust, and other particles passing through a cave would create an earthquake. Also, Henniger further backs this claim with reference to the Giant's "heart-wrenching appearance": trees are uprooted, and here was a rushing sound of

wind within the woods. The representation of Orgoglio appearing in the epic as an earthquake himself allegorically represents God's wrath upon his people so they will repent. The Giant's appearance arises out of irony and surprise and whisks him away from the sensual and sexual presence of Duessa and the fountain. The earthquake metaphor is included in the Bible, especially the Book of Revelation where various verses discuss this similar natural disaster. The three events where earthquakes occur are after the Sixth seal has been revealed, and the first and second angels blow their trumpet. Aside from the biblical and mythical representations of an earthquake, there is further complexity in Spenser's allegory (Henniger 178).

At the juncture in which Duessa calls Orgoglio by this name for the first time, a religious/political sphere emerges. Throughout the rest of the Canto, there is a backlash by the Protestants for the Catholics to be overthrown; here Orgoglio emerges with his Italian name Pride for the overwhelming control exhibited by the Pope and the Anti-Christ. Duessa becomes the Whore of Babylon. The apocalypse of St. John from Revelation turned political once the Catholics in Rome oppose Paganism; and the government's duty was to eliminate "godliness" within the human heart. Once Prince Arthur defeats Orgoglio and his demise is imminent, this turning- point of events represents the Protestants overpowering the Catholics, and Duessa—the Whore of Babylon escapes from the dungeon, symbolizing the schisms throughout the Reformation (Henniger 179-180).

Spenser's third and final level of the Orgoglio canto arises from the vast array of mythology, folklore and fairytales that were available to writers throughout the

Renaissance. Ovid and Hesiod wrote the union of various myths relating to the Titans; these Giants came into existence through the union of Uranus (Heaven) and Ge—Earth—who waged fierce battle upon the Earth. Henniger cites a quote from C. W. Lemmi's original article "The Symbolism of the Classical Episodes in *The Faerie Queene*" pertaining to Orgoglio's similarity to another giant.

Orgoglio shows a striking resemblance to the Giants described by Natalis Comes springing from the basest Element, Earth, the giants were not accustomed to the virtues of moderation and justice. Instead, they were partial to sensuality and anger, and they dared attack even Jove himself... So in the Giants, Spenser happily found an embodiment for the Anti-Christ which would nonetheless accord with his mise en scene of Italian romance. Orgoglio, by being a Giant, is automatically endowed with the vices that Protestant England attributed to Catholic despots (181).

Spenser's inspiration for the magical fountain originated in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* from the myth of Salmacis and Hermaphrodites. Salmacis yearned so profusely for the two of them to be together always, he prayed to the gods with intense vigor. In return they fused both of their bodies together, and Salmacis realized he had lost half of his masculinity. He prayed to the gods one final time asking them that whenever anyone drank water from the well, they, too would lose their strength; the definition of the word hermaphrodite follows the myth exactly since these organisms have half male and female reproductive organs (Henniger 173- 174, 177)

The two companions are snatched up like toys by Orgoglio's unprecedented strength, and Red Crosse, still weak from the effects of the well, has no strength to fight at that instant:

The Geaunt strooke so manly mercilesse
That could have overthrowen a stony towre
And were not heavenly grace that did him blesse,
He had been pouldred all as thin as flower
But he was wary of that deadly stowre,
And lightly lept from underneath the blow;
Yet so exceeding was vilens power,
That with the wind it did him overthrow
And all his senses stound he still did lay full low (95-103).

It is interesting to note that within this stanza Spenser uses comedy to override near tragedy for Red Crosse; Orgoglio's power is so exuberant he almost falls to the ground by his severe blow. The use of the words "heavenly grace" is both ironic as well as realistic, since Orgoglio's aim doesn't hit his target directly. Similar to Orgoglio's blow, the Cyclops Polyphemus tries with his greatest strength to sink Odysseus's ship, but it is so powerful he falls to the ground. Spenser combines Greek mythology and Christian/Protestant doctrine into one convenient phrase. Also, this stanza is one of the few occurrences where Orgoglio's portrayal of an earthquake isn't a perfect representation of this natural disaster, since Spenser intended the Giant to possess human and natural characteristics.

By the flip of a coin, Duessa screams to Orgoglio not to kill Red Crosse because she would rather be his bond-slave. In other words, she would rather serve him until the end of his days. This is a definite fallacy, of course, since she would rather force Red Crosse Knight into further dilemmas. He abides by her word but throws both of his captives into the dungeon. Red Crosse finally wakes from his reverie but is still too weak to conquer Orgoglio; the dwarf's appearance is almost inevitable, but some readers may not approve of the uncomplicated narrative position Spenser observes. However, he is observing the common practices of mythological tales and romances and other novels of heroic literature; the protagonist must be liberated from himself by another character/creature, or even an invisible force. Una is the intermediary between the strife that has befallen Red Crosse and symbolizes peace and strength in their band of three. The following stanza demonstrates Una's power as the woman of unfading Truth. Her dialogue ends the Canto and the companions depart from Orgoglio's castle:

Henceforth, Sir Knight, take to your wonted strength,
And maister these mishaps with patient might;
Loe where your foe lies stretcht in monstrous length,
And loe that wicked woman in your sight,
The root of all your care and wretched plight,
Now in your powre to let her live or die.
To doe her dye, quoth Una were to despight
And so weake to avenge such an enemy... (397- 406).

Una's monologue ends with an integral section within Book 1. Red Crosse Knight's "original sin" has been forgiven, and he has grown into a mature knight who has overcome the dilemmas of a "mortal man; he is not tempted by sin but now through his senses" (Henniger 178). Therefore, he must battle the "intellectual" sentiment of Despair and finally the dragon, which is a "sin of the soul" (178). Despair is considered an intellectual emotion because it affects an individual's thought processes. Duessa received what she desired: by spending her long days in Orgoglio's castle, she later makes an appearance in book 4. Her cruelty and falsity toward Red Crosse are the opposite intentions of Holiness that is trampled.

In Book 1, Canto 11, Red Crosse Knight continues to mature and learn from his mistakes. Theoretically, humankind identifies, processes, and stores knowledge and unforeseen disasters in their minds to gain a further understanding of the correct decisions to make. In a latter part of Book 1, Canto 11, Spenser's ability to teach through images, actions, and the setting is expressed. In this portion of the Canto, Red Crosse Knight is trying his hardest to defeat the dragon. Throughout this entire process, he undertakes and gains more of the necessary components of becoming an ideal gentleman. The climax between Red Crosse Knight and his greatest enemy occurs without any assistance from Una or the dwarf.

Whitney Wells's article "Spenser's Dragon" gives a general description of the creature and how this imagery dramatically complicates the characteristics of a romance. Spenser enlarges the beast beyond the size of the common dragon which was popular in various romances throughout the Middle Ages. This beast was used as a comparison for other mythical beasts throughout this period. She next gives a

comparison between Spenser's dragon and that of the "puny" dragon mentioned within the romances: -- "each scale is a brazen shield,/each wing a sail supported with mainyards,/each eye a huge glaring lamp,/each claw sharper than stings or sharpest steel. " (25-27) What follows is a short description of the other foraging from the romances: Bevis of Hampton's dragon measures "fore and twenty fett," his wings are "seldom to be glas" and finally in some romances the dragon's eyes were compared to fire darting out of them (143-144).

Wells continues her argument by determining that Spenser had incorporated other animals from the romances into the description of his dragon; however, she doesn't specify which animals from romances could have been incorporated into the dragon's character. From here she immediately proceeds to discuss the dragon's strengths during battle. This is the first time she mentions the similarities between Spenser's dragon and the dragons from other romances. Some similarities include: Whenever the knight's aim is true and hits the dragon's hide, the spear bounces off the dragon without harm, Red Crosse's true aim occurs when he uses his most effective weapon: his sword; in this manner, he first wounds the dragon on his wing (144-145).

In "The Dragon's Spark and Sting and the Structure of Red Crosse's Dragon Fight: *The Faerie Queene* I, XI- XII," Carol Caske interprets with precise details how the fight unfolds and what it represents through an allegorical mindset. He identifies this mindset as the final battle where Christ defeats Satan in a three-day battle for power and strength. Caske's other allegorical interpretations relate to the dragon's sting, the plume of fire, and placing his claws into Red Crosse's sword. To explain

further, the dragon's sting is compared to the sting of a scorpion, and Caske argues, the Christian serpent (or Satan) is expanded in length to include a long, barbed tail. Instead of the sting being diverted through the hero's sword or shield, the dragon's aim is true and bites into the protected flesh; therefore, Red Crosse hasn't yet completed his transformation into Christ or a true Christian man of holiness. The Knight's counterattack, then, uses an unprecedented amount of energy, where he concentrates his suffering into the desire to mortally wound the beast. In other words, for a Christian individual to discover success, he or she must control their thoughts and actions, although the act of sin is inevitable (614). This is why Red Crosse must undergo these trials and tribulations: once he defeats the monster, he will finally attain his place in Paradise after assisting the Faerie Queene with other quests. Like Jesus, he has received the thorn in his side, but he fights back valiantly.

The test proves even more challenging when the dragon sticks his claws into the Knight's shield, where one claw remains permanently embedded. This again is a sign of weakness and doubt, which enables the dragon to place Red Crosse off his guard. Allegorically, he has repelled one claw with the blow of his sword—portions of his sins have been forgiven. However, he still remains an imperfect character, who has failed to realize his full potential and actions through a Christian lens. As he dismembers the creature's joints, he is separating the word of God into smaller "pieces," instead of His grace converging into one Church and one people (615-616).

The third and final allegorical symbol during his first day of battle was the heat from the dragon's penetrating breath. This passage should not be taken lightly, because through every stanza Spenser's usage of imagery, dialogue, and character

description is integral to the plot and its allegorical meaning. The fire spreading from Red Crosse's beard to his entire body is recognized as his most severe downfall. Yet during the principal occurrence of the battle, this dangerous creature is an allegory for Leviathan—the dragon from Job. It is obvious to the reader as the fire continues increasing in temperature, the Knight experiences overburdening suffering of sin, uncertainty, and doubt (618). These stanzas can be compared to the Bible where Satan in the desert continually tempts Jesus for forty days. As the days pass, Satan's appearances become more frequent and his trials more unbearable. He is perfect in all things, but isn't exempt from the plethora of sentiments experienced by humankind worldwide. He comprehends physical and mental toils, just as Red Crosse Knight must endure his own trials.

The following excerpt illustrates Red Crosse's unimaginable suffering endured due to his severe burns. He laments at his utter failure:

Faint, wearie, sore, emboyled, grieved, bernt
With heat, toylearmes, smart and inward fire
That never man such mischiefs did torment;
Death better were, death did he oft desire (244-247).

Though he is cast down to the lowest level of hopelessness, there is only one way the epic will conclude: Spenser will begin to cast his hero upward and onward to an eventual epiphany. Through the greatest suffering, hope will arise. At this juncture in the plot, the day concludes with Red Crosse, who is overexerted, but through a miraculous act falls into the Well of Life in which he is baptized.

Behind his back unweeting where he stood,

Of auncient time there was a springing well
From fast which trickled forth a silver floo,
Full of great vertues, and for med'cine good.
Whylome, before that cursed Dragon got
That happy land, and all with innocent blood
Deflyd those sacred waves, it rightly hot
The Well of Life, ne yet his verues nay forgot.
For unto life the dead it could restore,
And guilt of sinfull crimes, clean wash away,
Those that with sicknesse were infected sore
It could recure and age long decay
Renew, as one were borne that very day.
Both Silo this and Jordan did excel,
And the English bath, and eke the German Spau
Ne could Cephise not Hebrus match this well:
Into the same the Knight back overthrowen, fell (253-270).

These two stanzas demonstrate Weatherby's theme throughout his "Holiness" article: the idea for the Red Crosse Knight's baptism is an obvious interpretation within Canto 11. The Well saves him from being scorched by the dragon's fire and allows his sins to be forgiven.

The latter stanza, which captures the knight's healing, is deeply rooted within the Bible; this section is likely referring to Jesus's performance of miracles for the Jews. Once John the Baptist immersed his followers, he proclaimed: "I baptize you

with water for repentance. But after me comes someone more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry” (Matthew 3.11). This proclamation precedes his argument in which Red Crosse’s fight with the dragon can be compared to the Tritium Sanctum—or the three days between Good Friday and Easter. Once the dragon is defeated, Adam and Eve—or Una’s parents are released from Hell, and finally reopen the gate to Paradise. All of these latter accomplishments can only be completed through his immersion in the well. Weatherby underscores a powerful quotation from the Bible to effectively prove his argument in relation to the allegory of baptism: “that having put on the breastplate of righteousness he may stand against the wills of the Devil” (Catechis 3). Unlike other Protestant writers, however, Spenser chooses not to include the right of imputation; this term refers to sins, placed automatically upon believers, which cannot be forgiven. Therefore, Red Crosse would have been unable to defeat the dragon, gain greater capability through his rejuvenation, thus allowing him to become a saint (Weatherby 286, 296).

After Red Crosse’s faith, physical strength and emotional mindset are renewed, he ascends from the Well, awaiting a new day of combat and pain. In the seconds that follow, he takes stock of his previous surroundings and scrutinizes the landscape for the foul beast; for only a second, and he imagines the dragon has left his presence for its cave, but instead he spots it preparing to assault him:

Whom when the damnéd feend so fresh did spy,
No wonder if he wondered at the sight,
And doubted, whether his late enemy
It were, or other new suppliéd knight.

He, now to prove his late renewed might,
High brandishing his bright dew burning blade,
Upon his crested scalpe so sore did smite,
That to the scull a yawning wound it made;
The deadly dint his dulléd senses all dismayd (307-315).

The fight resumes in a flurry, and ironically it hardly takes any time at all for the dragon to severely wound Red Crosse. His sins have dissipated within the Well, but he still fails to possess the nerve of the most valiant knight and the “Savior of the World.” He still must gain patience, skill, and shed his blood for the kingdom around him. Though his wound pains him profusely, he again uses his suffering to his advantage:

But yet more minful of his honour deare,
Then of the grievous smart, which him did ring,
From loathed soile he can him lightly reare
And strove to loose the far infixéd sting;
Which when in vaine he tried with struggeling,
Inflam’d with wrath, his raging blade he heft
And strook so strongly, that the knotty string
Of his huge taile he quight asunder cleft
Five joyints of it he hewed, and but the stump him left (344-352).

The knight’s two reactions to his pain as previously mentioned symbolize a wild animal’s instinct and the latter, a warrior who is accustomed to fighting through his pain. Spenser’s words, which describe his “coveted” creation, portray

Satan to the highest degree. Unlike God, Satan is quick to anger, unrelenting in brutality, and prepared to fight to the death. The greatest attention must be paid, however, to the phrase: "Five joints of it he hewed" (352). Allegorically, this pertains to man's five senses being immersed within sin. Once the wound's stinging has subsided, Red Crosse gains more confidence after he realizes he has actually injured the creature. The baptism has assisted him in more ways than one: it improved his confidence even when in dire straits. It also taught him not to feel guilty for his mistakes; he is still a human being who will shortly mature to his new self.

Soon after Red Crosse dismantles the dragon's claw and the dragon gives him several more severe blows, he is weakened once again from his loss of blood and overwhelming pain that has once again taken hold of him. However, the balm within the Tree of Life assists in his healing process, so that he will not only heal physically but mentally and emotionally. The Balm within the Tree of Life represents the act of Holy Communion since the knight was just baptized by the water from the well the previous evening. His sins had been forgiven, and he had acquired new sins throughout the five senses on the second day. Therefore, he needed to be bathed with the precious Balm from the Tree just as Christians receive the body and blood of Christ: to promote unity within the Church and to experience Christ's love toward every individual, so that they will never hunger and thirst, spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

The third day of fighting allows Red Crosse to come to a higher level of his physical strength, emotional capacity, and spirituality in the final few stanzas of the

canto. The following stanza illustrates how both the Well of Baptism and the Balm from the Tree of Life have assisted Red Crosse in his final challenge:

And in his first encounter gaping wide,
He thought attonce him to swallow quight
And rushed upon him with couragious pride,
Who him t'encountring fierce, a hawke in flight
Perforce rebutted backe, the weapon bright
Taking advantage of his open jaw,
Ran through his mouth with so importune might,
That deepe empresed his darksome hollow maw
And backe forth retyrd, his life blood forth with all did draw (470-
478).

The last stanza of Red Crosse Knight's encounter with the dragon signifies the final hurdle he must overcome to reach the completion his quest. All of his previous engagements have been fulfilled except for his true physical capabilities, which were previously hindered through the dragon's unprecedented strength and powerful stature. Now Red Crosse Knight has gained the expertise of natural warriors whose sins have been forgiven, and he has been placed into the category of a Christian man. He is fearless and feels his final blow to the beast that lies head-on must be accomplished. Once the dragon has been slain and Una's parents have been freed, the One Church has been reunited; the Reformation has divided Christian society into Catholics and Protestants. By book's end, he has finally gained a full understanding of the virtue of Holiness and how it can be applied to everyday life.

He and Una venture into Error's den, only to discover the allegorical personage of Error itself, and more specifically, how all humans become ensnared within life's sinful, spiritual, and emotional shortcomings. Archimago represents the magician/wizard who upholds the power to transform dreams and everyday objects into horrific apparitions of lies. Throughout the meetings between Duessa—Falsehood--and Fradubio—a character who portrays the body of a tree and the soul of a man, Red Crosse do esn't yet realize Duessa's trickery. However, Orgoglio's sudden appearance forces Red Crosse to realize he must gain the necessary qualities of Jesus, as well as become the strongest and most powerful knight within Fairy Land. Finally, his three-day battle with the dragon enables him to take on the presence of St. George himself, and through receiving the water from the Well of Life and the Balm of Holy Communion, he becomes an individual perfect in all things.

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