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To “maister the circumstance”: Mulcaster’s *Positions* and Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*

This essay argues that the prominent Elizabethan pedagogue Richard Mulcaster exerted a considerable influence on the narrative strategies of his pupil Edmund Spenser, especially as seen in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*. Where recent scholars such as Jeff Dolven and Andrew Wallace have maintained that Spenser was critical of many of the humanist practices they deem prevalent in the Elizabethan classroom, this study shows that such critique of humanism was already a basic part of the reformed curriculum at Merchant Taylors’ School, where Spenser received his early training under Mulcaster. The essay first provides a reading of Mulcaster’s main pedagogical text, *Positions* (1581), and then applies its key concepts to a reading of Book I of Spenser’s poem with a double emphasis on the hero of the poem, Redcrosse, and on the reader’s interaction with the text. The most important of these concepts is the seemingly innocuous term “circumstance.” Aside from being a key concept within forensic oratory, to “maister the circumstance” is for Mulcaster a shorthand for a cautious approach to the classical text studied in his classroom. The same strategy, this essay argues, is implemented in the poem. The reader must pay attention to the circumstances, with their rhetorical, pedagogical, and theological

connotations, triggered in large part by the apparent inability of Redcrosse, the putative hero of the book, to do so. Additionally, as a subcategory of the rhetorical connotations, there is also the need to assess the use of names in the poem.

This essay argues that the narrative strategies of Book I of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* were inspired by the pedagogy of Richard Mulcaster, Spenser's mentor at Merchant Taylors' School and the author of *Positions* (1581).¹ Where an earlier researcher like A. Bartlett Giamatti stressed how Mulcaster "preceded [Spenser] in celebrating the formative power of the teacher or poet,"² more recent scholarship has rather emphasized the tension between the two: Jeff Dolven perceives "a rivalry between poets and schoolmasters,"³ while Andrew Wallace believes that Spenser had "misgivings about the pedagogical practices and theories that had helped fashion him and his poem."⁴ This essay should be seen as a correction of these conclusions, more in line with Wallace's concession that despite Spenser's "misgivings," Mulcaster's "pedagogical practices and theories . . . helped fashion him and his poem"⁵ and Dolven's acknowledgment that "Spenser owed [Mulcaster] a substantial intellectual debt."⁶ That Spenser was molded by Mulcaster is undeniable, but that he also had an affection for his former master is indicated by his inclusion in *The Shepheardes Calender* as the "good olde shepheard,"⁷ and even more suggestively by his naming both children from his first marriage, Sylvanus and Katherine, after two of Mulcaster's children who had died young.⁸ It should not be controversial to assume that Spenser was familiar with the content of *Positions*, most likely from having read it, but certainly from having for eight years lived it as one of Mulcaster's pupils. The question is whether he objected to Mulcaster's pedagogy, as Dolven and Wallace suggest, or, as this essay will try to show, implemented important aspects of it in his poem. After an analysis of *Positions*, the essay shall apply the work's governing principles to one specific aspect of *The Faerie Queene* by demonstrating how Mulcaster's views on the inexperienced pupil can form a significant model for the reader's understanding of Redcrosse, the protagonist of Book I. To anticipate one of Mulcaster's key concepts, *The Faerie Queene* is an attempt on Spenser's part to educate readers to "maister the circumstance"⁹ rather than to follow unthinkingly the authority of titles or given names.

Central to this essay is the interaction (some would say unresolved tension) between humanism and Reformation. This tension can in particular

be seen in pedagogical attitudes toward the young scholar, attitudes that reflect conflicting views about human nature as well as the range and limitations of human reason. As Andrew Hadfield points out, "Mulcaster and the school were associated with the generation of Protestants who had been exiled under Mary in Geneva and who were directly influenced by Calvin."¹⁰ This influence was also dominant during Spenser's years at Cambridge from 1569 to 1576, a period when the university, and Spenser's college, Pembroke, in particular,¹¹ was the Elizabethan hub of what might be termed "academic puritanism."¹² While the essay will not engage directly in the heated and long-standing debate about Spenser's relation to the reformed religion,¹³ nor to the less intense debate about Mulcaster's exact religious affiliations,¹⁴ it will be guided by the fact that the theology of the Church of England for several decades from the 1560s on was at its most Calvinistic,¹⁵ and that this dogmatic position was felt throughout the educational system in ways that can be closely observed in Mulcaster's *Positions*.

I

The theological foundation for Mulcaster's pedagogy can be summed up by his assertion that while the classical texts have their important uses, his own pedagogical base is provided by the anchor of hope, one of the three theological virtues mentioned by Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 (the other two being faith and charity), an assurance to which the ancients for all their virtues had no access: "as they in precisenes do passe us, so we in possibility go farre beyond them. For our hope is at ankar [anchor], and rides in assuraunce, [while] their wishe wandereth still, not like to win the rode [road, i.e., calm waters]" (*Positions* C').¹⁶ Humanism as such is therefore not enough, but has to be complemented by a spiritual regiment (to which we shall return below) that is here represented by the anchor of hope.

By choosing the title *Positions*, Mulcaster explains in his dedication to Queen Elizabeth that he had indicated "certaine groundes very needefull for my purpose, for that they be the common circumstances, that belong to teaching and are to be resolved on, eare we begin to teach" (*iij*). The central term in this explanation is easily missed since it is rather underplayed, but it is these "common circumstances" that form the "groundes"

for Mulcaster's pedagogy and his book, a fact made clear by its full title: "Positions wherein those primitive circumstances be examined, which are necessary for the training up of children, either for skill in their booke, or health in their bodie." As with the title page, the "common circumstances" are here synonymous with the basic preconditions governing all teaching, in what I take to be a shorthand for Mulcaster's emphasis on the equal importance of training both the mind and the body. In addition to these pedagogical connotations, however, "circumstance" has a more technical meaning as a concept with a long pedigree within rhetoric and casuistry, and, as we shall soon discover, it is also a concept fraught with theological connotations.

As a term within forensic oratory, "circumstances qualify the nature of an action, and by extension provide signs by which we may know the true nature of that action."¹⁷ The term had its origin as "the topical categories associated with rhetorical invention," that is, "the specific questions that must be asked of a given case in order to formulate an argument about it."¹⁸ With Hermagoras as the originator, it was Cicero who, in *De inventione*, had expanded the circumstances into a system of topics, later transmitted by Quintilian and others.¹⁹ However, rather than quoting any of these early rhetoricians, I will use the formulation used by Saint Augustine in his *De rhetorica*: "There are, seven parts of circumstance, that is to say, of *peristasis*, which Hermagoras calls **moria peristaseos** (particulars of circumstance). . . . They are these: Who? (*quis*), What? (*quid*), When? (*quando*), Where? (*ubi*), Why? (*cur*), In what manner? (*quem ad modum*), By what means? (*quibus adminiculis*), which the Greeks call **aphormai** (instrumentalities)."²⁰ In this early work, Augustine is still viewing rhetoric as an oral discipline closely tied to the law courts, but in *De doctrina christiana* he converts rhetoric into a tool for biblical exegesis, transforming the use of topics, including the circumstances, into what Kathy Eden terms "a principle of interpretation."²¹ The medieval grammarians, explains Rita Copeland, as a result "turn rhetorical strategies of composition into strategies of reading,"²² while a dual emphasis on speaking and reading was part of all humanist rhetorical training.

When Mulcaster stresses the importance of circumstance he is therefore in part envisioning strategies for reading the classics, but the term signifies more than a rhetorical toolbox. A cornerstone of his pedagogy is his insistence that all humans are "creatures to circumstance" (*Positions Bi^v*), a phrase that he appears to have coined.²³ In this context, the term describes an existential condition that includes not only the agency within the

texts being read, but that of the reader. Mulcaster's phrase can be elucidated with the help of the *OED* definition 4a for "circumstance": "The 'condition or state of affairs' surrounding and affecting an agent; esp. the external conditions prevailing at the time. (Now usually pl.) Esp. in phr. *(the) creature of circumstance(s)*."²⁴ It is in Mulcaster's theological understanding of "circumstance" that the interface between humanism and Reformation is most acutely felt. The whole of chapter 3 and large parts of chapter 4 are dedicated to a detailed discussion of what it means to be "creatures to circumstance," for Mulcaster both an acknowledgment of the fallen state of humanity and a strategy for coping with this condition.

The third chapter is part of his critique of the propensity of classical authors to idealize human existence, thereby setting up goals that are impossible to reach. To emulate "peerelesse" paragons, as far as Mulcaster is concerned, is a dispiriting and counterproductive endeavor: "Such of the auncient writers, both Greek & Latin, as either picture us out the platfourmes of the best framed common weales: or do lend us the looking on of some such a paragon as in some particular kinde, they devise to be peerelesse, . . . they do fetch the ground of their traine exceeding farre off[f]" ([Biiij^r]). For his own part, he continues, "I meane to proceede from such principles, as our parentes do build on, and as our children do rise by, to that mediocritie, which furnisheth out this world, and not to that excellencie, which is fashioned for an other" ([Biiij^{r-v}]). Mulcaster's preference for "mediocritie" is "bycause dispaire to obtaine the verie best it selfe, discourageth all hope" ([Biiij^v]). The reference to "hope" is no coincidence, since the passage about the "ankar" of hope follows right after. Implied in this argument is the basic reformed view that (to use Mulcaster's own vocabulary) the "excellence, which is fashioned for an other [world]," is the prerogative of faith, while "that mediocritie, which furnisheth out this world" is the domain of human reason, and thus of his educational project.

Mulcaster's distinction can be traced back to Luther's dichotomy between the individual's position before God and before the world, which he elaborated in his influential *Zwei-Reiche-Lehre*, that is, the theory of the two regiments.²⁵ This dichotomy was also transmitted by Calvin, as well as by early English reformers such as Tyndale and Barnes.²⁶ Equally important, it was then spread into the educational sphere by Melanchthon.²⁷ In short, the dichotomy is the bedrock on which rests all civil and civic life, including all educational efforts, in Reformation Europe.²⁸ I could explain the dichotomy with the help of texts written by any of the above writers, but since Calvin figures most prominently in the context of this article, I will make use

of his *Institutes*, quoting from Thomas Norton's English translation, *Institution of Christian Religion*, published with royal approval in 1561.²⁹

Calvin has the most to say about the two "governments" in books 2 and 3, giving a succinct overview in 3.19.15: "There are two sortes of government in man: the one spirituall, whereby the conscience is framed to godlinesse & to the worship of God: the other civile, whereby man is trayned to the duties of humanitie and civilitie which are to be kept among men." In book 2 he elaborates on what are the legitimate spheres of the earthly kingdom, including its necessary political and legal structures, but these spheres also provide the foundation for all educational efforts. While human reason has no place whatsoever in the kingdom of God, he concedes that "there shyneth yet some sparkes that shewe that hee ys a creature havinge reason, and that hee differeth from brute beastes, bicause he is endued with understanding." "In the orderynge of thys lyfe," he concludes, "no manne ys voyde of the lyghte of reason" (2.2.13), thereby justifying his educational platform. However, even though "that marvaylous lyghte of trueth . . . shyneth in them," the classical writers were at the same time "perverted and fallen from the fyrste integryte" (2.2.15). They should therefore be read with great circumspection, especially since they frequently encroached on the spiritual kingdom by promising moral rectitude and even salvation of sorts to their readers. Students throughout Reformation Europe therefore had to follow Augustine's old advice that like the Israelites, who found new use for the silver and gold taken from the Egyptians yet shunned their idolatry (*De doctrina* 2.40), so the Christian humanist had to learn to read earlier texts with great caution, gleaning the wheat from the chaff in order to accommodate them to a new, Christian context very different from that of ancient Greece or Rome.³⁰

The reformed ambivalence toward a human capability impaired by human error is a main reason why Mulcaster's fundamental advice is to pay attention to the "circumstance." After warning against having too much confidence in the authority of the classical authors or in one's own abilities, Mulcaster explains in chapter 3 why not only pupils and students but seasoned scholars must be on their guard:

I do see many very toward wittes . . . marveilously overshoot themselves by overruling the circumstance, and overstraining authoritie. . . . [At best, only] after the benefit of many yeares, after much reading of the most and best writers, after sound digesting of that, which they have red, and applying it all to some certaine ende . . . [hath time

refined] their iudgement, and by precise observing and comparing, both what others have said, and what themselves have seene, hath made them maister the circumstance. (*Positions* Aiii^j–Bi^r)

From this analysis Mulcaster can formulate a general rule applicable to young students and old masters alike:

Which mastering of the circumstance, is the only rule, that wisemen live by, the only meane, that wisdom is come by, the only ods between folie and witte. . . . It descrieth the young student, which is ravished with the object, eare he can discern it, and honoreth the wise learned, whose understanding is so staided, as he may be a leader. (Bi^r)

But because postlapsarian existence hampers the effectiveness of the pedagogy, learning this lesson is the work of a lifetime, achieved late in life if at all: "The skill to iudge of it is so lingring, and so late, bycause man is the gatherer, and so long eare he learne it, as it seemes to be reserved, till he be almost spent" (Bi^r).

Mulcaster's pedagogy thus balances Reformation distrust of and humanist confidence about the possibility of human improvement in "this world." The primary aim of schooling is to prepare subjects fit for civic duty: "to aide the common course of studies . . . for the common good" (*Positions* Ppi^r), as well as the "good bringing up of yong gentlemen . . . [for] their place and service in our countrie" (Ppiij^r). However, since he deals with "a subiect, which is subiect to all uncertainties: with circumstances, which are checkt with many objections, lying open, to much disturbance, cavilled at by every occasion: where one sillie errour, is of strength enough, to overthrow a mans whole labour" (Ppi^r), the fallen condition of humankind means that their "frailtie will faile either in all, or in most" to the point where they "marre the whole moule" ([Biiij^v]). Mulcaster's theological convictions therefore have the pedagogical implication that he envisions his students to be slow learners susceptible to error. Their main strategy must therefore be to "maister the circumstance" by seeing beyond appearance and pretense. In his dedication to his model reader, Queen Elizabeth (who incidentally is also the dedicatee and thus the model reader of Spenser's poem),³¹ he therefore stresses that the queen must use her own "singular iudgement" to "circumspectlie consider" his book (ij^v). No less is required of the readers, whether queen or common, of *The Faerie Queene*. However, and this is a conviction shared by Mulcaster and Spenser, by relying on the

“ankar” of hope, that is, the theological virtues, the readers must ultimately go beyond “that mediocritie, which furnisheth out this world” and reach for the “excellencie” of the divine sphere (C^r and [Biiij^{r-v}]).

This pedagogical-cum-theological position is the starting point for Book I of *The Faerie Queene* (where I will remain for the rest of my essay). While the tensions under investigation are discernible throughout *The Faerie Queene*, they are most acutely felt in the overtly theological context of the Legend of Holiness.³² Spenser is focusing on the foundational pedagogy of the grammar school rather than the higher echelons of the university because he agrees with Mulcaster that the basic lessons have to be learned over and over again by the heroes within the poem as well as by its readers. To sum up my main argument, what both Dolven and Wallace interpret as Spenser’s quarrel with Mulcaster’s pedagogy I instead see as an integral part of his classroom experience. For example, when Wallace in *Virgil’s School-boys* argues that *The Faerie Queene* reveals how Spenser is “resisting the terms in which Aeneas’ status as a paragon of decisive achievement was celebrated in the schools,”³³ that claim needs to be placed next to Mulcaster’s disapproval of the “peerelesse” paragons his students encountered in the classics (*Positions* [Biiij^r]). So, while I agree with Wallace that Spenser shows a profound understanding of the moral complexities of Virgil’s epic, that understanding was instilled already at Merchant Taylors’. Similarly, I find Dolven’s specific readings of “The Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse, OR Of Holinesse” both convincing and enlightening in the main, yet the next section will demonstrate how important aspects of the reading strategies encouraged by Spenser’s poem can be traced back to Mulcaster’s *Positions* and thus to Spenser’s classroom. Since this is a huge subject, I will restrict myself to exemplifying two related strategies. The first of these is the need for the reader to pay attention to the circumstances with their rhetorical, pedagogical, and theological connotations, triggered in large part by the apparent inability of Redcrosse, the putative hero of the book, to do so. Additionally, as a subcategory of the rhetorical connotations, there is also the need to assess the use of names in the poem.

II

I shall start with Redcrosse in this section and then turn to the readers in the next, but since the readerly education is done by way of tracking the

hero of Book I, he will figure prominently in the second part as well. In the "Letter of the Authors," Spenser describes Redcrosse as "a tall clownishe younge man" (717), a portrayal not dissimilar to Mulcaster's depiction of a beginning pupil as "the silly poore boy at his first entry, [entrusted by his parents] to his maisters charge" (*Positions* C^r). While the "younge man" of the poem is older than the schoolboys entering Mulcaster's academy, as far as the task at hand is concerned he is just as "silly." As the *OED* helps us understand, a "clown" in Elizabethan England is not primarily associated with entertainment, but is a "rustic, or a peasant," with the added opprobrium of "ignorance, crassness, or rude manners."³⁴ The key component as applied to the poem is ignorance, seen in the way the youth is prone to accept the title and outward appearance of those he encounters. But as Mulcaster had warned, truth suffers "when the hearer is wedded unto names," adding that "if truth did depend upon the person, she would oftimes be brought into a miserable plight" (Bij^v). These attitudes offer an excellent commentary on the storyline of the first nine cantos of "The Legend of Holiness," in which not only Redcrosse is "brought into a miserable plight," but, echoing Mulcaster's words, so is truth herself in the form of Una, and with her the reader.

For the duration of the first nine cantos the clownish youth repeatedly exhibits an overreliance on "title, and authoritie, in prooffe or disproofe" (*Positions* Bij^v). He blithely and at face value accepts new characters and places, whether a hermit that turns out to be the falsely attired Archimago, Duessa dressed up like Fidessa, or the "goodly building" ruled by a "mayden Queene" that is actually Lucifera's House of Pride (I.iv.2 and 8). The main reason for the youth's mishaps is that he never slows down to consider the circumstances before rushing off in a huff and a puff: "Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare; / Will was his guide, and grieve led him astray" (I.ii.12). As a consequence, before the very first canto is barely concluded he has attached himself to ersatz Unas by twice becoming a "dettor to the first devise, and fairest deliverie" (*Positions* Bij^v): first to a Spright whom Archimago has shaped into a Lady "So lively and so like in all mens sight, / That weaker sence it could have ravisht quight" (I.i.45), and second to the seductive reasoning of a decked out Duessa, a "goodly Lady clad in scarlot red" (I.ii.13). Insofar as Una represents truth, she embodies a combination of Mulcastrian circumspection and reliance on divine grace, demonstrated when she admonishes the youth to add faith to his force in Errour's den (I.i.19), brings Arthur to save him from Orgoglio's prison (I.viii.1), or reminds him in Despaire's cave that he is chosen (I.ix.53). Clearly, without Una's aid Redcrosse is like Mulcaster's "young student, which is ravished with the obiect, eare he can discern it" (*Positions* Bi^r). Yet Una herself at other times

shows a lack of circumspection,³⁵ revealing that she too is a “creature[] to circumstance” in that she shares the precarious conditions of a postlapsarian world. Not only does she not warn Redcrosse about the false hermit in canto i, but in canto ii she gullibly joins up with the conjurer, believing him to be her knight.

To what extent Redcrosse learns anything in his progress is a central concern for Dolven, and he correctly stresses the repetitive patterns of both the youth’s errors and of his redemption.³⁶ As exemplified later in this essay, even after killing the dragon and being betrothed to Una, he still falls short. Indeed, it is not a humanistic “schoolehouse” designed for this world that Redcrosse encounters in the House of Holiness. Where Mulcaster (in part) prepares his students for civic duty, Fidelia (“Faith”), basing her teaching on “heavenly documents . . . / That weaker witt of man could never reach” (I.x.19), stays within Calvin’s “spirituall government” (*Institutes* 3.19.15). In what Dolven persuasively sees as part of the poem’s “ritual pattern,”³⁷ Fidelia’s words will “kill, / And rayse againe to life the hart, that she did thrill,” while her sister Speranza (“Hope”) teaches the youth “to take assured hold / Upon her siluer anchor” (I.x.22). Yet at this point we need to be reminded that by referring to the same Anchor of Hope Mulcaster too positions his humanist education in relation to the heavenly kingdom. While Redcrosse and the readers of the poem, just like the students of Mulcaster’s classroom, are “creatures to circumstance” constrained by “that mediocritie, which furnisheth out this world,” their ultimate goal is “that excellencie, which is fashioned for an other” (*Positions* Bi^v and [Biiij^{r-v}]).

Two separate yet related Reformation dichotomies are at play here: in addition to Luther’s theory of the two regiments that we have already encountered, there is also his insistence (shared by Calvin) on a “both/and” pertaining to a Christian’s postlapsarian existence, succinctly expressed in the famous tag “Simul iustus et peccator” (simultaneously justified and sinner).³⁸ The theological validation for this view is that there is an “imputed” righteousness that does not depend on the actions or moral standing of the individual but on Christ. To use Calvin’s formulation, “they only are righteous that have obteyned pardon by mercie. . . . man is not righteous in himselfe, but bycause the righteousness of Christ is by imputation enterpartened with [i.e., imparted to] him” (*Institutes* 3.11.22–23).³⁹ Indeed, it is precisely because Redcrosse simultaneously is/is not holiness that he is able to defeat the dragon even as he keeps failing. And it is also against the “both/and” that the appellation “the faithfull knight” in the Argument to cantos iv and v of Book I of *The Faerie Queene* has to be interpreted,

since Redcrosse is anything but faithful when he accompanies Duessa into the House of Pride. On a more general level, this paradox underlines the significance of the youth donning the armor of Christ in the first place: not that he can live up to its badge, but, in Saint Paul's words, that he has "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27), what Calvin paraphrases as "he shalbe said to be iustified by faith that . . . take holde of the righteousness of Christ: where-with when he is clothed, he appereth in the sight of God, not as a sinner, but as righteous" (3.11.2).⁴⁰

This paradox is highlighted when Redcrosse in the House of Holiness is handed over to the third sister, Charissa ("Charity"), who proceeds to instruct him "in everie good behest, / Of love, and righteousnes, and well to donne" even as she urges him to allow God's mercy "his weaker wandering steps to guide" (I.x.33–34). It is crucial to note that the allegorical character of Mercy has a double function. The youth must learn to show mercy to others, a lesson embodied in the "seven Bead-men" who counteract the ill effects of the seven deadly sins parading through the House of Pride, but the mercy he shows is contingent on the understanding that he is in continual need of divine mercy himself, as the last line of the stanza spells out: "That Mercy in the end his righteous soule might save."⁴¹ Where Darryl Gless and Carol Kaske explain this line with the suggestion that "charitable works win heaven,"⁴² or that "one can merit heaven by works,"⁴³ I would rather propose that only the "both/and" paradox is able to explain why a "righteous soule" needs to be saved by divine mercy in the first place.

To sum up this part of my essay, a key lesson of Spenser's poem, as of Mulcaster's classroom, is that readers should acknowledge and put into practice the distinctions between the two kingdoms and the "both/and," and in doing so recognize the uses and limitations of human reason, as of all human endeavor, as well as the ultimate human dependence on divine mercy.

III

As for the readerly lessons, there are of course fundamental differences of perspective between the readers and the hero. For one, they have access to a number of extradiegetic features to guide them, such as a title page followed by a proem and a set of introductory arguments that both summarize

and expound the content of each canto, as well as a narrator who not only moves the story along but also comments on the action. However, since Spenser in Daniel Moss's words is eager "to punish overconfident readers,"⁴⁴ their interpretative advantage turns out to be less than meets the eye. The narrator is both trustworthy and unreliable, at times even outright devious, while there is at times a palpable strain between the arguments and the cantos they are supposed to explain. In short, the reader must weigh the circumstances (in a rhetorical sense) rather than being "wedded unto names, and sworn to authoritie, not so much eying the thing which is uttered, as the persons title by whom it is uttered" (*Positions* Biiij^v). Since there already exist an abundance of studies that in practice apply Mulcaster's advice not to trust "title, and authoritie, in prooffe or disproofe" (Bij^v) to the narrative voice,⁴⁵ I here want to concentrate on the related issue of naming in the poem. Spenser has enmeshed the allegorical labels controlling the semantics of the text in subtle and sometimes devious narrative contexts that force the readers to investigate the circumstances in which even a name such as "Redcrosse" is used. As it turns out, despite the authoritative link established on the title page of Book I between "the Knight of the Red Crosse" on the one hand and "*Of Holinesse*" on the other, in the large majority of cases when "Redcrosse" is mentioned in Book I that link is questioned, or even severed, thereby pushing the "both/and" dichotomy toward its breaking point.

Spenser indicates in his Letter of the Authors that the message of the poem is not "delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large," but "clowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall devises." As a consequence, the readers have to follow in the footsteps of its hero since "so much more profitable and gracious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule" (716). We should note that Spenser here stresses not only profitable doctrine but a doctrine of grace, "gracious" having strong theological connotations. This becomes clearer when we understand that by "ensample" he follows Mulcaster in not creating "some such a paragon as in some particular kinde, they [i.e., the Classical writers] devise to be peerelesse" (*Positions* [Biiiij^r]). Instead, being "creatures to circumstance" (Bi^v), his readers must vicariously share the progress of what Christopher Bond terms an "Imperfect Exemplar" (162), both pilgrim and rake, both righteous and sinner. In terms of the poem's pedagogy, where Dolven contends that "humanist pedagogy . . . [has] the ambition to reduce example to the minimum of a bare name,"⁴⁶ I would argue that Spenser assumes the very opposite. Guided by Mulcaster's advice, he forces the reader to query any given name: to fulfill its educational purpose a name must be expanded into a story that forces the reader to make

use of the circumstantial questions "Who, what, and where, by what help, and by whose / Why, how, and when, do many things disclose."⁴⁷

A key feature of *The Faerie Queene* is that this circumstantial method is not just applicable to the encounters with antagonists like Archimago and Duessa, where deceptive names can be regarded as a narrative consequence of their personae, but pertains as much to the readers' encounters with main protagonists such as Redcrosse and Una. One reason for this is to highlight the theological underpinning of both Mulcaster's and Spenser's understanding of the circumstances as seen in the "both/and" paradox discussed above. A complementary reason is that the readers must learn to question authorities and titles by assessing the status of *all* the characters they meet by applying the rhetorical circumstances to what a character does rather than on what he or she is called. Una is consequently described but not named during the first forty-five stanzas of canto i. The name finally appears within Archimago's lair, but it does not designate her, but a voluptuous lady "fram'd of liquid ayre" and clad in a stole "most like to seeme for *Una* fit" (I.i.46). It is Archimago who tricks the "tall clownishe younge man" (717) into believing that the Sprite is indeed "that virgin true, which for her knight him took" (I.i.49). While the readers are given enough hints to realize that this is not the case, they have to base their interpretations of the virgin not only on her actions and words during the knight's fight with Error, but also on the fact that she, no more than the youth, is able to see through the hermit's disguise.

If the readers only have a belated and false naming of Una, the first mention of "Redcrosse" in the main body of Book I is even more protracted, and as problematic. After the announcement on the book's title page—"The first Booke of the *Faerie Queene*. / *Contayning* / The Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse, OR Of Holinesse."—the name is nowhere to be found for the duration of canto i. And while the Argument to canto ii forewarns the readers that "The guilefull great Enchaunter parts / The Redcrosse Knight from Truth," in the canto itself his name is given only *after* Archimago has separated him from Una. At first it is not even "Redcrosse" but "Saint George," and, more to the point, it is the magician and not the youth who in seeming complicity with the narrator assumes not just the name but the armor better to fool Una: "Full iolly knight he seemed, and wel address, / And when he sate uppon his courser free, / *Saint George* himselfe ye would have deemed him to be" (I.ii.11). Ominously, "Full iolly knight he seemed" repeats the exact phrase that first introduced the young knight in I.i.1, but is now applied to Archimago. True holiness, it seems, is not that easy to

identify. As for the “true” knight, it is the allegorical distance from his alleged identity that is stressed: “The true *Saint George* was wandering far away, / Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare; / Will was his guide, and grieve led him astray” (I.ii.12). In other words, while Redcrosse and Archimago may be set up in a true/false dichotomy, with Archimago representing the Antichrist rather than the Christ referred to on the youth’s shield, the youth’s own identity is tainted by association since it is his own weaknesses as much as Archimago’s machinations that lead him astray. Both only *seem* to be a “Full iolly knight,”⁴⁸ an identity crisis that comes to a head in the Cave of Despaire when the youth will be named “O man of sin” (I.ix.46), an epithet used of the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.⁴⁹

Indeed, when the name “Redcrosse” finally occurs in the narrative proper, it does so in stanzas of great moral ambivalence:

The knight of the *Redcrosse* when him [Sansfoy] he spide,
 Spurring so hote with rage dispiteous,
 Gan fairely couch his speare, and towards ride:
 Soone meete they both, both fell and furious, . . .

As when two rams stird with ambitious pride,
 Fight for the rule of the rich fleeced flocke,
 Their horned fronts so fierce on either side,
 Do meete, that with the terror of the shooke
 Astonied both, stand sencelesse as a blocke,
 Forgetfull of the hanging victory:
 So stood these twaine, unmoved as a rocke,
 Both staring fierce, and holding idely
 The broken reliques of their former cruelty.
 (I.ii.15–16)

This description of the knight’s very first joust is structurally and generically important,⁵⁰ and can be interpreted as either side of the “both/and” equation: either he is finally engaged in his epic quest in earnest, battling the forces of evil, or else he—tropologically speaking—is becoming entangled in the faithlessness represented by Sansfoy (just as his being “sad” in I.vi.2 can be seen as the result of his battle with Sansjoy, or winning the shield of Sansloy can be seen to blur the clarity of the emblem on his own shield).⁵¹ While the passage has been interpreted in both ways, the rhetorical circumstances in the form of the ambiguity of the language, as well as

the setting, highlight the latter. As Gless points out, "Having abandoned Una, Red Cross has himself committed infidelity, and his gigantic armed enemy is in part an accurate projection of his own current state."⁵² It is unclear whether the "rage dispiteous" in the second line of stanza 15 refers back to Redcrosse or Sansfoy in the preceding line, or more likely to both, an ambiguity reinforced by the description in I.ii.8 of the youth being filled with "wrath and fiery fierce disdaine." His conflation with the Sarazen is further reinforced in stanza 16, in which they are compared to "rams stird with ambitious pride," certainly not a Christian virtue in a book which has the House of Pride as its allegorical nadir. As for the context, the "rich fleeced flocke" they both want to "rule" is in fact Duessa.⁵³ In short, the young knight is named "Redcrosse" at the exact moment he actively engages in acts of questionable repute, thereby precipitating his downward curve. From a readerly perspective, this means that we are nudged to question his allegorical label, asking ourselves what it means for the youth to be named "the Knight of the Red Crosse, OR Of Holinesse."

Nor is this occurrence a fluke followed by more heroic and apposite uses of the name "Redcrosse."⁵⁴ After the joust and meeting up with Duessa in canto ii, the next mention comments on the youth's entry into the House of Pride by spelling out the problems with his progress so far:

YOUNG knight, what ever that dost armes professe,
 And through long labours hunttest after fame,
 Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse,
 In choice, and change of thy deare loved Dame,
 Least thou of her believe too lightly blame,
 And rash misweening doe thy hart remove:
 For unto knight there is no greater shame,
 Then lightnesse and inconstancie in love;
 That doth this *Redcrosse* knights ensample plainly prove.
 (I.iv.1)

The last line is a reminder of Spenser's professed "Methode" that doctrine is "much more profitable . . . by ensample, then by rule" (716). However, the profitable doctrine that the circumspect reader needs to draw from "this *Redcrosse* knights ensample" is indeed "clowdily enwrapped" since a hero nominally associated with holiness is here accused of "fraud" and "ficklenesse," "lightnesse and inconstancie," in short, to use Philip Sidney's formulation, "a shunning example."⁵⁵

The name "Redcrosse" next occurs at the knight's nadir in canto vii, once in the Argument, where we find out that "*The Redcrosse knight is captive made / By Gyaunt proud opprest,*" and once in stanza 2, which incongruously names him "the noble *Redcross* knight" at the exact moment he takes off the very armor that defines him as such, facilitating a sexual tête-à-tête with Duessa, "poured out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd" (I.vii.7). As Gless explains: "To lie with Duessa is at once a literal act of sensual self-indulgence and a symbol of adulterous betrayal of humankind's due relationship to God, the bond metaphorically expressed (e.g., in Jeremiah 2–6) as conjugal love, and dramatized in Revelation's presentation of the Bride of the Lamb."⁵⁶ This stage of the poem depicts the total breakdown in the progress of the pilgrim: bereft of his Christian armor, the youth is about to be defeated by pride. As a consequence, he is even worse off the next time he is named "Redcrosse":

AY me, how many perils doe enfold
 The righteous man, to make him dayly fall?
 Were not that heavenly grace doth him uphold,
 And steadfast truth aquite him out of all:
 Her [i.e., Una's] loue is firme, her care continuall,
 So oft as he through his own foolish pride,
 Or weaknes is to sinfull bands made thrall:
 Els should this *Redcrosse* knight in bands have dyde,
 For whose deliverance she this Prince [i.e., Arthur] doth thether guyd.
 (I.viii.1)

The readers are teased by yet another incongruous setting for his allegorical label: imminent death in Orgoglio's dungeon unless saved by "heavenly grace." However, Calvin provides a pertinent gloss: in this life the "electe . . . are scattered abroad and stray in the common deserte, and differ nothinge from other, saving that they be defended by the singular mercie of God, from fallinge into the extreeme hedlong downefall of deathe" (*Institutes* 3.24.9).⁵⁷ The stanza sums up the "both/and" of Luther's and Calvin's theology: the youth is *both* "righteous" *and* a "thrall" to "foolish pride" and "sinful bands." In fact, the same pattern repeats itself both during and after his battle with the dragon. While the youth is not once named "Redcrosse" when he is in the House of Holiness, on the three occasions the name is used in the final two cantos of the book it is his weakness (I.xi.15) or his proximity to Duessa and Archimago (I.xii.Arg, and I.xii.31) that is stressed.

The poem maintains the same moral and semantic ambiguity whenever "Redcrosse" is named in the remaining parts of *The Faerie Queene*, whether meeting Sir Guyon in the presence of Archimago in II.i.1–11 or being tempted by Malecasta in III.i.20–67. Spenser indeed seems to be making a point by showing that some of the more troubling aspects of Book I, in particular the youth's concupiscent dealings with Duessa, are still haunting him when he returns briefly at the start of Book III. The chaste heroine of that book, Britomart, encounters "six knights, that did darrayne / Fiers battail against one, with cruel might and mayne" (III.i.20). We later find out that the six represent the *gradus amoris*, the ladder of lechery from gazing to sexual intercourse. Hamilton, after informing the reader in a note that the "one" is in fact Redcrosse, opines that the fight shows that he "has learned the lesson." I am not so sure about that assessment. Might it not rather be that one of the youth's weaknesses in Book I, a fondness for lascivious ladies, is rekindled to the extent that he again becomes entangled in what the Argument to canto iii terms "Duessaes traines"? This entanglement is revealed through the allegory when he and Britomart are invited to the castle of Malecasta, a "proud *Persian* Queene[]" (III.i.41) closely related to both Duessa and Lucifera. Once inside, they are led "into a bowre, disarmed for to be." Britomart refuses to take off her armor, but ominously, just as the youth had willingly taken off his Christian armor when making "goodly court" to Duessa in I.vii.7, he now succumbs once more: "The *Redcrosse* Knight was soon disarmed there" (III.i.42). Once again a woman—the resolute action of Una in Book I and the example of Britomart in Book III—provides the needed foil. Hamilton is correct to argue that the youth then helps Britomart defeat the six knights, but doing so partially undressed, "[h]alfe armd and halfe unarmed" (III.i.63), does not instill confidence. As Gless articulates the overall pattern in a "general rule about theological implications in Books II–VI": "moments of achieved fullness of knowledge or virtue, repeatedly shown to crumble at the very instance of their announced 'perfection' . . . then shown to require repeated shoring up during their active exercise . . . remain similarly elusive throughout *The Faerie Queene*."⁵⁸ An investigation of the education of the youth thus reveals that while he does learn, he also remains (as seen in Book III) a sinner who, much like Mulcaster's "toward wittes," remains liable to "overshoot" himself (*Positions* Aiiij^r) by ignoring past lessons or misjudging the surrounding circumstances. So much for the perfection of the hero. As for the readers, they have to assess continually the putative heroes, even after they have killed their dragons.

To conclude, what are the pedagogical and readerly lessons to be gleaned from Spenser's poem? Like its hero, the readers are taken on a journey of self-discovery. Initially encouraged by the poem's epic and allegorical conventions to assume a heroic stance, they are soon nudged to question the very same conventions through narrative hints that may at first disturb and confuse. These competing levels of interpretation are a means of prodding the readers to engage with the text by mastering the "circumstance" (to once again refer back to Mulcaster's key concept), and ultimately to help them understand the "both/and" of human life. The message of the poem, as it was of the period's theology and pedagogy, is that confusion and incoherence are part and parcel of the "mediocrity" of postlapsarian existence and will so remain: the poem's readers cannot reach closure or full understanding on their own accord or indeed in this life. Like Redcrosse, they remain habituated to repeat past mistakes, moral as well as intellectual. And yet, this is not a recipe for passivity or despair, but for relying on what Mulcaster expressed by his "ankar." The readers will then discover that the seemingly contradictory readings form part of a greater whole, a synthesis not unlike the one William Blake, illustrator and admirer of *The Faerie Queene*, suggested by the implied reading instructions contained in the subtitle to his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*: "Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul" (19).

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NOTES

Writing this essay has been a long process, and I want to acknowledge my grateful appreciation to the anonymous readers who (like Una) have guided me in the right direction, and from whom I have occasionally borrowed a useful formulation.

1. On Mulcaster, see Richard L. DeMolen, *Richard Mulcaster (c. 1531–1611) and Educational Reform in the Renaissance* (Nieuwkoop: Brill, 1991), and Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 30–37. While no one has pursued my particular argument, John Wesley explores connections between Mulcaster's work and Book II of *The Faerie Queene* in "Mulcaster's Boys:

Spenser, Andrewes, Kyd" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 2008), supplemented by "The Well-Schooled Wrestler: Athletics and Rhetoric in *The Faerie Queene*, Book II," *Review of English Studies*, n.s., 60, no. 243 (2008): 34–60.

2. A. Bartlett Giamatti, *Play of Double Senses: Spenser's "Faerie Queene"* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 6.

3. Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 135.

4. Andrew Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys: The Poetics of Pedagogy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 220.

5. Ibid. In an earlier article, Wallace uses Mulcaster's *Positions* to explain aspects of Satyrane's education: Andrew Wallace, "'Noursled up in life and manners wilde': Spenser's Georgic Educations," *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 80–81.

6. Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction*, 137.

7. "December," line 41, in *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. William A. Oram et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 205.

8. Mulcaster's son Sylvanus lived from 1564 to 1574, and his daughter Katherine from 1573 to 1576. See C. Bowie Millican, "Notes on Mulcaster and Spenser," *EHL* 6 (1939): 214–15; and Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser*, 36 and 142.

9. Richard Mulcaster, *Positions* (London, 1581), Bi^r. All subsequent quotations from this edition, with modernized use of u/v, will be referenced in the text.

10. Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser*, 33.

11. On Pembroke College, see Aubrey Attwater and S. C. Roberts, *Pembroke College, Cambridge: A Short History* (New York: Macmillan, 2010), 54. There never was a uniform Calvinist presence of course; Lancelot Andrewes, for example, represents a different Church of England tradition even as he overlapped with Spenser both at Merchant Taylors' and Pembroke (see Carol V. Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999], 54–56).

12. The study that best captures the interaction between humanism and Reformation is Brian Cummings, *Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), with the inroads of Calvinism in England covered on 232–27. Paul F. Grendler shows the overlap between Reformation and higher education: "Eighty-eight leaders of the Lutheran, Calvinist, and Swiss Reformation [from 1517 to 1619] were university professors" ("The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation," *Renaissance Quarterly* 57 [2004]: 19).

13. For an assessment of this debate, see Anne Lake Prescott, "Complicating the Allegory: Spenser and Religion in Recent Scholarship," *Renaissance and Reformation* 25, no. 4 (2001): 9–23. With my emphasis on Spenser's educational background, it is sufficient for the present purpose to stress with Hadfield that "Spenser would have possessed Calvin's *Institutes*, as well as a selection of works by church fathers such as Augustine, Jerome, and Tertullian; major European Reformation

figures such as Melancthon, Luther, Bucer, and Bèze; and English theologians and thinkers such as John Jewel and Hugh Latimer" (228).

14. According to DeMolen, "Mulcaster's personal convictions lay somewhere between the reform spirit of Calvinism and that of conservative Anglicanism" (*Richard Mulcaster*, 40).

15. Calvin's doctrine, as Kaske explains, "dominated the Elizabethan religious scene" (*Spenser and Biblical Poetics*, 7). I want at the same time to stress that while this study draws heavily on Calvin, virtually all the theological points made can be exemplified by other major Protestant writers, as seen in my quotations from Luther. Nor is it solely a Reformation issue. The tensions discussed in this essay were present in the epistles of Saint Paul already, and were a seminal issue for Saint Augustine, whose influence on Catholics and Protestants alike was paramount during the early modern period (see Åke Bergvall, *Augustinian Perspectives in the Renaissance* [Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2001], 70–132).

16. While the literal component of Mulcaster's comparison deals with the odds of riding out a storm at sea, the references to "hope" and "assurance" are closely associated with the *Anchora spei*, "the Anchor of Hope" (see Darryl G. Gless, *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 42–43, and 155). Spenser, too, connected hope with assurance when Speranza ("Hope") teaches Redcrosse "to take assured hold / Upon her siluer anchor" (I.x.22). By apparent happenstance, the *Anchora spei* is present as an identical printer's device on the title pages of both Mulcaster's *Positions* and William Ponsonby's 1596, second edition of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. For a facsimile of the latter, see Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 27. All subsequent references to Hamilton's edition of *The Faerie Queene*, with modernized use of u/v, will be given in the text. On the provenance of the device, see Ronald B. McKerrow, *Printers' & Publishers' Devices in England & Scotland 1485–1640* (1913; London: Bibliographical Society, 1949), no. 222.

17. Douglas Lane Patey, *Probability and Literary Form: Philosophic Theory and Literary Practice in the Augustan Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 50.

18. Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 64, 66.

19. See Lorna Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1–5. For its impact on Elizabethan education, see Kathy Eden, "Forensic Rhetoric and Humanist Education," in *The Oxford Handbook of English Law and Literature, 1500–1700*, ed. Lorna Hutson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 23–40, and Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare*, 55–60.

20. "The *De Rhetorica* of Aurelius Augustine," ed. and trans. Otto Alvin Loeb Dieter and William Charles Kurth, *Speech Monographs* 35 (1968): 99.

21. Kathy Eden, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy and Its Humanist Reception* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 55–56.

22. Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, 64.

23. OED's earliest textual example for the phrase "(the) creature of circumstance(s)" comes from 1826 (see n. 24), but it is in fact Mulcaster who provides the first documented use of the term in English.

24. OED: *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Lorna Hutson argues that the OED definition I have just quoted is a later development not applicable to the early modern period, and as proof she points to the 1836 first occurrence in the OED entry ("Circumstantial Shakespeare," 78). However, as we have seen, Mulcaster used it some three hundred years earlier, and fully in line with the OED definition.

25. For a discussion of Luther's dichotomy, see Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought*, trans. R. A. Wilson (London: Collins-Fontana, 1975); W. D. J. Cargil Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther*, ed. Philip Broadhead (Brighton: Harvester, 1984); and John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963). On Luther's nuanced view of human reason, see B. A. Garrish, "Luther's Belief in Reason," in *Luther: A Profile*, ed. H. G. Koenigsberger (London: Macmillan, 1973), 196–209, and on Luther and education, see Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

26. See Bergvall, *Augustinian Perspectives*, 179–82.

27. For examples of Melancthon's use of the two regiments in his academic work, see *A Melancthon Reader*, trans. Ralph Keen (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 65–70, 86–87, 203–5, and 267.

28. See Åke Bergvall, "Reason in Luther, Calvin, and Sidney," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992): 115–27.

29. All subsequent references to this edition, with modernized use of u/v, will be given in the text.

30. As Lisa Jardin and Anthony Grafton demonstrate through an analysis of the reading strategies of Gabriel Harvey, a humanist with close ties to Spenser: "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," *Past and Present* 129 (1990): 30–78.

31. On Elizabeth as Spenser's reader, see Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 144–47.

32. A. S. P. Woodhouse's classic distinction between nature and grace is relevant here since he in effect applied Luther's and Calvin's teaching about the two kingdoms to the poem, with Book I dealing with the heavenly kingdom and the remaining books with the earthly kingdom: "Nature and Grace in *The Faerie*

Queene,” in *Critical Essays on Spenser from EHL* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 1–23.

33. Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys*, 222.

34. Compare Philip Sidney's more class-conscious *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (*The Old Arcadia*), ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), where Philoclea is threatened by an “unruly sort of clowns” (108), and where another violent mob is described as consisting of “clownish villains” (177).

35. She is described as fallible by Andrew Weiner, “‘Fierce Warres and Faithfull Loues’: Pattern as Structure in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 37 (1973): 37–38; Patrick Cullen, *Infernal Triad: The Flesh, the World, and the Devil in Spenser and Milton* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 30–32; and Paul Suttie, *Self-Interpretation in “The Faerie Queene”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 68–70. For a recent discussion of the topic, see Kathryn Walls, *God's Only Daughter: Spenser's Una and the Invisible Church* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 19–37.

36. Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction*, 141, 143–44.

37. *Ibid.*, 143.

38. See Jonathan Linebaugh, “The Theological Dictionary: Simul Iustus et Pecator,” *Liberate.org*.

39. For extended discussions about the complexities of the concept of imputation as it applies to Book I, see Gless, *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, 33–37, 52, 68–69, and 157–58.

40. Further discussions of Redcrosse's armor and the ramifications of the putting on of Christ can be found in Gless, *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, 45–46, and 54, and in Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics*, 134–35, who treats the armor as an example of the trope of paradox.

41. In Gless's formulation, Mercy represents both “the Lord's disposition to be ‘gratious, and eke liberall’ towards sinful humankind,” and “the mercy which believers show, in turn, to fellow mortals” (*Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, 156).

42. *Ibid.*

43. Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics*, 116.

44. Daniel Moss, “Spenser's Despair and God's Grace,” *Spenser Studies* 23 (2008): 73–102, at 79.

45. Notable studies that discuss the unreliability of the poem and its narrator include Kathleen Williams, “Vision and Rhetoric: The Poet's Voice in *The Faerie Queene*,” *ELH* 36 (1969): 131–44; Stan Hinton, “The Poet and His Narrator: Spenser's Epic Voice,” *ELH* 41 (1974): 165–81; Paul Alpers, “Narration in *The Faerie Queene*,” *ELH* 44 (1977): 19–39; Jerome S. Dees, “The Narrator of *The Faerie Queene*: Patterns of Response,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 12 (1971): 537–68; Jaqueline T. Miller, “The Omission in Red Cross Knight's Story: Narrative

Inconsistencies in *The Faerie Queene*," *ELH* 53 (1986): 279–88; Annabel Patterson, *Reading between the Lines* (London: Routledge, 1993); Thomas H. Luxon, *Literal Figures: Puritan Allegory and the Reformation Crisis in Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); and Harry Berger Jr., "Narrative as Rhetoric in *The Faerie Queene*," *English Literary Renaissance* 21 (1991): 3–48, and "Archimago: Between Text and Countertext," *Studies in English Literature* 43 (2003): 19–64.

46. Dolven is here summarizing the views of Timothy Hampton, upon which he then expands: "There is a pressure, in humanist examples, out of story; out of time, into universals; towards name but also towards maxim" (*Scenes of Instruction*, 151).

47. Thomas Wilson's mnemonic verse from his 1553 *Art of Rhetoric* as cited in Eden, "Forensic Rhetoric," 27.

48. As also argued by Berger, "Archimago," 35–36. However, his conclusion that "the text parodies . . . the reformed faith's own iconoclastic aspirations to invisible truth" misses the theological subtlety of Spenser's text.

49. See note to I.ix.46. It is Despaire who names the youth a "man of sin," but as with his other accusations it contains more than a grain of truth.

50. The epic genre is activated by the canto's many allusions to the *Aeneid*. See Lars-Håkan Svensson, "Imitation and Cultural Memory: The Ending of the *Aeneid* and Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 64 (2011): 451–58.

51. On Sansjoy, see Douglas Trevor, "Sadness in *The Faerie Queene*," in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, ed. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 240–52.

52. Gless, *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, 80. Svensson furthermore shows that despite Spenser's conscious and sustained imitation of the *Aeneid*, the hero of Book I cuts a sorry figure when compared to his role model: "Though constantly associated with Aeneas, Redcrosse . . . falls short of the heroism and *pietas* with which Virgil invests his protagonist" ("Imitation and Cultural Memory," 462).

53. See Gless, *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, 82.

54. After its initial occurrence on the title page, the name "Redcrosse" is used twenty-one times in the Legend of Holiness (I.ii.Arg, I.ii.15, I.iv.1, I.vi.32, I.vi.34, I.vi.41, I.vi.42, I.vii.Arg, I.vii.2, I.vii.27, I.vii.48, I.viii.1, I.ix.Arg, I.ix.1, I.ix.17, I.ix.19, I.ix.23, I.ix.37, I.xi.15, I.xii.Arg, and I.xii.31), and of these, eighteen are found in cantos ii–ix, that is, those describing the downfall of the clownish youth. Six of these eighteen occur in cantos vi and vii, devoted to Una, and are her or the narrator's descriptions of an idealized and absent knight for whom she is frantically searching, or false information about a knight called "Redcrosse" being slain.

55. In the letter to his brother Robert, in *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 2 vols., ed. Roger Kuin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2:880. See also

Dolven's discussion of Redcrosse in the House of Pride in his chapter on "Example" (*Scenes of Instruction*, 145–47).

56. Gless, *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, 120. On the wider theological implications of taking off the armor of God, see 113–18, as well as John W. Schroeder, "Spenser's Erotic Drama: The Orgoglio Episode," *ELH* 29 (1962): 140–59, 140–59, and Isabel MacCaffrey, *Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 161.

57. See Gless, *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, 145–46.

58. *Ibid.*, 176, and reinforced by Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction*, 142–44.