

Marquette University

e-Publications@Marquette

English Faculty Research and Publications

English, Department of

2022

Spenser and Logic: Gigantomachia and Contentlessness in The Faerie Queene

John E. Curran Jr.

Marquette University, john.curran@marquette.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://epublications.marquette.edu/english_fac



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Curran, John E. Jr., "Spenser and Logic: Gigantomachia and Contentlessness in The Faerie Queene" (2022). *English Faculty Research and Publications*. 591.

https://epublications.marquette.edu/english_fac/591



JOHN E. CURRAN JR.

Spenser and Logic: Gigantomachia and Contentlessness in *The Faerie Queene*

Figuring the enforcement of authority against rebellion, the war between the Olympians and the earth-spawned Giants is typically read as a marker of ideology. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser's abundant allusions to the Gigantomachia can seem straightforwardly ideological, aligning Olympian rule with his virtue-knights, avatars of Elizabethan hegemony, and his giants with subversion. This essay explores another significance for the Gigantomachia, reviewing a different tradition of meaning for the myth-pattern and locating it in the poem—a tradition wherein, rather than liberation in the political realm, the Giants portend the radical oversimplification and even the nullification of thought within the mind. Through conflict with giants, Spenser argues the importance of logic: investigating, idea inventing, discriminating, dialoguing. Giants help clarify the picture of the place of logic, particularly in a Ramist vein, in *The Faerie Queene*. The foci are the Egalitarian Giant and the correspondences between Orgoglio and Disdaine.

To study *The Faerie Queene* is to engage the question of whether Spenserian allegory ultimately opens up meaning or closes it down. How invested is Spenser in the processes of and in the exercise of interpretation? For many readers, his ideological and ethical directives must

Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual, Volume XXXVI, 2022.

© 2022 The University of Chicago. All rights reserved. Published by The University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.1086/717094>

necessarily have a calcifying, stultifying effect on his poetry, unless we take readings to proliferate wantonly, with ungoverned, Protean “subtile sophismes, which doe play / With double sences” (III.iv.28.7–8).¹ But in either case, then, *The Faerie Queene* is rendered fundamentally alogical. It either enlists what it offers as reason merely to enforce political and philosophical hierarchies or merely generates irresolvable ambiguities.² My purpose here is to suggest looking at the poem’s concept of logical reasoning from a different angle: in *The Faerie Queene*, logic is generally aligned with inventive interpretation rather than opposed to it; thought proliferation enables rather than detracts from “right reason,” and hermeneutic oversimplification, far from stabilizing the poet’s preferred frameworks, is cast as the preeminent threat to them. For a case study, I draw upon that myth-pattern, much used in *The Faerie Queene*, which seems least able to support my claim: the war between the Olympians and the Giants (and/or Titans).³ The Gigantomachia was often read as a parable about rebellion being forcibly put down by authority, and it is generally taken as such by modern scholars. But in Spenser’s hands, the menace posed by the Giants also holds a nihilistic significance. Embroidering on a thread he would have encountered in many places, including in sixteenth-century commentators on logic and rhetoric, Spenser finds that the Giants are distinctly antidistinction—they are deleterious to any sort of discriminating mode of thought. For Spenser, idea generation was aligned with logic, a nexus consonant with Ramist formulations. To underscore the importance of this alignment, he set it against rigid, hard-fast, antidiscriminating, anti-inventing, anti-questioning, monologic, blank, and contentless cognition figured by Giants. I will concentrate my discussion on the Egalitarian Giant, and on the links between Orgoglio and Disdaine.

* * *

In isolating *The Faerie Queene*’s ligatures to the Gigantomachia as collectively having this suggestiveness, I should start by noting how the myth-pattern’s more overtly political, and more troubling, ramifications jibe with those found to be encoded in wider giant-lore. Scholars have approached genealogies of literary giants from a number of angles outside and alongside the classical one. Two oft-cited and sometimes related strands of giant stories derive from biblical exegesis, which had made figures like Nimrod and Goliath matter for interpretation both historic and symbolic, and from medieval romance, into the fabric of which Geoffrey of Monmouth had woven giants as challenges for his Brutus and Arthur.⁴ And yet, as rich and multivalent as giants could be, Walter Stephens admonishes us that the giant “is

always and by definition an ideological figure, a figure through whom cultures represent their most compelling fears and aspirations”—and for Stephens, positive valences for giants, before Rabelais at least, were decidedly the exception, not the rule.⁵ Such cross-cultural pejorative meaning, ambiguous but embedded in ideology, seems confirmed by Sylvia Huot’s study of French romance; for Huot, giants’ “intractable otherness and depravity” convey the rightness of “idealized norms” and justify conquest and subjugation.⁶ Generally, then, giant-lore is held to be bound up with issues of alterity and of power.

Indeed, as a sort of archetype of doomed rebellion, overcome not by higher principle but by sheer physical power, unruly giants have been aptly associated by Spenserians with ambiguity, but this mostly within the scope of the question of establishmentarianism. Seldom in the commentary is the Gigantomachia sorted out from other clusters of giant stories, as I am doing here. Though, as James Nohrnberg has shown, Giants, and giants, sent a bevy of mixed messages, for many readers the Giants’ fall would seem to boil down to either validating the Olympian regime, and symbolically any status quo, or exposing it as arbitrary, and underwritten by nothing but force.⁷ Anne Lake Prescott’s *Spenser Encyclopedia* entry lays out how, in their “opposition to the natural order,” giants are “paradoxical,”⁸ and Susanne Wofford has elaborated. For her, through giants Spenser conveys “ambivalence about the political system . . . and signal[s] a concern about the legitimacy of the order allegory is able to represent”; giants reveal political power as founded on “suppression of a violent other” that is also a version of the self.⁹ Consequently, Andrew Hadfield reads this ambivalence into the parallel between Book V’s Egalitarian Giant and the Titaness Mutabilitie, with each speaking for the seditious side but with neither’s defeat affirming the hegemony’s moral superiority.¹⁰ For Tullia Giersberg, the Egalitarian Giant’s destruction marks one of Book V’s instances of doubt as to whether humanist ideals of education and reason can be positively transformative: from such episodes in Book V we learn that “civilization comes at a terrible price, and that this price may well be humanity itself.”¹¹ Spenser’s unruly giants tend to prompt readers to question how comfortable we are meant to be, and should be, with the stifling of that unruliness.

Such a line of questioning is warranted, given what he would have seen in diverse iterations of the Gigantomachia itself. Allusions to the myth-pattern often carry a decidedly ideological charge. When Virgil and then Dante emphasized the punishment of the Giants and Titans in Tartarus, they were on the surface advancing the pat cautionary tale, elevating the justice of Jove’s thunder and condemning the principle of rebellion, though Dante implicitly dilutes this somewhat, harping on the giants’ primordial intellect and

mentioning the gods' fear of them.¹² The subversive suggestion in this divine fear is made most overtly in Ovid; the Pierides invariably lose their upstart singing contest with the Muses, but they broach the idea of the gods' terror-stricken, shape-changing escapes from Typhoeus, a "what-if" recurring in the *Fasti* with the tale of the ophiotauros and the Titans' almost-victory.¹³ But more problematic than the possibility of losing the Gigantomachia was that the gods needed brute strength to win it. The *Fasti* notes this, originating Majesty's immortality in Jove's artillery,¹⁴ and both Cicero and Lactantius express disgust about it—such gods were not godlike, requiring coercion.¹⁵ Thus the subversiveness of Lucan comes across in his Gigantomachia analogies: the price of empire is cataclysm, and Lucan's insistence feels ironic that the victorious Caesarians, aligned with the Olympians, are worth that price. Neither winner seems very much in the right at all¹⁶

And yet, for some ancient writers the Giants signified a threat to much more than the dominant ideology; they threatened to destroy rationality itself. Of course, the dominant ideology is ever quick to brand the monstrous other with unreason. But sometimes, Giants warn most emphatically against unreason, or more properly antireason, within the self. Their chaotic energy could be thought of as directed, however justly, toward overthrowing their oppressors but also as having no direction whatever—as portending the erasure of all direction. When Longinus located the sublime in the Giants' piling up of mountains to assail Olympus, it was to illustrate how awe could be instilled devoid of emotional content. James I. Porter explains how in such passages Longinus is exploring an "extreme of representational blankness and unimaginability"¹⁷—as a prime specimen, the Gigantomachia has peculiar potential for sublimity as overwhelming antisignification. Indeed, the only extant work focusing on the Giants' rebellion, a fragment by Claudian, captures this. Though their mother the Earth motivates them with vengeance and plunder, the Giants soon become purely, furiously kinetic, and Claudian's words are telling:

Iam tuba nimborum sonuit, iam signa ruendi
 his Aether, his Terra dedit confusaque rursus
 pro domino Natura timet. discrimina rerum
 miscet turba potens: nunc insula deserit aequor,
 nunc scopuli latuere mari. quot litora restant
 nuda! quot antiquas mutarunt flumina ripas!
 . . . subsedit patulis Tellus sine culmine campis
 in natos divisa suos.

[And now the war-trumpet of the clouds sounded, now Heaven to these, Earth to those gave signs to attack, and Nature, once more confused, fears for her lord. The mighty throng mixes up the distinctions of things: now an island abandons the sea, now high rocks hide in the ocean. How many shores stand forth naked! How many rivers alter their ancient courses! . . . Earth settles on fields spread-out with no height, torn apart in her spawn.]¹⁸

Ideological conflict on a cosmic scale, sky versus earth, higher against lower, gives way to an opposition between defined things and nothingness; the question changes from whether the gods are tyrannically distinguishing the sons of the Earth as evil “other” to whether anything can ever be distinguished from anything else. All differences—*discrimina rerum*—collapse. The ripping up of mountains loses its sense of aspiring temerity and instead marks the disappearance of *all* relational coordinates, high or low, other or same; even the Giants’ association with Earth is gone, leaving only a blasted, sunken contourlessness. It is to tap into this radical stripping and leveling that Statius compares his Capaneus so closely to the Giants; Capaneus’s rage is unfocused and unmoored from cause—the narrator cannot determine what drove him as he prepared to rain indiscriminate death on Thebes—and so Jupiter responds as if to a Giant, and the Olympians’ relief resembles that they experienced after the battle of Phlegra.¹⁹ Repeating this causeless and effectless rage eternally, with nothing inflecting it, Dante’s damned Capaneus aptly construes himself as a repetition of Phlegra’s Giants.²⁰

Mythographers also touch on this strain. Macrobius mentions Hercules’s role in repulsing the Giants and supposes they had actually been a nation of wild god-haters. When he adapts to this interpretation the snakes the Giants were pictured as having in place of legs, Macrobius strikes a nihilistic note: “significat nihil eos rectum, nihil superum cogitasse, totius vitae eorum gressu atque processu in inferna mergente” (it means they thought nothing righteous, nothing elevated, with the unfolding of their whole life plunging into the lower regions).²¹ Cogitation, in its *entirety*, is so constricted as to be already consumed, downwardly pulled and absorbed in and conflated with earthy mass, so that *any* possible higher-level thinking is suffocated. Macrobius’s reading of the Giants’ anticogitation significance was cited by Boccaccio and, in Spenser’s time, by Chassanion.²² Of definite relevance to Spenser, though, would have been Conti. Here the myth-pattern’s ideological valences are evident: the Gigantomachia steeped the pagan gods in wretched, markedly *human* violence, both ruling by and subject to fear, even while it also proved

that rebellion, especially against religious authority, like any crime, never prospers—an ethical point, says Conti, needing no further treatment. Still, for Conti too the Giants also stood for the negation of thought: theirs was no mere cupidity, but one “*pertinax & infixā in animo . . . neque consilio neque rationi cedens*” (fixed and embedded in the soul . . . nor to any prudence or reason responsive); they were cruel and reckless, but this to a pitch making all mental processes beyond sheer impulse impossible, as “*nihil honestum esse putarent, nisi quod placuisset*” (they thought nothing worthwhile unless what gratified them).²³

* * *

Sixteenth-century logic and rhetoric found useful what mythographers read into the Gigantomachia, applying it to the idea of idea generation, wherein the Giants represent an array of interior forces abortively cutting off reasoning and learning, and preventing any cognition that would facilitate accurate assessment of self and world. They represent how fixation on one way of seeing is tantamount to blindness. For Melanchthon, the Giants were a handy trope for defending a government’s right to prosecute religious “crime”; and yet, here the ugliness of his pro-establishment line is leavened by what he felt was actually being defended: the ability of any cultural progress, with sound principles as its basis, to flourish.²⁴ Hence in his logic, Melanchthon’s Giants are not merely deniers of a hegemony positing *its* truth as *the* truth, but nullifiers of *any* objective truth from which inferences could be made. The Titans’ uprising is akin to asserting contradiction, as though fire burns and does not burn, and as though heaven is heaven and, assailable by arms, not heaven. On logical distinctions such as “necessarily mutually exclusive contraries could not both be assumed” stood all constructive discourse. In fact, Melanchthon begins his treatise by explaining how at the heart of reasoning itself lies the making of distinctions: “*Necesse est enim discrimina rerum aliqua agnoscī, nec omnia confundenda, et in unum chaos miscenda sunt*” (It is imperative to acknowledge some distinctions of things, nor should all be conflated, and into one confusion mixed). Dialectic strove toward certitude and made use of certitude for this striving, and so where certitude was purchasable, such as by universal experience, it needed to be distinguished for what it was: “*Nam dissentire a manifesta experientia, est Deo bellum inferre Gigantum more*” (For to dissent from conclusive experience is to war against God in the manner of the Giants).²⁵ We cannot share his applications of undeniable truth, but we can perhaps

appreciate Melanchthon's aversion to antirationality, and the Gigantomachia furnished him with an economical way to express it.

For Erasmus, also, the myth-pattern was serviceable in expressing the destructiveness of denying the undeniable, and of insisting on the indistinction of distinct things, and his Gigantomachia allusions most pointedly pertain to obstacles to self-knowledge. In the *Enchiridion*, Erasmus describes literalism as one such obstacle. Late in the work he notes that the "vnruly gyaunt" of pride is a form of self-forgetting, a dereliction of the duty to "knowe thy selfe"; and earlier, he affirms that self-knowing includes the particular, not merely the general. For, "the fable of the gyauntes," if read for the "allegory," instructs us about the dangers of resisting God, but also about those of resisting the parameters of our own natures: "thou oughtest to abstayne frome suche studyes, as nature abhorreth" and gravitate instead to those "where vnto ye arte moost apte naturally." The Gigantomachia allows Erasmus to connect failure to generate readings beyond the surface of a text with failure to read the particulars of one's own inclinations.²⁶ In the *De copia*, furthermore, the myth-pattern, though proverbial for pride ("Gigantibus elatior"), also exemplifies Exemplum with precisely this connection. Exemplum is a major species of the rhetor's "copia rerum," a means to make the matter of discourse more abundant in logical persuasiveness ("ad fidem faciendam") as well as in ornateness, and the Exemplum Fabulosum does this work, provided the rhetor and the audience understand ancient myth allegorically and interpret it prudently:

deinde quid sibi voluerint interpretabimur. Veluti si quis persuadere velit non esse sectandum id a quo natura quis abhorreat, dicet hoc veteres illos ac sapientes scriptores et perspexisse prudenter et aptissimo figmento significasse, prodita Gigantum fabula, quorum temerarii conatus infeliciter cesserint.

[then we shall interpret for ourselves what [wise ancients] would have intended. If someone wants to suggest that one shouldn't pursue what one is adverse to by nature, s/he will say that those ancient wise writers prudently understood and signified this with a most suitable fiction, that fable made about the Giants, whose overbold attempts ended disastrously.]²⁷

Erasmus uses the Giants as an idea opposed to the copiousness of ideas: ideas of how to communicate one's ideas, ideas of how to glean ideas from ancient lore, and ideas of how to gauge one's own natural aptitude for idea generation. Twice in the *Ciceronianus* this usage recurs, with an emphasis

on self-awareness of one's own particularity as a thinker and speaker. For the rhetor to aspire to Cicero-ness is to neglect, with Giant-like blindness—"Male cessit gigantibus affectasse sedem Iouis" (ill it befell those Giants to have coveted Jove's seat)—both one's own particularity and Cicero's, for his style was largely inimitable, his virtues uniquely close to vices. Imitation in rhetoric has to be judicious and nuanced, modulated through considerations of one's own capacities and their congruence with one's models: "Amplector imitationem, sed quae adiuuet naturam, non violet: quae corrigat illius dotes non obruat: probo imitationem, sed ad exemplum ingenio tuo congruens, aut certe non repugnans, ne videre cum gigantibus θεομαχεῖν" (I embrace imitation, but that which aids, not abuses, nature: which corrects, not smothers, nature's gifts: I endorse imitation, but toward an example cohering with your mind, certainly not inimical to it, lest you seem with the Giants at war with heaven).²⁸

This use of the Giants to signify defiance of nature and refusal to acknowledge particularities perhaps coordinates with Erasmus's use of Minerva, the Giants' particular enemy, to signify the nature of one's own particular mind. Taking his cue from Cicero himself,²⁹ Erasmus in the *Ciceronianus* and also in *De pueris instituendis* references Minerva to stress the tenacity of individual differences, from one human mind to another—"quod repugnante Minerua non possit assequi" (s/he cannot pursue anything with Minerva objecting); "Sic natos non arbitror aduersus Mineruam compellendos" (I don't think children should be forced contrary to Minerva).³⁰ Minerva is intellectual acuteness, but also the fact of there being manifold and individual kinds and degrees of acuteness. Since, therefore, alliance with her figured one's concurrence with one's own mind functioning at its strongest, she fittingly stood among the Giants' principal Olympian adversaries, a designation Spenser alludes to in comparing the unmasked Britomart to Bellona, who "the Giaunts conquered" (III.ix.22). In Conti's iconological reading, Minerva's resounding victory over the Giants demonstrated the efficacy of wisdom—for resounding it was ("nullo prope negotio trucidarit"). Elaborating, Conti reads the snakes depicted on her Gorgon-decorated shield as a symbol of vigorous discernment ("vigilantia & prudentia rebus vel longe prospiciendis"), and her spear as denoting mental sharpness ("acumen ingenii").³¹ This allegorical nexus accounts for the brief but proleptic appearance of Spenser's Minerva-hero Palladine. Pursuing the sexually voracious giantess Argante, who is descended of "the *Titans* which did make / Warre against heuen, and heaped hills on hight" (III.vii.47.3–4), and for whom sources of gratification are grotesquely interchangeable, Palladine is antithetical not only to what is unchaste but also to what elides differences.

But if the *Gigantomachia* can allegorize a conflict between refined, variegated thought and bluntly leveling anti-thought, would this significance obtain in the light of Ramism? We have cause to assume not. Ramist innovations in logic and rhetoric, such as those advancing in Spenser's Cambridge, have typically been seen as having a streamlining, simplifying influence, theoretically, pedagogically, and, ultimately, cognitively. Since Walter Ong's groundbreaking study, Ramism has been criticized for having broadly attenuating and stiffening effects. Abandoning sophisticated Scholastic efforts to theorize on predication, as well as time-honored Aristotelian demarcations between demonstrative and rhetorical logic, Ramism posited that there was but one logic underlying all discourse and reinforcing the discourser's confidence that the products of reasoning corresponded to objective truth.³² Ramism discouraged intellectual exploration and encouraged intellectual certitude; in Ong's words, "The Ramist arts of discourse are monologue arts," fostering an outlook averse to dialogue and amenable to Calvinistic inflexibility.³³ Scholars such as Lisa Jardine, Donald K. McKim, E. Jennifer Ashworth, and Thomas O. Sloane have corroborated Ong, with Sloane condemning the English Ramists' call for "simplicity and clarity" as nothing less than "destructive."³⁴ Under the sway of a premier Ramism promoter, Gabriel Harvey, and promoted by a leading advocate for Ramism, Abraham Fraunce,³⁵ a Ramist-informed Spenser would be all the more likely to give his Protestant patriotic epic a monologic cast. Indeed, Fraunce would seem to evince the simplicity and certainty toward which a Ramist orientation could direct the mind. For Fraunce, the endless Scholastic wrangling over predication—"Quiddities"—and the classification of logic according to probability level all had to be jettisoned in favor of a barebones logic systematizing the reasoning processes all people share: "Coblers bee men, why therefore not Logicians? and Carters haue reason, why therefore not Logike?" Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, his interpretation of the *Gigantomachia* is bluntly ideological: "These [Giants] allegorically are seditious and rebellious subjects in a common wealth, or schismaticall and haeretick seducers in the Church."³⁶

And yet, as Rosemond Tuve asserted long ago, Ramism could also make a far different impression. For Tuve, Fraunce's remarks on the cobblers and carters reflect Ramist conviction of logic's "universality"; with logic synthesized, the places of invention were moved to logic's jurisdiction rather than relegated to the less scientific reasoning of rhetoric, and so they were accessible to everybody and pertained everywhere, very much including poetry. As Tuve put it, "we must understand the Ramist extension of dialectic to cover all forms of discourse not as impelling a poet to 'prove something' in every

poem, but rather as impelling him to declare reasons and causes, to examine the nature of something, to consider from various sides, to figure out, look into, mull over.”³⁷ Fraunce articulates this capaciousness he ascribes to logic, an exercise for both talker and listener: logic’s “vertue is seene not onely in teaching others, but also in learning thy selfe, in discoursing, thinking, meditating, and framing of thine owne, as also in discussing, perusing, searching and examining what others haue either deliuered by speach, or put downe in writing”; logic properly construed should fructify such mental activity, for “to draw any one woord through these generall places of inuention, it will breede a great plentie and varietie of new argumentes.”³⁸

On at least two conspicuous occasions, moreover, the Gigantomachia helped Ramists argue this position, that confusions and hypersubtleties within traditionalist logic were what squelched thought. Ramus proclaimed that Aristotelian overthinking of the syllogism led not merely to the cluttering but to the cancellation of premises:

metuo Iupiter bone, ne similiter in alia omnia grassentur, & nullum hominem esse hominem, nullum deum denique esse deum, quod tot cumulatis montibus gigantes efficere non potuerunt, syllogismorum suorum potestate efficiant: Iupiter, emitte fulmen de coelo, abige maleficos homines ad inferos: ne mundum maleficiis istis, teque ipsum contaminent.

[I fear, O Good Jupiter, that they [Aristotelians] similarly may proceed into all other things, and no man is a man, no god a god—what the Giants could not do with so many piled-up mountains, *they* may effect with the power of their syllogisms: Jupiter, send forth lightning from the sky, send the evil men to hell; lest they pollute the world and you yourself with their evils.]³⁹

Here, supersubtle reasoning is antireasoning, its propositions colliding into nothingness, and by it, all higher thought might be sickened. For Spenser’s mentor Gabriel Harvey, too, the Ramist restructuring of the principles of logic and rhetoric was a stay against chaos—blind revolt against reason came from old frameworks, not new. Invention needed to be reconceived as drawn from the sweet, flowing fonts of Dialectic, not from Rhetoric. Thus Harvey’s prosopopeic Rhetoric scolds Cicero for much inflating her powers, which were properly delimited, marked off from those of her sister Dialectic: “ita mihi circundans omnia, quasi Polyphemi cuiusdam essem filia, & magnitudine

vellem cum AETnaeis gygantibus concertare” (thus placing all things in my sphere, as though I were a daughter of a Polyphemus and I’d compete with the Aetnean Giants).⁴⁰ Blurriness between rhetoric and dialectic can only degrade and deplete the latter. For, dialectic described the capability of a mind, any human mind, to “invent”—to find—and harness the full range of possible rational responses to the world.

* * *

The Egalitarian Giant, the Giant with the scales, is the egregious test for the applicability of this sense of the Gigantomachia to *The Faerie Queene*: Artegall the Knight of Justice engages him in a debate concluded by Talus’s brutal destruction of him and his communist rebellion. As Michael O’Connell notes understatedly, “The episode has troubled many readers.”⁴¹ Indeed, the closest examination of the debate, Judith Anderson’s, rules it “profoundly disturbing,”⁴² and ideologically speaking it must appear so, as the governing hierarchy ventriloquized by Artegall must have recourse to arms to answer objections against the political inequality underpinning it. And in the process, for Anderson as for others, Spenser has vouchsafed an anxiety, or even a disbelief, that the verbal and the conceptual can represent the material world; in falling back on the invisible and abstract, Artegall dodges the Giant’s arguments and betrays an inability to deal with the visible and concrete.⁴³ And yet, compelling as they are about the sequence’s ugly politics, such readings fall into the trap of not discriminating. As Andrew Zurcher suggests, Artegall’s juridical position might be differentiated from Talus’s.⁴⁴ I would go further and say that Artegall’s position itself is not entirely juridical, or political. In fact, the lumping together of separate spheres is what Artegall resists. The Giant raises questions about the governing hierarchy—but this only incidentally, as a byproduct of his demand for the end of logic.

That the Egalitarian Giant is associated with the Gigantomachia is clear enough, but the significance of this association warrants reconsideration. The Giant is not expressly assigned a Typhonic or Titanic genealogy, like other Faerieland antagonists, but Hadfield is surely correct to parallel him with the Titaness Mutabilitie. Embodying not merely contrarianism but rebelliousness, he epitomizes the threat Artegall has been divinely equipped to face with his sword Chrysaor, “vs’d in that great fight, / Against the *Titans*, that whylome rebelled / Gainst highest heauen . . . when *Ioue* those Gyants quelled” (V.i.9). Artegall’s purpose, to administer justice, has been couched in terms of the Gigantomachia, and so the Giant effectively ratifies that purpose by recasting that conflict; but then, the Giant also revives problems of

alternative justice concepts that had been broached in Artegall's origin story. The Gigantomachia already provokes questioning about Olympian justice, and Spenser intensifies this by giving the Giant scales,⁴⁵ the signature instrument of Artegall's departed trainer Astraea (V.i.11.8–9). That is, the Giant compounds justice's precariousness by emblemizing Gigantomachic rebellion with the symbol both of justice and of justice's absence from the earth. And yet, the Giant offers not so much an alternative justice as the elimination of alternatives, not an opening of different ways of seeing but an isolation of not-seeing as the only way.⁴⁶ Such is suggested by the Giant's topographic leveling—"Therefore I will throw downe these mountains hie, / And make them leuell with the lowly plaine: / These towring rocks, which reach vnto the skie, / I will thrust downe into the deepest maine" (V.ii.38.1–4)—which closely echoes Claudian. As there, here the erasure of topographic features, peaks and valleys and waters and islands, stands for the erasure of all discrete things (*discrimina rerum*); levels themselves are to be leveled, with topographical elevations collapsing, but also topography collapsing into politics collapsing into metaphysics collapsing into theology, and different senses of "equality" becoming confused. The language of logic, his "Therefore" as with his earlier "For why" (V.ii.32.1), further emphasizes this collapsing and confusing, for it calls attention to how the Giant categorically disallows the very conditions necessary for one idea to follow upon another.

The scales help Spenser convey this antilogic, for here they signify logic itself. Artegall prevents the Giant from frustratedly breaking them by explaining this: "Be not vpon thy balance wroken: / For they doe nought but right or wrong betoken" (V.ii.47.4–5). The scales are akin to logic in that they are a tool for the weighing process—the result of the process depends on the particular input, the matter being weighed. Moral reasoning in a syllogism, with a valid conclusion following sound premises, is a way of expressing what is right, but it does not create right nor is it the thing itself. This is why the scales cannot weigh words by themselves, which "out of his ballaunce flew" (V.ii.44.9); words without referents have no purpose in logic, and with Ramism, we are no longer interested in predication in the abstract. Thus Fraunce dismisses "Equipollence" or any such Scholastic term-theory as "obscure sophistry" not "grounded vpon any sure foundation of naturall experience";⁴⁷ and Ramus complains about the Aristotelian and Scholastic over-theorizing of the syllogism by comparing the pure, useful syllogism to scales: "libram enim habemus in syllogismi dispositione certissimam: in quam cum argumentum, id est, pondus, & quaestionem, id est, rem ponderandam imposuerimus: tum sine errore iudicemus" (we have in the disposition of the

syllogism a most certain scales: in which, when we insert the argument, that is, the weight, and the question, that is, the thing to-be-weighed: then we may judge without error). Aristotelianism is like fragmented, broken scales (“libram . . . fractam, & dissipatam”).⁴⁸ For, like scales, logic is infallible if properly limited to what it can actually show, or betoken. As Fraunce explains, “Logike telleth how to reason, dispute, examine, prooue, or disprooue any thing, but the thing that is to bee reasoned, disputed, examined, prooued or disprooued, that Logike cannot affoord”; matter without logic “bee mangled and confused,” just as logic without matter “is bare and naked.” This distinction is a baseline application of the Law of Justice, the rule that distinct things need to be recognized and treated as such.⁴⁹ Anderson makes trouble of Artegall’s verb “betoken,” “unique in *The Faerie Queene*,” but perhaps it is not strange for Artegall to employ it here, to betoken logic: Fraunce uses it to discuss the etymology of logic, the meaning of “effect,” the inferences we can make from adjuncts about subjects, and how contraries have different kinds.⁵⁰

Without claiming Fraunce as a source, we can refer to him to describe how the Giant’s intended use of the scales amounts to the confounding of logic and the assertion of an anti-logical view as the only view. Conveniently enough according to Ramist schema, the dispute between Artegall and the Giant falls into two phases, corresponding to the two parts of dialectic: invention and judgment. The latter part is confined to the weighing of True and False and Right and Wrong, wherein the Giant’s misuse of the scales, and violation of the Law of Justice, becomes blatant. The former part is more extensive, for it is with invention that Artegall confronts the Giant’s anti-principle and betokens it for what it is, in the process substantiating the value of idea generation and idea exchange. Artegall initiates the confrontation because he desires “to enquire” into what he doesn’t yet understand (V.ii.29.8), and his remarks *respond* to the Giant’s by using the places of invention, highlighting both their usefulness and the Giant’s attempt to expunge them.

The Giant’s position is delivered in two segments, but they argue the same thing, that all things should be the same; Artegall’s answers utilize, and refute the Giant’s attack on, the places in three key respects. The Giant holds that *any* quantitative or qualitative disparity is unfair. His logic seems self-contradictory—it both presupposes fairness as a value and precludes values—but the full extent of its destructiveness is glanced at by the idea he identifies with unfairness: *encroachment* (V.ii.32.2, 37.5). The Giant posits that everything has its proper boundaries, “order” (V.ii.37.3), but envisions a kind of universal encroachment of them, with everything constantly spilling over into everything else. This effectively means that nothing in the existing world

can ever be defined, much less weighed, and that in the world he would conjure nothing could exist—for the only way to prevent encroachment would be an “order” of no boundaries, where even heaven and hell were indistinguishable (V.ii.31.5).

Since, then, Artegal’s priority is to counter the idea of encroachment with one of viable boundaries, the place most vital to his answer is distribution, whereby he may reestablish the distinctions enabling discussion to proceed, dividing the whole of the discussion into its parts. As Fraunce points out (and as Ramism became stereotyped for), the “most excellent” division is by dichotomy.⁵¹ Artegal issues a series of dichotomies, beginning with necessary versus contingent argument: prior to any meaningful examination of the question, certainty that the “heavenly iustice” that first arranged the world still sustains it, “That euery one doe know their certaine bound” (V.ii.36.1–2), is necessary. This may seem evasive, as though Artegal is simply falling back on God’s plan as a logical skeleton key. But Artegal is taking a step essential to refuting the Giant’s grounding of the debate on the premise of universal encroachment. As Fraunce says, understanding that “God onely is the first and principall cause of all thinges” allows us to discuss efficient causes natural, voluntary, accidental, violent, and uncertain.⁵² With God’s providence posited, that is, as a necessary argument, we may distinguish contingent argument, wherein something might be debated. This demarcation of an arguable space accounts for another dichotomy at the heart of Artegal’s discourse, one cognate of necessary versus contingent: the dichotomy of unseen versus seen (V.ii.39.1–3, 42.8). Far from a dodge substituting immaterial for material, Artegal combats the Giant’s denial of any such division. In turn, with seen things separated from unseen ones, seen things can be divided into natural and social, which in turn can lead to a division of the natural into celestial and earthly, and the earthly into the geologic and organic, and meanwhile the social into the governing and governed.

Second, Artegal asserts that distinctions can be made, and so things discussed, because they have different causes. Cause taking priority among the places, Artegal fixes on it as chief among the concepts the Giant is trying to ignore. Artegal’s position is built from the necessary, certain argument of God as efficient cause: “What euer thing is done, by him is donne” (V.ii.42.1). The seen/natural/celestial realm evidences this causality, and argues its goodness by pointing to the chaos that would reign otherwise, with the heavens not contained and their courses not guided (V.ii.35.9): “All change is perillous, and all chaunce vnsound” (V.ii.36.7). This may seem sleight of hand, with political arrangements sneakily analogized to cosmic ones. But while Artegal

does implicitly discourage political innovation, more importantly his position that unseen things run on a design of unchanging good distinguishes what cannot and should not be questioned from what can and should. To know God as everything's ultimate efficient cause is to understand that God's "counsels depth thou canst not vnderstand" (V.ii.42.7)—that the unseen is not comprehensible, not subject to analysis of causes. From that point, as Fraunce says, "the variety of efficient causes is diligently to be marked."⁵³ The seen/natural/celestial realm is demonstrably a stable system, and we can infer such stability to be a necessary contributing cause for life to exist. Within this overarching stability we have different kinds of data we can collect and different kinds of speculations we can make about different kinds of phenomena: the tides (seen/natural/earthly/geologic) and the decomposition of plant and animal matter (seen/natural/earthly/organic) can be studied as to their own functioning. How does soil erosion work? But then, why does a certain creature die at a certain time? This is an altogether different kind of question. "They liue, they die, like as he doth ordaine, / Ne euer any asketh reason why" (V.ii.41.1–2). In this discriminating, moreover, we find that the seen/social is demonstrably *not* a stable realm: "He maketh Kings to sit in souerainty; / He maketh subjects to their powre obay; / He pulleth downe, he setteth vp on hy; / He giues to this, from that he takes away" (V.ii.41.5–8). The biblical tenor here seems pat and "frozen" to Anderson, but Artegall, if in biblical language, makes a crucial distinction.⁵⁴ Unseen, God is the efficient cause: we must not venture further into "whys" of political theodicy. Politics are multifarious. Sometimes the relationship between governing and governed is explicable to us and sometimes it isn't, and sometimes it changes, sometimes precipitously, and sometimes that change meets with our approval and sometimes it doesn't. The justice of a given polity owes to many particular causes. Discussing case by case is not ideal—but it is discussion.

Hence Artegall's third place, that of greater and lesser. As Fraunce says, "If a thing bee not in that, wherein it is most like to bee, then it shall not bee in that, wherein it is lesse like to bee." For an example he cites, like Artegall, the all-encompassing reach of providence, extending even to sparrows, therefore to you (Matt. 10:29).⁵⁵ Thusly does Artegall thrice argue: "Of things vnseene how canst thou deeme aright . . . Sith thou misdeem'st so much of things in sight?"; the Giant cannot judge God's unseen "counsels," "Sith of things subject to thy daily vew / Thou doest not know the causes, nor their courses dew"; "For how canst thou those greater secrets know, / That doest not know the least thing of them all?" (V.ii.39.1–3, 42.7–9, 43.7–8). With the Giant, no discussion can be had, for he has refused to acknowledge the most elementary

of distinctions: having no appreciation for the mysteriousness of unseen causes, the counsels of providence, he cannot presume to deem them unjust; much less can he presume to evaluate the justice of any social arrangement, for, unable to distinguish unseen from seen, he cannot even distinguish the social realm from other sectors of seen things. That there are greater and lesser is a rejoinder to the Giant's idea that everything needs to be equal, and more basically affirms that there exist other ways to think than his (i.e., degrees exist). Moreover, Artegall uses this place to establish different levels of epistemology and different lines of inquiry at different levels of certainty. The Giant's knowledge is "most like to bee" in seen things, things in his daily view—which in the area of the social would lead to engagement with vicissitudes and complexity; but since there is no knowledge *there*, there cannot be knowledge where it is infinitely "lesse like to bee," that complete metaphysical knowledge the Giant claims of all things and how they "were formed aun-ciently" (V.ii.32.8). Artegall sets what we know, partially know, try to know, and know we can't know against the Giant's purported knowledge of universal encroachment yielding to universal sameness, and thus reveals the Giant's antiknowledge and antireasoning. It begins and ends with nothing.

This nihilistic circularity is why the judgment phase of their dispute, the actual working of the scales, is so easily resolved. The Giant wants to prove False and True and Right and Wrong are interchangeable, and this is to render each variable meaningless both before and after: he assumes that they are already equal before being weighed and that weighing them will merely re-equate them as so. Fraunce calls this problem *Petitio principii*, "when the same thing is prooued by it selfe," but more pointedly, as pertaining to judgment, it is "Tautologie and vayne inculcation of the same thing."⁵⁶ Taking the scales as a figure for logic, we can see that the Giant expects valuelessness to be measured by valuelessness, with valuelessness as the consequent. Artegall, having employed places of invention against the Giant's attempted nullification of them, now demonstrates the use of the syllogism by means of the scales, against the Giant's effort to show how they void all judgment. If something is classifiable as True or Right, it is so because it has been *judged* so via syllogistic procedure. As Fraunce has it, "the necessitie of the consequence in a syllogisme" is when a particular middle term is shown to agree in both the major premise (proposition) and minor premise (assumption), "[a]s then, in thinges that bee to bee measured with line or by weight, wee iudge of them as they agree both eyther in line or weight."⁵⁷ Naturally, weighing is like reasoning—which calls attention to the existence of variant matter-to-be-weighed. If Right *is* right, it can only be termed so because *a thing* has

been judged conclusively right, and so afterwards no amount of Wrong will negate it. Artegal elucidates: “in the mind the doome of right must bee” (V.ii.47.6). Right isn’t presupposed, but judged to be right, a problem worked on and resolved, if indeed it is resolvable, by the mind—any human mind availing itself of its tools. Neglect of these tools, of the mind’s innate capacity to produce syllogistic judgments—“inseruit nostris mentibus hoc principium” ([God] placed this fundament in our minds)—is exactly what Melancthon compares to Titanic fury raging against heaven.⁵⁸

* * *

Orgoglio and Disdaine share with the Egalitarian Giant an unsavory ideological valence, Protestant bias in the former case and patriarchal bias in the latter; but again, to fixate on ideology alone is to oversimplify, and miss Spenser’s larger warning against oversimplification, miss how each sequence illustrates the imperative that logic, inquiry, and dialogue win out over monovision and antireason. Orgoglio and Disdaine are siblings (VI.vii.41.8) with a Gigantomachic pedigree, “descended of the hous / Of those old Gyants” that warred on heaven (41.5–7), specifically the sons of Earth and Aeolus father of winds (I.vii.9.1–3). Their lineage ties them to the Giants maternally, but Spenser also uses the wind connection to enliven the exposition of pride, pertinent to both Orgoglio and Disdaine. Nohrnberg has recounted this in analogizing Books I and VI, yet his observation that wind is appropriate to the identitylessness of pride can be further delved into.⁵⁹ The empty self-regard and self-regarding emptiness of which Orgoglio and Disdaine are projections can be read as having an intellectual dimension resonant with the Egalitarian Giant’s sweeping conceptual egalitarianism. This resonance becomes perceptible if we recall Fraunce’s sense of “Tautologie”; for, one way to conceive of pride is as autoreferentiality, a form of viciously circular repetition. Disdaine repeats Orgoglio as his brother, much as Ollyphant repeats Argante, his twin (III.vii.48, III.xi.3). But Orgoglio and Disdaine are both repetitions in other ways: Orgoglio repeats both Lucifera and Ignaro, as his foster son (I.viii.31.8);⁶⁰ Disdaine repeats many entities, most prominently the Titanic Disdaine in Mammon’s cave (II.vii.40–41) and the “hideous Giant” Daunger guarding Venus’ temple (IV.x.16–20).⁶¹ The Gigantomachic rebelliousness of Orgoglio and Disdaine is at one with a prideful recycling of ideas that is actually “Puft vp with emptie wynd” (I.vii.9.9), no ideation at all. Defeated, a deflated Orgoglio reverts to “emptie” vacuity and Disdaine reverts to staring down his (to him) interchangeable foes and staring down at his feet as if nothing had happened (I.viii.24.7–9, VI.viii.26.1–7).

That intellectual blankness that Orgoglio and Disdaine each represents comes across in the characters, Redcrosse and Mirabella, respectively, of whose mentality they are projections. The similarity isn't immediately clear: his armor discarded, a debilitated Redcrosse pays "goodly court" to Duessa when Orgoglio attacks (I.vii.7.1), and so the way in which his exhausted state corresponds to pride seems unclear. Mirabella seems distinct from him, in that her disdain for the courtship of her abundant suitors, when she "grew proud and insolent" (VI.vii.29.1), is in her backstory. And yet, what ails Redcrosse is similar to what ailed Mirabella: as Redcrosse accepting Duessa is "Both careless of his health, and of his fame" (I.vii.7.3), so was Mirabella careless in rejecting everyone, for "What cared she, who sighed for her sore" (VI.vii.30.5). Each mind is noted for what it does not care about. Neither discriminates, neither reasons or investigates—and this lack is in a sense gigantic, for it overrides all alternative possibilities. Redcrosse is utterly overwhelmed by Orgoglio, and that he's so "haplesse, and eke hopelesse" (I.vii.11.4) might seem incongruous with pride, unless we consider how Orgoglio is bracketed by Lucifera and Despaire, as though incorporating self-love and self-loathing.⁶² Orgoglio embodies a self-absorption that is immense, intense, and all-consuming but also amorphous and undefined. Before Orgoglio comes, Redcrosse has nothing to say at his reunion with Duessa (I.vii.3), a curious incuriosity given their history; the canto's opening disclaimer, wondering what "guiltlesse man" were so wise as to detect Duessa's guile (I.vii.1), seems ironic, for anyone might be suspicious enough to ask her a few questions. Orgoglio's conquering him is thus associated with an embrace of Duessa that is total, but not decided upon or thought about, much less inquired into, and consequently the conquest is sealed with a dungeon managed by blind Ignaro, figuring a boxing-in of thought, an inability to conceive or learn anything. Ignaro cannot tell, "ne euer other answeere made" (I.viii.32.9). The entire Orgoglio sequence traces a mind repeatedly snuffing out its own idea generation; the empty wind alone of Orgoglio's swing blacked Redcrosse out, "And *all* his senses stound" (I.vii.12.9; my emphasis). Such stifled, stubbornly inert intellection marks Mirabella's blanket refusal of any embrace: having "scorned them all," she would "weigh" the merits of none of her suitors, despite how many were already somewhat distinguished for their ability to look past her humble birth (VI.vii.29). Everyone was alike to her. Assessing the relative virtues of her discrete suitors was a possible way to happiness, but she "thought contrariwise" (VI.vii.30.1), adhering to the negative repeatedly and absolutely. Moreover, when arraigned by Love for this absolutist disdain for love, and negation of love's possibilities, she had nothing to say, "thereto nould plead, nor answeere

ought" (VI.vii.36.3)—her thought, too, was boxed-in, completely "restrained" (VI.vii.36.4).

On this restraint, Fraunce is again instructive. As with the Egalitarian Giant, so, in Fraunce's terms, with Redcrosse and past-Mirabella: both have made a necessity out of what is actually contingent. In their case, the place of invention abused might be that of opposites, for, as Fraunce explains, "If one Disparate bee equally opposed to many, then certainly, if one of them bee affirmed, all the rest must be denied. But if one among all bee denied, you cannot straightwayes infer any other what you list." The affirmative of something denies its opposites necessarily, "but the one beeing denied, another shall bee affirmed contingently." If a man is a lawyer then he is not a divine; but it does not follow necessarily that if he is not a lawyer, then he is a divine.⁶³ Neither Redcrosse nor past-Mirabella affirming anything, each "straightwayes" infers a necessary conclusion from a denial, a negative. This is more obvious with past-Mirabella, for whom all suitors were alike disqualified. In her indiscriminate disdain, she made an aggregate denial of all her suitors' worth, a negative from which she construed a positive self-conception necessarily followed. But Redcrosse's overwhelmed, idea-suffocating nondecisions are similar, as he sees nothing to do but go with Duessa, nothing to do but be Orgoglio's thrall, and nothing to do in Ignaro's cell but welcome death (I.viii.38). Orgoglio-thought squeezes out all other potential lines of thought, a blanket denial by which, in gigantic fashion, it proposes itself as necessarily the sole option. However, as with the Egalitarian Giant, the windy, emptied-out thinking of Disdaine-controlled Mirabella and Orgoglio-controlled Redcrosse only *approximates* fallacious logic—it is truly a deterministic antilogic inimical to reasoning. It replicates and reinforces itself tautologically and abhors any inflection, much less controversy. Imaging this mindset, Orgoglio and Disdaine are in line with Erasmus's layered interpretation of the Gigantomachia: it set off the dangers of both a smothered self-knowledge and a one-track-minded literalism.

As Erasmus also teaches, at odds with Gigantomachic monovision is "copia rerum," and so one idea emanating from Prince Arthur's battles with Orgoglio and Disdaine—by no means the only idea—is the potency of a vigorous invention of ideas. Though complex, and though only featured in the former sequence, Arthur's diamond shield is the conspicuous example. The diamond shield's brilliance can nullify evil magic, cancel deception—"all that was not such, as seemd in sight, / Before that shield did fade"—and even turn enemies to stone, Gorgon-like (I.vii.35).⁶⁴ It is decisive in Orgoglio's overthrow, draining him of both power and will, for "he has redd his end / In that bright shield" (I.viii.21). Seemingly independent of Arthur's agency,

the shield has a sudden and irresistible force suggestive of divine power, grace working regeneratively in the individual soul (Calvinist irresistible grace) or providentially to free God's people in the world (the English Reformation).⁶⁵ In either sense, the shield hardly portrays the potency of deliberate reasoning;⁶⁶ it seems more akin to Olympian omnipotence intervening, and indeed its burst is likened to lightning flashes, "As where th' Almightyes lightning brond does light, / It dimmes the dazed eye, and daunts the senses quight" (I.viii.21.8–9). And yet, once again, to look exclusively through this ideological lens is to fall into a kind of narrow-mindedness quite like what Arthur is allegorically combatting here. For the meanings of the shield's luminousness flow in two directions, representing evil dissolving but also a mind finding clarity—and this not necessarily by passive reception of divine revelation. Clarity is also found—invented—by exercise of the intellect. This is strongly suggested by the shield's mimicking of Minerva's Gorgon shield as deployed against the Giants. As told by Claudian, Minerva petrified several Giants in mid-rampage, stopping one, Pallaneus, with her sword in combination with the Gorgon, as he charged blindly;⁶⁷ the shield conveys the helplessness of unruly temerity in the face of the divine, but it also conveys the power of wisdom, including its adaptive power to find different solutions, the sword also being brought to bear, as Arthur's is. Accordingly, Conti interprets Minerva's Gorgon effect as illustrating how the guilty are intimidated by the wise and vigilant man, but also notes her shield's dazzling crystal-clear surface ("clarissimum & crystallinum"), setting off how clear is the truth and the reasoned path of the wise, especially in granting perspective to navigate life's vagaries and misfortunes.⁶⁸ Just so, Arthur's diamond shield is about the impact on the passive viewer, but also concerns the active rationality of its wielder. Hence the Merlin-made diamond shield's emblemizing the magical meaning-making power of *The Faerie Queene* itself: the shield is extant in Faerieland, "where yet it may be seene, if sought" (I.vii.36.9). If we exert our faculties to find them, Spenser's shimmering mythopoeia illuminates the *real* truths of our world. The diamond shield is the very picture of the ideal of readerly exertion striving toward understanding.

Arthur's Minerva-like stand against Orgoglio, pitting reasoning against prideful hypersimplifying, in other ways resembles his stand against Disdaine. Orgoglio regards Arthur as any opponent, with "scornefull wrath and high disdaine" (I.viii.7.2), and Disdaine, accompanied by Scorne, has a "wyde" contempt for his enemies, "in his ouerweening pryde" (VI.vii.42.3–4). Neither discerns a particular situation. Each armed with blunt, club-like weapons, the smashing down of which is compared to lightning strikes (I.viii.9,

VI.viii.8.6), Orgoglio and Disdaine hammer at opposition with reckless violence, an unthinking aggression that is contrasted with Arthur's craftiness. When Orgoglio sallies out, "Him thought at first encounter to haue slaine. / But wise and wary was that noble Pere"; Arthur's mind is busy with how to win, as hinted by how he won't "thinke" to do what "booted nought" (I.viii.7.5–9). Disdaine, too, attacks as though assuming automatic victory, and here the fight is couched in terms recalling disputation: defied by Enias, Disdaine "stayd not aunswer to inuent," his club proclaiming the entirety of "His mindes sad message" (VI.viii.8.1–3); Disdaine disdaining invention, he is met with a different and "new debate" with Arthur, "doubtfully" thrusting and parrying back and forth, a "long discourse" that frustrates the giant (VI.viii.13–14). In frustration, both Orgoglio and Disdaine become even more concentrated and one-tracked in their blank rage: Orgoglio's losing his arm lends him "force" that "vnites" in "rage more strong" (I.viii.18.1–5), and Disdaine "Resolued in one t'assemble all his force, / And make one end of him without ruth or remorse" (VI.viii.14.8–9). Unthinking rage leaves each giant vulnerable, and Arthur opportunistically capitalizes by chopping each at the knee and toppling him (I.viii.22–23, VI.viii.15–16), perhaps suggesting reasoning's undermining at the foundations what is insupportable. Of more definitive significance is how Arthur follows up each giant's fall with an inquiring approach amenable to careful and flexible thinking: tempering his rage, he interrogates Ignaro politely with an array of probing questions and, with the blind old man having nothing to say, investigates systematically by process of elimination, trying all the dungeon's doors in search of Redcrosse (I.viii.34–37); then, staying his hand, he heeds Mirabella's strange plea to spare Disdaine, whose death would harm her, and "gan of her inquire, / What meaning mote those vncouth words comprize" (VI.viii.18.3–4). Further, in each scene Arthur adjusts when his reasoning proves incorrect. As he finds, gravity in an old man and desire to be saved in a beautiful damsel in distress are separable, not inseparable, subject-adjunct arguments (I.viii.33, VI.viii.18, 23).⁶⁹ Assumptions need to be rethought.

Arthur's thinking contrasts with the giants' unthinking most importantly, however, in how he both uses and promotes reason in dialogue. With the Orgoglio sequence his interlocutor is Una. On the verge of despair over Redcrosse's capture when he meets her, Una must be disabused of what is perilously close to Orgoglio-thought, repeatedly holding her hapless/hopeless state to be absolute and conversation about it to be useless. Arthur, in a Ramist vein dressing up logic with rhetoric well suited to the situation—"Faire feeling words he wisely gan display, / And for her humor fitting purpose

faine”—puts the first place first and seeks to learn the “cause it selfe” (I.vii.38.6–8). But Una immediately discounts the efficacy of all words, others’ words being unable to “reach” her and her own words better off “hidden,” contentless weeping and wailing substituting for them (I.vii.39). With a continued gentle tact itself evincing words’ helpfulness, Arthur points out the “Tautologie” she is lapsing into, for words certainly cannot help if she insists they cannot: “Found neuer help, who neuer would his hurts impart” (I.vii.40). Having made help into a necessarily false axiom, otherwise called impossible, she has imposed on herself the necessity of being helpless;⁷⁰ meanwhile the conversation she avoids imparts possibility.

The famous ensuing exchange proves Arthur right even *qua* exchange:⁷¹

O but (quoth she) great griefe will not be tould,
 And can more easily be thought, then said.
 Right so (quoth he) but he, that neuer would,
 Could neuer: will to might giues greatest aid.
 But griefe (quoth she) does greater grow displaid,
 If then it find not helpe, and breeds despaire.
 Despaire breeds not (quoth he) where faith is staid.
 No faith so fast (quoth she) but flesh does paire.
 Flesh may empaire (quoth he) but reason can repaire.
 (I.vii.41)

She has said that grief is best vented wordlessly with tears and not articulated; now grief cannot be fully articulated in words, and grief articulated with words leads to despair—it all amounts to a reiterated case for non-articulation as the sole recourse. Arthur contends with this stubborn solipsism. What he means doctrinally by “faith” here is not clear, but he does clearly establish a basis from which something can be discussed.⁷² “Faith” might be belief in personal salvation, or in providence, or in the possibility of scenarios other than worst case; it could mean looking up from the world toward heaven, looking toward heaven’s control over the world, or looking at how the world’s unpredictability can produce favorable as well as unfavorable outcomes. There are at least three senses, any one of which furnishes somewhere to look and something to think about, as opposed to despair, which, in the same way as pride, is deleterious to thought, a cognitive dead end. In fact, Una insinuates that not merely dauntingly ill fortune but even mortality itself, “flesh,” tends to impair faith and engender, “breed,” despair, as though being human were a material cause of thought suppression. The pithiness of Arthur’s reply belies its effectiveness in advocating for reason:

human infirmity may compromise faith, but reason can—*can*—shore it up. How so? Perhaps reason can recall God's love despite circumstances; or perhaps reason can consider how circumstances are part of an overarching design; or perhaps reason can assess the circumstances and tamp down exaggerated pessimism. What is incontestable is that ideas have been generated about idea generation; that there are different ways to think about the problem becomes apparent. Reason does repair her weakened faith. It repairs it by disproving the inevitability of contentless despair, and by *actuating* the healing power of invention in opening up these possibilities and many others. Moreover, it is paramount to notice how reason repairs faith via dialogue. Arthur has induced Una to acknowledge alternative views by first acknowledging her view and seeking to understand it better. He refutes her case for nondisclosure, but only because he has listened to and engaged her; he then earns the right to listen to her story and engage her particular situation. She harkens to "His goodly reason, and well guided speach" (I.vii.42.1), but the cause and the effect of this is his harkening to her.

Dialogue is even more powerfully consequential in Arthur's exchange with present-Mirabella, for now he is more the learner, his interlocutor the teacher. Sentenced to her seemingly Sisyphean penance by Cupid's court, Mirabella turns out to be much more than an object of misogynistic fantasies of control over female consent.⁷³ In refusing to let Arthur countermand Cupid's ruling, Mirabella seems complicit in patriarchal injustice, as though punishing herself excessively for having chosen exemption from love, her beauty, troublingly, making her participation compulsory. But this, as she leads Arthur to discover, is only one interpretation. Another is that the choice is hers as to when she becomes free of Disdaine. Arthur requires several steps to this reasoning. As he does with Una, he approaches Mirabella with questions about and acknowledgements of her story and her voice, yet now he also tries logically to contextualize her. First he infers, through the places of genus/species and greater/lessers, that Mirabella is the kind of oppressed victim to whose aid knights are committed, so much so that were there not knights supernatural aid would be provided her (VI.viii.18.6–9). Her degree of suitability to knightly sympathy appears great. But then, learning of Cupid's sentence upon her past cruelty, he infers from the place of testimony, admitting Love to be "iust," that her tribulations are not so undeserved as they appear (VI.viii.23.1).⁷⁴ Still, he questions why she and not her churlish companions toils with the vessels she carries, toil being much more "comely" for them than for her (VI.viii.23.7–9). Neither fallacious nor discourteous, his reasoning is incomplete, and to his credit he recognizes this and continues probing and discriminating; we see that logic is a means to courtesy, as it is to

any virtue. For him to rest on initial inferences would be to disdain her individuality, but validating her feelings hardly calls for a halt to inferences. Rather, it calls for further and more refined ones. It is by those vessels, she tells him, that she expresses her depth and sincerity of contrition (VI.viii.24)—her particular need to own her guilt outweighs what is comely. Thus, having “hearkned wisely to her tale” (VI.viii.25.1), he draws two conclusions: that Cupid is judicious in softening hard hearts (VI.viii.25.2–4); and that, since meeting him has given her the real possibility of freedom, whether to free herself is up to her (“Vnto your selfe I freely leaue to chose” [VI.viii.29.6–9]). Both conclusions affirm that her feelings matter, the former her feeling that her heart was hard and needed softening, and the latter her feeling that only she can tell when this has adequately been accomplished.

* * *

Through dialogue infused with reasoned inquiry, Arthur helps Una prevent Orgoglio-thought, and, upholding the right of Mirabella to determine for herself how to overcome Disdaine, Arthur prevents disdain in himself. Such episodes, exemplifying the virtue of logic with the virtue-knights and activating it in us as we read, are not rare in *The Faerie Queene*, and indeed I am submitting this effect as a norm for the poem. But insofar as they depend on the Gigantomachia, the sequences studied here are geared to enhance our sense of logic’s virtue by emphasizing the gigantic, titanic terribleness of antireason and closed-mindedness. To be clear: this essay does not purport to remove or resolve the poem’s ideological tensions, and it does not claim Spenser for a Ramist specifically or dispute the affiliation generally between Ramism and Protestantism in their simplifying and iconoclastic energies. What I do argue is that the poem opens up interpretive possibilities beyond the ideological and invites us to address such possibilities, ideological and otherwise, not merely with an acceptance of indeterminacy but with reasoned inquiry, analysis, and, where available, conversation. A Ramist sensibility could have different effects, those traced by Ong but other effects as well. With Spenser, Ramist concepts can shed light on the importance he placed on idea generation, especially in the vein of inventing distinctions and discriminations. With Giants, furthermore, Spenser explores the fruitfulness of invention while delineating for his poem the most fundamental distinction of all: that between viciously circular, empty confusion and productive, constructive complexity.

Marquette University, USA

NOTES

1. All *The Faerie Queene* (FQ) quotations are from *The Faerie Queene*, 2nd ed., ed. A. C. Hamilton et al. (Harlow: Longman, 2007). For this quotation as epitomizing the hermeneutics of FQ, see A. Bartlett Giamatti, *Play of Double Senses: Spenser's Faerie Queene* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 121–26.

2. For important formulations of this dilemma, see, e.g., Kenneth Gross, *Spenserian Poetics: Idolatry, Iconoclasm, and Magic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 15–19; and Joseph Campana, “On Not Defending Poetry: Spenser, Suffering, and the Energy of Affect,” *PMLA* 120 (2005): 33–48. For a representative of each side, see for ambiguity Andrew Wadowski, “Spenser, Tasso, and The Ethics of Allegory,” *Modern Philology* 111 (2014): 365–83; and for ideology Jamey E. Graham, “Character in *The Faerie Queene*: Spenser's Phenomenology of Morals,” *Modern Philology* 115 (2017): 31–52.

3. I will capitalize “Giants” when referring directly to the collection of classical myths about enormous creatures rising up against the rule of Zeus/Jupiter. The rebellion of the Titans is enfolded into this collection, since, as Anne Lake Prescott notes, Spenser, like others, “confuses” them. See her “Giants,” in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 332–33. For the ideological ambiguity in this confusion, see Clark Hulse, “Spenser and the Myth of Power,” *Studies in Philology* 85 (1988): 378–89, esp. 282–83.

4. For the conception of giants as historically real, see, e.g., Walter Stephens, *Giants in Those Days: Folklore, Ancient History, and Nationalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 5, 84–92; and Arthur B. Ferguson, *Utter Antiquity: Perceptions of Prehistory in Renaissance England* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 106–13. For a case for the inherently ambivalent political meaning of giants, especially as figures for the collective and the state, see Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 70–103. For the ambiguity of giants along axes of psychoanalysis and gender as well as politics, see Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), xi–xiii, passim; for insights into the Galfridian appropriation of biblical giants, 32–35. For parallel psychosocial meanings between classical, biblical, and romance giants, see Sylvia Huot, *Outsiders: The Humanity and Inhumanity of Giants in Medieval French Prose Romance* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 240–43.

5. Stephens, *Giants*, 11, 66–67, 99–100.

6. Huot, *Outsiders*, 8.

7. James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of “The Faerie Queene”* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 264–74.

8. Prescott, “Giants,” 333.

9. Susanne Wofford, *The Choice of Achilles: The Ideology of Figure in the Epic* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 334–53, quotation at 334–35.
10. Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 373–76.
11. Tullia Giersberg, “‘The art of mightie words, that men can charme’: Language, Reason, and Humanity in *The Faerie Queene*,” *Spenser Studies* 30 (2015): 58, 67–68.
12. Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.577–84, in *Virgil*, vol. 1, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1986), 546; Dante, *Inferno* 31, in *The Divine Comedy One: Hell*, trans. Dorothy L. Sayers (London: Penguin, 1949), 264–70. For Dante’s particular synthesis of classical Giants with Nimrod and Old Testament giants, see Stephens, *Giants*, 67–70.
13. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.315–31, in *Metamorphoses*, vol. 1, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1984), 260; *Fasti* 3.793–808, in *Fasti*, trans. James George Frazer (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1986), 178–80.
14. *Fasti* 5.34–46.
15. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.28, in *De natura deorum and Academica*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1979), 190–92; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 5.5–6, trans. William Fletcher, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 140–42.
16. Lucan, *De bello civili* 1.33–45, 3.307–20, 7.129–50, in *Lucan*, trans. J. D. Duff (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1988), 4–6, 136–38, 378–80.
17. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, chap. 8, in *Classical Literary Criticism*, trans. T. S. Dorsch (London: Penguin, 1965), 108–9; James I. Porter, *The Sublime in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 161–66, quote at 162.
18. Claudian, *Gigantomachia*, esp. 60–73, in *Claudian*, vol. 2, trans. Maurice Platnauer (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1922), 280–91. This and all translations from Latin are my own, though I have consulted translations where available.
19. Statius, *Thebaid* 10.827–11.11, in *Statius*, vol. 2, trans. J. H. Mozley (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1989), 378–91.
20. Dante, *Inferno* 14.49–60.
21. Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.20.7–10, in *Macrobius: Saturnalia*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Robert A. Kaster (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 2011), 272–73.
22. Boccaccio, *Genealogia deorum gentilium* 4.68.12–18, in *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Jon Solomon, I Tatti Renaissance Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 610–13; Jean de Chassanion, *De gigantibus eorumque reliquiis* (Spira, 1587), 10. Chassanion’s work is noted by Prescott, who also notes that Spenser ignored the snake-legs aspect (“Giants,” 332–33).
23. Natalis Comes, *Mythologiae* 1.17 (fol. 24), 2.1 (fol. 29), 6.20 (fol. 194), 6.21 (fol. 196) (Venice, 1567) (New York: Garland, 1976). For Conti’s influence on Spenser and other writers see John Mulryan and Steven Brown, “Introduction,” in *Natale*

Conti's *Mythologiae*, 2 vols., trans. Mulryan and Brown (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2006), 1:xxxvi–xlili.

24. Melanchthon, *Philosophiae moralis epitome*, in *Opera qui supersunt omnia*, 28 vols., ed. H. E. Bindseil (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1963), 16:119.

25. Melanchthon, *Erotemata dialectices*, in *Opera*, 13:585–86, 514, 647.

26. Erasmus, *Enchiridion christiani militis . . . in Englishshe* (London, 1541), chaps. 37, 13.

27. Erasmus, *De copia* 1.947, 2.846–48, 2.929–45, in *Opera omnia* 1.6, ed. Betty I. Knott (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1988), 106, 232, 235–36.

28. Erasmus, *Ciceronianus*, in *Opera omnia* 1.2, ed. Jean-Claude Margolin and Pierre Mesnard (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1971), 631–32, 704.

29. Cicero, *De officiis* 1.31, trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1990), 112–13.

30. Erasmus, *Ciceronianus*, 708; and *De pueris instituendis*, in *Opera omnia* 1.2, 45.

31. Conti, *Mythologiae* 4.5 (fol. 97).

32. For Scholastic dialectic, including predication theory, and the humanist reaction, see Alan Perreiah, "Humanist Critiques of Scholastic Dialectic," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 13 (1982): 3–22.

33. Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 287. For the Ramist rejection of predication and formal logic, and inculcation of simplicity and certainty, see 182–95. See also Ong's introduction to Milton's *Art of Logic*, in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, vol. 8, ed. Maurice Kelley et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University 1982), 164–66, 202–4.

34. Lisa Jardine, "The Place of Dialectic Teaching in Sixteenth-Century Cambridge," *Studies in the Renaissance* 21 (1974): 57–60; E. Jennifer Ashworth, "Logic in Late Sixteenth-Century England: Humanist Dialectic and the New Aristotelianism," *Studies in Philology* 88 (1991): 231–35; Donald K. McKim, *Ramism in William Perkins's Theology* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 21–31; Thomas O. Sloane, *On the Contrary: The Protocol of Traditional Rhetoric* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 218–19.

35. For Ramism at Spenser's Cambridge, and Harvey and Fraunce, see Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser*, 59–63, 109, 342.

36. Abraham Fraunce, *The Lawyer's Logic* (1588; Menston: Scolar Press, 1969), fols. 35, 6, "To the Learned Lawyers," sig. ¶¶3; Fraunce, *The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembroke's Yuychurch, Entitled Amintas Dale*, ed. Gerald Snare (Northridge: California State University, 1975), 23–24. For Fraunce's Ramist rationalism, see Michael Hetherington, "'The Coherence of the Text' in Sixteenth-Century England: Reading Literature and Law with Abraham Fraunce," *Studies in Philology* 115 (2018): 641–78. On Fraunce's Giants as exemplifying antirebellion, see Michael O'Connell, "Giant with the Scales," in *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 331.

37. Rosemond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 331–53, esp. 337–38, 341–42. For Ramism’s democratizing, see James Veazie Skalnik, *Ramus and Reform: University and Church at the End of the Renaissance* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, Truman State University, 2002), 42–62, Fraunce quoted on 61–62. See also the case for developing Tuve’s use of Ramism for interpretation by Emma Annette Wilson, “Reading the ‘Unseemly Logomachy’: Ramist Method in Action in Seventeenth-Century English Literature,” in *Ramus, Pedagogy and the Liberal Arts: Ramism in Britain and the Wider World*, ed. Steven J. Reid and Emma Annette Wilson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 69–88.
38. Fraunce, *Logic*, fols. 3, 82.
39. Peter Ramus, *Aristotelicae animadversiones*, in *Dialecticae institutiones; Aristotelicae animadversiones* (1543) (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann, 1964), fol. 50.
40. Gabriel Harvey, *Gabrielis Harueii Rhetor* (London, 1577), 65, 58–59. For Ramism’s influence on Harvey, see Lisa Jardine, “Gabriel Harvey: Exemplary Ramist and Pragmatic Humanist,” *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 70 (1986): 36–48. For an interesting analysis of Harvey’s earthquake letter to Spenser, referencing the Giants’ and Titans’ association with Epicureanism to express Harvey’s concerns about Ramism’s limited ability to contain irony, see Gerard Passante, “The Art of Reading Earthquakes: On Harvey’s Wit, Ramus’s Method, and the Renaissance of Lucretius,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 61 (2008): 792–832, esp. 816–17.
41. O’Connell, “Giant,” 332. See also James Holstun, “The Giants’ Faction: Spenser, Heywood, and the Mid-Tudor Crisis,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37 (2007): 336–46.
42. Judith Anderson, *Words That Matter: Linguistic Reception in Renaissance England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 169.
43. *Ibid.*, 167–89. See also Giamatti, *Play*, 89–91; Wofford, *Choice*, 345–47; Annabelle Patterson, *Reading between the Lines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 80–116, esp. 90–93; Paul Suttie, *Self-Interpretation in “The Faerie Queene”* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006), 186–88; Jane Grogan, *Exemplary Spenser: Visual and Poetic Pedagogy in “The Faerie Queene”* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 92–93; Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser*, 373–75; Giersberg, “Language,” 67–68.
44. Andrew Zurcher, *Spenser’s Legal Language: Law and Poetry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2007), 141–43.
45. See Patterson, *Reading*, 95–96.
46. I remain grateful to Denna Iammarino for this insight.
47. Fraunce, *Logic*, fol. 93.
48. Ramus, *Animadversiones*, fol. 42.
49. Fraunce, *Logic*, fol. 4.
50. Anderson, *Words*, 182–83; Fraunce, *Logic*, fols. 1, 17, 44, 49.
51. Fraunce, *Logic*, fol. 57.
52. *Ibid.*, fols. 5–6, 18.

53. Ibid., fol. 19.
54. Anderson, *Words*, 174–80. See Hamilton’s notes on stanzas 41–42. For the opposite extreme, that Artegall wins by dint of biblical authority, see T. K. Dunseath, *Spenser’s Allegory of Justice in Book Five of “The Faerie Queene”* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 94–112.
55. Fraunce, *Logic*, fol. 81.
56. Ibid., fols. 28, 89.
57. Ibid., fol. 99.
58. Melanchthon, *Dialectices*, 13:585–86.
59. Nohrnberg, *Analogy*, 706–12, 264–68.
60. For the ambiguities of Orgoglio’s repeating of Lucifera, see John Watkins, “Polemic and Nostalgia: Medieval Crosscurrents in Spenser’s Allegory of Pride,” *Spenser Studies* 18 (2003): 41–57.
61. See Hamilton’s note to 6.7.41–43. Daunger, a staple of the love-allegory tradition (see also 3.12.11), might be especially pertinent. Personifying either the beloved’s scornfulness or the lover’s horror thereof, Daunger embodies thought-paralysis in love.
62. For my argument on Despaire as a continuation of Orgoglio, see Curran, “Despaire and Briton Moniments: Moments of Protestant Clarity in *The Faerie Queene*,” *Reformation* 25 (2020): 175–91.
63. Fraunce, *Logic*, fols. 47–48.
64. See Nohrnberg, *Analogy*, 195.
65. For the seminal discussion see S. K. Heninger Jr., “The Orgoglio Episode in *The Faerie Queene*,” *ELH* 26 (1959): 171–87.
66. For the shield as ideological oversimplification see Wofford, *Choice*, 260–62; for a deconstruction of its indeterminacy see Gross, *Spenserian Poetics*, 134–44.
67. Claudian, *Gigantomachia*, 91–113.
68. Conti, *Mythologiae* 4.5 (fol. 97).
69. See Fraunce, *Logic*, fol. 43.
70. Ibid., fol. 88.
71. See Christopher Bond, *Spenser, Milton, and the Redemption of the Epic Hero* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 119–21.
72. See Richard Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 17–23.
73. That she *is* partly this is well demonstrated by Anne Shaver, “Rereading Mirabella,” *Spenser Studies* 9 (1988): 211–26. But for legal concepts complicating her case, see Zurcher, *Spenser’s Legal Language*, 170–74; Danila Sokolov, “Mirabella’s Crime and the Laws of Love in *The Faerie Queene* 6.7–8,” *Studies in Philology* 115 (2018): 73–98.
74. See Fraunce, *Logic*, fol. 65.