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“SPEACHES SEEMING FITT”: RHETORIC AND COURTESY IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

by

MICHELLE GOLDEN

Under the Direction of Paul J. Voss

ABSTRACT

The practice of courtesy was of the utmost importance in Renaissance England; courtesy was tied to social standing, virtue, and civility. Spenser joins in a rich tradition of courtesy literature by including the Book of Courtesy in *The Faerie Queene*. His presentation of courtesy goes far beyond the limited discussion of the concept by his predecessors and peers; instead of limiting his depiction of courtesy to “courteous” behavior, Spenser includes every aspect of courtesy, including courteous and completely discourteous behavior and effective and ineffective expressions of courtliness.

Spenser’s courtesy involves layers of complexity that exist in various social spheres throughout *The Faerie Queene*. The wide-ranging nature of the poem enables Spenser to explore virtue in varied physical and allegorical contexts, thus allowing the reader to view courtesy in multiple contexts.

Spenser's conception of courtesy may be viewed in four discreet types of characters: moral courtiers, unrheterical but inwardly courteous individuals, artful courtiers, and discourteous individuals. A close analysis of each type of courteous or discourteous character leads to a more nuanced and fuller understanding of Spenser's portrayal of courtesy. This study reaches outside the Legend of Courtesy and views the virtue of courtesy throughout the entirety of *The Faerie Queene*. Focal characters include, but are not limited to, Arthur, Britomart, Florimell, Redcrosse, Salvage Man, Satyrs, the Salvage Nation and Brigands, Duessa, Archimago, and Malecasta. An analysis of each of these widely differing characters contributes to the reader's understanding of courtesy and the relationship between courtesy and rhetoric in Spenser's work.

INDEX WORDS: Spenser, Courtesy, *The Faerie Queene*, Calidore, Rhetoric, Renaissance.

“SPEACHES SEEMING FITT”: RHETORIC AND COURTESY IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

by

MICHELLE GOLDEN

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in English

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2015

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2015

“SPEACHES SEEMING FITT”: RHETORIC AND COURTESY IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

by

MICHELLE GOLDEN

Committee Chair: Paul J. Voss

Committee: Beth Burmester

Wayne Erickson

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2015

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my son Edmund. Thank you for giving me perspective on what is truly important in life and inspiring me every day to see the world through new eyes.

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First, thank you to my all of my academic advisors and mentors, particularly Paul J. Voss and Wayne Erickson. I first met both professors as an undergraduate student in August 2005, and they have shaped my academic career and taught me how to think critically and write well. It has been a long journey but a good one.

I cannot begin to express my love and indebtedness to my husband Jeff and my mom Susan for the many sacrifices they have made to help me fulfill my dream of earning a doctorate. I could not have done it without their time, energy, and support. Thank you, Jeff, for always being a voice of reason and providing a layman's (always insightful) perspective on my work.

I must also mention that my work time would not have been possible without the wonderful caregivers at Arrow in Athens, Georgia, who cared for my child so well that I was not distracted by worry while I was working. It has often been said that it takes a village to raise a child; this seems particularly true when the parent is a graduate student.

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1 CONTEXTS AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* emerges from the traditions of epic poetry and medieval romance and offers complex allegorical representations of the virtues of holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship, justice, and courtesy. The poet's own description of his work, penned in his "Letter to Raleigh," attributes a rhetorical purpose to the poem: to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline."¹ The letter has been subject to a great deal of scrutiny concerning the veracity of Spenser's intent for his work, but much of the controversy² comes from the inconsistencies between Spenser's supposed vision for his work and the poem we now have (particularly the discrepancy in length, as he originally proposed writing 12 books). The claim of the didactic purpose of the poem is less hotly debated.³ If Spenser's claim is sincere, *The Faerie Queene* may qualify as a rhetorical work in the tradition of conduct or courtesy literature. Indeed, Daniel Javitch notes that "some readers . . . consider *The Faerie Queene* as a courtesy book in verse" ("Courtesy Books" 197). This places Spenser in the rhetorical tradition of classical rhetoricians from ancient Greece and Rome as well as popular Italian Renaissance courtesy writers Baldesar Castiglione and Stefano Guazzo. Spenser's participation in the field of courtesy literature, the rhetorical nature of the concept of courtesy, and the historical importance of rhetoric to humanist thought and thus Renaissance writing all suggest a need for an analysis of Spenser's rhetorical purposes within *The Faerie Queene*.

¹ References to "The Letter to Raleigh" are from A.C. Hamilton's 2001 Edition of *The Faerie Queene*, 713-18.

² See, for example, Baker, Buckman, and Hamilton ("Spenser's Letter to Raleigh").

³ For a full discussion of the reception of the criticism around the Letter to Raleigh, see Variorum, vol. 1, 314-62 and Erickson ("Spenser's Letter to Raleigh and the Literary Politics of *The Faerie Queene's* 1590 Publication").

While contemporary academic practices tend to separate literary and rhetorical study, the two existed more harmoniously in the Renaissance. In fact, Don Paul Abbott calls the relationship between Renaissance literature and rhetoric “coterminous,” maintaining that “rhetorical precept and literary production are so intertwined as to be virtually inseparable” (“The Renaissance” 84). Walter J. Ong notes that Renaissance literature “bore everywhere the mark of rhetorical flair and rhetorical control” (67). While the term rhetoric may be as multifaceted as the individuals who utter it, it here may be briefly defined as the art of speaking or writing persuasively. Literary work from the Renaissance period is inextricably linked to rhetoric through the Renaissance resurgence of Classical works and the practices of the public education system set in place by Erasmus and other humanist educators. In the English Renaissance, the Classical form of rhetoric as oratory was adapted more to writing than speaking,⁴ but rhetoric also takes on the form of courtesy theory.

Courtesy is perhaps the most rhetorical of concepts, even from its roots. C. S. Lewis refers to Renaissance courtesy as “the poetry of conduct” (Lewis 351). Given its connection to eloquence, courtesy may well be poetic, but it also represents a more practical form of rhetorical expression. Abbott maintains that the Renaissance humanists “enthusiastically embraced” the Ciceronian ideal that “rhetoric was the force that created and sustained the possibility of humans living together in a political community” (“Renaissance Rhetoric” 595). Cicero’s world was dominated by powerful individual orators; the Elizabethan world was socially more complex, and speeches alone could not guarantee harmonious living. Hence, courtesy takes the place that oratory had maintained in Cicero’s context. A central tenant of Cicero’s oratory that Renaissance writing particularly adopted was the ideal of eloquence—the art of appropriate harmonious public address. While eloquence reigned supreme over written

⁴ See Bizzell and Herzberg, “Renaissance Rhetoric,” 475.

expression in the Renaissance, courtesy became the highest pursuit of the Renaissance individual's public persona, which encompassed the whole realm of social interaction, including conversation, formal speech, fencing, dance, letter writing, poetry writing, hunting, etc. Leonard Ashley notes the subtle change of ideals from the Ancient to the Renaissance cultures:

The ideal of the Greeks was the philosopher; of the Romans, the orator. The chivalric ideal of the Middle Ages was the warrior, the very perfect gentle knight. In the Sixteenth Century the word 'gentleman' gained currency as the description of the ideal of the Renaissance, the suave and accomplished courtier attending on his prince. (110)

The courtier—to some, the embodiment of courtesy—became that ideal towards which the ambitious members of society strove. Walter H. Beale calls the most direct rhetorical predecessor of courtesy, decorum, “the standard of what is fitting, becoming, and appropriate in public discourse” (168). Courtesy, then, as a reified form of decorum, may be defined as what is fitting, becoming, and appropriate in all public interaction and, by extension, to civil society.

Courtesy also has a rhetorical goal; “insofar as courteous behavior was public, it should be conceived as a kind of rhetoric, designed to persuade an audience of one's identity” (Whigham, "Courtesy as a Social Code" 196). Indeed, this rhetorical purpose provides the basis for Stephen Greenblatt's influential concept of self-fashioning in the sixteenth century; he explains that the period is characterized by “an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process” (2). Courtesy therefore takes on the complexities of social class, politics, and even virtue. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser

moves beyond a treatise on manners and beyond the rhetorical outward identity, seeking instead “not merely to describe his idea of the perfect courtier but to explain the origin of courtesy itself” (Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 163). In this sense, Spenser goes beyond what many Renaissance courtesy theorists sought to do. He extended the idea of courtesy literature from a guide for individual self-promotion to a set of practices that encourages harmonious living in a society. Central to the “widening and deepening of the meaning of courtesy” (Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 163) in Spenser’s work is the idea of harmony between expression and meaning. Rhetoric has been unable to shed the longest-standing bias against it—that it consists of empty or meaningless words and manipulates the audience. This bias, however, does not resonate with the humanist perception of rhetoric. Hanna Gray notes the important connection between thought and expression in “true eloquence” to humanist thinkers, explaining that “true eloquence . . . could arise only out of a harmonious union between wisdom and style” (498). The speaker of *The Faerie Queene* expresses a similar sentiment in the proem to Book 6 (The Legend of Courtesy) in the lines, “Vertues seat is deepe within the mynd / And not in outward shows, but inward thoughts defynd” (6.proem.5). Despite this ideal harmony, true courtesy eludes most of Spenser’s characters, and wide discrepancies between these “inward thoughts” and “outward shows” dominate Spenser’s work.

An analysis of how Spenser uses courtesy in *The Faerie Queene* illuminates the importance of the virtue and its complexity in the sixteenth century. Though only Book 6 specifically focuses on courtesy, an extension of the analysis to characters in other books of the poem offers a more comprehensive view of Spenser’s conception of courtesy. This rhetorical analysis of courtesy reveals four “types” of courtesy that find expression within Spenser’s epic;

Spenser's characters fall along a spectrum of rhetorical courtesy that identifies them as discourteous, artful, unrhetorical, or courteous. This dissertation will analyze the place of *The Faerie Queene* within the tradition of Renaissance Rhetoric and explain Spenser's use of manifestations of courtesy to represent these four distinct courtesy "types" within his longest work.

1.2 Rhetoric in the Renaissance

Rhetoric in the English Renaissance is marked by two disparate yet inextricably linked characteristics: at once a reverent regard for eloquence and, at the same time, a distrust of the power of that eloquence. Humanist thinkers embraced a Ciceronian ideal wherein "true eloquence . . . could arise only out of a harmonious union between wisdom and style; its aim was to guide men toward virtue and worthwhile goals, not to mislead them for vicious or trivial purposes" (Gray 498). So key was this concept of harmonious eloquence that James Baumlin and Joseph Hughes dub the period "an age of eloquence" due to "its great flowering of Ciceronian humanism" (216). Javitch notes that to the Renaissance poet, "the possession of eloquence was more important than the abstract knowledge" (*Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* 20). Richard Lanham notes that Renaissance literature features a persistent "delight in words, an infatuation with rhetoric, a stylistic explosion" (33). Humanists had a consummate respect for "the mysterious power inherent in language" (Rhodes 29). Poets, orators, lovers, and letter-writers in the Renaissance all sought pristine eloquence, holding the characteristic above all others.

Eloquence, however, also had a dark side. Eloquence and rhetoric in the Renaissance were "hedged about with a wary skepticism educators and writers alike knew" (Kinney 386).

Lanham expresses the opinion that “rhetorical” is synonymous with “immoral” or “empty”; he claims that “the rhetorical stylist has no central self to be true to . . . At his center lurks a truly Ciceronian vacuity” (27) and that “Rhetorical man is an actor and insincerity is the actor’s mode of being” (27). Stanley Fish similarly notes an

opposition between two kinds of language: on the one hand, language that faithfully reflects or reports on matters of fact uncolored by any personal or partisan agenda or desire; and on the other hand, language that is infected by partisan agendas and desires, and therefore colors and distorts the facts which it purports to reflect. It is the use of the second kind of language that makes one a rhetorician, while adherence to the first kind makes one a seeker after truth and an objective observer of the way things are. (205)

Catherine Nicholson warns that the Renaissance conception of rhetoric “allows that the attractions of eloquence are not necessarily identical to the imperatives of the common good” (48), and Neil Rhodes suggests that George Puttenham’s English rhetoric⁵ illustrates a “power of eloquence” that “is not to be trusted” (9). Spenser’s contemporaries build upon a long foundation of distrust. Erasmus, despite using Cicero’s oratory as foundation of his educational philosophy, admonishes in *The Education of a Christian Prince*, “if anyone praises your easy flowing speech, remember that such terms of commendation are applied to the sophists and rhetoricians” (1.134). Suspicion of rhetoric leads the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome* to begin its entry on “classical sophists” with, “the word ‘sophist’ today suggests an intellectual trickster, a clever manipulator of words and arguments who cares little for truth or justice” (Gagarin). This view of rhetoric also leads Longinus to warn that when studying

⁵ Puttenham’s *The Arte of English Poesie* was published in 1598 and often considered more comprehensive than the first English rhetoric, Thomas Wilson’s *The Art of Rhetorique* (1553).

“distinguished passages in poetry or prose . . . we must beware of the mere outward semblance of greatness, which is overlaid with many carelessly fashioned ornaments but on closer scrutiny proves to be hollow conceit” (7.1). Gray opposes this distrust of rhetoric in her article entitled “Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence.” She defends rhetoric in humanist thinking, insisting that

The term "rhetoric" must be divorced from its pejorative associations. By "rhetoric" the humanists did not intend an empty pomposity, a willful mendacity, a love of display for its own sake, an extravagant artificiality, a singular lack of originality, or a necessary subordination of substance to form and ornament. Nor did the humanists identify rhetoric with "sophistry" in the popular sense, as the specious manipulation of language and argument for purposes of deception. (498)

Abbot concurs with Gray’s observations, stating that “in the minds of the humanists and in the grammar school classrooms rhetoric and humanism were intertwined” (“Rhetoric and Writing in Renaissance Europe and England” 97). Marta Spranzi notes that “rhetoric held a crucially important place in Renaissance culture” and that “most humanists were professors of rhetoric and the humanities, as opposed to professional philosophers” (65), suggesting that the stigma of rhetoric was less potent in the period. Similarly, John Monfasani notes, “Classical rhetoric was central to [education] because, humanists believed, it held the key to classical eloquence” (171). Such disparate views of rhetoric—as mental usury or as humanistic ideal—seem contradictory.⁶ Yet both views persist, with the long-reaching distrust of rhetoric, which began

⁶ Abbott suggests that this discrepancy stems from the fact that “the history of Renaissance literature is being rewritten by individuals more sympathetic to rhetoric than was an earlier generation of scholars” (“The Renaissance” 75). Murrin attributes the “confusion” about “the relationship of poetry to rhetoric” to the Renaissance identification of poetry with allegory” (3).

with the sophists in ancient Greece and persists into to the modern day, undermining the ideal humanistic eloquence. The following brief history of the reception and development of rhetoric and eloquence from the ancient period to the Renaissance will contextualize the complexity of the rhetorical world in which Spenser wrote.

The roots of the suspicion about rhetoric and distrust of language lie in ancient Greece with the sophistic rhetoricians. The philosophy espoused by early sophistic rhetoricians has spurred controversy in the field of rhetoric from its very beginnings. Sophistic rhetoric cannot be easily defined because usage of the term has varied widely through time, and the differences between sophistic rhetoric and rhetoric (or oratory) are not always clearly distinct. Edward Schiappa suggests that some of the difficulty in defining the concept comes from the fact that we use the “modern phrase” sophistic rhetoric to define “a collection of rhetorical practices and doctrines” that was not given a distinct label in the classical period. He also suggests that the term “sophist” has been applied “rather inconsistently according to the perspective of the writer” (682). Sophistic rhetoric refers to the general practices of the older sophists, a group who George A. Kennedy calls “the radicals of their time [because] they introduced new methods of teaching, questioned traditional values, and encouraged their students to do the same” (231). At its core, sophism is a way of learning about and knowing the world that involves experimenting with and challenging ideas through the varied use of language. Much of the early distrust towards sophists may have come from the fact that they were not from Greece but were foreigners who traveled from place to place, teaching “political excellence, for a fee” (Rountree 681). They gained respect as teachers, but as they gained popularity, they also became the subject of “jealousy, anger, suspicion, and fear from those who saw the most promising young men drawn away from [Greek mentors] and drawn toward these foreigners

who charged money on the promise that they could impart practical wisdom to their students” (Rountree 682). Isocrates, for example, disdains that “in their desire for a little profit [the sophists] almost promise to make their students immoral” (4). The fact that they offered wisdom not as an end itself but for profit went against the prevailing intellectual culture of the time and offended other Greek writers and thinkers.

The older sophists, beginning with Corax and his students, used many rhetorical approaches in their teaching, but two features most clearly differentiate sophism from other rhetorical education: the idea that truth can be relative and the practice of arguing both sides of a single issue. Perhaps the most (in)famous teacher of sophistic rhetoric, Gorgias, was from Leontini, Sicily, but travelled to Greece to teach his craft. Gorgias “espous[es] a rhetoric that is at once mysterious and eminently powerful” and “enjoyed a reputation particularly unpleasant, even for a sophist” (B. A. Miller).⁷ He seemed “interested in philosophical questions [and] his epistemological position . . . was skeptical or at least relativistic” (Kennedy 20). This skeptical world view was characteristic of early sophists, who, rather than separating rhetoric from philosophy, through opposing dialogue “explored the themes of truth and opinion, nature and convention, and language and reality” (Kennedy 20). Of course, Gorgias and the other sophists did not view themselves as immoral. They “saw themselves as philosophers . . . [who] saw knowledge as accessible only through discourse” and who “practiced rhetoric as an intellectual method, a way of generating knowledge” (Bizzell and Herzberg, “Classical Rhetoric” 22). The ways in which they practiced rhetoric—particularly arguing both sides of a single issue without necessarily identifying one side as “right”—led others to call the sophists immoral.

The anonymous text *Dissoi Logoi*, or *Contrasting Arguments*, most famously demonstrates the distinctively sophistic practice of arguing both sides of an issue. Consistent

⁷ For more on Gorgias and the sophists, see Jarratt and Untersteiner.

with older sophistic belief, this text expresses the relativity or contextuality of “truth.” The text opens with this idea:

on the matter of what is good and what is bad contrasting arguments are put forward in Greece by educated people: some say that what is good and what is bad are two different things, others that they are the same thing, and that the same thing is good for some but bad for others, or at one time good and at another time bad for the same person. (1.2-2)

Dissoi Logoi, then, presents the idea of truth as relative to personal and situational context. This type of thinking can be seen in the Renaissance as well. Spenser presents a similar viewpoint in the proem to Book 5 of *The Faerie Queene*, writing,

That which all men then did vertue call,
Is now cald vice; and that which vice was hight
Is now hight vertue, and so vs'd of all:
Right now is wrong, and wrong that was is right,
As all things else in time are changed quight. (5.proem.4)

Spenser’s relativism here, though comparing two time periods rather than two sides of a single argument, demonstrates the type of thinking present in the early traditions of sophistic rhetoric. Quentin Skinner attributes a “sceptical outlook” in the Renaissance regarding rhetoric to this “characteristic insistence that there will always be two sides to any question, and thus that in moral reasoning it will always be possible to construct a plausible argument *in utramque partem*, on either side of any given case” (269). However, the later Greek rhetoricians and philosophers fought against this relativism and also sought to separate philosophy from

rhetoric. They questioned the concept of a relativistic or contextual “truth,” with Plato leading the charge against sophism in favor of a single truth.

Plato devoted his writings about rhetoric (primarily found in *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*) to drawing a distinction between false (sophistic) rhetoric that “relies on *kairos*,⁸ or the situation, to determine the provisional truth of the matter under discussion” and true rhetoric, “whereby the philosopher and his pupil free themselves from the conventional and all worldly encumbrances in the pursuit and eventual attainment of absolute truth” (Bizzell and Herzberg “Classical Rhetoric” 28). Greek philosophers divided rhetoric and philosophy—a distinction encouraged by Plato’s reductive depiction of Gorgias and his sophistic followers as “inept at describing what they do, more inclined to praise the importance of their art than to define it, and easily trapped in Socrates’ arguments against rhetoric” (Kennedy 19). Hence, in Plato’s *Gorgias*, Gorgias makes empty statements about his craft, led to do so by the character Socrates. With characteristic vagueness, Gorgias says that the subject of oratory is “the greatest and best of human concerns” (451) and oratory “does its work and produces its effect entirely by means of speech” without relying on a specific knowledge base or discipline (450). The character Socrates concludes that “the orator need have no knowledge of the truth about things; it is enough for him to have discovered a knack of persuading the ignorant that he seems to know more than the experts” (459). Plato’s depiction of the sophists dealt them a historically significant blow; his “condemnation . . . became authoritative for centuries and contributed to the loss of Sophistic texts” (Bizzell and Herzberg, “Classical Rhetoric” 22). While Plato may not accurately depict the historical Gorgias or sophistic views, his work *Gorgias* remains important because “for the first time it poses in detail the question of the morality of rhetoric in

⁸ This *kairos* differs from the discussion of *kairos* as a representation of balance discussed in Chapter 5.

society” (Kennedy 38). This concern with the morality of rhetoric resurfaces in the literature of Renaissance period, and poets who reference sophism directly do so with a pejorative context.⁹

Despite their eventual unpopularity among philosophers, sophistic practices continued to influence Greek rhetorical theory and thinking. Aristotle—certainly not a sophist himself—upheld at least one practice seen in the *Dissoi Logoi* in his text *On Rhetoric*. He instructed that “one should be able to argue persuasively on either side of a question, just as in the use of syllogisms”—but Aristotle here qualifies the purpose of the practice—“not that we may actually do both (for one should not persuade what is debased) but in order that it may not escape our notice what the real state of the case is and that we ourselves may be able to refute if another person uses speech unjustly” (1.1.12). Aristotle drew upon the method of the earlier sophists as an educational tool but also suggested that a single moral truth must emerge. Aristotle lacks Plato’s conviction that rhetoric is inherently untrustworthy, and he distinguishes between the rhetorician and the sophist: “one person will be [called] *rhetor* on the basis of his knowledge and another on the basis of his deliberate choice, while in the dialectic *sophist* refers to deliberate choice [of specious arguments]” (1.1.14). Aristotle attempts to redeem rhetoric from Plato’s scathing denouncement but is willing to sacrifice the specific practices—or at least the label—of sophism. Perhaps partly because of Aristotle’s limited endorsement of the subject, rhetoric becomes increasingly popular in the Roman period, but the negative associations of sophistry and the tension between knowledge and rhetoric lurk in the shadows of Roman oratorical theory.

⁹ Consider, for example, Christopher Marlowe’s Leander, called a “bold sharpe Sophister” (197) who uses “Rhetoricke to deceive a maid” (338); William Shakespeare’s Polonius, who needs “more matter with less art” (*Hamlet* 2.2.95); and John Milton’s Belial, whose words are “false and hollow; though his Tongue / Dropt Manna, and could make the worse appear / The better reason . . . his thoughts were low” (2.112-15).

A view of language or rhetoric as a pragmatic and powerful tool necessarily linked to knowledge continued to develop throughout the Roman period. However, the mere existence of so many pro-rhetoric defenses suggests that uneasiness about sophistry and/or rhetoric persisted, even into the height of Roman rhetoric. Many texts about rhetoric or oratory address the question of morality in the face of this powerful eloquence, and just as Cicero sought to reunite knowledge and rhetoric, other Roman rhetoricians sought to sever rhetoric from accusations of immorality that persisted from Plato and others. The anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, like many of the Roman rhetorical texts, takes no side on ethics or a quest for universal truth, instead focusing on the practical application of rhetoric. The author defends the use of rhetoric against critics with the sensible position that “it is a fault to disparage an art or science or any occupation because of the faults of those engaged in it, as in the case of those who blame rhetoric because of the blameworthy life of some orator” (2.44). Likewise, Quintilian maintains that “[words] are not in their nature either good or bad . . . but only as they are suitable and properly applied” (10.2.13). Morality, in other words, exists not in the language itself, but in the speaker of the words.

Quintilian tends to focus on the morality of both teacher and student of rhetoric in his *Instituto Oratoria*. According to Quintilian, the teacher of rhetoric should be “himself [an] example of the strictest morality” (2.2.4); he should “regulate . . . by severity of discipline, the conduct of those who come to receive his instructions” (2.2.4); and he should “[take care] above all things, that tender minds, which will imbibe deeply whatever has entered them while rude and ignorant of everything, may learn not only what is eloquent, but, still more, what is morally good” (1.8.4). For Quintilian, teacher, student, and subject matter should be governed by a rigorous morality which does not leave room for sophistic relativism. Eloquence and

morality are “combined and inseparable. For I am convinced that no one can be an orator who is not a good man; and, even if anyone could, I should be unwilling that he should be” (1.2.3). Echoes of this sentiment can be seen later in the Renaissance period, when at times within the humanistic education, “eloquence owed as much—if not more—to moral guidance as to formal instruction in ‘rhetoric’” (Johnston 147).¹⁰ Though the distinction may seem arbitrary, Quintilian’s changing of the focus of morality from rhetoric as a practice to the rhetorician as an individual continued to liberate the idea of rhetoric from its somewhat sordid history, the endeavor started by Aristotle and continued by Cicero.

Cicero’s *On the Ideal Orator*, written as a dialogue in the tradition of many of the Greek philosophical texts, explores the multifaceted views of oratory (synonymous with rhetoric in this context) that resulted from the Greek philosophers’ analyses of the art and its emergence as a means of gaining political power. Writing in the dialectic form gave Cicero the advantage of giving voice to several differing perspectives about rhetoric and eloquence. Antonius’ position on rhetoric echoes Plato’s, suggesting that rhetoric focuses more on style and less on true knowledge. He begins, “knowing, then, that this is a subject that relies on falsehood, that seldom reaches the level of real knowledge, that is out to take advantage of people’s opinions and often their delusions, I shall speak about it” (2.30). Crassus’ view represents the Ciceronian (and later humanistic) view that rhetoric and content cannot be separated: Crassus holds that “since all discourse is made up of content and words, the words cannot have any basis if you withdraw the content, and the content will remain in the dark if you remove the words” (3.19). Crassus blames Socrates for the separation of philosophy and rhetoric (learning and oratory), saying,

¹⁰ While this may be true of humanism, it may not be true for courtesy manuals specifically: Jane Grogan notes, “the more immediate promises of political success offered by the courtesy tradition outweighed the staid drudgery of active humanist virtue for many readers” (137).

For, as I said before, those great men of the past, all the way down to Socrates, used to link the principles of oratory with the entire study and knowledge of everything that was relevant to human conduct, to human life, to virtue, and to the state. Then subsequently, as I have described, the learned were separated from the skillful speakers, first by Socrates himself, and after that likewise by all of Socrates' followers. The philosophers despised eloquence, and the orators wisdom, and each side did not so much as touch what belonged to the others.

(3.72)

Cicero, then, attempts to reunite rhetoric and knowledge as inseparable; he chastises the philosophers of the past who had attempted to separate the two. Cicero (through the character of Crassus) lauds Aristotle for “decid[ing] to give distinction and brilliance to the whole body of his teachings, linking knowledge with practice in speaking” (*On the Ideal Orator* 3.141) but warns that “eloquence is so vast and important that it can only be covered by all the books of the philosophers, which none of those rhetoricians [who studied under Corax] has ever so much as touched” (*On the Ideal Orator* 3.81). So despite Cicero's praise for Aristotle's having reunited philosophy (wisdom) and rhetoric, Cicero extends the rift between the two schools of thought. He insults the philosophers who would abandon rhetoric altogether, saying that “most philosophers give no rules for speaking, while still having ready at hand what they should say about any subject” (*On the Ideal Orator* 2.152). Thus, the feud between wisdom and language continued to be handed down to new generations of writers and thinkers.¹¹

The tension between rhetoric and philosophy persists into the Renaissance (first the Italian and, by extension, the English) with “a whole generation of Italian intellectuals [who]

¹¹ Spenser expresses an echo of this divide when Calepine gives the infant he rescues from a bear to Matilda, saying that she may decide how to raise him, indicating two distinct choices between chivalry (rhetoric) and philosophy (wisdom) “whether ye list him traine in cheualry, / Or nourse vp in lore of learn'd Philosophy” (6.4.35).

seized from Petrarch a Ciceronian image of the public man who unites eloquence and wisdom, rhetoric and philosophy” (Bizzell and Herzberg, "Renaissance Rhetoric" 466). The debate obviously did not end with Cicero. It remains “one of the central controversies of Western rhetorical tradition: the relation of *eloquentia* to *sapientia*, of language to thoughts. While Cicero sought always to unite the two, subsequent theorists often encouraged—or lamented—their separation” (Baumlin and Hughes 215). The separation becomes “a symbol of the battle of the arts—philosophical dialectic versus literary rhetoric” (Spranzi 69) in the English Renaissance. Even modern theorists continue the tension between knowledge and rhetoric; despite Cicero’s unparalleled influence on Early Modern thinking, the rift that he sought to close remains wide.

With Cicero’s assertion that ideal oratory emerges from the harmony of the expression and the subject matter comes a lionization of eloquence. In *On the Ideal Orator*, Cicero assigns eloquence “its own place among the supreme virtues” (3.55), attributing the full power of rhetoric (oratory) and philosophy (knowledge) to the single term, eloquence. He writes,

The real power of eloquence is so enormous that its scope includes the origin, essence, and transformations of everything: virtues, moral duties, and all the laws of nature that govern human conduct, characters, and life. It establishes traditions, laws, and legal arrangements, governs the State, and addresses with distinction and copiousness all questions belonging to any area whatsoever.

(3.76)

Due to Cicero’s influence and the high regard that the Romans held for rhetoric in general, “eloquence becomes the highest aim of the Roman citizen; it is a human faculty capable of training but, more important, its perfection requires that it be united with wisdom and with the

ethical virtues as well” (Baumlin and Hughes 215). Antonius in *On the Ideal Orator* explains that any speech may instruct, but only eloquent speech can move:

This other type of speaking, however, is not aimed at supplying the juror with knowledge, but at upsetting his emotions, and no one can achieve this goal unless by a long, varied, and rich speech, and by a corresponding energetic delivery. For this reason, those who speak either briefly or in a low key can instruct the juror, but they cannot move him—and on this everything depends.
(2.215)

The last line alone justifies the tradition of the rhetorical handbook—the means by which orators would learn the “long, varied, and rich speech”—and sets the stage for the rhetoric-based Classical education employed by Renaissance schoolmasters, such as Erasmus, who viewed “the speech of man [as] a magnificent and impressive thing when it surges along like a golden river, with thoughts and words pouring out in rich abundance (*“Copia: Foundations of the Abundant Style”* 502). Erasmus, then, reveres the power of eloquent speech, and his work *De Copia* becomes “the most popular school textbook of the period, habitually listed in school statutes, private collections, and university records” (Potter 374), giving Erasmus an incalculable influence on generations of humanist-educated thinkers and writers. Later European humanist educators continue this reverence for eloquence, which may be seen as a bridge between language and emotion.

The concept of eloquence as “a moving force, a force capable of impelling a doubting or hostile audience to come round to our side, was taken up with much enthusiasm by the vernacular rhetoricians of the English Renaissance” (Skinner 271). The Renaissance poets, too, perpetuate this idea that powerful words have the ability to move; Sir Philip Sidney defines

poetry as “an art of imitation . . . a speaking picture—with this end, to teach and delight” (345), and Sir John Harington describes poetry as having the ability to “soften and polish the hard and rough dispositions of men, and make them capable of virtue and discipline” (305). In William Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*, Claudio lauds Isabella for having

a prone and speechless dialect,
 Such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art
 When she will play with reason and discourse,
 And well she can persuade. (1.2.180-84)

Shakespeare draws attention to the art of the eloquence, as well as the importance of both the words and their expression (her “speechless discourse”). Shakespeare expresses the darker side of the power of language in *Othello*, when Iago notices that his lies have moved Othello. Iago says, “My lord, I see you're moved” (3.3.1873), and Othello’s soliloquy reveals that Iago’s words have successfully deceived Othello: “This fellow's of exceeding honesty, / And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit, / Of human dealings” (3.3.1919-21). The darker side of persuasion and eloquence seen in these examples complicates the Renaissance reverence for eloquence.

By the time the concept of rhetoric reaches the English Renaissance, it has already had a long history of nuanced reception. Ancient ideas were not simply “reborn” in the Renaissance period; the humanists “participated in the recovery and absorption of classical rhetoric” which led to “the pragmatic reworking of that tradition” (Monfasani 172). Nor was it a simple re-hashing of old texts; “we forget that the humanists were in many cases readers if not hearers of rhetoric and famous as critics and interpreters of texts” (Trinkaus 207). The Renaissance featured, on one hand, a resurgence of distrust for rhetoric and, on the other hand,

an increased understanding and use of rhetorical strategies in literary works due to the recovery of Greek and Roman rhetorical texts.¹²

Unquestionably, Renaissance thinkers and writers were primarily exposed to rhetoric through the recovery of ancient texts; the study of Roman and Greece texts was central to the educational system put in place by humanist philosophers, guided by Erasmus.¹³ Bizzell and Herzberg attribute the humanist interest in education to the changing social world of the Renaissance, explaining that “as the times changed and humanist scholars found fewer opportunities in public life, they also devoted more energy to work in education” (“Renaissance Rhetoric” 468). Gray has, perhaps, a less pessimistic view of humanist motivations, suggesting that they were drawn to educate because they “believed that education should equip a man to lead a good life” (500). Whatever the reason for the creation of public grammar schools, the schoolmasters sought to uphold “a major goal of Renaissance Humanism: the creation of elegant and eloquent expression” (Abbott, “Rhetoric and Writing in Renaissance Europe and England” 97). This was achieved through a primarily Latin-based, intensive study of the works of Roman authors, focusing especially on Cicero, which we now refer to as a Classical education. Monfasani notes that the humanists “proposed a new educational program, the *studia humanitatis*, which focused on classical literature and made rhetoric, not logic, the chief art of discourse” (171). There was also some focus on vernacular and Greek works, but much of the knowledge of Greek philosophers was filtered through a Roman/Latin lens. This hyper-focus on the Roman orators led to a “domination of rhetoric and

¹² A single example that aptly demonstrates these two counter-forces (both the strength and distrust of rhetoric) may be seen in *The Prince*'s prefatory letter to Lorenzo Di Medici. Machiavelli insists, “my book is not stuffed with pompous phrases or elaborate, magnificent words, neither is it decorated with any form of extrinsic rhetorical embroidery, such as many authors use to present or adorn their materials. I wanted my book to be absolutely plain.” However, Machiavelli undermines his own statement because the statement itself is rhetorical in nature and artfully serves its purpose.

¹³ For a full discussion of the development of Humanist education in the Renaissance, see Bizzell and Herzberg (“Renaissance Rhetoric”) and Foster.

Latin in this curriculum [which left] very little room for anything else” (Abbott, "Rhetoric and Writing in Renaissance Europe and England" 105). The humanist educational system thus sought to redeem the practice of rhetoric even further, seeing it as the route to true eloquence.

1.3 The Climb of Conduct

Two key factors highlight the difference between rhetoric in the height of Rome’s power and in the English Renaissance. First, humanist thinking led to the belief that more people from lower classes should be educated, and second, the printing press facilitated widespread literacy. As power moved away from orators who gave eloquent speeches and towards members of the social elite,

The Ciceronian public man, who exercised some political power openly in the state, was increasingly replaced by the figure of the courtier, who had to be deferential to the ruler in public and exercise political influence behind the scenes. The increasingly covert character of the public servant’s political power is symbolized in part by the concept of *sprezzatura*, according to which the talented and humanistically learned person should make his or her accomplishments appear to be the outcome of unstudied nature, not art. (Bizzell and Herzberg, "Renaissance Rhetoric" 468)

This gave rise to conduct literature as a niche genre of educational literature. Louis B. Wright explains the rise of the handbook tradition of which courtesy literature is a part, observing,

With the rise of a vigorous, prosperous tradesman class, with the spread of the ambition for further advancement, both social and commercial, with the percolation even into the lower ranks of society of a Renaissance desire for

knowledge, and with the increase in literacy came a demand for some means of self-improvement. The answer was the handbook, the printed guide. (58)

This printed guide emerges from a complex history of rhetorical and educational contexts; Tonkin calls their sources “a curious and sometimes unwieldy mixture of material traceable to the chivalric manuals of the fifteenth century, classical works on education and good government, Christian doctrine, Italian humanism, and contemporary treatises on education or political theory” (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 164). Conduct literature’s rhetorical purpose makes the genre particularly unique. It seeks to set forth a collection of rules that establish appropriate behavior in various situations.

Conduct literature at once gives the lower class the ability (or at least the perceived ability) to reach higher into the courtly society and perpetuates the difficulty in actually doing so. The genre “helped create and sustain the court’s view of its own virtue and centrality—the dominant ideology of the Elizabethan ruling elite” (Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege* x). Frank Whigham explains that “this demographic shift of new men into the ruling elite aroused a storm of controversy best seen as a crisis of legitimacy” (“Courtesy as a Social Code” 195). The humanist education movement led to “the proliferation of grammar schools for the poor, [which] opened new ways to power and prestige, outside the Church, for the burgeoning middle classes” (Ashley 112). When Thomas Wilson published the first English language rhetoric, his rhetorical handbook “represented a movement toward the democratization of the arts of discourse, making it available to a wider group of people” (Weaver 766). This blurred the lines between social classes, and the upward mobility of the lower class needed a form of guidance to “fit in” in a world governed by intricate social rules. Further, just as writers of English “vernacular manuals . . . worry that by making the tools of eloquence commonly

available . . . they may be . . . giving the ‘force’ of eloquence to the ‘wild savages’ rather than the wise orator” (Mann 207), the upper class worried that the lower class now possessed a tool that would enable their upward mobility. David Lee Miller notes that “the destabilizing of economic and class structures in sixteenth-century England led to a social environment marked . . . by the intense competition, insecurity, and conflict among the aristocracy” (“Calidore” 128). The genre, then, gave educated, middle-class individuals hope that they could move up in society while it perpetuated the divide between the classes and insecurity among individuals of the ruling class.

The conventions of Renaissance conduct literature emerge from both historical precedent and social pragmatism. The genre often features tension between public expression and private correspondence; the writer of early conduct literature generally presented the work as a letter to a close friend or family member, ostensibly distancing the author of the work from responsibility for the contents.¹⁴ The letter often included a preface that explained the author’s purpose and apologized for the poor quality of the work—a rhetorical move known as the humility topos.¹⁵ The Roman precedents for this convention include most of Cicero’s work, addressed frequently to his brother or Atticus; Quintilian’s *Instituto Oratoria*, dedicated to Marcellus Victorius; the anonymous *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, dedicated to Gaius Herennius; and even Horace’s *Ars Poetica*, written entirely in the form of a letter to the Piso family. Following this tradition established by their Roman influences lent the Renaissance authors legitimacy and *gravitas* and also allowed them some deniability when it came to wider

¹⁴ Aron Morgan offers a succinct history of how letter writing (*ars dictaminis*) evolved as a new form of rhetoric in the Medieval period. See Witt and Camargo for the early tradition. See Beebee for epistolary tradition from 1500-1850.

¹⁵ Whigham refers to the humility topos as “the gesture of self-deprecation, which extracts ratifying compliment and reassurance from an audience by a false humility which they feel bound to contradict” (“Courtesy as a Social Code” 196).

publication. Castiglione displays this convention in his prefatory letter to the Bishop of Viseu when he claims that he “could not but feel a certain annoyance” that his *Courtier*—arguably the most influential example of conduct literature—had begun circulating publically, “a large part of it [having been] transcribed” without his consent (1). By presenting his work as a personal document that he was “forced” to publish, Castiglione mitigates his responsibility for the content and quality of the work and relies on the humility topos.¹⁶ Though using such a dedication before a rhetorical or literary work would seem to limit the audience of the texts, these conduct manuals enjoyed a wide circulation. *The Courtier* was first circulated in manuscript form then later printed under Castiglione’s direction. Renaissance courtesy literature clearly targeted a wider audience than the individuals to whom the books claim to be addressed.

While conduct literature has a clear rhetorical purpose, its place in the rhetorical tradition is less clear. It does not fit neatly into the three classical subdivisions of rhetoric, being neither deliberative, judicial, nor epideictic. L.A. Coutant describes the rhetoric in *The Courtier* as epistemic: “Castiglione’s nobles engage in an epistemic rhetoric wherein the merits of noble or common birth are debated as seriously as skill in the military and fine arts” (97). Epistemic rhetoric—the concept that “rhetoric itself is a way of knowing”—claims that experience and action form understanding, or that the active study of knowledge creates knowledge (Scott 232). Coutant’s claim makes sense in that the characters of *The Courtier* strive to create knowledge—the conception of an ideal courtier—through conversation. However, one could argue that other texts such as Plato’s *Symposium* and Cicero’s *On the*

¹⁶ For a thorough discussion of this common posture as well as an index of works that take a similar position, see Franklin B. Williams (*Index of Dedications and Commendatory Verses in English Books before 1641*).

Ideal Orator do the same, and all three of these texts may simply qualify as examples of dialectic rhetoric.

Both epistemic rhetoric and dialectic are limited to a way of knowing or understanding something, but conduct literature first defines the knowledge then moves the reader to action. This active, prescriptive nature differentiates conduct literature from traditional oratory. While it incorporates elements of classical rhetoric—analyzing outcomes of different decisions stems from deliberative rhetoric and using discussion to conceptualize an ideal combines features of dialectic, epideictic, and epistemic rhetoric—as a whole, conduct literature departs from classical rhetoric. Unlike other related Renaissance genres such as educational handbooks, poetic treatises, and many poetic and dramatic forms, conduct literature lacks a direct Greek or Roman ancestor, with the possible exception of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, an ethical treatise which has a rhetorical purpose that reflects that of conduct literature. Written by Aristotle for his son, the work begins with the statement, “every art and every investigation, and similarly every action and pursuit, is considered to aim at some good” (*The Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1). Hence, Aristotle develops an ethically-based conception of how one may live a good life. While this text has a more philosophical and hypothetical approach than the practical “how-to” quality of Renaissance conduct literature, its purpose aligns with the premise of conduct literature—how to thrive in a civil society.

Cicero and Quintilian include some ideas that seem to have influenced the genre of conduct literature in *On the Ideal Orator* and *Institutes of Oratory*. While the texts differ widely from each other—Cicero’s represents a philosophy of oratory and Quintilian’s an educational philosophy—they each touch on ideas of proper conduct. Quintilian writes about custom in both language and life, calling “custom in speaking . . . the agreement of the

educated, just as I call custom in living the agreement of the good” (1.6.45). Quintilian’s focus, however, remains narrowly on the function of language and education. While Cicero’s *On the Ideal Orator* is not itself conduct literature, it was hugely influential to the development of the quintessential text of the Renaissance conduct literature genre, for Castiglione claimed that it was the model for *The Courtier*. The differences between the model text and Castiglione’s reveal the change in the social structure of the world in which each text was written; Daniel Javitch prefaces his translation of *The Courtier* with,

The comparison between the two works [invited by Castiglione’s claim] also served to reveal the degree to which the norms of public behavior advocated in *The Courtier*—and they were quite different from those prescribed the ideal Roman orator—were conditioned by the changed political and social circumstances of a modern court. (viii)

As did many Renaissance writers, Castiglione recovered the form and ideas from Cicero, then updated them to fit his purposes given his social context.

While the terms “conduct literature” and “conduct manual” are useful for documenting the historical development of the genre, the term “courtesy literature” becomes more appropriate¹⁷ as this discussion moves forward into the Renaissance. During the Renaissance, conduct literature underwent a transition to courtesy literature. The issue was no longer a question of how to conduct oneself in the world, but how to achieve a higher level of social discourse through both speech and action that became important. On one end, the courtesy literature sought to promote the “civil conversation” that would enable one to live

¹⁷ Dorothy Woodward Culp disagrees, saying “There is no clearly developed Renaissance theory about a virtue called ‘courtesy.’ There are, to be sure, a large number of books which examine the nature of true nobility and the virtues that the gentleman or prince should possess. These works, most unfortunately, have been termed ‘courtesy books’ by many modern scholars though, in fact, courtesy is discussed very little in them” (38). While this may be true for many of the manuals, some of them, such as Guazzo’s *Civile Conversation*, discuss the moral virtue as well.

harmoniously in the world, and on the other end, it provided the “rules of the road” for social success and promotion at court. Courtesy literature provided a map to guide individuals through (and, ostensibly, up) increasingly complex social relationships. Rhetoric and effective language use lie at the heart of courtesy literature, the “the first true attempts to rationalize man’s ways to man” which “are bound up inextricably with an extensive conception of man as communicator” (Mohrmann 194). Whereas earlier rhetorical handbooks simply catalogued the tropes, figures, and traits of an effective orator, courtesy literature dealt with the entire spectrum of verbal, emotional, and physical human interactions in a variety of complex and ever-changing contexts and sought to establish an ideal of human behavior.

1.4 Conceptualizing Spenser’s Courtesy

Any comprehensive study of the English Renaissance is impossible without the study of courtesy. Spenser reminds us of the relationship between the words “courtesy” and “court” by beginning the Legend of Courtesy with

Of Court it seems, men Courtesie doe call,
 For that it there most vseth to abound;
 And well beseemeth that in Princes hall
 That vertue should be plentifully found. (6.1.1)

In a world dominated by court politics and favoritism as well as the whims of those who held the most power, the perceived social grace of an individual remained consummately important. Aside from a few early uses, the word “courtesy” was not widely used until the 1500s (“Courtesy, n.”). The concept that most directly led to courtesy is the idea of “appropriateness” from Greek and Roman texts. Commentary on appropriate social behavior and word usage

appear in the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Horace. Aristotle also expresses a theory relating to propriety of context—what he called *to prepon*. Because of the importance of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric* to the study of rhetoric, this term had great influence on other Greek and Roman rhetorical texts. Generally translated as “appropriateness” or “propriety,” *to prepon* refers primarily to the correct choice of words in a given context. Aristotle states that “*lexis* will be appropriate if it expresses emotion and character and is proportional to the subject matter” (3.7.1). Appropriateness, here, depends upon the relationship between the words and the subject matter, indicating a reliance on balance between the two. Aristotle goes on to say that achieving this propriety in the area of delivery can make a speaker seem truthful, “mak[ing] . . . matter [seem] more credible” (3.7.4). The closest Roman equivalent to the Greek conception of *to prepon* is decorum. Roman decorum involves speaking or acting with propriety as defined by a relative context, using appropriate balance and judgment:

Decorum invokes a range of social, linguistic, aesthetic, and ethical proprieties for both the creators and critics of speech or writing. Each of these must be balanced against each other strategically in order to be successful in understanding or creating discourse. (Burton)

Though *to prepon* may have first been seen as “just one of several virtues of style,” the concept may be thought of as “a governing concept for all of rhetoric” (Burton). The *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition* refers to decorum as “the most rhetorical of rhetorical concepts, an idea that permeates the whole of classical rhetoric, and an important point of convergence for the social, moral, and aesthetic concerns of the rhetorical tradition” (Beale 168). By extension, courtesy can be seen as the “most rhetorical of rhetorical concepts” in the Renaissance.

Just as others focus on decorum in oratory, Horace speaks of appropriateness in the specific context of a play. He refers to having “characters fitly sketched” (309) and to a play in which the actors were “suited to alternate speech, able to drown the clamours of the pit, and by nature fit for action” (73). Further, he refers to appropriate connection between words, actions, and context, explaining that “sad tones befit the face of sorrow; blustering accents that of anger; jests become the merry, solemn words the grave . . . if the speaker’s words sound discordant with his fortunes, the Romans, in boxes and pit alike, will raise a loud guffaw” (99). Horace emphasizes that a character’s words, actions, and manners should befit the context of the play. The Renaissance courtier likewise fit his words, actions, and manners to the context of the court in which he acted, making courtesy of the utmost importance to social position.

Courtesy eventually “became one of the most powerful cultural forces in late-sixteenth-century England and Ireland” (Grogan 175). As the use of the term became more popular in the Elizabethan period, it also became more nuanced and less specific. Courtesy involved everything from how and when one should blow one’s nose to how to impress a high-powered noble to how to be truly virtuous. The following chapters will address the varied approaches that Spenser takes in describing courtesy. In analyzing Spenser’s use of courtesy, it becomes clear that Calidore, the knight who “loued simple truth and stedfast honesty” (6.1.3), who was “beloued ouer all,” and who stands out at court because “mongst them all was none more courteous Knight” (6.1.2), does not stand up to this initial praise and does not manifest true courtesy. While Book 6 is important because it is the place in which Spenser most directly presents some of his theories about courtesy, much of the analysis in this dissertation will occur outside of the bounds of the Book of Courtesy. Scholarship exists that supports such an approach: Humphrey Tonkin, for example, believes that understanding the other virtues

facilitates understanding courtesy in the poem, noting that “it seems that only after we have been led through the other virtues are we ready to deal with the broad and exalted definition of courtesy presented [in Book 6]” (*The Faerie Queene*, Book VI" 285). Likewise, Kenneth Borris posits, “by Book VI, [the other] virtues have become sufficiently manifest that they may be exercised with spontaneity and grace as harmoniously coordinated parts of courtesy” (“Courtesy” 195). Viewing courtesy within the context of other virtues in *The Faerie Queene* reveals the vast importance of courtesy to a functional society.

As the knights of Faeryland work towards their individual moral virtues, courtesy seems to remain central to all social interaction. Gordon Teskey concludes that “Courtesy is the basis on which the other virtues are raised . . . Temperance, Friendship, and even Justice are impossible without courtesy; and Holiness and Chastity are disgusting without courtesy” (“And Therefore as a Stranger Give It Welcome: Courtesy and Thinking” 355). Hence, this discussion of courtesy must encompass other books of *The Faerie Queene* to be complete. Further, if Spenser’s conception of courtesy “derives not only from gentleness, a natural inclination to seek what is best for others, but also from the conscious and voluntary choice of an action that best meets the needs of a particular situation” (Culp 37), then we must look beyond Calidore to find functional examples of this selfless courtesy.

In order to differentiate between what may be called higher and lower order courtesy, I will be using the terms “moral courtesy” and “courtliness.” Moral courtesy, the focus of Chapter 5, distinguishes this harmonious balance of surface-level courteous behavior and speech (rhetorical courtesy) and actual courteous virtue (internal courtesy) from other types of courtesy that will be discussed other chapters. The truly moral courtier stands above his or her peers as a shining example of rhetorical eloquence and virtuous action. This person combines Aristotle’s

moral and intellectual virtues and meets the humanistic Ciceronian ideal—what Quintilian means by “the good man speaking well” (12.1.1). It seems that Spenser advocates for a conception of courtesy that has a moral element.

However, Spenserian courtesy necessarily manifests itself outwardly as well. D. L. Miller states, “in its practical form, however, Spenserian courtesy bears the traces of a social code popularized in courtesy books like Castiglione’s *Courtier*” (“Calidore” 128). This outward courtesy, or more precisely, courtliness, bears resemblance to the type of courtesy advocated by Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* and is self-serving and concerned primarily with the gloss or trappings of outward manners. Chapter 3, The Artful, will address the concept of courtliness fully. This courtliness abounds in *The Faerie Queene*, and Spenser uses courtesy, courtliness, and both aggressive and accidental discourtesy to explore the nature of the concept of courtesy in his epic poem.

1.5 Dissertation Directions

This dissertation will investigate Spenser’s complex iterations of courtesy, identifying four discrete embodiments of courtesy represented in *The Faerie Queene*: the discourteous, the artful, the unrhetorical, and the courteous. Each chapter contains several focal characters who represent the specific courtesy type presented in each chapter. Chapters also provide critical and historical context to enrich the analysis of the text.

Chapter Two will address the wholly discourteous individuals in *The Faerie Queene*: those individuals in whom discourtesy and immorality are, in a sense, balanced. These characters represent the greatest threats to harmoniously functioning courteous society. Being the most direct enemies to courtesy, these antagonists appear solely in Book 6: “The Legend of Courtesy.”

Spenser differs from many courtesy theorists in the Renaissance because he addresses aggressive forces of discourtesy head-on, rather than limiting his discussion of courtesy to courteous behavior alone. Featured in this chapter are Briana and Crudor, Turpine, the Salvage Nation and the brigands, and the Blatant Beast.

Chapter Three will locate the false courtiers within Spenser's work—champions of Castiglione's concept of *sprezzatura*. Spenser's presentation of these individuals as morally bankrupt artful usurers implicitly delineates between the bad artifice of the tricksters and the good art of the poet. Duessa, Archimago, and Malecasta will be the main foci of this analysis, though other characters are addressed as well.

Chapter Four will track the unrhetorical individuals—those who show an imbalance of rhetoric and truth because they lack the social graces to effectively participate in the social climate. This includes characters who lack experience due to youth, inexperience, or rusticity. Central to the analysis of this chapter is the idea of primitivism, as many of the unrhetorical but still essentially good characters come from outside of civilized society. This chapter begins with the primitive Satyrs and Salvage man, transitions to court with Sir Satyrane, and then ends with the naïvely (rather than primitively) unrhetorical characters Redcrosse and Florimell.

Chapter Five attempts to locate the truly moral (albeit imperfect) courtiers within *The Faerie Queene*. The characters who approach true courtesy in the text are Arthur and Britomart. This chapter also connects Spenser's theory of harmonious moral courtesy to Stefano Guazzo's moral theory of courtesy from *The Civile Conversation*.

The sixth and final chapter of the dissertation analyzes Calidore, the supposed Knight of Courtesy, and his relationship to the aspects of courtesy outlined in the other chapters, asking

whether he is courteous, artful, unrheterical, or discourteous. This chapter also addresses a broad view of Spenser's concept of Courtesy.

2 THE DISCOURTEOUS

“the baser mind it selfe displayes, / In cancred malice and reuengefull spight” (6.7.1)

2.1 Introduction

Spenser depicts the whole range of courteous behavior in his work, from nearly exemplary courtesy to the debased discourtesy of unrepentant savage forces of chaos. The wholly discourteous characters who do not try to mask their discourtesy represent the worst affronts to harmonious society, for they threaten the wellbeing of other characters and of society generally. Whereas the following chapters will seek to investigate the place of courtesy and rhetoric within the entirety of *The Faerie Queene*, the focal characters of this chapter are found only in the Legend of Courtesy simply because the worst transgressions against courtesy occur solely in Book 6. The discourteous characters or forces identified in this chapter epitomize discourtesy: they violate essential codes for reasonably harmonious living. They often represent complete perversions of nature or humanity and can be found only outside of civil society. Some of the characters who represent discourtesy may be described as wicked, to use Aristotle's terminology. Aristotle identifies the wicked as one who “does a wrong on purpose” (*The Nicomachean Ethics* 5.8.25). Cicero refers to those who “fall into error” as “improper,” linking impropriety to injustice in *De Officiis* by saying that “all things just are proper; all things unjust, like all things immoral, are improper” (1.27.94). However, there are many characters in *The Faerie Queene* who purposefully (or thoughtlessly) do wrong or act improperly. What

distinguishes the following characters is that they both purposefully do wrong and they pose a threat to the societal harmony of others because they reject any code of civility.

Most courtesy theorists only fleetingly address individuals who lack courtesy. Castiglione suggests that “he who associates with the ignorant or the wicked is held to be ignorant or wicked” (91), and therefore the company of the wicked should be avoided. Likewise, Guazzo explains that the courteous man, “being desirous to understand thorowly which is the civile conversation, to the intent to follow it, must principally seeke to knowe which is the uncivile and blameful conversation, to the intent to flee it” (56). Both advocate merely avoiding discourteous or unpleasant individuals. In another popular courtesy manual, *The Galateo*, Giovanni della Casa insists that the discourteous punish themselves, saying,

Although the law prescribes no penalty for rudeness and bad manners, treating them as slight offences—for, of course, they are not grave crimes—nevertheless we can see that nature herself punishes us for them severely by depriving us on their account of the friendship and company of others. (22)

These Renaissance writers are not alone in their cursory treatment of discourtesy. Though Aristotle addresses both virtue and vice, he focuses his advice on how to achieve virtue, not on how to avoid vice or those who practice vice. Cicero similarly avoids many explicit references to discourtesy or rude behavior. He takes an approach similar to Aristotle’s, focusing instead in the virtuous orator and saying, “all my efforts are always concerned with this goal . . . to do some good by my speaking, if I can, and if not, at least do no harm” (*On the Ideal Orator* 2.306). Cicero does state, “only a wicked and treacherous man could say something that was unsuitable and that harmed [another]” (*On the Ideal Orator* 2.297). The connection here between unsuitability and wickedness nods to a Platonic belief that virtue and eloquence must coexist (see

Chapter 3). None of these influential texts deal with active discourtesy to the extent that Spenser does. Jane Grogan suggests that this reveals the lack of depth to the courtesy manuals: “that courtesy books are, at heart, commercially-oriented routes to social advancement and not works of moral philosophy, can be seen from their dealings with discourtesy” (159). The texts, in fact, avoid dealing widely with discourtesy. If they do mention discourtesy, they do so in the context of violated social conventions, not the more serious violations represented by some of Spenser’s characters. According to these theorists, wicked people should be avoided, but the writers offer no advice for situations in which the wicked cannot be avoided, as when the brigands pillage the pastoral village. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser, perhaps because he attempts to define courtesy as a “moral philosophy,” to use Grogan’s phrase, complicates his depiction of courtesy by directly addressing a spectrum of actively—even aggressively—discourteous characters in *The Faerie Queene*.

These discourteous characters attack courteous living from several different angles, with “discourtesy express[ing] itself in various ways in Book VI: in harshness and inhospitality toward strangers, in lack of consideration for women, in treachery and ingratitude, in the pride and cruelty of a heartless flirt, and above all in slander” (Judson 129). By launching this multilateral attack on courtesy, Spenser reveals the far-reaching danger of discourtesy to a courteous world—particularly a courteous world structured by social convention and a contract of civility, rather than one backed by the force of arms. Bruce Danner speculates that by

revealing the vulnerability of courteous discourse in a world of discourtesy, Spenser shows not only how force becomes the authorizing principle of speech, but also how it functions as a preeminent form of that speech. More than just

speaking louder than words, force speaks where words cannot, when ideological barriers render courteous discourse unrecognizable to the discourteous ear. (8)

Courtesy in the form of civil conversation, then, remains wholly ineffective in the face of extreme discourtesy and must be paired with the violence of chivalry. Civil conversation only succeeds when multiple parties wish to engage in the “conversation,” and beyond just abstaining from the conversation, discourtesy destroys the ability of others to engage in this type of harmonious courtesy. Aggressive discourtesy, therefore, creates a necessity for several instances of excessive violence by otherwise courteous characters against the figures of discourtesy in Book 6. This also explains the relative lack of artful rhetoric by either the courteous or discourteous characters in the book—the discourteous characters neither practice nor succumb to rhetoric as others in the poem do. Spenser leads the reader through varied manifestations of discourtesy from the inhospitable and unchivalric Crudor, Briana, and Turpine, to the violent Salvage Nation and Brigands, and finally to the slanderous Blatant Beast, exploring the threat of discourtesy to both the courteous characters in the book and ultimately to himself as a poet.

2.2 Hostile Hospitality

An aspect of courtesy that Spenser’s discourteous characters routinely disregard is the offering of hospitality. Hospitality’s importance in Renaissance texts results from its historical importance in Greek and Roman texts. The earliest references to hospitality emerge from Greek texts that express the concept of *xenia*—the sacred guest-host relationship seen in the literature of the Ancient Greeks. This respect for guests had religious and superstitious connections. The Greek gods Zeus and Athena were both attributed with the task of watching over guests (often referred to as “strangers”). Zeus and Athena are given the surname “Xenia”

or “Xenios” at times, indicating that they “presid[ed] over the laws of hospitality, and protect[ed] strangers” (“Athena Titles”). One of Zeus’ numerous responsibilities as a god was, as the “protector of the rights of hospitality,” to watch over travelers when they stayed in the homes of others (“Zeus Cult”). In both *Agamemnon* and *The Libation Bearers*, the Greek poet Aeschylus repeatedly gives Zeus epithets relating to the proper treatment of guests; he refers to the god as “Zeus, lord of host and guest” and “Zeus, the warder of host and guest.” This shows the high regard that Greek society held for hospitality, particularly given Zeus’ importance among the gods.

Homer, too, upholds hospitality as an important characteristic to the gods. Odysseus—not surprisingly, given his relationship with Athena and Zeus—constantly engages with Greek guest-host ideals. Several passages in *The Odyssey* show the importance of the treatment of guests. Odysseus charges the Cyclops, Polyphemus, to treat himself and his men well in the name of Zeus, protector of strangers. When Polyphemus breaks the sacred bond of *xenia*, Odysseus curses him, saying, “full surely were thy evil deeds to fall on thine own head, thou cruel wretch, who didst not shrink from eating thy guests in thine own house. Therefore has Zeus taken vengeance on thee, and the other gods” (9.461). Elsewhere in the epic, characters admonish others to be mindful of the proper treatment of guests, such as Peisistratus telling Telemachus that “a guest remembers all his days the host who shews him kindness” (15.48). Homer’s emphasis on the trait of *xenia* suggests its importance to Greek culture.

Homer takes his conception of *xenia* even further in *The Iliad*; he blames the entire Trojan war on a breach of hospitality. Menelaus reprimands the Trojans,

Ye evil dogs . . . had no fear at heart of the grievous wrath of Zeus, that
thundereth aloud, the god of hospitality, who shall some day destroy your high

city. For ye bare forth wantonly over sea my wedded wife and therewithal much treasure. (13.601)

The Greeks seemed to view adherence to *xenia* as an essential element of a harmonious life and civil society. Both the guest and the host held responsibility in upholding this balance. The importance of this guest-host balance appears in classical religious texts as well. Both Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* describe an imbalance in the world in terms of hospitality; the onset of the Iron Age features an imbalance between guest and host. Hesiod relates that "Children will not resemble their fathers, / And there will be no affection between guest and host / And no love between friends or brothers as in the past" (180-84) and Ovid describes the "rapacity [that] broke forth—the guest was not protected from his host, the father in law from his own son in law; even brothers seldom could abide in peace" (1.2.125). Hospitality remained a vitally important element of culture that persists in the Renaissance as an aspect of courtesy.

These Greek texts may not have been directly available to a large number of Renaissance courtesy theorists, but the concept of hospitality nonetheless persisted from the Greek to the Roman and then into Medieval¹⁸ and Renaissance cultures. While other Renaissance writers, such as Shakespeare, also represent violations of hospitality,¹⁹ none do so with the didactic intent that Spenser proposes. Spenser uses his discourteous characters, more than just antagonists to the Knight of Chivalry, to challenge the notion, often put forth by courtesy literature, that good manners are adequate tools for maintaining a harmonious

¹⁸ Hospitality factors heavily in the lessons of Gawain in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

¹⁹ For example, *Macbeth* features several violations of the guest/host relationship, most notably the murder of Duncan by his host, "Who should against his murderer shut the door, / Not bear the knife [him]self" (1.7.15-16).

society.²⁰ As we see in Spenser's work, a lack of hospitality can escalate to worse violations of harmonious civility.

2.3 Crude and Brazen: Crudor and Briana

The first instance of discourtesy in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*, the Legend of Courtesy, is the story of Crudor and Briana. This episode offers a view of discourtesy as an inconvenience and a violation of normal courteous social behavior, though with little real danger. In order to win Crudor's love, Briana collects a toll of knights' beards and ladies' hair, an inherently inhospitable act directed towards all passersby. This condition represents "an arrogant breaking of the chivalric code" (Toliver, "Crudor" 200). At first glance, this seems to be a manifestation of discourtesy that could be corrected with civil conversation. The nature of the violation is not so extreme that the discourteous characters here would not respond to reason and civility. However, when Briana's seneschal tries to cut off Calidore's beard, Calidore kills him and the rest of her men. This seemingly extreme reaction "occasions a crucial debate on the ethical status of violence to implement courteous doctrine. Rather than begging Calidore for mercy, Briana challenges the hero's right to uproot her political supremacy" (Danner 5). Calidore's response seems to be an attempt to justify other violent attacks later in the Legend of Courtesy as well. Briana accuses him of "treason" (6.1.25), but Calidore responds that

Bloud is no blemish; for it is no blame
 To punish those, that doe deserue the same;
 But they that breake bands of ciuilitie,
 And wicked customes make, those doe defame

²⁰ For example, della Casa states "polite habits and a correct manner of speech and behavior may benefit those who possess them no less than a noble spirit and a stout heart benefit others" (21-22).

Both noble armes and gentle curtesie,

No greater shame to man then inhumanitie. (6.1.26)

He further instructs Briana that she must “forgoe / This euill manner. . . And doe in stead thereof mild curt’sie showe / To all, that passe” (6.1.27). While a massacre seems an extreme reaction to a haircut, Calidore’s response suggests that discourtesy must be met with swift and decisive force. Harold Toliver attributes this action to “Spenser question[ing] just how far force may proceed against wrongdoers without destroying courtesy” (“Briana” 111). Calidore, after all, manifests, or at least defends, courtesy (for more about the nature of Calidore’s relationship with courtesy, see Chapter 6). Briana sends her dwarf to retrieve Crudor to defend her against Calidore, and shortly thereafter, the two knights fight. Though they seem to fight on equal ground at first, Calidore gains the upper hand and defeats Crudor. When Crudor begs for mercy, Calidore admonishes him, “strangers no more so rudely to intreat, / But put away proud looke, and vsage sterne, / The which shal nought to you but foule dishonor yearne” (6.1.40). Crudor, “cruel and crude . . . [but] not defective in breeding . . . [or] irredeemably base” (Toliver, “Crudor” 200), agrees to stop the discourteous behavior that he and Briana have enacted in the past and lay aside his pride to take Briana as his wife. Briana, “so wonderously now chaung’d, from that she was afore” (6.1.46), offers to give Calidore her castle. Stewart notes Calidore’s success in “teaching” Briana courtesy:

[Briana] is transformed into a fine and grateful hostess [and then guest]. . . The issue, then, is not civil or criminal law enforcement, but hospitality. To be free, Briana must release everyone from that custom requiring a demeanor of obeisance toward her, and change places with those whose social mobility she once hindered. (84)

Though they violate the tenants of hospitality early in the episode, after “learning” from Calidore, the couple reform their inhospitable ways and become gracious hosts. The relatively simple “happily ever after” nature of this resolution²¹ reveals its place as an episode at the beginning of one of Spenser’s books. As in other parts of *The Faerie Queene*, the Legend of Courtesy offers its protagonists lessons about the titular virtue in increasing severity. Though Crudor and Briana violate courtesy, they still function as part of the civil system, representing a twisted perception of surface-level courtesy rather than positioning themselves as true enemies to all courteous behavior. Despite qualifying as the bad-mannered individuals described by Castiglione and Guazzo who should be avoided, the effects of their discourtesy are limited. The next enemy of courtesy—Turpine—also lives as part of the court structure. He shows himself more discourteous than Crudor and Briana, possibly low-born, and less receptive to reforming his discourteous behavior, even when threatened with violence.

2.4 Turpitudinous Turpine

Turpine, perhaps the most traditional antagonist in the Legend of Courtesy, is the most complete representation of a discourteous knight in *The Faerie Queene*. A. C. Judson calls Turpine Spenser’s “most notable example of discourtesy [and] an arrant coward” (126); John D. Bernard identifies Turpine as “Spenser’s most egregiously discourteous knight” (96); Paul D. Green notes that Turpine “is [a] commoner masquerading as a knight” (391) marked by “extreme incivility” (392); Humphrey Tonkin observes Turpine’s “appallingly plebeian behavior” (*Spenser’s Courteous Pastoral* 161); and Daniel Fried refers to Turpine as “an emblem of false gentility” (240) and “[exemplar] of . . . false courtesy” (241). Though immersed in the chivalric

²¹ Danner comments that the “happy” conclusion of Briana and Crudor’s story is undermined by the fact that Crudor acquiesces to marry Briana only under threat of violence (9).

system, Turpine egregiously violates the code by which he has ostensibly pledged to live. The narrator and other characters refer to Turpine as “discourteous” or displaying “discourtesy” seven times in the poem.²² Turpine’s own porter describes him as

one of mickle might,
 And manhood rare, but terrible and stearne
 In all assaies to euey errant Knight

 For seldome yet did liuing creature see,
 That curtesie and manhood euer disagree. (6.3.40)

Turpine’s consistent violations of the rules of chivalry and hospitality render him an almost comic anti-knight with few or no redeeming virtues.

Turpine, though a knight, ostensibly civilized and well-born, consistently displays bad behavior, often causing others to strip him of his birth status with their language. Tonkin contrasts him with the Salvage Man, who shows some nobility despite his wild nature; he notes that Turpine’s conduct “reveals his ‘base kind’, his ‘vile dunghill mind.’ Turpine creates and spreads trouble, confusion, and disorder. He is an enemy of benevolent nature and hence not endowed with nature’s gifts . . . [he is] dishonest, basely born, cowardly” (*Spenser’s Courteous Pastoral* 161). The relation of birth to courtesy is a complicated question that recurs throughout *The Faerie Queene*, with no real resolution.²³ Tonkin reminds us that “the question whether courtesy and noble birth go together, or whether the first is possible without the second, occupied the attention of most of the authors who wrote on courtesy in the sixteenth century” (*Spenser’s Courteous Pastoral* 43). Guazzo also weighs in on the issue, stating,

²² These can be found at 6.3.33, 6.3.34, 6.4.2, 6.5.33, 6.7.1, 6.7.2, and 6.7.4.

²³ Tonkin discusses the issue of nobility and courtesy fully in *Spenser’s Courteous Pastoral*. See also Judson and Culp.

truly I knowe many men of meane calling, who in Gentlemanlike and courteous conditions, in good bringing up, and all their talke and behavior, excell many Gentlemen. And contrariwise, I am sure you know many Gentlemen more uncivill then the Clownes themselves. (175)

Regardless of whether he is actually lowborn or just acts as though he is, Turpine is constantly labeled as basely born. Calepine calls him a “peasant Knight” who is “full base and euill borne” (6.3.31), a “rude churle” guilty of “fowle discourtesie, vnfit for Knight” (6.3.33), and an “Vnknighly Knight” (3.3.35). Turpine is a knight in name only, and other characters emphasize this point over and over again. Much of Turpine’s bad behavior emerges from his cowardice, which “has three parts: first, self-assured malice and defiance in having a definite advantage over his adversary; second, unethical tactics; and third, ignominious flight when the odds are no longer in his favor” (Green 392). Arnold Williams observes that Turpine, like “every discourteous person we meet in the story[,] shares these characteristics, boldness and violence in the face of their inferiors, cowardice towards their equals” (43). Turpine comes across as a bully, who acts out against other knights due to some repressed insecurity or cowardice on his part. He embodies the men who Aristotle refers to when he warns, “the cause of pleasure to those who give insult is that they think they themselves become more superior by ill-treating others” (*On Rhetoric* 2.2.6). The motivations behind Turpine’s discourtesy are less important than the fact that he fails to fulfill his role in upholding the codified civil contract of knighthood.

Turpine consistently violates the code of chivalry and—at times—basic human decency. He refuses to help the wounded Serena cross a river, taunting Calepine and Serena instead of helping (6.3.30-34), an action which Leonard Ashley calls “wantonly malicious” and “a breech

of the laws of chivalric courtesy” (122). Calepine, offended that Turpine dare call himself a knight, formally challenges him to either fight or give up his claim to knighthood, saying,

Vnknightly Knight, the blemish of that name
 And blot of all that armes vppon them take,
 Which is the badge of honour and of fame,
 Loe I defie thee, and here challenge make,
 That thou for euer doe those armes forsake;
 And be for euer held a recreant Knight. (6.3.35)

Instead of fighting, Turpine disdains the challenge and hides in his castle. He does eventually emerge and attack Calepine on horseback, but only after Calepine dismounts his own horse, making the fight unfair. The Salvage Man happens upon them and saves Calepine by chasing Turpine away, and the subsequent interactions between Turpine and other characters reveal different ways that Turpine acts unknighly. When the Salvage Man gets close to the discourteous knight, he “gan cry aloud with horrible affright, / And shrieked out, a thing vncomely for a knight” (6.4.8). Serena complains to Arthur of “the foule discour’ties and vnknighly parts, / Which Turpine had vnto her shewed late, / Without compassion of her cruell smarts” (6.5.33), and Arthur steps in to “auenge th’abuses of that proud / And shamefull Knight” (6.5.34). When Arthur approaches, Turpine again hides in his castle. Characters and the narrator consistently comment on the ironic discrepancy between Turpine’s title and his actions: a quality he shares with the empty rhetoricians that were distrusted by many. Still, Turpine’s discourtesy does not seem particularly out of place or dangerous in the book.

Perhaps some of the familiarity of Turpine’s brand of discourtesy stems from the fact that other characters in *The Faerie Queene* demonstrate similar discourtesy. Redcross abandons Una

in her time of need (1.2.6); both Malbecco and Briana refuse to offer hospitality to passing knights (3.9.10-13, 6.1.13-15); Radigund overturns the traditional chivalric system by forcing men to dress as women (5.4.31-32); and first Malecasta and then later Dolon's knights discourteously visit Britomart's bed chamber (admittedly, with different intentions) (3.1.59-61, 5.6.28-29). Whereas these other characters may be said to act with similarly unknighly or cowardly behavior, Turpine adds intentional malice to his behavior that sets him apart as the best example of a discourteous knight. Fried calls Turpine "the book's prime example of false courtesy, the lord who lives with the trappings of knighthood and nobility but only uses such trappings to hide a moral foulness" (240). Beyond just twisting a single aspect of courteous behavior, Turpine repeatedly abuses both the external trappings and the moral sense of chivalric conduct.

Turpine's abuses remain limited to violations of social codes from within the system. His abuses are little more than hyperbolic instances of everyday discourtesies that knights may encounter, and Arthur punishes Turpine's indiscretions without excessive violence (for more on Arthur's treatment of Turpine, see Chapter 5). Turpine resists learning how to be courteous or admitting the error of his behavior, even after being shamed by Arthur repeatedly. William Oram attributes this to a recurring paralysis in the efficacy of Spenser's characters, suggesting that "the angry helplessness associated with the paralysis motif gains new meaning as Spenser focuses on external limits to human action . . . Arthur can strip Turpine of his armor but cannot shame a man naturally shameless" ("Spenserian Paralysis" 64). While Turpine violates social custom over and over again and inhibits (or even threatens) the comfort of others—particularly with the refusal of hospitality—his cowardice and his place within the existing chivalric structure of Faeryland limit

the effects of his discourtesy. As the *Legend of Courtesy* moves forward, the villains—and their brand of discourteous behavior—become increasingly serious.

2.5 The Sinister Salvages and Bad Brigands

Calling the Salvage Nation and the Brigands discourteous vastly understates the severity of their actions. These groups represent the absolute lack of even the most basic respect for other human beings because they engage in cannibalism and slave trade. Spenser portrays them as “unredeemable and deserving of annihilation” (Lockey 385), presenting these violent forces in the context of courtesy. This is an approach that few others take in courtesy texts. Castiglione identifies the existence of individuals “so inept and uncouth that we cannot but think that nature brought them into the world out of spite and mockery” (1.14), but offers no explanation of how courteous individuals should interact with these “inept and uncouth” people. Guazzo proposes that “infamous persons... [ought] rather to be pitied than blamed: for that they shew plainly, that their euill speaking is deriued from their owne corrupt nature” (67), but again offers no suggestion for dealing with these “infamous persons.” Spenser, then, breaks new ground by including this aspect of courtesy—this aggressive discourtesy. The chaos and destruction that results from introducing aggressive discourtesy into a civilized world reveals the inadequacy of courtesy theory in the face of true danger and justifies Spenser’s portrayal of characters using excessive force in the *Legend of Courtesy*.

The episodes of the Salvage Nation and the brigands reveal the fragility of harmonious society to external forces of aggressive discourtesy and the inability of either courtliness or civil conversation to deal with this type of discourtesy. The ways in which the two groups sustain themselves show them similarly positioned as enemies to harmonious civility. The Salvage

Nation “ne did giue / Them selues to any trade, as for to driue / The painefull plough, or cattell for to breed” (6.8.35) while the Brigands “neuer vsde to liue by plough nor spade” (6.10.39). Both nations take advantage of hardworking neighbors, with the Salvage Nation “on the labours of poore men to feed, / And serue their own necessities with others need” (6.8.35), each “euening wandring euery way, / To seeke for booty” (6.8.36), while the Brigands “fed on spoile and booty, which they made / Vpon their neighbours, which did nigh them border” (6.10.39). The fact that neither nation provides for itself starkly contrasts the idyllic pastoral life of simple hard work presented by the shepherds in Book 6. The fact that they live off of the spoils²⁴ of the hard work of those shepherds (and other neighbors) positions them as an active threat to harmonious social living. The shepherds represent “a moral positive [which] has all the innocence and joy long associated with [pastoral]” (Cooper 532). Spenser positions the Salvage Nation and brigands as opposites of this “moral positive,” as they represent an active threat to the wellbeing of others. Though this tradition of theft violates civility, it pales in comparison to the groups’ other violations of courtesy.

The Salvage Nation’s particular brand of extreme discourtesy is cannibalism. The Salvages, an “extreme of collective incivility” (Toliver “Cannibals” 133), “vsed one most accursed order, / To eate the flesh of men” (6.8.36). Their religious fanaticism and treatment of Serena clearly echo the Satyr nation of Book 1 and their worship of Una. However, the Salvage Nation’s rituals are more extreme. Instead of merely worshipping Serena, they plan to “Vnto their God [her] sacrificize, / Whose share, her guiltless bloud they would present” and afterwards “of her dainty flesh . . . make a common feast” (6.8.38). Whereas the Satyrs’ lack of language renders them less harmful, the Salvages discuss whether to wake her or let her sleep, “for sleepe they sayd would make her battill better” (6.8.38), how best to devour Serena, “her eate attonce;

²⁴ For a discussion of the context of the word “spoils” in conjunction with thievery, see Dubrow (206-07).

or many meals to make” (6.8.37), and “with their eyes the daintest morsels chose” (6.8.39). This leering and flesh eating amplifies earlier references in *The Faerie Queene* to human consumption. The hyena-like beast that the witch sends after Florimell “feeds on wemens flesh, as others feede on gras” (3.7.22). Worse, the “wilde and saluage” character Lust had “huge great teeth . . . For he liu’d all on rauin and on rape / Of men and beasts; and fed on fleshly gore” (4.7.5). Lust, however, “was no man, but onely like in shape” (4.7.5) and the hyena was “an hideous beast, of horrible aspect” (3.7.22); neither was actually human. Despite their bestial behavior and similarities to the half-human satyrs, the Salvage Nation is made up of actual humans.²⁵ Toliver suggests that “lacking inborn human instincts and the nurtured discipline of the gentleman, the cannibals represent an organized bestiality and communal disorder” (“Cannibals” 133). Nevertheless, the Salvages *are* in fact human, which makes their inhumane transgressions all the worse.

The Salvage Nation, however discourteous, does have its own limits of acceptable behavior: though they practice cannibalism, they do not rape their sacrifice. The Salvages strip Serena naked and leer at her, dissecting her visually in a detailed, twisted blazon that “betrays a gluttonous voyeurism that deforms woman into sexual object, spiritual gazing into lascivious leering, and human courtesy into discourtesy” (DeNeef 637). After this gratuitous blazon, some of the Salvages “gan mongst themselues deuize / Therof by force to take their beastly pleasure,” but the priest warns them “to dare not to pollute so sacred threasure, / Vow’d to the gods” (6.8.43). The savages “turn from hungry butchers to courtly lovers, dismembering [Serena] with

²⁵ The Salvage Nation and Brigands are often interpreted as representations of the uncivilized Irish. See, for example, Hadfield (“Another Look at Serena and Irena”; *Spenser’s Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl*), Lockey, and Cavanagh (“Ideal and Practical Justice: Artegall and Arthur in *Faerie Queene* Five). Dubrow warns, however, that this may be over-simplified and that “we should gloss the brigands in terms of anxieties about crime within England, not simply with fears of Ireland” (210). Oram notes that the Brigands in particular “may owe something to Spenser’s concern with the bands of Irish outlaw rebels mentioned in *Vewe*, though the episode has its literary roots in the melodramatic action of Greek romance” (“Brigands” 112).

their ‘lustfull fantasies’” (Toliver, "Cannibals" 134), but this group does “possess minimal civilized restraints” (Oram, "Brigands" 113) which keeps them from raping their captive.

Another limit to their behavior is the fact that the Salvage nation eats only people who “they mote fynde, / And straungers to deuoure, which on their border / Were brought by errour, or by wreckfull wynde” (6.8.36). Their misguided, extreme religious practice leads them to believe that Serena (and, ostensibly, any other stranger) “by the grace of God . . . there was sent” (6.8.38). They otherwise keep to themselves; the Salvage Nation does not invade and eat its neighbors. This limit to their behavior differentiates them from the brigands and allows the narrative of discourtesy to escalate as the cantos in Book 6 progress.

The Brigands, while not flesh eaters, do invade peaceful settlements and kidnap prisoners out of their own homes, meaning “for slaues to sell them, for no small reward, / To merchants, which them kept in bondage hard, / Or sold againe” (6.10.43). They form the “last and worst . . . [threat] to civil harmony” (Oram, "Brigands" 113), entering the peaceful civilization of others and abducting individuals to sell them into slavery. Richard Neuse comments, “against hellish forces like the Brigands in league with the Merchants, any civilized order is likely to prove fragile” ("Pastorella" 533). The Brigands’ method of abduction separates them from other kidnapers in the poem; elsewhere in the allegory, victims of abduction are away from their own homes and often the characters’ flaws, or at least the flaws of the chivalric system, lead to their imprisonment. Proteus finds Florimell in the fisher’s boat while she seeks the man who has scorned her (3.8.30-32), Artegall (or perhaps his pride) agrees to be bound to Radigund’s will if she bests him in battle (5.4.51), and Amoret’s capture by Busirane is a by-product of the revelry of the mask that happened “before the bride was bedded” (4.1.3). The other kidnapers do not pillage their victims’ peaceful homes. While any kidnapping may be an affront to civility, the

brigands' approach specifically violates courtesy, echoing the rape²⁶ of Helen, which violated hospitality and threatened social harmony so extremely that it launched a 10-year war.

That the brigands violate courtesy more than the Salvage Nation is implied by the escalating structure of Spenser's narrative. Harry Berger explains this structure, reflecting that often in Book 6, "the second group is always worse or more ineffective than the first—we move from Crudor to Turpine, from Calidore to Calepine, from the hermit to Melibee, from the noble savage to the cannibals to the bandits" ("A Secret Discipline: *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI" 39). Because slave trade does not seem inherently worse than cannibalism, the brigands' escalation must stem from the nature of their invasions rather than their treatment of the victims.²⁷ Heather Dubrow reveals that Elizabethan "records of crime and prosecution . . . suggest particularly intense anxieties about burglary, the felony that generally involves entry into a house and hence invasion" (209). Their invasive attacks combined with the fact that their dwelling is so far removed from society, "in a little Island was, / Couered with shrubby woods, in which no way / Appeard for people in nor out to pas" (6.10.41), make the Brigands the greater threat to harmonious living. They do not mask their birth status with any art: "the Brigands, like the Savage Nation, both seem and are base" (Fried 240). Like Ate and Cupid,²⁸ the Brigands are a force of chaos or "anarchic strife" (Oram, "Brigands" 113) acting on otherwise harmonious spaces in Faeryland.

Another way to interpret the escalation from the discourteous knights to the aggressive forces of discourtesy lies in the ability of courteous characters to deal with the discourtesy.

²⁶ Rape in this context implies theft/kidnapping, not sexual assault.

²⁷ Alternatively, Oram believes the difference lies in the fact that "the cannibals form a community of savages, [but] the Brigands are civilized creatures gone bad . . . [who] participate in a money economy" ("Brigands" 113).

²⁸ Ate, the goddess of discord, threw the golden apple into the feast of the gods and ultimately set into motion the events leading to the Trojan war. Cupid, the "disturber of civil life" (3.6.14), is likewise a force of discord in *The Faerie Queene*.

Though Calidore slays Briana's men, Briana and Crudor do not themselves require violence (perhaps aside from the threat of violence) to become more courteous. Turpine arguably does not become more courteous, but he is baffled and his titles are removed, so he is significantly punished. His punishment, however, is minimally violent; though Arthur hangs him by his heels in shame, Arthur does not kill him, which would be justified given Turpine's attempt to have Arthur murdered. The Salvage Nation and the Brigands, on the other hand, can be handled only with extreme and immediate force. No element of a courtesy manual—no civil conversation, no courtliness, no shunning of inept individuals—offers a useful solution for dealing with this degree of discourtesy. It seems odd that these groups, apparently the worst type of aggressive discourtesy in *The Faerie Queene*, do not appear in the final cantos of Book 6. Instead, Spenser reserves as the final enemy of courtesy the seemingly less dangerous Blatant Beast.

2.6 The Barking Blatant Beast

It seems anticlimactic that courtesy's most persistent nemesis in Book 6 is neither Briana, Crudor, Turpine, the Salvage Nation, nor the Brigands; instead, Spenser presents the Blatant Beast as the most constant threat to courtesy. The other characters enact the severest crimes against humanity, yet the book—and the poem²⁹—culminates in this beast that, once "tamed" by Calidore, "like a fearefull dog him followed through the land" (6.12.36). As Tonkin posits, "while the Blatant Beast might be a very fitting representative of slanderous tongues and stirrers up of scandal, such activities seem hardly the opposite of courtesy" (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 32). Spenser seems to imply that slander is the worst affront to courtesy, even beyond

²⁹ For discussion about Book 6 as the intentional end of *The Faerie Queene*, see Neuse ("Book VI as Conclusion to *The Faerie Queene*"), Stewart, Tonkin ("*The Faerie Queene*, Book VI"), and D. L. Miller ("Abandoning the Quest").

bodily harm, theft, and destruction of others' harmonious lives. Anne Lake Prescott speculates that

Spenser's generation found the perennial human temptation to slander particularly worrisome, perhaps because several factors converged to give language and its dangers more importance than ever: [including] humanist stress on rhetoric . . . and widespread anxieties about reputation. (632)

These “anxieties” can be seen minimally in other courtesy manuals and, to a lesser extent, in their Greek and Roman predecessors. Aristotle mentions slander in reference to friendship, saying “it is only the friendship of the good that is proof against slander” (*The Nicomachean Ethics* 8.4.20). Cicero addresses slander only once, as an aside, in *On the Ideal Orator*, noting that shouting from the audience “may be the result of resentment or indignation in the audience (which can either be justified or arise from slander and rumors)” (2.339). Cicero does, however, mention slander thrice in *De Officiis*, at 1.37, “[some] in earnest take delight in making malicious and slanderous statements about the absent,” at 2.10, “For some men they consider unscrupulous, slanderous, fraudulent, and dangerous,” and at 3.20, “Pray tell me, does it coincide with the character of your good man to lie for his own profit, to slander, to overreach, to deceive? Nay, verily; anything but that!” While Cicero clearly represents slander as a negative quality, his references to it are fleeting, and he gives no specific advice for dealing with it. Similarly, in Castiglione's *The Courtier*, slander is mentioned 6 times—most significantly in conjunction with the behavior and reputation of the Court Lady at 3.4, 3.42, and 3.43—but it holds little sway over the overall argument of the treatise. In contrast, the concern for slander weighs far more heavily in the work of Spenser and Guazzo.

Whether slander exceeds other discourtesies or, as Williams speculates, “surely slander is only one kind of discourtesy . . . But they have all one essential element, a selfishness, a blindness to the sensibilities and needs of others” (42), Spenser gives slander the last word on discourtesy in Book 6. Ronald B. Bond calls the Blatant Beast the “epitome and culmination of intractable evil” (96). Judson emphasizes that “of all expressions of discourtesy, slander seems to be most repugnant to Spenser. Never for long are we allowed to forget that Calidore's mission is the capture of the Blatant Beast. The evil character of this monster is stressed in many ways” (130). This perception of slander has some precedent; Guazzo, from whose theories of courtesy Spenser draws heavily (see Chapter 5), also places slander above other discourtesies, saying that slanderers,

with the falsenesse of their tongues, seeke to blemishe the brightnesse of others names. The fault is at this day common throughout the worlde, and therefore wee must spite of our teeth beare with ill tongues, which swarme in greater number than Bees doe in July: neither is it possible for a man to escape their stinging, do the best hee can. For now adaies men take such pleasure in this vice, that many which are free from all other faults, yet are they not able to bridle their blasphemous tongues. (65)

While Guazzo does not evaluate the severity of slander compared to other vices here, he does speculate on its prevalence as the most common vice. Spenser echoes Guazzo's view of slander in the form of the Blatant Beast in the middle of Book 6:

No wound, which warlike hand of enemy
 Inflicts with dint of sword, so sore doth light,
 As doth the poysnous sting, which infamy

Infixeth in the name of noble wight:

For by no art, nor any leaches might

It euer can recurred be againe. (6.6.1)

Spenser seems concerned by the permanence of slander as well as its prevalence. Although Fried suggests that “the thousand-tongued Blatant Beast is apparently good enough at rhetoric to be deadly” (237), it may be that the danger of the Blatant Beast lies less in its rhetorical skill (we rarely hear it “speak” coherently) and more in humanity’s predilection towards wanting to spread and listen to gossip. The “sting” of vicious tongues against a knight’s or courtier’s good name harms more than other types of assaults for both Spenser and Guazzo. Guazzo continues to explain,

the fault of him which speaketh yll of his neighbour, to the intent to bring him into hatred, is greater then of him who pulleth the bread out of the mouth of the poore. For as the soule is more precious then the body, so is it a greater offence to take away ones good name, which refresheth the soule, then to defraud one of food, which sustaineth the body. (66)

The Salvage Nation and the Brigands both take bread from their neighbors, but the Blatant Beast spreads rumor and slander. Guazzo’s position against slander is supported by his emphasis on the importance of civil conversation to the coherence of society; slander “undermines the community that language creates” (Prescott 632). However, Spenser’s upholding slander as the worst enemy to courtesy seems unusual given the depth of his examination of discourtesy. Also unusual is Spenser’s upholding the Blatant Beast as worse than other slanderers in the poem.

The Blatant Beast is not the only character of *The Faerie Queene* that engages in slander; other characters use (or are accused of using) slander. These examples show the persistence of

Spenser's abhorrence of slander. Archimago's tricking Redcrosse into believing that Una was unfaithful may be interpreted as a form of slander against Una, though he used a magical vision as well (1.2.4-5). Malfont had his "tongue . . . for trespasse vyle / Nayld to a post" for "blasphem[ing]" Mercilla with "forged guile / Both with bold speaches . . . And with lewd poems" (5.9.25). Ate, as a tool of discord, has

the seedes of euill wordes, and factious deedes;
Which when to ripenesse due they growen arre,
Bring foorth an infinite increase, that breedes
Tumultous trouble and contentious iarre,
The which most often end in bloodshed and in warre. (4.1.25)

Even gentle Britomart uses slander rhetorically to try to "trick" Redcrosse into revealing anything negative he knows about Artegall (3.2.8).³⁰ Indeed, even the allegorical character Sclaunder³¹ appears in Book 4. Spenser portrays her as a hag, a "foule and loathly creature . . . stuf with rancor and despight . . . Pouring out streames of poison and of gall / Gainst all" (4.8.24). He positions Sclaunder as an abuser of the purpose of language:

Her words were not, as common words are ment,
T'expresse the meaning of the inward mind,
But noisome breath, and poysnous spirit sent
From inward parts, with cancred malice lind. (4.8.26)

Sclaunder appears only to rant and yell negative lies about people (or things) that she sees; aside from annoying Arthur and Amoret, she has little influence on their actions. This may be due to

³⁰ David Mikics notes "The devious way she elicits Red Crosse's praise of Arthegall . . . suggests Britomart's awareness of dissimulation's pleasures," calling the strategy an example of "courtly rhetoric's blurring of ethical definitions in the service of a sensibility receptive to paradox" (101).

³¹ A.C. Hamilton and Prescott have noted that the spelling connotes both "slander" and "scandal."

the ineffective rhetoric she slings about; M. Lindsay Kaplan notes that “her words are almost without content” (37). Still, she shares some characteristics with the Blatant Beast. Her words “passing though the eares, would pierce the hart, / And wound the soule it selfe with grieffe vnkind” (4.8.26). Similarly, the Blatant Beast’s wounds make victim’s “hearts . . . sicke” (6.5.40) and “forth doth bring / Sorrow, and anguish, and impatient paine / In th’inner parts” (6.6.8). Further, the canine attributes of the Blatant Beast also apply to Sclaunder. After Arthur and Amoret ride away from Sclaunder, she

after them did barke, and still backbite ,
 Though there were non her hatefull words to heare:
 Like as a curre doth felly bite and teare

 Against the stones and trees did rayle anew,
 Till she had duld the sting, which in her tongs end grew. (4.8.36)

The Blatant Beast, likewise,

began aloud to barke and bay
 With bitter rage and fell contention,
 That all the woods and rockes nigh to that way,
 Began to quake and tremble with dismay. (5.12.41)

Despite these similarities, Sclaunder’s words remain ineffective, and the Blatant Beast’s words nearly end several lives. Kaplan acknowledges that “the effects of slander are represented as much more grievous and resistant to redress in Book VI [where] defamatory attacks are analogous to, but more serious than, physical maiming” (54). This may be due to the book in which the antagonists appear; slander does not allegorically oppose friendship in the way that it

opposes courtesy. The way in which the characters encounter the slanderer may also determine the result of the slanderous interaction. Arthur and Amoret (who have generally sparkling reputations) stumble upon Sclaunder in her own home and leave her behind easily. Victims of the Blatant Beast arguably invite the bite by putting themselves in compromising situations. Prescott notes that “slander is not wholly arbitrary . . . for it exploits appearance, whether of imprudence . . . or of an encounter with Lust, however innocent” (632). This certainly seems true to Spenser’s use of allegory throughout the poem.

Perhaps, however, Bond is on to something when he indicates that “of all the fiends, monsters, and dragons in *The Faerie Queene*, the Blatant Beast alone terrorizes the poet” (98). In the final stanzas of Book 6, the Blatant Beast jumps out of Faeryland and into England, ranging into Spenser’s England, and, in fact, biting Spenser’s own work. The Blatant Beast may be the most dangerous enemy because it represents a danger to the poet himself. The last complete book of Spenser’s epic comes to a close with a note about the reception of the poet’s previously published work:

More then my former writs, all were they clearest
 From blamefull blot, and free from all that wite,
 With which some wicked tongues did it backebite,
 And bring into a mighty Peres displeasure,
 That neuer so deserued to endite. (6.12.41)

This, the end of Spenser’s great work, is little more than a complaint to discourteous readers of his work. Spenser needs his readers; “*The Faerie Queene* invests . . . in the idea that works of art are not self-identical, but locked into a mutually dependent relationship with their critical readers and scholarly presentation” (Chamberlain 60). However, this dependency leads to

disappointment on the part of the poet. Spenser's enigmatic last lines, "Therefore do you my rimes keep better measure, / And seeke to please that now is counted wisemens threasure" (6.12.41), indicate a giving up of the didactic purpose of *The Faerie Queene*, and the reader—like the poet—is left profoundly dissatisfied with the conclusion of Book 6 and the epic as a whole.

3 THE ARTFUL

"ye will them all but fayned shows esteeme, / Which carry colours faire, that feeble eies misdeeme" (6.proem.4)

3.1 Introduction

Spenser's conception of moral courtesy stems from a harmonious interweaving of external and inward courtesy which parallels the Humanist view that art and content must align to be truly eloquent. The concept of surface-only, inauthentic courtliness also weighs heavily in his work and reveals the long-standing distrust of the deceitful power of empty rhetoric. Much of the Elizabethan distrust of rhetoric stemmed from the ability of art to too closely imitate nature. Indeed, C.S. Lewis says that in *The Faerie Queene*, "like Life and Death, or Light and Darkness, the opposition of natural and artificial, naïve and sophisticated, genuine and spurious, meets us at every turn" (328). The real-life implication tied to the aesthetic concern about art masquerading as nature³² was the idea that a commoner could pass as an aristocrat with the proper application of training. On one hand, the didactic nature of courtesy manuals made this upward mobility possible. On the other hand, a latent unease with the idea of the common masquerading as gentry

³² This is in no way a full discussion of art vs. nature in *The Faerie Queene*. This focus on art here is meant to cover only artful deception as it relates to courtesy.

emerges in the writings of the Renaissance. One means of addressing this opposition was to delineate between inward courtesy, which some considered an in-born trait, and outward courtliness, which could be learned, implicitly suggesting that natural courtesy was superior to nurtured courtliness. Also at play was a concern for the discrepancy between true virtue and outward appearance; Neoplatonic thought held that true beauty necessarily implied inner beauty, but rhetorical courtliness did not necessitate matched inner virtue. Distrust of courtliness for this reason mirrors distrust of rhetoric that may not be matched with legitimate knowledge. Spenser's work expresses these concerns about courtliness. He makes his readers distrust—or at least question—the concept of courtesy, and he distinguishes between moral courtesy and courtliness. Further, Spenser seems to distinguish between the “bad” artistry of the courtier and the “good” artistry of the poet.

Interestingly, Spenser never uses the term “courtier” in *The Faerie Queene*, despite having used it several times in *Mother Hubberds Tale*³³ and once in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*.³⁴ He does, however, use the words “chivalry” and “courtly” in his epic. While these terms may sound like positive attributes that would be associated with inward courtesy, the characters who Spenser usually identifies with these terms are far from courteous: Braggadochio, Malecasta and her knights, Duessa, Fradubio, and Trompart to name a few. Additionally, Spenser puts his reader on guard against the concept of courtesy from its introduction in his work. His first use of “courteous” refers to an interaction between Redcrosse and Archimago (1.1.30); the first uses of the words “courtly,” “chivalry,” and “courtesy” refer to Duessa/Fidessa (1.4.14; 1.2.35; 1.4.15); and the first use of “civility” references Malecasta's knights (3.1.44). The language connecting

³³ “Courtier” or “Courtiers” appears in *Mother Hubberds Tale* on lines 516, 614, 653, 669, 714, 717, and 784.

³⁴ “Courtier's” appears on line 702 of *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*.

these characters to courtesy, or at least to courtliness, alerts readers that they should approach those appearing courtly with utmost suspicion and caution.

Spenser joins a tradition of other Renaissance writers when he makes his least admirable characters nevertheless interesting.³⁵ He diverges from other Renaissance writers, however, with his attempt to keep his readers out of the reach of those characters' artful words. The characters and narrator of *The Faerie Queene* constantly warn readers of the danger of these artful characters, often before the virtuous characters in the poem see the danger themselves. In contrast with, for example, Milton—who has been criticized and cheered for making Satan too seductive in his rhetoric³⁶—Spenser keeps the artful characters at arm's length, reminding readers of their evil attributes as he describes their art. Though with one hand Spenser points out to his readers the danger of art—particularly art which disguises itself as nature—with the other hand he skillfully pens his own art, not drawing attention to any effort behind his poetic output. The resulting tension between the identified “bad” users of art and the unspoken “good” users of art (poets) demonstrates the complexity of rhetoric and eloquence in Elizabethan literature.

3.2 Courtly Castiglione and Stealthy *Sprezzatura*

Spenser seems to engage Baldesar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (henceforth *The Courtier*) directly within certain aspects of his representations of courtesy. Sir Thomas Hoby's English translation of *The Courtier* appeared first in 1561 and was then followed by reprints in 1577, 1588, and 1603 (Burke 64). The number of reprints alone reveals the popularity of the work. We may assume that Spenser, active in the court and literary circles of England in

³⁵ For example, William Shakespeare's Iago, Richard III, Shylock, and Lady Macbeth, John Milton's Satan, and Ben Jonson's Volpone are all interesting characters who lack perfect morals.

³⁶ This has been widely noted; see, for example, Fish, Forsyth, G. Rostrevor Hamilton, St. Hilaire, and Werblowski.

the late 1500s,³⁷ read the work; with so many copies in print, he certainly would have had the opportunity to read it. Woodhouse admonishes that “in absence of [significant] reference to [Castiglione] or his *Book of the Courtier* (*Il cortegiano* 1528), hypotheses about Spenser’s use of that particular treatise must be pure speculation” (136). However, one reference suggests Spenser’s direct knowledge of the work: “Around 1580, Gabriel Harvey, in a letter to his friend the poet Edmund Spenser, declared Castiglione to be ‘of no small reputation’ in Cambridge” (Burke 77). Woodhouse concedes,

It seems, from contemporary enthusiasm for the work, likely that he read it, certain that he knew of it. Even so, without external evidence it is impossible to say that Spenser culled ideas from Castiglione rather than from other courtesy works, or, more probably, from authors such as Ariosto, whose compositions were permeated with similar courtly ideas. (136)

Regardless of his familiarity with Castiglione’s work itself, Spenser engages heavily with the ideas presented in *The Courtier*. As such, understanding the ideas presented in Castiglione’s work contextualizes Spenser’s use of courtliness.

Castiglione’s work, modeled after Cicero’s *On the Ideal Orator*, uses a dialogic form, which “was well suited to the author’s aim of confronting and mediating between opposed views of the ideal courtier” (Burke 19-20). Castiglione uses the form to put forth multiple perspectives on an ideal of courtesy, but certain characteristics dominate the discussion and seem to express Castiglione’s viewpoint. The text touches on many aspects of court life; Lanham calls it “a philosophical treatise, then, as well as a political and educational one, it is also a basic etiquette handbook, superficial only in theorizing about the social surface” (144). This focus on the “social

³⁷ For biographical information about Spenser’s court life and education, see Andrew Hadfield’s *Edmund Spenser: A Life*. For the politics surrounding Spenser’s work, see Norbrook’s *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, 97-139.

surface” differentiates Castiglione from other theorists such as Guazzo, who focuses on the morality of the speaker as well as his polish. Castiglione fixates primarily on the social polish, typified by his concept of *sprezzatura*.

Castiglione’s most famous and supposedly innovative concept is *sprezzatura*: what I define as the art of appearing artless. Peter Burke calls *sprezzatura* “contrived spontaneity” (31); Frank Whigham refers to it as a “trope of promotion” in which “one puts on a guise of effortlessness, making elevation seem natural by hiding one’s artful preparation and effort” (“Courtesy as a Social Code” 196); Harry Berger identifies it as “the cultivated ability to display artful artlessness, to perform any act or gesture with an insouciant or careless mastery” (“Sprezzatura and the Absence of Grace” 295-96); Leonard Ashley calls it “studied nonchalance” (128); and Daniel Javitch describes it as “the ability to make effort appear effortless, that is, to make acquired skills seem unrehearsed and artifice seem artless” (“Courtesy Books” 197). Castiglione introduces the term *sprezzatura* in *The Courtier* through Count Ludovico, who urges the aspiring courtier

to avoid affectation in every way possible . . . and (to pronounce a new word perhaps) to practice in all things a certain *sprezzatura* (nonchalance), so as to conceal all art and make whatever is done or said appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it . . . Therefore we may call that art true art which does not seem to be art. (1.26)

Art without effort, or without showing its art, emerges as the single most defining trait of the courtier; the other skills are mere details.

The term *sprezzatura* was, as the Count suggests, new, but the concept of concealing art was not entirely unique to Castiglione. Several Greek and Roman authors reference a

sprezzatura-like hidden art. Aristotle writes, “authors should compose without being noticed and should seem to speak not artificially but naturally” (*On Rhetoric* 3.2.4). Cicero, through his character Antonius in *On the Ideal Orator*, expresses the idea of an eloquence which conceals art (2.83-87). Part of Quintilian’s *Instituto Oratorio* deals with extemporaneous speaking and suggests that prolific writing builds up the skill for speaking extemporaneously, which creates an effortless effect (10.7.1-24). Though Castiglione may not have been the first to write about the importance of artful artlessness, his explanation of the concept seems to have had the most direct influence on Renaissance culture and poetics.

Sprezzatura resonates with Renaissance poets and thinkers, who seem to both admire the skill and distrust it. Herbert David Rix suggests that at this point in the Renaissance, “form, or style, became more important than content, or truth” (7). *Sprezzatura* relies almost entirely on style, and little on content. Though seen by Castiglione as an admirable quality in a courtier, *sprezzatura* is, at its core, tricky and untrustworthy. Erasmus certainly distrusts it; Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg describe his *de Copia* as “a protest against the extreme Ciceronianism of the Italian humanists, particularly as their stylistic display gave rise to the deceptively polished eloquence of the courtier” (“Renaissance Rhetoric” 472). Berger notes that *sprezzatura* “creates within and around its performers a self-fulfilling culture of suspicion” (“Sprezzatura and the Absence of Grace” 299). After all, art seems artless, how may one identify it as art? This reflects the kind of suspicion that some Renaissance humanists had for rhetoric (see Chapter 1). Spenser seems to value outward shows of courtesy only if inner virtue matches the outer (see Chapter 5). Humphrey Tonkin, moreover, insists that when outward shows of courtesy do not spring from a deeper internal courtesy, “the result is the mere pretence of virtue, an imitation of an imitation” (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 158). Likewise, Stefano Guazzo,

who wrote his courtesy book, *The Civile Conversation*, about 50 years after Castiglione wrote *The Courtier*, warns of the courtier who possesses only the outer expression of virtue:

Many Courtiers carie that litle peece of suger in their mouthes, and it may bee saide, that their money seemeth to bee Golde, although in the touche it is found to bee silver, or baser mettall. But I am of opinion in this, that wee suffer our eares to bee too much tickled, whereby wee give wrong judgement of the matter, beeing more attentive to the sounde of the woordes, then to the waight of the sentences. (126)

These examples highlight an adherence to the Neoplatonic idea that surface expression necessarily reflects inner virtue³⁸ as well a suspicion of unearned position, which may be tied to anxiety about the upward mobility of the middle class.

Nevertheless, the type of courtesy that Castiglione writes of may not be entirely useless. Berger notes two ways of interpreting the concept: “killjoys might be inclined to dismiss this art as a culturally legitimated practice of hypocrisy or bad faith, but others would appreciate the suppleness of the high-wire act of definitional balance” that the duke’s court engages in (“Sprezzatura and the Absence of Grace” 296). Richard Lanham writes, “the self emerges from *The Courtier*, then, as aesthetic rather than moral entity, as a matter, finally, of taste. Castiglione depicts a self built from the outside in” (156). In this interpretation, followers of *The Courtier* may experience a moral component of the courtesy, albeit secondary—the courtier may become truly courteous as a result of seeming courteous.³⁹ Berger complicates the usual interpretation of Castiglione’s work by positioning another of Castiglione’s concepts, *grazia*, as a moral courtesy

³⁸ Neoplatonism in the Renaissance built heavily upon the work of Plotinus and Marsilio Ficino. Jon Quitslund has written extensively about Neoplatonism in the work of Spenser; see his works, “beauty” and *Spenser’s Supreme Fiction*.

³⁹ This view follows Aristotle’s belief that “the virtues we do acquire by first exercising them” (*The Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1.30).

that is “grace beyond the reach of art;” he writes that “sprezzatura is envisaged as the false lookalike that threatens to displace *grazia*” (“Sprezzatura and the Absence of Grace” 305). Furthermore, Renaissance poets—the very individuals who are wont to express the distrust of art—themselves apply the principle of *sprezzatura*; they certainly do not wish to show any effort behind their work. Burke notes that Castiglione “himself practised what his characters preached. The *Courtier* itself is a work or art which conceals art under the appearance of spontaneity” (31). The same could be said of Spenser’s poetry and the work of other Renaissance poets.

One way that the distrust of *sprezzatura* emerges in Spenser’s work is in his use of the word “harmony.” Like “courtly” and “chivalry,” this word seems like a positive attribute. However, Spenser uses the term only six times. Una and Redcrosse “heare the birdes sweete harmony” (1.1.8) just before the storm forces them into Error’s den; in Malecasta’s sleeping chamber “sweet Musicke did diuide / Her looser notes with *Lydian* harmony” (3.1.40); during the Maske of Cupid, “a most delituous harmony, / In full straunge notes was sweetly heard to sound” (3.12.6); and Acrasia’s Bower of Bliss features “birdes of euey sorte / [which] Chaunted alowd their chearefull harmonee” (2.5.31), Zephyrus whistling “his treble, a straunge kind of harmony” (2.12.33), and “a most melodious sound . . . For all that pleasing is to liuing eare, / Was there consorted in one harmonee” (2.12.70). In each of these instances, aural harmony offers a false sense of comfort to characters entering a place of physical or moral danger. While this harmony does not necessarily represent a manifestation of polished rhetoric which, entering through the ear, may have a similar effect on a character, it does signal the danger of something seeming too polished. The fact that even the birds are often complicit in this artful harmony further blurs lines between art and nature and is typical of Spenser’s work.

In *The Faerie Queene*, the most artful abusers of this polished surface courtliness use the trappings of courteous behavior as a form of persuasion or deceit to meet their own ends.

Spenser seems to condemn courtliness in his work, particularly emphasizing a distrust of the appearance of the polished artful expression of *sprezzatura*. The concept represents at the same time a key feature of courtliness and an antithesis to inward courtesy due to its inherent trickery. Spenser's "impl[ication] that the deepest deceit consists of masking the vices so completely that virtue is impersonated" (Skinner 275) suggests that *sprezzatura*'s chief danger stems from how closely it resembles true courtesy. Spenser limits the effectiveness of the duplicity of his courtly characters against other characters. He constantly reminds readers of the hypocrisy of his artful characters, focusing their attention on the divide between the appearance and reality of these characters while he ironically works his own art on the reader.

3.3 Duplicitous Duessa

Duessa's rhetoric is consistently characterized by duplicity. Indeed, her very name suggests her duplicitous nature, of "two-ness, doubleness, and duplicity" and even "the principle of falsehood itself" (Hume 229). Often, her duplicity comes in the form of disguise; this has led Linda Gregerson to call Duessa "a scarlet seductress with a predilection for deception and rich costuming" ("Protestant Erotics: Idolatry and Interpretation in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*" 9).

While her motivations for action are not explicitly stated in the text, her primary goal seems to be upward mobility, similar to Lucifera, who "for to the highest she did still aspyre, / Or if ought higher were then that, did it desyre" (1.4.11). This certainly connects her with the courtier, who is often motivated by ambition. Duessa also joys in mischief-making for the sake of chaos or strife, like Archimago. *The Faerie Queene* tends to depict "women keep[ing] men from their

knightly duties . . . [an] emphasis upon women's distracting qualities [which] helps explain why Duessa and her fellow hags and witches often seem focused on keeping the knights out of the field” (Cavanagh, "Nightmares of Desire: Evil Women in *The Faerie Queene*" 328). Though Duessa uses magic and rhetoric to disguise herself to meet those ends, she also takes advantage of opportunities provided by fortune, as when Orgoglio defeats her champion, Redcrosse. She immediately switches allegiance to Orgoglio, who “gave her gold and purple pall to weare, / And triple crowne set on her head full hie, / And her endowd with royall maiesty” (1.7.16).⁴⁰ Duessa has traditionally been interpreted as a depiction of the Whore of Babylon or representation of the Catholic church;⁴¹ the aim of this reading is not to contradict those interpretations, but to analyze her place as a user of the art of persuasion.

Duessa uses both rhetoric and magic effectively against some characters of *The Faerie Queene*, but the efficacy of her efforts reaches its limit after Arthur and Una expose her true identity. Even when Duessa tricks characters in the poem, Spenser constantly reminds readers of her duplicity. Klein notes that “even when Duessa is disguised, however, Spenser never lets his reader forget her diabolical power and origin” (186). Spenser gives her the epithet “false Duessa” no fewer than 20 times⁴² in the poem, and also calls her “fowle Duessa” twice (1.4.37, 1.8.49), “faithlesse Duessa” once (4.1.32), and “proud Duessa” twice (1.8.6 and 1.8.13). By constantly reminding readers of her falseness, Spenser directs their attention to the way she manipulates other characters without giving Duessa the opportunity to persuade the readers themselves.

⁴⁰ Hume interprets this as pride, rather than ambition: “her monstrous pride is exposed when she allows Orgoglio to deck her in temporal pomp and the triple crown of the papacy” (229).

⁴¹ See, for example, Gregerson (Protestant Erotics: Idolatry and Interpretation in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*) and Hume. Hamilton, while not denying the Christian readings, also addresses Duessa as a function of classical archetypes in “Spenser’s Treatment of Myth.”

⁴² Duessa is identified as “false Duessa” at 1.2.44, 1.4.13, 1.4.arg, 1.5.11, 1.5.45, 1.7.1, 1.7.18, 1.7.50, 1.8.25, 1.12.arg, 1.12.32, 2.1.21, 4.1.18, 4.1.19, 4.1.46, 4.1.47, 4.1.51, 4.5.11, 5.9.40, and 5.9.42.

Duessa's most striking characteristic is her ability to deceive others so consistently with disguise. When she meets Redcrosse, "her humblesse low / In so ritche weedes and seeming glorious show, / Did much emmoue his stout heroicke heart" (1.2.21). Redcrosse easily falls for the fictional story that Duessa tells him as the "virgin widow" (1.2.24) and "seeming simple maid" (1.2.27), Fidessa. The pair travels together, making "faire seemely pleasaunce each to other," and Redcrosse "in his falsed fancy he her takes / To be the fairest wight, that liued yit" (1.2.30). Later, after Redcrosse flees the House of Pride without Duessa, she finds him and "with reproch of carelesnes vnkynd, / Vpbrayd, for leauing her in place unmeet, / With fowle words tempring faire, soure gall with hony sweet" (1.7.3). Duessa effectively uses language to both chastise Redcrosse and to please him. Spenser highlights her adaptive ability to use language, not just magical disguises, in her interactions with Redcrosse. Nor is Redcrosse the only knight that Duessa has fooled into believing her fair dissembling. Fradubio, another knight tricked by Duessa, tells his sad story to Redcrosse and "Fidessa," apparently still unable to see through Duessa's disguise.

Fradubio explains that when he met Duessa, he saw a knight who "had a like faire Lady by his syde, / Lyke a faire Lady, but did fowle Duessa hyde" (1.2.35). When he compares Duessa to his love, Fralissa, to see who was fairer,

Both seemde to win, and both seemde won to bee,
 So hard the discord was to be agreed.
 Fralissa was as faire, as faire mote bee,
 And euer false Duessa seemde as faire as shee. (1.2.37)

When Duessa realizes that her own feigned beauty does not outshine Fralissa's, she decides to "win by guile," and using her magic, she "Dimmed [Fralissa's] former beauties shining ray, /

And with foule vgly forme did her disgrace” (1.2.38). She does not rely on magic alone, however. Duessa supplements this magic with rhetorical speech, saying to Fradubio,

Fye, fye, deformed wight,
 Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth plaine
 To haue before bewitched all mens sight;
 O leaue her soone, or let her soone be slaine. (1.2.39)

Again, it seems to be Duessa’s words—her rhetorical power—as much as her magic, that convince Fradubio of his former love’s fall from beauty; he notes, “her loathly visage viewing with disdain, / Eftsoons I thought her such, as she me told” (1.2.39). Melinda Gough attributes this to Duessa’s effective rhetorical slander, stating that “Duessa’s ability to substitute the image of foulness for Fraelissa’s true fairness relies not only on slanderous speech but also on the enchantress’s traditionally persuasive yet fallacious rhetoric: Fradubio sees what Duessa tells him to see” (50). Moreover, Fradubio continues to live under the false impression planted by Duessa for a “long time” until he “chaunst to see her in her proper hew” (1.2.40). Chance, then, leads Fradubio to view the undisguised Duessa and discover his error, and not a lack of efficacy on Duessa’s part or self-realization by Fradubio.

Duessa handily manipulates Redcrosse, Fradubio, and Sansjoy. These male knights seem to be easy prey for her. Redcrosse is rustic and unrhetorical (see Chapter 4), Fradubio is young and eager, “in prime of youthly yeares, when corage hott / The fire of loue and ioy of cheualree / First kindled in [his] brest” (1.2.35), and Sansjoy is a “Paynim bold [and] enraged wight, / Whome great grieffe made forgetter the raines to hold / Of reasons rule” (1.4.41). When speaking to Sansjoy, Duessa lauds his brother Sansfoy as “flower of grace and cheualrye,” playing on his grief to manipulate him and “him amoues with speaches seeming fit” (1.4.45). Spenser

characterizes all three knights by passion, either from their youth or emotion, and Duessa easily deceives them, putting them at risk for complete destruction. Sheila Cavanagh notes that “Duessa's consummate skill in camoflaue amplifies her danger for the knights and ladies she encounters” (“Nightmares of Desire: Evil Women in *The Faerie Queene*” 332). More impressive, perhaps, is Duessa’s ability to deceive Night, her own kinswoman. Night demands to know who she is, and Duessa responds,

I that do seeme not I, Duessa ame,
 Quoth she, how euer now in garments gilt,
 And gorgeous gold arayd I to thee came,
 Duessa I, the daughter of Deceipt and Shame. (1.5.26)

Night explains her inability to see past Duessa’s disguise:

..... In that fayre face
 The false resemblaunce of Deceipt, I wist
 Did closely lurke; yet so true-seeming grace
 It carried, that I scarce in darksome place
 Could it discerne, though I the mother bee
 Of falshood, and roote of Duessas race. (1.5.27)

Night is a more surprising victim of Duessa’s deceit because she lacks the characteristics which limit the judgment of the young knights. Despite this ability to deceive, Duessa does not seem to have mastered *sprezzatura*. In her conversation with Sansjoy, she reveals her art through lack of finesse, stating “O But I feare the fickle freakes (quoth shee) / Of fortune false” (1.4.50), of which Hamilton cheekily notes, “excessive alliteration declares Duessa’s duplicity” (1.4.50n). Furthermore, her disguise lacks effectiveness when tried against true virtue; she cannot maintain

her duplicity against characters such as Arthur and Una. Spenser, though revealing the strength of Duessa's rhetoric and magic against weaker characters of the poem, places a limit on the power of Duessa's work. He encourages his readers to distrust and dislike her, but stops short of allowing her to become so persuasive that the reader needs to fear her.

When Una and Duessa meet, Una tells Redcrosse that Duessa has been “the roote of all [his] care, and wretched plight” but recommends that he nevertheless allow Duessa to live because “to doe her die . . . were despight, / And shame t'auenge so weake an enemy; / But spoile her of her scarlot robe, and let her fly” (1.8.45). Despite Duessa's ability to influence other characters, Una calls her weak—perhaps because her duplicitous nature suggests a lack of inward virtue. Una, the unification of all virtue, demands Duessa's exposure: “So as she bad, that witch they disaraid, / And robd of roiall robes, and purple pall, / And ornaments that richly were displaid” (1.8.46). Upon seeing her naked, “her misshaped parts did them appall” (1.8.46), and of her,

Such then (said Vna) as she seemeth here,
Such is the face of falshood, such the sight
Of fowle Duessa, when her borrowed light
Is laid away, and counterfesaunce knowne. (1.8.49)

Una's exposure effectively silences Duessa; though she attempts to trick her way back into court society, she does so without the rhetorical voice she uses in the first book, and her power is severely limited.

Duessa makes several ineffective plays to reenter society after her exposure, first attempting to stop the wedding of Una and Redcrosse, then joining with Archimago in trying to

make Guyon fight Redcrosse. In Book 4, Duessa again takes on a disguise of beauty as Paridell's lady in the contest for Florimell's girdle. Paridell displays her,

His false Duessa, that she might be seene,
 Who with her forged beautie did seduce
 The hearts of some, that fairest her did weene;
 As diuerse wits affected diuers beene. (4.5.11)

Though her disguise does fool some, the suggestion that “diuerse wits” experience influence differently implies that some who view her (perhaps the more naïve or inexperienced knights) are more easily tricked than others. Nonetheless, she does not win the contest, showing that her effectiveness has been limited—perhaps here because she does not have the opportunity to match her physical affect with words. Finally, in Book 5, despite seeming “a Ladie of great countenance and place . . . [who] did appeare rare beautie in her face” (5.9.38), Duessa is ultimately condemned to death by Mercilla after a trial⁴³ for her many crimes against the knights of Faeryland. Though Duessa initially inspires some compassion in Arthur (5.9.46), Zele makes a strong case against her in court, and she never has the opportunity to speak in her own defense. Her vulnerability at having been exposed⁴⁴ by truly virtuous characters combined with a limited ability to speak renders Duessa ineffective and ultimately costs her her life. If Duessa represents a type of court lady—or at least aspects of a court lady—the message that Spenser puts forth is unclear. Her duplicity both makes her powerful and limits her power. Her rhetoric strengthens her disguise yet disappears when her disguise is removed. She shows ambition and independence but suffers the severest punishment in the end. Her failings seem to be both that she does not

⁴³ Duessa's depiction in the court is quite obviously a representation of Mary, Queen of Scots. See Hume and O'Connell.

⁴⁴ Klein similarly notes Duessa's limited efficacy after being disrobed, but attributes it to Arthur's revealing “Duessa's true ugliness,” after which “she can no longer tempt anyone” (183).

match her courtliness with inner virtue and that she simply is not good enough at her art, perhaps because that art is not backed with the force of virtue.

3.4 Artful Archimago

Like Duessa, Archimago's dominant characteristic is his deceitfulness. Lewis calls Archimago and Duessa "forces of illusion and deception" (334); Robert Kellogg notes that the two characters implement "destruction through guile, duplicity, and false appearance, making evil seem good, folly wise, and foulness beautiful" (588); Douglas Brooks-Davies calls Archimago an "evil magician" and "emblem of hypocrisy" (53); and Berger explains,

the double sense of Archimago's name—Archi-mage, the preeminent enchanter, and Arch-image, the preeminent illusion [and asserts] that the name authorizes a cultural imagination corrupted by its own impossible aspiration toward wholeness/holiness—toward heroic autonomy and tyrannical power—and thus torn by deprivation, anger, and the perpetual fear of impotence. ("Archimago: Between Text and Countertext" 37)

As he does with Duessa, Spenser draws attention to Archimago's cunning by attributing epithets such as "subtill" (1.3.29, 1.3.38, and 1.7.26), "false" (2.1.21, 2.8.11, 2.8.56, and 3.4.45), and "slie" (2.8.10). Archimago's array of surprisingly effective⁴⁵ disguises unquestionably qualifies him as "artful." He disguises himself variously as a hermit, a knight (Redcrosse, in fact), a pilgrim, a messenger, and a squire, "for by his mighty science he could take / As many forms and shapes in seeming wise, / As euer Proteus to himselfe could make" (1.2.10). While he never

⁴⁵ I speak to the initial efficacy of the disguise at fooling others. Berger notes that Archimago is often ultimately ineffective: "[His] appearances all begin with strong attacks of guile and clever disguising, but each scenario reduces him to a sheep in wolf's clothing" ("Archimago: Between Text and Countertext" 40).

directly impersonates a courtier, Archimago's situational shapeshifting certainly echoes an aspect of the courtier. He represents the changeability of the courtier that Javitch identifies in Castiglione's work as "graceful court conduct . . . [which] demands that the courtier always be ready to alter his mood and personality, or to accommodate himself and his views to the different dispositions of those he converses with" ("Courtesy Books" 197). Archimago's motivations differ from those of the courtier, however. The magician uses his disguises to create turmoil among knights,

For all he did, was to deceiue good knights,
 And draw them from pursuit of praise and fame,
 To slug in slouth and sensuall delights,
 And end their daies with irrenowmed shame. (2.1.23)

Pursuant to his aim to destroy knights, Archimago also plots against Una several times, seeking to "bring her to her last decay" (1.6.48). Quentin Skinner indicates that this "special fondness for images of disguise" is typical of the English Renaissance poet, and "makes rhetorical redescription possible . . . [by] stressing how the nearness of good and evil makes it all too easy for the vices to mask themselves by hiding under a mantle of goodness" (273). Archimago approaches the appearance of courtesy—and engages with aspects of courtesy, such as hospitality—by using the guise of courtliness and the disguise of different personas.

Archimago's method of deceit relies heavily on magic.⁴⁶ Magic and rhetoric share qualities in *The Faerie Queene*, and Archimago's art blurs the line between them. Neil Rhodes explains that rhetoric in the period "was closely associated with both poetry and magic, not as a means of providing aesthetic entertainment, but as an instrument of power" (8). Brooks-Davies identifies the way that Archimago's magic functions:

⁴⁶ For more on Spenser's use of magic and the occult, see Gross, Guenther, and Shumaker.

He is the arch image-maker, the fabricator of dreams, also the arch-magus or primal magician. Since Renaissance magi operated largely through their own and their subjects' imaginations, however, these two roles in fact merge: he is the magician who induces images of delusion within the imaginations of all fallen human beings. (53)

As a manipulator of the imagination, Archimago is necessarily an effective rhetorician.

Genevieve Guenther calls Archimago “a poetic maker. . . . With a wit as much ‘practick’ as creative, and with a rhetorician’s ‘fayre fyled tonge’ (2.1.3), he produces allegorical images that . . . move his victims to perform the social or theological error that is always his ‘aymed end’” (39). As mentioned in Chapter 2, when Archimago attempts to deceive Redcrosse, it is not only the image that he conjures but also the force of his speech that convinces the knight of Una’s deceit.

The Faerie Queene’s narrator describes Archimago as a skillful storyteller, saying, “for that olde man of pleasing wordes had store, / And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas” (1.1.35). Archimago uses speech to his advantage, but he effectively also “reads” the situation and strikes when his victims have set aside their defenses, for example, “begin[ing] the temptation of Red Cross when he is most vulnerable, apart from Una and without his armor” (Klein 184). Archimago first separates Redcrosse and Una to weaken them, and then he preys on them in their weakened states. His machinations reflect the “ends justifies the means” approach of Machiavelli, and his cunning gives him power—albeit temporary—over other characters.

Archimago often shows the polished rhetoric of the courtier. After Redcrosse and Una separate, Archimago takes on the form of Redcrosse as a disguise and approaches Una cautiously, “for dread hee durst not show / Him selfe too nigh at hand,” apparently worried that

she or her “wilde Champion” (the lion) may recognize his falsehood (1.3.26). Una chastises him for leaving her, and he responds so skillfully that “his louely words her seemd due recompence / Of all her passed paines” (1.3.30). He greets her with overtly courtly language that leans heavily on the conventions of chivalry, saying,

My dearest Dame,

Far be it from your thought, and fro my wil,
 To thinke that knighthood I so much should shame,
 As you to leaue, that haue me loued stil,
 And chose in Faery court of mere goodwil,
 Where noblest knights were to be found on earth:
 The earth shall sooner leaue her kindly skil
 To bring foth fruit, and make eternall dert,
 Then I leaue you, my lief, yborn of heuenly berth.

.....

Good cause of mine excuse, that mote ye please
 Well to accept, and euer more embrace
 My faithfull seruice, that by land and seas

Haue vowd you to defend. Now then your plaint appease. (1.3.28-29)

This highly embellished, formal language mirrors the language of courtly love and empty court gestures... and it works. Una, still young and naïve in the early cantos of the Legend of Holiness, finds that “A dram of sweete is worth a pound of sowre: / Shee has forgot, how many, a woeful stowre / For him she late endurd; she speakes no more / Of past” (1.3.30). Una forgives his transgressions, not because of Archimago’s magic, but because of his art—that is, his rhetoric.

Gregerson identifies Archimago and other magicians as the epitome of corrupted eloquence—what may also be thought of as untrustworthy rhetoric—in *The Faerie Queene*:

The history of corrupted and corrupting eloquence is one that impinges upon *The Faerie Queene* at every turning. The villainous avatars of craven poesis—Archimago, Busirane, Proteus, and a host of others—dog Spenser's heroes from canto to canto. . . . Within the fiction, these antagonists transform and proliferate at a prodigious rate, testifying to the simultaneous fecundity and unreliability of false rhetoric. ("Protestant Erotics: Idolatry and Interpretation in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*" 11)

Archimago exhibits power over the trusting Una in the early and middle cantos of Book 1; he deceives her again when, disguised as a pilgrim, he tells her of Redcrosse's death (1.6.36-37).

After Una's dwarf tells her of the "subtile traines of Archimago old; [and] The wanton loues of false Fidessa fayre" (1.7.26), Una learns to distrust such rhetoric as Archimago's; it is not language at all, but her own sight and pity that move her to forgive the actual Redcrosse when they reunite. He appears to her as a "ruefull spectacle of death and gastly drere / [With] sad dull eies deep sunke in hollow pits [and] bare thin cheekes" (1.8.40-41). The readers may expect to see here an apology from Redcrosse echoing Archimago's artful speech from canto 3, but Redcrosse instead remains completely silent. Una, not Redcrosse, speaks at their reunion, effectively taking over their relationship and showing that she has learned about the power of language to deceive and control. After her apparent lesson about rhetoric, Una sees through Duessa's rich array as well as Archimago's next disguise, as Fidessa's messenger at her parents' court. Archimago and Duessa, both magician/rhetoricians, become ineffective against the virtuous (and now experienced) Una. As he did with Duessa, Spenser, using his skillfully

wrought poetry, tempers the power of Archimago in the face of virtue. Archimago serves as a model of dangerous, effective rhetoric, but he also falls short of being a truly powerful orator or artful poet. As the poem progresses, however, the art of the antagonists becomes less overt, more subtle, and more dangerous.

3.5 The Beastly Bower and Malignant Malecasta

An analysis of art within *The Faerie Queene* is impossible without at least mentioning the Bower of Bliss. Much critical debate centers on the nature of art (and the art of nature) in the Bower. C.S. Lewis writes that “Spenser, as I have shown, distinguishes the good and evil paradises by a skilful contrast between nature and art” (326), with the false (crafted) art of the Bower representing evil and the generative (natural) nature of the Garden of Adonis representing good. Millar Maclure calls the Bower of Bliss an example of “the demonic artificial” (7), but Carl Robinson Sonn disagrees that the art in the Bower possesses inherent evil, saying “The evil, if it may be called that, consists, in part, in the disjointed relation of art to nature . . . The Bower of Bliss is sterile because art is not . . . operating productively on nature; it is not sterile merely because it is artificial” (169). Robert Durling posits that “like the lewdness of the bathers, the lavishness of the Bower is presented as excessive to the point of destroying nature's true beauty” (345), while Arlene Okerlund refutes this position, insisting that the “Bower, rather than being repulsive, is instead delightfully appealing” (62). Zailig Pollock suggests that in the Bower of Bliss, “art and nature are impossible to disentangle,” and they represent the “evil mixture of the irascible and the concupiscible” in the Bower (51).⁴⁷ In the Bower, the voyeuristic reader sees

⁴⁷ This is a sampling of the commentary on the Bower of Bliss and is not meant to be an exhaustive list. For the purposes of this analysis, the Bower establishes an important framework for viewing the Castle Joyous. For a fuller

“art stryuing to compayre, / With nature” (2.5.29) and art and nature “So stryuing each th’other to vndermine, / Each did the others worke more beautify” (2.12.59). Indeed, the Bower is a place in which

natures worke by art can imitate:

In which what euer in this worldly state

Is sweete, and pleasing vnto liuing sense,

Or that may dayntest fantasy aggrate,

Was poured forth with plentiful dispenche,

And made there to abound with lauish affluence. (2.12.42)

The Bower is the epicenter of the art/nature debate in *The Faerie Queene*, and the issues of temperance and chastity raised by Spenser’s depiction of the Bower become tied to later uses of art and nature in the poem.

Acrasia, despite inhabiting the art-filled Bower of Bliss, shows very little art herself. The other damsels who greet Cymochles at the edge of the Bower have characteristics of rhetoricians:

Some framd faire lookes, glancing like euening lights,

Others sweet wordes, dropping like honny dew;

Some bathed kisses, and did soft embrew

The sugred licour through his melting lips. (2.5.33)

This is reminiscent of the Ancient Greek Religious text, *Theogony* by Hesiod, which says that the gods honor a king by “pour[ing] on his tongue sweet dew / and make the words that flow from his mouth honey-sweet” (83-84) and Guazzo’s assertion, also quoted at the start of this chapter, that “many Courtiers carie that litle peece of suger in their mouthes” (126). While

discussion of the Bower of Bliss and the associated art/nature debate, see especially Dundas’s *The Spider and the Bee*, C. S. Lewis’ *The Allegory of Love*, and Millar Maclure’s “The Nature of Art in *The Faerie Queene*.”

effective, these honeyed words seek to lure unsuspecting knights to danger: the ladies' words employ the sweet allure of the sirens' song (Homer, *The Odyssey* 12.36), while their kisses evoke the luxurious decay brought on by eating the lotus flower (Homer, *The Odyssey* 9.82). Acrasia apparently either does not have or does not need the skill of the orator; the only words she speaks in the poem are those of a spell she casts on Mordant, which the reader hears secondhand, filtered through Amavia's account of the incident. Acrasia lets the environs of the Bower do most of the work for her, whereas Malecasta (see below) uses her courtly arts, including speech, to seduce knights. While Acrasia does have some power of enchantment, she seems less powerful than Malecasta. Acrasia's power comes not from her voice but from her eyes,⁴⁸ and the danger lurks more in the Bower itself than in the person of Acrasia.

Certainly the Bower of Bliss is important in its own right as a commentary on lavish art and intemperate behavior within the Legend of Temperance. It is also significant because it sets the framework for the more subtle—or at least the more socially acceptable—type of temptation in the Castle Joyous. In the Castle Joyous, the staples of courtly behavior—seemingly innocent polite social interaction—take on an intemperate, dangerous sheen. Lewis claims that the Castle Joyous “is dangerous to spirits who would have gone through the Bower of Bliss without noticing its existence” (340). Here, in the Castle Joyous, Spenser gives his most direct (and scathing) representation of the artful court lady. Visitors at the Castle Joyous “were entertaynd with courteous / And comely glee of many gracious / Faire Ladies, and of many a gentle knight” (3.1.31). Malecasta's courtiers bring to mind the ladies of the Bower of Bliss, “a flock of Damzelles fresh and gay . . . [who] stroue, with most delights, / Him to aggrate, and greatest pleasures shew” (2.5.33) and Lucifera's “Lordes and Ladies” who “frounce their curled heare in

⁴⁸ For more on the power of gazing and the place of women's eyes in conjunction with their chastity, see Cavanaugh's *Wanton Eyes and Fierce Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene*.

courtly guise, / Some prancke their ruffes, and others trimly dight / Their gay attyre: each others greater pride does spight” (1.4.14). The lady of the court, Malecasta, combines elements of Acrasia and Lucifera—looseness and pride, respectively—and adds to those elements the social polish of courtliness and the empty tropes of courtly love. This makes her at once the most complete portrayal of a courtier in *The Faerie Queene* and a dangerous enemy to Britomart.

Though frequently more courtesan than courtier, Malecasta exemplifies the eloquent yet immoral character in *The Faerie Queene*. Even before the narrator reveals Malecasta’s name, which implies an evil lack of chastity,⁴⁹ the indulgences of her lifestyle indicate a warning about her questionable character. In the “inner chamber of the Castle Joyeus . . . the scarlet lady Malecasta holds court, surrounded by the wanton tapestry of Venus and Adonis” (MaClure 11). She embraces the structure and trappings of court life, but her castle provides merely a mimicry or corrupt image of an idealized court such as Gloriana’s. Lewis posits that “Malecasta clearly represents the dangerous attractions of courtly love” (340). She and her knights are referred to as courteous, civil, and courtly. She mirrors the court lady that Castiglione cautions about through the character of Signor Gasparo, who warns of

vain ambition in women, coupled with madness and cruelty. Women . . . seek to have as many lovers as they can and would have all of them burn (were that possible) and, once they were in ashes and dead, would have them alive again so that they might die a second time . . . by their beauty they can make men miserable or happy, and bestow life and death upon them as they choose. (3.74)

Malecasta possesses a kind of lewd confidence, ruling over her court with the self-possessed smugness of a lady who has not often been told “no.” She lacks the warning epithet given to

⁴⁹ Rose, among others, notes that Malecasta is formed from the Latin *male* (badly) and *casta* (chaste) (136).

other artful characters, being instead called “faire Malecasta” (3.1.57 and 3.1.59). Her knights⁵⁰ “all seemed courteous and gent” and had been “traynd in all ciuiltee, / And goodly taught to tilt and tournament” (3.1.44), and one knight in particular, Basciante (whose name implies “kiss”), “did him selfe most courteous shew” (3.1.45) and later encourages “courtly play” (3.1.56). Likewise, Malecasta’s courtiers “entertaynd with courteous / And comely glee” (3.1.31). She perpetuates a traditional court or chivalric hierarchy, in which her knights were “liegmen to this Ladie free, / And her knights seruice ought, to hold of her in fee” (3.1.44). The knights and courtiers all serve Malecasta without question, and the reader witnesses them indulging in her loose lifestyle throughout the episode. Spenser uses this supporting cast to frame Malecasta’s artful courtliness within the context of a lavish, corrupt court. This is not one dangerous woman alone in a castle: it is an entire system, a way of life, that Spenser presents as artificial and dangerous.

Part of Malecasta’s danger lies in the fact that she possesses some aspects of actual courtesy. She follows the “rules” of courtly behavior and certainly offers hospitality to her guests. She makes sure that her guests and members of her court have plenty to eat and drink; “She caused them be . . . cheared well with wine and spiceree” (3.1.42), “Supper was shortly dight and downe they satt / Where they were serued with all sumptuous fare . . . And aye the cups their bancks did ouerflow” (3.1.51), and “they slaked had the feruent heat / Of appetite with meates of euery sort” (3.1.52). She provides ample entertainment, most of which involves dance and revelry: “they were entertaynd with courteous / And comely glee of many gracious / Faire Ladies, and of many a gentle knight” (3.1.31). Indeed, her chamber “was full of Damzels, and of Squyres, / Dauncing and reueling both day and night, / And swimming deepe in sensuall

⁵⁰ For more discussion about Malecasta and her knights, see the “Britomart” section of Chapter 5. For further reading about Malecasta’s knights, see Fowler and A. H. Gilbert (“The Ladder of Lechery”)

desyres” (3.1.39). After dinner, “Euery knight, and euery gentle Squire / Gan choose his dame with Bascimano gay, / With whom he ment to make his sport and courtly play” (3.1.56), until “Some fell to daunce, some fel to hazardry, / Some to make love, some to make meryment, / As diuerse witts to diuerse things apply” (3.1.57). Music (mentioned above in the discussion of harmony and *sprezzatura*) also adds to the sensual experience of the Castle Joyous:

sweet Musicke did diuide
 Her looser notes with *Lydian* harmony;
 And all the while sweet birdes thereto applied
 Their daintie layes and dulcet melody,
 Ay caroling of loue and iollity,
 That wonder was to heare their trim consort. (3.1.40)

Malecasta does all of the “right” things in her court—she provides her guests with food, wine, and entertainment. But the savvy reader is cognizant that in the book of Chastity (particularly after just having gone through the book of Temperance), the looseness and excess presented here signifies danger. The pairing of the pristine (and likeable) Britomart with the loose Malecasta and the fact that the reader has recently witnessed the destruction of the Bower of Bliss work together to hint at some impending danger.

Her possible potential as a hostess aside, Malecasta can hardly be called inwardly courteous. Before the narrator reveals her name, she is introduced thusly: “them brought vnto their Ladies sight, / That of them cleeped was the Lady of Delight” (3.1.31). For the Renaissance reader, delight has connotations of not just happiness, but pleasure and satisfaction (“delight, n”), and as such, it poses a clear threat to chastity. Furthermore, Malecasta “roue at [Britomart] with crafty glaunce / Of her false eies, that at her hart did ayme, / And told her meaning in her

countenance” (3.1.50). Malecasta’s roving eyes indicate her looseness to the reader, but Britomart does not notice this. During the feast, Malecasta plies her guests with generous helpings of food and wine, and “between the cups, she did prepare / Way to her loue, and secret darts did throw; / But Britomart would not such guilfull message know” (3.1.51).⁵¹ Her unwanted advances, which escalate to the point of jumping into bed with Britomart uninvited, certainly violate courtesy. An inherent selfishness lies at the core of her actions; she cannot imagine that Britomart, who Malecasta thinks is a male knight—“her weend a fresh and lusty knight” (3.1.47) would not be interested in her “fickle hart[’s] hasty fyre” and “extreme desire” (3.1.47). She brings to mind “the courtier [who] is trapped by his own comeliness, utterly preoccupied with himself” (Tonkin, *Spenser’s Courteous Pastoral* 158), and her presentation alongside Britomart emphasizes the emptiness of her courtliness.

Though she lacks inward courtesy, Malecasta uses rhetorical speech effectively in most cases. She carefully calculates every move she makes; indeed, she and the Castle Joyous are over-designed, deliberately conjuring an

image of a desire which seeks to manipulate its object into consent, by contrived techniques. Much of the imagery seems to be controlled by the intention to amplify this characteristic . . . All her shows of affection were feigned or calculated, designed to work on Britomart’s feelings so that she would submit to Malecasta’s wishes. (Fowler 595)

These machinations seem to have been successful in the past; Malecasta’s complete surprise at Britomart’s rebuff suggests that her “malengine and fine forgerye” (3.1.53) had previously served her well. Malecasta’s rhetoric works especially well on male characters—or, at least, on

⁵¹ Fowler points out that this wine drinking is nicely paralleled and contrasted by Hellinore’s enthusiastic reception of Paridell’s similar advances in Book 3, Canto 9 (585).

Redcrosse, who lacks the rhetorical skill (see Chapter 4) to notice that “her wanton eyes, ill signes of womanhed, / Did roll too highly, and too often glaunce” around (3.1.41). When Malecasta “caused [Redcrosse and Britomart] to be led in courteous wize / Into a bowre, disarmed for to be . . . The Redcrosse Knight was soone disarmed there” (3.1.42), but Britomart, not so easily comforted by the niceties of hospitality and unwilling to give up the safety of her disguise as a male knight, keeps her armor on. Even though Britomart does not trust Malecasta and secretly believes that her “loue [is] too light, to woee a wandring guest” (3.1.55), Britomart does “easely beleuee her strong extremitye” (3.1.53) and tries to avoid “rudely sdeigne a gentle harts request” (3.1.55), staying in her company for fear of discourtesy. Lauren Silberman explains that “although she chastely disapproves of Malecasta’s seeming lightness, Britomart entertains her advances out of a naïve courtesy and wish to please” (33). Cavanagh notes that Britomart “appears to accept readily Malecasta’s culinary hospitality, which the lewdly-minded hostess clearly intends as an aid toward seduction” (*Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* 161). Britomart’s polite courtesy goes unintentionally awry, as “Malecasta is mistakenly encouraged by her visitor’s courteous speech” (Rose 136). Britomart engages in the art of courtesy, and though she also possesses inward courtesy, in the context of Castle Joyous, her actions are misinterpreted. Britomart cannot use (innocent) courtly art as a defense against (experienced) courtly art: she must back her manners with the knightly art of the sword to defend herself against Malecasta’s discourteous bedroom advances. The shallow wound that Britomart receives in the bed chamber symbolizes her loss of innocence,⁵² but it also represents the potential danger of courtliness to even the inwardly virtuous individual.

In addition to providing warnings about the effects of courtliness, Spenser uses the Castle Joyous to make an important distinction about types of art. The Castle represents, everywhere,

⁵² This has been widely noted. See, for example, Anderson (“Britomart” 114).

the misuse of lavish art. The entertainment that Malecasta provides is so extravagant that the narrator does not describe it all, saying instead, “long worke it were, and needles to deuize / Their goodly entertainment and great glee” (3.1.42). The narrator also claims reticence to convey “The roiall riches and exceeding cost, / Of euery pillour and of every post . . . [which] Did sparckle forth great light, and glorious did appeare” due to the overly “sumptuous aray / Of that great chamber” (3.1.32). It is atypical for the narrator—who takes elaborate ekphrasis to the extreme in other episodes⁵³—to gloss over it here in the Castle Joyous, a place that Lesley Brill calls a “monument to sensuality” (20). Rather than fully indulging in the artistic luxuriousness, he summarizes some key qualities—particularly focusing on the tapestry⁵⁴—then merely reports that the castle’s luxurious artistry exceeds his descriptive abilities. To contrast the Castle Joyous as “Malecasta’s court of erotic self-indulgence” (Rose 136), Spenser mitigates his own self-indulgence in floral description to differentiate himself from the artful characters he describes and thus remain more trustworthy. Indeed, it is the very indulgence of the senses that makes the Castle Joyous a dangerous place. Dundas points out a distinction between visual art and poetic art in Spenser’s work, suggesting that his

criticism of the visual arts almost seems to turn upon their illusionistic power. In this, he conforms to the Platonic tradition . . . according to which the visual arts must always be on a lower scale than poetry because their appeal is so much more related to sensation than is the appeal of poetry, which is entirely of the mind and presumed to be more rational in its purpose. (*The Spider and the Bee: The Artistry of Spenser's Faerie Queene* 46)

⁵³ Dundas describes Spenser elsewhere in the poem as “unashamedly a painter when he writes” (“The Rhetorical Basis of Spenser's Imagery” 63).

⁵⁴ Many scholars touch on the significance of the tapestry. See, for example, Rose and Thompson.

It may not be the visual alone, but the excessive sensuality of sights in the Castle that Spenser warns of here. Excess—particularly in the Legends of Temperance and Chastity—should be shunned, if not actively feared. Lewis writes, “any moralist may disapprove luxury and artifice; but Spenser alone can turn the platitude into imagery of such sinister suggestion” (329). Spenser implicitly distinguishes between the “bad” artifice in the Castle and the “good” art of his poetry. His refusal to fully indulge in the description of the art ostensibly separates him from the suspect artists of the Castle. However, the readers are (perhaps guiltily) intrigued by the description of the art here, just as they were with the loose ladies of the Bower of Bliss. It is easy to forget that Spenser’s poetic art guides the reader to feel thusly intrigued.

3.6 Other Orators

Other examples of courtliness abound in *The Faerie Queene*. Javitch suggests that “most of the beautiful manners Castiglione advocates are made necessary by the loss of sincerity and free expression” in the Renaissance (“Courtesy Books” 197); the proliferation of courtesy manuals both create and necessitate the codification of manners, and this seeps into representations of court life in Spenser’s work. Minor characters and those who have a more significant bearing within the context of other virtues do not generally enter in to an analysis of courtesy in Spenser’s work. However, when the following scattered representations of courtliness are culled together, they suggest a single attitude towards this aspect of court life: they combine to suggest Spenser condemns “the vacuous sycophancy of the court” (J. R. Woodhouse 136). As with Duessa and Archimago, most of these characters have few redeeming qualities and pose threats to the virtue or lives of other characters.

In Book 5, Arthur and Artegall seek out “a wicked villaine” (5.9.4) who

so crafty was to forge and face,
 So light of hand, and nymble of his pace,
 So smooth of tongue, and subtile in his tale,
 That could deceiue one looking in his face. (5.9.5)

This crafty deceiver is known as Malengin or Guyle. The knights beguile Guyle by setting a trap for him. They have a damsel who complained about Malengin sit alone and cry, drawing his attention. Malengin approaches her and “gan with guilefull words her to perswade, / To banish feare” while he “Gan forth to lay his bayte her to beguyle, / That from her self vnwares he might her steale the whyle” (5.9.12). To meet his ends, Malengine employs “many pleasant trickes . . . slights and iugling feates” (5.9.13) as distractions before throwing a net over his prey to capture her. He is reminiscent of Archimago, for in his attempt to elude the knights, he transforms himself into a fox, a bush, a bird, and a snake.⁵⁵ Though Malengin is hardly an allegorical stand-in for a courtier, he uses empty rhetoric and courtly tricks (sleights and juggling feats) to disguise his malicious intent. Not insignificantly, by defeating Malengin, Arthur and Artegall are granted admittance into Mercilla’s court—the knights must prove their ability to overcome empty courtliness before being admitted to a virtuous court society.⁵⁶

Blandina, the mate of Book 6’s antagonist Turpine, offers a more artful discourtesy than her blatantly discourteous husband. Whereas Turpine remains discourteous through and through, Blandina adapts, using courtliness to function effectively in the chivalric world. After Arthur initially defeats Turpine, Blandina “fayrely entertayned [the knights] / With all the courteous glee and goodly feast / The which for him she could imagine best” (6.6.41). The narrator goes on to say that Blandina knew “how to please the minds of good and ill, / Through tempering of her

⁵⁵ Archimago turned himself into a fowl, fish, fox, and dragon (1.2.10).

⁵⁶I suggest here the intentional double meaning of princely court and court of law.

words and lookes by wondrous skill” (6.6.41). However, he goes on to explain that “her words and looks [were] but false and fayned . . . Yet were her words but wynd, and all her teares but water” (6.6.42). Blandina, in fact, shows so much skill in courtliness and rhetoric that “she so well applyde / Her pleasing tongue, that soone she pacifyde / The wrathfull Prince, and wrought her husbands peace” (6.6.43). Even Arthur does not see through Blandina’s false rhetorical courtliness, and he nearly pays for that mistake with his life when Turpine plots against him for a second time.⁵⁷ Blandina’s position as a rhetorical court lady brings to mind Malecasta, but Blandina relies more heavily on ambition and cunning and less on seduction to meet her ends.

Many other characters represent aspects of rhetorical courtliness. Braggadochio certainly does not possess the polished *sprezzatura* of the consummate courtier, but he does pose as an empty shell of a knight. He and Trompart join together as “the scorne of knighthood and trew cheualrye” (2.3.10), and they are consistently labeled “vain” and “vainglorious.” Busirane, though not a knight, represents the type of courtly love that was typical of many knights when he tortures Amoret “perforce to make her him to loue” (3.12.31). Phaedria, like Malecasta and Acrasia, offers a loose hospitality, a “curteous seeming part” (2.6.26), which tempts Guyon to be “courteous, and . . . not forbear / Her honest merth and pleasaunce to partake” (2.6.21). Paridell poses as a virtuous knight but seduces Hellinore directly in the sight of Malbecco,

So perfect in that art was Paridell,
That he Malbeccoes halfen eye did wyle,
His halfen eye he wiled wonderous well,
And Hellenors both eyes did eke beguyle,
Both eyes and hart attonce. (3.10.5)

⁵⁷ For more about Arthur’s courtesy, see Chapter 5; for more about Turpine’s discourtesy, see Chapter 2.

This episode clearly mimics the story of Menelaus, Helen, and Paris—a supposed ancestor of Paridell. It also reveals the use of art to seduce and fool while it puts forth both a presentation (by Malbecco) and a violation (by Paridell) of hospitality. Lucifera, representative of ambition, maintains a court of her own making in the House of Pride; she “made her selfe a Queene, and crownd to be, / Yet rightfull kingdome she had none at all . . . Ne ruld her Realme with lawes, but pollicie” (1.4.12). Clarinda, Radigund’s maid, gives Artegall “daily shew of courteous kind behaiour” and presents him with “vncouth speech, / Whose hidden drift he could not well perceiue” (5.5.36-37). These examples represent a sampling of characters using courtly speech and manners to meet their own, usually selfish, ends. They also allow Spenser to perpetuate the division of good and bad art. He consistently portrays these courtier-like characters with negative framing, indicating that their art makes them tricky and untrustworthy. All the while, he crafts his own art in the form of poetry.

3.7 Sneaky Spenser

Most of the antagonists in *The Faerie Queene* use art as a weapon of sorts against other characters. That art often stems from rhetorical speech or from the niceties of courtly behavior. Sometimes it includes magic, as with Archimago or Busirane, but that magic retains a close link with rhetoric. Sometimes it includes visual art, as in the Bower of Bliss or the Castle Joyous. This leaves the reader with the impression that art—particularly art that deceives—is dangerous and should be feared. However, many of the protagonists of *The Faerie Queene* also use art. Without the gloss of courtly manners, the inward courtesy of characters such as Britomart and Arthur would not be appreciated by other characters. Further complicating this is the idea that Spenser directs the reader to notice the artifice that the antagonists use. Rather than presenting

the antagonists in a positive light then revealing their true character when events unfold, the narrator directs our attention to the art as a warning all along. This happens so frequently that readers may easily lose sight of the actual art that works upon them without their explicit knowledge: the poet's art. Spenser warns us of the art of his antagonists, but not of his own work.

Spenser, by upholding the value of the art of poetry, joins in the tradition of other Renaissance poets. Other authors such as Sir Philip Sidney and Sir John Harington defend the place of poetry (particularly English vernacular poetry) as a legitimate form of art, even in the face of Plato's ejection of poets from *The Republic*. Harington disagrees with Plato's claim that poets lie, saying that poets write "fiction . . . nearer to the pith and marrow, they place the moral sense, profitable for the active life of man, approving virtuous actions and condemning the contrary" (309). Furthermore, he claims that "the reading of a good heroical poem may make a man both wiser and honester" (313). Likewise, Sidney claims that "a feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true example" (355). He goes on to say that men "must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour, and justice" (358) in order to "[find] their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage" (359). Sidney famously suggests that the end of poetry is "to teach and delight" (345). Spenser himself aims for *The Faerie Queene* to be "most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read" ("Letter to Raleigh"). If Spenser's poetry has two goals, it would seem that his goals may be "to teach and achieve social advancement for the poet." Javitch notes that Spenser "knows full well . . . that the rhetoric of poetry rather than the rhetoric of oratory is more likely to captivate those high enough in position to benefit society" (*Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* 101). Spenser uses his poetry as an attempt to join the inner circles of

Elizabeth's court. Spenser's perception of the value of his own art is somewhat undermined by his place as a would-be courtier poet who "launched an ambitious campaign to broaden his base of patronage, but despite his expressions of gratitude to various members of the nobility [remained] unsuccessful" (May 34). Moreover, Jacqueline T. Miller suggests that "the definition of allegory as courtly, duplicitous, and expedient seems especially relevant to Spenser's portrait of [Courtesy]" (52). Spenser's poetic form, in which the story is "cloudily enwrapped in Allegoricall deuises" ("Letter to Raleigh"), is itself connected with the same methods of courtliness that Spenser condemns in his antagonists.

4 THE UNRHETORICAL

"Vnfitte through his rusticity for a better place" ("Letter to Raleigh")

4.1 Introduction

Rhetoric, as the art of speaking and writing persuasively, and courtesy, as an embodied form of rhetorical eloquence, are necessarily aspects of civilized culture. Without an organized civilization, neither rhetoric nor courtesy would be necessary. Stefano Guazzo said that moral courtesy (civil conversation) "is an honest commendable and vertuous kinde of living in the world" (56). Implicit in his statement is a conception of the world as a civilized world, given that his courtesy theory centers solely on the social and political structures of the Italian city-states in which he lived. Likewise, Castiglione's *Courtier* focuses on the social structure of the court of the Duke of Urbino. Even Cicero's *On the Ideal Orator* is necessarily situated within the context of Roman politics. In reference to Renaissance literature, Arnold Williams identifies courtesy's

“proper locus” as “‘civility,’ that is, it deals with the relationships between private individuals in society” (41). The traditional interpretation of courtesy, then, would seem to exist as a necessary element of the court, or at least of the city—even other realms in which courtesy may be explored, such as pastoral, function as extensions or parodies of the court world. Traditional courtesy may not exist as a necessary virtue outside the traditional court world.

However, Spenser’s conception of courtesy involves layers of complexity which translate across different social spheres. The wide-ranging nature of *The Faerie Queene* enables Spenser to explore virtue in varied and multi-faceted contexts. The reader may explore representations of courtesy within Gloriana’s court structure as well as in other physical and allegorical contexts, including untamed forest, bodies of water, and open fields.⁵⁸ A striking trend which emerges from viewing courtesy outside of the court world is the relationship of courtesy and rhetoric. Due to rusticity or inexperience, several characters emerge from the poem as consistently ineffective rhetoricians. Even some primitive characters who possess inward courtesy are unable to express it effectively because of their lack of language or rhetoric. This leaves their manifestation of courtesy incomplete, as courtesy’s “full development, in fact, comes from the cultivation of outward appearances to supplement inner virtue” (Tonkin, *Spenser’s Courteous Pastoral* 160). The lack of rhetoric in the face of court structures renders characters limited in their agency. This discussion will begin with primitive unrhetorical characters—the satyrs and the Salvage Man—then work back into the court world with Sir Satyrane, Redcrosse, and Florimell. These characters have widely divergent circumstances, yet they all possess inward courtesy but lack the rhetorical skill to comport themselves effectively within the chivalric system. By presenting these ineffective, unrhetorical characters, Spenser indicates that an understanding and

⁵⁸ For a full discussion of the physical and allegorical spaces within *The Faerie Queene*, see Wayne Erickson’s *Mapping The Faerie Queene*.

implementation of some degree of external courtliness is necessary to thrive in a court society. Despite the potential danger of artful courtliness discussed in the previous chapter, not having any of the social polish of the courtier can be limiting or even dangerous for *The Faerie Queene's* characters.

4.2 The Practice of Primitivism

The concept of primitivism, introduced in ancient texts and revived in the Renaissance, weighs heavily in Spenser's work. Aspects of primitivism, "a broad term often used of various expressions of human malcontent with the present manifesting itself in a longing for earlier, simpler, better conditions of life" (Harrison 39), can be seen in every book of *The Faerie Queene*, but most often in Books 1 and 6. In their influential text, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, Arthur Lovejoy and George Boas describe two types of primitivism: chronological and cultural. Chronological primitivism is "in short, a kind of philosophy of history, a theory, or a customary assumption, as to the time . . . at which the most excellent condition of human life, or the best state of the world in general, must be supposed to occur" (1), which usually "suppose[s] that the highest degree of excellence or happiness in man's life existed at the beginning of history" (2). References to the Golden World in ancient texts⁵⁹ as well as references to prelapsarian Eden in Renaissance Christian texts⁶⁰ demonstrate this concept of chronological primitivism. Spenser demonstrates the concept most explicitly in the proem to Book 5, saying,

So oft as I with state of present time,

The image of the antique world compare,

⁵⁹ See, for example, Hesiod's "golden race of mortal men" (*Works and Days* 111) and Ovid's Golden Age, "when Man yet new, / No rule but uncorrupted reason knew: / And, with a native bent, did good pursue" (89-91).

⁶⁰ See, for example, Milton's Eden, described at 4.131-287.

When as mans age was in his freshest prime,
 And the first blossome of faire vertue bare,
 Such oddes I finde twixt those, and these which are (5.proem.1)

 For during *Saturnes* ancient raigne it's sayd,
 That all the world with goodnesse did abound:
 All loued vertue, no man was affrayd
 Of force, ne fraud in whight was to be found. (5.proem.9)

The narrator of *The Faerie Queene*, then, fully engages with the concept of chronological primitivism, upholding a point in mankind's history as the pinnacle of achievement and suggesting that contemporary society has become corrupted.⁶¹

While this reference may have become somewhat conventional due to the Renaissance poets' tendency to model their works after ancient texts, Spenser's adherence to cultural, as well as chronological, primitivism suggests that his engagement with primitivism goes beyond mere literary trope. William Keach notes that "chronological primitivism is a self-consciously manipulated artistic stance in Spenser's poetry, and this is even more conspicuously the case with cultural primitivism" (557). Cultural primitivism, like chronological primitivism, values a simpler lifestyle, but it does not necessarily assign that lifestyle to a past era.⁶² Lovejoy and Boas define cultural primitivism as

⁶¹ For an alternate reading of this, see D.C. Allen, who writes of pessimism in the Renaissance, saying that "Spenser complained of the moral disintegration of man since the youth of the world, a figment that is especially Ovidian and that explains, perhaps, the fundamental motive of the *Faerie Queene* as a sugar-coated means of inculcating ethical idealism" (215).

⁶² While they are not the focus of this discussion, Meliboe and the Hermit, both of whom rejected the court world for simpler lifestyles, are the best examples of cultural primitivism in *The Faerie Queene*.

the discontent of the civilized with civilization, or with some conspicuous and characteristic feature of it. It is the belief of men living in a relatively highly evolved and complex cultural condition that a life far simpler and less sophisticated in some or in all respects is a more desirable life (7).

In Renaissance poetry, cultural primitivism most often takes the form of pastoral, and Spenser's work is no exception. Helen Cooper explains that "the metaphoric nature of pastoral allowed poets to use the mode for social, political, and religious comment, while the model of Virgil's *Eclogues* lent authority to its use as a symbolic pattern for poetic activity itself" (529). Spenser takes advantage of this rich context in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*, where he employs the pastoral mode, engaging in cultural primitivism.⁶³ This sojourn becomes so attractive to Calidore, the knight of courtesy, that he abandons his quest to indulge in an "escape for the imagination . . . [which may have appealed to his] recalcitrance to some or most of the inhibitions imposed by current moral codes, or to the alluring dream, or the hope, of a life with little or no toil or strain of body or mind" (Lovejoy and Boas 9). While in reality the "simpler" life would involve quite a lot of physical toil, poetry has the luxury of presenting an idealized conception of a more primitive culture. The appeal of such a life may be due not just to the complexities of court life, but also its artificiality. G.M. Pinciss explains,

The frustration caused by a rigid, elaborate and artificial code of courtly manners precluding spontaneity of expression and denying natural conduct led men to long to escape the repressions of society, to live unrestrained in nature. Accordingly,

⁶³ Keach views pastoral as a convergence of chronological and cultural primitivism "which offers a fiction of innocence and simplicity that was presumably universal during the Golden Age and may still be imagined to survive among rustic people uncontaminated by decadent civilization" (557), but attributing both types to pastoral seems redundant given the definition of cultural primitivism.

the wild man then became a model for human conduct, a creature free, happy and loving. (70)

Certainly in the context of elaborate, detailed courtesy manuals and specific expectations regarding skilled yet seemingly artless behavior and speech, the relative simplicity of wild or pastoral life would come as a welcome relief.

Primitivism—particularly cultural primitivism—serves at least one other rhetorical purpose in *The Faerie Queene*. Because primitivism removes the action from the traditional court setting, the reader has the opportunity to see Spenser’s characters without the outward show of courtesy necessarily found at court. Pinciss points out that “the savage man’s removal from society allowed him to display the effects of heredity and environment on individual development” (89). In other words, the shell of courtliness has no place in the primitive or wild world. While this sometimes leads to the aggressively discourteous behavior of the brigands and the Salvage Nation (see Chapter 2), it also enables Spenser to engage with the idea of an innate moral courtesy. Moreover, movement between the primitive and court settings throughout *The Faerie Queene* gives Spenser the opportunity to explore courtesy in the wilderness as well as wildness in the court and thus complicate what it means to be courteous.

4.3 Primitive yet Polite

In the primitivistic world, “man and nature are regarded as under one law [and Spenser shows] his sympathy for the gentle savage, who seems to represent the earlier transition from beast to man, and for beasts themselves governed by kindly instincts” (Harrison 39). By adhering to primitivism and depicting some uncivilized characters, such as the satyrs and the salvage man, as wild yet kind beings, Spenser draws upon the tradition of the noble savage. Kenneth Borris

suggests that Spenser's use of primitivism and the noble savage indicates that he "mixes elements of the native and classical traditions in a way that is guardedly optimistic about the potentialities of fundamental human nature" ("Salvage Man" 624). The phrase "human nature," however, is one that must be approached cautiously, for Spenser equivocates widely in the nature/nurture debate throughout the poem.⁶⁴

Una's sojourn with the satyrs in Book 1 shows one of the first primitivistic "escapes" from the court world in *The Faerie Queene*. The satyrs rescue Una from being raped and ruined at the hands of Sansloy. They do not need to *do* much to rescue Una; Sansloy merely flees upon seeing the "rude, misshapen, monstrous rablement, / Whose like he neuer saw, he durst not byde, / But got his ready steed, and fast away gan ryde" (1.6.8). Immediately, the satyrs' introduction as "rude" indicates that the satyr nation, despite being minor deities, has a birth/class status inferior to human characters. This inferiority, however, does not preclude their virtue. The satyrs, "only slightly raised above the condition of animals" show themselves to be "more virtuous than the pagan Sansloy whom they frighten away, and their offspring in Satyrane shows their capacity to improve" (Jordan, "Satyrs" 628). While they would prove more virtuous than Sansloy by simply not harming Una, the satyrs actually display basic courtesy. They first offer comfort to Una, then when she accepts their kindness, they take her into the woods and give her refuge (hospitality). She a "long time with that saluage people stayd, / To gather breath in many miseryes" (1.6.19). Whether this spontaneous courtesy was inborn in the primitive people or inspired by exposure to Una's beauty (see below),⁶⁵ the satyr nation does display rudimentary courtesy by offering hospitality to Una.

⁶⁴ For more on the nature and nurture debate, see Chapter 5.

⁶⁵ Pearce calls the Satyrs' worship of Una "instinctive" and a "quasi-intuitive recognition by sub-human beings of absolute values" (146) and Jordan attributes the satyrs' worship to their "natural religious instincts" ("Satyrs" 628).

The satyrs are not complex characters, and through their naïveté, they are easily influenced. While they almost immediately worship Una because of her beauty—“All stand astonied at her beautie bright, / In their rude eyes vnworthy of so wofull plight” (1.6.9)—when she teaches them not to worship her, they worship her ass instead:⁶⁶

her gentle wit she plyes,
 To teach them truth, which worshipt her in vaine,
 And made her th'Image of Idolatryes;
 But when their bootlesse zeale she did restrayne
 From her own worship, they her Asse would worship fayn. (1.6.19)

Aside from the comic relief provided by this interlude (much-needed relief after the serious business of a near-rape), underneath the humor, the satyr episode shows the danger of being unrhetorical. The satyrs lack real agency, directing their idolatry first to Sylvanus, then to Una, then to Una's ass, then back to Sylvanus, then later to Hellinore in Book 3. Despite the narrator's description of the satyrs “shouting, and singing all a shepherds ryme” (1.6.13), they seem to lack language; they never use words to comfort Una, instead relying on “shew[ing] a semblance glad / To comfort her, and feare to put away” (1.6.11), and “their harts [Una must] ghessest by their humble guise” (1.6.13). They are also referred to as “barbarous,” which Hamilton glosses as referring to their lack of language (1.6.12*n*). While their ability to be so easily influenced certainly may come in part from their half-animal status, their lack of language and hence any rhetorical skill plays a part in their being easily moved.

The satyrs' lack of rhetoric compromises their inward courtesy. Though they may wish to offer courtesies to Una, their inability to use the language and manners appropriate to civility

⁶⁶ Pearce also notes that “accounts of primitive, instinctive worship such as Una receives from the satyrs are common in Elizabethan voyage literature” (146). The satyrs have also been interpreted as Jews (Jordan, “Una among the Satyrs: *The Faerie Queene*, 1.6”) and as primitive Christian clergy (Steadman).

undermine their effectiveness. Ultimately, though Una is safe with them, she cannot be happy in this primitive environment, and she takes the opportunity “on a day when Satyres all were gone, / To doe their seruice to Sylvanus old” to sneak away with Sir Satyrane (1.6.33). Spenser uses the satyrs to suggest that elements of courtesy may be present in low-born, primitive beings, but that their lack of external rhetoric leads them to be too easily swayed by others. Outward shows of courtesy seem to be necessary to both express and preserve the inner virtue of courtesy. Though no real harm comes to them as a result of this lack of sophistication, the satyrs end up seeming like somewhat misguided buffoons. The ideas of primitivism and rhetoric begin in Book 1 with the satyrs, rather “naïve, benign creatures” (Jordan, “Satyrs” 628) and continue later in Book 6 with the Salvage Man.

The Salvage Man in Book 6 offers a parallel to the primitivism of the satyr nation, but with a far less benign influence. He, too, lacks language, was raised outside of the court world, and immediately attaches himself to one of the central protagonists of the poem—in this case, Arthur. The satyrs were attracted by Una’s “piteous strained voice” and “ran towards the far rebownded noyce” (1.6.8); likewise, the Salvage Man is “drawne with [a] Ladies loud and piteous shrigh [and] Toward the same incessantly did ronne” (6.4.2). He immediately shows Serena “deepe compassion of her dolefull stound” by signs, “for other language had ne none nor speech, / But a soft murmure, and confused sound / Of senseless words, which nature did him teach” (6.4.11). Despite being uncivilized, both the satyrs and the Salvage Man are moved to feel pity for a woman in trouble. They offer courtesy in the form of protection, kindness, and hospitality as balm to the wounds inflicted by discourteous individuals (Sansloy and Turpine, respectively). The Salvage Man shows a natural propensity towards hospitality. He leads Calepine and Serena to his home and invites them to take advantage of his shelter:

Thether he brought the vnacquainted guests;
 To whom faire semblance, as he could, he shewed
 By signes, by looks, and all his other gests.
 But the bare ground, with hoarie mosse bestowed,
 Must be their bed, their pillow was vnsowed,
 And the frutes of the Forrest was their feast. (6.4.14)

Calepine and Serena accept his hospitality, “yet howsoever base and meane it were, / They tooke it well, and thanked God for all” (6.4.15). Up to this point, the Salvage Man and the satyr nation have served similar purposes. The brief primitive interlude in Book 1 seems to be a more significant lesson in Book 6, where “nature is an all-pervading presence . . . and with nature the natural man, unspoiled by the selfish vices of the competitive world, man who has either regained the pastoral Golden Age . . . [or] has never lost it” (K. Williams 339). The Salvage Man represents a simple lifestyle which provides contrast for the discourteous corruption of supposedly “civilized” courtiers such as Turpine and Crudor.

Despite his simple lifestyle, the Salvage Man is a fairly complex character with an unclear origin. Richard Neuse describes him as “a model of instinctive courtesy” who shows “spontaneous sympathy” (“Book VI as Conclusion to *The Faerie Queene*” 340) to Serena. Although the Salvage Man “lacks the learned characteristics of human beings” he nevertheless “possesses the unlearned and natural attributes of civilized human beings of the gentle classes” (A. Williams 49). Not only is the Salvage Man fully human, unlike other wild characters, he may even have gentle blood. The narrator says,

That plainely may in this wyld man be red,
 Who though he were still in this desert wood,

Mongst saluage beasts, both rudely borne and bred,
 Ne euer saw faire guize, ne learned good,
 Yet shewd some token of his gentle blood,
 By gentle vsage of that wretched Dame.
 For certes he was borne of noble blood,
 How euer by hard hap he hether came;
 As ye may know, when time shall be to tell the same. (6.5.2)

Spenser never reveals, however, precisely how the Salvage Man came to live in the woods.

Though the narrator implies that the story will be told later, he seems to be guessing about the Salvage Man's gentle status by his gentle actions rather than from actual knowledge of his history. The question of blood may be less important than how he lives his life as a noble savage.

A. Bartlett Giamatti describes the noble savage in Renaissance literature as “the primitive ancestors whom self-transforming Renaissance man has left behind” (73). If the Salvage Man shares blood with his court brethren, then, it serves only to emphasize the similarities and differences between them, not to lead to conclusions about the importance of blood and birth in Spenser's work. The Salvage Man has innate courtesy, unlike some knights with all of the breeding and education that should, but do not always, lead to courtesy.

The Salvage Man differs from other primitive characters in *The Faerie Queene* in that he does not remain at the margins of the court world but becomes fully engaged in the chivalric system. After spending some time with Arthur, the Salvage Man “was greatly growne in loue of that braue pere” (6.5.41) and becomes a stand-in squire for him while Timias heals from his Blatant Beast bite. As Arthur's squire, the Salvage Man becomes a part of the chivalric system. He seems more like a loyal, protective dog than a human of supposedly gentle blood; when he

encounters Turpine's squire, he "with his teeth and nailes, in present vew, / Him rudely rent, and all to peeces tore" (6.6.21). Arthur follows Turpine inside the castle, but when he returns, he finds the Salvage Man "enuironed about / With slaughtred bodies, which his hand had slaine" (6.6.38). This seems extreme for the gentle wild man who represents the "kindly and beneficent creatures living happily in accord with nature" (Pinciss 70) and who never "fed on flesh, ne euer of wyld beast / Did taste the bloud, obaying natures first beheast" (6.4.14). While the reader may hold little love for the discourteous Turpine or his men, the massacre seems extreme and incongruent with the Salvage Man's otherwise gentle character. It seems as though, upon entering the chivalric world, the Salvage Man has become truly savage for the first time.

The Salvage Man's inability to carry his wild gentility from the forest into the civilized world may stem from his lack of language and thus rhetoric. The chivalric system has no place for unrheterical individuals; when Timias and Arthur first see the Salvage Man, their first instinct is to fight him. Because he cannot speak, he cannot avoid their rancor. It takes Serena's intervention to persuade Arthur and Timias to back down. She admonishes,

Sith he cannot expresse his simple minde,
 Ne yours conceiue, ne but by tokens speake:
 Small praise to proue your power on wight so weake.
 With such faire words she did their heate asswage,
 And the strong course of their displeasure breake. (6.5.30)

Her "faire words" stop the "strong course of their displeasure," indicating that the strength of her persuasion exceeds both the knights' anger and the animalistic strength that the Salvage Man later displays against Turpine's forces. Additionally, Serena calls the Salvage Man a "wight so weak" because he lacks language, and indicates that a fight between Timias and the Salvage Man

would be unfair due to the communication imbalance. Grogan points out that because he is “permanently excluded from the magic circle of language, the Salvage Man is allotted only a listening role in civil conversation, and civil characters to speak for him” (168-69). In the woods on his own, the Salvage Man may live in a harmonious balance with nature, but when moved to the court world, he cannot engage in the outward courtesy necessary to function as a part of civil society. Even when placed in a social setting, the Salvage Man may maintain a degree of inward courtesy, but his inability to express it outwardly leaves him at risk. Like the satyrs, his personal agency is limited, and he is reduced to a mere weapon for Arthur to use against discourtesy.⁶⁷

It would, perhaps, be easier if Spenser adhered only to the idealized primitivism which holds the natural, simple world as superior and concludes that the corrupt court should be abandoned. However, Spenser portrays a wide range of both primitivistic characters and civilized characters in primitivistic settings. This leads to some mixed messages about the savage world, for he depicts savages “first at their best, realizing completely their sub-human, animal-like potentialities, in order to show that men should fully realize their rational potentialities [and then] at their most brutish, to show to just what bestial depths men who forget they are men can sink” (Pearce 142). *The Faerie Queene* offers glimpses into the virtues of simple life, and then offers the bastardization of the same concept—Serena, who on the one hand advocates for the Salvage Man, on the other hand falls victim to a group of savage cannibals who show aggressive discourtesy. If the wilderness can hold some respite from the annoyances of the court, it can also hold great danger. Primitivism, in other words, has a place in *The Faerie Queene*, but so does society. Giamatti suggests that

⁶⁷ Tonkin says that “Arthur . . . backs courtesy with force of arms. He also supports his own strength with the strength of nature, epitomized in the Salvage Man” (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 176). In this way, the Salvage Man is little different than a sword in Arthur’s arsenal.

If Spenser recognizes the potential for improvement in the primitive order, he also recognizes that the potential is limited, limited because the primitive world has no self-consciousness, no self-reflexive vision. It has no art. It only has instinct. And good though instinct may be—it can be far better than what is misshapen by art, for instance—it is in itself not enough for true civility. (73)

This “instinct”—towards inward courtesy, for example—can be seen in some places in the wild, but it needs to be met with some deliberateness, some intentionality. Toliver suggests that “if primitive instinct is to be a source of virtue, it must be combined with the disciplines of courtesy, which the cannibals lack” (“Cannibals” 134). Courtesy, then, becomes a virtue which controls other virtues—a set of rules that can control the unpredictability of the primitive world.

4.4 Wild yet Worldly

Sir Satyrane serves as a bridge of sorts between the primitive and the court worlds. Due to his appearance in several books of *The Faerie Queene* and given his wild upbringing, he appears in a wider range of contexts than other characters. Satyrane is at home in the forest due to his birth and in the court due to his training in chivalry. As such, “he can temper his mood to fit any company” (D. Cheney 64). He has a foot in the primitive as well as the civilized worlds. Unlike Meliboe and the hermit, who have shunned the civilized world to retreat into cultural primitivism, Satyrane seems to value both worlds. Giamatti considers Satyrane “just over the line between primitive and civilized, a Janus who shows us in a shadowy way what the new man will be like, and where he has come from” (75). A transitional character, Satyrane possesses the ability to adapt to and be moderately successful in both the primitive and the civilized world. According to Donald Cheney, the “progress from the satyr’s world to the fairy court” represented

in the character of Satyrane “suggest[s] simultaneously the values of the former and the limitations of the latter” (63). This has some truth, but Spenser’s message about primitivism does not seem to be that simple. There are benefits to both the primitive and the civilized worlds, and Satyrane, more than any other character, seems positioned to bridge the two worlds and potentially draw out the best from each. However, Satyrane’s primitive roots, his predisposition towards plainness, and his attitude towards women limit his efficacy in the court world. Satyrane could be fully conversant in both primitive and court languages, but he falls short because he lacks the social polish of the courtier, limiting himself instead to the more violent aspects of knighthood.

Satyrane, as his name implies, has strong connections with the primitive world. His father was a satyr who sired his son by raping a human woman, and Satyrane was raised in the woods, “till to ryper yeaes he gan aspyre, / He nousled vp in life and manners wilde, / Emongst wild beastes and woods, from lawes of men exilde” (1.6.23). Despite being more human than his father—his mother was human, which would make him one quarter goat rather than half goat—Satyrane becomes more savage. The beasts in the woods, including Satyrane’s own father, fear him because after being raised only “to banish cowardize and bastard feare” (1.6.24),

Thereby so fearelesse, and so fell he grew,
 that his owne syre and maister of his guise
 Did often tremble at his horrid vew,
 And oft for dread of hurt would him aduise,
 The angry beastes not rashly to despise,
 Nor too much to prouoke. (1.6.25)

Satyrane's mother, upon seeing the fierceness with which Satyrane dealt with other beasts in the woods, implored him to stop, saying,

Ah Satyrane, my dearling, and my ioy,
 For loue of me leaue off this dreadfull play;
 To dally thus with death, is no fit toy,
 Go find some other play-fellowes, mine own sweet boy. (1.6.28)

Satyrane ignores his mother's request, continuing to terrorize and tame the dangerous animals of the forest. While Ronald A. Horton views this extreme behavior as "a tacit rejection, with recognition, of the circumstances of his birth, for since childhood he has been at war with his bestial affinities" (628), it may also be an *acceptance* of his birthright. The competitive aggression to be the most powerful being in the forest is characteristic of primitive, not civilized, behavior. After Satyrane masters the "delights of bloody game" in the forest, his aggressive streak leads him to seek further challenges: "his courage haught / Desyrd of forreine foemen to be knowne / And far abroad for straunge aduentures sought" (1.6.29). Again, Horton reads Satyrane's participation in chivalric sport as "allegorically a continuation of his youthful pastime: the taming of innate bestiality" (628), but his reading assumes that chivalric sport is human(e) and not playing to a bestial side of human nature.

Satyrane's ability to transition into the chivalric system so easily comes from his split parentage and from the brutal tendencies of the chivalric system. Linda Gregerson notes that his satyr father's raping his mother results in "not dishonor but a double aptitude, both human and feral" (*The Faerie Queene* (1590)" 212). This "double aptitude"—his ability to adapt to both wild and civil worlds—seems to have less to do with his ability to adapt his rhetoric to the social

niceties of the court and more to do with his ability to excel in the more brutal chivalric sports.

When Satyrane first enters the poem, the narrator emphasizes his martial victory, saying,

He had in armes abroad wonne muchell fame,
 And fild far lands with glorie of his might,
 Plaine, faithfull, true, and enemy of shame,
 And ever lou'd to fight for Ladies right,
 But in vaine glorious frayes he litle did delight. (1.6.20)

Satyrane, then, excels in “armes” and “might,” is “plaine,” and stands against “shame” and “vaine glorious frayes.” Most of the positive aspects of his personality that the narrator emphasizes—the ways in which he fits into the chivalric system—have to do with his might rather than his manner. Similarly, when Satyrane reenters the narrative in Book 3, he is described as

a goodly Swaine, and of great might,
 As euer man that bloody field did fight;
 But in vain sheows, that wont yong knights bewitch,
 And courtly seruices tooke no delight,
 But rather ioyd to bee, then seemen sich:
 For both to be and seeme to him was labor lich. (3.7.29)

Satyrane, despite being a respected knight, does not demonstrate courtliness. He shuns “vain sheows” and “courtly seruices” and would rather simply be himself than pretend to be something else—sentiments that could not be further removed from the ideas of Castiglione and other courtesy theorists.

Satyrane's rejection of "shows" and insistence that it is easier to simply be who you are rather than trying to pretend to be something else, while perhaps a welcome contrast to Castiglione and the pressures of the perfect courtier, seems somewhat quaint in the broader context of a court-centered world. While he interacts with civilization and certainly aids some of the characters in the poem, Satyrane remains an outsider to some extent. He returns to his "natiue woods" after "long labours and aduentures spent . . . To see his syre and offspring auncient" (1.6.30), yet Satyrane lacks a permanent home. He quickly joins the fights of others if their cause seems just, but seems to do it more for the joy and glory of fighting than for the cause itself. Additionally, the rudimentary inward courtesy shown by the satyrs and the Salvage Man in the form of hospitality seems to be present in Satyrane only as an urge to protect or honor beauty. This honor of beauty is at once an instinct seen in the satyrs' admiration of Una and a characteristic of chivalric romance and therefore seems appropriate to Satyrane's character, given his straddling of the two worlds.

While he may disdain the empty shows of the court world, Satyrane represents a distinct movement from the primitive world into the chivalric system. He ferries Una from the primitive escape of the satyrs back into civilization: "so fast he carried her with carefull paine, / That they the woods are past and come now to the plaine" (1.6.33). Hamilton's note on this passage reads "plaine: in the poem's moralized landscape, the setting for chivalric encounters" (1.6.33*n*). He attempts to save Florimell from the hyena, an attempt in which "Sir Satyrane fails in all respects: the Hyena escapes and Florimell is lost, presumed dead" (Leslie 143). Satyrane falls short of rescuing Florimell, but he embraces the urge to honor her beauty; following the fight, Satyrane hosts a three-day tournament for Florimell's girdle, arguably one of the most explicit

representations of traditional knighthood in *The Faerie Queene*.⁶⁸ It is appropriate for Satyrane to host—and excel in—the tournament, as it is specifically a celebration of the martial side of knighthood, not the courtliness that often accompanied that warlike tendency. Michael Leslie suggests that “the imperfection of Satyrane and of the Order [of Maidenhead] is confirmed at the tournament” (143). Though he may be imperfect, Sir Satyrane is upheld as a model of knighthood. During the tournament, Satyrane is called “bold Sir Satyrane” (4.4.17), “hardy Satyrane” (4.4.26), and “Satyrane Lord of the field” (4.4.28), and “his wondrous worth [was] declared in all mens view” (4.4.37). The only knight who does beat Satyrane is the salvage knight⁶⁹ (Artegall), who had a shield that read, “*Saluagesse sans finesse*” (savagery without refinement) (4.4.39). In effect, Satyrane is beaten in the tournament only by another knight who exhibits the same characteristics as himself. Artgall, in turn, is beaten only by Britomart. We may perhaps extrapolate, then, that Britomart could have beaten Satyrane had they not been fighting on the same side. This seems appropriate given that Satyrane lacks the rhetorical polish to interact effectively with women.

Undergirding much of the chivalric behavior in *The Faerie Queene* seems to be a genuine respect for women—at least for the strong women in the poem. Peaceful Una is treated with reverence by man and beast alike. Loyal Britomart commands respect, and the strength of her chastity defeats foes that the men in the poem cannot defeat. Independent Belphebe is an unstoppable force of militant virginal strength. Satyrane, however, does not show respect towards the women in the poem. He shows more reverence for Florimell’s girdle—a reverence that Leslie identifies as a violation both “of decorum and of religious principle” (150)—than he

⁶⁸ For a full discussion of Satyrane’s tournament and its relation to historical tournaments, see Shulze.

⁶⁹ Leslie notes that the salvage knight was a common guise for literary depictions of tournaments (147).

shows to any individual woman herself. While Satyrane does eventually admire Una, he treats her like an aberration of the usual nature of women. Upon meeting her,

He wondred at her wisdom heuently rare,
Whose like in womens witt he neuer knew;
And when her curteous deeds he did compare,
Gan her admire. (1.6.31)

He seems to admire Una in spite of her being a woman, not because she is a woman or without regard to her sex. Osgood suggests that Una—or Una’s beauty—“awakens in him these virtues [of faith and verity] which are doubtless indigenou” (507), but his treatment of women elsewhere brings the respect he has for Una into question. Satyrane shows disdain for women when he speaks with the Squire of Dames. When the Squire of Dames tells him that his quest to find 300 women who will remain chaste in spite of his advances has yielded only 3 chaste women, Satyrane laughs and asks,

what were those three,
The which thy proffred curtesie denayd?
Or ill they seemed sure auizd to bee,
Or brutishly brought vp, that neu’r did fashions see. (3.7.57)

Note the tongue-in-cheek reference to “curtesie” here; the “courtesy” offered by the Squire of Dames is to “doe seruice vnto gentle Dames” (3.7.54)—to sleep with them. While the interaction between these men bears the tone of a bawdy joke, Satyrane clearly understands neither courtesy nor women. John Bernard speculates that here Satyrane and the Squire of Dames “bear the burden of cynicism about women” for Spenser (11). Moreover, Satyrane reinforces this bitter

cynicism towards women—and their chastity in particular—in Book 3. He speculates of Hellinore’s potential infidelity,

Extremely mad the man I surely deeme,
 That weenes with watch and hard restraint to stay
 A woman’s will, which is disposd to go astray.
 It is not yron bandes, nor hundred eyes,
 That can withhold her wilfull wandring feet,
 But fast goodwill with gentle courtesyes,
 And timely seruice to her pleasures meet
 May her perhaps containe, that would algates fleet. (3.9.6-7)

At first read, it may seem nice that Satyrane proposes “gentle courtesyes” and “timely seruice” rather than “yron bandes” to hold a woman. However, considering his use of the term courtesy when speaking to the Squire of Dames, Satyrane really implies that keeping a woman sexually satisfied is the only way to keep her from straying to another man. Osgood (1931) claims that Satyrane

views women with the superficial eye of *l’homme sensuel moyen*, and like most men, is unable to distinguish false Florimell from true. He loves and serves no one woman; yet he behaves himself, still retaining a sort of reverence for higher things which he cannot understand or precisely evaluate. (507)

This (obviously dated) statement seems to imply that Satyrane, by “behaving himself” (which would seem to mean that he doesn’t rape anyone like his father did), has a respect for women that validates his treatment of them. However, even when nominally showing respect for women, Satyrane falls short of acting fully courteous.

Satyrane theoretically shows respect for the agency of women when he allows the Snowy Florimell to choose her own champion from the tournament. However, his gesture is undermined by the facts that when he originally thought he had won her, he was “right glad to gaine so goodly meed” (4.5.22), that he and the other knights “all on her gazing wisht, and vowd, and prayd, / And to the Queene of beautie close did call” (4.5.26), and that they then “chaft and rag’d / And woxe nigh mad” (4.5.27) when she chose Braggadochio. Satyrane seems so sure that she will choose him that he thought he had little to lose in giving her some agency. This is to say nothing of the fact that the “prize” in question is not even the actual “Queene of Beautie,” Florimell, but instead the fake representation of Florimell created by the witch.

Satyrane, though primitive and unrhetorical, fits in with and even excels at many aspects of chivalry. This may reveal a problem with the chivalric structure rather than with him as a character. He has the excuse of having been raised in the wild, but he acts with some of the same habits of knights who do not have the same excuse. Satyrane, despite beginning in the primitive world, is well ensconced in the court world of *The Faerie Queene*. His rustic misogyny shows his lack of rhetorical aptitude, but he seems to be accepted at court despite his shortcomings. However, Satyrane’s limited successes—what Leslie deems his “fail[ure] in all respects”—suggests that he falls short of what a Knight of Fairyland should be. This deficit seems to be tied to his lack of the courtly polish typically associated with the courtier.

4.5 Rustic Redcrosse

Though much of the lack of rhetoric in the obviously uncivilized characters in *The Faerie Queene* stems from their primitive birth or environment, Spenser also presents a different source of unrhetorical behavior—naïveté. The Red Cross Knight, or Redcrosse, is the most obvious

example of a naïvely unrhetorical character. He is young, untried in battle, and doesn't even have his own armor: Redcross is

Ycladd in mightie armes and siluer shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruell markes of many' a bloody fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he neuer wield. (1.1.1)⁷⁰

He also seems unable to control his “angry steede,” which “did chide his foming bitt, / As much disdainning to the curbe to yield” (1.1.1). Una communicates his lack of experience, calling Redcrosse “a fresh vnproued knight, / Whose manly hands imbrawd in guilty blood / Had neuer beene” (1.7.47). Comparing Redcrosse to Calidore, Humphrey Tonkin notes “the green naivety of the first hero of the *Faerie Queene*, the gauche Red Cross Knight” (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 30). Despite the fact that he is repeatedly led astray by duplicitous characters and has no apparent capacity to effectively judge character, Redcrosse remains a somewhat sympathetic character. Indeed, lack of knowledge—worldly or heavenly—in *The Faerie Queene* does not always necessarily suggest a lack of virtue. As Judith Anderson suggests, there are different kinds of naïveté, but she maintains that “Britomart’s innocence is a function of youth, purity, and inexperience,” while “Redcrosse’s is culpable ignorance” (“Britomart” 114). Redcrosse’s “ignorance” has most often been attributed to spiritual ignorance; the traditional reading of Redcrosse’s quest is that of “the making of a Protestant saint, both the fall into sin once separated from Christian truth, and the gradual restoration, through the intervention of grace and the loving guidance of holy church, to spiritual health, wholeness, and conformity to the image of Christ”

⁷⁰ For the accuracy of armor in Spenser’s work, see Gilbert (“Spenserian Armor”).

(Kellogg 588).⁷¹ While I do not seek to abandon that reading, this discussion will frame Redcrosse in a different light; instead of emphasizing his spiritual ignorance, this study focuses on his ignorance of the world—particularly on his inability to either read or use rhetorical expression to navigate a complex world.

The reader's first impression of Redcrosse comes from Spenser's "Letter to Raleigh," in which Spenser contextualizes Redcrosse's journey, explaining that

in the beginning of the feast, there presented him selfe a tall clownishe younge man, who falling before the Queen of Faries desired a boon . . . which was that hee might haue the atchieuement of any aduventure, which during that feaste should happen, that being graunted, he rested him on the floore, vnfitte through his rusticity for a better place.

After Una appears and asks the Queen for help with a dragon that has plagued her parents' home, Redcrosse "earnestly importuned his desire" to help, and Una insists that he wear the armor that she has brought with her.⁷² While the reader later learns that Redcrosse is destined to become St. George, he seems to have been "given the armor of faith before he recognizes either its meaning or its worth" (Huston 213), without the experience or understanding to realize what he is accepting. Spenser previews Redcrosse's character perfectly in the Letter; the knight is clownish, rustic, and young. He clearly lacks the polish of social manners (given his propensity for throwing himself around on the floor and leaping up to speak during the feast). He has neither armor nor horse, yet has the ambition and desire to become a knight. This enthusiasm leads him to be (perhaps foolishly) brave in the face of danger and also to stray from his quest. Though he has a specific quest, "Redcrosse is in reality looking for [any] adventure, in general, along the

⁷¹ Redcrosse's spiritual journey has been the focus of much critical attention. For example, see Broaddus, Dughi, Huston, Klein, and Whitaker.

⁷² It was not historically or mythically unusual for "a commoner [to] be made noble by a gift of armor" (Berry 143).

way and as soon as possible” (Lees-Jeffries 141), putting him in the tradition of other knights of chivalric romance, including Sir Gawain. Redcrosse’s youth and eagerness work against him, and his ignorance of artful duplicity repeatedly leads him to be taken advantage of. Guazzo, in *The Civile Conversation*, suggests that one must be aware of trickery, and even use it as a tool: “we must by their example give them mery lookes, and fleer in their faces: we must play the Foxe with Foxes, and delude art, with art” (80-81). Not only is Redcrosse unable to act courtly—to “play the fox”—he cannot recognize a fox when he sees one. As such, artful characters handily trick him with a combination of illusion and persuasion.

Redcrosse never questions Archimago’s authenticity when he and Una meet the “aged sire . . . sober he seemed, and . . . Simple in shew” (1.1.29). The (rhetorically savvy) reader notes that the words “seemed” and “shew” indicate danger. Redcrosse accepts his offer of hospitality without hesitation and eagerly listens to Archimago speak, “for that olde man of pleasing wordes had store, / And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas” (1.1.35). When Archimago uses his “magick books and . . . seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy minds” (1.1.36), Redcrosse has troubling dreams and visions of unfaithful Una, but his own misled visions do not actually lead him to action. Redcrosse becomes angry enough to abandon Una only after Archimago runs to him in “feigned faithfull hast” (1.2.4) and leads him to view a vision of two lovers, interpreting the vision to Redcrosse as Redcrosse’s “false Lady [staining] her honor” (1.2.4). This reveals the weakness of Redcrosse’s loyalty and ability to resist passion; his “susceptibility to Archimago’s illusion exposes the frailty of his faith and the strength of his desire” (Dolven 3). It also shows Redcrosse’s susceptibility to rhetoric. Left on his own, Redcrosse does not believe an illusion. Another person persuading him to believe the vision, however, leaves him with no doubt.

When Redcrosse meets Duessa (disguised as Fidessa), he is similarly duped. She launches into a sad story of her fate, during which Redcrosse “in great passion al this while did dwell, / More busying his quicke eies, her face to view / Then his dull eares, to heare what shee did tell” (1.2.26). His “dull eares” easily fall prey to this “seeming simple maid” (1.2.27), and Duessa tricks Redcrosse into acting as her champion. When they hear Fradubio tell his sad tale of being tricked by Duessa and turned into a tree, Redcrosse, himself “full of sad feare and ghastly dreriment” (1.2.44) turns to Duessa, who “seeming dead he fownd with feigned feare, / As all vnweeting of that well she knew” (1.2.45). She distracts him from Fradubio’s sad tale by needing attention, and the knight “too simple and too trew” (1.2.15) fails to see the dangerous path that he is already taking. Not only has Redcrosse’s naïveté led him to be easily persuaded by the artful rhetoric of bad characters, he has also failed his new role as a knight; “from the chivalric point of view, he has been guilty of emotional fickleness; he has doubted his own lady too easily and transferred his allegiance to a false one too lightly” (Neill 178). Furthermore, he undervalues himself; when he feasts with Duessa and Lucifera, “that good knight would not so nigh repaire, / Him selfe estraunging from their ioyance vaine, / Whose fellowship seemd far vnfitt for warlike swaine” (1.4.37). Redcrosse fails to identify the artifice of the characters who trick him, but he also fails to see his own position as a good knight. While his naïveté comes in part from his youth and inexperience, much of Redcrosse’s trouble comes from his inability to see through thin disguises and “read” other characters.

Critics have noted the difficulty Redcrosse has in reading other characters, particularly when his passions—either sexual or anger-driven—have been roused by trickery. Dennis Huston notes that “Red Cross constantly wants to oversimplify complex human problems, particularly those which result from the activity of basic sexual drives” (214). Hester Lees-Jeffries attributes

“the difficulties of Redcrosse’s quest and the obstacles that he faces [to] his shortcomings as a reader or interpreter of signs” (135-36). Robert Kellogg suggests that “Redcrosse is capable . . . of prevailing against overt attacks on his good sense, faith, and morality; but he is unable to interpret the external appearance of things to perceive their true condition,” which leads him “into a life of vanity and pride” (588).⁷³ Anderson finds Redcrosse more to blame for his ignorance than Una, saying, “the emphasis on Redcrosse's growing inability to decipher appearances contrasts sharply with the treatment accorded Una's mistake . . . Redcrosse is led astray despite a wicked appearance; Una, because of a good one” (“Redcrosse and the Descent into Hell” 477-78). Redcrosse’s inability to read other characters stems from his own inability to use rhetoric. Like the primitive characters of the poem, Redcrosse lacks rhetorical skill. Unlike those characters, he lives in the civilized world, so his inability to identify or use rhetoric becomes far more dangerous.

Nowhere is the danger of Redcrosse’s unrhetorical position more clear than in his dealings with Despaire. Despaire remains a formidable enemy, a “cunning sophister who touches the most secret and vulnerable parts of the mind” (Beecher 105-06). Sir Terwin, who had lately fallen victim of Despaire, issues the first direct warnings about his rhetoric to Redcrosse, saying, “but God you neuer let his charmed speaches heare” (1.9.30) and then “how may a man . . . with idle speach / Be wonne, to spoyle the Castle of his health?” (1.9.31). Sir Terwin blames his fate entirely on the speech of Despaire. Despaire represents a sophistic rhetorician who “entrap[s] Redcrosse by appealing to authorities that lend credibility to his argument and by manipulating the voices of classical rhetoricians. He wrenches phrases from Seneca and Cicero out of context” (Vaught 81). Further, Despaire attempts to “entrap Redcrosse by misusing scripture, the supreme

⁷³ Rusche notes that “Red Cross must defeat not despair, but pride” (Rusche “Pride, Humility, and Grace in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*” 30), claiming that Pride is the chief enemy to Holiness.

example of an authoritative text” (Vaught 82). Heedless of the warnings of Sir Terwin, Redcrosse engages in dialectic with Despayre, then “was so much enamoured with his speach / That as a sword point through his hart did perse . . . that oftentimes he quakt, and fainted oftentimes” (1.9.48), and eventually Redcrosse attempts to take his own life.

Unlike an opponent of physical arms, Despaire’s “warfare is entirely rhetorical and psychological; in this way he can disarm the warrior far more effectively than by force” (Beecher 106). Words led Redcrosse away from hope to despair, and words ultimately break the spell that Despaire has cast. Una, apparently impervious to Despaire’s rhetoric, stops Redcrosse’s attempted suicide, telling him “Come, come away, fraile feeble, flesly wight, / Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly hart” (1.9.53). Redcrosse, once again, shows little agency of his own. Instead, he seems to respond to whoever has the greatest hold on him. In this case, Una, representative of the one Truth, trumps the sophistic rhetoric of Despaire. Una, though also young, becomes a better reader and user of rhetoric from her dealings with Archimago and Duessa. Redcrosse, despite having dealt with the same characters, still does not seem to have mastered an understanding of the importance of using language effectively.

Towards the end of Book 1, Redcrosse displays a surprising lack of rhetorical expression. Finally given the opportunity to use his voice persuasively, he defaults to silence, which very nearly ruins his wedding plans. Richard Levin identifies several places in the final episode that show Redcrosse seeming to fail to learn a lesson and instead remaining silent. First, when Fidessa’s true form is revealed,

It is interesting that when Fidessa is now stripped and revealed as a witch, Redcrosse says nothing, and therefore fails to confirm the model established by Fradubio, who quickly learned his lesson when he saw Duessa naked. The reunion

episode closes, then, with a curious gap, marked by Redcrosse's silence. (Levin 14)

Then, when Una's father pointedly asks Redcrosse about his plans to marry, "it would seem that Redcrosse, put on the spot, must reply, choose among his commitments, make known his plans. Instead, silence" (Levin 21). Sidestepping Redcrosse's inability to speak persuasively on his own behalf, Una steps in, defending his encounter with Duessa and revealing the identity of the messenger: "this false footman, clokt with simplenesse, / Whome if ye please for to discover plaine, / Ye shall him Archimago find, I ghesse" (1.12.34). Una, similarly young and naïve at the start of *The Faerie Queene*, nonetheless possesses—or has gained—some rhetorical ability. Redcrosse does not seem to have learned from his own experiences.

Redcrosse, despite his failings, is not an antagonist. The reader wants him to be successful, and even when he errs, he remains likeable. Book 1 reads like a *bildungsroman* for Redcrosse in some ways, but Redcrosse does not seem to actually become experienced. He soldiers on, which may be a virtue unto itself, but he never becomes rhetorically savvy. He may be better on the battlefield with his experience, but certainly does not possess at any point in *The Faerie Queene* the courtier's "grace . . . which shall make him at first sight pleasing and lovable to all who see him" (Castiglione 1.14). As Redcrosse gains experience, he may become more virtuous, but he must also learn the outward art of the courtier to be taken seriously at court.

4.6 Faire Fleeing Florimell

The rhetorical naïveté present in Redcrosse can also be seen in the character Florimell. However, in a woman, this lack of polish becomes far more dangerous. Like Redcrosse, Florimell lives in the world of the court and seems to lack rhetorical effectiveness. However, the

effects of the rhetorical void diverge greatly because of the characters' different genders. Additionally, the reason behind the lack of rhetoric differs in the characters; Florimell, rather than simply lacking the rhetorical skill to resist the duplicitous actions of other characters, has instead deliberately hardened herself against other characters—particularly male characters. Florimell becomes unrhetorical by choice, as a defense mechanism against dangerous (and sometimes not dangerous) forces that act against her. Out of necessity, Florimell's "faint hart was with the frozen cold / Benumbd so inly" (3.8.34) that she remains unmoved by courteous-seeming speech. Each time she seems to have been freed from one danger, she sees another, "herselfe not saued yet from daunger dredd . . . but chaung'd from one to another feare" (3.8.33). Unfortunately, because she has little power to do otherwise, Florimell's primary means of seeking safety involves simply fleeing from any perceived danger. Lesley Brill suggests that Florimell "lacks the wisdom, self-possession, and 'manly terror' that pertain to chastity" (23), rendering her largely ineffective. Throughout *The Faerie Queene*, Florimell is largely limited to three actions—if we may even call them all actions: fleeing danger, being the subject of male gazes, and resisting rhetorical speech.

Florimell spends virtually all of her agency in the narrative fleeing from other characters "in several dehumanizing and debasing episodes" (Roche 310). She "fledd so fast" from the Foster (3.1.15); when pursued by Arthur and Guyon, she "from them fled, as light-foot hare from view / Of hunter swifte, and of sent of howndes trew" (3.4.46); from Arthur she "fled afore, affraid of him, as feend of hell" (3.4.47) and "fast she from him fled, no lesse afraid, / Then of wilde beastes if she had chased beene" (3.4.51); from the witch's son "she forth issewed . . . in perill" (3.7.19); from the witch's hyena, upon her horse "from perill free he her away did beare" until he grows too tired and, approaching the ocean, "lightly she leaped, as a wight forlore, /

From her dull horse” (3.7.25). Unfortunately, she leaps into the boat of a lecherous old fisherman, against whom “the silly virgin stroue to withstand, / All that she might, and him in vaine reuild: / Shee struggled strongly both with foote and hand” (3.8.26). Proteus steps in to rescue Florimell, but subsequently throws her “Downe in a Dongeon deepe” (3.8.41), where she remains unable to flee, until Cymodoce entreats Neptune for her release so that Florimell’s presence may restore Marinell to health. This fleeing—at times humorous and at times frightening—characterizes Florimell due to its frequency. Like Redcrosse, Florimell seems unable to read situations and characters, fleeing from Arthur, who ostensibly poses no danger to her and seeks to help her, just as she fled the Hyena. She does not have the “good judgement to recognize the kind of person with whom she is speaking” (3.6) that Castiglione attributes to the ideal court lady. Marie Buncombe suggests that Florimell represents a lady-in-waiting, “forced to conform to the demands of a society whose strictures left her subject to the whims and vagaries of all sorts of male predators—god, man, and beast—with only her virtue and steadfast love as her sole protectors” (175). As such, her tendency to flee first and ask questions later may result from the way that men treat her throughout the poem.

Florimell has been described as the “the special embodiment . . . of Beauty” (Padelford 72), a Neoplatonic representation of beauty,⁷⁴ as “the pursued woman whose beauty is threatened by desire and lust” (Roche 309), as “a parody of chastity rather than a second embodiment of it” (Brill 23), or as the combination of “‘chastitie’ [and] surpassing beauty” (Donno 41). Because of the visual nature of beauty, Florimell spends much of her time in the poem being voyeuristically gazed at⁷⁵ and inspiring lusty thoughts with her appearance. When Florimell first flees from Guyon and Arthur, “they gazed after her a whyle” (3.1.17). The witch’s son sees “the fairest

⁷⁴ For Florimell as a representation of Neoplatonic beauty, see P. Cheney, Sims, Geller, Quitslund, Kaske, Evans.

⁷⁵ For more on gazing in *The Faerie Queene*, see Dallett and Krier.

creature, that he euer saw... the sight whereof did greatly him adaw” (3.7.13), and the fisherman felt that “some extasye / Assotted had his sence, or dazed was his eye” (3.8.22), at which sight “in his congealed flesh, / Infixt such secrete sting of greedy lust, / That the drie withered stocke it gan refresh” (3.8.25). Proteus sees the fisherman’s attack on Florimell as an “yrkesome sight, which smote / Deepe indignation and compassion frayle / Into his hart attonce” (3.8.31), and even as a woman, Cymodoce “Admyr’d her beautie much . . . And was right ioyous, that she gotten had / So faire a wife for her sonne Marinell” (4.12.33). Marinell, upon seeing his betrothed, “soone as he beheld that angels face, / Adorn’d with all diuine perfection / His cheared heart eftsoones away gan chace / Sad death” (4.12.34). In this final example, Florimell’s beauty functions restoratively, but Marinell’s gaze differs little from the leering gazes of the lusty threats to Florimell’s chastity. All of this leering by (mostly) male characters objectifies Florimell to the point that her agency as a person becomes limited. This overemphasis on her physical appearance leads characters to be fooled by the False (Snowy) Florimell later in the poem.

When she is not fleeing or being gazed upon, Florimell spends her energy resisting, listening to, or being moved by, the speech of the other characters. This seems to be a defense mechanism similar to her fleeing. Arthur attempts to call out to Florimell, to convince her that she has nothing to fear;

Alowd to her he oftentimes did call,
 To doe away vaine doubt, and needless dreed:
 Full myld to her he spake, and oft let fall
 Many meeke wordes, to stay and comfort her withall. (3.4.48)

The reader knows that Florimell may well have been better off listening to Arthur; his intentions should be honorable based on his character throughout the poem, and the narrator even reminds the reader that the “fearefull Ladie fled from him, that ment / To her no euill thought, nor euill deed” (3.4.50). Florimell, however, remains unmoved: “but nothing might relent her hasty flight; / So deepe the deadly feare of that foule swaine / Was earst impressed in her gentle spright” (3.4.49). Her fear of Arthur (and fear in general) leads Dwight Sims to conclude that Florimell “is almost totally unable to discriminate between men of virtuous and evil intent” (443). However, the lack of trust inspired by her fear serves her well when in the company of the witch and her son. She plans “in secret wize her selfe thence to withdraw, / For feare of mischief, which she did forecast / Might by the witch or by her sonne compast” (3.7.18). She remains similarly wary of Proteus, who

Endeuored with speaches milde
Her to recomfort, and accourage bold,
Bidding her feare no more her foeman vilde,
Nor doubt himself; and who he was her told.
Yet all that could not from affright her hold,
Ne to recomfort her at all preuayld. (3.8.34)

His initial comfort ineffective, Proteus takes Florimell to his bower under the sea and there “with flattering wordes he sweetly wooed her, / And offered faire guiftes, t’allure her sight” (3.8.38). Florimell, however, resists him and “both the offers and the offerer / Despysde, and all the fawning of the flatterer” (3.8.38). Proteus grows desperate and takes on different physical

forms⁷⁶ to try to convince or scare her into submission. Florimell continuously resists him, despite his many approaches:

Dayly he tempted her with this or that,
 And neuer suffred her to be at rest:
 But euermore she him refused flat,
 And all his fained kindnes did detest. (3.8.39)

Finally, he throws her in a dungeon, where “eternall thraldome was to her more liefē, / Then losse of chastity, or chaunge of loue” (3.8.41). Florimell, far truer than Redcrosse, can be moved neither to trust strangers nor to abandon her beloved. Sims reads Florimell’s actions as “fear defin[ing] the limits of her natural good sense” (443), while Elizabeth Donno interprets her steadfastness as a “triumph of chastity in that [she] elect[s] to remain faithful to [her] belov[ed] with the intent of ultimate fulfilment through marriage” (47). Neither interpretation accounts for Florimell’s agency as a rhetorical being. Florimell protects herself and her chastity in the only way that she can: by rejecting the rhetoric of others—the “meeke wordes” of Arthur’s chivalric rhetoric as well as Proteus’ “speaches myld.” Hence Florimell rejects the opportunity to read other characters. Rather than attempting to distinguish genuine civil conversation from artful courtliness, she simply ignores the words of all of the men she encounters out of self-preservation.

Florimell’s tacit rejection of rhetoric may also come from experiencing the ineffectiveness of her own voice. Florimell—given her tendency to flee through cantos on horseback—rarely speaks in *The Faerie Queene*. She does not even have the opportunity to tell her own story; Dony the dwarf steps in to explain her history to Arthur (3.5.3-12). When Florimell does speak, her words do not offer her any help. When she finds herself in the boat

⁷⁶ This connects him to both Archimago and Guyle, who use shapeshifting similarly as a means of persuasion.

with the fisherman, she sees that he is elderly and believes that he may save her. Yet while she speaks, the man's "deceitfull eyes did neuer lin, / To looke on her faire face, and marke her snowy skin" (3.8.25) and when she protests his inappropriate advances, her "sharpe rebuke full litle did esteeme" (3.8.26). Florimell's beauty undermines her ability to be heard, as the male characters of *The Faerie Queene* seem to be incapable of seeing beyond her blinding beauty.

Only Florimell's disembodied voice proves effective. Marinell, unable to see Florimell in her cave, hears her complaint, which "neuer before disclosd to none, / But to her selfe her sorrow did bemone" (4.12.5). Upon hearing her complaint and when Marinell

vnderstood the cause of all her care

To come from him, for vsing her so hard,

His stubborne heart, that neuer felt misfire

Was toucht with soft remorse and pittie rare (4.12.12).

Ultimately, Florimell's voice does free her, so she saves herself in a manner of speaking.

Marinell's response to her complaint is to be "struck first with pity, then with love, which unable to express itself openly, turns inward in self-reproach and soon reduces him to a pining misery worse than his former wound" (Blissett 100). His ensuing illness prompts Cymodoce to request Neptune's help in freeing Florimell.

Only without the distraction of her beauty are Florimell's words given the opportunity to be effective. David Franz declares that "the victory of hearing over seeing in Florimell's case is a fittingly ironic one, since she is one of the females in the poem so persistently pursued and assailed for the physical beauty that males see" (116). I would argue that this is not ironic, but appropriate. Florimell's beauty distracts men from her words, and even after the "victory" of winning the love of Marinell, Florimell returns to her ineffective state. Once rescued from her

underwater dungeon, Florimell loses the brief power that her voice alone was given. When the couple unites, Marinell expresses “chearefull signes he shewed outwardly,” but Florimell “Ne lesse was she in secret hart affected, / But that she masked it with modestie, / For feare she should of lightnesse be detected” (4.12.35). She returns to her mute state. Thomas Roche notes that Florimell “does not speak—indeed is never described—again, even when Cymodoce brings her to Marinell . . . or when she is married to him” (310). Even after marrying Marinell, Florimell is unable to recover her rhetorical voice. When she praises Braggadochio for his performance in the wedding tournament, he says “he did it not / For her, but for his owne deare Ladies sake” and “further did vncomely speaches crake” (5.3.16). Braggadochio’s “words [did much] the gentle Ladie quell / And turn’d aside for shame to heare, what he did tell” (5.3.16). Her feeling of shame grows when Braggadochio produces Snowy Florimell, who “with great amazement . . . stupefide” (5.3.17) all of the knights present. Even Marinell cannot see through the false creation, but

He long astonisht stood, ne ought he sayd,
 Ne ought he did, but with fast fixed eies
 He gazed still vpon that snowy mayd;
 Whom euer as he did the more auize,
 The more to be true Florimell he did surmize. (5.3.18)

Florimell’s own husband—the one who finally heard her voice and was won over by her words—cannot distinguish the false Florimell from the real with his sight.

That the Snowy Florimell could be conflated so easily with the real Florimell proves Florimell’s lack of substantive agency in (at least) the eyes of the men in the poem. Patrick Cheney suggests that the fact that “False Florimell is consistently being perceived as the real

Florimell by knights with generally virtuous souls . . . signals a culture-wide problem” with the perception of beauty (312). Cavanagh further complicates this notion by suggesting that the knights’ perception and value of women’s beauty influences their perception of the women’s goodness as well: “they apparently base their behavior upon very literal interpretations of Neoplatonic doctrine, readily and simplistically equating physical with spiritual beauty.” (“Nightmares of Desire: Evil Women in *The Faerie Queene*” 330). The resolution of the two Florimells (Snowy Florimell melts away when placed next to the true beauty) only when Artegall, the Knight of Justice, intervenes. Florimell never speaks on her own defense amid the confusion. While at times her lack of rhetorical voice was a deliberate defense mechanism, she seems to almost lose her new husband—whom she has pursued through Faeryland—to a false version of herself because she will not speak on her own behalf. Florimell may fit the expectations of both a damzell in distress and an obedient wife within the chivalric society in which she lives, but when she abandons rhetorical expression, she also abandons her own agency.

As with the satyrs, the Salvage Man, and Redcrosse, a lack of rhetoric in Florimell becomes equivalent to a lack of power and agency. The inward virtue that each of these characters possesses is not met with the outward shows that convey power at court, so the characters remain limited in their efficacy. The unrhetorical characters all have good intentions and inner virtue, though it may be underdeveloped or overshadowed by rusticity. What Spenser seems to suggest by presenting these characters is that some degree of courtliness—of those external niceties that make one “blend in” to the court world—are, in fact, necessary. As Giovanni della Casa, author of *Galateo*, another popular courtesy manual, says,

A man must therefore not be content to do things well, but must also aim to do them gracefully. Gracefulness is like a light which shines in things which are fit and proper for their purpose because they are well ordered and arranged both in relation to each other and as a whole. Without it even goodness has no beauty and beauty has no charm. (93)

While courtliness, what della Casa calls gracefulness, can certainly be abused by those who use it as a tool for social promotion or mischief, it has a place in a holistic view of courtesy.

Spenser's courtesy "emphasizes both the needs of others and the importance of adjusting one's actions according to the particular circumstances" (Culp 49). Ideas of relativism and good judgment play into courtly behavior, and characters who lack those skills put themselves at a disadvantage or even in danger.

5 THE COURTEOUS

"But where shall I in all Antiquity / So faire a patterne finde, where may be seene / The goodly praise of Princely curtesie" (6.proem.6)

5.1 Introduction

True courtesy, in Spenser's work, is more complex than in many Renaissance courtesy manuals. Just as Hanna Gray says that for Renaissance humanists, "true eloquence . . . could arise only out of a harmonious union between wisdom and style" (498), for Spenser, true courtesy may arise only from a harmony between outward and inward courtesy. Italian courtesy theorist Stefano Guazzo describes this union in effective courtesy (what he calls "civil conversation") when he says, "Hee then that will behave himself wel in civile conversation, must

consider that the tongue is the mirrour, and (as it were) the image of his minde . . . so by the sounde of words, we gather the inward qualities and conditions of the man” (122-23). Guazzo’s “insist[ance] on avoiding any discrepancy between the inner and outer self” (Javitch, "Courtesy Books" 198) speaks to the idea of harmony between expression and virtue necessary for a moral conception of courtesy. Through his representations of discourteous, artful, unrhetorical, and finally truly courteous characters, Spenser stresses the importance of such a harmonious courtesy in *The Faerie Queene*.

Spenser’s moral courtesy goes beyond the mere lists of manners prescribed by traditional Elizabethan courtesy books, instead striving to depict “a more inward, less superficial virtue than the etiquette and ‘outward shows’ [that courtesy manuals] prescribe” (Javitch, "Courtesy Books" 197). For Spenser, true courtesy is both difficult to achieve and vitally important to the continuation of effective society, for “the truly courteous man is one who not only observes the rule of decorum at all times, but who devotes his life to the good of the state, and who is prepared to sacrifice personal interests, even though these may be honourable and virtuous in themselves, to the higher good” (Wells 221). Furthermore, outward courtliness was an important skill set in Elizabethan England: “in the carefully stratified Elizabethan society . . . this virtue [courtesy] was absolutely necessary for anyone who hoped to move in society without friction” (Ashley 124). Courtesy, then, becomes a complex combination of virtue and expression, a model for which would have been difficult to identify. Spenser nods to Queen Elizabeth in the proem to Book 6, indicating that she is herself the perfect model of this true courtesy:

But where shall I in all Antiquity
 So faire a patterne finde, where may be seene
 The goodly praise of Princely curtesie

As in your selfe, O soueraine Lady Queene. (6.proem.6)

This type of praise is highly conventional and colored more than a little by Spenser's wish to gain favor with Elizabeth,⁷⁷ but it introduces an important question. Who is the model of courtesy in Spenser's work? It is certainly not Calidore (see Chapter 6). The only character who inherently approaches perfect courtesy is Belphoebe, who, as something of an abstraction of Gloriana (Elizabeth),⁷⁸ remains pristinely virginal and courteous. Belphoebe's inborn courtesy complements her almost militant chastity:

In so great prayse of stedfast chastity,
 Nathlesse she was so courteous and kynde,
 Tempred with grace, and goodly modesty,
 That seemed to those two vertues stroue to fynd,
 The higher place in her Heroick mynd:
 So striuing each did other more augment,
 And both encreast the prayse of woman kynde,
 And both encreast her beauty excellent;
 So all did make in her a perfect complement. (3.5.55)

Belphoebe does not qualify, however, as one of the more interesting or realistic "human" (as opposed to allegorical) characters of *The Faerie Queene*. She also lives a somewhat renegade lifestyle and spends more time alone than dealing with the intricacies of court life. We do not see her practicing the outward courtliness necessarily a part of court life, so we must seek courtesy in other characters.

⁷⁷ See May.

⁷⁸ Spenser's "Letter to Raleigh" says, "For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royall Queene or Empresse, the other of a most virtuous and beautifull Lady, this latter part in some places I doe expresse in Belphoebe."

While no character lives up to the praise that Spenser holds for Elizabeth as the sovereign model for the virtue, an analysis of courtesy in the entirety of *The Faerie Queene* reveals that Spenser's characters Arthur and Britomart most closely embody this moral virtue. Arthur and Britomart may not be the official "knights of courtesy," but both strive to act courteously within complex social situations. The knights—one male and one female—together navigate through different episodes, experiencing lessons about other virtues that connect to courtesy. Britomart and Arthur seem to have an understanding of what it means to possess actual, moral courtesy. Dorothy Woodward Culp describes this type of true courtesy as "neither virtue nor personal charm, it is a graciousness of manner, a comeliness of demeanor and appearance, that reflects inward virtue. Courtesy adorned by such grace wins the liking of others and is able to draw men together in mutual good will" (51). Spenser uses "the chivalric order as a viable metaphor for gentlemanly conduct," which leads to "a widening of the ground normally covered by courtesy books and a corresponding deepening of the virtues with which he deals" (Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 168). To understand Spenser's brand of courtesy—an understanding necessary to establishing what it means to possess harmonious moral courtesy—one must understand the courtesy tradition with which Spenser engages in his heroic poem.

5.2 Matching Manners with Morals

Moral courtesy, as stated above, includes a harmony between the inner virtue of courtesy and the outer expression of courtliness. This idea of harmonious balance is reflected in the Ancient Greek idea of *kairos*, a Pythagorean theory of appropriate universal balance. *Kairos* has a bearing on the Roman concept of decorum as well as the Renaissance concept of courtesy. The *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition* defines *kairos* as "right timing and

proper measure—directly related to the rhetorical importance of time, place, speaker, and audience, the proper and knowledgeable analysis of these factors, and the faculty of using the proper means in a particular context to arrive at belief” (Helsley 371). The Renaissance courtier also seeks this idea of balance; he wishes to adapt himself to a given situation with consummate ease and grace. However, beyond the application of the courtier’s adaptability, the emphasis on balance suggests a need for harmony between inner and outer. Whereas Malecasta possesses outward polish without inner virtue or the satyrs possess inner virtue with no means of expressing it, the balanced, courteous knight would adapt well to social situations and maintain inward virtue.

Similarly, while of the Roman rhetoricians focus primarily on the aesthetic or linguistic aspects of decorum, in *De Officiis*, Cicero advocates a decorum balanced with morality when he says,

In [propriety] we find considerateness and self-control, which give, as it were, a sort of polish to life; it embraces also temperance, complete subjugation of all the passions, and moderation in all things . . . For to employ reason and speech rationally, to do with careful consideration whatever one does, and in everything to discern the truth and to uphold it—that is proper. (1.27.93-94)

These ancient ideas of *kairos* and propriety seem to have influenced Spenser’s conception of balanced moral courtesy.

More contemporary influences on both Spenser’s conception and his Elizabethan audience’s understanding of courtesy were other Renaissance courtesy manuals (the tradition and history of which are outlined in Chapter 1). Castiglione’s *Courtier* and Stefano Guazzo’s *Civile Conversation* are “considered to have been the most influential contributions” to courtesy

literature in the Renaissance (Mohrmann 194). Guazzo's work, written in 1574 then translated and published in English in 1581, presents a nuanced, moral conception of courtesy, "treat[ing] proper social conduct as a function of inner virtue" (Borris, "Courtesy" 194). Guazzo's work would appear to be "less interested in advising on tactics of self-promotion at court than in exploring ways of managing the relationship between self-interest and social duty, self-restraint and freedom and competition and cooperation in . . . social communication" (Richards 2). Spenser's reference to courtesy as the "the ground / And roote of ciuill conuersation" (6.1.1) invites a connection to Guazzo, and his deepening of the idea of courtesy to a moral dimension verifies this connection. Spenser perpetuates "Guazzo's preference for substance rather than form, and his distaste for graceful ornamentation, in behavior as well as in speech" (Javitch, "Courtesy Books" 198). Humphrey Tonkin concludes that "Spenser seems to have drawn more on Guazzo's work than any other among the courtesy books" (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 168), stating that "[Guazzo's] intention, of defining the qualities of behavior which bring about harmony in society, is very similar to that in [Spenser's] Legend of Courtesy" (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 169). Even the phrase "civil conversation" instead of the more commonly used term "courtesy" aligns Guazzo's theory with what is here called "moral courtesy."

Courtesy necessarily has an outward element, and the word "conversation" stresses both the potentially verbal nature of such exchanges and the give-and-take inherent to both courtesy and conversation; neither conversation nor courtesy is one-sided. Guazzo explains the more complex term, "civil," in his work:

You see then, that we give a large sense and signification to this woorde (civile) for that we would have understoode, that to live civilly, is not sayde in respect of the citie, but of the quallities of the minde: so I understand civile conversation not

having relation to the citie, but consideration to the maners and conditions which make it civile. And as lawes and civile ordinances are distributed not onely to cities, but to villages, castles, and people subject unto them, so I will that civile conversation appertaine not onely to men inhabiting cities, but too all sortes of persons of what place, or of what calling soever they are. (Guazzo 56)

Guazzo's fundamental claim is that "civile conversation is an honest commendable and vertuous kinde of living in the world" (Guazzo 56). He warns that "There is no greater affliction then to live amongst men, and to bee deprived of the ayde and companie of men" (Guazzo 35-36), suggesting that civil conversation makes up an essential aspect of humanity. His *Conversation* differs from the other Italian courtesy books in that, instead of focusing on practical tips for fitting in at court social events, it focuses on the potential good and ill of social interaction.

Guazzo stages the *Conversation* between two characters: Guazzo (the author's brother, seemingly equivalent to Cicero's Antonius) and Annibal (the author's spokesperson, like Cicero's Crassus). Guazzo expresses a distrust of art and rhetoric through Annibal, who claims that rhetoricians "make as though they would not speake evill, and yet doe it, and worse too" (68) and warns against "secret flatterers, who under the colour of friendship and good will, cunningly and artificially insinuate them selves into other mens favour, and by their subtil devises and false perswasions, make them fall into many errors" (77). Using the trope of the conversation to his advantage (much as Cicero does through his use of Antonius), Guazzo also shows the practical use of such art through the (admittedly less convincing) character of Guazzo, who sees the benefit of flattery. Guazzo says, "flatterie is the way to make friends, and winne preferment: and I am perswaded, that hee which knoweth not howe to glose and flatter, knoweth not howe to behaue himselfe in companie" (Guazzo 78). Ultimately, Annibal's views prevail,

and the reader concludes that, while flatterers and rhetoricians should be tolerated, an individual should seek a higher truth. One such truth is that “by meanes of civil conversation, a man may not onely cleere himselfe of cowardly abjection, and vaine presumption, but besides, cloath himselfe with the knowledge of himselfe” (Guazzo 115). In *The Faerie Queene*, the character Arthur supposedly embodies all of the moral virtues; however, Spenser does not portray the hero as already possessing true moral courtesy. He has to engage in civil conversation and find this knowledge of himself in order to harmonize his outward chivalric courtesy and his inward true courtesy.

5.3 Nascent Nobility

On the surface, Arthur seems to serve as exemplar of all virtue within *The Faerie Queene*. Leonard Ashley notes, “the sum of all the virtues is Magnanimity, of which Arthur is the embodiment” (129). Ashley refers here to Spenser’s claim in his “Letter to Raleigh” that he will “labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a braue knight, perfected in the twelve priuate morall vertues” and “in the person of Prince Arthure . . . sette forth magnificence⁷⁹ in particular, which virtue for that . . . it is the perfection of all the rest, and containeth in it them all.” We would expect, then, to see Arthur as the pinnacle of all of the virtues in the poem. Indeed, Arthur is referred to as “courteous” or as having “courtesy” 11 times in *The Faerie Queene*,⁸⁰ including his introduction into the action of the poem by both the narrator and Una, who both clepe him with the epithet “courteous knight” (1.8.33; 1.9.7). He seems to be the perfect knight, entering the narrative just when the other knights most need him

⁷⁹ Ashley, like most scholars, think Spenser meant magnanimity, not magnificence: see Moloney, MacLaughlan, and Waters.

⁸⁰ See *The Faerie Queene* 1.8.33, 1.9.7, 2.8.23, 2.8.56, 2.9.2, 2.9.37, 2.11.17, 3.1.1, 3.4.45, 5.11.11, and 6.5.32.

and helping them “learn” their allegorical lessons. He strives to do what the rules of chivalry say he should do; he rescues helpless dames, helps friendly knights, and punishes “bad” knights. Even when Arthur’s actions seem to fall short of courtesy, others still call him courteous, suggesting that Arthur has mastered the outward show of courtliness, even when virtuous courtesy does not balance that courtliness. Arthur has been well-bred and groomed to be the perfect knight, and is well-versed in the chivalric code and culture.

However, Arthur does not seem to have perfected inward manifestations of the virtue of courtesy, despite the suggestion that he has in the “Letter to Raleigh.” A discrepancy arises between the poetic commentary on his character and his actual actions. Despite seeming courteous, Arthur displays some decidedly discourteous behavior in parts of *The Faerie Queene*, showing an imbalance between his courtliness and inward courtesy. In typical Spenserian fashion, Arthur has to learn a lesson from the narrative; he must learn how to differentiate courtliness from true courtesy. Gordon Teskey writes about how thinking and learning happen in *The Faerie Queene*, concluding that “as he works to fill out a thought by means of narrative Spenser almost inadvertently explores the thought more deeply (“And Therefore as a Stranger Give It Welcome: Courtesy and Thinking” 349). Spenser may not intend to produce a perfected Arthur from the beginning; as we, the readers, witness Arthur learn about the nature of courtesy, we also learn about the importance of true courtesy as a moral virtue. Arthur’s lessons in Fairyland are also important to the quasi-historical side of *The Faerie Queene* because they can “be seen as contributing at every point to Arthur’s moral formation before his reappearance in history as king of the Britons” (Teskey, “Arthur in *The Faerie Queene*” 69). By giving a character with a historical (or at least literary) “life” outside of *The Faerie Queene* lessons about courtesy, Spenser extends the importance of courtesy outside of the bounds of Faeryland.

Arthur's first significant lesson in courtesy occurs in Book 2, where he fails to establish himself as a standard of moral courtesy, instead displaying mere outward courtliness. Though the titular virtue of Book 2 is Temperance, courtesy weighs heavily on the social interactions in the book, specifically in the episode in which Arthur fights Maleger on behalf of Alma. The fact that Arthur is referred to as "courteous" five times in the span of four stanzas signals the importance of courtesy in relation to temperance in the episode. Moreover, the inclusion of the word "courteous" so many times in this interaction in which Arthur does not act courteously reveals an imbalance between perception and reality. This episode shows Arthur relying primarily on the trappings of chivalry and failing to show true inward courtesy. Interwoven in the description of Arthur's courtliness are also several references to noble/gentle or base birth—an issue connected with courtesy that Spenser explores in *The Faerie Queene* and Guazzo in his *Civile Conversation*.

The narrator first signals the possibility that Arthur acts without true courtesy in Alma's castle when Arthur asks her in "courteous maner," "Gentle Madame, why beene ye thus dismayd / And your faire beautie doe with sadnes spill? . . . What euer bee the cause, it sure beseemes you ill" (2.9.37). While Arthur seems to care for Alma's happiness, telling a lady that her sadness "beseemes [her] ill" hardly qualifies as courteous speech. Arthur soon after takes "courteous conge" and "himself in glitterand armes he dight" and "his well proued weapons to him hent" (2.11.17). Arthur dresses himself in the suit of chivalry and goes to fight, the picture of the outward courtliness; he is "The prowest and most gent, / That euer brandished bright steele on hye" (2.11.17). Arthur fights Maleger's men, but Malager eludes him;

Apace he shot, and yet he fled apace,

Still as the greedy knight nigh to him drew,

And oftentimes he would relent his pace,
 That him his foe more fiercely should poursew:
 But when his vncouth manner he did vew,
 He gan auize to follow him no more,
 But keepe his standing, and his shaftes eschew,
 Vntill he quite had spent his perlous store,
 And then assayle him fresh, ere he could shift for more. (2.11.27)

Spenser is often vague about his pronoun antecedents. In this case, “greedy knight” appears to refer to Arthur while “vncouth manner” refers to Maleger, but the vagueness of the pronouns suggests that either label squints to either knight. Neither of the knights displays courteous behavior here, and in the midst of this greedy discourtesy, Arthur becomes unhorsed by the “rude hands” (2.11.29) of Impotence and Impatience. They would have “of the battle balefull end . . . made” (2.11.29) if Arthur’s squire, Timias, had not come to rescue him: “Had not his gentle Squire beheld his paine, / And commen to his reskew ere his bitter bane” (2.11.29). The narrator here illustrates tension between noble birth and common birth.

As Prince, Arthur represents the highest born knight⁸¹ in *The Faerie Queene*, but “rude” (low-born) hands bring him down, then “gentle” Timias who “commen” to his rescue saves Arthur. While “commen” means “came” in this context, the spelling forces the connection of “commen” to “common,” complicating Timias’s birth status (as a squire, he would likely be “gentle,” but not as “noble” as Arthur, the prince). This question of gentility suggests that courtesy (or virtue generally) may not be an essential part of nobility because “it is possible to abuse one’s gentle or noble rank, and . . . virtue, even if it comes of right, requires cultivation”

⁸¹ Arthur is “Prince, the prowest man alyue, / And noblest borne of all in Britayne land” (2.11.30).

(Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 166). This question of whether gentility and nobility⁸² are bred or taught is most directly addressed in Book 6 when the narrator speculates,

True is, that whilome that good Poet sayd,
 The gentle minde by gentle deeds is knowne.
 For a man by nothing is so well bewrayd,
 As by his manners, in which plaine is showne
 Of what degree and what race he is growne,

 So seldom seene, that one in basenesse set
 Doth noble courage shew, with courteous manners met. (6.3.1)

Other courtesy writers also address the importance of birth to courtesy. A more moral conception of courtesy—particularly with a Christianized worldview—would lead to a greater emphasis on the (more easily controlled) learned aspect; in other words, moral courtesy values nurture over nature. Regardless of how Arthur obtained his courtesy and nobility, he *should* be the exemplar of the trait, having the advantage of birth and having been trained well in the chivalric arts.

Despite his position of high nobility and chivalric outward courtesy, Arthur shows almost merciless intemperance in trying to fight Maleger. He acts “as a Beare” (2.11.33), is “wrothful” while he “fiercely aduanunst his valorous right arm” (2.11.34), shows “exceeding sway”⁸³ (2.11.36), then “with his brandish blade . . . stroke at [Maleger] so sternely, that he made / an open passage through his riuen brest, / That halfe the steele behind his backe did rest” (2.11.37), and finally, “so puissant wrest [Maleger to the ground] That backe againe [he] did alofte rebownd” (2.11.42). Arthur’s excessive force here shows a definite lack of courtesy. This proves

⁸² See Chapter 2 for more discussion of the place of birth in courtesy and discourtesy.

⁸³ Hamilton glosses “sway” as “force”; see 2.11.36*n*.

that “although gentleness may be solely the gift of nature, courtesy is not. Choice of appropriate action is what distinguishes the natural inclination to gentleness, the gentle mind, from the moral virtue of courtesy” (Culp 51). The word “gentle” creates an apt juxtaposition in this context; Arthur may be gentle (well-born) but he does not act gently (with compassion). Likewise, he shows a (somewhat brutal) chivalry but not inward moral courtesy. This seems more like the unpolished chivalry of Sir Satyrane than the careful approach of a moral courtier.

Maleger, meanwhile, seems invincible. Even Arthur’s brute strength proves ineffective against him. Arthur has to “[discard] the usual accoutrements of outward battle [and] turn his attention inward” (L. H. Miller, Jr. 181) in order to defeat him. Each time Maleger falls to Arthur, he revives as if immortal, until Arthur realizes that

the Earth his mother was, and first him bore,
 Shee eke so often, as his life decayd,
 Did life with vsury to him restore,
 And reysd him vp much stronger then before. (2.11.45)

Arthur then drowns Maleger to circumvent the restorative power of the earth on Maleger.⁸⁴

While this episode has a clear place in the Legend of Temperance, it also provides an important commentary on Arthur’s developing sense of courtesy. Arthur, supposedly “perfected in the twelve priuate morall vertues,” shows a disharmony between expectation and reality—a discourteous discord of behavior. Maleger’s restoration to health by the earth remains somewhat puzzling if we limit our analysis of the episode to a context of the book’s virtue of temperance, but it makes sense when contextualized by *The Faerie Queene*’s depiction of courtesy. While

⁸⁴ The meaning of the Maleger episode—particularly its interpretation as an allegorical representation of the sinful body being renewed by baptism—has been subject of much critical debate. See especially Woodhouse, Hamilton’s “A Theological Reading of *The Faerie Queene*, Book II,” and Rollinson.

Maleger certainly does not represent courteous behavior,⁸⁵ the idea of nature acting as a restorative against (in this case, Arthur's) discourtesy holds with other episodes of *The Faerie Queene*. Courtesy is found in or restored by nature, away from the court, throughout Book 6; the Hermit, Meliboe, Pastorella, the shepherds, and the dance of the graces all exist away from the court. Tonkin speculates, "all too frequently, the creatures of the natural world know more about courtesy than supposedly civilized knights . . . and the true courtiers have, for one reason or another, fled a court where corruption rather than courtesy rules" ("*The Faerie Queene*, Book VI" 284). Similarly, Judson cites that courtesy "can be found beautifully manifested far from court and even in obscurest retirement" (Judson 136). In the proem to Book 6, the narrator describes courtesy in terms of a humbled nature, calling it "the bloosme of comely courtesie, / Which though it on a lowly stalke doe bowre . . . spreads it selfe through all ciuilitie" (6.proem.4). The importance of courtesy in the Legend of Temperance is not coincidental; Borris points out that Spenser presents a "cultivation of temperance and prudence as parts of courtesy" ("Courtesy" 195). Arthur's breach of temperance, then, is also a breach of courtesy.

Even after his battle with Maleger, Arthur has not yet learned to distinguish between his courtliness and true courtesy. When he tries to return to his knightly trappings after winning the battle, he cannot mount his horse (a clear symbol of knighthood). Timias helps Arthur back to Alma's castle, where she "mett him there / With balme and wine and costly spicery" and "caused him to be . . . of his armes despoiled easily, / In sumptuous bed shee made him to be layd" (2.11.49). Again, in terms of temperance, this extravagance is puzzling. It sounds ornate and lavish, suggesting the quasi-sinful language of the Bower of Bliss or the Castle Joyous, and it should have no power to restore the lately intemperate knight. However, given the context of the

⁸⁵ I tend to agree with Miller that "Spenser leaves somewhat ambiguous the specific quality which Maleger may represent" (181).

virtue of courtesy, the language fits. Alma has Arthur remove his armor (symbolic of his shallow chivalry) and ministers to Arthur with hospitality—an important element of courtesy. Through Alma’s hospitality, both Arthur’s and Guyon’s “sory wounds right well recur’d” but they decline her invitation to stay on, because “they might not be allur’d, / From seeking praise, and deeds of armes abroad” (3.1.1). One cannot help but think of Guazzo’s admonition that “men for the most part, are Flatterers of themselves, making themselves believe they are that, which they are not” (Guazzo 81). Arthur and Guyon, through seeking fame, flatter themselves and continue to devote themselves to empty ideals of chivalry and knighthood. Arthur does not seem to have learned from his encounter with Maleger. The narrator next refers to Arthur as courteous when he and other knights chase after Florimell in Book 3, calling him one of “the crew / Of courteous knights, the Prince, and Fary gent, / Whom late in chace of beauty excellent / [Britomart] left” (3.4.45). Again, this is not courteous behavior. This is not the Arthur who “represent[s] . . . that perfection of human nature which unites all virtues in itself” (Teskey, “Arthur in *The Faerie Queene*” 71). Arthur merely joins the parade of men who chase the terrified Florimell on horseback. Even though his intentions may be virtuous, he appears to lack inward courtesy in his actions here.

What sets Arthur apart from other characters who lack courtesy, however, is his attempt to be courteous in the way that he understands courtesy (that is, within the chivalric system). He understands the courtliness and chivalry that are tantamount to the rules and regulations of being a knight. He has been raised and lives in a society that values the shallow ceremony of chivalry, and he finds it difficult to move past the trappings of the court to find true moral courtesy—in fact, he does not seem to know that he should aim for a deeper courtesy. Arthur’s failure may not be a failure of himself, but a systemic societal failure. It is vitally important, however, that he

does learn how to be truly courteous. He will one day reign over this society, “ultimately becom[ing] king . . . Although Arthur is now active in the chivalric world, when he ascends to the throne, he will need to depend upon his knights to feed his wisdom with their experience” (Cavanagh, "Ideal and Practical Justice: Artegall and Arthur in *Faerie Queene* Five" 24). Before moving forward to his place of power, he needs to learn about how to achieve true courtesy in the world in which he lives so that he may be a model for others. Enter Britomart: in some ways, the female version of Arthur.⁸⁶ In terms of learning how to be courteous, Britomart becomes a surrogate to Arthur in the way that Calepine becomes a surrogate for Calidore in Book 6. Perhaps the martial chivalric society necessitates such a surrogacy; it seems to take a woman to move beyond the male-centered chivalry towards true inward courtesy. Tonkin posits, “the fact that the hero of Book III is a female knight may imply a criticism of the male-oriented chivalric theme itself” (“*The Faerie Queene*, Book VI” 287). Perhaps, indeed, Spenser’s criticism of the societal structure of chivalry goes beyond “the male-oriented chivalric theme” to a deeper concern about whether a courteous (and, perhaps, just) society can exist in a world that upholds a social code that favors external appearances over inward virtue.

5.4 Courteous Kindness

Britomart is referred to as behaving with courtesy six times in the text of *The Faerie Queene*.⁸⁷ While this may be fewer total times than Arthur, she appears in half as many books as Arthur, which means the narrator and other characters refer to her as courteous with approximately the same frequency that they do Arthur. While female characters appearing

⁸⁶Britomart is elsewhere a stand-in for Arthur; for example, Teskey notes that “with the entry of Britomart in quest of Artegall, complications develop, for this new couple takes on many of the symbolic values previously associated with Gloriana and Arthur” (“Arthur in *The Faerie Queene*” 70).

⁸⁷ See *The Faerie Queene* 3.1.55, 3.9.24, 3.11.8, 3.11.13, 4.1.5, and 4.1.11.

outwardly courteous often indicates something to be distrusted,⁸⁸ Britomart seems to possess genuine courtesy. Partly due to her disguise as a male knight, Britomart must navigate a complex interweaving of courtesy and chivalric courtliness. While “Britomart’s disguise frees her from a woman’s customary social role, and her sex frees her from a man’s” (Anderson, “Britomart” 114), she has to find a way to fit in to the existing social structures. In the Castle Joyous, Britomart attempts courtesy in the face of Malecasta’s hospitality; “she would not in discourteise wise, / Scorne the faire offer of good will profest” (3.1.55). As discussed in Chapter 3, Malecasta mistakes her courtesy for amorous intent, which causes confusion and chaos. True courtesy is in short supply at the Castle Joyous. Malecasta’s henchmen⁸⁹ all “seemed courteous and gent . . . borne of one parent, / Which had them traynd in all ciuilitee / And goodly taught to tilt and turnament” (3.1.44) but references to “courteous shew” (3.1.45) and “courtly play” (3.1.56) belie the disingenuousness of their court behavior. These discourteous men also have the advantage of having been born into the court world and trained in “all civility,” but they certainly do not show moral courtesy. The fact that Malecasta slips, uninvited, into bed with Britomart, forces an escalation of the response to discourtesy, with Britomart receiving her first wound.⁹⁰ Redcrosse joins the exposed Britomart to handily defeat the discourteous crew with their swords—classic chivalric weapons.

After Britomart reveals her true gender, she finds herself in a situation that parallels her stay with Malecasta. She joins a feast at Malbecco’s castle—a feast which Malbecco hosts under duress, as narrator describes him as “a cancred crabbed Carle . . . That has no skill of Court nor

⁸⁸ For example, the far less trustworthy characters Duessa, Phaedria, Malecasta, and Clarinda are all referred to as acting courteously.

⁸⁹ Her six knights—Gardante, Parlante, Jocante, Basciante, Bacchante, Nocante. For interpretation of the six knights, see Fowler.

⁹⁰ Britomart is “the only knight in *The Faerie Queene* who suffers such a rapid downfall, wounded when her journey in book 3 has hardly begun” (Villepontaux 54). For more about Britomart’s wound here, see Chapter 3.

courtesie . . . for all his days he drownes in priuitie” (3.9.3). That his isolation would be discourteous holds with Guazzo’s warning that “who so leaveth the civile society to place himself in some solitarie desert, taketh as it were the forme of a beast, and in a certaine manner putteth uppon him selfe a brutishe nature” (30). Though the events leading up to the hospitality differ—Malbecco is forced into hosting the knights, while Malecasta enthusiastically sought the knights’ company—the feasts become eerily similar.

Unarmed Britomart seems more vulnerable here; without either weapon or disguise, she is completely exposed. The men at Malbecco’s

meruaild at her cheualree,

And noble prowess, which they had approu’d,

That much they faynd to know, who she mote bee;

Yet none of all them her thereof amou’d,

Yet euery one her likte, and euery one her lou’d. (3.9.24)

Britomart has no interest in getting to know any of Malbecco’s knights, who were “smitten” and seek her with “hungry vew” (3.9.23-24). The knights demand that Malbecco produce his wife for them to leer at as well: “they Malbecco prayd of courtesy, / That of his lady they might have the sight, / And company at meat, to doe them more delight” (3.9.25). They use the term courtesy, but do so rhetorically—almost ironically—not caring for an inward manifestation of the virtue. Hellinore, when she appears, “came in presence with right comely grace, / And fairely them saluted, as became, / And shewd her selfe in all a gentle courteous Dame” (3.9.26). However, Hellinore shows herself to be somewhat less than courteous when, in the next canto, she elopes with Paridell, taking much of Malbecco’s squandered wealth with them.

With these examples of discourteous courtliness fresh in her experience, we finally see Britomart's own brand of courtesy when she leaves these parodies of court. Perhaps as a female knight, she understands the tropes of the chivalric world but can also soften the martiality with sympathy. Perhaps her place as the "ideal embodiment of love as well as of chastity" (A. S. P. Woodhouse 216) enables her to have honest compassion—from love—for others. This love enables a "true courtesy [which] is fundamentally a matter of the heart rather than of manners" (Judson 131). Britomart's character emerges as she is "progressively defined through relations of sympathy and antipathy with characters and events in every canto in the book" (Anderson "Britomart" 114), and her version of inward courtesy emerges from her interaction with Scudamore. Britomart encounters Scudamore sleeping the disquieted sleep of the brokenhearted in the forest, but "the braue Mayd would not for courtesy, / Out of his quiet slomber him abrade, / Nor seeme too suddeinly him to inuade" (3.8.11). She instead discreetly waits for him to awaken himself. This scene previews the several situations in Book 6 in which a knight (usually Calidore) blunders upon others in the woods (Priscilla and Aladine, Serena and Calepine, and Colin and the vision of the graces). Though not part of the Legend of Courtesy, Britomart acts far more courteously than any of the men who intrude on others in Book 6.

When Scudamore awakes and tells Britomart that Busirane has stolen Amoret from him, he becomes almost inconsolable until "the bold Virgin seeing, gan apply / Fit medicine to his grieffe, and spake thus courtesly" (3.11.13). This may be Spenser's most explicit application of Guazzo. In the *Conversation*, the character Guazzo, despite feeling ill at the start of the book, finds himself "greatly comforted with [Annibal's] gentle discourse" (36) and Annibal concludes that "Neither is a good aire and a mans owne native soile more helpful to the health of the body, then the conversation and companie of the good is to diseased minds" (44). Britomart seems to

display this type of civil conversation that heals (or at least temporarily soothes) the other knight. Scudamore's responds to her kind words with, "Ah gentlest knight aliue (sayd Scudamore) / What huge heroicke magnanimity / Dwells in thy bounteous brest?" (3.11.19). Scudamore's response indicates that she possesses courtesy and gentility (with the double meaning of kindness and being well-born) and his use of "magnanimity" further aligns her with Arthur.⁹¹

Britomart, through her interaction with Scudamore, seems to have found the key to balancing chivalry with true courtesy: kindness. By infusing the tropes of chivalry with the often missing kindness, or what Morgan calls "generosity" (18), Britomart has achieved the moral courtesy that Arthur was heretofore unable to find. Moreover, she also maintains her outward courtliness. In Book 4, while traveling with Amoret, she remains as courtly as ever, though Amoret's "euerie looke was coy, and wondrous quaint, / And euerie limbe that touched her did quake: / Yet could [Britomart] not but courteous countenance to her make" (4.1.5). Britomart returns to the chivalric mode, posing as a knight, but she retains the inward courtesy she showed in her initial interaction with Scudamore. The narrator says that Britomart "no lesse was courteous then stout" (4.1.11); her inward courtesy equals her "stoutness," or outward chivalry. Britomart has already demonstrated the lesson about inward courtesy that it takes eight cantos of Book 6 for the male knights to learn (if they ever do)—that "courtesy combines an inner quality (gentleness) with the judgment ('skill') needed to enact that quality and a talent for enacting it gracefully" (D. L. Miller, "Calidore" 127-28). We may say that the male-centered chivalric world has been tempered (or even educated) by the inclusion of feminine gracefulness in the person of Britomart. At any rate, Britomart's ability to express external courtliness and maintain inward

⁹¹ Assuming, as discussed above, that Spenser conflated "magnificence" and "magnanimity" in the Letter to Raleigh, or that the words were thought to mean the same thing in the Renaissance.

courtesy shows her to be a balanced moral courtier worthy of emulation, and Arthur seems to learn from her.

5.5 Cultivation of Complete Courtesy

We must remember that the chivalric world around Britomart has not changed. Britomart seems to have internalized Guazzo's advice, that

our chiefe labour must bee to moove the heartes of the hearers: and wee must weigh this, that nothing can enter into their hearts, which is not currantly spoken, and without offence to the eares: and therefore wee must labour to have . . . a comely grace in holding our peace, and a lively force in speaking. (125)

When Britomart speaks to Scudamore while he is in pain, and in her dealings with the sensitive Amoret, this approach works. However, this somewhat softer approach to civil conversation proves ineffective in other circumstances. When Britomart and Scudamore fight against Claribell, Blandamour, Paridell, and Druon in Book 4, for example,

Full oftentimes did Britomart assay
To speake to them, and some emparlance moue,
But they for nought their cruell hands would stay
Ne lend an eare to ought, that might behoue

.....

So litle did they hearken to her sweet beheast. (4.9.31)

The civil conversation approach only works when the other party willingly engages in the conversation. Just when Britomart's approach begins to fail, Arthur returns to the narrative.

Upon witnessing the battle, he

to their aide adrest,
 And thrusting fierce into the thickest preace,
 Diuided them, how euer loth to rest,
 And would them faine from battell to surceasse,
 With gentle words perswading them to friendly peace. (4.9.32)

Arthur, like Britomart, seeks social harmony through civil conversation. He has “learned” the value of civil conversation through the actions of his surrogate, Britomart. His approach, however, proves equally ineffective in this case because “They so farre from peace or patience were / That all at once at him gan fiercely flie” (4.9.33), causing Arthur “who them with speaches milde gan first disswade . . . [to lay] at them so sharply and so sore, / That shortly them compelled to retrate” (4.9.34). Arthur has—almost—found balance between his inward courtesy and his martial chivalry. He tries to enact civil conversation and falls back on chivalry—which, in the case of antagonists unwilling to engage in “conversation,” may be necessary. However, Arthur almost goes too far again, as “he ment to make them know their follies prise / Had not [Britomart and Scudamore] him instantly desired / T’asswage his wrath” (4.9.35). Once he falls back on the martial chivalry, it takes Britomart’s intervention to attenuate Arthur’s anger. Ultimately, he does restore peace among the knights with his words, and when we see him again in Book 6, he seems more able to maintain the balance between chivalry and inward courtesy.

Arthur plays a prominent role in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*. The Arthur in this book has transformed from the intemperate, chivalric Arthur in Book 2. He has learned as the poem has progressed, and he has become a more nuanced character. Teskey even calls Arthur “less impersonal in the book of courtesy” (“Arthur in *The Faerie Queene*” 71). While he still uses his

chivalric tools, he seems more mindful of courtesy. The Arthur and Turpine episode in Book 6 closely parallels Arthur's fight with Maleger in Book 2. A woman tells Arthur that she has been scorned, he sets off to fight first the forces of the discourteous man and then the actual offender himself, the offender eludes him at first, but then they fight. The framework of the fight is the same, and through this parallel structure, we may assess whether Arthur has, indeed, become more inwardly courteous between Books 2 and 6.

There is, at first, a familiar brutality to the actions of Arthur (and with, him, the Salvage Man). They "fell with might and maine" (6.6.23), did "round about with boystrous strokes oppresse" (6.6.26), and Arthur shows "furious intent . . . like a fierce Bull . . . And layd at him amaine with all his will and might" (6.6.27). This sounds like the same discourteous, intemperate savagery from Book 2, but there follow some significant differences. Arthur follows Turpine (who has abandoned the fight) on foot. This shows that Arthur wishes to fight a fair fight and also that he is now willing to abandon his chivalric tools in order to have a more honorable fight. Further, when Arthur finally corners the fleeing Turpine, "with his sword him on the head did smyte, / That to the ground he fell in senseless swone" (6.6.30). Arthur delivers a blow that stuns Turpine instead of a sword stroke that would kill him. Arthur, by letting Turpine live, shows him mercy. Instead of killing him, Arthur strips Turpine of his knighthood, as he "from his crauen bodie torne / Those goodly armes, he them away did giue / And onely suffred him this wretched life to liue" (6.6.36). When Arthur finds the Salvage Man still slaughtering Turpine's men, "Approching to him neare, his hand he stayd, / And sought, by making signes, him to asswage" (6.6.39). Arthur now not only shows mercy himself, but also softens the rage of another.

Arthur has one final test, however, when Turpine tries to trick another knight into killing Arthur. The plan fails, and Arthur has another chance to kill Turpine as he

lay vpon the humbled gras

[Arthur's] foot he set on his vile necke, in signe

of seruile yoke, that nobler harts repine.

Then letting him arise like abiect thrall. (6.7.26)

Arthur shows him mercy again, and instead of killing him “He by the heeles him hung vpon a tree, / And baffuld” (6.7.27). While Turpine must now live as a model of shame, Arthur has twice shown him mercy—a mark of his now moral courtesy. As Arthur has found an inward balance of courtesy, he is now enforcing courtesy around him as well; Tonkin speculates that “courtesy is not simply a matter of the court, for it involves a feeling of harmony with natural process . . . In the event of disharmony, honour and strength are needed to re-establish harmony: the enemies of courtesy must be punished . . . or destroyed” (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 177). Thus, Arthur's destruction of Turpine—though merciful—is necessary to the book of courtesy. Spenser's conception of courtesy promotes “social harmony, the quality which makes possible the organization of society itself” (Tonkin, “The *Faerie Queene*, Book VI” 284). Arthur's courtesy here shows thoughtful leadership, and courtesy here seems “less interested in . . . tactics of self-promotion at court than . . . [a] way of managing the relationship between self-interest and social duty, self-restraint and freedom” (Richards 2). Unfortunately, an aspect of that social duty is the punishment of discourtesy; in this way, courtesy and justice go hand in hand.

We return again to the idea of harmony. The code of chivalry—the outward convention of interaction in the courtly society—is important in its own right. Without such rules, society may not run smoothly. Courtesy becomes an active force that “demands more of its practitioner than merely a passive trust in its rules and principles” (Archer 27). Likewise, inward courtesy remains important on an individual level; the moral kindness and selflessness essential to internal

courtesy makes one's character desirable. The harmony of these two, a mastery of the outward rules of chivalry as well as the inward virtue of courtesy, promotes a functional society. Perhaps Arthur does embody this "perfected" virtue at the point at which he leaves the narrative of *The Faerie Queene*. The Legend of Courtesy carries on without him, but Arthur seems to take this harmonized social courtesy when he goes. The visions of courtesy we see in later parts of Book 6 are cursory, fleeting, and exist only outside of the functional world of Faeryland. The Dance of the Graces, the seeming pinnacle of Book 6, should be the vision of perfect social harmony, but I question whether Colin Clout's vision can signify true harmonious moral courtesy when it exists only as a vision of artistic production and disappears so easily.⁹² This may represent some manifestation of inward courtesy, but without the functional exterior courtesy, it cannot survive. Hence, without a knight such as Britomart or Arthur, the Legend of Courtesy lacks direction and virtuous moral courtesy seems—like Colin's vision—to simply disappear.

6 CALIDORE AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Calidore the Courteous?

My readers may be surprised that Calidore did not appear in Chapter 5: The Courteous or, indeed, any chapter. Despite critics such as Humphrey Tonkin upholding "Calidore, the last of Spenser's heroes, [as] the closest to the perfect pattern of a knight" (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 30), I have long been troubled by the idea of Calidore as the champion of courtesy because I have looked for him to fulfill the place of the moral courtier. One would think that he

⁹² I tend to agree with Lewalski's interpretation that the Graces scene "suggests that the courtly audience's proper response to the poet's vision is wonder and contemplation, not intrusive demands for explanations; and it offers a pessimistic view of the audience's ability to understand the poet on his proper terms" (763).

should have a place alongside Britomart and Arthur as an imperfect representation of moral courtesy. Yet, as David Lee Miller indicates, despite implications that “Calidore and courtesy are synonymous . . . Calidore is an ambiguous figure” (“Calidore” 127). Despite high praise from scholars and the text itself, Calidore remains a controversial figure. The narrator lauds his place as a courteous individual, introducing him thusly,

But mongst them all was none more courteous Knight,
 Then *Calidore*, beloued ouer all,
 In whom it seems, that gentlenesse of spright
 And manners mylde were planted naturall;
 To which he adding comely guize withal,
 And gracious speech, did steale mens hearts away. (6.1.2)

At first glance, this introduction seems complimentary. However, a closer examination offers nuance that undermines the seeming praise and suggests a need to reappraise Calidore’s courtesy.

The preceding passage that introduces Calidore includes that nettlesome word “seems,” which indicates an artful gloss. It also poses the oxymoron of “planted naturall”—if natural, how are the manners planted, and who is planting them? “Comely guize” is the sort of language that Spenser usually reserves for false courtiers—particularly women—who trick others. “Gracious speech” may be fairly innocuous on its own, but speech that “steale[s] mens hearts away” is speech that acts on others in a way that they do not necessarily consent to. Some have contended that *The Faerie Queene* teaches readers how to read its allegory as they work through it.⁹³ As such, here, in the sixth book, Spenser expects his readers to be wary of such language. The tension between what the text says about Calidore and how Calidore actually comports himself

⁹³ See, for example, Gordon Teskey’s *And Therefore as a Stranger Give it Welcome: Courtesy and Thinking*.

contributes to the critical lack of agreement about the nature of Calidore's relationship to his virtue, causing some to extol his virtues while some refer to him as a "faulty knight" (Tuve 91). Calidore shows a range of behaviors along both of the above spectrums, at times seeming to approach balanced moral courtesy and at times seeming altogether discourteous. He is occasionally presented as the perfect artful rhetorician, and at times exhibits the same unrhetorical clownishness that typifies Redcrosse. His relationship to both his titular virtue, Courtesy, and his chief antagonist, the Blatant Beast, may be clarified by reframing how we interpret the "Knight of Courtesy." If we view Courtesy as the system of behaviors composing courtesy—the concept of Courtesy as a whole—and not just as morally courteous behavior, then Calidore may be the perfect Knight of (the concept of) Courtesy. He functions as a microcosm of Courtesy in the entirety of *The Faerie Queene*.

6.2 Calidore the Courteous

Separating truly moral courtesy from courtliness, particularly in a text with limited or selective omniscience, can be somewhat nettlesome; however, there are times when Calidore acts outwardly courteous and also appears to at least want to be inwardly courteous: that is, he selflessly upholds some standard of courtesy the best he can. Spenser portrays Calidore acting the most courteously—both in outward expression and in virtuous intent—in the episode with Priscilla and Aladine. After rescuing the embarrassed Priscilla and the injured Aladine following the discourteous knight's intrusion upon their lovemaking, Calidore conducts them to Aldus, Priscilla's father. Dorothy Woodward Culp views Calidore's "undertaking to return Priscilla to her home and in his refusal to think evil of another without sufficient cause" as a representation of his "great courtesy"(44). Priscilla worries that her reputation will be ruined, but "Calidore

with all good courtesie / Fain'd her to frolicke, and put away / The pensieve fit of her melancholie" (6.3.9). Priscilla and Aladine put their safety and Priscilla's reputation in Calidore's hands,

Twixt them twaine with equall care to cast
How to saue hole her hazarded estate;
For which the onely helpe now left them last
Seem'd to be Calidore. (6.3.12)

Calidore protects them. After "to him their cause they best esteemed / Whole to commit" (6.3.13), he swears, "his faith thereto did plight" (6.3.16), to a somewhat altered account of how he found Priscilla and Aladine, presenting Priscilla "to her father deare, / Most perfect pure, and guiltlesse innocent / Of blame, as he did on his Knighthood sweare" (6.3.18) despite the fact that he knew her to be somewhat less than perfectly pure. Arnold Williams suggests that "courtesy, as practiced by Calidore, requires the truth, but not necessarily the whole truth" (45). Calidore certainly acts rhetorically here, deceiving Aldus to some degree, but his decision is matched with good intention that somewhat mitigates the deceit. Tonkin remarks, "Calidores's intervention *does* preserve harmony, temporarily at least" (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 48). It would hardly be more courteous for him to expose Priscilla's true state when he discovered her, so his rhetorical choice in the delicate situation actually upholds courtesy rather than violating it.

Indeed, some critics do believe that Calidore represents courtesy. William Nestruck calls Calidore "the paragon of courtesy" (357), saying that in Calidore, Spenser "*perfected* the nature of Sidney's courtier" (358). Gerald Morgan notes that "Calidore is distinguished by his courage and fame as well as by his gentleness of manner" (19) and that he represents "the love of honour

and a Christian humility” (23), albeit “short of perfection” (26). Likewise, A. C. Judson has high praise for Calidore:

He has a gentle spirit and a charm of manner and speech that wins men's hearts; he is uniformly courteous toward both high and low, and ready to aid, even in a menial way, those who are suffering; he is magnanimous to an enemy or to a rival in love; he is frank and truthful; and he is withal full of vigor and courage. (126)

Millar MaClure says that “Calidore hardly needs to be told that he is ‘surely borne of some Heroicke seed,’ so much is he the image of knightly strength and knightly courtesy” (16).

Williams insists that “Calidore is a perfected knight of courtesy” (57) and that others “cannot attain the perfection [of courtesy] which Calidore has by nature” (67). Even Tonkin, who ultimately interprets Calidore as far from perfect, calls him “the exemplar of social virtue” (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 15). This sometimes unconditional praise, however, seems unwarranted in light of Calidore’s entire range of actions. While he displays nearly perfect courtesy at times, his actions hardly represent universally courteous behavior, and as such, Calidore’s place on the spectrum must be reconsidered.

6.3 Calidore the Unrhetorical

Calidore’s unrhetorical actions primarily consist of his blundering about and interrupting the privacy of others. Calidore’s first intrusion happens when he “chaunst to come” upon Serena and Calepine “in couert shade” (6.3.20). Though he is somewhat embarrassed “that he so rudely did vppon them light, / And throubled had their quiet loues delight,” he blames “his fortune, not his fault” (6.3.21) and stays to talk to Calepine. He does make a feeble attempt to comfort Serena; he “pardon crau’d for his so rash default, / That he gainst courtesie so fowly did default”

(6.3.21). While he classifies his action as discourteous, it lacks the ill intent of the truly discourteous behavior. Instead, he fails to read the situation and make the appropriate decision; he should have excused himself and left the couple. He has already heard a preview of the same situation through Pricilla's account of Aladine and the discourteous knight that ill prepared him to deal with the situation himself. His blindness to the warnings echoes Redcrosse's myopia about Fradubio's warning about Duessa. Stanley Stewart maintains that "neither of [these examples] seems particularly instructive" (71), but it may be more accurate that Calidore fails to learn from his own mistakes. He next blunders into the pastoral world. Then he blunders upon Colin Clout's vision of the graces on Mount Acidale. Tonkin suggests that after causing disharmony, Calidore "does not prove eminently capable in the task of restoring order" (50), possibly due to the fact that he "lacks a conception of courtesy broad enough to make principles out of his occasional insights" (175). This may also explain why he fails to learn from the mistakes that he does make.

Speaking to Calidore's inability to "read" situations, Tonkin describes him as a "failed hero unable to understand Colin's poetic vision" (Tonkin, *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI" 285). Indeed, when the vision disappears, Calidore "drew near [to Colin], that he the truth of all by him mote learne" (6.10.18). He cannot interpret what he has seen without Colin's explanation. Another example of lack of situational awareness occurs between Meliboe and Calidore. Calidore "[either] willfully or wishfully misconstrues" Meliboe's advice to be content with what one has (West 1027), wishing to stay among the shepherds instead of following his own quest. To ensure a place in the shepherd's home, Calidore offers Meliboe money, to which Meliboe replies, "Sir knight, your bounteous proffer / Be farre fro me, to whom ye ill display / That mucky masse, the cause of mens decay" (6.9.33). Calidore makes this offer immediately after

Meliboe gives speeches about finding bliss through living simply and being happy with what one has—an act that “effectively exposes how little Calidore has understood of Meliboe's account of the internal pleasure of pastoral life” (J. T. Miller 52). Richard Mallette suggests that Calidore, in order to stay among the shepherds, must “embrace a new understanding of human relations” (“Poet and Hero in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*” 263). Calidore’s social misstep shows both his initial inability to read situations appropriately and his inability to remove himself fully from the culture of the environment from which he comes.

Furthermore, Calidore’s speech, which should be the source of his courtesy in a model of courtesy based so heavily on Stefano Guazzo and civil conversation (see Chapter 5), is often lacking or ineffective. Stewart notes that the “discipline of his ear and tongue . . . seems to be lacking” (75). Similarly, Bruce Danner admits, “though [Calidore] makes clear efforts toward verbal negotiation and resolution, he finds little success in the face of the strong ideological resistance offered by agents of discourtesy” (3). Mallette suggests that Calidore relies too heavily on “visual scrutiny” without supplementing with other senses or effective interpretation, “for mere sight by itself cannot adequately comprehend all of life's profoundest experiences” (“Poet and Hero in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*” 260). Calidore repeatedly falls short of fully reading situations and expressing himself appropriately. However, he does attempt to use language artfully, particularly within the relativistic framework of his brand of courtesy. He therefore straddles the spectrum; at times, he shows a good-intentioned lack of art, and at other times, Calidore “plays the fox,” adapting his courtly manners to varied situational contexts.

6.4 Calidore the Artful

Calidore, despite being unrhetorical at times, shows an artful rhetorical courtesy at other times. Danner explains that “Machiavellian *virtu* provides a model through which Calidore's often questionable ethical behavior may be construed” (4), noting that Calidore often “defends his conduct on relative and contextual grounds” (7). Jacqueline Miller emphasizes a similar relativity when it comes to applying the truth, saying, “throughout Book VI we witness numerous incidents revealing the efficacy of his rhetoric that is not always in the service of truth” (52). Calidore’s dealings with Priscilla and Aladine, described above, certainly qualify as an artful application of rhetoric due to his selective description of the events; Mallette calls his account of the events “an equivocal version of the story” (“Aladine, Priscilla” 11). Even more artful, perhaps, is Calidore’s use of courtesy among the shepherds. James Nohrnberg notes, “Sir Calidore is a courtier, a kind of poet of conduct, but also a hypocrite. His allegorically veiled truth is the polite white lie: indirection, the disguise of ulterior motives, the studied use of misrepresentation, and the hermeneutical virtues of subtlety and finesse all serve his cause” (*The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* 668). He uses his courtesy as a tool to win the love of Pastorella. He “did her entertaine / With all kind courtesies, he could inuent” (6.9.34), but Pastorella “did litle whit regard his courteous guize” (6.9.34). He therefore decided to “chaunge the manner of his loftie looke; / And doffing his bright armes, himselfe addrest / In shepherds weed” (6.9.36). Calidore focuses the nature of his change on a decidedly surface quality—the manner in which he dresses. It does not occur to him at this point—if ever—that an inward change would be appropriate; he instead attempts to manipulate Pastorella’s perception of him by changing clothes.

Further, Calidore interrupts the wooing of another shepherd, Coridon, who “her likewise / Long time had lou’d, and hop’d her loue to gaine” (6.9.37). Calidore uses his court training in dance and wrestling to supplant any favor Pastorella had for Coridon. Calidore wrestles Coridon, and upon winning the prize, an oak crown, “he, that did in courtesie excel, / Gaue it to Coridon, and said he wonne it well” (6.9.44). This gesture aligns more with the court values of *sprezzatura* and maintaining appearances than the more primitive values of the shepherds.⁹⁴ Indeed, David Lee Miller explains, “Calidore’s deference to Coridon uses the gestures of mildness, candor, and generosity to dominate a rival,” suggesting an “outward [show] of courtly manner . . . staged for [its] strategic value” (“Calidore” 128). Whether or not it violates true courtesy, this outward show of courtesy effectively curries favor for Calidore among all of the shepherds:

Even they, the which his riuals were,
 Could not maligne him, but commend him needs:
 For courtesie amongst the rudest breeds
 Good will and fauour. So it surely wrought
 With this faire Mayd, and in her mynde the seeds
 Of perfect loue did sow. (6.9.45)

While courtesy certainly is not the worst tool used to win love in *The Faerie Queene*, this bears the mark of the artful characters who use outward shows of courtesy to achieve a selfish goal. Miller suggests that the “virtuous motive [of the truly courteous gesture] is wholly ‘apparent’ only when circumstances offer no grounds for the imputation of self-interest” (D. L. Miller

⁹⁴ Nohnberg offers another reading of his actions, identifying the “rusticated Calidore” and his “wrestling feats, his winning and awarding of crowns, his love affair with the local beauty” as reminiscent of “medieval versions of Paris’ sequestration on the countryside of Ida” (“Acidale” 4).

"Calidore" 128). Judson, however, excuses the behavior, saying that this "brief depiction of courtesy governed by self-interest rather than by benevolence surely does not impugn Spenser's fundamental conception elsewhere so unmistakably presented" (135). Nevertheless, this "courtesy governed by self-interest" echoes Castiglione's representation of the artful courtier, not the model of inward moral courtesy that we may expect from an allegorical knight of courtesy.

6.5 Calidore the Discourteous

Calidore, despite being lauded as courteous 13 times⁹⁵ in Book 6, acts decidedly discourteously at times—a discrepancy that contributes to the critical divide mentioned above. When Meliboe speaks of the source of his humble life of courteous pastoral peace, he says, "I doe not any one enuy, / Nor am I enuyde of any one therefore" (6.9.21) and he warns against the "vaineness," "idle hopes," and "follies" of the court (6.9.24-25). Meanwhile, Calidore, seemingly deaf to the meaning of Meliboe's words, "with greedy eare / Hong still vpon his melting mouth attent . . . rapt with double rauishment" (4.9.26). Listening to Meliboe and looking at Pastorella, Calidore "lost himself" "twixt [Meliboe's] pleasing tongue and her faire hew" (6.9.26). Failing to heed the warnings in Meliboe's words, Calidore brings the imperfections of the court into the pastoral world when he introduces envy for the shepherds' lives and a wish to possess Pastorella. Given this intrusion of court elements into the pastoral, there should be little surprise when discourteous elements—the brigands and the Blatant Beast—enter the previously idyllic world.

Furthermore, Calidore's main enemy—the Blatant Beast—seems always to be near him to the extent that, at a minimum, Calidore's actions sometimes summon his presence (a common occurrence in Spenser's allegory). Tonkin upholds this allegorical logic when he says,

⁹⁵ Calidore is referred to as "courteous" at 6.1.2, 6.1.27, 6.2.3, 6.2.27, 6.2.38, 6.2.42, 6.2.46, 6.3.2, 6.3.13, 6.9.5, 6.9.35, and 6.10.29. He is referred to as having "courtesy" at 6.3.9, 6.3.15, 6.9.18, and 6.9.44.

“Calidore’s neglect of Serena leads to her falling victim to the Beast” (*The Faerie Queene*, Book VI” 285). Similarly, Stewart calls the episode “a discourteous act for which Calidore cannot escape some blame” (71). More extremely, the Blatant Beast may be read as an aspect of Calidore himself. Although Calidore is chasing the Blatant Beast “first from the court he to the citties coursed, / And from the citties to the townes him prest” (6.9.3) and so on, until “From thence into the open fields he fled . . . He followed fast, and chaced him so nie” (6.9.4), the vagueness of the pronouns suggests a conflation of the two characters. D. L. Miller notes a similar conflation after Calidore captures the Blatant Beast, when onlookers “much admyr’d the Beast, but more admyr’d the Knight” (6.12.37); he suggests that “the repeated verb links Calidore and his antagonist, as they have been linked throughout the Legend of Courtesy, in the ambiguity of ‘outward shows’ whose relation to ‘inward thoughts’ is never sure” (“Calidore” 128). At some point, the close link between the two becomes almost inextricable.

When Calidore enters the pastoral world, he sees the shepherds and of them, he “to tell him courteously besought, / If such a beast they saw, which he had thether brought” (6.9.5). This line suggests that when Calidore enters the open fields, he also causes the Blatant Beast to enter the area. Skinner points out that “many virtues and vices must . . . stand in a relationship of proximity with each other” (276). The Blatant Beast’s disappearance, or at least dormancy, during the pastoral interlude coincides with Calidore’s oft-speculated truancy.⁹⁶ This suggests that Calidore’s truancy leads to a kind of truancy by the Blatant Beast. At most, the beast becomes dormant because Calidore rests—implying that his quest creates or fuels the existence of the Beast. At least, by abandoning his quest, “he leaves the world vulnerable to the Blatant Beast” (Tonkin, *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI” 286). Either way, Calidore has some culpability

⁹⁶ For more on Calidore’s truancy, see Rusche (“The Lesson of Calidore’s Truancy”), D.L. Miller (“Abandoning the Quest”) and Maxwell.

for the actions of the Blatant beast, and the two maintain a complex interconnection that makes it difficult to separate them narratively or allegorically from each other.⁹⁷

6.6 Conclusion

The premise of this dissertation stems from an idea of a spectrum of courteous behavior that, if visualized, may look something like this:

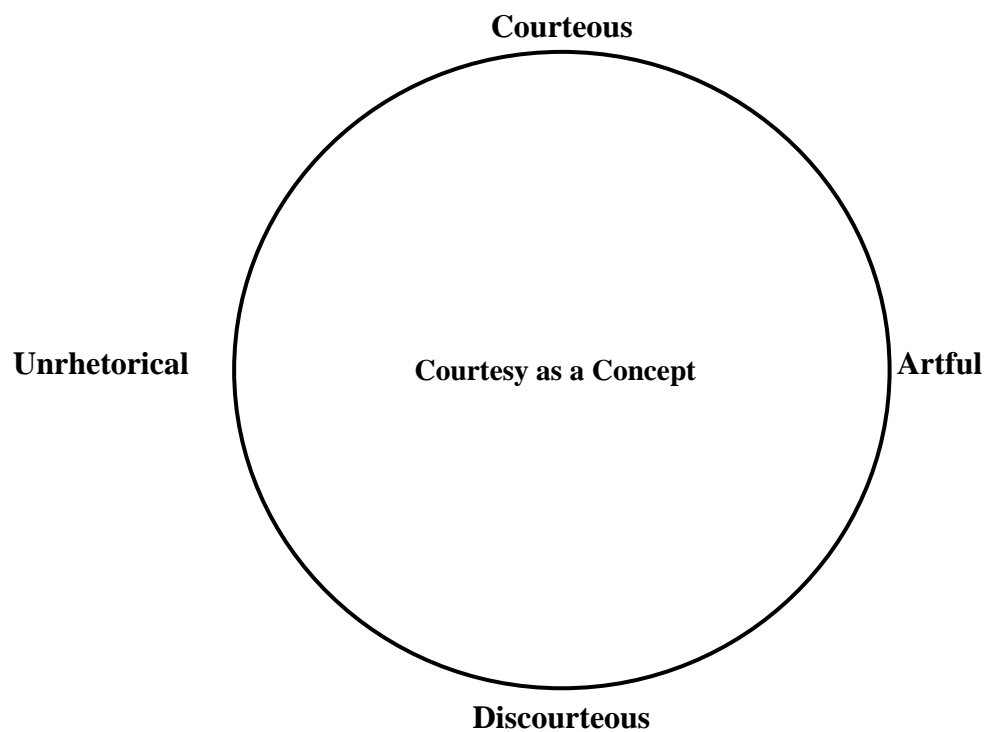


Figure 1: The Spectrum of Courtesy

This implies, of course, that on the spectrum, the highest point of moral courtesy is “best” and the lowest point of blatant discourtesy is “worst,” but this reading oversimplifies the issues.

Duessa, for example, does not necessarily represent more or less evil than the brigands. In some

⁹⁷ Admittedly, the fact that the Blatant Beast leaves the poem and enters the real world complicates this reading. However, this is somewhat mitigated by the allegorical nature of Spenser’s work because Calidore represents the concept of Courtesy and is not limited to merely living as a character in a fictional world.

ways, her art makes her more dangerous to other individual characters than the aggressively discourteous, but the brigands, as discussed in Chapter 2, may be a worse enemy to harmonious society. The artful and unrhetorical sides of the circle represent how effectively characters express courtesy, whether or not they also have inner virtue. Artful characters may possess the inner courtesy to match their external expression, like Arthur, or they may lack virtue entirely, like Archimago. Characters, then, fall somewhere along the perimeter of the circle without necessarily manifesting a complete embodiment of one specific trait. Britomart and Arthur fall along the top right segment, between courteous and rhetorical, whereas Redcrosse could be found in the top left, between courteous and unrhetorical. Archimago falls along the bottom right, between rhetorical and discourteous, while the Salvage Nation has a place in the bottom left, between unrhetorical and discourteous. The categories do not represent absolutes; they represent tendencies toward which characters move along spectrums. Both the courteous-discourteous and the artful-unrhetorical spectrums work together to signify a holistic representation of Courtesy as a concept. Courtesy therefore becomes a system of behavior and expression that must function harmoniously together rather than a single virtue. With this understanding of Courtesy as a system, it becomes possible to place finally Calidore as the Knight of Courtesy.

Calidore is at times morally courteous and at times extremely discourteous. He, at times, uses rhetorical speech persuasively and at times exhibits characteristics of an unrhetorical knight. Calidore does not seem to fit onto the spectrum of courtesy as cleanly as other characters. He jumps from side to side, top to bottom. Nor is his movement linear in the way that Arthur's may be (as Arthur "learns" about true courtesy, he travels upward on the spectrum). Calidore, the Knight of Courtesy, has no clear place on the spectrum of courtesy. However, this seeming

paradox is resolved if we consider that Calidore embodies the entire figure of courtesy. Spenser does not call Calidore the “Knight of Courteous Behavior”—that would just be one aspect of courtesy. Calidore exhibits traits of every type of courteous and discourteous, artful and unrheterical behavior; he is therefore appropriately the Knight of the concept of Courtesy—not any specific manifestation of courtesy or discourtesy, but the interconnected concept of Courtesy as a whole. Similarly, Spenser’s work does not represent just one aspect of courtesy; it includes the courteous and the discourteous, the artful and the unrheterical, in varying degrees and contexts. This nuance contributes in no small part to the greatness of Spenser’s work.

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