

MASTER MULCASTER'S PAGEANTRY OF MISEDUCATION IN BOOK ONE OF SPENSER'S

FAERIE QUEENE

by

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This dissertation is dedicated to Julie, who has been with me throughout my own journey,
to Ben who arrived near the beginning,
and to Zeke who came midway through—
all of you have made my life better.

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ABSTRACT

The educational treatises of Spenser's childhood teacher, Richard Mulcaster, provide context for reading the Redcrosse Knight as an early modern student. The young knight undergoes a journey in Book One of *The Faerie Queene* (1590) that allegorically represents the humanist education a student of the sixteenth century would have received at the hands of his teachers, especially as outlined in Mulcaster's *Positions Concerning the Training up of Children* (1581) and *The First Part of the Elementarie* (1582). In these two works, Mulcaster describes a child's education and the stages of error that can deflect the progression of a student's learning. The educational progressions and digressions outlined in Mulcaster's pedagogy bring into focus the journey of "anti-education" the Redcrosse Knight is on. The Redcrosse Knight's "anti-teachers" (Error, Duessa, Idleness, Ignaro, Despaire, etc.) nurse him into temptations that require maturity and insight to detect, which he fails to do. His education must then be redeemed by a (mostly maternal) cast of teachers in the House of Holiness.

Several motifs arise in the source texts—among them hollowness, blindness, and nursing. Spenserians interested in the maturation of the personified virtues have examined these motifs individually in relation to the hero's trials and growth. My study connects these three motifs to trace more fully the elaborate allegory of the Redcrosse Knight as a badly educated early modern student, who is ultimately redeemed through a reeducation deeply implicated in concerns of language and national identity. A close analysis of Mulcaster's two pedagogical treatises and particularly Book One of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* provides new insights into humanist education as practiced in England during the late sixteenth century. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser portrays Mulcaster's ideal education (presented as a set-piece pageantry in *Positions*) through an elaborate pageantry of teachers offering a miseducation ultimately to redeem the process, thus provoking debate on contemporary concerns regarding education and the best means of fashioning those who serve the young nation's political interests.

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PREFACE

The humanism of early modern England fostered an educational system that saw tremendous cultural changes between its infancy, brought about by individuals such as Desiderius Erasmus, and its old age led out by John Milton, yet throughout the entire tumultuous period, education provided a stability of sorts through its two main purposes which Milton perhaps states best in "Of Education." The first purpose is for a person to seek good, ultimately God, and the second to perform one's duty in public and private life. The goodness one seeks and does, however, is hard earned as true goodness had to be tested.

The maturation of the hero in early modern literature, especially the Redcrosse knight in Book One of *The Faerie Queene*, demonstrates such educational trials in a culture undergoing seismic paradigm shifts. The young knight, expected to don the armor of God and faithfully serve the regime, errs—casting aside his armor; he must be restored before he can fulfill Una's quest. Even then, fulfilling the restoration of Una's parents to their kingdom, Redcrosse continues to serve Gloriana, the trials of his life not finished. Erasmus's *The Handbook of a Christian Knight* informs this process as a Christian soldier should put on the spiritual armor of God and faithfully execute the Christian life rather than ritually perform outward acts. The subsequent work of Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, is also of consequence because it encourages the prince (and students imitating the highest levels of gentlemanly behavior) to attain knowledge of the past in order to govern others and shape policy.

Many Spenserians have addressed education in the context of both the Christian warrior and that of the gentleman. Adopting a Neoplatonic perspective, Douglas Brooks-Davies discusses Redcrosse as a knight who quests after the Christian virtues, ultimately experiencing

spiritual regeneration.¹ James Nohrnberg also examines the Redcrosse knight in the context of the Christian warrior, discussing the allegorical contexts that bear this out, especially in relation to characters who dispense wisdom or deter Redcrosse from it.² Scholars such as Lynn Enterline, Lisa Jardine, Anthony Grafton, and Caroline McManus focus on learning practices during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and many of their examples touch upon the teaching practices of Mulcaster, the personal life of Spenser, and of *The Faerie Queene*, which Spenser claims for the purpose of fashioning gentlemen.³

Scholars who have worked with biography have noticed the various ways Spenser's works have been self-reflexive, his humanist training recorded in a literary career influenced by classical tradition and affecting others in turn. Patrick Cheney masterfully recasts the trajectory of Spenser's works, arguing they do not strictly follow the Virgilian pattern (*rota Vergilii*) of a literary career as other models were available, Ovidian and Augustinian.⁴ Richard Helgerson fully argues the detailed extent to which Spenser fashions himself as a poet laureate and, according to the classical model, as such, an influencing agent to the state.⁵ Richard Rambuss explores Spenser's often under-analyzed secretarial duties, arguing that Spenser's double-career

¹ Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene: A Critical Commentary on Books I and II* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1977), 9-14.

² James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). EBSCOhost.

³ Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," *Past & Present*, no. 129 (November 1990), 30-78, www.jstor.org/stable/650933; Caroline McManus, "The 'Carefull Nourse': Female Piety in Spenser's Legend of Holiness," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (January 1997): 381-406, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3817786>.

⁴ Patrick Cheney, *Spenser's Famous Flight: A Renaissance Idea of a Literary Career* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

⁵ Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

(laureate and bureaucrat), his simultaneously ideal and practical mindset, guided the poet's decisions concerning his literary output.⁶

What has been neglected is the full degree to which Richard Mulcaster's treatises, *Positions* and *Elementarie*, participate in discourses on education and child-rearing, whose principles Spenser personally experienced in practice and to which his *Faerie Queene* then also contributes. Mulcaster's texts and Spenser's mutually inform each other concerning the maturation of the student into a fully functioning servant of the modern state—a new kind of humanist hero, and there is some controversy concerning this process. Richard DeMolen provides a biographical overview of Mulcaster's life and influence, historically contextualizes his teaching practices, and analyzes his involvement with pageantry.⁷ William Barker edits the critical edition of *Positions* and writes the entry for Mulcaster in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.⁸ While most scholars view Mulcaster as progressive, Eric De Barros examines the negative effects of Mulcaster's exclusive admissions process that encourages parents not to seek further education for their children because the state needs the service of future (non-educated) generations.⁹ Except for De Barros, each scholar at times mentions Mulcaster's influence on Spenser, but their focus is Mulcaster himself and his pedagogies. Other scholars have teased substantive connections between the two authors. C. S. Lewis examines

⁶ Richard Rambuss, *Spenser's Secret Career* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁷ Richard DeMolen, "Richard Mulcaster: An Elizabethan Savant," *Shakespeare Studies*, no. 8 (January 1975): 29-82, EBSCOhost; "Richard Mulcaster and the Profession of Teaching in Sixteenth-Century England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, no. 1 (January-March 1974): 121-29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2708747>. "Richard Mulcaster and Elizabethan Pageantry," *Studies in English Literature* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1974): 209-21, <https://doi.org/10.2307/450050>.

⁸ William Barker, ed. *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, by Richard Mulcaster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); "Mulcaster, Richard (1531/2–1611), schoolmaster and author," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, last modified September 23, 2004, <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128>

⁹ Eric De Barros, "(I)Noble Lies: Personal Historicism and Richard Mulcaster's *Positions Concerning the Bringing Up of Children* (1581)," *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education* 20, no. 3 (September 2013): 317–26, doi:10.1080/1358684X.2013.816530.

textual connections between *Elementarie* and the Despaire episode in *The Faerie Queene*.¹⁰ Roland M. Smith performs a textual analysis to see if Mulcaster's spelling recommendations influenced Spenser.¹¹ Lewis's analysis is inconclusive while Smith's findings suggest that Spenser did not imitate the spelling practices of Mulcaster. Most recently Åke Bergvall argues that it should be safe to assume Spenser was familiar with *Positions*, and he then analyzes Redcrosse in Book One from the perspective of an inexperienced student and in light of the specific educational goal to "maister the circumstance" from *Positions*.¹² With the aid of Mulcaster's treatises, I read the Redcrosse knight as an early modern student; however, my analysis is much more extensive than Bergvall's and others' as I also examine Faery Land as a network of schools and teachers (at every level of learning) and discuss Mulcaster's and Spenser's beliefs concerning education, particularly as their works contribute to humanist debates involving vernacular language-learning and nationalism.

The introduction discusses the connection between Mulcaster and Spenser and the pageantry of Mulcastrian miseducation that is found fully elaborated in *The Faerie Queene*. The first chapter examines parents as an informal first stage of education (according to Mulcaster and others) and then explores the good and bad parents Redcrosse imitates. The second chapter analyzes the elementary instructor as the first formal stage of education (once more, according, most notably, to Mulcaster's schema) and examines Idleness as the first anti-teacher of Redcrosse, laying a bad foundation upon which the subsequent anti-teachers build. The third chapter addresses issues of language learning within the second stage of education,

¹⁰ C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 350.

¹¹ Roland M. Smith, "Spenser's Scholarly Script and 'Right Writing,'" in *Studies in Honor of T. W. Baldwin*, ed. Don Cameron Allen (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 66-111.

¹² Åke Bergvall, "To 'Maister the Circumstance': Mulcaster's *Positions* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," *Spenser Studies* 34 (2020): 1-24, <https://doi.org/10.1086/706175>.

grammar school (with specific reference to Mulcaster's theories), and examines Ignaro as an ignorant grammar instructor who fails to help students move to the next stage of learning. The fourth chapter compares the debate between Despaire and Redcrosse to a university disputation, whose moral outcome is complicated by the somewhat exemplary tutoring Despaire supplies to his young pupil. The fifth chapter considers Redcrosse's reeducation in the House of Holiness where his woefully tragic miseducation and neglect is countered by a mostly maternal cast of characters whose practices suggest Spenser's views, conflicting with Mulcaster's ideas. A brief epilogue analyzes the dragon fight at the end of Book One, specifically focusing on visual perspective and how Spenser foregrounds a mother remonstrating her child and protecting it from the dragon.

INTRODUCTION

AS I WALK THROUGH THE PAGEANTRY OF EDUCATION, GUIDE MY STEPS SO THAT I MAY NOT
STRAY

Two significant treatises encapsulating a lifetime of teaching experience formed in early modern England and published less than a decade before the first part of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590) express Richard Mulcaster's ideal vision of education: *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children* (1581) and *The First Part of the Elementarie* (1582). This dissertation addresses together the work of Mulcaster and his student, Spenser, and how the pedagogy of the former intersects with the poetry of the latter; but we begin elsewhere, with an earlier philosopher and pedagogue, Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). Tucked into *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, a Latin primer for sixteenth-century schoolboys that Erasmus claims makes "better Latinists and characters of so many," we find a curious title for one of the dialogues: *Adolescentis et scorti* ("The Young Man and the Harlot").¹³ Modern readers may question the character-building validity of this dialogue's opening exchange as Sophronius, the youth, speaks alarming lines—"Let's withdraw to a more secret place"—and voices *double entendres* offering to "examine every crack"; and Lucretia, the prostitute, crudely (though endearingly) calls Sophronius her *Mentula* (Penis), a term Craig R. Thompson translates in his 1965 edition of *The Colloquies* as "Dicky dear" and in a later edition as "my cocky."¹⁴ Erasmus often had to defend his frank dialogues from detractors: "Socrates brought philosophy down from heaven to earth; I

¹³ Desiderius Erasmus, "Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam to John Erasmius Froben, A Boy of the Highest Promise," August 1, 1524, in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 3; Erasmus "The Young Man and the Harlot (*Adolescentis et scorti*)," in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, 154.

¹⁴ Translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Erasmus, "Young Man," 154; Craig R. Thompson, trans., *Colloquies in Collected Works of Erasmus*, vols. 39-40 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 382.

have brought it even into games, informal conversations, and drinking parties.”¹⁵ Erasmus claimed to have made learning more accessible. In the larger context of his defense, he argues that his *Colloquies* can show youths what to avoid in life, teaching boys through easeful dialogue when painful experience could harm them.¹⁶

As a humanist, Erasmus is not alone in his sentiment regarding literature’s teaching value. Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) in *The Defence of Poesy* argues the Horatian dictum that poetry, an “art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in the word *mimesis*—that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth—to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture,” has a double “end, to teach and delight.”¹⁷ Sidney further claims that the “end of all earthly learning [is] virtuous action.”¹⁸ Similarly, in *Areopagitica*, opposing prepublication censorship, John Milton (1608-1674) argues that, since knowledge of sin is a prerequisite for goodness in a fallen world, reading can carefully inform individuals of the hazards with which they may grapple in real life. Milton asks, “[H]ow can we more safely, and with lesse danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity then by reading all manner of tractats [tracts], and hearing all manner of reason.”¹⁹ Education through reading allows one to learn of evil without experiencing it firsthand and aids in the process of virtuous formation.

Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton analyze early modern reading practices, and those of Gabriel Harvey (1550-1630) in particular, arguing that reading was causal—an active, not a

¹⁵ Erasmus, *Colloquies of Erasmus*, 630.

¹⁶ Erasmus, *Colloquies of Erasmus*, 630.

¹⁷ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, in *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 217.

¹⁸ Sidney, *Defence*, 220.

¹⁹ John Milton, *Areopagitica*, in *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Roy Flannagan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 1006.

passive pursuit, in the sense that it “g[a]ve rise to something else.”²⁰ For early modern readers, scripture often provided the best summation of the Christian humanist attitude guiding reading and learning for the active life: “And be ye doers of the worde, and not hearers onely, deceiuing your owne selues.”²¹ Early modern students had to translate many of their study texts, and Lynn Enterline shows the strenuous mental and physical demands of doing so: students learning classical languages, and imitating their schoolmasters and characters from classical literature, were led through performance and inculcation (memory) to become gentlemen.²² Erasmus’s dialogue, that his students would consume through translating, a degree of textual engagement more involved than reading, presents a conversation imitating life aimed to teach, delight, and improve the characters of schoolboys, preparing them for future careers and attendant dangers.²³

Although the humanism of early modern England fostered an educational system that saw tremendous cultural changes between its infancy, brought about by intellectuals such as Erasmus, Thomas More, and John Colet, and the full flourishing of its old age, led out by Milton,

²⁰ Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, “‘Studied for Action’: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy,” *Past & Present*, no. 129 (November 1990): 30, www.jstor.org/stable/650933.

²¹ James 1:22 (The Geneva Bible, 1560). The Geneva gloss points to Romans 2:13 and Matt 7:21. The latter is noteworthy as it is not synonomous: “Not euerie one that saieth vnto me, Lord, Lord, shal enter into the kingdome of heauen, but he that doeth my Fathers wil which is in heauen.” Its gloss states, “He meaneth hierli[n]gs & hypocrites, who rather serue God with their lippes than with their heart.”

²² Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 1-8.

²³ One wonders how much schoolboys delighted in their translations, even ones as challenging to social norms as Erasmus’s. The vast number of reprints and publications of the *Colloquies* is a testament to its power as a teaching tool and as “adult literary entertainment,” Craig R. Thompson, introduction to *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, by Erasmus, trans. by Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), xxii-xxvi. However, Erasmus, in a prefatory greeting to the printer’s son, must prod the boy to pick up the *Colloquies* for study that he has neglected, “Erasmus to John Froben,” 3. Furthermore, Enterline reminds us that discipline is always attached to translating; therefore, fear of the birch, of the judgmental master who wields the punishment, and even of other students in positions of power who monitor the classroom, affected the learning environment, the educational goals of the institution, and the relationship between student and text, *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom*, 33-61.

a stability of sorts endured throughout the tumult of the period in its two main purposes, which Milton perhaps shapes best in *Of Education*. The first purpose is for a person to seek good, ultimately knowledge, love, and imitation of God, and the second purpose of a humanist education is to perform one's duty in private and in public life.²⁴ Sidney is perhaps less explicit in the religious imperative, but he does phrase that first goal in terms of moving toward perfection, as far as "degenerate souls" in "clayey lodgings" are capable.²⁵ The goodness humanism seeks and performs, however, is understood to be hard earned—a quality that emerges through tempering in a field of action in which it must be tested. Sidney reasons in his *Defense* that one should be capable of "well-doing and not of well-knowing only," and Milton, in *Areopagitica*, that "cloister'd vertue" should not be praised, since only overcoming difficulty builds a reflexive and practiced good.²⁶ In other words, humanism's knowledge should not be inert but momentous along a true trajectory—learning should, to borrow Sidney's phrasing, move one to "virtuous action."²⁷

Erasmus's dialogue on the harlot bears these ideas out. Sophronius, the young man, has recently returned from a trip to Rome during which he has been instructed on, and redeemed from, his life of sin that involved his frequent patronage of the prostitute, Lucretia. He must now resist her temptations, teach her, and convert her, all of which he accomplishes. The adolescent, who has now been educated on virtue and duty, offers the youths who are translating the dialogue an example of what they need to become: confident, learned reasoners who decline temptations and help others likewise to model such action. Defining the period of life

²⁴ John Milton, *Of Education*, in *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Roy Flannagan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 980-81.

²⁵ Sidney, *Defence*, 219.

²⁶ Sidney, *Defence*, 219; Milton, *Areopagitica*, 1006.

²⁷ Sidney, *Defence*, 220.

considered “adolescence” is at best challenging. Age and maturity often do not correlate, and the early modern educators recognized this and did not delay adulthood. In this situation, Latin grammar becomes involved in shaping a mature experience. The young man in Erasmus’s dialogue belongs to a group, the *adolescentes*, whom Smith *et al.* define in the *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* as those between puberty (twelve or fourteen depending on whether the child were a girl or a boy) and twenty-five.²⁸ The youngest group of the youths are classified as *infantes* [young children]; from a legal standpoint, the classification of children depended upon their ability to speak, and not just to repeat words but to pronounce them with intelligence, which the Romans believed to occur at the end of seven years of age.²⁹ Thomas Elyot in *The Boke Named the Governour* consequently designates seven as the age boys should begin learning Latin grammar.³⁰ The second stage of growth was *infantia maiores*, eight to puberty. After the age of twenty-five, people were *majores*.³¹ Sophronius, who sports a beard, represents the latter end of adolescence as his physical description aligns him more with the “bearded” soldier of Jacques’s Seven Ages of Man monologue in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*.³² However, Sophronius’ history with Lucretia represents the younger stage of the lover, and the students in an early modern grammar school translating the dialogue would fulfill the preadolescent stage of “the whining schoolboy, with his satchel / And shining morning face,

²⁸ *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 1890, s.v. “Impu’bes,” ed. William Smith, William Wayte, and G. E. Marinidin, accessed December 2020, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0063:entry=impubes-cn&highlight=infantia%2Cmajores>; there is some confusion with the entry “Impubes” even though it gives the definition of *adolescentes*; if one looks up *adolescens*, one is to see “Infans,” which says see “Impubes.”

²⁹ *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 1890, s.v. “Impu’bes,” ed. Smith et al.

³⁰ Thomas Elyot, *The Boke, Named the Gouvernour devised by Sir Thomas Elyot Knight* (London: By Thomas East, 1580), *ProQuest*, l.vi; x.

³¹ *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 1890, s.v. “Impu’bes,” ed. Smith et al.

³² William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2004), 2.7.149; references are to act, scene, and line.

creeping like a snail / Unwilling to school.”³³ Regardless of Erasmus’s youth’s place in adolescence, Thompson notes in the introduction to the dialogue that in previous versions of the story the man would disguise his age and/or level of holiness before going in to convert the prostitute. Adapting the elder of the variants to an adolescent and a former lover is Erasmus’s change, one that the translator says, “makes all the difference.”³⁴

Milton presents a similar scenario of tempted youth in *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634*. The god Comus, son of Circe and Bacchus, restrains the masque’s young woman in a chair and tempts her chastity. The only means by which the Lady can battle Comus is through the art of rhetoric, and that is a test only an educated youth could pass.³⁵ My purpose in drawing attention to Erasmus and Milton is to contextualize humanist learning in the early modern period, shaping a beginning and ending, first with the “Prince of Christian Humanists” and then with the last and greatest of their teachers.³⁶ Although one is a priest who desired to remain so and die in his sleep as the increasingly violent religious reforms gained momentum and the other a heterodox nonconformist layman who hurtled into controversies such as the defenses of divorce and lawful regicide, both authors fashion similar didactic scenarios around

³³ Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (Bevington), 2.7.144-6.

³⁴ Craig R. Thompson, introduction to “The Young Man and the Harlot (*Adolescentis et scorti*),” in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, by Erasmus, trans. by Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 153.

³⁵ In *Venus and Adonis* (1593) Shakespeare also presents the youth (Adonis) as one resisting sexual temptations (those of Venus), although Enterline reminds us that Adonis is too inexperienced in oration, so he simply refuses to continue debating the superior rhetoric of Venus, *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom*, 89. Milton’s Lady lacks resources to avoid temptation or remove herself from the debate, as once Comus has tricked her to follow him into the dark woods, he binds her; see John Milton, *Comus*, in *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Roy Flannagan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998) lines 244-330; 659-65; see Enterline’s analysis of Venus’ attempts in persuasion, tempting Adonis toward sex, and the movement of her attempts from verbal to physical, *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom*, 62-74.

³⁶ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Beginnings to AD 1500*, rev. ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1975), 661.

adolescents defending themselves from a sexual temptation through the language arts of rhetoric and disputation.

In the process of children moving into puberty (marked by a maturing sexual function), Latin (grammar) regulates a successful transition to adulthood. If Erasmus' innovation is in the age of personal relationships of the conversants/interlocutors, Milton's innovation is in the sexes of the youth and the tempter, which Milton swaps, but this choice has local occasional and historical reasons which can be briefly summarized.³⁷ John Egerton, 1st Earl of Bridgewater, became in 1631 lord lieutenant of Wales and the Marches, but Egerton did not officially enter the position until May 12, 1633 due to his proximity to the intervening Castlehaven Scandal.³⁸ Lady Bridgewater's brother-in-law Mervyn [Mervin] Touchet, 2nd Earl of Castlehaven was accused and convicted of arranging for the rape of his wife and committing sodomy with his male servants. Milton's masque—performed September 29, 1634—accomplished multiple tasks. It provided a celebratory entertainment for the Bridgewater family, it provided occasion to repair Bridgewater's tarnished reputation, and it provided Egerton's daughter, Lady Alice Egerton, a starring role in a production that championed learned womanhood (possibly defending her character in light of her family's recent scandal).³⁹ Alice, Lady Egerton had just

³⁷ For an overview of earlier queering and gendering practices in this pattern, see Colin Burrow's introduction to *Venus and Adonis* (1593) in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. Colin Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 18-27. Shakespeare, more so than Milton, complicates early modern notions of gender and sexuality. For the argument that Shakespeare's grammar school training, such as boys performing the speeches of women from literary texts, affected Shakespeare's later writings and his ability to voice across gender, see Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 88-94.

³⁸ Louis A. Knafle, "Egerton, John, first earl of Bridgewater (1579–1649), politician and lawyer," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, last Modified October 8, 2009, <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8587>.

³⁹ See Leah Marcus, who analyzes how Milton's masque relates to the scandal, "The Milieu of Milton's *Comus*: Judicial Reform at Ludlow and the Problem of Sexual Assault," *Criticism* 25, no. 4 (Fall 1983): 293-327, www.jstor.org/stable/23105098; see Cynthia B. Herrup who reexamines the legalities of the case

turned fifteen years old, an age that Roy Flannagan reminds us makes her a “marriageable adult.”⁴⁰

Gender swapping aside, a second difference between Erasmus’s dialogue and Milton’s masque is one of genre. Masques (as opposed to colloquies) are traditionally heavy with delight and spectacle, and Milton’s primary purpose was not the education of schoolboys. However, *Comus* is not without teaching, and masques can be preachy. By its presence in the subtext of the masque, the Castlehaven Scandal complicates the question of how much Milton is trying in *Comus* to readjust public opinion; at a minimum, the masque does encourage (or “school” through modeling and performance) in both the observing auditors and the acting children a virtuous conduct. The Lady in the masque offers the daughter performing the part and her brothers acting and observing beside her in their roles a speaking example of what they need to do in order to be and become fully functioning adults, confident, learned, and capable of declining dysregulated behavior.⁴¹

One other notable difference is that of language. Whereas a hundred years earlier figures such as Erasmus were writing their works in Latin, and Milton argued his university proflusions in the same, the Lady in *Comus* submits her examinations in English.⁴² The cultural shift from the father tongue to the mother tongue in schoolroom exercises cannot and should

that disrupted social norms of sexuality and political ideals of governance, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁴⁰ Roy Flannagan, ed. introduction to *Comus* in *The Riverside Milton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 111.

⁴¹ Catherine Thomas argues that *Comus* is about the negative effects of perverse sexual desire on the political realm; as such, *Comus* presents an equal temptation to the brothers as to the Lady, since they fail to capture him or remove his wand, a distinct symbol of the phallus, “Chaste Bodies and Poisonous Desires in Milton’s ‘Mask,’” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 46, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 453-59, www.jstor.org/stable/3844650.

⁴² Upon Edward King’s death, Milton wrote “Lycidas” (1637), dedicating it to his former classmate, King. Milton chose to write the pastoral poem in English, fashioning himself to become an Epic poet for England.

not be traced to any single cause, and Edmund Spenser has not been ignored in the movement. His reputation the decades after his death garnered him several titles. His epitaph on a tombstone, paid for by Anne Clifford in 1620, monumentalized Spenser as the “Prince of Poets.” Sir John Stradling called him the “British Homer” in 1607, and the editor R. C. in 1651, the “English Virgil,” characterizing Chaucer as the Homer who walked before Spenser.⁴³ Milton famously praises in *Areopagitica* the “sage and serious Poet Spenser” as “a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.”⁴⁴ Labels like the “Prince of Christian Humanists” for Erasmus and those given to Spenser are historical romanticizations, but they are not without some modicum of truth. Spenser specifically chose English for *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579) and *The Faerie Queene* (1590; 1596), roughly following a Virgilian trajectory of moving from writing pastoral to epic and thus cementing himself as the poet laureate providing his own nascent nation a body of vernacular literature.⁴⁵

In *Edmund Spenser, A Reception History*, David Hill Radcliffe claims that English Literature begins with Spenser because he uses the vernacular, imitates classical works, and utilizes print instead of manuscript culture.⁴⁶ Richard Helgerson claims in *Forms of Nationhood* that Spenser’s choice of language helped shift England into a national identity dispersed into the

⁴³ For a more comprehensive listing of epigrams given to Spenser, see David Hill Radcliffe, *Edmund Spenser, A Reception History* (Columbia: Camden House, 1996), 11-16.

⁴⁴ Milton, *Areopagitica*, 1006.

⁴⁵ Scholars have debated how Spenser shaped his literary career. Patrick Cheney recasts the trajectory of Spenser’s works, arguing they do not strictly follow the Virgilian pattern—other models being available, Ovidian and Augustinian, *Spenser’s Famous Flight: A Renaissance Idea of a Literary Career* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Richard Helgerson positions Spenser as a self-fashioned poet laureate and as an influencing agent to the state, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); and Richard Rambuss explores the under-analyzed secretarial career of Spenser, arguing that Spenser’s double-career mindset guided the poet’s decisions concerning his literary works, *Spenser’s Secret Career* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁴⁶ Radcliffe, *Spenser, Reception History*, vii. Radcliffe does not overlook Chaucer, the father of English poetry. Radcliffe instead proposes Spenser helped create a body of English literature, especially due to the rise of print technology and Spenser’s use of it to distribute his works (rather than relying on the circulation of manuscripts).

people (the ploughman as well as the diplomat) and distinct from one built singularly on the body of the monarch, deepening our understanding of the significance of Spenser's labels.⁴⁷ Not only does Spenser write in English, but he approaches writing (like Erasmus, Sidney, and Milton) with the humanist's pedagogical intent, claiming in his "Letter to Raleigh" that the purpose of *The Faerie Queene* is to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline."⁴⁸ Particularly in Book One of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser adopts the didactic formula of the youth tempted in the process of maturation as seen in Erasmus's and Milton's works. In Spenser's version, a badly educated youth, the Redcrosse Knight, repeatedly fails to decline sexual temptation, delivering flawed rhetoric in English and seriously harming himself in alarming circumstances. Once forces of outside grace rescue Redcrosse, a mostly maternal cast of characters help to re-educate him, enabling the completion of his life's quest as one of a fully functioning adult, understood in Spenser's particular formula of governmental service.

This dissertation explores the humanist education of youth, the testing of virtue (often through sexual temptation), the debates that occurred on the use of English in teaching, and Spenser's commentary on this pattern. I read the Redcrosse Knight in Book One as an early modern student, a bad one. As a knight, he possesses the worst qualities of a sixteenth-century student as characterized by Mulcaster. He is immediately disobedient and easily distracted,

⁴⁷ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1-18. Helgerson is not without his dissenters. Andrew Hadfield's review of the book draws attention to the assumption on which it is based, namely that the idea that individuals had subjective selves independent from the monarch only began with the Renaissance, "Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England," review of *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*, by Richard Helgerson, *Notes and Queries* 40, no. 4 (December 1993): 535. In addition to reading Helgerson, Hadfield recommends David Aers' collection *Culture and History 1350-1600* that dispels strict divisions between the medieval and early modern periods and explores the nebulousness of the transition: David Aers, ed., *Culture and History 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992).

⁴⁸ Edmund Spenser, "A Letter of the Authors expounding his *whole intention in the course of this worke* [. . .], in *The Faerie Qveene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), 714.

resulting in laziness, ignorance, and despair. A necessary, notably willing, re-education follows. Blame particularly for the corruption of youth rarely rides in solitary formations and divides its forces to attack institutions on multiple fronts. Many of the characters Redcrosse meets are guilty of being bad teachers—flawed guides in a broader sense—and they contribute to his abject failure to advance in his development. If we think of Book One as containing students (Redcrosse is not the only one), teachers, and even competing schools, then an educational network (or institution) forms at the allegorical level. To provide a guiding overarching pedagogy to help navigate this dimension of the allegorical system, I use Richard Mulcaster (1531/2-1611) and his sixteenth-century educational theories. Mulcaster's treatises lay out the expectations and outcomes for early modern students, the roles and responsibilities of humanist educators, and the goals for educational institutions and their foundational principles.

Even for a humanist educator of the sixteenth century, Mulcaster's achievements are impressive. He was an esteemed teacher for over fifty years, becoming the first headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School and later the headmaster of St. Paul's School. Summarizing Mulcaster's life, Richard DeMolen labels him the "archetype of the Elizabethan schoolmaster."⁴⁹ He was learned in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew and taught six of the forty-seven translators of the *King James Bible*.⁵⁰ His interest in drama saw the establishment of the boys' company at Merchant Taylor's and the reviving of the St. Paul's boys' company.⁵¹ He taught Thomas Kyd

⁴⁹ Richard DeMolen, "Richard Mulcaster: An Elizabethan Savant," *Shakespeare Studies*, no. 8 (January 1975): 66, EBSCOhost.

⁵⁰ DeMolen, "Elizabethan Savant," 61. Compare Barker's assessment where he questions the often-stated claim that Mulcaster was a gifted Hebraist due to a lack of evidence. William Barker, "Mulcaster, Richard (1531/2–1611), schoolmaster and author," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, last modified September 23, 2004, <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19509>.

⁵¹ DeMolen, "Elizabethan Savant," 34; 52.

whose *Spanish Tragedy* influenced many plays to follow, including Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He also taught Thomas Lodge whose *Rosalynde* provided the basis for Shakespeare's *As You Like it*.⁵² In "Richard Mulcaster and Elizabethan Pageantry," Richard DeMolen points to Mulcaster's involvement in processions and civic pageants, giving an overview of his *précis* for Queen Elizabeth's royal entry during which she traveled to her coronation site.⁵³ DeMolen does not overlook Mulcaster's failings—debt and poverty plagued Mulcaster much of his life due to the low salary of a headmaster, even pushing him to steal.⁵⁴ Even with such lapses, Mulcaster remained a well-respected educator (proximal to the Queen) who influenced Elizabethan society not least through his students.

It is natural to invite Mulcaster into the fictional world of the poet since he was present in Spenser's historical world. Mulcaster was the young poet's headmaster when Spenser attended Merchant Taylor's School from 1561 to 1569.⁵⁵ Furthermore, he shared many of the adult Spenser's beliefs concerning language and national identity, most prominently among them that an English nation must command an English language.⁵⁶ To accomplish this, Mulcaster advocated the use of the vernacular English in writing (in letter writing, poetry, fiction) and in teaching grammar or language art—English as an end in itself (not only a means to help

⁵² DeMolen, "Elizabethan Savant," 61.

⁵³ Richard DeMolen, "Richard Mulcaster and Elizabethan Pageantry," *Studies in English Literature* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1974): 209-21, <https://doi.org/10.2307/450050>.

⁵⁴ DeMolen, "Elizabethan Savant," 40-2; 53-4; 64.

⁵⁵ We only have record of Spenser's last year of attendance. We infer his start date based on average time of completion. See Andrew Hadfield, "Spenser, Edmund (1552?-1599), poet and administrator in Ireland," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, last modified January 3, 2008, <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26145>; and Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 24-50.

⁵⁶ For other shared beliefs of the two, including an adoration for classical literature (though this could be said of most early modern Christian humanists), their glorification of Elizabeth I, and their support of the state religion, see William Barker, "Merchant Taylor's School," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 469.

accomplish one's Latin), and of raising the status of the English language more generally, and thereby England. Mulcaster believed early modern English had arrived at an artistic moment. As he personifies Art in the *Elementarie*, she matures in the practice of language until her people in general can use her forms with simultaneous accomplishment. English's "moment" as an accomplished language has come:

Such a period in the Greke tung was that time, when *Demosthenes* liued, and that learned race of the father philosophers: such a period in the Latin tung, was that time, when *Tullie* liued, and those of that age: Such a period in the English tung I take this to be in our daies, for both the pen and the speche.⁵⁷

Spenser longs for a similar moment of English vernacular maturity when in a letter to Gabriel Harvey he asks, "For why, a Gods name may not we, as else the Greeks, haue the kingdome of oure owne Language?"⁵⁸ At an early age, in the model of Mulcaster, Spenser encountered a well-respected and talented humanist teacher who favored the English language in connection to fostering a love for England as a country. While it might be tempting to argue that Mulcaster's influence is partly or even mostly responsible for inspiring Spenser to fashion an English literary canon that further legitimized England as a nation, no evidence exists to prove the claim other than their relationship as student and teacher and the fact that Mulcaster championed the teaching of English for nationalistic reasons. Helgerson most persuasively connects the relationship of Mulcaster to Spenser in terms of ideological implications in his magisterial *Self-Crowned Laureates*:

Some one particular person says what has not been said before, what would not be said in the same way, if at all, were he not there—and someone else understands. Without those two agents (who may on occasion be one), there can be no communication. [. . .] Move the birth of a Spenser, Jonson, or Milton

⁵⁷ Richard Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chefelie of the right writing of our English tung* [. . .]. London, 1582, 75, *Early English Books Online*.

⁵⁸ Edmund Spenser, "Three proper wittie familiar Letters, lately passed between two Uniuersitie men, touching the Earthquake in April last, and our English reformed Versifying 1580," in *Spenser Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), 609.

by a few years, or a few miles, or a few notches on the social scale and he would cease to be. Of the codes that constituted him only the genetic would survive. The literary works of these men were made possible by the situations in which they occurred. Their meanings could not have been imposed unless they were understood, unless the conventions that made understanding possible were already in place.⁵⁹

Helgerson's approach to understanding a language "field" comprised of "codes" unique to a specific historical moment resonates with that of Mulcaster and Spenser, obviating a need to provide forensic evidence of influence rather than circumstance.

Mulcaster's (and Spenser's) Pageantry of Anti-Teachers

Scholars have long tried to bridge Mulcaster's works with Spenser's literature to show any type of influence, but they have been unable to find significant forensic connections. In *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, C. S. Lewis quotes a passage from *Elementarie* that Spenser could have used as a source for Despaire's argumentation, but Lewis maintains we are safer holding this (and the few other instances that arise) as possible coincidences—circumstantial—and instead assume that the main streams of classical and contemporary influences passed between the two, who also shared similar general beliefs.⁶⁰

Concerning Lewis's findings in the Despaire episode, William Barker says that Lewis overlooks

⁵⁹ Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates* 19. In the above passage, Helgerson is indebted to Jonathan Culler who discusses the semiotics of literature and who, in turn, is influenced by Gerard Genette's discussion of narrative code in *Narrative Discourse*, Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 37-9. For other possible connections between Mulcaster and Spenser, see Moore G. C. Smith who found the possible anagram of Mulcaster's name in Mast. Wrenock in the December eclogue of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, "Spenser and Mulcaster," *The Modern Language Review* 8, no. 3 (July 1913): 368. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3712687>; and see Barker who, with the aid of Millican's previous scholarship, points out that Spenser's children from his first marriage are named Sylvanus and Katherine while Mulcaster's son was named Sylvanus and his wife and daughter Katherine: Barker, "Merchant Taylor's School," 469; and Bowie C. Millican, "Notes on Mulcaster and Spenser," *ELH* 6, no. 3 (September 1939): 214-6. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2871554>.

⁶⁰ C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 350.

the common source in Aristotle's *Politics* 7.15.⁶¹ In "Spenser's Scholarly Script and 'Right Writing,'" Roland M. Smith analyzes the handwriting and orthography of Spenser, noting that Mulcaster's recommendations for spelling in the *Elementarie* did not influence Spenser.⁶² We do not know that Spenser read Mulcaster's works, although his friend Gabriel Harvey did, quoting *Positions* in the margins of his other books.⁶³ Åke Bergvall argues Spenser was familiar with *Positions* either through reading it or experiencing its content via Mulcaster; Bergvall then analyzes Redcrosse in Book One from the perspective of an inexperienced student and in light of the specific phrase "maister the circumstance" from *Positions*.⁶⁴

My research has found an additional connection among Mulcaster's and Spenser's works, but whether it is happenstance or actual influence is uncertain. My goal in relation to previous scholarship is not to prove Mulcaster or his treatises were sources for Spenser; instead, I intend to read Book One of *The Faerie Queene* as part of an educational network, to which *Positions* and *Elementarie* belong, to give dimensions of the allegory new and deeper significance. We have a unique situation with Mulcaster and Spenser: a teacher and student living in the same historical moment under Elizabeth I, holding similar beliefs, expressing those beliefs in different genres, and publishing their major works roughly within a decade of each other. To read both authors in tandem yields a uniquely precise perspective on issues of literary and pedagogical practices as they inform, and are informed by, social concerns of some import at the end of the sixteenth century.

⁶¹ William Barker, "Merchant Taylor's School," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 468.

⁶² Roland M. Smith, "Spenser's Scholarly Script and 'Right Writing,'" in *Studies in Honor of T. W. Baldwin*, ed. Don Cameron Allen (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 91.

⁶³ William Barker, introduction to *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, by Richard Mulcaster, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), xxxv.

⁶⁴ Åke Bergvall, "To 'Maister the Circumstance': Mulcaster's *Positions* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," *Spenser Studies* 34 (2020): 1-24, <https://doi.org/10.1086/706175>.

In *Positions*, Mulcaster provides an overview of his ideal education. He recommends three stages of learning along with appropriate teachers (masters) to guide students through each of those levels that he terms eponymously *Elementarie*, *Grammatical*, and *Academical*.⁶⁵ Mulcaster includes parents as part of the learning process, creating a preliminary stage to formal education and a set of later guides who can aid students as they progress. These stages in Mulcaster align with sets of figures the Redcrosse knight successively encounters once he leaves Una, including, what I am calling “anti-parents” and “anti-teachers.” Errorr and Duessa fall under the label of bad or “anti-”parents; the anti-teachers are Idlenesse (corresponding to Mulcaster’s first stage outlined in the *Elementarie*), Ignaro (corresponding to the middle phase found in the *Grammatical*), and Despaire (corresponding to Mulcaster’s third stage in the *Academical*).

When Mulcaster analyzes the first stage of education in *Elementarie*, he dedicates time to examining parents. He includes parents as necessary participants in the educational process since they are the “verie best part of the verie best teacher.”⁶⁶ While instructors are experts in knowledge and responsible for a student’s behavior, parents, because of their proximity, play the crucial foundational role: “[T]he chefe [chief] performance & practising there of is cōmitted vnto parents, as of nearest care & most certain autoritie [authority] ouer their own children.”⁶⁷ He argues a child can disobey a teacher, “but he hath no mean at all to shake of[f] his parents, without losse of his liuing.”⁶⁸ Once Redcrosse ignores Una’s advice in the dark woods, he quickly

⁶⁵ For a historical contextualization of Mulcaster’s ideas for educators and a summative overview of his positions on education, see Richard DeMolen, “Richard Mulcaster and the Profession of Teaching in Sixteenth-Century England,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, no. 1 (January-March 1974): 121-29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2708747>.

⁶⁶ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 4-5.

⁶⁷ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 4.

⁶⁸ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 4.

encounters Error, an allegorical mother opposite the positive mother role Una inhabits and the inverse of what Mulcaster prescribes. Error nurses her offspring with “poisonous dugs.”⁶⁹ She later vomits her babies out, weaponizing them in an attack to save herself from the Redcrosse Knight after they sought protection in her mouth.⁷⁰ Finally, when Redcrosse kills Error, the babies rush to their dead mother’s wound and drink the blood, “Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.”⁷¹ Their lives soon come to a gluttonous end with their “bowels gushing forth,” a miniature portrait of their mother’s behavior.⁷² Error is the very *worst* part of the very *worst* teacher, and if James Nohnberg in *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* is right in his overview that Error provides a threshold for readers to cross into the poem and see the epic in miniature, then she establishes patterns that Redcrosse and other characters will emulate.⁷³ After Redcrosse defeats Error but abandons Una, Duessa slips into that vacant role of mother and educator, leading Redcrosse to the rest of his anti-teachers and directing his steps in the rest of the progress of his maldevelopment—his bad education.

While outlining the general requirements for the Elementary teacher in *Positions*, Mulcaster couches his argument in financial terms. He observes that this bottom rung of educators are paid the lowest and believes it serves to attract the worst teachers and produce inadequate students. Mulcaster argues that since these masters “dealeth with the first principles,” the position should offer the most pay to attract the most highly qualified

⁶⁹ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Qveene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), bk.1, canto 1, st. 15, line 6.

⁷⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 22.

⁷¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 25, line 9.

⁷² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 26, line 6.

⁷³ James Nohnberg, *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 135-38. EBSCOhost.

individuals to lay a foundation upon which later educators can successfully build.⁷⁴ Idleness holds the position of the first anti-teacher Redcrosse encounters, and it is not one that has attracted the best. When describing Idleness, Spenser does not directly address monetary issues; however, the House of Pride wherein Idleness resides and guides others has stone walls overlaid with “golden foile,” which is one of the temptations of the palace, but it also suggests hypocrisy.⁷⁵ All that is contained within is false or valueless. The worth of Idleness as a teacher is suspect by his simply being in the House of Pride. His placement as the leader in the medieval pageantry of the seven deadly sins adds further evidence to his being a worthless teacher. Since he is so sleepy, he never raises his head to see where he is going, becoming a blind guide to those he is responsible for leading: first, for the immediate train of followers, and second, for Redcrosse, who imitates him from afar. Idleness hinders the learning of the young Redcrosse and prepares a foundation upon which future anti-educators fortify their tower of miseducation.

Mulcaster next details the level of schooling and the teachers who serve in transitional roles. The grammar teacher “entreth [enters] to the toungues,” guiding students from the basics of reading, writing, and other essentials to the classical languages and the knowledge contained in their literatures, which would prepare students for mastery of knowledge in the next stage of learning.⁷⁶ To accomplish his duties, Mulcaster argues that the grammar master must be knowledgeable in the subject matter, especially in the languages of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In addition to good knowledge, the master must possess good morals and exhibit good behavior.⁷⁷ In *Elementarie*, Mulcaster thinks of education in a two-pronged manner, coupling it with

⁷⁴ Richard Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 231-33.

⁷⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 4, line 4.

⁷⁶ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 231.

⁷⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 234.

morality: “For the matter of their [students’] learning, that is there devided into two parts, the one whereof is knowledge, to encrease vnderstanding, the other is behauiour to enlarge vertew.”⁷⁸ When Mulcaster discusses any of his teachers, he predictably concerns himself with their moral behavior; but Mulcaster argues the moral standing of the Grammatical teacher is more important. Because the grammar teacher perfects the former stage of learning, he sets up the student either to fail or to succeed in later stages, so good knowledge and good behavior have a complementary effect on each other.⁷⁹ Mulcaster further emphasizes the early teacher’s importance in *Positions* by pointing to the pliability of students due to their age: “For he [the Grammar Master] is to deale with those yeares, wheereupon all the residew do build their likelyhoode to proue well or ill.”⁸⁰

Ignaro, the jailer who keeps Redcrosse imprisoned after the giant Orgoglio captures him, fails in every ideal Mulcaster outlines. Ignaro fails to serve in a progressional role since he locks Redcrosse in the castle dungeon and prevents him from continuing his quest. Ignaro functions allegorically as ignorance since he fails in being knowledgeable. Furthermore, for one who should be a master of languages, his linguistic skills are quite shallow, evidenced by how many times he fails to answer Prince Arthur’s questions. In fact, Ignaro never responds nor speaks directly in the episode—in response to every question, the narrator tells us, “He could not

⁷⁸ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 4.

⁷⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 234.

⁸⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 233. For the importance of a student’s age in Grammar school, see Ong, who argues that the removal of children from homes and the influence of vernacular speaking mothers to learn Latin in grammar schools is a form of a puberty rite that prepared students for their future lives by connecting them to a past heritage. Walter J. Ong, “Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite,” *Studies in Philology* 56, no. 2 (April 1959): 103-24. www.jstor.org/stable/4173267; compare Enterline, who updates some of Ong’s arguments by looking at the same institutional patterns and age of influence but concludes that grammar schools may have been subverting their own goals of turning boys into gentlemen, *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom*, 17-18.

tell.”⁸¹ Language is further emphasized by its absence: when Arthur enters the castle, he encounters only an eerie silence.⁸² Finally, Ignaro fails to be of good moral character in his role as a teacher—he is blind, his head is on backwards, and he walks in crooked halting paths on backward feet, details that signify in the period ignorance and compromised morality.⁸³

While describing higher education, Mulcaster sees the final (academical) educator as “a reader, or tutour to youth in the university”; however, in *Positions* Mulcaster diplomatically presents his agenda as augmenting a present good rather than as reform per se. Mulcaster writes, “But by the way I protest simply, that I do not tender this wish, as having any great cause to mislike the currant, which the universities be now in: but graunting thinges there to be well done already, I offer no discourtesie in wishing that good to be a great deale better.”⁸⁴ As a result, Mulcaster advises four means by which to improve university education for the better. The last reform is pertinent to the present study because it offers the pedagogical role that Despaire best fits as the last (academical) anti-teacher. In “Richard Mulcaster and the Profession of Teaching in Sixteenth-Century England,” Richard L. DeMolen expertly summarizes the role of

⁸¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 32, line 9.

⁸² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 29.

⁸³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 30-31. Here, as elsewhere, the language of disability arises, which is inherently tied to learning and thinking about learning during the period, so too the need to address it. Blindness and the negative associations with ignorance, backwardness, and moral crookedness were typical of the period and those preceding it. For prominent examples see canto twenty of Dante’s *Inferno*, where those who lived as false prophets walk blindly forward with their heads twisted backward; or accusations that Milton’s blindness was God’s punishment for his defense of regicide in *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*. Such depictions arose from the medieval religious model of disability that depicted impairments as a result of sin. By the early modern period, the religious model persisted but was not universal—it often applied to allegorical works and flat characters, Allison P. Hobgood and David Houston Wood, eds., introduction to *Recovering Disability in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013), 14. For more on early modern disability, especially the differences non-normative bodies present and how to view such differences ethically and productively, see Allison P. Hobgood and David Houston Wood, eds., *Recovering Disability in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013).

⁸⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 231; 235.

Mulcaster's tutor: colleges at universities should have "mature, residential scholars or readers, who would guide the study habits of students."⁸⁵

Because of their allegorical nature, previous anti-teachers in the poem operate as oppositional figures of Mulcaster's descriptions of ideal teachers. If a teacher, according to Mulcaster, should help transition a student from one developmental level to the next, then the opposite of that blocks progress. If a teacher should be a master of languages, then a possible opposite of that is silence (the failure of using language to communicate knowledge). Despaire's method of operation upsets this pattern of allegorical opposite; he fits what Mulcaster prescribes more closely than any other master. Despaire is a resident who has taken up his "dwelling" in a cave, (an archetypal habitation for the scholar); he proves to be the most intellectual of all the anti-teachers, introducing ideas and texts to the knight's mind that Redcrosse would not have thought of alone. Despaire perfectly fulfills Mulcaster's role of a reader: "Private studie tied to one booke led by one braine" cannot compete with one who has "red, and digested all the best bookes, or at the least all the best bookes in that kinde, whereof he maketh profession [. . .]."⁸⁶ Of course, once we examine his methodology and result, Despaire's teaching practices fail to fit Mulcaster's desires for a residential scholar and reader at university. Better trained in disputation than Redcrosse, he outmaneuvers him rhetorically, but in his sophistry, he conceals knowledge, specifically the truth that grace leads to redemption (as opposed to repentance or works in the Catholic scheme). As a result, Despaire's guidance in hopelessness leads Redcrosse toward suicide, which would prevent any future education and

⁸⁵ DeMolen, "Mulcaster and Teaching," 126. For an overview of all Mulcaster's reforms at the university level, see DeMolen, "Mulcaster and Teaching," 126.

⁸⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 33, line 2; and Mulcaster, *Positions*, 249.

service to the state, an idea at the heart of Mulcaster's ideal educational system and humanism more generally.

The Error of Miseducation

In examining a few of the characters Redcrosse meets, picking the ones that fit Mulcaster's model while ignoring others, my study lacks the evidence to bring Spenser's and Mulcaster's texts together into a perfect, one-to-one correspondence of an extended allegorical relationship, even when the allegory is narrowed to the dimension I have brought into focus concerning the sexual temptation of a youth in the midst of grammar-school training. Nonetheless, in one sentence in *Elementarie*, Mulcaster does lay out the pageantry of miseducation that Redcrosse follows. In the first chapter of the *Elementarie* using the metaphor of the seminary, Mulcaster explains his reasons for writing the book, one of which is that the early education of a child implants knowledge that will yield a profitable harvest through the investment in a first planting.⁸⁷ Continuing with imagery from the parable of the sower, Mulcaster warns of the dangers of a missed education or one that finds "hard footing."⁸⁸ Reeducating this student is nearly impossible because he does not want to be educated, and when he finally does desire an education, Mulcaster points out that his old age prevents him from being profitable (serviceable) to the state.⁸⁹

To illustrate the resistant learner, Mulcaster gives the analogy of a drunk lying in the ditch, asking for blankets to keep warm, and telling people to extinguish the moon, which he has mistaken for a candle. People try to convince him to come inside and to bed, but he refuses to listen. In the end, friends must carry the drunk home by force. Mulcaster then observes the

⁸⁷ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 2.

⁸⁸ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 2; Matt. 23:1-23.

⁸⁹ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 2.

message of the trope: “Such a strength is *error* of being bakt [backed] with *long ease* [sloth], which brings *ignorance* a slepe: and with securitie in *persuasion* [sophistry], which neuer bredes but ill.”⁹⁰ Mulcaster’s one-sentence explanation of an education that misses the mark through deflection, and its effects, summarizes Redcrosse’s digressions, giving credibility to the levels of academia I identify in Book One of *The Faerie Queene*. Strength of error is mother Errour (and later Duessa who succeeds her); long ease is the elementary teacher Idlenesse; ignorance is the grammar master Ignaro; and persuasion is the university scholar Despaire and his sophistry.⁹¹

Even through the application outlined in the *Elementarie*, encapsulated in Mulcaster’s pageantry of miseducation, one is in danger of reading texts into *The Faerie Queene*. In other words, care must be exercised in using Mulcaster treatises as external sources to interpret meaning inner to the allegory instead of merely to guide understanding and deepen it. My goal is to place the primary sources securely in the decade of their publication (1580s-1590s) and close to one another in the semiotic field to work in tandem to yield dimensions of humanistic learning leading to more precise interpretive meaning in the poem. The allegorical narrative of *The Faerie Queene* does contain internal indicators of how to read the poem that correspond to this pageantry of pedagogues and function allegorically independently—without the aid of

⁹⁰ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 2 (emphasis mine).

⁹¹ Nohrnberg points to Dante’s reasoning for Errour’s woods being dark: “[A]ll error always proceeds from ignorance and blindness of mind,” *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 138. However, Mulcaster, stylistically, places error first in the sentence even though the others support it, and Spenser has Redcrosse encounter Errour as the first enemy. In my own analysis of the pageantry, I too have placed error first as a parent even though a miseducation will cause one to err. This seeming contradiction is the nature of allegory and of error in general. Nohrnberg explains it best: “Redcrosse has slain Error, but understood nothing. The ostensible success of the knight’s opening campaign yields to the perception that there are kinds of error that can only be destroyed through hindsight, and from within,” *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 124. Redcrosse begins lost. Idleness, ignorance, despair, are all specific errors (sins) that keep Redcrosse lost, necessitating a correction to avoid the ill that will ultimately result. Perhaps, Spenser says it best: “God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine,” *The Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 18, line 9.

Mulcaster's outline.⁹² The poem contains three motifs related to education that thread together the characters in Book One to legitimize the parallel of Mulcaster's outlines for pedagogy with Spenser's program in *The Faerie Queene*.

The first motif is blindness. Every anti-teacher in the poem possesses some degree of impaired vision. Idleness, while not physically blind, is too lazy to lift his head to see where he is going.⁹³ As well as having his head on backwards, Ignaro's eyes have failed, a doubling of his compromised intellectual awareness; and Despaire's eyes are "hollow" and "dull" and stare as "astound."⁹⁴ Errour and Duessa are not blind, and thus do not fall directly under this motif, but they do brush up against it. Errour, a creature of sin, prefers the darkness of her cave and recoils from revealing light, a reflex Redcrosse later mimics: when Una and Arthur free him from the dungeon, his eyes "[c]ould not endure th'vnwonted sunne to view."⁹⁵ Duessa, also known as Fidessa, operates slightly differently: she blinds others through her hypocrisy. This last connection may stretch the motif beyond its limits, to seemingly include the character arbitrarily, but the physical senses do have a direct connection to education. Barker points to Aristotelian concepts in *On the Soul* that influenced Mulcaster. The soul (for Aristotle) gains knowledge through the senses and imprints it onto the memory via the imagination.⁹⁶ In *The Art of Memory*, Frances Yates traces the link between the physical senses of the body and learning, elaborating on memory as one of five parts of classical rhetoric discussed by Cicero and later

⁹² Gordon Teskey shows narratives that are written allegorically, such as *The Faerie Queene*, provide their own maps for interpretation, "Allegory," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 16-17. The name Despaire, for example, is an internal road marker that indicates how to read the character.

⁹³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 19.

⁹⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 29-30; canto 9, canto 35, lines 6-7. Spenser uses the now obsolete adjective *astound* meaning stunned or stupefied. "astound, adj.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/12186.

⁹⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 15-16; canto 8, st. 41, line 2.

⁹⁶ Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xvii-xviii.

Quintilian.⁹⁷ Yates points to Cicero's emphasizing that "the sense of sight is the strongest of all the senses."⁹⁸ Each of the senses contributes to forming knowledge especially through the mnemonic technique of using "places and images (*loci* and *imagines*)" to form locations in the mind, containing architecture with images of the knowledge to be recalled.⁹⁹ Not all educators and theorists agreed on the technique's importance or the rules that governed it, but one concept remained true: learning requires the senses as inlets of knowledge. The anti-teachers and bad parents Redcrosse meets disrupt learning either through being unable to teach him because of a self-induced blindness or by causing an impairment of the senses (their own and his) that disables learning. The former occurs through laziness or obliviousness mostly in the male anti-teachers. The latter happens through the hypocrisy of Duessa and her false beauty that first entwines Redcrosse, "More busying his quicke eies [eyes], her face to view, / Then his dull eares, to heare what shee did tell."¹⁰⁰ In all cases, learning fails, and Redcrosse begins to mimic bad patterns of behavior.¹⁰¹

The second major motif is the repetition of the word *hollow*, occurring fourteen times in Book One. Hollow is mostly unproblematic for modern readers as it derives from the Old English noun *holh*, a relative to OE *hol* or hole in modern English with the adjectival form arising in Middle English with *hol3*, *holeh*, or *holu*. Its primary definition is to have "an empty space in the

⁹⁷ Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1966; London: Bodley Head, 2014), 18. Citations refer to Bodley Head edition.

⁹⁸ Yates, *Art of Memory*, 19.

⁹⁹ Yates, *Art of Memory*, 18.

¹⁰⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 26, lines 6-7.

¹⁰¹ Another anti-educator is Corceca as she is blind and tries to sway those she meets, but she is beyond the focus of my analysis—Una encounters her and not Redcrosse. However, in *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England*, Richard Mallette emphasizes the separate yet connected experiences of Una and Redcrosse. Beginning with an examination of the Corceca encounter and ending with the captivity of Redcrosse, Mallette explores the parallels through the lens of public and private spiritual catastrophe and the transmission of the Word of God, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997): 35-7. Because the Redcrosse and Una's journeys are so connected, more might be done with how their learning affects each other.

interior.”¹⁰² Since Book One explores the virtue of holiness, almost every occurrence of the word “hollow” generally assumes the connotation of lacking spiritual substance pertaining to characters and their settings. The word demonstrates how the insubstantiality of the characters Redcrosse meets derails him from his quest and then causes a comparative hollowness in him. Spenser’s specific usage of the word causes groupings to occur that further show the effects of sin configured as bad learning that leads to an insubstantial education.

A hollowness in the landscapes of Faerie Land occurs at least three times in the book of Holiness. Redcrosse and Una stumble upon Errour’s “hollowe cave,” and they later enter Despaire’s “hollow cave.”¹⁰³ The dragon Redcrosse fights at the end of the book provides a third, figurative, cave as well. The narrator compares the size of the beast to “a great hill” and his jaws to the “mouth of hell.”¹⁰⁴ The dragon’s “hollow maw” becomes a cavernous structure, a hollow cavity, similar in shape to the earlier two caves.¹⁰⁵ The motif of “hollowness” unites the pageantry of educators: Errour, as the anti-parent, badly begins Redcrosse’s education; Despaire tries to end his lessons by foreclosure on learning as a failed enterprise; and the dragon is the allegorization of the monstrous result of bad education.

A hollowness of sound occurs three times as well; however, sound does not form so tidy a line of allegorical meaning as does connecting the dots among Redcrosse’s anti-teachers. Sound does, though, serve to contrast other characters to Una in the role of the positive mother-educator. After Redcrosse ignores her teachings and abandons her, Una encounters a

¹⁰² “hollow, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/87759; “hole, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/87707; and “hollow, adj. and adv.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/87760.

¹⁰³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 11, line 6; canto 9, st. 33, line 2.

¹⁰⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 4, line 6; st. 12, line 8.

¹⁰⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 53, line 8.

lion who becomes her protector and kills the thief Kirkrapine. Abessa and Corceca “loudly bray” with “hollow houlng” at Una upon Kirkrapine’s death. They sound much like Errour when she “loudly gan to bray” as Redcrosse attacks her like a lion, at the time when he was still Una’s protector.¹⁰⁶ Later in Una’s adventure, Arthur becomes her protector and severs Orgoglio’s arm. The giant “loudly brayd with beastly yelling sound.”¹⁰⁷ Spenser then describes, through simile, the echo of Orgoglio’s noisiness as bulls bellowing, causing the woods to “ring” with a “hollow murmur.”¹⁰⁸ The linked sound images echo each other, finally catching up to the imprisoned Redcrosse, as Una’s failed protector, through similar language that describes his “hollow, dreary, murmuring voice” in his castle dungeon.¹⁰⁹

A hollowness of the face, mostly involving the eyes, occurs four times. It emphasizes unhealthy facial aspects of sinful characters such as gauntness, malnutrition, and blindness resulting from spiritual sickness. It should also be noted again that from a classical perspective sight is one of the primary inlets of sensual learning, and all the way to the early modern period, as memory depended on sight, the motifs of hollowness and blindness compound to signal that exhausted educators create empty (“hollow”) students. The first usage of “hollow” to describe a face occurs when Redcrosse emerges from the dungeons: his eyes are “deepe sunck in hollow pits,” a result of all his previous bad educational exercises.¹¹⁰ Una and Prince Arthur have just rescued him, but Redcrosse has not yet received a reeducation in the House of Holiness, so he is still in danger of being misled. They soon meet Trevisan, who has also just escaped near death. He is running from Despaire, but he is without the helmet of salvation and is “staring wyde /

¹⁰⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 3, st. 23, lines 1-2; canto 1, st. 17, line 5.

¹⁰⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 11, line 3.

¹⁰⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 11, line 9.

¹⁰⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 38, line 1.

¹¹⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 41, line 1.

With stony eyes, and hartlesse hollow hew.”¹¹¹ Despaire’s “hollow eyne [eyes]” provides the third instance of a motif of a hollow visage.¹¹² The hollowness emphasizes Despaire’s impaired vision, and the overall image is one of him being skeletal and deathly—his “raw-bone cheekes” “[w]ere shronke into his iawes.”¹¹³ Hollowness harries Redcrosse throughout the epic. The sound image perforates the landscape, reverberates from the background scenery, it transfers to him as he comes closer to spiritual desperation, but it never overtakes him as grace prevents that. For Despaire, hollowness directly modifies his eyes, but it can only touch the pits into which Redcrosse’s eyes sink and the color [“hew”] Trevisan’s eyes turn due to lack of courage. Despaire is an absolute (personified abstraction) while Redcrosse and Trevisan are one step removed grammatically from their desperation. The feature of vacancy has not completely and irreversibly clouded their eyes, only temporarily, resulting from malnourishment in one and terror in the other. Since Redcrosse escapes Despaire, the dragon then enters to culminate his learning trajectory in the epic, and four uses of the adjective hollow ensue. The dragon’s eye sockets are described as hollow glades, an image that combines the connotations of landscape and facial gauntness. The “glaring lampes” that are the dragon’s eyes indicate no blindness but instead an intensity seeking to blind those he would destroy.¹¹⁴ By this time, Redcrosse has been soundly educated and the destructive emptiness of his enemies and the self-destructive hollowness of his former self no longer cling to him.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 24, lines 2-3.

¹¹² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 35, line 6.

¹¹³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 35, line 9.

¹¹⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 14, line 9.

¹¹⁵ A close tally of all the instances of *hollow* I have discussed will reveal that they do not add up to fourteen. Not all its usages fall so neatly into categories; however, they are still attached the analysis of characters of importance such as the giant Orgoglio as a fellow student and the dragon as the result of a bad education. They complicate my analysis but do not contradict it.

Nursing and Education

The most important motif for assembling this train of parents and anti-teachers is that of nursing. The word first entered Middle English near the beginning of the thirteenth century as both a noun and a verb, and its etymological origins are related to the verb *nourish*, which primarily revolved around the notion “to bring up” a child or animal under one’s responsibility; the minimum requirement of this definition is to give food. Early uses of *nurse* typically implied a wet nurse who nourished a child’s nutritional needs, but the meaning eventually broadened to include those who oversaw the care of children, such as dry nurses.¹¹⁶

In “The ‘Carefull Nurse’: Female Piety in Spenser’s Legend of Holiness,” Caroline McManus connects nursing to spiritual education and surveys the maternal figures who nurture Redcrosse during his spiritual journey. McManus examines the characters in Spenser’s epic under several sixteenth- and seventeenth-century beliefs, the primary being that “godly women should nurture their children both physically by breast-feeding, and metaphorically, by catechizing and teaching.”¹¹⁷ In other words, female nurses were not only responsible for giving physical nourishment to children through breastfeeding but also spiritual nourishment through the Word of God. Of course, this idea does not begin with the sixteenth century, but dates to medieval Catholicism and early humanism. In the early modern period, this educational nourishment becomes equated with and encapsulated within a linguistic nourishment of the vernacular mother tongue, especially for Protestants. To first teach children about God was to also to teach them their first language.

¹¹⁶ “nurse, n.1,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/129240; “nurse, v.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/129242; and “nourish, v.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/128704.

¹¹⁷ Caroline McManus, “The ‘Carefull Nurse’: Female Piety in Spenser’s Legend of Holiness,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (January 1997): 382, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3817786>.

For those such as Mulcaster who believed that a child's earliest education could yield the greatest results and for both Mulcaster and Spenser who valued command of the English language as an art, nurses held an influential position. Concerning this influence, McManus points to early modern fears of female nurses: women were upheld to virtuous standards, but if those virtues failed, corruption of infants could easily enter. McManus ultimately labels "women as powerful agents of socialization who transmit to their children not only life but also fundamental elements of language, culture, and religion."¹¹⁸ Spenser upholds this view in *The Faerie Queene*, where Una serves as a beautiful, well-spoken, and virtuous nurse, teaching the gentle Satyrs, while gruesome Error vomits books and poisons her offspring.¹¹⁹

Spenser's opinion on nursing in *A View of The State of Ireland* reinforces these depictions of nursing and nurses in *The Faerie Queene*. In the *View*, Spenser writes of the Irish influence on the colonizing English, specifically the effects of Irish wet nurses on English children's language acquisition:

[F]or first the childe that sucketh the milke of the nurse, must of necessity learne of his first speach of her, the which being the first inured to his tongue, is ever after most pleasing unto him, insomuch as though hee afterwards be taught English, yet the smacke of the first will allwayes abide with him; and not onely of the speach, but also of the manners and conditions. For besides that young children be like apes, which will affect and imitate what they see done before them, especially by their nurses, whom they love so well, they moreover drawe into themselves, together with their sucke, even the nature and disposition of their nurses: for the minde followeth much the temperature of the body: and also the words are the image of the minde, so as they proceeding from the minde, the minde must needs be affected with the words. So that, the

¹¹⁸ McManus, "Carefull Nourse," 393.

¹¹⁹ McManus notes the general exclusion of lower-class women from reading in the sixteenth century, and Spenser does not veer from the norm since "those women in Book One who are praised most for their appropriation of biblical precepts are of high social standing [. . .]," "Carefull Nourse," 383-4. Mulcaster does argue in *Positions* that all children, including girls who have a natural ability to learn, should be taught to read and write English. However, he regulates women only to the service of men as they will be the ones quietly serving and teaching in the house, *Positions*, 169-84.

speech being Irish, the heart must needs bee Irish: for out of the abundance of the heart, the tongue speaketh.¹²⁰

Spenser's cautioning tirade in *A View* focuses on what he labels Irish "infections" of the colonizing English, one through language and the other through intermarriage. His more general belief in an education that leads to virtue, imparted by the word, or the mother tongue, means the opposite can also be true: a mis-education in the language arts leads to vice and could be delivered through the improper use of a vernacular, or through a qualitatively inferior vernacular.¹²¹

During his quest, Redcrosse encounters several nurses, both good and bad. The good transmit sound teaching through English, and the bad miseducate through improper use of language. Una is the first positive nurse readers meet, and although Redcrosse defies her motherly advice and opens himself to the "losse of his liuing" that Mulcaster says results from disobedience, she remains a constant presence throughout the first book, teaching and caring for those who fall under her care.¹²² In addition to identifying Una as a nurse, McManus labels Charissa, Fidelia, and Mercie as positive nurses, though, they only begin to serve as correctives in the House of Holiness, properly modeling breastfeeding, reading of books, and teaching after Redcrosse's miseducation under the panoply of his anti-teachers.¹²³

¹²⁰ Edmund Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland: from the First Printed Edition (1633)*, ed. Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 71.

¹²¹ Spenser, *View*, 71. While Spenser does not mention nurses educating children with the Word of God, his language in the *View* drips of scripture. "O generacions of vipers, how can you speake good things, when ye are euil? For of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Matt. 12:34; and "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth the good, and an euil man out of the euil treasure of his heart bringeth forth euil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh," Luke 6:45.

¹²² Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 4.

¹²³ McManus, "Carefull Nurse," 383. For a more detailed analysis, see McManus's division of characters into wet and dry nurses where she categorizes them based on whether they breastfeed a child (wet nurse) or oversee the general care of a child (dry nurse), "Carefull Nurse," 389-90.

The two negative nurses that McManus examines are Errour and Duessa. Errour only produces poison for her children through her breasts, and she vomits books from her mouth, failing to digest the words she ought to teach.¹²⁴ Duessa poisons Redcrosse and offers only dry, empty breasts.¹²⁵ As parents, Errour and Duessa fail to fulfill the basic definition of supplying sustenance or the extended definition of caring for those young people under one's influence, which would include education. At worst, Duessa sexualizes her nursing role by seducing those who fall under her care and by eventually becoming, at least in her emblematic image, the Whore of Babylon. Therefore, every word she utters to those under her care suffers a perversion.

McManus focuses on the maternal, specifically on images in the poem of the nurturing mother church, and does not look at any of the masculine applications of the word in Book One. She does note, though, that the word can apply to both genders, especially in metaphorical use.¹²⁶ The noun *nourice* [nurse] for men was rare and is mainly recorded in works from the century before Spenser's. Usually when referring to the male counterpart, writers would use the compound nurse-father. However, from the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth century, the word becomes more fluid when used to refer to mythological, allegorical, or historical figures. Any of these, regardless of gender, can become nurses.¹²⁷ One of the more famous examples is King James I who—writing to his son—desired himself to be called a “loving nourishing father to

¹²⁴ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 364.

¹²⁵ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 395.

¹²⁶ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 390; see Marina Warner who examines the implications of the virtues (and their personifications) being feminine in their grammatical gender, and her discussion of male gods (such as Zeus) who raise children through maternal practices, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), 63-87; 121-3.

¹²⁷ “nourice, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/128701.

the Church.”¹²⁸ In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser’s narrator calls Idlennesse “nourse of sin” when Redcrosse first enters the House of Pride.¹²⁹ The poet labels Ignaro “foster father” to the giant Orgoglio.¹³⁰ The Old English *fóstor* has the same base as OE *foddan* [food] and *foddor* [fodder]. The compound is essentially synonymous with nurse-father. A. C. Hamilton defines the compound as “nourishing father” in his annotation to the passage.¹³¹ Both Idlennesse and Ignaro are allegorical models of nursing, i.e., bringing up Redcrosse in their vices not in virtue, which begins to form a train of miseducation.

Spenser, however, does not call Despaire a nurse. As usual, Desparie is the most challenging of all the characters in this paradigm (he is the most Academical). In one sense, he functions as an examiner or tutor, passing or failing those who come before him or fall under his tutelage. In one sense, he is the crafty tutor whom Mulcaster desires. In *Positions*, Mulcaster calls readers (university professors) nurses due to the role that they serve and argues they should be well paid: “[S]uch *readers*, or rather such *nurses* to studie, must needes be maintained with great allowance, to make their heaven there.”¹³² Despaire has not established a heaven. Instead, he urges victims to hell through suicide, acting as anti-nurse, advising those under his tutelage to despair unto death.

¹²⁸ James I, King of England, *Basilikon dōron, Or, King James's Instructions to His Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince*. London, 1682, 32, *Early English Books Online*. Elizabeth I casting herself as the sacrificial pelican nursing its children is also relevant as her rhetoric of herself as mother caring for her people. In the Pelican Portrait (1575), Elizabeth wears a pendant bearing a pelican feeding its young.

¹²⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 18, line 6. Spenser follows Chaucer in his name calling. The Nun in Chaucer’s “The Second Nun’s Prologue” calls Ydelnesse the “nорice unto vices,” Geoffrey Chaucer, “The Second Nun’s Prologue,” in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed, Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), frag. 8, line 1.

¹³⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 31, line 8.

¹³¹ A. C. Hamilton, *The Faerie Qveene*, by Edmund Spenser, rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), 1.9.31.8n.

¹³² Mulcaster, *Positions*, 249.

Once Redcrosse leaves Una, the model of a good parent and nurse, his errant journey parallels the miseducation Mulcaster describes in *Elementarie* that diverts a student toward evil's persuasion: error, idleness, ignorance, and despair. Redcrosse's journey also follows the stages of education Mulcaster describes in *Positions* to form the antithesis of the ideal humanist education envisioned there. Since Redcrosse's anti-parents and anti-teachers badly nurse him, he becomes malnourished physically, spiritually, and linguistically. A lack of sustenance leads to a lack of substance. If we use the language Spenser provides us, the knight has become hollow instead of holy (whole). His eyes are dim, his voice is mute, and even when he does regain his voice with Despaire, his words are ineffective because he has not sustained himself on the advice Una gave him (to add hope to faith), choosing instead to rush ahead to the conclusion he is being set up to reach.¹³³ Since Redcrosse is Saint George, the patron saint of England, he is more than just some ignorant (easily beguiled) schoolboy. His education makes larger comments on England's educational system.

At first glance, Spenser's didactic elements regarding language arts seem to align with Mulcaster's pedagogical principles. The mother tongue of English can sustain England, and a miseducation at any of the learning stages will have disastrous effects on the nation. Layered within this general principle are Protestant portrayals of women characteristic of the time (the Cooke sisters come to mind) that give them great power over language and education, but also demonize them due to the danger within that potential.¹³⁴ We have no reason to doubt these

¹³³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 32.

¹³⁴ Duessa becomes the seductive enchantress and the Whore of Babylon, testing the chastity of those around her. Chastity in this context and likely for the early modern mindset does not just mean sexual purity. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short define *castitas* as "purity of morals, morality," s.v. "*castitas*," in *A Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrew's edition of Freund's Latin dictionary* (1879) last accessed December 21, 2020, <http://perseus.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.2:1076.lewisandshort>. Also see Flannagan's introduction to *Comus* where he makes the connection with *castitas* to a possible allegorical reading of the Lady as chastity. He expands the reading by looking at a passage from Milton's

ideas regarding education, language, and gender as they fit the nature of Spenser's and Mulcaster's beliefs and the attitudes early modern Protestants and humanists in general held. However, Spenser's final commentary arrives in the domestic House of Holiness where Redcrosse is reeducated within a feminine domain with little formal education. Only afterward is he able to defeat the dragon which harbors many of the negative motifs of his teachers. Why does Spenser portray Mulcaster's entire ideal public education inversely only to offer a corrective that is not Mulcastrian in nature? Is this a rejection of Mulcaster's system? Is their raising of the English language and their nationalism not enough to bring them together? The two are decidedly different in how they display their allegiance to the monarch. Spenser immerses his allegory in religious affairs while Mulcaster posits secular defenses for education compared to those of his contemporaries.¹³⁵ Spenser, if we are to take his words at face value, says the purpose of *The Faerie Queene* is to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline."¹³⁶ Mulcaster calls for the public education of all.¹³⁷ He says especially of the elementary stage of education (that taught students to read and write English) that it would result in sending "abroade sufficient men for the service of their cuntrye [. . .]."¹³⁸ Mulcaster still made concessions, namely that educated women should indirectly serve the state by working in the household and educating children, especially sons, and men should not be overly educated; not all need it and for many it would push them into jobs they are not naturally

An Apology against a Pamphlets in which Milton speaks of the power of chastity and love to produce knowledge and virtue. Milton contrasts them with a sorceress who seduces people away with an alluring potion, introduction to *Comus*, 112-13.

¹³⁵ For a more detailed overview of Mulcaster's separation of education and faith, as least as much as one could separate them in the sixteenth century, see Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xv-xvii.

¹³⁶ Spenser, "Letter to Raleigh," 714.

¹³⁷ For insight into the changing educational trends near the end of the sixteenth century how Mulcaster's views on commoners and gentlemen fit within that ideological shift, see Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xxvii-xxx.

¹³⁸ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 19.

qualified to do.¹³⁹ Some of these issues are beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, the analysis my study lays out must eventually lead to the House of Holiness, where a cast of mostly women teachers re-educates Redcrosse through acts of feminine grace (or what the Catholic Church calls, following Milton, as it were, the “feminine genius”). A process of re-education is almost impossible and useless according to Mulcaster’s arguments, because human nature, especially in youth, is rebellious and repentance in old age yields a diminished return to the state. Yet, a youthful Redcrosse repents, learns, and saves Una’s parents, and continues his quests for Gloriana and Faery Land (the state). To better address these issues, readers must first err with Redcrosse and understand relevant aspects of an anti-education: its stages, its participants, and its patterns. Only when readers of the poem arrive at the House of Holiness can they appreciate the competing school of education institutionalized there and analyze the reversing qualities of the House’s correctives.

¹³⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 138; 169-84; and 141-42.

CHAPTER I

PARENTS: I SEEK THE NOURISHMENT OF WISDOM BUT SETTLE FOR THE TALK OF PROSTITUTES

This chapter that concerns parenting in the context of pre-education begins with another colloquy of Erasmus, *Puerpera* (“The New Mother”). The colloquy debates practices of mothering that relate to education as treated in Mulcaster and Spenser. The new mother, Fabulla, has hired a wet nurse to care for her just-born son, a reasonable decision by the standards of the day for a mother whose concern is the wellbeing of her child. However, Fabulla’s friend Eutrapelus warns her of the dangers of outsourcing the breastfeeding of one’s children. Through lines of arguments reflecting current debates on best practices of the time (though not necessarily followed by actual women and certainly unsound by modern medicine), Eutrapelus persuades Fabulla to nurse her child herself. During the arguments, Fabulla observes, “So far as I can see, childbearing is not so simple an affair as people commonly suppose.”¹ The litote captures the gist of the dialogue. As a new father, I was no stranger to unsolicited parenting advice, and I sympathize with Fabulla! She has a sense of how to raise her child, and others push alternate ideas.² Adopting Aristotelian thought on the “four causes” could be useful

¹ Desiderius Erasmus, “The New Mother (*Puerpera*),” in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 283.

² In addition to parenting advice that runs contrary to a mother’s best wishes for her child, these characters are written by Erasmus, a male, and backed by a literary history of male authors. Missing is the feminine and the maternal. For a more detailed overview of the government of female bodies in relationship to male bodies, especially concerning reproductive processes and nursing, see Gail Kern Paster: “In the almost exclusively male-written reproductive discourses—even those genuinely devoted to promoting the social and medical interests of the woman in travail—that misogyny is legible as discomfort with the fluids and processes of female physiology and, as I shall argue later, with the technical events of birth. In reproduction, the female body was not only different *as usual* from the male body but different from itself in a way that, at its most dangerous, threatened contamination of self and baby,” *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 173. Also see, Caroline McManus, “The ‘Carefull Nourse’: Female Piety in Spenser’s Legend of Holiness,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (January 1997): 381-406, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3817786> and Kathryn Schwarz, “Missing the Breast,” in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), 148-169; also see Elizabeth Norton who overviews nursing and childcare practices while

to think about Fabulla's situation in the context of material bodies and animation. The material cause of the child is the compositional matter itself: bones, flesh, and organs that make up its material being. The formal cause is the concept of the thing. A baby acts in certain ways and has certain characteristics or qualities expressed in the material being. The efficient cause (or causes) acts on matter—changes in the environment that influence the baby. The new mother, Fabulla, could be seen as an efficient cause—by giving birth to her son and by hiring a nurse to feed him. The nurse becomes an additional efficient cause, bringing her own influences. Eutrapelus becomes another efficient cause as she argues against the use of a wet nurse and convinces Fabulla to stop using one. The final cause is the purpose for which the thing has being. The baby holds the purpose to grow up to function within society. In the allegory, Fabulla and Eutrapelus differ on best efficient causes that could influence how the baby will ultimately express the final cause. Fabulla thinks using a wet nurse will allow the boy best to grow and achieve manhood; but Eutrapelus presents her position against the wet nurse: "The result will be that when he's older, he'll be the less willing to obey your commands and you'll care less for him—perhaps you'll see the nurse in the way he behaves."³ To determine how the child should best be influenced to express the final cause (functioning manhood), they debate their efficient causes (a combination of nursing and good conduct) to support that outcome.⁴

Erasmus's dialogue of the mother serves as an example of discourses on nursing occurring in England in the end of the sixteenth century, which understood physiological processes in terms of Aristotle and Galen. In the context of childrearing, both Mulcaster and

discussing Cecily Burbage, wet nurse to Elizabeth Tudor, second daughter of Henry VII, "Of Nurses and Nurseries," in *The Hidden Lives of Tudor Women: A Social History* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2017), 20-32.

³ Erasmus, "New Mother," 283.

⁴ I apply these terms with some broadness. The meanings are not so simple as reduced here. My purpose in using them is to provide a rudimentary vocabulary with which to discuss later on-goings in Book One of *The Faerie Queene*. For Aristotle's explanation of the four causes, see *Physics* II.3 and *Metaphysics* V.3.

Spenser believe in the final cause that is England. An English kingdom comprises English people whose education enables the country to arise out of its commonness (unanimity) to produce literary art, reflecting and enabling other achievements. Modeled on works of the classical civilizations of the Greeks and Romans, and also the more recent achievements of the Italians, works of English authors such as Spenser, educated by Mulcaster, attempt to surpass them all—thus becoming a greater power than these. Historically and culturally, much more contributes in the Elizabethan Age to the production of England’s golden age of literature. Monarchical continuity created an illusion of political stability in an age fraught at home and abroad with Catholic and Protestant conflicts. Competition for colonization of the new world and dominance of trade routes, efforts to subdue the Irish and assassination plots, and executions—a multitude of forces (efficient causes) affected how England arrived at the expression of her final cause. Not least of these was Elizabeth herself. As the new mother of England (as she cast herself), Elizabeth and her councilors debated the protection and development of the young nation.⁵ Mulcaster and Spenser, both of whom dedicate their works to Elizabeth, agree on the country’s final cause, but they differ on how best to raise up England to manifest that fully achieved and artful state of government and prosperity.

Mulcaster, after a life spent teaching the language arts, writes his treatises “concerning the training vp of children” to argue that all should be taught to read and write English. In its egalitarianism, this is a radical position, one that begins to franchise those competent in English (as opposed exclusively to those competent in Latin). Furthermore, his *Elementarie* gives the beginnings of a lexicographical analysis of the English language, a proto-dictionary that gives the

⁵ Richard Helgerson argues that England was beginning to identify itself not through the image of the monarch but through the printing of a variety of texts such as maps of England, its laws, Shakespeare’s history plays, and so on, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1-18.

spellings for over eight thousand words to encourage “the right writing of our English tung.”⁶ Mulcaster’s influence directly affects a segment of England’s youth, argues for changes in educational practices, and improves the systematization (fixing grammar and spelling) of the language he wants to legitimize. Outside of his posts as a government official, Spenser spends his life writing poetical works, fashioning himself into his country’s poet laureate, and creating an English literary canon.⁷ As Richard Helgerson argues in *Self-Crowned Laureates*, Spenser aims not to write poetry to enter the service of a patron or the courts, as amateur writers did, but to influence the state itself.⁸ Fashioning themselves (as Elyot did earlier in *The Schole Master*) as efficient causes that influence England, Mulcaster and Spenser share a certain zeal for reform. Both move to legitimize the English language to propel England in her final cause. The differences between Mulcaster and Spenser become most evident in my analysis of the House of Holiness (chapter five). In overall sentiments regarding England’s potential as a successful nation, their shared predilections can be viewed broadly in large strokes. In the finer details of their beliefs, conflicts seem to arise, especially in my culminating analysis of Book One.

⁶ Richard Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 1; and Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chiefele of the right writing of our English Tung* [. . .]. London, 1582, 166, *Early English Books Online*. Mulcaster’s position as the first English philologist has long been recognized; see Leo Wiener, “Richard Mulcaster: An Elizabethan Philologist,” *Modern Language Notes* 12, no. 3 (March 1897): 65-70, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2919446>. Compare Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 102-103. While Mulcaster’s advocacy of the teaching of English to all children can be heralded as progressive, compare Eric De Barros who argues that Mulcaster adopts Socrates’ noble lie or the necessity for those in power to lie to others to maintain that power for the benefit of the state. Mulcaster only agrees to inclusive education if poor students enter a trade and not the court. Otherwise, Mulcaster views such inclusivity as a destabilizing threat to the economic and aristocratic status quo, “(Ig)Noble Lies: Personal Historicism and Richard Mulcaster’s *Positions Concerning the Bringing Up of Children* (1581),” *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education* 20, no. 3 (September 2013): 317–26, doi:10.1080/1358684X.2013.816530.

⁷ For Stephen Greenblatt’s argument that “in sixteenth-century England there were both [essential] selves and a sense that they could be fashioned,” see *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 1.

⁸ Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 27.

Book One of *The Faerie Queene* supplies several different portraits of England, most important to the present analysis, the Redcrosse Knight as Saint George. Like the baby in the colloquy of “The New Mother,” Redcrosse begins his representational work as a young person and has several characters who have competing ideas of how to guide his growth. Thus, the future of England in the poem is always in debate through allegorical representation. The final cause of Redcrosse, at least in terms of his maturing to adulthood, is to slay the dragon terrorizing Una’s kingdom, but he then continues on, serving God and country. Redcrosse sees a vision of the New Jerusalem that cannot be attained on earth and, guided by that, continues to serve Gloriana after his betrothal to Una. Recognizing the dragon allegorically as an obstacle to education’s full flowering in English art, readers of the poem can see how Redcrosse completes the St. George legend (as a patron of the country) in the victory over the dragon. The young person has grown into the final cause of a mature man, completing Spenser’s desired final image of England, but like Spenser himself, Redcrosse must continue giving a lifetime of service to the state. We know where Redcrosse is headed in the poem, but we should also ask what we are working with at the beginning of his quest. In terms of education, what is the condition of Redcrosse or of the state of England at the beginning of Book One?

Parenting Practices Relating to Una (and Redcrosse)

Spenser’s “Letter to Raleigh” provides a picture of the formal cause of the Redcrosse Knight since the letter operates as a guide to *The Faerie Queene*. In the “Letter,” Spenser describes Redcrosse twice as “clownish,” which A. C. Hamilton glosses as rustic.⁹ Spenser casts the young Redcrosse as socially maladapted, awaiting a quest in Gloriana’s court: “[H]e rested

⁹ Edmund Spenser, “A Letter of the Authors expounding his *whole intention in the course of this worke* [. . .], in *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), 717; A. C. Hamilton, ed., *The Faerie Queene*, by Edmund Spenser, rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), 717.61n.

him on the floore, vnfitte [unfit] through his rusticity for a better place.”¹⁰ The description casts the youth as low in status—not the most accomplished of knights. The description of the youth cast off in a corner contrasts to the calls to action of the other knights described in the “Letter.” The Faery Queene readily dispatches Guyon, who “went forth.” Scudamour goes on the third quest, though he becomes bound by “hard Enchantments”; he is rescued, the “Letter” observes matter-of-factly, by Britomart.¹¹ Redcrosse’s clownishness appears early in the poem itself at the beginning of Book One. He sits his horse insecurely, becomes lost, stumbles through his first fight, and does not know his parentage. In his letter to Raleigh, Spenser states that the knight changes in status due to the armor loaned him, “which being forthwith put vpon him [. . .], he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the Lady [Una].”¹²

Redcrosse is far from who he should become in actuality. His rusticity, his inexperience with his knightly accoutrements, and his nearness to the ground in Gloriana’s court suggest his origins revealed later as, *Georgos*, “earth tiller” (he was found by a plowman in a field).¹³ As a type of Adam, a man made from clay—autochthonous—Redcrosse’s nature and his origins situate him far from what he must become, a defeater of dragons, a second Adam, a Christ.¹⁴ Although there are many lenses through which to view Redcrosse’s progress from potential to an actual and accomplished life, the common thread is one of maturation or embodied experiential learning.¹⁵ In *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, Nohnberg points out that

¹⁰ Spenser, “Letter to Raleigh,” 717.

¹¹ Spenser, “Letter to Raleigh,” 717-18.

¹² Spenser, “Letter to Raleigh,” 717.

¹³ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Qveene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), bk.1, canto 10, st. 66; and Robert Kellogg, “Red Cross Knight,” in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 588.

¹⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. I, canto 10, st. 66.

¹⁵ For overviews of other such overarching movements, see Kellogg: Redcrosse’s quest can be read as an allegory of the “making of a Protestant Saint,” *The Faerie Queene* as romance allows Redcrosse to love and seek Una as the true Church of which there were two in the historical moment, the Protestant (true)

Redcrosse's arms and emblem identify him as St. George among other analogues, but his early actions reveal him to be a type of the "high fool."¹⁶ Nohrnberg writes, "The high fool, or saintly *simplicissimus*, is a character on whom much depends, who nevertheless does not know well what he is about or who he is. His adventures take the form of misadventures, and there is always an element of backwardness in his forwardness."¹⁷ If Redcrosse is "simple" and must achieve by mishap, then we are left to consider how the first stage of his education, in Mulcaster the parental, affects or has affected Redcrosse as an efficient cause of his development.

At the beginning of Book One, Redcrosse quickly encounters a series of adult figures he may confuse in parental roles: Una, Error, Duessa, and Archimago. Though they are several, their numbers fall into a dichotomy—the one (Una) and the others. Hamilton glosses the Latin *una* as "one," and Douglas Brooks-Davies as "oneness."¹⁸ Brooks-Davies contrasts the unity of Una with the "duality and multiplicity" of Error, Archimago, and Duessa.¹⁹ Error has copious

and the Roman (false in many Protestant eyes), and so on, "Red Cross Knight," 588. Also, see Brooks-Davies who discusses Redcrosse's quest for holiness and the knight's movement from fallen sinner to one undergoing repentance and sanctification, *Spenser's Faerie Queene: A Critical Commentary on Books I and II* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1977), 9-10.

¹⁶ James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 261. EBSCOhost.

¹⁷ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 262. Michel Foucault discusses the trope of the fool in *Madness and Civilization*. Writing on the history of mental illness from the late medieval period to the end of the eighteenth century, Foucault analyzes the imagery of the Ship of Fools in art and in history. In art, fools or madmen traveled down a river on a ship, imagining themselves as heroes in pursuit of reward or truth. Historic reality was less kind as towns drove their unwanted away by placing them on boats and shipping them elsewhere (19-20). The fool, however, becomes a purveyor of truth. Foucault notes that "the character of the Madman, the Fool, or the Simpleton assumes more and more importance. He is no longer simply a ridiculous and familiar silhouette in the wings: he stands center stage as the guardian of truth-playing here a role which is the complement and converse of that taken by madness in the tales and the satires. If folly leads each man into a blindness where he is lost, the madman, on the contrary, reminds each man of his truth [. . .] (25)," *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 15-48.

¹⁸ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.1.45.9.n.; Douglas Brooks-Davies, "Una," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 704.

¹⁹ Brooks-Davies, "Una," 705.

offspring and “many boughtes [coils]” in her tail that ends with a sting.²⁰ Archimago creates false dreams, even a false Una, and Duessa enters as Una’s foil.²¹ The subject of the book, holiness, relates to wholeness; characters who serve as multiple foils to Una cause Redcrosse to despair and dis-pair—tempting him to go off in myriad different directions.²²

While Mulcaster does not dedicate much time in *Positions* to discussing parents, and even less in *Elementarie*, he clearly establishes their place in his educational system. In *Elementarie*, he divides learning into two parts: “knowledge, to encrease vnderstanding” and “behaviour to enlarge vertew [virtue].”²³ Knowledge is wholly the responsibility of the teacher—it is “proper to his office without participation of anie parent”; nonetheless, Mulcaster admits that “a wise and a learned parent be the verie best part of the verie best teacher.”²⁴ The teacher directs students’ conduct—his “profession smels of iudgement, and giues abilitie to direct.”²⁵ However, the primary responsibility for conduct belongs to the parent “as of nearest care & most certain autoritie [authority] ouer their own children.”²⁶ Continuing his emphasis on division of childcare labors, in *Positions*, Mulcaster claims that teachers and parents have differing responsibilities concerning a child’s physical health and education. While the teacher

²⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 15, line 3.

²¹ Brooks-Davies, “Una,” 704-5.

²² Susanne L. Wofford, “*The Faerie Queene*, Books I-III,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser*, ed. Andrew Hadfield (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2001), 119. Nohrnberg discusses the scriptural connection between perfection and wholeness and the implications of a holiness that demands following *only God*, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 277-82.

²³ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 4.

²⁴ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 5. In discussing the role of parents in education, Mulcaster does not imply that parents usurp the authority of the school master or that educators should marry—teachers are historically single (celibate). Mulcaster argues that teachers are responsible for imparting learning—knowledge and behavior—while the “chefe performance & practising [of behavior] is cōmitted vnto parents, as of nearest care & most certain autoritie ouer their own children. For the moning childe hath verie manie waies to shift from his teacher, vpon verie many small and verie light occasions, God he knoweth: but he hath no mean at all to shake of his parents, without losse of his liuing,” *Elementarie*, 5.

²⁵ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 5.

²⁶ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 4.

should oversee physical exercise and training, “diet to avoide inward dangers, and clothing to avert outward injuries,” Mulcaster gives the main responsibility “over to parentes, and other well willers” who will help in the physical upbringing of children.²⁷ Lastly, Mulcaster addresses the subject of when children should begin their studies at school. He does not give a set age, “bycause ripenes in children, is not tyed to one time, no more then all corne is ripe for one reaping.”²⁸ Instead, Mulcaster sees one of natural charges of parents as the “care before schoole, and [the] choice in schooling” of their children, and he gives parents a set of criteria by which to judge their children’s readiness to begin formal education.²⁹

How does Una fit the definition of a parent within the criteria Mulcaster sets? What type of parent does Una become in the context of these requirements? How does she exhibit care overall for Redcrosse: does she become the very best, wise parent who supports the knowledge-giving teacher while retaining a special authority over her child concerning conduct? Does she provide food and clothing, and does she judge competently in preparing her child for a formal education (in the House of Holiness, for instance)? To explore these questions, the period’s beliefs on nursing, and how childcare informs education, I now turn.

Defining the terms “parent” and “nurse” is essential to the following analysis. While “parent” varies in meaning—referring to an ancestor, guardian, and/or progenitor—for the purpose of this analysis, I mean one who assumes certain basic responsibilities regardless of biological relation.³⁰ A nurse is a nourisher, one who *raises up* a child by providing for their physical well-being through adequate food, clothing, and shelter. The upbringing can include

²⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 56.

²⁸ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 31.

²⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 30.

³⁰ “parent, n. and adj.2,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed November 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/137816.

educational and spiritual provisions. There is an overlapping of terms in early modern childcare. Fathers nurse their children as well as mothers; a wet nurse cannot provide milk unless she is also a parent. A nurse's motherhood does not mean she is the biological parent to the child she is nursing at any given moment. "Dry nurses" are those who do not provide physical nourishment through breastmilk but focus rather on a child's education and physical care outside of breastfeeding.³¹ Paster delves into the period's understanding of the "raising up" process and "the complex sequence of events surrounding childbirth."

This sequence begins at conception with two biological parents and their offspring, extends through a period of infant dependency, and ends at weaning. Such is the history of nurture, however, that weaning, too, requires preliminary definition. Because an influential segment of parents during this period sent their babies out to wet nurses soon after birth, weaning in those cases occurred separately from mother and child. [Paster is] interested, then, in a narrative of gestation, birth, and two possible weanings—the early weaning of mother from child, the later one of child from wet nurse.³²

These biological and sociological relationships that oversaw (perhaps competed for) the wellbeing of children were somewhat fluid and class-specific.

In "The 'Carefull Nurse,'" McManus points to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century belief that "godly women should nurture their children both physically, by breast-feeding, and metaphorically, by catechizing and teaching."³³ In other words, those who perform the "nurse-function"—whether a biological parent or a nurse not related to the child—are responsible for both the physical and spiritual nourishment. Furthermore, according to McManus, "moralists throughout the period" urged aristocratic women to nurse their children, and doing so "reaffirmed the classical notion that a woman imparted, along with her milk, her own character

³¹ See the Introduction for a more substantial definition of nurse.

³² Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, 166.

³³ McManus, "Carefull Nurse" 382.

to a nursing child.”³⁴ Una holds to these precepts. Her character is positioned (allegorized) maternally and positively, especially from a Protestant perspective, as Truth, as the True Faith, as the Church of England, and as Elizabeth I. Under the allegorical images, she is of “Royal lynage [lineage],” an aristocratic woman who figuratively (perhaps exceptionally, given the cultural norms) nurses her child spiritually by using the Word of God.³⁵

The earliest example of Una as nurse occurs in the wandering woods when Una warns Redcrosse not to enter Error’s cave. Una places herself in a morally superior position of giving advice, and she uses scripturally coded language and proverbial utterances in her warning to Redcrosse.³⁶ J. Dixon equates Una’s opening lines of “Be well aware” to Ephesians 5:15: “Take hede therefore that ye walke circumspectly, not as fooles, but as wise.”³⁷ Una continues to align allegorically with the figure of Wisdom; she declares self-reflexively, “Yet wisdom warnes” before providing additional supervision to Redcrosse’s conduct.³⁸ Una embodies the Wisdom of Proverbs—the first nine chapters of Proverbs present advice to a young man at a threshold moment in life. He is at the age of choosing a wife; he must choose between gaining knowledge through pursuing Wisdom (personified in the female form) or rejecting her for a “strange” woman, the Harlot of apostasy (the pursuit of foreign gods).

As Lady Wisdom, Una becomes collapsed with Mulcaster’s wise parent who cares for her child and governs behavior, especially as a nurse who can deliver scriptural edification. The

³⁴ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 390.

³⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 5, line 3. Brooks-Davies writes, “Una’s lineage alludes to Isaiah 49:23: ‘And Kings shalbe thy nourcing fathers, and Quenes shalbe thy nources’ (Geneva gloss: ‘Meaning, that Kings shalbe converted to ye Gospel and bestow their power, & autoritie for the preservation of the Church’),” *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 16.

³⁶ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 393.

³⁷ John Dixon, *The First Commentary on The Faerie Queene*, (1964), quoted in Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.1.12.1n.; Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 12, line 1; Eph. 5:15.

³⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 13, line 4.

Geneva gloss for Proverbs 1:20 identifies Wisdom as “the eternal worde of God.” Leeway in the allegory needs to be allowed—Lady Wisdom is figured as a wife and Una (prenuptially) operates similarly as spousal support. As allegorical figures, Una and Redcrosse can embody multiple and sometimes competing concepts. McManus labels Redcrosse a “child-husband” whom Una must nurse as a mother and a wife.³⁹ She specifically points to the Geneva gloss of Proverbs 31:26: “[The virtuous wife’s] tongue is as a boke whereby one might learne a manie [many] good things: for she deliteth to talke of the worde of God.”⁴⁰ No matter the precise social role, Una is more to Redcrosse than just a helpful travel companion who drops scriptural advice from time to time. As mother or as wife, she is Wisdom (an efficient cause), shaping the course of Redcrosse’s future, but this shaping requires on her part a healthy amount of disciplining of conduct. Una constantly teaches Redcrosse, truths he mostly ignores, she searches for Redcrosse when he has separated from her, and she physically rebukes him (snatching the weapon he turns on himself) when needed.⁴¹ Wisdom in Proverbs cries at the city gates to any who will hear her words of “correction:”

Wisdom cryeth without: she vtterth [utters] her voice in the stretes. She calleth in the hye [high] street *among* the prease [press—people] in the entrings of the gates; & vttereth her words in the citie, *saying*, O ye foolish, how long wil ye loue foolishness? & the skorneful [scornful] take their pleasure in skorning, & the fooles hate knowledge? (Turne you at my correction: lo, I wil powre [pour] out my minde vnto you, & make you vnderstand my words). Because I haue called, and ye refused: I have stretched out mine hand, and one wolde regarde. But ye haue despised all my counsel, & wolde none of my correction.⁴²

³⁹ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 401.

⁴⁰ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 399-400.

⁴¹ As a feminine icon, Una also slips into the roles of the Church betrothed to Christ and the Queen governing England, but again these roles are disposed to be read as spousal or maternal. I am not concerned with how these roles affect the dispensing of wisdom because in every case she still has an accountability to wisdom and that is of import.

⁴² Prov. 1:20-25 (The Geneva Bible, 1560).

Wisdom calls to those who will listen; fools ignore her. While Una is not at the gates of a city nor in an urban setting, she does stand at the entrance to Error's cave crying out her wisdom to a fool.

Nohrnberg examines the Error episode as an opening miniature that encompasses the entire action of the poem. As such, the beginning of the poem and the Error episode (working with Spenser's "Letter to Releigh") operate as thresholds where readers enter Faery Land and where Redcrosse begins his quest proper.⁴³ In this threshold setting, Una functions as guide in this transitional moment for both reader and Redcrosse, and she supplies educational warnings similar to Wisdom's raising her voice at the gate so that "none can pretend ignorance."⁴⁴ The messages to the layered levels of audience are nearly antithetical: readers are alerted to pay attention and continue reading. The message for Redcrosse is to listen-up sharply and go no further (or less contrastively, to continue your journey by seeking the path elsewhere). Yet, Redcrosse ignores the corrections of Wisdom, stumbles to a victory, and in ignorance abandons Una. He does not escape error's tangled train. Wisdom in Proverbs provides a rough outline of what will happen to Redcrosse, and as a subtext, shapes Error episode positively: Wisdom will "deliuer thee [those who listen] from the euil way."⁴⁵

Wisdom, however, does not keep Redcrosse safe as he ignores Una's warnings, and he must learn truth through hard experience. He soon meets Archimago, a type of "the man that

⁴³ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 135-36. For a similar reading of the openings of *The Divine Comedy* and *The Faerie Queene*, see A. C. Hamilton: "Essentially, then, each episode is an initiation: the candidate wanders in a labyrinth or maze which prepares him for his salvation. It initiates the poet also by committing him to his kind of allegory. Further, it initiates the reader by offering a brief allegory of what is to come, and by teaching him the art of reading allegory," *The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 31.

⁴⁴ Geneva gloss for Prov. 1:20.

⁴⁵ Prov. 2:12.

speaketh froward [perverse or unreasonable] things.”⁴⁶ He goes with the reckless crowd—
 “them that leaue the waies of righteousnes to walke in the waies of darkenes: Which reioyce in
 doing euil, & delite in the frowardnes of the wicked, Whose waies are croked and they are
 lewde in their paths.”⁴⁷ In the wandering woods, Redcrosse has left the straight path; thus, most
 characters he encounters there walk, or ride ineptly, but those already identified in the
 introduction as his anti-parents and anti-teachers merit special consideration. They also come
 under the label of nurse and should dispense educational nourishment. I do not want to jump
 too far ahead in my analysis of these characters (considered in chapters 2, 3, and 4,
 respectively), but all of them fail under this title, especially in how they either neglect or pervert
 the use of language and scripture, subjugating Redcrosse to a mental darkness.

The Geneva gloss for the passage in Proverbs identifies the “righteous way” as “the
 worde of God, [which] is the onelie [only] light;” those who leave it “followe their own fantasies
 [which] are darkenes.” Nohrnberg associates wisdom in the Errour episode with light and one
 who defeats serpentine dragons, specifically referring to Apollo killing Python. The image that
 snakes its way from the classical through the medieval to the sixteenth century is dragon (or
 daemon) error brought into the revealing light of truth (wisdom).⁴⁸ It is when Redcrosse has left
 the clear path and Una, who in this context has amassed the titles of parent, nurturer, Wisdom,
 Word of God, and light, that he encounters Duessa, whose words mislead—“the strange
 woman,” she “flattereth with her wordes” and her “house tendeth to death, & her paths vnto

⁴⁶ Prov. 2:12.

⁴⁷ Prov. 2:13-5.

⁴⁸ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 141-42.

the dead."⁴⁹ Duessa guides Redcrosse to the bone-strewn House of Pride, to Despaire and to suicide.⁵⁰

Una eventually returns to Redcrosse, at which point he is mostly ready to hear. She must still forcefully take the knife from his hand, a physical act of correction that returns Redcrosse to the right path.⁵¹ The passage does not indicate how Una grabs the knife, whether it is with her left or right hand; but among Wisdom's blessings in Proverbs, one finds that "Length of daies is in her right hand."⁵² The Geneva gloss for the passage reads, "Meaning he that seketh wisdom: that is, sufferth [allows] him self to be gouerned by the worde of God, shal haue all prosperitie both corporal and spiritual." The full context of the verse links wisdom with long life and material and spiritual gain; however, here as elsewhere, in the Geneva glosses of Proverbs wisdom becomes equated with the Word of God. As a parent to Redcrosse, Una's responsibility is to educate and nurse him on spiritual matters. She does this from the opening of the poem to its end by relating to him scripture and modeling emblems of wisdom. The result of her efforts is that she brings renewed life to Redcrosse, fulfilling her role as Wisdom as the Paraclete.

Una fulfills Mulcaster's requirements of being the very best parent who is wise, provides general care, and guides behavior. The overlapping of congruent imagery such as breastfeeding, book reading, and light-guiding suggests that she is. I examine a sixteenth-century printer's device that exhibits the emblems relating to Una to belabor the point for a moment longer.

⁴⁹ Prov. 2:16;18.

⁵⁰ After Duessa has seduced Redcrosse, and Orgoglio captured the knight, Una meets Arthur and relates her story, which situates Duessa firmly as her foil and as the Harlot of Proverbs. Of Redcrosse, she says that he left her (Wisdom) to "wander [. . .] other bywaies [. . .] / Where neuer foote of liuing wight did tread; / That brought not back the balefull body dead; / In which him chaunced false Duessa meete, / mine onely foe [. . .]," Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 50, lines 2-7.

⁵¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 52.

⁵² Prov. 3:16.



Figure 1.1. Framed printing device of a woman holding a book and candle from *The Court of Venus*. Cleanest version appears near end of book.⁵³

⁵³ John Rolland, *Ane Treatise Callit the Court of Venus Deuidit into Four Buikis, Newlie Compylit be Iohne Rolland in Dalkeith Edinburgh, be Iohne Ros, 1575*, *Early English Books Online*.

The framed device of a woman holding a book and candle was used by John Ross, a Scottish printer operating out of Edinburgh from 1574 to 1580. Although my focus has been emblems of Protestant England, those of Scotland can give insight. Due to financial stresses or desire for quality, Scotland imported much of its type, ornaments, and engravings from England.⁵⁴ Furthermore, this particular device passed to other printers after Ross's death, seeing use as late as 1699.⁵⁵ While the device made its mark within Scotland, the emblems of which it is comprised have been widely recognizable in England as well. The illuminated woman has her right breast exposed, signifying her role/identity as a nurturer. She is offering those who come to her edifying nourishment not only with the book she bears in hand but within the book in which she is printed. The woman holds a book in her right hand, *Verbum Dei* (The Word of God), and in her left hand a candle she uses to illuminate the book. Biblically, the Word of God and a light source (often intelligence) work together to guide: "Thy worde is a lanterne vnto my fete, and a light vnto my path."⁵⁶ The Geneva gloss to the verse states, "Of our selues we are but darkenes, and can not se, except we be lightened with Gods worde." Any one of these attributes (books, candles, bared breast) can be understood to signify wisdom. In *The Faerie Queene*, the attributes gather together to firmly present Una as Wisdom. She is the good attendant nurse, she teaches from the good Book, and she shines light; she reveals error and keeps those who

⁵⁴ Alastair J. Mann, "The Anatomy of the Printed Book in Early Modern Scotland," *The Scottish Historical Review* 80, no. 210 (October 2001): 184, <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/stable/25531044>. Also see Hugh William Davies whose seminal work clarifies terminology related to printing such as device, symbol, emblem, and personification, *Devices of the Early Printers 1457-1560: Their History and Development* (London: Grafton and Company, 1935). Especially important to the current analysis is that symbols obscure ideas just as much as they reveal them (77). A symbol's history—or the creator's intent for that symbol—might be veiled to its current viewer (102-3).

⁵⁵ Edwin Elliott Willoughby, "The Cover Design," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 9, no. 2 (April 1939): 205, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4302573>.

⁵⁶ Ps. 119:105.

cling to her from evil ways.⁵⁷ The motto on the border of the printer's device bears the message: *Veritas vincet tandem*: "Truth will conquer in the end."⁵⁸

To argue that Una physically cares for Redcrosse according to Mulcaster's prescripts through the provision of food and clothing is a bit trickier. The figure of Una lacks overt breastfeeding imagery as is found in the likes of Charissa, for instance, whose "necke and brests were euer open bare."⁵⁹ McManus classifies Una as a dry nurse who tends for the overall care of a child or children rather than a wet nurse who breastfeeds a single child.⁶⁰ Wet or dry, as an allegorical figure, Una sustains Redcrosse on the Word of God. Removed from this nourishment, Redcrosse as an allegorical figure starves. The physical and spiritual messages operate simultaneously, through the same descriptive details. In Faery Land, scriptural passages such as those from Matthew 4:4, when Jesus rebukes Satan during the wilderness temptation, operate as subtexts, embracing the seemingly seamless qualities of continuous meanings, allegorical and literal: "Man shal not liue by bread onely, but by euerie worde that procedeth out of the mouth of God."⁶¹ In giving Redcrosse his armor, more than just with a physical covering, Una girds him in spiritual protection without which he would die morally from exposure to evil's influence. Even Redcrosse's enemies acknowledge the armor's power. During his battle with Redcrosse, Sansfoy yells,

Curse on that Crosse [armor] (quoth then the *Sarazin*)
That keepes thy body from the bitter fitt;

⁵⁷ John N. King mentions that "Una never carries a Bible, but she characteristically voices proverbs and admonitions drawn from scriptures," *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 63. In other words, Una is not a woman with a book but is woman as book.

⁵⁸ Willoughby, "Cover Design," 205.

⁵⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 30, line 7.

⁶⁰ McManus, "Carefull Nourse," 383; 389-90.

⁶¹ Also see, Deut. 8:3.

Dead long ygoe I wote thou haddest bin,
Had not that charme from thee forwarned itt.⁶²

The final duty Mulcaster assigns to parents, and the last by which I wish to examine Una in this context, is to judge when children are to begin their formal education. This educational duty is linked to nursing (understood broadly) and requires further discussion. As we have seen, a lengthy objection to wet nurses culminates Erasmus's "The New Mother." Of the numerous reasons Eutrapelus objects to them, the majority create conflicts between (what Foucault might call) the mother and the nurse functions. Eutrapelus says nursing is the natural duty of the mother, thus, implying wet nursing an unnatural act. Not nursing, she argues, will cause Fabulla to become less than a "half-mother:" the "better part of childbearing is the nursing of the tender baby, for he's nourished not only with milk but by the fragrance of the mother's body [. . .] He needs that now familiar, recognized fluid which he absorbed in her body and by which he grew strong."⁶³ In other words, the child's health and security depend on his relationship to the mother's body, and the mother can be most complete and loving only by tending her own child. Allowing the intrusion of a wet nurse into the relationship divides child from mother and mother from child and her own nature (according to Erasmus and the discourses more generally).⁶⁴

⁶² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 18, lines 1-4.

⁶³ Erasmus, "New Mother," 282-83.

⁶⁴ Craig R. Thompson details the sources for Erasmus's views on nursing and the outline of Eutrapelus's remonstrations to Fabulla, in particular that it falls into three categories: "[Nursing] is against the law and nature of God; it is bad for the physical and spiritual health of the child; it is bad for the health of the mother," *Colloquies in Collected Works of Erasmus*, vols. 39-40 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 612n31. A subtext here is 1 Kings 3:16-28, where two women who dispute ownership of a child and go to King Solomon to settle the matter; he asks for a sword, commanding the baby be cut in half so each woman can be justly satisfied: "Then spake the woman, whose the liuing child was, vnto the King, for her compassion was kindled toward her sonne, & she said, Oh my lord, giue her the liuing childe, and slay him not: but the other said, Let it be nether mine nor thine, but deuide it" (1 Kings 3:26). Instead of a half mother, we have the threat of a divided child and a mother's love that would willingly cause her to be severed from her infant, but the just king rules correctly and reunites mother and child: "Then the King answered, I said, Give her the living childe, and slay him not: this is his mother" (1 Kings 3:27).

The core argument is a moral one: good mothers rear good children. If mothers are good, they should not let someone else nurse their children. As Paster points out in *The Body Embarrassed*, issues of class complicate the debate. For most women of the period, breastfeeding their children is business as usual. Paster writes, “The majority of mothers nursed their own babies out of custom and economic necessity; in so doing, they were serving food, satisfying nature, rather than exercising choice.”⁶⁵ As such, their nursing cannot be read as holding any ethical or moral significance.⁶⁶ However, upper-class women did have choices. Representations of nursing or not nursing become signs to be read in this context.⁶⁷ The wet nurse, sourced from a lower class, could be read morally too: choosing to accept a commercial contract, she placed restrictions on her body (such as not nursing any other children besides those of her client).⁶⁸ McManus notes that Una, along with other women in Book One, who are upheld for their “appropriation of biblical precepts[,] are of high social standing.”⁶⁹ However, we cannot categorically condemn women when children are off nursing (looking for sustenance) elsewhere. Una did not willfully send a child away. Instead, the simpleton Redcrosse chose to leave her faithful attention. Una, as an aspect of, a loving and complete mother, tirelessly searches for her lost child. Redcrosse, however, increasingly becomes, less whole—hollowed out if we use the language Spenser provides—as he continues to pursue strange nurses. While Redcrosse does abandon Una, an act that allegorically equates to apostasy, he does so paradoxically because he wanted only her. When he sees a false Una having sex, mistaking the

⁶⁵ Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, 199.

⁶⁶ Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, 199.

⁶⁷ “[M]ost families of means sent their newborns away for a period of up to three years and visited them only occasionally during that time,” Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, 199. Reasons for not breastfeeding varied from beliefs that the first milk, colostrum, was bad for the infant to the desire of aristocratic women (or perhaps the men viewing them) to maintain small youthful breasts, Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, 194, 203-7.

⁶⁸ Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, 199.

⁶⁹ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 384.

apparition for Una, he burns with a “gealous fire.”⁷⁰ His distorting and unbridled passion leads him to a mistake from which he cannot easily recover, as it separates him from the natural parent he is dependent on. On the issue of young children learning and failing, Mulcaster cites Quintilian:

[I]f theie be trubled sometime, or fail in something, yet it is with their mindes, as it is with their bodies, soon down and soon vp again, & lightlie without harm, if their nurses and trainers be redie at their hand. For the childern[sic], which whē[n] theie be from their ouerseers must deall of themselues, ar by litle and litle to be committed to thē[m]selues to learn to do that betimes, which theie must deall with euer after, yet while theie ar yoū[n]g, & hollie [wholly] vnder charge, their falts com rather by negligence of such, as haue charge ouer them, then of their own selues, which cannot rule themselues.⁷¹

Redcrosse as a young person can make mistakes and fall down—that is the nature of children. They seem to bounce onto their feet again, especially when those who care for them are ready to lend a hand.

Even though Una’s validity as a mother cannot too closely be questioned, her influence as an efficient cause does falter. Kathryn Schwarz points to multiple sources of the period which claim that the nurse’s breast has sway even over the forming power of pregnancy and birth to transform children into the nurse’s image.⁷² Schwarz states, “In giving nursing this extraordinary formative efficacy, medical texts and midwives’ manuals suggest that mothers who send their children to wet nurses risk not only the child’s health but its hereditary identity.”⁷³ By giving him the armor of God, Una transformed Redcrosse into the image of St. George. In that sense, she

⁷⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 5, line 6.

⁷¹ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 37. Discussing the workload of a student, Quintilian argues that a child should study multiple subjects at once since a child’s mind is more pliable than an adult’s and because knowledge, if not practiced, is lost. Quintilian uses the image of children falling to the ground and then immediately jumping up to play to contrast the heavier bodies of adults that do not recover so quickly from such falls, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.12.1-11.

⁷² Schwarz, “Missing the Breast,” 152-53.

⁷³ Schwarz, “Missing the Breast,” 153.

births his iconic identity. The foolish, or childish, knight must still undergo a process of education to comprehend his identity and grow into his armor, and his nurses harbor in this process a greater effect over him than his true parent. He eventually casts aside the armor Una gave him—the “bloodie Cross” and shield that shows “soueraine hope.”⁷⁴ The dichotomy between Una as Wisdom and other female nurses in the poem who inhabit roles of strangers and prostitutes characterizes much of Redcrosse’s growth in the book. While not exactly inviting nurses of the traditional sort in, Una does outfit Redcrosse to begin his quest, which exposes him to anti-nurses. In knowing the danger Redcrosse must face, does Una judge well in choosing Redcrosse and starting him on this quest, or is he a child unready for school due to his age and temperament?

In *Positions*, Mulcaster addresses children’s readiness (and unreadiness) for formal education. He compares the danger of starting school too early “to winne an houre in the morning, and lease [lose] the whole daie after: as those people most commonly do, which start out of their beds to early, before they be well awaked [. . .].”⁷⁵ The idea that a parent could begin a child’s education too early and thus damage the child or harm them is applicable, especially with the analogy Mulcaster uses. Although Redcrosse begins the poem at a gallop, he immediately seeks rest once leaving Archimago’s house, quickly settling into slothfulness. The imagery of Redcrosse beginning the poem at a gallop, his “angry steede [chiding] his foming bitt,” gains light from Judith H. Anderson’s analysis: Redcrosse’s “pricking” steed, at least in description, vastly outstrips Una’s donkey, the lamb Una is leading, and the dwarf who is on

⁷⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 2, lines 1, 6.

⁷⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 31-32.

foot, causing them to be left “in his dust.”⁷⁶ Redcrosse wakes too early from his dreams at the hermitage of Archimago. His sense not “well awaked,” he flees from Una, and becomes seduced by Duessa, who introduces him to Idlennesse, on whom Redcrosse then models bad behavior. As with much bad behavior learned young, the negative consequences do not exhibit fully until later, and such is the case here. I will examine Redcrosse’s idleness in full in the next chapter, maintaining focus for now on Redcrosse as a child still under Una’s early care.

In describing the readiness of children for formal education, Mulcaster uses several potential scenarios involving variations of mental and physical abilities. He consistently focuses on the wit (mind) and the body as signifiers of whether a child can attend school.⁷⁷ The parent who has a child with a strong mind and weak body should wait until the child is physically well enough to study; otherwise, intense study will send him to an early grave.⁷⁸ The “meane conceiver [intermediate learner], in some strength of bodie,” should receive schooling with “ordinarie regard.”⁷⁹ Of the worst condition, a weak mind and body, Mulcaster says it is “much to be moaned.”⁸⁰ Mulcaster consistently assumes his readers hold the humanist expectations

⁷⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 1, line 6; Judith H. Anderson, “‘A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine’: The Chaucerian Connection,” *English Literary Renaissance* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1985): 167, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43447155>.

⁷⁷ Wit in this context is the “faculty of thinking and reasoning in general; mental capacity, understanding, intellect, reason.” “wit, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/229567. Mulcaster’s dual focus on physical health and mental improvement has an Aristotelian basis in the *Body and Soul*. For an overview of this connection, see William Barker, introduction to *Positions Concerning the Training up of Children*, by Richard Mulcaster, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), xvii-xxi.

⁷⁸ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 32.

⁷⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 32. “Meane” in this context most likely carries the connotation of quality, thus, this is an ordinary and average student. In the early modern period, *mean* does carry an additional connotation of “inferior in ability, learning, perception, etc.” “mean, adj.2,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/115439. Even though Mulcaster is discussing learning abilities, and an inferior learner would fit that context, the ordinary student falls between the strong-witted sick child and the weak-witted strong child in Mulcaster’s ordering. He is a mathematical mean of the two, which in this case implies ordinary.

⁸⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 33.

that these students will serve the state after their education, so if they are incapable of doing so, or worse unwilling to do, then an education or higher education should not be wasted on them. In Aristotelian terms, Mulcaster's envisioned final cause for students' learning is governmental service; he provides parents (efficient causes) parameters to judge their children's educational aptitude based on wit and health, aspects of the child itself (the formal cause). The best child is one who possesses a "strong witte" and "as strong a bodie."⁸¹

Classifying Redcrosse's readiness is troublesome. He is of strong body, especially after donning the armor of God. He may have difficulty controlling his horse and wielding his weaponry, but these aspects of physical education would be learned in school (training). We cannot fault him for having the motor skills of a young person if allegorically he may be read as one. Later in the quest, he does become physically weak and sick, but this does not reflect badly on his formal cause at the beginning or his final cause that he is moving toward. As Isaiah puts the point, "Euen the yong men shal faint, and be wearie, and the yong men shal stumble and fall."⁸² Furthermore, Mulcaster gives instructions on how to use exercise to repair the health of children who become sick, so setbacks were natural and expected in the lives of young people.⁸³

Whatever we may say about Redcrosse's physical capabilities, we can be more certain of his intellectual ones. A fool as noted by Nohnberg, the young knight perhaps best classifies as Mulcaster's "dull witte in a strong body."⁸⁴ Not guilty of Redcrosse's faithlessness, neither does Una appear to be a bad judge according to the terms Mulcaster sets forth for this type of child. Redcrosse is physically able and, though dull witted, capable of learning. Mulcaster explains that this type of child should go on to learn "for necessarie service in the rest of his life," for his body

⁸¹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 33.

⁸² Isa. 40:30.

⁸³ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 114-19.

⁸⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 32.

will be good for labor and his wit is not so bad that it cannot receive knowledge.⁸⁵ Una selects her knight, births him iconically via a process of adorning him with identity-granting armor that also clothes him, nourishes him on biblical wisdoms and precepts, and sets him off to learn.

Serious problems begin to arise when Redcrosse ignores Una's warnings at the entrance of Errour's cave. The narrator observes a pattern of dysregulated emotions leading to rash behavior:

But full of fire and greedy hardiment [boldness],
The youthfull knight could not for ought be staide,
But forth vnto the darksom hole he went,
And looked in [. . .].⁸⁶

Nohrnberg notes the subtext of Ecclesiasticus 21:22-23 in the episode of Una's warning and Redcrosse ignoring it:

Yet wisdomes warnes, whilst foot is in the gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.⁸⁷

The scriptural passage in the Geneva highlights the role of nurture in experience: "A foolish mans fote is sone in [his neighbour's] house: but a man of experience is ashamed to loke in. A foole wil pepe in at the dore into the house: but he that is wel nurtured, wil stand without."⁸⁸ Redcrosse might be excused for not having experience because he is young, naturally inexperienced. Education is after all the process of gaining experience and, one hopes, learning from it to gain wisdom. In the sixteenth century, this educational process (learning by mistakes) would at some point involve training in declining temptation. For as much as Mulcaster secularizes the purpose of education by emphasizing service to the state, he still unites training and virtue: "This concordance betwene the parent at home, and the teacher in school for the

⁸⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 32-3.

⁸⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 14, lines 1-4.

⁸⁷ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 142; Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 13, lines 4-5.

⁸⁸ Ecclus. 21:22-23.

vertewous training vp of their litle young ones, is in verie dede, to bring them vnto Christ, as we be bid in scriptur.”⁸⁹ As I detailed in the introduction, humanist knowledge cannot be inert, and goodness depends on active trials. Redcrosse counters Una’s warning not unnecessarily to provoke Errour in her dark lair, arguing, “Vertue giues her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade”; in a general sense, he is correct, but situationally, he is wrong. His virtue is untested and weak, making only a “little glooming light” as he enters the cave.⁹⁰ He is simply too inexperienced for the encounter. Redcrosse situates himself as the not well nurtured “fool” of Ecclesiastes when he peeps in the door. If he is ill-nursed, how is Una to be read?

Una’s warning could simply be saying “I have raised you better than this,” an eternal trope of parents. For all intents and purposes, this summary acquittal is likely the best reading. McManus, in fact, labels Una “the ideal Christian mother,” who along with the other positive examples of women in Book One, provides readers of the period “the cultural ideal of the pious, faithful woman [. . .].”⁹¹ However, if Redcrosse enters the cave because he is badly nursed (broadly understood), then do his actions reflect poorly upon Una as a mother and efficient cause of the knight’s moral education?

I may be at risk of over analyzing at this point since I have already examined Una under the requirements of Mulcaster’s system and found her a fit parent, and Una says as much when she tells Redcrosse that he should make “further tryall [trail]” before entering Errour’s cave.⁹² However, a question of this nature is scripturally challenging. There are multiple ways of reading

⁸⁹ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 23.

⁹⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 12, line 9; canto 1, st. 14 line 5.

⁹¹ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 405-6. For a further examination of the power women held in society and how men idealized and beautified such power within the female form, see McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 405-6. McManus also examines “the dangers inherent within that ideal” by examining its opposite, the evil and ugliness of Errour and Duessa, “Carefull Nourse,” 405-6.

⁹² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 12, line 6.

Una as Wisdom, the Wisdom of Proverbs being only one. A. C. Hamilton, for example, discusses the labyrinthine woods preceding Error's cave in which Una and party become lost, arguing that Wisdom, in this case Una, deliberately leads people down crooked paths to teach them.⁹³ Hamilton also points to Ecclesiasticus as a subtext for this episode: "For first she wil walke with him by croked waies, and bring him vnto feare, and drede [dread], and torment him with her discipline vntil she haue tryed his soule, and haue proued him by her iudgements. Then wil she returne the straight way vnto him, and comfort him, and shew him her secrets, [and heape vpon him the treasures of knowledge, and vnderstanding of righteousnes]."⁹⁴

When Una is divided from Redcrosse, she resembles the Wisdom of Proverbs who opposes fools and strange women who walk in dark paths. Wisdom calls out, seeking the attention of those who would accept her instruction. Una amplifies this function of Wisdom by not only verbalizing intelligence but by searching for Redcrosse once he parts.⁹⁵ In the thick of the woods, Una walks with Redcrosse, figuring the Wisdom of Ecclesiastes who stays with the individual during trying experiences and educates through discipline as a way of coping with trials.⁹⁶ In this context, Una has not failed but is continually nursing (attending) her child. All evidence shows that Una is of good character and has (read in the context of discourse on childbearing) brought up Redcrosse to this point by imparting scripture, so the slight upon her image due to Redcrosse's behavior seems unfounded—judging Una for one moment of misbehavior she did warn her child against. Redcrosse, like the inexperienced and foolish young

⁹³ A. C. Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 35.

⁹⁴ Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, 35; Eccles. 4:17-18.

⁹⁵ For an examination of Una's vocalness and its effects, see McManus, "Carefull Nourse," 397-403.

⁹⁶ For an additional depiction of Wisdom calling to those who will listen, compare Wisdom of Solomon 6-9. The relationship to the listener is less personal as the address is to kings and others in authority, but Wisdom receives more description as to her qualities and effects.

person he is, chose to walk in dark, crooked paths. Una maintains her position to him closely and continues with him, aiding him along the way.

Looking at the end and not just the beginning of the book is helpful here. While Redcrosse's battle with Errour is clearly far from glorious, A. C. Hamilton reminds us that when the knight emerges from the cave, "he is no longer led by the path, but keeps it [. . .]."⁹⁷ The subtext of Ecclesiastes in Protestant discourses on education—Wisdom returning the learned individual to the straight path—is again clear:

That path he kept, which beaten was most plaine,
Ne euer would to any byway bend,
But still did follow one vnto the end [. . .].⁹⁸

The pathfinding way out of crooked tangles does not completely come from the somewhat dull intelligence of Redcrosse. He has on the armor of God that protects him and Una yells at proper moments to "add faith," enabling Redcrosse to squeeze a victory in this episode. Hamilton argues that Spenser evoking the need for God's help in relation to Errour's snares (entered into in foolhardy ways) sends a clear message to the reader: "[T]his monster will devour us, as she devours all who take the beaten path to her den, unless God helps us."⁹⁹ In that dark cave, God "intercedes through the Lady."¹⁰⁰ The divine intervention of grace in troubling times and how it relates to the Word of God reaching children delivered through what were considered at the time lesser vessels—women and vernacular languages—will become a prominent discussion for

⁹⁷ Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, 37.

⁹⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 28, lins 3-5. An additional allusion: "Teache a childe in the trade of his way, and when he is olde, he shal not departe from it," Prov. 22:6, is illuminated by the accompanying *Geneva* gloss that reads, "Bring him vp vertuously, and he shal so continue." The 1568 Bishops Bible offers an alternate translation, perhaps one with less Protestant focus on work ethic and finding a trade: "Teache a chylde what way he should go: for he shall not leave it when he is olde."

⁹⁹ Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, 37.

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, 37.

later chapters. Mothers and nurses had the exposure through their early attendance to instruct young children in the word of God, in their native tongue.

Raising up the Youthful Redcrosse (and England)

The idea that Redcrosse is not well nursed—he is dull-witted and inexperienced, a fool who unadvisedly peeps in doorways and then must be guided out of snares to which he has exposed himself—is more telling of his condition than Una’s (which remains essentially consistent). In the words of Mulcaster, as the dull-witted yet strong-bodied child capable of learning, Redcrosse’s knowledge is hard-earned, found in long maintained ignorance from which he is rescued by the grace of God. What do Redcrosse’s preschool years at the beginning of the book say about the present state of England, or put another way, what is the formal cause of England as Mulcaster and Spenser see it? While Redcrosse does wear the armor and regalia of St. George that links the knight to his future deeds—his final cause—and raises him above his capabilities, he remains, at the beginning, plain George and an earth-tiller by trade, an occupation that fits his dull mind and capable strength. Mulcaster means no offence to Georges or farmers—he, Spenser, and the other humanists understood that neither names nor trades (nor gender, nor class) denote intelligence or capability. Mulcaster, however, would see it as a disservice to the state to teach students higher learning such as Latin and Greek if they lacked aptitude and would have no use for it. For Mulcaster to place resources of the state in a child who cannot return them would be unprofitable, which he casts in terms of the harvest England can reap from educating children: they “prove in their ripenesse very good and profitable, both to the parties which have them, and to their countries, which use them.”¹⁰¹ To further emphasize his point, in *Positions*, Mulcaster writes, “Againe wittes misplaced [are] most unquiet

¹⁰¹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 37.

and seditious: as any thinge else strayed against nature: light thinges prease [press] upward, and will ye force *Fire* downe? Heavie thinges beare downeward: and will ye haue *Leade* to leape vp?"¹⁰² In other words, Mulcaster believes that all children have a natural capacity for certain kinds of learning specific to aptitudes. Some are more suited to pressing upward; others more suited to bearing downward. To force children against natural aptitude (that is not correspondent to birth) would be contrary to public good.¹⁰³

Despite (or even because of) Redcrosse's dull mind, he eventually becomes St. George. Reading Redcrosse's training brings up a problem of theology, in the question of predestination. Una tells Redcrosse he is "chosen," a claim later echoed by Contemplation when he is showing Redcrosse the vision of New Jerusalem, built for "His [God's] chosen people purg'd from sinful guilt;" Redcrosse is "ordained a blessed end."¹⁰⁴ In one sense, his final cause overlaps with English exceptionalism and the belief that England under the reformed church was God's chosen kingdom (a belief later held to be proven by such contingencies as storms destroying the Spanish Armada of 1588). The first three books of *The Faerie Queene* make plain this orientation toward exceptionalism despite being mostly composed before the Armada event, a testament to the strength of the belief and Spenser's personal commitment to nationalism.

The larger point is that Redcrosse as St. George represents England as an elected nation, but that can mean several different things within predestination theology. Carol V. Kaske examines Calvinist terminology in the House of Holiness episode. Kaske notes in the episode of

¹⁰² Mulcaster, *Positions*, 142.

¹⁰³ For the intricacies of what Mulcaster means when using the word *nature*, see Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xvii-xxii.

¹⁰⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 53, line 5; canto 10, st. 57, line 4; canto 10, st. 61, line 5. A. C. Hamilton points to Una's "chosen" as the "most theologically controversial word in Book I," general introduction to *The Faerie Queene*, by Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al, rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), 8.

Contemplation calling all those in New Jerusalem “saints,” that the term has flexibility: “[T]hey are arbitrarily chosen and they are self-made.”¹⁰⁵ Kaske explains, “The Bible and its commentaries display a somewhat similar ambiguity. ‘Saints’ could mean the whole body of believers; this general sense of the word existed in the Middle Ages and was privileged by Protestants. But ‘saints’ could also mean individuals who had been formally canonized, which is to say, recognized for their extraordinary virtue or holiness[. . .].”¹⁰⁶ As Kaske notes, Spenser uses precise theological terms “flexibly” and allows Redcrosse to be both a saint-small-“s” (part of a common group of believers) and super-saint (an exemplar).¹⁰⁷ I do not want to dive into the paradoxes of predestination theology or the often equivocal nature of Spenser’s poetry surrounding strains of Calvinistic doctrine.¹⁰⁸ Instead, I wish to focus on the action that Redcrosse performs within the poem: his faith, wherever it falls on the scale of freewill, ultimately comes from God, nurtured by Una as the Church, and enables him to produce good works.

The theological relationship between faith and works is plainly stated in scripture: “[T]he faith, if it haue no workes, is dead in it self”; “the bodie without the spirit is dead, euen so the faith without workes is dead.”¹⁰⁹ Between the statement and its restatement, the author gives several Old Testament examples, one of which is Abraham’s faith in God, resulting in his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. His passing of the test is credited to him as righteousness. The Geneva gloss for the passages in James reads, “The more his faith was declared by his

¹⁰⁵ Carol V. Kaske, “Propositional Contradictions and Their Resolutions,” in *Spenser and Biblical Poetics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 119, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctvr7f7ds>.

¹⁰⁶ Kaske, “Propositional Contradictions Resolutions,” 119.

¹⁰⁷ Kaske, “Propositional Contradictions Resolutions,” 119.

¹⁰⁸ For additional differences between the types of saints Spenser uses and the rewards that come with them, namely salvation for the common and additional treasures for the super, see Kaske, “Propositional Contradictions Resolutions,” 119-21.

¹⁰⁹ James 2:17; James 2:26.

obedience and good workes, the more was it knowen to men to be perfite [perfect], as the goodnes of a tre[e] is knowen by her good frute, otherwise no man can haue perfection in this worlde: for euerie man must pray for remission of his sinnes, & increase of faith.” Again, I do not bring this theologically thorny passage up to discuss how the relationship between faith and good works settles issues of predestination. Freewill is a moot point (ultimately only God can recognize when “will” is free, and the operation of a person’s freedom is ultimately for God’s pleasure). If one has faith, they will perform works and willingly choose obedience to God (understood in Christian theology as Trinitarian); however successfully they implement their (possibly free, possibly compromised) will, the outcome is the same. They are (wholly or in some measure only God can judge) God’s either way. Whether Redcrosse is set aside as given to God’s service or gives himself may be splitting hairs at the level of faith expressed in a desire for obedience. Instead, the purpose of the New Jerusalem episode in Canto X links the concept that Redcrosse as an individual and England as a nation will bear fruit. Redcrosse and England will be known by the fruit they produce: in the subtext—“So euerie good tre[e] brī[n]geth forth good frute, and a corrupt tre[e] bringeth forth euil frute.”¹¹⁰ Jesus repeats the sentiment of fruit-bearing in response to the hypocritical behavior of the religious leaders: “Ether make the tre[e] good, and his frute good: or els make the tre[e] euil, & his frute euil: for the tre[e] is knowen by the frute.”¹¹¹

In language that explicitly links fruit-bearing and childrearing, Jesus further warns religious leaders of Israel not to rely on a status as chosen people to exempt them personally from their responsibility: “[T]hink not to say with your selues, We haue Abraham to *our* father:

¹¹⁰ Matt. 7:17.

¹¹¹ Matt. 12:33. Compare, “For it is not a good tre that bringeth forthe euil frute: nether an euil tre, that bringeth forthe good frute,” Luke 6:43.

for I say vnto you, that God is able of these stones to raise vp children vnto Abraham. And now also is the axe put to the roote of the trees: therefore euerie tre, which bringeth not forthe good frute, is hewen downe, and cast into the fyre.”¹¹² In *A View of the State of Ireland*, Spenser suggests this biblical language and linkages when discussing the English colonization of the Irish. Eudoxus asks on the topic of redressing wrong, “How then doe you think is the reformation thereof to be begunne, if not by lawes and ordinances?” Irenius replies, “Even by the sword; for all these evils must first be cut away by a strong hand, before any good can bee planted, like as the corrupt branches and unwholesome boughs are first to bee pruned, and the foule mosse cleansed and scraped away, before the tree can bring forth any good fruite.”¹¹³ In this instance, the corruption Spenser refers to is rooted in the Irish, the good fruit to be planted the colonizing English. Mulcaster employs the language of horticulture as well, writing of planting education in children and harvesting it later when it becomes fruitful.¹¹⁴ The idea of crop productivity and its biblical subtext was central to early modern thinking about reform. For Mulcaster and Spenser, an education was to produce both the state’s public good and the learner’s private good.

If we may read Redcrosse as an English child and therefore the formal cause of Mulcaster and Spenser’s nation, then how is Redcrosse as England to be trained, and in what language, particularly in the context of English exceptionalism? In other words, what is to be the efficient cause or causes regarding education that moves Redcrosse as allegorical representation of an ordinary early modern student to his final cause? If Redcrosse lacks wit, according to Mulcaster, he is only entitled to an Elementary education. In addition, he has no need for higher

¹¹² Matt. 3:9-10.

¹¹³ Edmund Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland: from the First Printed Edition (1633)*, ed. Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 93.

¹¹⁴ For further details on Mulcaster’s emphasis on growing children, see Barker, introduction to *Positions*, li.

levels such as Grammar school or University because he will not need classical languages, Latin or Greek, beyond what would be useful to work his natural trade (or the work he has a natural aptitude to do). However, Mulcaster speaks of election—“bycause we cannot chuse, as we could wish”—when discussing the education of monarchs.¹¹⁵ He argues that monarchs should be taught as much as possible regardless of wit and strength of body because “[w]e must take him as God sendes him.”¹¹⁶ This get-what-you-get sentiment seems to trickle onto Redcrosse as student because of the chosen nature Spenser gives him. Redcrosse shifts from common elect (lower-case “s”) to special elect (upper-case Saint); thus, Redcrosse as England and as student (an English student) can represent different demographics of England, simultaneously representing all of England from commoners to monarch.

Complicating the situation is the station of Redcrosse himself. He is a foundling, descending from Saxon kings, but he is not privy to his noble background when he begins his quest. Redcrosse becomes betrothed to Una, daughter of the King and Queen of Eden, the kingdom he saves, situating him to become its monarch. Evident is the biblical subtext of the Christian’s adoption into the family of God: “For ye are all the sonnes of God by faith, in Christ Iesus.”¹¹⁷ However, Redcrosse’s formal cause (based on his knowledge of himself at the beginning of the poem) lands him as a farmer, and this apparently complicates his situation just as Mulcaster divides England (the referent to which Redcrosse gestures) into two groups: common and gentle.¹¹⁸ Of the commonalty, Mulcaster divides them into *marchauntes*, “those which live any way by buying or selling” and *manuarie*, “those whose handyworke is their ware,

¹¹⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 220.

¹¹⁶ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 220.

¹¹⁷ Gal. 3:26. For further details, see Rom. 8:14-19.

¹¹⁸ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 198.

and labour their living.”¹¹⁹ As a farmer, Redcrosse, would rank as a commoner and manual laborer.¹²⁰ However, his armor raises him above his position into that of a knight and gentility. Mulcaster writes of this branch of his social hierarchy: “There be also three kindes in *gentilitie*, the *gentlemen*, which be the *creame* of the common: the *noblemen*, which be the *flowre* of the *gentilitie*, and the *prince* which is the *primate* [leader of most importance] and *pearle* of *nobilitie*.”¹²¹ If we apply the late sixteenth-century usage of knight (vs. the medieval, which clings to it), denoting position awarded due to merit or service, then Redcrosse lands at the point of division of a nobleman from a gentleman according to Mulcaster’s definitions: “Hereby it is evident that the tearme of nobilitie amongst us, is restrained to one order, which I named the flowre of gentilitie: and the gentlemen be in degree next unto them. Whereof where either beginneth, none can dout, which can call him a nobleman that is above a knight.”¹²² Of course, Spenser is anachronistically harkening back to the late medieval period with the setting, so his use of knightly status becomes complex. The knight of the feudal society acted as a military servant for a person of higher rank and often oversaw a superior’s land. Knights were often of noble birth and worked their way through apprenticeships (as squires) to become knights. Regardless, Redcrosse’s lowly nature is pulled above his position, jumping from clown (rustic) to knight and seemingly skipping any apprenticeship. As a student, possessing the faults of the

¹¹⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 198.

¹²⁰ The ploughman and yeoman farmer are related archetypes, and as a result the above classifications become slightly muddled concerning status. According to the OED, a yeoman is a “man holding a small landed estate; a freeholder under the rank of a gentleman; hence *vaguely*, a commoner or countryman of respectable standing, *esp.* one who cultivates his own land,” “yeoman, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 2023, <https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/Entry/231598>. The education of commoners could vary widely, especially between a farmer who worked for someone else versus a yeoman who brought in a large income because he owned his own land. The Spencers of Althorp, who were some of the largest land owners of the time provide one such example.

¹²¹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 198; and “primate, n.1 and adj.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed December 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/151282.

¹²² “knight, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed December 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/104025; and Mulcaster, *Positions*, 198-99.

weak-witted child, he ultimately excels in performance and, thus, comes close to the description of strong-witted and strong-bodied child.¹²³ Concerning the potential of this student, Mulcaster says, “But where so ever they light, or what so ever waye they take, they shewe what they be, and alwaye prove either the verie best, or the most beastly.”¹²⁴ Redcrosse has the potential to do great good or cause great harm; he is able to bear good or bad fruit on a grand scale.

The next question is how Redcrosse should be taught given the complications that arise from being framed as a commoner elected to gentility. Mulcaster is not silent on such issues. Commoners, especially the merchant class, were increasingly rising in power due to the accumulation of wealth, upsetting higher social strata held by hereditary position and the often-held belief that innate virtue corresponded to nobility. Of the commoners, Mulcaster says, “Their distinction is by wealth,” and of the gentility, he says, “Their difference is in authoritie” or how much power they wield, the prince having the most.¹²⁵ However, in many cases, Mulcaster’s strict boundaries break down as money also supplies power. A prime literary example that captures the upsetting of the status quo is *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607).¹²⁶ A merchant named George and his wife Nell pay to attend the theatre. Once George realizes the drama is a conventional city comedy, which depicts the worst of city life and those who can swindle their way to success, he interrupts and demands the cast instead perform a citizen play, which glorifies citizens and depicts apprentices going on romantic adventures and

¹²³ The paradoxical status of the individual is not uncommon concerning scripture: “For God that commanded the light to shine out of darkenes, he which hathe shined in our hearts, to giue the light of the knowledge of the glorie of God in the face of Iesus Christ. But we haue this treasure in earthē [clay] vessels, yet the excellencie of that power might be of God and not vs,” 2 Cor. 4:6-7. God often chooses the weak and lowly so that His power might be clearly seen.

¹²⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 33.

¹²⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 198.

¹²⁶ Francis Beaumont, *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. David Bevington (New York: Norton, 2002), 1067-139.

returning to the city gloriously.¹²⁷ The players refuse, so George and Nell send their grocer-apprentice, Rafe onstage to enact their desires, butting up against the ongoing play while George and Nell continue to disrupt events by making comments and buying services and drink, and even sitting onstage with the gallants who have purchased that privileged spot. The point is that the fictional George and Nell pay to attend a play, refuse to be silent, and encroach upon spaces reserved for customers of higher social status who have paid more. These intrusions remove power from the real gallants onstage and cause a sense of downward mobility.¹²⁸

Of course, the upsetting of the status quo is not a new issue. Chaucer draws attention to it in *The Canterbury Tales* with various characters who are merchants, of which the Wife of Bath is perhaps the most well-known. In addition to being a successful clothmaker, her tale focuses on inborn nobility not linked to beauty, status, or wealth. While possibly being wish-fulfillment on her part, her tale hints at larger societal ongoingings. Nevertheless, Mulcaster is wary of those who arrive at gentility through money, and while he does grant that both the commoner and the gentleman can be “virtuous or vicious” or “rich or poore,” the lower the class of the individual, the seemingly lesser the capabilities.¹²⁹ Mulcaster marks the qualities of a gentleman: “[G]entility argueth a courteous, civill, well disposed, sociable constitution of minde in a superiour degree.”¹³⁰ Barker, pointing to this passage, states, “Such qualities may be taught,

¹²⁷ A citizen is a male guild member who has completed his apprenticeship to become a freeman. Citizens held political influence such as choosing the aldermen of the city. For a more detailed explanation of seventeenth century citizens, see Janette Dillon who examines social differences from the perspective of geographical boundaries and Joshua S. Smith who makes connections between social class and theatrical genres, “‘Is Not All the World Mile End, Mother?’: The Blackfriars Theater, the City of London, and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*,” *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, no. 9 (1997): 127-48, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24322151>; “Reading between the Acts: Satire and the Interludes in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*,” *Studies in Philology* 109, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 474-95, doi:10.1353/sip.2012.0027.

¹²⁸ Brent E. Whitted, “Staging Exchange: Why *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* Flopped at Blackfriars in 1607,” *Early Theatre* 15, no. 2 (2012): 125-26, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43499628>.

¹²⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 198.

¹³⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 201.

though Mulcaster also holds that in their finest degree the qualities are inborn and somewhat mysterious (and therefore unattainable by the outsider).¹³¹ However, Barker admits that Mulcaster is more conservative than his contemporaries, asserting, “Certainly all authorities insisted that learning be joined with wealth where good birth was lacking [. . .].”¹³²

Elsewhere in *Positions*, Mulcaster defines the final causes of an education more clearly based on the class of student, the formal cause. He writes that “the common man doth learne for necessitie at first, and avauncement after: the greater personage ought to learne for his credit, and honour, besides necessarie uses.”¹³³ In other words, Mulcaster suggests that the purpose of common learning is for functionality and then advancement. The purpose of aristocratic learning is to raise up the individual’s worthiness and match it to his “*nobilitie* in blood.”¹³⁴ Perhaps, we could apply all that we have gathered to this point to both Redcrosse and Prince Arthur in Book One as examples of students. Even though both are elected and noble, Redcrosse is no monarch of the likes of Arthur. Redcrosse only becomes heir of a kingdom through his betrothal to Una; thus, his title is pending, and as an adopted son of God, his status as an heir is common (or common to all those predestined depending on one’s theology). Redcrosse may be God ordained, but he is not in the same category as Arthur, who is Prince in Faery Land and the once and future king of Arthurian legend.

While several variations of the legend fought for currency in Spenser’s time, a popular one saw Arthur as a Breton whose lineage descended to the Tudors, including Elizabeth I.¹³⁵ Not only was he King of England, but his descendants ruled England, and according to legend, he will

¹³¹ Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xxviii.

¹³² Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xxix.

¹³³ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 206.

¹³⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 206.

¹³⁵ Carrie Anna Harper, *The Sources of the British Chronicle History in Spenser’s Faerie Queene* (New York: Haskell House, 1964), 1-2.

return to unite the kingdom.¹³⁶ Of course, the St. George legend is nothing to besmirch. Caxton's *Golden Legend* tells of a knight who happens upon a princess who is being sacrificed to a dragon. The beast has been terrorizing the locals who, in attempts to pacify it, have sacrificed sheep, then youths of the town, and then ultimately the princess. George fights and wounds the dragon, allowing the princess to throw her girdle round the dragon's neck. The princess leads the dragon back to the town. The dragon's presence terrifies the people, but George reassures them, urging them to profess their belief in God and be baptized. Fifteen thousand do so. Thus, the legend tells of a knight, (a type of Christ) who saves a kingdom (England) from a dragon, yet even though Redcrosse is St. George, and a type of Christ, he is not Arthur, the type of Christ who harrows hell to save Redcrosse and who came and will come to save England again.¹³⁷

As is the nature of allegory, we can become lost in the allegorical kaleidoscope, but Arthur is no natural fool as Nohrnberg labels Redcrosse whose education is necessary for the knight to function before he can advance.¹³⁸ When Redcrosse receives his anti-education, his capability reduces until his reeducation in the House of Holiness allows him to advance again. Prince Arthur is the uncommon elect child whom Mulcaster describes: a monarch who must be educated regardless of his nature, yet he naturally excels in both strength and wit, so he is deserving of it. He is a more elite specimen of nobility, possessing all the allegorical virtues and touching upon all books of *The Faerie Queene* and all Faery Land as England. Arthur is the

¹³⁶ Hugh MacLachlan, "Arthur, Legend of," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 64-6; and Gordon Teskey, "Arthur in The Faerie Queene," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 69.

¹³⁷ For Arthur's rescuing of Redcrosse from Orgoglio's imprisonment, see Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 37-41. For further evidence that Redcrosse is an inferior Christ figure, see Nohrnberg who argues that Redcrosse's battle with the earth-bound dragon positions him as a Second Adam limited in scope to the true Christ, whose battle is heavenly, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 159.

¹³⁸ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 262.

definition of nobleman and gentleman as Mulcaster defines one: the prince's education allows his worthiness to match his noble blood.¹³⁹

The Error of Redcrosse and Its Effects

Una fulfills the feminine ideal of a good mother because she fulfills the parental duties Mulcaster outlines, which also qualify her as a good nurse; Redcrosse should be taught because he is (a) capable of learning as a strong-bodied and dull-witted child and (b) ordained by God. The methodology of Redcrosse's learning is found in Mulcaster's treatises and his suggestions on teaching children. Examining larger trends of early learning in the period helps contextualize Mulcaster. In *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, Lynn Enterline examines early modern grammar schools and asks what their institutional goals were and what their effects were. The primary goal of grammar schools was one of upward mobility: boys were made into gentlemen by being removed from the feminine domain and the mother tongue of English and its associated folk texts while being exposed to a male domain and the father tongue of Latin and its associated classical texts.¹⁴⁰ Part of the basis of a humanist education was *imitatio*, the translating of texts (the imitating of ideas, style, and rhetorical devices). Enterline carries the idea of *imitatio* further, defining it at its broadest as "one person copying another's example."¹⁴¹ Enterline shows that students not only translate Latin but physically imitate their schoolmasters to embody correct oratory techniques.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ A. S. P. Woodhouse points out that Arthur fulfills the Aristotelian scheme of magnanimity as he "represents in the whole poem the sum of the virtues, "Nature and Grace in the Faerie Queene," *ELH* 16, no. 3 (Sep. 1949): 203, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871731>.

¹⁴⁰ Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 6-7.

¹⁴¹ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 36.

¹⁴² Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 4.

As such an emphasis was placed upon the learning of Latin and the learning of gentlemanly (and masculine) mannerisms, boys were required to deliver the translations aloud while embodying the physical aspects of an orator, rhetorically known as *actio*, which was “thought necessary to the performance of eloquence.”¹⁴³ Indeed, Mulcaster advocates for a similar type of mimesis in young children, arguing that in combination with a child’s nature, education nurtures the inner qualities of a child. He identifies three such qualities of an ideal student. Wit is the “capacity to perceive that which is taught them, and to imitate the foregoer,” a concept resembling Enterline’s explication of *imitation*.¹⁴⁴ Memory is a “quickenes to take, so a fastnesse to retaine,” and discretion is the “ability to discern, what is good, and what is ill.”¹⁴⁵

Mulcaster prefaces these qualities of a student with the century’s and his own overriding belief that a child cannot be a student or remain unripe forever but must put that knowledge to action, thus, become ripe and bear fruit.¹⁴⁶ When learning is complete, Mulcaster continues, that ability is at its apex, and, when “the countrey coummaundes service, then studie must be left, and the countrey must be served.”¹⁴⁷ While Redcrosse is not yet in grammar school and lacks texts to translate and grammar masters to imitate (*imitatio*), the grammar school methodology has shifted to the more informal and nebulous institution built of the maternal: mothers and nurses offer, not written texts, but the word of God spoken through the mother tongue to be acted out in the lives of children, and in doing so, children mimic the qualities of

¹⁴³ Enterline, *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom*, 3-4.

¹⁴⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 38.

¹⁴⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 39. For additional lists detailing what students should possess, ranging from Plato’s *Republic* to Ascham’s *Schoolmaster*, see William Barker, ed., *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, by Richard Mulcaster, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 323n38.31-2. None has condensed it to as short a list as Mulcaster’s three: “witte to take, memorie to keep, discretion to discern [. . .],” *Positions*, 39.

¹⁴⁶ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 38.

¹⁴⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 38.

parent and nurse. Further damaging to Redcrosse is the expectation of *actio*. Redcrosse is placed in situations where he must perform, but he either lacks the skills for such performances or he has embodied the negative traits of his anti-educators causing ineloquences.

Much is at stake in a student's learning. If he fails at grammar and all that is associated with it, he does not become a gentleman and does not serve his country to the fullest. Stated in different terms, he will lack grammar and its rhetorical expressions of eloquence. "As numerous schoolmasters had it, 'Eloquence and wisdom are one.'"¹⁴⁸ It is here that the opposition between mother and nurse reaches its fullest. One is the natural supplier of life; the other, unnatural. One imparts wisdom; the other perverts wisdom with an inferior vernacular or lack of eloquence. After Redcrosse as a student exchanges his natural parent Una for unnatural nurses, what does Redcrosse learn from his anti-parents—Error, Duessa, and Archimago—and what conduct does he model upon meeting these figures who function as nurses in the period's broader sense of the word?

The first challenge that Redcrosse faces on his quest and the first anti-parent he meets is Error. Much can be elaborated on regarding the significance of Error and her woods that relates to education and the testing of a student's abilities. The labyrinthine arena of the woods preceding Error's cave fuses several analogues, among them the maze designed for King Minos, guarded by the Minotaur, and the shadowy woods in which Dante the Pilgrim becomes lost in *The Inferno*. Taken together, the motifs of the disorienting-forest represent ignorance, false (or worldly) wisdom, and multiplicity, especially with regard to the various trees similar yet slightly different.¹⁴⁹ Error's dark cave additionally recalls Plato's cave allegory, only Redcrosse is

¹⁴⁸ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 3.

¹⁴⁹ John M. Steadman, "Error," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 252.

descending into false knowledge not emerging or ascending toward enlightenment.¹⁵⁰ My concern is not so much to argue definitively what Error and the wooded emblems mean. Other scholars have already achieved that, and I shall defer to their analyses.¹⁵¹ Instead, I will limit my analysis to how Error fulfills a role as a parental efficient cause according to Mulcaster's guidelines, especially in relation to nursing, and how that affects Redcrosse as he replicates patterns of conduct spawned in the Error episode.

To review, Mulcaster defines parents as the very best caretakers of their children and as those who support teachers in dispensing knowledge while maintaining parental authority over their child's behavior. In addition to intellectual nourishment, parents should provide physical support for upbringing such as food and clothing. Finally, they prepare their children for more education and judge correctly when to send their children to school. Seen as a parental caregiver, Error fails all criteria. Spenser's moral landscape prefaces Redcrosse's interaction with Error. She resides in a "hollowe cave," a geographical feature that (with its subtexts) points to allegorical meaning.¹⁵² The description is the first use of hollow in the poem; the word that occurs thirteen more times in Book One. Here Spenser likely employs its general sense as "having an empty space in the interior."¹⁵³ The motif throughout Book One suggests educational as well as spiritual dimensions and contrasts to the wholeness of holiness. Allegorically, the

¹⁵⁰ Steadman, "Error," 252.

¹⁵¹ Brooks-Davies provides a general overview, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 19-24; John M. Steadman provides a more detailed analysis, sifting through a multitude of sources that may have shaped Spenser's creation of Error, "Spenser's 'Error' and the Renaissance Allegorical Tradition," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 62, no. 1 (1961): 22-38, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43342056>.

¹⁵² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 11, line 6.

¹⁵³ "hollow, n.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/87759; "hole, n.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/87707; and "hollow, adj. and adv.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/87760. See Introduction for a discussion of hollow.

emptiness of Errour's environment, both physically and spiritually, extends to Errour herself—her breasts, her babies, and the education she provides Redcrosse.

The description of Errour that Spenser presents is particularly horrid in its focus on inner filth rupturing outward. She vomits "A floud of poyson horrible and blacke, / Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw."¹⁵⁴ The vomit is "full of bookes and papers" and "loathly frogs and toades."¹⁵⁵ Commentary has made much of these regurgitated books, linking them to "false Catholic doctrine and anti-Protestant propaganda" or the dangers of the newish print technology.¹⁵⁶ Shifting from this important focus for the present conversation, a returning to a close reading of textual details best serves my purpose. Unlike Una who, as the Church, holds a nourishing Word for Redcrosse, Errour fails to convey that which she consumes, whether it is the Word of God or not. Nohrnberg labels Errour a book-eating dragon, specifically comparing her to the bookworm that eats words but does not grow wiser.¹⁵⁷ She can only spew half-digested pages at Redcrosse, which are useless to him, a child unable to discern what could be valuable to read, needing "the syncere milke of the worde, that [he] maye growe thereby."¹⁵⁸ The Geneva commentary on this verse that Nohrnberg suggests as subtext to the detail speaks of new believers as newborn babes: "In this their infancie and new coming to Christ he willeth them to take hede lest for the pure milke, which is the first beginings of learning the sincere worde, they be not deceiued by they which chop and change it, and giue poyson in stede thereof." Errour fails to provide the beginnings of an educational nourishment; she adheres to the *Geneva* deceiver who provides anti-food—an insubstantial, ultimately hollow caregiving; she

¹⁵⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 20, lines 2-3.

¹⁵⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 20, lines 6-7.

¹⁵⁶ Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 22; and Lawrence F. Rhu, "Romancing the Word: Pre-Texts and Contexts for the Errour Episode," *Spenser Studies* no. 11 (1994): 101.

¹⁵⁷ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 101; 150.

¹⁵⁸ 1 Pet. 2:2.

nurses her “brood” with “poisonous dugs.”¹⁵⁹ McManus points to these instances in the Errour episode and argues that Errour’s mouth, especially when connected to the undigested books found in her vomit, situates her as a mother who cannot instruct her children morally, and with her poisonous breasts, as a nurse who cannot sustain her children physically.¹⁶⁰ Thus, Errour fails at the complexities of parenting that Mulcaster outlines and the nursing that overlays parental duties because she does not transmit knowledge (especially wisdom), she does not give moral instruction, and she does not provide life-sustaining food.

Errour’s offspring carry her exhausted motherhood further when they enter her mouth for protection from the gleaming light of the knight’s armor. Their attempt at safety fails when she regurgitates them to attack the knight. Just as Redcrosse without his armor becomes exposed to dangers both spiritual and physical, the offspring, without the protection of their mother, are equally naked and exposed to dangers. Errour fails as a parent to clothe her children in protections. When Redcrosse kills Errour, her babies rush to her wound and drink her blood, “Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.”¹⁶¹ The dying image of Errour resembles the pelican, who “for to reuiue her younge, / Doth peirce her brest, and geue [give] them of her blood [. . .].”¹⁶² The emblem of the pelican (coopted by Elizabeth) was also applied to Christ’s redemption of humanity and the nursing (raising up) of the children of God, further situating Errour as parody and perversion of a good parent.¹⁶³ To this point, all that Errour has

¹⁵⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 25, line 1; canto 1, st. 15, line 6.

¹⁶⁰ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 393-4.

¹⁶¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 25, line 9.

¹⁶² Geoffrey Whitney, *A choice of emblems, and other deuises, for the moste parte gathered out of sundrie writers, Englished and moralized* [. . .]. Leiden: in the house of Christopher Plantyn, by Francis Raphelengius, 1586, 87, *Early English Books Online*.

¹⁶³ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.1.25.7-9n. Hamilton specifically points to Dante, *Paradise* 25.113 and the drinking of Christ’s blood during the Eucharist John 6:54: “Whosoeuer eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hathe eternal life, and I wil raise him up at the last day.” For further details of Errour as a “parodic,

done has been hollow. Spenser has stressed this sentiment through descriptions emphasizing the expulsion of Error's bile, through her breasts producing poison, through the regurgitation of her young, and through her death, which becomes a "parody of Christ's salvific blood."¹⁶⁴

Error can be best summed up by a description Spenser assigns her. She is a "body full of filthie sin."¹⁶⁵ As such, she is a harmful maternal example for Redcrosse and empty of Mulcaster's desired parts of learning: understanding and virtue.¹⁶⁶ Lines such as these are problematic since they suggest the female body in ways aligned with sin and tinged with misogyny. Error is, as an allegorical character, a non-entity—she represents an evil that is abstract (not real, in an Augustinian sense). Full of filth, her allegorical nature, her non-essence must erupt as she is brought to light.¹⁶⁷ If Error is full of filthy sin, she is hollow of anything good, especially anything worthy of teaching Redcrosse. Milton would understand how Redcrosse has found "Knowledge of Good bought dear by knowing ill."¹⁶⁸ The allegory is not insignificant, just unfortunate, in that so often the container for non-essence must be cast as feminine. As McManus notes, "Error thus serves as a specifically gendered 'frontispiece' not only for Redcrosse's quest for exegetical skill but also as a specifically gendered illustration of

perverted version of the good-mother figure," see Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 80-98.

¹⁶⁴ Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 23.

¹⁶⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 24, line 7.

¹⁶⁶ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 4.

¹⁶⁷ "For nothing is secret, that shal not be euidēt [evident]: nether any thing hid, that shal not be knowen, and come to light," Luke 8:17. Compare, John 3:19-21 and Eph. 5:13. Stephen M. Fallon in "Milton's Sin and Death" defends an allegorical reading of Milton's Sin, suggesting Augustine's conception of evil in *City of God* drives Milton's portrayal of Sin, "Milton's Sin and Death: The Ontology of Allegory in *Paradise Lost*," *English Literary Renaissance* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1987): 329-50, www.jstor.org/stable/43447227. His analysis informs much of my reading of Spenser's Error. Fallon writes, "In metaphysical, as opposed to moral, terms, evil is nonentity, the negation rather than the expression of being," "Milton's Sin and Death," 330. The character of Sin, the absence of all that is good, is from an Augustinian standpoint nothing. For Milton to best express the concept of sin as a nonentity, he uses the "lesser reality" of allegory, "Milton's Sin and Death," 332.

¹⁶⁸ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Roy Flannagan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), Book IV, line 222.

the dangerous results of (corrupt) women reading and dispensing (corrupt) spiritual doctrine.”¹⁶⁹

Spenser is hardly unique in perpetrating the feminizing of evil. As the introduction noted, this is a period that upholds the allegory of the female form and the maternal as a container of beauty and virtuous influence and also fears it for such power through an imagined opposite: ugliness and proclivity to polluting. Error falls victim to allegorical necessity and the views of the age, and the result is she is a bad parent (I will refrain from using the word mother unless necessary to my argument, because even today mothers often shoulder the blame for disobedient children’s actions). Error feeds her children poisonous material, and when her children seek protection, she supplies it momentarily only to use them as weapons to defend against a threat to her safety. As a parent, I feel it is problematic to have sympathy for Error. I would not harm my children by feeding them poison, nor would I shield myself from danger by using my kids. Scripture—surely a subtext in this episode—calls parents (or the parent function) to higher standards in satisfying the needs of children: “[W]hat man is there among you, which if his sonne aske him bread, wolde giue him a stone? Or if he aske fish, wil he giue him a serpent? If ye then, which are euil, can giue to your childrē[n] good gifts how mucche more shal your Father which is in heauen, giue good things to them that aske him?”¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, scripture calls everyone, not just parents to higher standards of loving, a form of nourishing, or caring for: “Greater loue then this hathe no man, when any man bestoweth [grant] his life for his friends.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ McManus, “Carefull Nourse,” 395.

¹⁷⁰ Matt. 7:9-12. Also see, Luke 11:10-13.

¹⁷¹ John 15:13; in the sixteenth-century, usage of the Geneva “friends” can extend to kin.

The verse from John situates Christ's death as a loving sacrifice; when thought of as a parental and emblematic, Christ becomes the pelican nursing children on his wounds to revive them. The image inverts Error's death and her brood coming to a gluttonous end with their "bowels gushing forth," which, Brooks-Davies notes, "expresses the ultimate self-deaffectingness of sin by recalling the suicide of Christ's betrayer, Judas Iscariot, in the field he bought with his betrayal money: 'when he had throwne downe him selfe head long he brast a sondre in the middes, and all his bowels gushed out' (Acts 1:18)."¹⁷² In *The Inferno*, Dante emphasizes betrayal as the polar opposite of love. In Dante's geography, betrayal is the farthest from lust (a perversion of love and punished at the top of hell); the betrayal of various relationships resides in the coldest region of hell, farthest removed from the warmth of love. In Error, who resides in a cave hollow of all things good, we find the negative of a parent who fulfills the period's precept that Godly, i.e., good, women should nurse their own children as failing to do so or failing to adequately do so unnaturally divides mother from child and mother from natural self. As Error's offspring devour her, they become "vnkindly [unnatural] Impes."¹⁷³ Unkind to eat their own mother, the children, described by the word, cast themselves as unnatural.¹⁷⁴ Error fails in her last responsibility as a parent: she cannot send her children off to school because she and they are dead.¹⁷⁵

Redcrosse, unlike Error's brood, continues on an educational journey, but similar to her brood, he imitates Error's behavior. In terms of a literal battle, Error shrieks at Redcrosse,

¹⁷² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 26, line 6; Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 23.

¹⁷³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 26, line 2.

¹⁷⁴ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.1.26.2n.

¹⁷⁵ As usual, Spenser's allegory is paradoxically playful. Error and her brood are divided because of sin's duplicitous nature: they break familial bonds and die physically cleaved from themselves. However, they are parent and child, cut from the same cloth, as they illustrate the same principles of sin: avoidance of light, sinfulness being revealed, and so on.

leaps upon him with her “traine” [tail], tries to strangle him, and vomits on him. In allegorical terms and from an educational perspective, Error gives Redcrosse unpalatable knowledge and leads him to a “traine” of subsequent sinful teachers, which will effectively separate him from Una and lead him to Despaire.¹⁷⁶ He has escaped her cave but not error itself, which he cannot discern. Hamilton reminds us that the knight’s battle with Error and Despaire are linked with “allegorical language.” Hamilton continues, “The one lives in a ‘darksome caue’ in the thickest woods, the other in a ‘darksome caue’ among ‘old stockes and stubs of trees.’ Again the knight must enter the cave and fight the monster. But while the first struggle was outward and physical, this is inward and spiritual.”¹⁷⁷ Perhaps the most dangerous characteristic that Redcrosse shares with Error is that he is hollow. For the threat that resides ahead, he will need spiritual knowledge and wisdom (to defeat Despaire), yet Redcrosse is malnourished because Error as nurse provided sparse knowledge. The knight lacks the ability to discern what (if any) bits are good to read; what wisdom he did glean from the experience did not prevent him from separating with Una nor adequately prepare him for future challenges.

The Continued Error (through Duessa) of Redcrosse

Upon Error’s death, her responsibilities as nurse pass onto Duessa. Error sophisticated, Duessa uses sophistry among other charms to mislead Redcrosse. In some respects, though, the overt awfulness of sin remains the same. Just as Error’s body was “full of filthie sin” and her inner corruption spewed to the surface, Duessa is eventually stripped to reveal the core awfulness that resides underneath, specifically breasts excreting “filthy

¹⁷⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 18, line 6. When Redcrosse fights Error, she leaps “vpon his shield, and her huge traine / All suddenly about his body wound [. . .],” *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 18, lines 6-7. Hamilton notes both the literal and allegorical possibilities of the word train, denoting tail and suggesting every other challenge brought about by Redcrosse’s error, *Faerie Queene*, 1.1.18.6;9n.

¹⁷⁷ Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, 41.

matter.”¹⁷⁸ Duessa complicates the nursing imagery in the context of care because of the additional roles Spenser assigns to her. When Fradubio warns Redcrosse of Duessa, he describes her as a “witch” and “filthy foule old woman,” suggesting an association of age to sagging breasts and other features caused by maturity and breast feeding.¹⁷⁹ “[H]eavy breasts are shown to be characteristic of ugly old women and witches.”¹⁸⁰ Paster examines the wording Spenser uses during the stripping of Duessa. To describe them as “bladders” combines Duessa’s breasts with her reproductive organs—“an oozing, excretory bladder-womb.”¹⁸¹

McManus makes a similar observation about Errour, whose womb and mouth combine when she regurgitates her young in a birth-like process.¹⁸² McManus reminds us that the danger with Errour was seemingly minor as the babies were as gnats to Redcrosse.¹⁸³ Duessa proves much more dangerous because she fails to supply Redcrosse “lifegiving milk” and instead provides “corrupt teachings, allegorized as liquid sustenance.”¹⁸⁴ Redcrosse drinks from the “lethargy-inducing fountain” that fully pulls him under the influence of Duessa, making her “his Dame.”¹⁸⁵ McManus reminds us Duessa also uses a golden cup,

Which still she bore, replete with magick artes;
Death and despeyre did many thereof sup,
And secret poyson through their inner partes,
Th’eternall bale of heaue wounded harts [. . .].¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 24, line 7; canto 8, st. 47, line 7.

¹⁷⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 40, lines 2, 8; Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, 203-5.

¹⁸⁰ Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 98.

¹⁸¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 47, line 6; Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, 206. Paster earlier notes the “wombs of whores were seen as sewers and privies,” *Body Embarrassed*, 178. Since Duessa’s upper and lower extremities combine, it is no wonder that her breasts leak a filthy matter.

¹⁸² McManus, “Carefull Nurse,” 394. McManus argues the regurgitation of the young suggests the “horror of woman’s generating error through writing,” “Carefull Nurse,” 394. Thus, her spawn are “blacke as inke,” Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 22, line 7.

¹⁸³ McManus, “Carefull Nurse,” 395.

¹⁸⁴ McManus, “Carefull Nurse,” 395.

¹⁸⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 7, line 1 (emphasis mine).

¹⁸⁶ McManus, “Carefull Nurse,” 395; Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 14, lines 2-5.

Duessa's cup—filled with magic—further situates her as a witch, specifically the enchantress Circe whose pleasurable enticements enslaved men. Those who drank from her cup transformed from reasoning men to unreasoning animals, a metamorphosis not necessarily desired when considering the efficient causes of parents and the final cause of a humanist education. Yet, this is not the end to how Duessa fails Mulcaster's guidelines for parents because she inhabits additional roles.

A. C. Hamilton compares Redcrosse to Adam, associating Errour the “woman-serpent” to Eve in the temptress role.¹⁸⁷ His analogy extends Errour into the Eve mother role as well; though, the image is negative since Errour nurses her children with death, a perhaps not unfair comparison to the fallen Eve who becomes mother of a humanity that must die. To be fair, Eve requires a partner, and Adam receives official credit in scripture as well: “Wherefore, as by one man sinne entred into the worlde, but death by sinne, and so death wē[n]t ouer all men: for asmuche as all men haue sinned.”¹⁸⁸ Since the Errour episode guides readers into the poem, Duessa also becomes a “woman-serpent” in the temptress role.¹⁸⁹ However, she complicates that role. Nohrnberg associates Redcrosse and Duessa with Adam and Lilith, Adam's legendary other wife. He explores the various traditions of Lilith ranging from her being a night-hag and succubus capable of creating “sexual dreams” to a lamia who “seeks the death of infants and is the enemy of nursing mothers.”¹⁹⁰ The combination of the two places Duessa in the unsettling role of sexualized anti-nurse who comes between Redcrosse as Adam and Una as Eve. An Adam (earth) and a student, Redcrosse is expected to be fruitful, yet so much seems to depend on

¹⁸⁷ Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, 40.

¹⁸⁸ Rom. 5:12.

¹⁸⁹ Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, 41.

¹⁹⁰ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 229. For an overview of the Duessa and Lilith connection, especially biblical commentary on Lilith supplying “false milk and teaching,” see Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 235.

whether Redcrosse can follow the path of a good woman while resisting the seductions of a bad all the while gaining an education (a discipline) that would enable him to decline temptation.

In Duessa's role as succubus, she affects the dreams of Redcrosse in a distinctly sexual nature; when Redcrosse wakes, she is there as false Una to seduce him physically; and she again assumes the identity when Redcrosse sees the "false couple" in bed.¹⁹¹ The effects of these temptations cause Redcrosse to abandon the real Una, which fulfills the purpose of Duessa's second role as Lilith, the enemy of nursing mothers. Inherent to the nature of nurses and mothers, according to sixteenth-century belief, is that the nurse, operating as efficient cause competing with the mother, will divide child from mother and mother from herself. Inherent to Duessa's nature is her duplicitousness, especially in contrast to Una's oneness, which Duessa tries to destroy and divide as the false Una. Duessa's name derives from Latin, meaning "twoness, double-ness, and duplicity."¹⁹² Once Una is gone, Duessa plies her liquid arts upon Redcrosse until he removes his spiritual armor given to him by Una, drinks from the enervating fountain, and is captured by a giant.¹⁹³ In removing Redcrosse's outerwear, Duessa strips him of his "hereditary identity" that protects him from all harm.¹⁹⁴ Thus, she doubly fails the second of Mulcaster's parental guidelines: she not only neglects to provide clothing but she causes Redcrosse to remove what he has. I am, however, in danger of getting ahead of my own analysis. We would do well to examine the separation of Redcrosse and Una more closely.

¹⁹¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 5, line 4. Regarding the false Una and Duessa being the same, Nohrnberg states, "If the reader still doubts Duessa to be present in canto I, though in a covert way, it may be mentioned that she appears by name in the first canto of the next three books," *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 228n318.

¹⁹² Anthea Hume, "Duessa," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 229.

¹⁹³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 2-15.

¹⁹⁴ Schwarz, "Missing the Breast," 153.

After Redcrosse wakes from the dream, the knight “thought [to] haue slaine” the false Una who tempts him with a kiss.¹⁹⁵ The false Una further tempts Redcrosse with a love confession, which he rebuffs. Duessa leaves Redcrosse to sleep, but he cannot because he is left “musing” the change in Una and thinks his “labour all was vaine.”¹⁹⁶ Later, Archimago wakes Redcrosse and leads him to the false couple. Redcrosse again mistakes the false Una for the real. Archimago stops Redcrosse from stabbing the apparitions (if he had done so, he would have found them insubstantial), and soon after the knight departs without the real Una. Most important to my present analysis here is that Spenser begins to call attention to the motif of blindness (“The eie of reason was with rage yblent, [blinded]”).¹⁹⁷ Currently, the blindness is only spiritual in form, but it will later begin to manifest physically in Redcrosse. The movement of an inner spiritual sickness manifesting outwardly mimics Errour’s earlier purgations in that the inner will move outward to be made manifest. Thus, Redcrosse is beginning to enact [the stage of *imitatio*] and embody Errour’s behavior. Furthermore, Errour was the first to establish blindness because she operates as an opposite to Una as Truth who drags error into the light. Those who continue to err remain in darkness and blindness.¹⁹⁸ In both major temptation scenes, Redcrosse fails to see truth (passion blinds his capacity to reason), and he fails to consider the uncharacteristic change in virtuous Una.

¹⁹⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 50, line 3.

¹⁹⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 55, lines 1, 8.

¹⁹⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 5, line 7. *Yblent* is a past participle of *blend* [to blind], “yblent, adj.1,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed December 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/231334.

¹⁹⁸ Brooks-Davies points to chapter four of St. Augustine’s *Soliloquies* as a “useful general gloss on the Error episode”: “O Lord; who art the light, the Way, the Truth, the Life; in whom there is no darkness, error, vanity nor death: the Light, without which there is darkness; the Way, without which there is wandering; the Truth, without which there is error; the Life, without with there is death: say, Lord, let there be light, and I shall see Light, and eschew darkness: I shall see the way and avoid wandering; I shall see the truth and shun error; I shall see Life, and escape death: Illuminate, O illuminate my blind soul, which sitteth in darkness, and the shadow of death: and direct my feet in the way of peace,” *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 17.

Nohrnberg categorizes the knight's mistake in slightly different terms: "The naïve knight, incapable of 'untruth,' cannot re-cognize that the false Una is an unfaithful representation of the true one, because he is cognizing this unfaithfulness for the first time. And yet he does not know Una herself well enough to be confident of her fidelity, or truth" (123).¹⁹⁹ Nohrnberg continues, "The basic weakness in Redcrosse's faith is that his faith is more ignorant than innocent [. . .]"; Una has worn a veil since the dragon overtook her father's lands, and Nohrnberg reminds us of the scriptural definition of faith: "Now faith is the grounde of things, which are hoped for, and the euidence of things which are not sene."²⁰⁰ Redcrosse's ignorance comes from a failure to see the evidence of faith. The introductory listing of contents to Psalm 46 and the psalm itself in *The Geneva Bible* exemplify those God has rescued, realized the experience afterwards, and allowed faith and praise to grow. The psalm's introduction reads:

A song of triumph or thankesgiuing for the deliuerā[n]ce of Ierusalēm, after Sennaherīb with his armie was driuē awaie, or some other like sudden and maruelous deliuerance by the mightie hād [hand] of God. Wherby the Prophet commending this great benefite, doeth exhorte the faithful to giue them selues wholly into the hand of God, douting nothing but that vnder his protection thei shal be safe against all the assautes [assaults] of their enemies [. . .].²⁰¹

Una has proven faithful. She gave Redcrosse his armor and enabled him to defeat Error, yet he has not trusted in the experience from which faith is born so that he is wholly (becoming holy) God's. Psalm 46 consists of tumultuous events, earthquakes and raging waters, but none overcome the power of God—the focus of much of the psalm—and the faithful of the introduction can find comfort in the penultimate verse: "Be stil and knowe that I am God[. . .]."²⁰² Redcrosse has never been still in the sense the psalm offers: the world crumbling and the

¹⁹⁹ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 123.

²⁰⁰ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 125; Heb. 11:1.

²⁰¹ Ps. 46.

²⁰² Ps. 46:10.

faithful able to stand in stillness because they have contemplated or studied (if we want a less religious term) the saving power of God. Redcrosse fails to trust his parent Una, who is Faith and Wisdom, and instead trades her for the nurse and the prostitute—instead of wholeness, division.

Error and Duessa are not the only efficient causes encouraging Redcrosse's lack of study or his refusal to see. Archimago calls Redcrosse a "deare Sonne" at their first encounter, situating himself as an anti-father who helps guide Redcrosse toward misbehavior.²⁰³ Hamilton in his annotations to the text sees the label as "more than a religious formality" because it precedes Una's father calling the knight by the same label.²⁰⁴ Archimago's anti-parenting imagery is carried further when he privately "schooled" Redcrosse in dream fantasies.²⁰⁵ The stay at Archimago's hermitage should provide an opportunity for Redcrosse to reflect upon Una's biblical teachings, so that he trusts her and becomes the obedient child.²⁰⁶ Instead, Archimago distracts him with "pleasing wordes" from a "tongue as smooth as glas," sliding them directly to sleep.²⁰⁷ To his credit, Redcrosse is "void of euil thought" when he goes to sleep, but he is disturbed by an *insomnium* and then a *phantasma*.²⁰⁸ According to Macrobius's Commentary on the Dream of Scipio, *insomnium* is a nightmare "caused by mental or physical distress, or anxiety about the future: the patient experiences in dreams vexations similar to

²⁰³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 30, line 5.

²⁰⁴ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.1.30.5-9n.

²⁰⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 46, line 5. Brooks-Davies shows an underlying connection to father imagery: "Archimago—identified as Hypocrisy in the Argument to canto I and named at st. 43—is ultimately Satan, father of illusion [. . .]," *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 23.

²⁰⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 19, lines 3-4.

²⁰⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 35, lines 6-7. Nohrnberg argues that Archimago functions as a "sinister version of the Word" in contrast to Una's championing the Word of God. Interestingly Error, Idleness, Ignaro, and Despaire serve the same role as anti-word, all of whom form the same line of anti-educators that I am examining, though, for different reasons. Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 151. For Archimago using words as parody, Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 104-5.

²⁰⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 46, line 3; Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.1.47.3-7n.

those that disturb him during the day.”²⁰⁹ One example Macrobius gives of mental distress is “the lover who dreams of possessing his sweetheart or of losing her.”²¹⁰

Una has been faithful to Redcrosse as a nurturer, yet he has not seen her or studied the evidence of her actions. Vexed by past error and a lack of knowledge, Redcrosse dreams of gaining Una only to lose her when he wakes. Redcrosse may be void of evil thought, but his head seems to be empty of much good as well. Because nightmares such as *insomnium* are “noteworthy only during their course and afterwards have no importance,” Archimago uses false Una as a *phantasma* which occurs between “wakefulness and slumber,” allowing the dreamer to imagine various unnatural creatures, including “the incubus [or succubus in Duessa’s case], which, according to popular belief rushes upon people in sleep and presses them with a weight which they can feel.”²¹¹ The effect is immediate, and Redcrosse begins “musing” Una’s behavior (distrusting her) thinking his “labour all was vaine.”²¹²

The mentioning of labor is revealing. As discussed in the next chapter, one of the greatest enemies of a student is idleness. The etymological sense of the word (Old English *idel*) suggests that it is empty, hollow, and thus worthless. Idle’s development into modern English saw the additional sense of not performing work.²¹³ Concerning education in the sixteenth century, the two senses overlapped: idle students who would not study had empty heads and were useless. Mulcaster, speaking of a child’s memory (one of the three aspects of learning), says it needs constant training—“never suffered to be idle, seeing it [memory] spoiles so

²⁰⁹ Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 1.3.2.

²¹⁰ Macrobius, *Commentary*, 1.3.2.

²¹¹ Macrobius, *Commentary*, 1.3.5-7.

²¹² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 55, lines 1, 8.

²¹³ “idle, adj. and n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed December 2020, www.oed.com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/Entry/91064.

soone.”²¹⁴ For “if idlenesse enter, it will exclude all earnest, and call in her kinsfolkes, toyes and triffls, easie for remembraunce, heavy for repentaunce.”²¹⁵ So it is with an “ydle dreame” that Archimago begins to deceive Redcrosse.²¹⁶ Duessa then enters and afterward makes him question the worthiness of his past efforts (something Despaire also does).²¹⁷ At this point, Redcrosse seems to be already trapped, but Nohrnberg describes various Jewish and Christian charms and prayers to ward off the nocturnal spirit Lilith. One of these wards is directly connected to the St. George of Reginald Scot’s *Discovery of Witchcraft*, who defeats a spirit within a nightmare, while others protect sleeping infants.²¹⁸ In every case, safety required preparation such as reciting a charm or writing protective words on the corners of a room.

One final scriptural contextualization will prove helpful to examine the ways knowledge prepares and protects. Solomon of Proverbs urges his son to seek Wisdom and avoid her opposite, the strange women or harlot. In the Geneva version, the passage reads:

My sonne, kepe thy fathers commandement, and forsake not thy mothers instruction. Binde them always vpon thine heart, and tye them about thy necke. It shal leade thee when thou walkest: it shal watch for thee, when thou slepest, *and* when thou wakest, it shal talke with thee. For the commandement *is* a lanterne, and instruction a light: and corrections for instruction *are* the waie of life, To kepe from the wicked woman, & from the flatterie of the tongue of a strange woman. Desire not her beautie in thine heart, nether let her take thee with her eyeliddes.²¹⁹

Redcrosse strayed at the Wandering Wood during the daylight, but he at least had the guidance of Una operating as a good parent dispensing sustenance through the spoken Word of God and guiding his behavior, and he emerged on the right path afterward. In the House of Archimago,

²¹⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 39.

²¹⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 39.

²¹⁶ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.18.6.n.; and Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 46, line 1.

²¹⁷ Hamilton defines idle as “empty or unsubstantial (being made of air or being a dream); or vain and frivolous (describing the nature of the dream),” *Faerie Queene*, 1.1.46.1n.

²¹⁸ Nohrnberg, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 233-34.

²¹⁹ Prov. 6:20-5.

the knight (predisposed to blindness and error, due to imitating Error) forsakes the preparatory nature of study in favor of empty sleeping, inviting in Duessa as false Una, who urges him toward immoral behavior. Unsurprisingly, Duessa fails in the ultimate aspect of being a very best parent—in her authority over Redcrosse concerning matters of behavior, she moves him away from virtue.

Once Redcrosse leaves Una at the hermitage of Archimago, he finds Duessa, now named Fidessa. He defeats the knight Sansfoy, who has become her protector and lover, and as she is speaking, her false beauty entwines the knight: “More busying his quicke eies, her face to view, / Then his dull eares, to heare what shee did tell.”²²⁰ The lapse in senses is telling of the growing authority of his anti-nurses and how Redcrosse continues to embody their behaviors. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks in the context of the desire between earthly and heavenly treasures and serving two masters, apt in the analysis of Duessa as dry nurse and pre-teacher separating Una and Redcrosse. The passage in Matthew reads: “The light of the bodie is the eye: if thē[n] thine eye be single, thy whole bodie shal be light. But if thine eye be wicked, then all thy bodie shalbe darke. Wherefore if the light that is in thee, be darkenes, how great is that darkenes!”²²¹ The Geneva gloss for the passage provides an additional layer of meaning: “If the cōcupiscēce [concupiscence], & wicked affections ouercome reason, we must not marueil

²²⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 26, lines 6-7.

²²¹ Matt. 6:22-23. The passage also appears in *Luke* with more contextual imagery: “No man lighteth a candel, & putteth it in a priuie [secret] place, nether vnder a bushel: but on a candelsticke, that thei which come in, may se the light. The light of the bodie is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, then is thy whole bodie light: but if thine eye be euil, then thy bodie is darke. Take hede therefore, that the light which is in thee, be not darkenes. If therefore thy whole bodie shalbe light, hauing no parte darke, thē[n] shal all be light, euen as when a candel doeth light thee with the brightness” (11:33-36).

[marvel] thogh men be bli[n]ded, & be like vnto beastes.” No longer a commonly used word, concupiscence means intense desire for worldly things, especially a sexual desire.²²²

While Redcrosse does not yearn for Error sexually, she does begin the modeling of blindness resulting from being in darkness. Duessa, however, does appear sexually desirable, first as a spirit in an *insomnium* and later as a succubus in a *phantasma*, and it is during sleep that “judgement and reason are suspended, leaving the fancy (phantasy) free.”²²³ “With Redcrosse’s reason suspended in sleep, the sprite activates his phantasy with a dream which is directed at arousing concupiscent desires [. . .]. Concupiscence, according to the ninth of the *Thirty-nine Articles* (see II.ii.1-4n.) remains even after baptism and requires constant combatting by reason and will (see ii.4-6n. and IIv.1n.), which operate again when he wakes at st. 49 and control his reaction to the false Una.”²²⁴ During the third temptation, when Archimago wakes Redcrosse and reveals the false couple in bed, it should come as no surprise that passion blinds the “eie of reason” because the false Una has worked her way in as an object of desire, supplanting Una.²²⁵

Brooks-Davies calls attention to Hesperus, the morning star, setting and dawn emerging as the point when Redcrosse leaves Archimago’s hermitage. Redcrosse, because of faulty reason, dysregulated passions, and false guides is unable to comprehend reality:

The third illusion works when Hesperus, the morning star, is “in highest skie”; for the morning star is the planet Venus (cf. xi.33-4n., xii.21-3n., where Una is compared with it) and so symbolises the reality that Redcrosse is blinded by the false Venus—Una, or, in the more precise terminology of moral psychology, when his reason fails to govern his passions and his corrupted will acquiesces: “But in spiritual things we will no good, prone to evil (except we be regenerate,

²²² “concupiscence, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 2020, www.oed.com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/Entry/38435.

²²³ Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 24.

²²⁴ Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 26.

²²⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 5, line 7.

and led by the Spirit), we are egged on by our natural concupiscence” (Burton, *Anatomy*, l.i.2.11, *ed.cit.*, 146).²²⁶

Even though “Will was his [Redcrosse’s] guide” as he now travels separated from Una, it is infected because “griefe led him astray.”²²⁷ It is at this moment that Redcrosse and Sansfoy meet. Both are knights who have made Duessa their objects of desires; thus, they have been blinded by concupiscence and are without faith.²²⁸ As a result, both knights fulfill the last part of the Geneva gloss and become bestial. During their battle, Spenser compares them to two rams butting heads.²²⁹ This is especially telling of Redcrosse who earlier was Una’s protecting “Lyon,” a role that associates him with royalty, justice, and the sun.²³⁰ Now Spenser does not even distinguish Redcrosse from his foe, and they both knock each other “sencelesse.”²³¹ During the battle, they also both break their spears due to hitting so hard, and they hold the remnants in their hands “idely” or uselessly.²³²

Redcrosse has looked in dark places and bent his eyes toward unclean things, darkening his other senses, but the damaging effects of his anti-learning are now becoming apparent: just as Errour’s babies were useless as weapons against Redcrosse, Redcrosse’s weapons are becoming worthless against his foes. For individuals like Mulcaster who argued that a student should ultimately grow into servicing the state, this is the worst position for Redcrosse. He cannot even use the tools of his trade for the purpose for which Una has raised him up.

²²⁶ Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 28-9.

²²⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 12, line 4.

²²⁸ Sansfoy derives from French: “*sans foi*; i.e. faithlesse,” Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.2.12.8n.

²²⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 16.

²³⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 17, line 2. When Una tames the savage lion and he assumes Redcrosse’s role as protector, see Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 3, st. 7. For a succinct commentary on the lion as protector, see Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 36-7.

²³¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 16, line 5.

²³² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 16, line 8. Hamilton glosses “idely” in this instance as vain, *Faerie Queene*, 1.2.16.9n.

Once Redcrosse is guilty of looking upon Fidessa's unveiled face, he continues enacting his anti-nurses' behaviors by seeking respite from the "fierce heat" in the darkness of the "coole shade" of two trees.²³³ He resembles Errour's brood who sought the protection from the "litle glooming light" Redcrosse brought into Errour's cave with his "glistring armor," which became an "vncouth light" to them.²³⁴ While Redcrosse begins the quest with Una, who operates as Truth dragging error into the light, he now tries to escape the source of all light, the sun, with which he was previously associated.²³⁵ Because Redcrosse enters the shade of dark places to find rest, he combines two dangerous ideas. Not only does he increasingly move away from truth revealing light, but he succumbs to idleness as doing nothing. He has stopped moving in his quest.

In the earlier battle with Sansfoy, Redcrosse experienced instances of idleness (uselessness) with his weaponry, but he was still able to defeat the faithless knight. In the bower, however, Redcrosse has outright stopped in his tracks. Furthermore, he has entered the first *locus amoenus* (pleasing place) of the poem. Characteristics of these pastoral settings are water, (offering refreshment), greenery (suggesting life), and trees (providing shelter). Terry Comito frames bowers as resting places, arguing that "the invitation to make oneself at home in a fallen world must always be problematic; every dimension of the bower's enticement demands continuous scrutiny from Spenser's characters and from his readers."²³⁶ While such a setting may afford a shepherd streams to water, grass to feed, and shade from which to watch

²³³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 29, lines 9, 2.

²³⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 14, lines 4-5; st. 15, line 8.

²³⁵ See Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 5, st. 2, line 5, where the sun is also described as "glistring," linking Redcrosse's armor to it. For more comparisons between the sun and Redcrosse, see Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 24.

²³⁶ Terry Comito, "Bowers," in *Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 107.

his flock or a poet the space and the time out of time to compose his verse (as is the case for Spenser's Colin Clout), the setting proves dangerous for a knight who, in entering the bower, is delaying his quest and opening himself to temptation. Resting in the garden, Redcrosse encounters Fradubio whom Duessa fooled and then transformed into a tree. Fradubio's story of the foul woman separating him from his true love through seducing him with false beauty should be a warning to Redcrosse about appearance not representing reality and that his past experiences with false Una will lead him to destruction. However, Duessa falsely swoons to divert Redcrosse, who then kisses her. The concupiscence of Redcrosse fixates his attention upon Duessa's false beauty and blinds him to all else.²³⁷

Redcrosse ignoring Fradubio's warning becomes the third event in a pattern: he first ignores Una's warnings at the entrance of Errour's cave, which the Dwarf repeats for Redcrosse to ignore it a second time. It is only when Redcrosse listens to Una's command to "[a]dd faith vnto your force, and be not faint" that he escapes Errour's grasp, yet Duessa attracts Redcrosse's attention during Fradubio's warning—a possible moment of realization—not as Una's earlier attempt to help but to damn.²³⁸ Later in the poem when Redcrosse fights the knight Sansjoy, he ignorantly obeys Duessa's encouragement meant for Sansjoy, since he assumes it to be for him. Ironically, it saves his life in the situation, but his attention to Duessa

²³⁷ Nohnberg provides a different interpretation of the kissing, but one with an equally sexual experience as he labels it an addictive idolatry: "From the biblical point of view, all false gods are idols, and all false faith is idolatry. The devotions that Duessa secures are idolatrous in this sense, according to that biblical usage whereby to commit idolatry is to commit adultery," *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 223. However one interprets it, Duessa's sexual emphasis unsettles her role as anti-nurse of Redcrosse. Whether Redcrosse has allegorically nursed upon Duessa's sexualized breasts that unite her upper and lower extremities, had sexual intercourse with her, or spiritually transgressed by worshiping idols, the effects are the same. His bad nurse hampers his education by instilling laziness and ignorance, all the while using lust to blind him to the process.

²³⁸ For Una's warning before Errour's cave, see Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 12; for the Dwarf's, see bk. 1, canto 1, st. 13; and for Una's command, see bk. 1, canto 1, st. 19.

demonstrates the opposition between mother and nurse, the natural life-giver and the imposter. In this case, the power of the anti-nurse has supplanted the nursing mother. It should be noted that while Duessa's call saves Redcrosse's life, only the aid of true Faith allows him to defeat his enemy unto death.²³⁹ Thus, Redcrosse continues as a fool.

Conventional metaphors of portraying ignorance in the early modern period were blindness and imprisonment.²⁴⁰ I will save more in-depth discussions of ignorance for Chapter Three, which deals with the character Ignaro as he adheres to both of those conventional images.²⁴¹ However, Mulcaster defines two types of ignorance relevant to the current discussion. One arises from "infirmities in natur," the other "negligence in labor."²⁴² While the nature of Redcrosse's wit is questionable, he is a victim of the second type, for Error's and Duessa's anti-nursing causes blindness and leads to idleness and ignorance. The first part of Mulcaster's warning about the digression of educational hindrances becomes clear here: "Such a strength is error of being bakt [backed] with long ease [sloth], which brings ignorance a slepe [. . .]."²⁴³ We would also do well to remember that Duessa as a foil to the faithful Una prostitutes herself to everyone she can, inhabiting the role of the Whore of Babylon from Revelation and the Harlot of Proverbs. As such, Duessa further upsets the dichotomy between the anti-nurse and the mother by overtly sexualizing the maternal role and its associated imagery of

²³⁹ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.5.12.3-4n.

²⁴⁰ Wilhelm Füger, "Ignaro," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 388.

²⁴¹ For conventional uses of imprisonment and blindness relating to ignorance, see Mulcaster, *Positions*, 44; 165. Hamilton notes Ephesians 4:18 in relation to Spenser's conventional application to Ignaro, *Faerie Queene*, 1.8.31.9n. Brooks-Davies points to verse seventeen as well (82): "This I say therefore and testifie in the Lord, that ye henceforthe walke not as other Gentiles walke, in vanitie of their minde, Hauing their cogitation [faculty of thought] darkened, and being strangers from the life of God through the ignorā[n]ce that is in them, because of the hardenes of their heart [. . .]."

²⁴² Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 48.

²⁴³ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 2.

breastfeeding and by perverting oral teachings and the word through which it is delivered. Erasmus's dialogue "The Youth and the Prostitute" is once more relevant as subtext (with its analogues).²⁴⁴ Instead of resisting temptation, taking wisdom to the prostitute, and converting her, Redcrosse has traded Wisdom for the prostitute. Eutrapelus's concerns of a mother using a wetnurse and losing control of her child seem validated.²⁴⁵ As anti-nurses, Errour and Duessa have firmly established behavioral habits in opposition to Una's that Redcrosse's formal anti-teachers will continue to nourish. They succeed in leading Redcrosse to a formal education; however, in Duessa's final parental duty of deciding when her child is ready for school, she fails. When she brings Redcrosse to his first anti-teacher he is more ignorant than when he began his quest.

We have spent a great deal of time—perhaps too much—on parents and have not even begun looking at the formal part of the educational process that Mulcaster outlines, but this shows the importance of parents that Mulcaster emphasizes when he describes them as the "verie best part" of teachers.²⁴⁶ That Spenser chose mainly to use the maternal when displaying parental influence possibly shows his valuing of the role and power of women in the process of Protestant sanctification, which for our purposes involves the nursing and educating of children. That so much of that maternal influence is figured in dangerous and particularly loathsome terms shows the age's awe and fear of that power and its bias toward women. The maternal, with a dash of the paternal in Archimago, plays a large role in Redcrosse's bad education, as in its eventual redemption in the House of Holiness. The rest of Redcrosse's bad educational experiences only build upon this often-overlooked foundation.

²⁴⁴ Desiderius Erasmus, "The Young Man and the Harlot (*Adolescentis et scorti*)," in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 153-58.

²⁴⁵ Erasmus, "New Mother," 283.

²⁴⁶ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 5.

CHAPTER 2

ELEMENTARY: I WOULD RATHER SIT ON MY ASSE WITH IDLENESSE

On the importance of beginnings, Richard Mulcaster has much to say regarding the elementary education of children. He continually compares students to plants, arguing that the best harvest will result from the first and most carefully cultivated sowing. He writes using the language of construction, stating that his “purpose is to helpe the hole [whole] trade of teaching, even from the very first foundation [. . .].”¹ It comes as no surprise then that Mulcaster’s educational treatises focus on the importance of elementary education and how to deliver it well because Mulcaster, who knows “what importance it is, to haue youth embrewed with the best at the first,” believed “to have it [education] well done” and required that “the first groundworke would be layd by the best workeman.”² Spenser, in Book One of *The Faerie Queene*, similarly knows the importance of beginnings and also writes of foundations. The House of Pride rests on a “sandie hill,” a “weake foundation,” the instability of which, as Douglas Brooks-Davies points out, “contrasts the ‘Diamond stedfast’ Una at vi.4 (and cf. vii.33); while its ‘ruinous . . . hinder parts’ recall Duesa at ii.40-1.”³ We would do well to remember that Duesa as an anti-parent in opposition to Una has taken Redcrosse to this house, and it is in this House of Pride where Redcrosse meets Idleness, the first male “nourse of sin” who represents

¹ Richard Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chefelie of the right writing of our English tung* [. . .]. London, 1582, 2, *Early English Books Online*; Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 17. For a discussion of the main and conventional educational images Mulcaster uses (growing, building, flying, and riding), see William Barker, introduction to *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, by Richard Mulcaster, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), li.

² Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 21; Mulcaster, *Positions*, 135.

³ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), bk. 1, canto 4, st. 5, lines 4-5; and Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene: A Critical Commentary on Books I and II* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1977), 44.

Mulcaster's first formal stage of learning, and as anti-teacher, Idlennesse provides a bad educational foundation.⁴

A comparison with the parable of the wise and foolish builders is apt. The passage in the Geneva reads,

Whosoeuer then heareth of me these words, and doeth the same, I wil liken him to a wise man, which hath buylded [built] his house on a rocke: And the raine fell, and floods came, and the windes blewe, and beat vpon that house, and it fell not: for it was grounded on a rocke. But whosoeuer heareth these my words, and doeth them not, shalbe likened [likened] vnto a foolish man, which hath buylded his house vpon the land: And the raine fell, and the floods came, and the windes blewe, and beat vpon that house, and it fell, and the fall thereof was great.⁵

The parable arrives at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus tells it for those listening not only to hear his words but also to put them to practice. Redcrosse has established a pattern of not learning and mishearing.⁶ Idlennesse, seen as an elementary teacher, exacerbates this defect by formally training him not to hear and not to do, causing Redcrosse's house (his body) to fall and endangering his soul (especially if Despaire has his way and convinces Redcrosse to commit suicide). As England at its elemental level—the stuff of the land—Redcrosse situates the nation on an unstable foundation, setting up its future for a collapse of greater proportions (by the scale of the analogy) than his own personal fall. Before moving to Mulcaster's views of what a foundational education should provide and what appears in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, we would do well to examine the historical reality of elementary education in the early modern period. Idlennesse's failures as an elementary teacher, which the remaining pageantry of anti-teachers build upon, are better understood when contextualized. A reading of Idlennesse

⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 4, st. 18, line 6.

⁵ Matt. 7:24-27 (The Geneva Bible, 1560); compare Luke 6:46-49.

⁶ For a discussion of Redcrosse's inattentive behavior, see Chapter One, pages 103-4.

depends on navigating iconographic elements in Spenser's allegory. The allegorical imagery of Idleness can shift when he is viewed in the context of early modern education.

Two immediate challenges emerge when analyzing elementary education of the early modern period. First, pre-grammar school learning was a nebulous affair, lacking an overall systematic organization and varying with region and time. Second, and compounding the first (or perhaps arising out of it), there is an abundance of scholarship on Tudor grammar schools, but relatively little that focuses on the stage of education that comes before. Scholars' focus has mostly been on the effects of grammar school in the early modern period, in politics, culture, and society. T. W. Baldwin's *William Shakspeare's Petty School* proves a quality source on the subject, yet later scholarship typically omits Baldwin's earlier work on "pettie" schools.⁷

Although Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton offer the basis for how to view reading practices that provided the foundation of education in the early modern period, they do not mention petty schools in their exploration.⁸ In *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, Lynn Enterline cites extensively from Baldwin's subsequent work on *Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, which looks at Grammar schools.⁹ Enterline examines Grammar school education in the time of Shakespeare, rather than earlier stages of children's pedagogical instruction. Enterline's omission of Baldwin's earlier work on "pettie" schools epitomizes the challenges faced in exploring the institutionalization of early-education paradigms in the period and the degree to which they figure in Redcrosse's (mal)development. Nicholas Orme provides a comprehensive historical

⁷ Thomas W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Petty School* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1943), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001018387>.

⁸ Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," *Past & Present*, no. 129 (November 1990), www.jstor.org/stable/650933.

⁹ Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Thomas W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001112103>.

overview of all the stages of education in England, but his focus is on the broad period of medieval to renaissance pedagogical practices.¹⁰ Kenneth Charlton, Joan Simon, and Helen M. Jewell contribute other books on early modern education that give overviews to help lay the ground for my deeper contextualizing of the debates.¹¹

The institution of early modern British education can be traced back to the Roman empire. Romans divided education into three stages—elementary, grammar, and rhetoric, the last of which emphasized oration.¹² My interest begins with the late medieval period, where modern education as we know it has its firmest footing.¹³ My focus in this chapter is with “free-standing schools, rather than activities in monasteries or households” or in the private education handled in the households of nobility.¹⁴ Private education, the type of education prince Arthur receives in *The Faerie Queene*, I will attend to later as a possible analog to Redcrosse’s. When discussing education, nomenclature needs to be addressed first—eras and scholars use various and often conflicting terms. Schools were and are still classified by what is taught and the level of complexity at which it is presented. For example, the “grammar” school label refers to what the school teaches students. Schools were classified according to their developmental status. For example, “petty” (little, or pre-) schools are deemed such because what is later learned (grammar) was judged more mature. Schools were classified according to

¹⁰ Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006).

¹¹ Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965); Joan Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966); and Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998).

¹² Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 15-16.

¹³ Orme agrees with Arthur Francis Leach’s monumental scholarship concerning medieval education which found numerous free-standing schools apart from the schooling monasteries provided; Orme argues that medieval education was not a “precursor” to modern education but the “same thing in different circumstances,” *Medieval Schools*, 3-5.

¹⁴ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 55.

how they operated. For example, a grammar school could also be a “free” school: “a school providing education free of charge, unlike the usual kind of school where fees were paid.”¹⁵ Orme also divides free-standing schools into four kinds based on what they taught: “reading and song, grammar, business studies, and higher education of the kind pursued in universities.”¹⁶ I am currently focusing on the elementary stage of education, the earliest aspects of schooling, learning reading and song, that occurred in free schools. This type of schooling will eventually trickle into the early modern period. It would be the type of education more widely available to students (as opposed to private tutoring or monastic education) and the type of education, or closer to the type of education, that Spenser would have received. Spenser began attending Merchant Taylor’s close to its founding in the early 1560s. About two hundred fifty boys would have attended the school in the early years, and Andrew Hadfield writes, “The school register shows that Spenser’s fellow students would have largely been from the middle classes, with no offspring from the aristocracy or gentry.”¹⁷ Hadfield argues that while a number of elements fashioned Spenser into who he was, his public education with the “middling sort” was undeniably influential.¹⁸ Spenser’s public education also resembles the type of learning that Redcrosse receives although notable exceptions do occur throughout Book One, which I will address as they arise.

From the twelfth to the sixteenth century, Latin was taught in grammar schools, which meant pre-grammar school education introduced students to the Roman Latin alphabet free of

¹⁵ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 54-55. Orme adds that modern historians have other terms for free-standing schools including: “‘almonry school’, ‘chantry school’, ‘cloister school’, and ‘endowed school’,” *Medieval Schools*, 55.

¹⁶ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 55.

¹⁷ Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 24.

¹⁸ Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 24-5.

the vernacular English letters such as the thorn þ (th), the eth ð (th), or the wyn p (w).¹⁹ English boys would learn to recognize and pronounce the signs (Roman) of a language system that was not their own and that led to a language they could not immediately understand. They would then learn to read from songbooks and primers with little or no grasp of what they were reading.²⁰ The focus was on reading aloud and learning pronunciation; comprehension would not occur until grammar school, if it occurred at all. The commonly cited literary example of this process is Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale," since it provides such a succinct picture: the seven-year-old boy goes to a "litel scole [small or "petite" school] of Cristen folk" where he learns "to syngen [sing] and to rede [read]."²¹ The child must, though, ask an older classmate to translate the song. The older student has only heard that the song is about Mary, the mother of Christ, because he is there to learn song, saying, "I kan ["con," know or understand] but smal grammeere."²²

The location where learning could occur varied drastically. Students could learn privately at home through their parents; this did require an upbringing by those who were literate.²³ However, as discussed in the previous chapter, a disconnect existed between children learning at home from nourishing mothers via vernacular language and then learning at school or church through Roman Latin. If they are available, in addition to their other duties, local clergy taught boys part time; however, near the end of the Middle Ages, for many parish priests and clerks,

¹⁹ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 56.

²⁰ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 59.

²¹ Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Prioress's Tale," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), frag. 7, line 495; frag. 7, line 500.

²² Chaucer, "The Prioress's Tale," frag. 7, line 536. At least one major reason behind this method—lasting to the early sixteenth century—is that commoners were expected to pray in Latin, so knowing how to read and pronounce the major prayers, even with just a passing understanding of the intent, would prove beneficial from the perspective of the Catholic church, Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 59.

²³ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 61.

these roles had expanded considerably and were becoming more widespread.²⁴ Song schools existed as early as the eleventh century and were open and free to the public; they taught pupils plainsong along with reading.²⁵ Medieval song schools do seem to fade out before the start of the early modern period. Orme indicates two potential reasons. First is the growing number of literate people in the 1300s, which meant students had more options as to who could teach them.²⁶ Second, liturgical music began to change in large cathedrals in the thirteenth century (eventually spreading to other large churches). By the mid-fourteenth century, the change in music had affected the boys' performance, requiring more boys and more specialized practice, which meant there was no time for the teaching of plainsong and reading.²⁷ Grammar schools complicate the state of elementary education. Because their business was the teaching of Latin grammar, young boys had to know how to read and pronounce Latin to learn its grammar. Some grammar schools and schoolmasters refused students who were not old enough and who had not yet received proper training in the fundamentals, placing the responsibility of early education elsewhere. Others included reading and song (petty instruction) at their lowest levels.²⁸ The latter circumstance is another reason for a lack of stand-alone scholarship on petty schools; it is often included in the analysis of grammar schools because that level of education so often dealt with pre-grammar learning.²⁹

The picture of late medieval education is a complicated one. The authority of the medieval Catholic church was prevalent in many aspects of learning, from its many buildings

²⁴ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 63.

²⁵ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 63.

²⁶ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 64.

²⁷ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 65-66.

²⁸ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 66-67.

²⁹ Even Baldwin admits that he intended his book examining the petty school education of Shakespeare to be part of his examination of grammar schools in *Shakespeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, but Baldwin realized the topic was too big and wanted to give it proper service, *Shakespeare's Petty School*, 5.

where students were taught to its influential curriculum (songs, prayers, primers), yet as centuries passed, education began to sprawl away from the church, especially due to the rise of free-standing schools among other reasons. A. F. Leach attributed incorrectly that the Reformation in England, especially lead by Henry VIII and later by Edward VI, was the final act that devastated the educational system leading into the early modern period because it dissolved religious monasteries and chantries in which schooling was occurring. Kenneth Charlton and Joan Simon address the faults with Leach's scholarship in this area: Leach over-estimates the number of religious schools providing education when the Reformation occurs, and he omits the positive effects of Henrician and Edwardian policies.³⁰

The effects of the policies started by Henry and continued by Edward did shut off one sort of educational access. One intent of Edward's 1547 Chantries Act aimed to correct the "Superstition and Errors in Christian Religion [that] hath byn brought into the myndes and estimacion of men" through "blyndness and ignoraunce" of Christ's salvation and through incorrect doctrine.³¹ The Act's goal of ending corrupted education allowed for the conversion of chantries and their provisions "to good and godlie uses, as in erecting of Gramer Scoles to educacion of Youthe in vertewe and godlinesse, the further augmenting of the Universities and better provision for poore and nedye [. . .]."³² Charlton details the outcomes, "[W]here teaching was taking place this was duly noted and provision was made for the school to be 'continued', with a fixed stipend for the teacher paid by the Crown, and with no religious duties attached."³³ Charlton is quick to point out that intent expressed in charters does not align with execution,

³⁰ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 89-92; Simon, *Education in Tudor England*, 166-68.

³¹ Arthur Francis Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents 598 to 1909* (Cambridge: The University press, 1911), 472-73.

³² Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents*, 472-73.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t7rn3389d&view=1up&seq=9>.

³³ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 90.

but by the end of Edward's reign a robust educational system emerges, especially concerning the rise of grammar schools.³⁴ That Idleness in Book One of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is fashioned as a monk with associated accoutrements gains new significance when viewed in this context. He looks much like an elementary master pre-Reformation (a monk belonging to a monastery or chantry) or post-Reformation (a master who still bears the accoutrements of the old institution). The Chantries Act also established schools where none were before and revitalized dilapidated schools.³⁵ It allowed residents to acquire the land and upkeep the schools themselves; sometimes they even rehired the same schoolmaster who was forced to leave due to closures.³⁶ Finally, guilds and merchants aided in the founding and upkeep of schools, increasing the number and diversity of schools.³⁷

Perhaps the best way to consider elementary education of the early modern period is to study its methodology (praxis). In *William Shakspeare's Petty School*, Baldwin begins by examining the educational practices of William Kempe (1560-1601) as detailed in *The Education of Children in Learning* (1588). Kempe saw the first stage of education as the place for students to learn prosody and orthography.³⁸ One change the early modern period (along with the Reformation) brought was that students began learning English again in petty schools. Students first began learning to read by studying their Latin alphabet and syllables.³⁹ Students would

³⁴ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 90; For the effects of the Chantries Act of 1547, see Simon, *Education in Tudor England*, 223-44. Compare Helen M. Jewell's analysis of the short-term effects of the Chantries Act, *Education in Early Modern England*, 22-6.

³⁵ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 90.

³⁶ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 90-91.

³⁷ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 91-2. See Ursula Potter for additional comments on the growing rate of schools "sponsored by groups of townspeople and merchants," "Performing Arts in the Tudor Classroom," in *Tudor Drama Before Shakespeare, 1485-1590* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 144-45.

³⁸ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Petty School*, 15.

³⁹ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Petty School*, 15.

practice the alphabet from a hornbook, a sheet of paper containing the alphabet and usually the Lord's Prayer, attached to a piece of wood covered with a thin protective and transparent overlay of horn. Kempe's ordering was to move the boy from hornbook to the Catechism to the Primer.⁴⁰ By the end of Kempe's process, boys would be expected to know how to read in English, and some care would have been dedicated to their learning to write, which would prepare them for demands of learning Latin at age seven in grammar school.⁴¹ Baldwin moves through a number of other theorists of the age and their theoretical interests and recommendations for how to teach schoolboys, which mainly results in variations within this main process, such as which version of the alphabet to use, how to pronounce it, which spellings to use, or what books to use as primers.⁴² Many of the variations result from the schoolmasters themselves grappling with sixteenth-century English, its spellings, its pronunciations, and trying to tame the wildness of an oral language with multiple regional dialects that had yet to be standardized, especially compared to the stability of Latin that students would learn in the next stage of education.

As to the goals of an elementary education, students should learn to read and write. However, reading was primary. Although Mulcaster divides elementary education into five areas (reading, writing, drawing, singing, and playing), he emphasizes reading should come first, "[f]or the letter is the first and simplest impression in the trade of teaching, and nothing before it."⁴³

In Positions, Mulcaster continues to uphold reading as a necessity to the learning the follows:

Wherefore I make *reading*, my first and fairest principle of all other, as being simply the first in substance, and leaning to none, but leading all other, and

⁴⁰ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Petty School*, 15.

⁴¹ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Petty School*, 15-16; Seven is the age Thomas Elyot designates a boy should begin learning Latin grammar, *The Boke, Named the Gouvernour deuised by Sir Thomas Elyot Knight* (London: By Thomas East, 1580), ProQuest, l.vi; x.

⁴² Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Petty School*, 17-19.

⁴³ Mulcaster, Positions, 41.

growing after so great, as it raungeth over all, being somewhat without other, other nothing without it: and a thing of such moment, as it is vainly begon, if it be not soundly gotten, and being once sound it selfe: it delivereth the next maister from manifest toile, and the child himselfe from marvellous trouble, from feare where he failes not, from staggering, where he stops not, with comfort where he knowes, with courage, where he dare, a securitie to the parent, a safty to eche partie. I wishe the childe to have his reading thus perfect, and ready, in both the English and the Latin tongue verie long before he dreame of his Grammar.⁴⁴

Despite such debates as holding the value of teaching writing as ancillary to reading, Baldwin writes that most theorists saw that value of teaching reading *and* writing.⁴⁵ Theory differs from practice, and Ursula Potter writes, “Illustrations of school classrooms dating from the sixteenth century rarely show any desks or tables to write at, and even by 1660 desks were still comparatively rare. Many boys who completed several years of schooling would leave barely able to write, yet with excellent reading skills. It is important to bear this in mind when discussing literacy levels in Tudor England.”⁴⁶

To understand at least one reason why such importance was placed on reading over writing when the two seem so intertwined, especially from modern pedagogical practices, we must look at how the theorists and schoolmasters viewed reading during the sixteenth century. Ursula Potter reminds us that most boys educated in the sixteenth century “were receiving instruction in skills that we today would consider more suited to an actor than to a scholar.”⁴⁷ In *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom*, Lynn Enterline examines how Grammar masters required students to imitate the ideas, styles, and rhetorical devices of the texts they were translating (*imatatio*) and tasked students to perform their translations aloud (*actio*). These practices were intended

⁴⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 41. In *Elementarie*, Mulcaster reiterates his point of the primacy of reading often calling it the “first principle,” *Elementarie*, “The Epistle,” 21-2.

⁴⁵ Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Petty School*, 23-30.

⁴⁶ Potter, “Performing Arts,” 148. Also see Orme’s description schoolroom conditions, specifically students using their knees as tables, *Medieval Schools*, 139.

⁴⁷ Potter, “Performing Arts,” 143.

to teach students Latin and press into them gentlemanly (and masculine) mannerisms through the physical imitation of their schoolmasters to embody correct oratory techniques.⁴⁸ Potter's breakdown of the process boys experience is more succinct because she focuses on education's connection to drama while Enterline's concern is on the effects of schools on boys growing into gentlemen and whether or not schools were actually meeting that goal.

In her examination of performance, Potter outlines five skills related to dramatic learning: (1) memorizing, the ability and requirement to learn "without book" and retain vast amounts of grammatical rules and large passages of text; (2) loud speaking, the ability to orate to an audience; (3) role-playing, the ability to imitate various parts of dialogues and dramas that many humanists found integral to modeling correct behavior; (4) personation (*prosopopoeia*), the ability to simulate in oneself "realistic emotions by drawing on personal experiences and memory" in order to emotionally affect listeners; (5) action (*Chironomia*), the ability to deliver a rhetorical oration using both voice and bodily gestures (the concept is also linked to *actio*).⁴⁹ The teaching intent is clear; students give life to what they studied, and reading was integral to the process as the first step that led to action. Most importantly, Mulcaster argues the process of gaining knowledge, once complete, will lead to a life of service to the state.⁵⁰ Of grammar school, specifically, Mulcaster states that "the end [purpose] thereof is to write and speak [. . .

⁴⁸ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 2-4.

⁴⁹ Potter, "Performing Arts," 145-54. *Prosopopoeia* presented problems for school-age children as they "could hardly be expected to draw on their own emotional experiences, so they were taught a form of memorized emotions," Potter, "Performing Arts," 152. Enterline has much to say in this area as herein lies the disconnect between what masters were teaching and the goals they were expecting: they were teaching Latin grammar and rhetoric and desiring masculine gentlemen, yet they were forcing boys to experience emotions beyond their age during theatrical orations, especially feminine emotions that complicated gender norms, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 120-52.

⁵⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 38.

.].”⁵¹ As in the parable of the builder, students must not just be hearers but also perfected doers.⁵²

As an active—not a passive—pursuit, reading was “goal-oriented” and public. Readers would apply the knowledge they had consumed and memorized: “Above all,” Jardine and Grafton write, “this ‘activity of reading’ characteristically envisaged some other outcome of reading beyond accumulation of information; and that envisaged outcome then shaped the relationship between reader and text. In consequence, a single text could give rise to a variety of goal-directed readings, depending on the initial brief.”⁵³ Jardine and Grafton look at Gabriel Harvey (1550-1630) in particular because they want to explore the junction of politics and a type of employee working in a noble’s household; the scholar-reader’s goal is “to read and excerpt the classics,” while “acting less as advisors in the modern sense than as facilitators easing the difficult negotiations between modern needs and ancient texts.”⁵⁴ The importance of reading and what it helps facilitate in early modern England cannot be overstated. While most scholarly attention has focused on the practices of grammar school teaching, the foundations of (English) literacy begin in the much earlier stages of children’s education.

In addition to reading and writing, most of the authors Baldwin covers would not have been opposed to teaching students their numbers, and many students would have had the

⁵¹ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 228.

⁵² Compare James 1:22. In the period, the idea of “per-fection” is key—Spenser understood the concept pertaining to his own role as poet laureate. The Latin *per* equates to thoroughly and the Latin *facio* equals to do or to make; thus, education is a process of per-fecting—thoroughly making—students and what they are to become. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, “per,” in *A Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrew’s edition of Freund’s Latin dictionary* (1879), last accessed September 27, 2022, <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry%3Dper1>; “făcio,” in *A Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrew’s edition of Freund’s Latin dictionary* (1879) last accessed September 27, 2022, <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=FAC&la=la&can=fac0&prior=per#lexicon>. I am indebted to Dr. Marion Hollings for pointing out this connection to me.

⁵³ Jardine and Grafton, “‘Studied for Action,’” 30.

⁵⁴ Jardine and Grafton, “‘Studied for Action,’” 32-35.

opportunity because *The ABC with the Catechism* at least provided them.⁵⁵ Numeration (math and arithmetic) would have been less likely taught, and possibly even neglected in grammar school. The other large goal of early education was a religious and moral one. In the late medieval period, educational institutions were mainly part of the church, or were “primarily nurseries for the priesthood.”⁵⁶ After the Reformation, educational institutions (newly free of Catholic religious obligations) sought to teach moral instruction with a Protestant focus. While the institutions that regulated education changed, the goals were often the same: students should learn intellectually and spiritually (morally) toward an end of service.

Returning to Idlennesse with a new sense of context, how do we read him based on his educational position in Redcrosse’s development? Perhaps more importantly, how does a reading of Idlennesse as an anti-teacher and Redcrosse as a modeling student affect our understanding of Redcrosse’s responsibilities to serve—the learning expectations placed upon the young knight to use his reading skills to perform (act) and to imitate religious and moral instruction as he carries out his service to the state? Considering Idlennesse within the broader educational context of the early modern period and especially in relation to Mulcaster’s criteria for an elementary teacher, Idlennesse fails as a teacher, the results of which become modeled and increasingly embodied by Redcrosse.

The Negligent Teaching Practices of Idlennesse

After Duessa, acting as Redcrosse’s anti-parent, leads him to the House of Pride, Redcrosse meets Idlennesse, his first male “nourse of sin.”⁵⁷ Mulcaster is quite clear regarding what he wants of elementary teachers, writing that they should be highly qualified, should lay

⁵⁵ Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Petty School*, 30.

⁵⁶ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 96.

⁵⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 18, line 6.

the foundation of learning upon which others will build, and should be paid the highest to attract the best.⁵⁸ Since Idleness is one of the seven deadly sins, his allegorically evil state eliminates him from being the highly qualified teacher whom Mulcaster desires. Idleness's failures are especially telling when examined under the minutia of Mulcaster's proposals.

The elementary teacher should teach five principles: reading, writing, drawing, singing, and playing (exercise). Idleness does none of these because he just sits on his Asse (donkey) and does nothing to foster fruitful learning.⁵⁹ Mulcaster repeatedly calls out laziness as a hinderance to learning. In *Positions*, Mulcaster explains why the first four of the five skills are foundational for future learning. They actively move the child forward in learning. Mulcaster writes:

[C]hildren are to be trained up in the Elementarie schoole, for the helping forward of the abilities of the minde, in these fower [four] things, as commaunded us by choice and commended by custome. *Reading*, to receive that which is bequeathed us by other, and to serve our memorie with that which is best for us. *Writing* to do the like thereby for others, which other have done for us, by writing those thinges which we daily use: but most of al to do most for our selves: *Drawing* to be a directour to sense, a delite to sight, and an ornament to his objectes. *Musick* by the instrument, besides the skill which must still encrease, in forme of exercise to get the use of our small joyntes, before they be knitte, to have them the nimbler, and to put Musicianes in minde, that they be no brawlers, least by some swash of a sword, they chauce to lease [lose] a jointe, an irrecoverable jewell unadvisedly cast away. *Musick* by the voice, besides her cunning also, by the waye of *Phisick*, to sprede the voice instrumentes within the bodie, while they be yet but young. As both the kindes of *Musick* for much profit, and more pleasure, which is not voide of profit in her continuing kinde.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 231-33. For arguments relating to Idleness's position and pay, see the Introduction. Idle combines the etymology of not working with useless, i.e., Idleness refuses (or cannot) work and the position he holds becomes worthless.

⁵⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 18.

⁶⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 50. For a similar passage where Mulcaster discusses the five principles and their effects, see *Elementarie*, 25-26.

In discussing the four principles in the passage from *Positions*, Mulcaster's goal is to shape a child's mind. He attends to the physical as well with such exercises addressing the small joints—the hands to make them “nimbler.” From an Augustinian viewpoint, Mulcaster sees the individual as a soul (an intellect) that is influenced through the body. Therefore, when educating the student, the teacher should improve both aspects of the individual. In *Positions*, Mulcaster argues the body should be cared for as it is a “copartner” with the soul—what happens to one affects the other:

The soule and bodie being coparteners in good and ill, in sweete and sowre, in mirth and mourning, and having generally a common sympathie, and a mutuall feeling in all passions: how can they be, or rather why should they be severed in traine? the one made stronge, and well qualified, the other left feeble, and a praye to infirmitie? will ye have the minde to obtaine those thinges, which be most proper unto her, and most profitable unto you, when they be obtained? Then must ye also have a speciall care, that the bodie be well appointed, for feare it shrink, while ye be either in course to get them, or in case to use them.⁶¹

Since Mulcaster believes the mind as well as the body should be improved, he adds play (exercise) as a fifth foundational principle, discussing it separately because it most affects the body. However, Mulcaster does not limit physical exercise to the elementary stage of education but encourages exercise for the “generall student during his whole life.”⁶²

As personified in *The Faerie Queene*, Idlennesse is defined by his negligence. He does not carry out his day in the practice of any type of profitable activity—reading, writing, drawing, or singing—that Redcrosse can see and model or embody. Thus, Redcrosse does not learn nor have reinforced any of the foundational elements he needs, the most important of which is reading, enabling one to act. Spenser purposely figured an image of Idlennesse as lazy, so he is not going

⁶¹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 51. For more information on Mulcaster's beliefs on the soul and body, see William Barker, introduction to *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, by Richard Mulcaster, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), xvii-xxi.

⁶² Mulcaster, *Positions*, 53.

to be doing much, and it is unfair to read *Idlennesse* using an outside text that places additional expectations upon him not inherent to the poem. As Gordon Teskey reminds us, allegorical narratives supply their own internal signposts that contribute to their interpretation.⁶³ *Idlennesse* lacks signs linking him to writing, drawing, and singing. However, *Idlennesse* is “Arayd in habit blacke, and amis thin, / Like to an holy Monck, the seruice to begin.”⁶⁴ *Idlennesse* also carries a “Portesse,” a breviary containing each day’s service.⁶⁵ “The choice of a monk complete with breviary (portesse) to represent this sin is typical of medieval and Renaissance ecclesiastical satire.”⁶⁶ His clothing equally situates *Idlennesse* as an educator (of what time period, I discuss later), and while the book is undoubtedly Catholic—Hamilton even labels it “outward popish display”—it could serve as a reading primer, especially pre-Reformation.⁶⁷ Taken generally, the goal of any primer is to teach letters and religious virtue. More important than the Catholic imagery is that *Idlennesse*’s book is “much [. . .] worne, but [. . .] little redd.”⁶⁸ Reading, as already covered, moved one toward virtuous action. Suffice to say, however, *Idlennesse* has a book—in an educational context—that serves as a primer that he fails to use.⁶⁹ *Redcrosse*

⁶³ Gordon Teskey, “Allegory,” in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 16-17.

⁶⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 18, lines 8-9. Hamilton glosses “amis” as “priestly vestment or monk’s hood,” *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.18.8-9n.

⁶⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 19, line 1.

⁶⁶ Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene: A Critical Commentary on Books I and II* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1977), 49.

⁶⁷ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.19.1n.

⁶⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 19, line 2.

⁶⁹ See Ray Schrire who discusses the history of schoolbooks in grammar schools from the Middle Ages to the sixteenth century. As learning tools, books shifted from the property of teachers to becoming personal copies of students, which caused learning to be evaluated differently, “without book,” or through memorization, “Learned without Book: English Grammar Schools and the Place of Textbooks in Early Modern Education,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 53, no. 1 (March 1, 2022): 169–94. Mulcaster, discussing the qualities of the physical education instructor, argues that one should not just memorize knowledge from a book and subsequently parrot that knowledge. Instead, an instructor should apply knowledge through thought: “In the course of training, a thousand difficulties not possible to be forseene by the generall direction, will offer themselves, and appose the maister, and at the sudden must be salved. What will the trainer do? runne to his booke? nay to his braines,” *Positions*, 136. *Idlennesse* carries

becomes fundamentally illiterate, misreading or failing to read the situations he enters.

Whether this is solely due to modeling to poor reading habits of Idlenesse is questionable.

Redcrosse does have other teachers (good and bad). What is evident is that Redcrosse will eventually be powerless to act when called to perform, becoming idle himself.

Idlenesse's negligence to teach reading, seen in the context of care for the young, would be his worst failure because that is the primary goal of the elementary stage of early modern education. However, Mulcaster was similarly concerned with training the body as well as the soul. Idlenesse perhaps equally fails to respond concerning the physical training of the young man, especially when reading Redcrosse allegorically within the context of his development. If allegory becomes at times psychomachia, the physical manifestation of a character's inner dealings, and if reading leads one to action, then Redcrosse must be physically capable of grappling with whatever manifests from his intellectual, psychological, or spiritual condition.

Mulcaster spends an excessive amount of time, especially in *Positions*, on the importance of physical education along with how schoolmasters at all educational levels are physically to train children.⁷⁰ Even though Mulcaster sees the foundation as most important, he argues that physical training should be the task of every teacher as it benefits students of all ages. Emphasizing the importance of exercise, Mulcaster asks, "Take exercise awaie, what then is the bodie, but an vnweildie lump? what vse of it hath either cūtrie [country] in defence, or it

a book much like a medieval schoolmaster in relation to a student who does not possess a book but listens to a lesson, but Idlenesse (or Redcrosse for that matter) shows no indication that he uses his brains. Compare him to Una, who presents learning to Redcrosse "without book."

⁷⁰ One aspect of Mulcaster's focus is he must defend his stance that all children should be educated (at least to certain levels); thus, he must argue that physical activities, often associated with the gentry, will not lead children toward nobility but are instead simply good for physical health. To help his stance, Mulcaster borrows much in his support of physical education from the Italian physician Girolamo Mercuriale and his work *De arte gymnastica libri*, Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xxiv-xxviii.

self in delite?"⁷¹ The elementary teacher especially had to be of good body (in addition to being of good mind and moral standing) so that he could instruct children in physical training and take part in it. Idlenesse fails on these counts to look after the young knight (having failed to look after himself):

From worldly cares himselfe he did esloyne [remove],
 And greatly shunned manly exercise,
 From euerie worke he chalenged essoynne [claimed excuse],
 For contemplation sake: yet otherwise,
 His life he led in lawlesse riotise;
 By which he grew to grieuous malady;
 For in his lustlesse [listless] limbs through euill guise
 A shaking feuer raignd continually:
 Such one was *Idlenesse*, first of this company.⁷²

Spenser's scheme when discussing the seven deadly sins is to divide them among three categories: the flesh, the world, and the devil.⁷³ Idlenesse, being a sin of the flesh, has a mostly physical emphasis. He avoids exercise and his bodily health is grave. However, Spenser pairs the fleshly state of Idlenesse with larger concerns of lawlessness and legal language. Idlenesse removes himself from worldly cares, but Spenser uses the word "esloyne," which Hamilton glosses as "withdraw, remove himself from the jurisdiction of the law." Idlenesse gets himself out of work through "challenged essoynne" another legal term that Hamilton notes would give him "claimed exemption."⁷⁴ Finally, Spenser directly tells readers that Idleness lives in "lawlesse riotise."⁷⁵

⁷¹ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 26.

⁷² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 20, lines 1-9.

⁷³ For details of the divisions, see Joan Heiges Blythe, "Sins, Seven Deadly," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 659; Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 48-49.

⁷⁴ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.20.1-3n.

⁷⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 20, line 5.

Mulcaster emphasizes that to serve properly both God and country, one must train one's natural abilities to their best. In *Positions*, Mulcaster emphasizes the body's effects (and ill effects) on the soul:

What a treasure health is, they that have it do finde, though they feele it not till it faile, when want bewrayes [exposes] what a iewell they have lost, and their cost discovers how they mynde the recoverie. The ende of our being here is to serve God and our country, in obedience to persons, and performance of duties: If that may be done with health of bodie, it is effectuall and pithie: if not, then with sorow we must shift the soner, and let other succede, with no more assurance of life, then we had made us, without this healthful misterie: in perpetuall change to let the world see, that multitude doth supply with number the defect of a great deale better, but to sone decaying paucity.⁷⁶

Idlennesse rejects the physical through legalistic manipulation, and because of his bodily suffering, he cannot properly serve God and the state (he is the antithesis of the nationalistic Mulcaster).⁷⁷

An additional offense related to exercise is that Idlennesse rides a donkey.⁷⁸ In cataloging animals associated with the seven deadly sins, Morton W. Bloomfield lists the donkey as the first and largest entry under sloth.⁷⁹ In *Nature and Myth: Medieval and Renaissance Moral Symbols*, John M. Steadman discusses Una's riding of a donkey at the beginning of Canto I and offers additional ways the emblem can be interpreted. The donkey has long been associated with ignorance as the animal thinks it is being worshiped instead of the important person or deity it carries upon its back, yet the "lowly Asse" that Una rides represents the vehicle carrying one

⁷⁶ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 132; "bewray, v.", *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 23, 2023, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/18495>.

⁷⁷ On the alignment of health and service, Mulcaster and Spenser are guilty of valuing only what they deem as able-bodied individuals, not allowing room for non-normative individuals with impairments or disabilities. As previously noted, for more information on the topic of disability during the early modern period, see Allison P. Hobgood and David Houston Wood, eds., *Recovering Disability in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013).

⁷⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 18.

⁷⁹ Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (Michigan: State University Press, 1967), 247-8.

from holy ignorance to Truth.⁸⁰ While the main association of the asinine donkey in this case is ignorance, Idlenesse pairs well with the beast as his slothfulness—his lack of physical, spiritual, and intellectual effort—will lead him to ignorance.

One noticeable lack of action from Idlenesse in relation to his donkey, however, is that he does not walk. In discussing exercise, Mulcaster cites walking as the most common and most natural physical activity one can perform:

Among those exercises which be used abroade, what one deserveth to be set before walking, in the order and place of traine? what one have they more neede to know, which minde, the preservation and continuaunce of health? what one is there, which is more practised of all men, and at all times, then walking is? I dare saye that there is none, whether young or olde, whether man or woman, but accounteth it not onely the most excellent exercise, but almost alone worthy to beare the name of an exercise. [. . .] If ye consider but the use of our legges, how necessarie they be for the performaunce of all our doings, *nature* her selfe seemeth to have appointed *walking*, as the most naturall traine, that can be, to make them discharge their duetie well. And sure if there be any exercise, which generally can preserve health, which can remedie weaknesse, which can purchase good haviour, considering it is so generall, and neither excludeth person nor age, certainly that is *walking*.⁸¹

Idlenesse models a slothful lifestyle devoid of Mulcaster's five educational principles concerning how an elementary master should teach the mind and body of a student; thus, any natural abilities he possesses—and the natural abilities of his students, namely Redcrosse—do not improve. Comparatively bad, Idlenesse neglects the natural God-given abilities of his own body, specifically riding when he should walk.

The (School)House of Pride

One challenge in examining the educational context of Idlenesse is deciphering the time in which Spenser sets Faerie Land. Knowing when events are occurring could help better to

⁸⁰ John M. Steadman, *Nature and Myth: Medieval and Renaissance Moral Symbols* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1979), 131-7; Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 4, line 2.

⁸¹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 89.

interpret Idlennesse (the monk with a breviary). The setting of Book One and *The Faerie Queene* in general is rather fluid. Spenser incorporates biblical history and myth as far back as Eden, yet social-political historical references dance between the sixth and the sixteenth century.⁸² Since Spenser chooses to allow “various historical, legendary, and mythical times [to] coexist, past, present, and future must be treated as relative, not absolute, terms.”⁸³ We cannot properly determine to what period the iconography and emblematic character of Idlennesse belongs, but perhaps it does not matter. Learning letters was a sort of devotional process—the alphabet often began with a cross (+), signaling children to make the sign of the cross before practicing their letters, and reciting it ended with an amen.⁸⁴ No matter when the learning of letters occurs (pre- or post-Reformation) the process has been Christianized, and Idlennesse as teacher is neglecting a duty to the young, which would negatively affect the lives of those under his authority who are expected to grow and performatively use the knowledge they are learning toward a virtuous end. Perhaps one criticism that could be levied against the figure of Idlennesse positioned at the earliest moment in time, is that teaching was not a full-time profession but the duty of “cleric, monk, or nun.”⁸⁵ Idlennesse may not be neglecting a profession in a modern sense, but more generally the offices of the Church, a far worse offense.

In addition to time, the space in which Redcrosse’s elementary schooling occurs must be considered. The Idlennesse episode occurs in the House of Pride in Lucifera’s Hall. If positioned in the context of the latest (1580s-1590s) of the poem’s subtexts, the hall resembles in setting a petty school, possibly one that is operating within a refitted building serving as a freestanding

⁸² Wayne Erickson, “*The Faerie Queene*, Geography of,” in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 293.

⁸³ Erickson, “*Faerie Queene*, geography,” 293.

⁸⁴ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 56.

⁸⁵ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 32. Also see Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England*, 46.

grammar school. The House of Pride's construction alludes to the Tower of Babel (10th C. BCE ff.); its architecture resembles the city of Alcina from Ariosto *Orlando Furioso* (15th C.); its overlay of gold foil resembles Solomon's Temple (biblical again, but later than Babel), minus the emphasis on flawless craftsmanship dedicated to God. Its layout and extravagance satirize the country houses used by wealthy courtiers to entertain Elizabeth during her royal progresses.⁸⁶ My interest is on the inner space, "the hall," of the palace where the procession of the seven deadly sins begins and where Lucifera resides.⁸⁷ While a standard early modern schoolroom did not exist due to the multiple ways and various places in which education was occurring, and the various places it was occurring, "[p]erhaps the strongest influence was simply the hall of a lay building, given that some schools occupied former domestic houses. A hall was usually oblong. Its principal seat, that of the head of the household (the dais), was in the centre of the inner short side, like the master's chair. The outer door of the hall in a nobleman's dwelling had an usher to control ingress and egress, as in a school; indeed, the title and function are likely to have passed from lay households to schools."⁸⁸ Lucifera's hall follows the same fundamental designs and offers the same functions.

As Duessa leads Redcrosse to the open gates of the House of Pride, the porter, Malvenu [evil welcome], serves as an usher and operates the outer gate of the palace controlling who enters, but in this situation, he lets everyone enter this dangerous place.⁸⁹ Spenser provides little detail about the shape of the hall—it is "on euery side / With rich array and costly arras

⁸⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 4; Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 43-44; and Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.4.1-4n.

⁸⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 6, line 5.

⁸⁸ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 141. For additional educational spaces and their layouts, see Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 135-141; and Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England*, 94-103.

⁸⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 6.

dight [adorned].”⁹⁰ The room is large and not likely overly elongated. Duessa and Redcrosse pass people gathered on the sides who “[gaze] on them round,” suggesting the architecture of a great hall—a room where each of the walls is within viewing distance from the entrance and center.⁹¹ Mimicking the space of authority in other contexts (noble and religious), Lucifera’s hall contains a key feature of the schoolroom as well—the master’s chair at one end of it.

Teachers were called masters because they demonstrated a mastery over the knowledge they teach, and they also reigned in positions of authority over their schoolrooms (exceptions did occur due to parental or state pressure).⁹² Discussing the management of the schoolroom, Orme describes such settings:

Pictures of schools at work show the master in his chair, never walking about. He sits grasping the birch—a bundle of twigs—that formed his badge of office, and once or twice a boy is shown standing before him to be examined. Boys came to him, not he to them, just as the lord of a household sat and was approached by his retainers. The master gave the lesson or issued the commands from his chair, and periodically called out boys to be questioned or examined, the process known as “apposing.” The birch was used to punish indiscipline and inability to answer.⁹³

Just as the schoolmaster sits in his chair as a position of authority where students must approach and be examined, Lucifera sits on her “high throne” where Duessa and Redcrosse must approach her to make “obeysaunce,” i.e., social submission.⁹⁴ Spenser further emphasizes Lucifera’s position (her status and location) by the “[i]nfinite sortes of people” on the sides of

⁹⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 6, lines 5-6.

⁹¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 7, line 1. Hamilton glosses round as “on all sides,” *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.7.1n.

⁹² Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 141.

⁹³ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 144. Ursula Potter also speaks of the teacher’s chair as a domineering aspect of the schoolroom: “Indeed, so emblematic was the master’s chair of his status that the induction process for a new schoolmaster was sometimes referred to as ‘chairing’ or being ‘well seated’ (Hoole 216),” “Performing Arts,” 148.

⁹⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 13, lines 6-7; Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.13.7-9n.

the hall who “abide / There waiting long, to win the wished sight / Of her, that was the Lady of that Pallace bright.”⁹⁵

The vast number of people seems to show that Lucifera is of some import, but that number also makes her school, if we may see it as such, an unrealistically large size. The number of students who attended schools differed drastically because of the variation in the type and size and even nearness of schools to each other. The number of pupils could range from five or six in smaller schools to slightly over one hundred for larger schools.⁹⁶ Even what were considered the great schools whose numbers rose into the hundreds pale in comparison to the numbers waiting in Lucifera’s halls. St. Paul’s operated as one of the larger schools and allowed for the teaching of 153 students.⁹⁷ The number is not incidental as many benefactors established strict demands relating to biblical numerology on membership or scholarships.⁹⁸ John Colet (1467-1519) who founded St. Paul’s in 1509 capped the attendance at 153 based on the same number of fish the disciples caught after the post-resurrection Jesus appears to them, commanding them to cast their nets on the right-hand side.⁹⁹ While Lucifera’s number of students (if we may see them as such) may be great, they lack any type of significance related to God’s underlying purpose for humanity or any connection to the humanist educational purpose of seeking knowledge, ultimately knowledge of God and the imitation of His goodness (for the

⁹⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 6, lines 7-9. The number of people also appears in stanza 3 as “Great troupes of people traueild” to the House of Pride, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 3, line 1.

⁹⁶ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 141-42.

⁹⁷ The boys numbered over two hundred during the early years of Merchant Taylor’s where Spenser attended, Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 24.

⁹⁸ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 142.

⁹⁹ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 142-43; John 21.

benefit of others), which would lead one toward perfection.¹⁰⁰ Instead, they spend their time “waiting long” to even gain “the wished sight” of Lucifera.¹⁰¹

The multitude’s arrangement and the emphasis on their waiting undercuts the school’s function. In most schools, the number of students per teacher skewed high, likely due to the costs of maintaining a school.¹⁰² Teachers were often in charge of large groups of students comprised of different ages and phases of learning; measures had to be taken to accommodate these challenges. Seating students around the walls was one popular method, especially before the advent of forms in the 1520s saw the larger schoolroom divide into smaller units, as it ensured boys had the best view of the teacher and he could better manage the students.¹⁰³ The arrangement of the people in Lucifera’s hall resembles this popular classroom permutation as they are on all sides of the room. Lucifera does present one notable exception. She does not engage with the onlookers or even acknowledge them, and they spend their time waiting, which Hamilton glosses as “suggesting both loss of time and that all who attend are servants.”¹⁰⁴ The multitude, whose physical arrangement of authority resembles that of students in a schoolroom, must now wait (and serve) a schoolmaster who presides over them but will never call on them. Spenser further calls attention to idle time with the Dial on top of the House of

¹⁰⁰ For specific examples of these goals, see John Milton, *Of Education*, in *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Roy Flannagan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 980-81; and Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, in *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 219.

¹⁰¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 6, line 8.

¹⁰² Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 143.

¹⁰³ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 143. For more information on the arrangement of schoolrooms, especially the origin of forms—benches rather than educational level—and how students sat in relation to the master, see Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 138-41. For a discussion of forms as they were used in early modern grammar schools, see Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England*, 100-101.

¹⁰⁴ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.6.8n.

Pride that “told the timely howres.”¹⁰⁵ Hamilton “suggests time’s destructive power in the House of Pride” as those who succumb to its power must wait “thriftlesse howres.”¹⁰⁶

Beginning in the fifteenth century, the use of clocks was widespread enough that people measured the day by it, and the school day was especially regulated, beginning at six or seven a.m., and lasted up to eight hours, not including the breaks, making full use of the daylight.¹⁰⁷

Alexander C. Judson describes what the atmosphere must have been like in and around the site of Spenser’s early education, at Merchant Taylor’s, especially concerning time:

Shortly before seven o’clock in the morning, Suffolk Lane must have been thronged with boys entering from Thames Street on the south and Candlewick Street, as Cannon Street was then called, on the north, for the Merchant Taylors’ School was, and still is, primarily, a day school. [. . .] From seven till eleven, we may think of the lane as comparatively quiet except for a studious murmur from within the school. Then came the pandemonium of two hundred and fifty boys suddenly released from four hours of repression. At one they returned and remained till five.

For Elizabethan schoolboys, education was a serious business. The founders of Merchant Taylors’ School explicitly provided that there should be no eating and drinking in the school, no cock-fighting or tennis playing, no “disputing abroad” on the part of the scholars, “which was but foolish babbling and loss of time.” If no holiday occurred during the week, they were to have only Tuesday or Thursday afternoon for play.

We may think of the school as being conducted in one large room, with the head-master and his three assistants teaching their classes at the same time in different parts of the room. Three times during the day, “in the morning, at noon, and at evening,” the boys knelt in prayer.¹⁰⁸

By comparison, the idleness found in Lucifera’s school hall is damning: no mental or physical learning occurs, no one leaves to experience fruitful play, and both space and time are wasted.

¹⁰⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 4, line 9.

¹⁰⁶ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.4.6-9n; Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 5, st. 51, line 8.

¹⁰⁷ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 143-44.

¹⁰⁸ Alexander C. Judson, “The Life of Edmund Spenser,” in *The Works of Edmund Spenser, A Variorum Edition* ed. Edwin Greenlaw, Charles Grosvenor Osgood, Frederick Morgan Padelford, and Ray Heffner (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1947), 13-14; Alexander is quoting the statutes of Merchant Taylors; see H. B. Wilson, *The History of Merchant-Taylors’ School, From Its Foundation to the Present Time* (London, 1812), 17, <https://archive.org/details/historymerchant00wilsgoog/page/n8/mode/2up>.

The throne and Lucifera who sits in it are the obvious opening set piece of the House of Pride, receiving the bulk of the description in the beginning of the canto (ninety lines). Spenser first identifies the “rich throne” in stanza 8 and again mentions the “high throne” in stanza 13 when Redcrosse approaches. Much of what occurs between focuses on Lucifera, whom Spenser compares to a queen, shining as the Titan’s ray. She holds a mirror and scepter, and at her feet rests a dragon, all of which seats her as an emblematic center of attention. Even when the pageantry of the seven deadly sins begins, Lucifera does not stay behind. She trades her throne for a couch and though readers may be entertained or distracted by spectacle, she is still Master of the House, residing from her place of power.

Lucifera’s positioning does pose a question: if Lucifera is master of her (school)house, especially by commanding its chair, what becomes of Idleness? He seems to lose his status as elementary master for the simple reason that this is not his house. This question cannot be answered easily as the status of Idleness seems to change depending on where and how he is viewed in relation to Lucifera. Analyzing Idleness in the hall and at the starting point of the pageant, the most likely title for Idleness is that of usher. In relation to him, Lucifera then becomes headmaster. The usher functioned as an assistant to the master, and concerning the physical space of the schoolroom, the usher would usually remain near the outer entrance, opposite of the master.¹⁰⁹ The word “usher” “comes from the Latin *hostiarius*, ‘door keeper’ (from which hostess).¹¹⁰ Spenser does mention a porter and an usher in Lucifera’s hall who already fill this role in some degree, further complicating the issue. The porter, Malvenu, operates the outer gate, and, positioned closer to the throne, the “gentle Husher [usher],

¹⁰⁹ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 139; and Potter, “Performing Arts,” 148.

¹¹⁰ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 139.

Vanitie” controls who approaches Lucifera.¹¹¹ Orme details one responsibility of an usher: “Placing the master’s assistant by the door ensured that someone could intercept boys who came in late or who wanted to leave.”¹¹² These two doorkeepers mostly fulfill this role. True to his namesake, Malvenu [evil welcome] does not intercept Redcrosse and warn him to the dangers inside and instead lets the knight and everyone else enter. Vanitie does catch Duessa and Redcrosse but only seems to allow them to enter so they can “proue the wide report of her [Lucifera’s] great Maiestee [Majesty].”¹¹³ The two gatekeepers do, however, prevent Redcrosse from leaving as once Redcrosse realizes the danger of the House of Pride, he must sneak through a “priuy Posterne,” a private back door because “he mote [might] be spyde” and “doubtlesse death ensewed.”¹¹⁴

In addition to the physical management of children, one of the other responsibilities of the usher was teaching, especially of younger students. The master would often teach the older boys while the usher would teach those in the lower forms, often the petties. Malvenu and Vanitie serve only as doorkeepers as their assistance does not extend to a place in the hall. It does not assume an educational context. Idlennesse does not do anything. He does not gatekeep Redcrosse in a physical sense, nor does he make any overt effort to respond to the young Redcrosse. However, Redcrosse does model him after leaving the House of Pride (signifying that indeed Idlennesse has “taught” an anti-education). Puzzling is the number of ushers who are present. The number is not uncommon for a courtly setting but for an educational setting, which it can double as. Small schools often did not have the resources to fund assistants, leaving many

¹¹¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 6; canto 4, st. 13, line 3.

¹¹² Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 139.

¹¹³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 13, line 9.

¹¹⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 5, st. 52, lines 7-9.

masters to teach alone.¹¹⁵ Having one usher as an assistant seems to be the norm, especially for grammar schools near the end of the sixteenth century.¹¹⁶ Idlennesse could also be a senior student in the House of Pride who assists the master (he and Redcrosse are after all sinners in the same house, Idlennesse is just further along in his anti-education); however, Idlennesse does wear the garb of a formal educator, not a student.¹¹⁷ Therefore, Lucifera's hall seems to be a grammar school with petty instruction included at its lowest level, and Idlennesse, assisting as an usher, is teaching at the lowest forms with the help of additional ushers who manage the students physically. Lucifera acts more like the residing school master of the grammar house who grants admission to the young student but sends him back to the petty instruction because he is beneath her.¹¹⁸ That Lucifera's (school)house has so many ushers, again indicates something about its size: it views itself as self-important. The house is puffed up beyond its capacity; that the ushers are ineffective in their positions concerning a proper education, further damns the (school)house.

¹¹⁵ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 100; Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 141; and Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England*, 82-3.

¹¹⁶ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 100; and Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 141. Schools could employ more than one usher or additional types of assistants such as chaplains, but this was not the norm, Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 141.

¹¹⁷ For information on senior students assisting masters and the division between the monitored and those who monitor, see Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 38-48.

¹¹⁸ When discussing the statutes of the Merchant Taylors' School, H. B. Wilson notes, "The first usher, according to the original foundation of the school, had an evident superiority over the other two, who were, both in rank and salary, on an equality with each other; and this continued for a number of years: but at length, when the principle of succession began to be acted upon, the third was placed as much below the second as the second already was below the first. Though usher and under-master were from the first synonymous terms, (as in the statute before us,) the former was originally in more general use, till circumstances arising that rendered it expedient to distinguish foundation-usurers from those who were retained and dismissed at the pleasure of the principal master, the old name began to be laid aside in most of the publick schools. At Westminster in particular the foundation-usher has long been called under-master, to distinguish him from those assistant-teachers whose services are called from in that' school. (See *Maitland's History of London*, vol. ii., 1277.) And, though the same reason does not hold at Merchant-Taylors', the usurers have of late years been generally spoken of as under-masters, always in common parlance, and sometimes in orders of court [. . .]," *The History of Merchant-Taylors' School*, 14.

The mobility of Idlensesse on his donkey creates two places of education and an additional concern when trying to decipher his significance within the context of educating the young. While readers begin in the hall that resembles the schoolroom with its master's chair and focus on wasted time, readers do not remain there. Lucifera's procession, led by the seven deadly sins, and Idlensesse in first place, begins a type of civic pageantry as it leaves the palace. Richard L. Demolen analyzes Mulcaster's involvement in and use of the genre, but he also gives an overview of it. The pageant appears in three main forms. First, the royal entry pageant is a traditional event meant to honor the king or queen as he or she travels to the coronation site. Second, the Lord Mayor's pageant occurs with the election of a new Lord Mayor. Third, the royal progress is more of a private affair—taking place on noblemen's country estates—meant to honor and entertain the monarch.¹¹⁹

Lucifera's procession most resembles the royal progress. Royal progresses took place on private estates hosted by nobles who would provide lodging, provisions, and entertainment for the monarch and his or her party; the rewards were often worth the investment as hosts had private communication with the monarch and could win favor and advancement.¹²⁰ The House of Pride seems to satirize this type of affair. The palace gives a "satirical glance at what John Summerson has called the Elizabethan 'prodigy house' – the extravagant country houses built by Elizabeth's wealthy courtiers to entertain her in on her royal progresses (*Architecture in Britain*

¹¹⁹ Richard L. DeMolen, "Richard Mulcaster and Elizabethan Pageantry," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1974): 210, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/450050>. For an additional definition of the Elizabethan pageant and its types, especially as it relates to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, see David M. Bergeron, "Pageants," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 524-26.

¹²⁰ Mary Hill Cole, "Monarchy in Motion: An Overview of Elizabethan Progresses," in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 36, <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=201170&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

1530-1830, ch. IV).¹²¹ Lucifera's participation in the event heightens the level of satire; She hosts a royal pageant for herself. DeMolen notes that one of the uniting characteristics of all three pageant types is flattery: "Their creators made an open and concerted effort to flatter; and flattery was an ensured means to advancement. As all burghers and nobles know only too well, city and court favors were earned and not freely offered."¹²² It should not be surprising that the prideful Lucifera flatters herself by hosting her own procession since she is a self-appointed monarch who narcissistically gazes into a mirror.

Lucifera's pageant read as an entertainment requires complex contextualization. Normally, the monarch travelling in progress is the primary business of the court. As Mary Hill Cole explains, the traveling court "dislocated the government and royal household, which fostered a productive confusion that enabled the Queen [Elizabeth I] to avoid decisions, delay meetings, and retreat from unwanted visitors."¹²³ At the center of this turmoil Queen Elizabeth, "a steady, yet mobile centre" imitated "the sun that moved through the universe with the planets and solar system in tow."¹²⁴ The entertainment and whatever persuasions are wrought through those dramatic endeavors is the business of the hosts of the estate. Lucifera is not levying any favors from herself, nor is she teaching herself anything, for how can a narcissist figure consumed with self-gazing supply valuable knowledge, especially to herself. Instead, Lucifera cannot resist the urge to take part within the pageant itself as if it were a Royal Entry Pageant and all must view her as she moves through her subjects. Her pride upsets the normally stationary monarch viewing an entertainment of a Royal Progress (and thus acts as a precedent

¹²¹ Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 43.

¹²² DeMolen, "Mulcaster and Elizabethan Pageantry," 210. For additional means that hosts used to persuade monarchs such as the cost of hosting, of extravagant hospitality, or of gifts, see Cole, "Monarchy in Motion," 36-40.

¹²³ Cole, "Monarchy in Motion," 27.

¹²⁴ Cole, "Monarchy in Motion," 28.

for late English masques that featured queens). Furthermore, even though the House of Pride resembles a private estate, anyone can enter, and “heapes of people” pile up to gaze upon Lucifera.¹²⁵

Despite upsetting norms, Lucifera’s pageant still establishes what can be seen as an educational setting. The monarch is in her chair, and her subjects come to see her, there is still a master’s seat mimicking the place of power in the classroom, there are onlookers whose presence (gathering on the sides of the pageant) replicates the architectural intent of school halls, and there are potential students who could learn from the drama. As medieval allegorical pageantry, Idleness (and the other sins) educate the reader how not to live. It clearly defines evil and the consequences of an evil life, implicitly warning, “Do otherwise.” For Redcrosse, the pageantry could do the same, but it also potentially shows Redcrosse’s state of mind or where he is headed. The spectacle of the pageantry can also serve as a further distraction to Redcrosse. However, the emblematic lessons contained within the seven deadly sins, not only for the reader but also Redcrosse, make this procession potentially persuasive, even educational. That focus shifts the emphasis away from Lucifera and onto Idleness.

If the spectacle of the entertainment moves toward Idleness and away from Lucifera, she resembles a monarch watching a host’s private entertainment. Cole writes, “During spectacles, the sovereign typically did not speak to the crowd or act in the show; instead, he or she listened to speeches, received gifts, and observed.”¹²⁶ Even though Lucifera maintains her position in her chair, in the context of the pageant, she becomes the silent monarch subject to watch the entertainment presented, which often had the purpose of persuasion. Cole notes, however, that “nobles did not stage overly elaborate shows for the king or other visiting

¹²⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 16, line 7.

¹²⁶ Cole, “Monarchy in Motion,” 29. Elizabeth I was an exception, see Cole, “Monarchy in Motion,” 29.

dignitary because such ostentation from a subject might appear, in royal eyes, to assert an unwelcome rivalry and ambition."¹²⁷ Since Lucifera is both host and progressing Queen she seems to stage a procession that competes with her station. The power of voice shifts from monarch to spectacle. All Lucifera's grandeur on her throne inside her hall disappears or at least diminishes once she emerges from its walls and the description of the sins begins. Frederick Morgan Padelford provides a lengthy description of the inharmonious and attention-grabbing sins, but it bears repeating here as it captures their spectacle:

Spenser's primary concern in the arrangement of the procession was to secure the maximum of grotesque pictorial effect. Whereas in Gower's procession the sins ride in single file, Spenser arranges six of them in pairs, Idleness and Gluttony, Lechery and Avarice, and Envy and Wraith riding side by side. But each couple is a jangling, discordant, incongruous team.¹²⁸

Instead of the focus being on Lucifera sitting in her coach, the discordant pairing of sins, who pull her coach as they ride upon their mounts, create a spectacle that deflates the attention previously given to Lucifera. Describing the sins' inability to ride their mounts effectively, Padelford continues,

The beasts themselves—at least the first four—give a painfully asymmetrical effect: the ass and the hog, matched together, and behind them the goat and the camel. There is no plane upon which the eye can rest. The impression is further emphasized by the absurd gaits of the beasts: the ass, constantly miring in his sluggish tracks, and the hog trotting by his side, the goat jerking and jumping about, and the camel undulating along beside him with his easy, awkward stride. Nor do the riders sit well upon their beasts, for Idleness is ever shaken with fever yet nodding with sleep, and sodden Gluttony is ever vomiting and lurching. Nor do they attempt to guide the beasts, for each in his own way is too busy, Gluttony, for example, clutching his bouzing can, Avarice telling over the coins in his lap, and Wrath with one hand on his dagger and with the other flourishing his burning brand.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Cole, "Monarchy in Motion," 29.

¹²⁸ Frederick Morgan Padelford, ed., commentary to *The Works of Edmund Spenser, A Variorum Edition: The Faerie Queene Book One*, vol. 1, eds. Edwin Greenlaw, Charles Grosvenor Osgood, and Frederick Morgan Padelford (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 217.

¹²⁹ Padelford, ed., commentary to *The Works of Edmund Spenser*, 217.

Lucifera's solitary seat as she rides in her coach cannot compete with the sight of all the sins together, jangling about as they awkwardly straddle their beasts. Finally, Padelford details the appearance of the sins in terms of their clothing:

Equally incongruous are the liveries, the black gown and hood of Idleness contrasting with the vine leaves and ivy garland of Gluttony, the green gown of Lechery with the thread-bare coat and cobbled shoes that only half conceal the gouty limbs of Avarice, and the varicolored say, painted full of eyes, of Envy with the blood-stained rags of Wrath. Moreover, if Idleness and Gluttony are examples of the playful grotesque, there is a transition through Lechery—black, filthy, and syphilitic—and Avarice—ashen and aged—to the terrible grotesque in Envy, snake in bosom, chewing at the toad whose poison runs about his chaw, and Wrath, trembling and pale, his eyes sparkling with red rage.¹³⁰

While Lucifera is “[a]dorned all with gold, and girlonds gay,” she is only one figure in the procession. The varying dress and underlying diseases of the characters within the pageantry demand more attention from the reader.¹³¹ Lucifera becomes—as the Monarch subject to silently watching the entertainment—secondary in importance to the spectacle and emblematic lessons projecting from the drama; thus, Lucifera loses her status as elementary master of the classroom because Idlennesse gains the dramatic power as a participant in (and leader of) the entertainment. He possibly even fulfills the image of the master in his chair by sitting on his donkey, a sort of pseudo-chair for a pseudo-master.

One last issue complicates the statuses of Lucifera and Idlennesse. Even if we view the two in separate settings, the hall and the procession, the one positioning Lucifera as Grammar master and Idlennesse as usher, and the other positioning Lucifera as a silent observer and Idlennesse as Elementary Master, we do not account for gender. Lucifera's gender is acceptable for her position as a monarch. Elizabeth, though, did admittedly face challenges as a woman that she would not have faced as a man. Women, however, did not serve as masters of boys'

¹³⁰ Padelford, ed., commentary to *The Works of Edmund Spenser*, 217.

¹³¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 17, line 2.

schools. That role was for men alone.¹³² Even though the status quo is fulfilled on the surface level with the image of a male teacher in Idleness who bears the official accoutrements of a teacher, Duessa, who is acting as an anti-parent and is educating Redcrosse within the parental and mostly feminine domain of education, should pass him into the formal and masculine domain of education. She instead brings him to a seemingly masculine system of education that is governed by a woman, a “mayden Queene.”¹³³ The full consequences of what this might mean remain uncertain. Lucifera as a monarch or the ruler of a private estate is not an abnormality within Spenser’s allegory, especially his social-political commentary and satire. After all, Spenser is likely envisioning the workings of a court for the House of Pride, not a school. However, the microcosm of the schoolroom often replicated the macrocosm of the political court. The goal was to make children into gentlemen so aligning these two institutions was advantageous. Hamilton notes that all the sins are male except Lucifera, the original sin of pride, positioning her and her womanhood as the engendering sin.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Lucifera as queen parodies Una along with her claiming light, so Redcrosse is once again stepping into darkness just as he entered Errour’s cave. Even more damning, Lucifera’s mirror has slight emblematic connections

¹³² Helen M. Jewel notes scholarship often treats the profession of teaching during this period as entirely male even though this is not accurate. Jewel writes, “[E]ven in the Middle Ages the occasional schoolmistress is recorded, and women filling the role of governess worked in aristocratic households. In our period [early modern] women are found teaching at two levels: the vast majority of them in elementary education, where the term ‘dame school’ covers a nursery schooling of very varied quality, and a few in fashionable girls’ schools or young ladies’ academies. The poorest dame schools were uneducative child-minding facilities: Eachard in 1698 described the sending of children at two and three years of age to a schooldame to keep them out of harm’s way rather than to learn a letter,” *Education in Early Modern England*, 83. In this context, Jewel uses the term *elementary education* broadly. I do the same at times to refer to the foundational education a child should receive before learning Latin; however, in the above context, the elementary education Redcrosse receives specifically refers to a petty school, likely attached to a grammar school. A woman would not have been teaching within its confines, especially as a grammar master, which is the position Lucifera inhabits (if we read the House of Pride as a schoolhouse and her as school master).

¹³³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 8, line 5.

¹³⁴ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.4.18-35n.

to the mirror of the harlot and the whore of Babylon.¹³⁵ Once again, Redcrosse has traded Una as an emblem of illuminating Wisdom for the prostitute who leads to darkness and destruction.

The Leisurely Learning of Redcrosse and Arthur

An additional way education was occurring during the early modern period was privately in households, often through tutoring. Redcrosse's education is a public affair. He attends a freestanding school, Lucifera's (school)hall, with other students. His eventual grammar education is equally public—Orgoglio is a co-student who also monitors Redcrosse and dispenses punishment. Arthur's education resembles private tutoring. While I am not going to evaluate who receives the better education (that is not my purpose), I will compare their experiences: their respective social statuses seem to reflect the type of education they receive, and they both experience dreams during physical inactivity yet respond differently to those dreams.

The type of education Arthur receives in *The Faerie Queene* reflects his nobility, yet some observations should be made in connection to Redcrosse's education.¹³⁶ After Arthur rescues Redcrosse, he tells his history. One detail of special note is that he was "[f]rom mothers pap [breast] [. . .] taken [. . .] vnfitt."¹³⁷ Hamilton in the footnote points to Malory 1.3-5 which supplies what happens next to Arthur: "Sir Ectors wyf [wife] nourysshed [nourished] hym with her owne pappe."¹³⁸ Malory uses the word *nourish* regarding breastfeeding, which also implies *to raise up*. In *The Faerie Queene*, Arthur mentions his early raising, but he fails to discuss any

¹³⁵ Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 46.

¹³⁶ For how Arthur's education matches his status as a student, see Chapter One, pages 79-81.

¹³⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 3, line 7.

¹³⁸ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.9.3.7-9n.

type of feminine nurturing once taken from his mother; when he is “streight deliuered to a Fary knight, / To be *vbrought* in gentle thewes and martiall might.”¹³⁹

The Fairy knight is Old Timon, and Arthur refers to Timon’s teaching as his “Tutors nouriture” [Tutor’s nurturing].¹⁴⁰ Further overseen by Merlin, Arthur is called his “noursling.”¹⁴¹ Thus, feminine nurturing is omitted (though it could be implied as Timon might be a stand in for Sir Ector and thus have a wife), and Arthur receives tutoring in the household of the “wisest” man “now on earth.”¹⁴² Arthur’s educational situation is private. Individually he enters under the care of several private tutors, and he also lives within the personal household of a noble where he receives that education. Most interesting of all, Spenser’s version of the education severs Arthur from the maternal domain seemingly from his infancy. Redcrosse, alternatively, receives a distinctly feminine nurturing under Una until he begins his formal and public schooling at the House of Pride, but even then, that traditionally male-dominated educational space is a false exterior, and the true master is Lucifera, a woman. I should note that the education Redcrosse receives after he is separated from Una is an anti-education, so it may be slightly unfair to compare it to the best Arthur receives; however, the public nature of the House of Pride, resembling a free-standing grammar school, does distinctly contrast Arthur’s private education.

The juxtaposition of Arthur and Redcrosse becomes even more pronounced when comparing their dream visions involving women. “[I]n the freshest flowre of youthly years,” Arthur is “[f]or wearied with [. . .] sportes”; he has been riding in the forest all day, so he takes a

¹³⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 3, lines 8-9 (emphasis mine).

¹⁴⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 5, line 4.

¹⁴¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 2, canto 8, st. 20, line 3.

¹⁴² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 4, line 4.

moment to sleep.¹⁴³ During his sleep, Arthur dreams of the Faerie Queene who importunes him to her service. Arthur recounts his vision of Gloriana (and its effect) to Una:

From that day forth I lou'd that face diuine;
From that day forth I cast in carefull mynd,
To seeke her out with labor, and long tyne [suffering],
And neuer vowd to rest, till her I fynd [. . .].¹⁴⁴

Just as Arthur is wearied by his physical activities, Redcrosse is “forwearied” after emerging from Error’s woods and his battle with her, and Una warns him that he needs rest.¹⁴⁵ Archimago intercepts Redcrosse and Una, taking them to his house. Here Redcrosse suffers the magic of Archimago, who deceives the knight with Duessa acting as succubus and assuming the identity of Una, first in a dream, then through physical temptations, and finally with the “false couple” in bed.¹⁴⁶ The immediate reaction of Redcrosse is jealous rage, which almost moves him to slay the imposters, but Duessa divides Redcrosse from Una, and the quest Una has called him to becomes abandoned. Even though Redcrosse later escapes the House of Pride, he becomes immediately guilty of idleness when he stops in the first garden he finds.

One of the problems with dream visions, and why the good resulting from Arthur’s dream is questioned so intensely, is that sleep in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* so often beds with evil. In *Images of Life*, C. S. Lewis examines and classifies different types of good and evil in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*. Lewis argues that one type of good, among all the kinds in the poem, appears active; certain types of evil, alternatively, resemble inactivity: temptations to sleep, to relax, or to die.¹⁴⁷ Spenser perhaps favors too much—as many Protestants did at the time—a

¹⁴³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 9, line 1; canto 9, st. 13, line 1. Hamilton glosses “For wearied” as “utterly wearied,” *Faerie Queene*, 1.9.13.1n.

¹⁴⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 15, line 5-8.

¹⁴⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 32, line 6.

¹⁴⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 5, line 4.

¹⁴⁷ C. S. Lewis, *Spenser’s Images of Life*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 64-73.

utilitarian ethic that appropriated the medieval sin of idleness. Earlier traditions, such as the classical and monastic, allowed for the concept of leisure as necessary and redemptive.

Education sprouted alongside these earlier traditions: “All the three major languages of medieval England had a word for ‘school’, each taken from the classical Latin *sc(h)ola*, which was derived in turn from the Greek word for ‘leisure’.”¹⁴⁸

John Redford’s morality drama *Wit and Science*, which was to be performed by children and served as an educational piece for both audience and performers, can perhaps illuminate the situation as the play belongs to the same genre as *The Faerie Queene*. It takes the form of a romance, focusing on Wit, a young man, who pursues his love, Lady Science.¹⁴⁹ Wit ignores the advice of Instruction—similar to Redcrosse ignoring Una’s advice—and faces the giant Tediousness (the enemy of science) without preparation. Honest Recreation revives him with song and dance (forms of physical education). Before Wit can continue, he succumbs to the temptation of sleep that the harlot Idleness offers because he lacks reason and is unable to see that she is a prostitute. Wit cannot differentiate between Recreation and Idleness. Of special note here is that Redford’s Idleness now wears the gender of female. Interestingly, Mulcaster also personifies idleness as female: “[I]f idlennesse enter, it will exclude all earnest, and call in *her* kinsfolkes, toyes and triffls, easie for remembraunce, heauy for repentaunce.”¹⁵⁰ Spenser gives the role of the harlot—and of the anti-parent—to Duessa while making Idlennesse male.

In Redford’s play while Wit is asleep, Ignorance enters, undergoes a mock education under Idleness, and then swaps his coat for Wit’s. Idleness also darkens Wit’s face; thus, Wit becomes Ignorance until he looks into the mirror of Reason and sets upon a course of

¹⁴⁸ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 53.

¹⁴⁹ Edgar T. Schell, “Scio Ergo Sum: The Structure of *Wit and Science*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1973): 179, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/449761>.

¹⁵⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 39 (emphasis mine).

reeducation and gains Science. In this romance, Wit pursues knowledge to reach his love, to achieve knowledge, and it is knowledge that Redford highlights, not salvation, likely because he “was a schoolmaster rather than a preacher.”¹⁵¹ In this path, elements of Redcrosse’s journey are evident: Redcrosse falls asleep, is persuaded by a harlot, is later influenced by Idleness (as a separate character), is captured by a giant, and is confined by ignorance. Also, noticeable are the parts of Mulcaster’s pageantry of miseducation; Error moves to idleness; and idleness moves into ignorance. Missing from the trajectory in Redford’s play is despair. In relation to Arthur, Wit seems to have been partaking in honest recreation (perhaps physical exercise beneficial to one’s health), just as Arthur partakes in riding—another physical activity sanctioned for education—before he rests. Overall, Redford’s play is an educational journey of a student allegorized free of the overt religious accoutrements that Spenser includes in *The Faerie Queene*, yet many of the effects for the characters are the same. The final cause of Wit and Science’s union as Experience, the mother of Science, sees it is “[u]nto Godes honor and profyt both / Of you and your neybowre [neighbor] [. . .].”¹⁵² Thus, a major scriptural tenet is fulfilled: Love God and one’s neighbor as oneself.¹⁵³ As noted, the goal of humanist education was to lead one toward God and the right performance of one’s public and private duties. This required testing virtue and, most importantly, right action. The end purpose of knowledge and how it should be used to facilitate action or to act was quite clear: to serve God, the state, and others. At the foundation

¹⁵¹ Schell, “Structure of *Wit and Science*,” 179. Although I take Schell’s point for what it is—the play is devoid of religious overtones that would normally be found in a morality play—knowledge, especially guided by reason, would not exclude salvation. Even Mulcaster who leans toward a secular purpose argues that an education leads to salvation, *Elementarie*, 23.

¹⁵² John Redford, *The Moral Play of Wit and Science: And Early Poetical Miscellanies*, ed. James Orchard Halliwell (London, 1848), 52, <https://archive.org/details/moralplaywitand00redfgoog/page/n6/mode/2up>.

¹⁵³ See Matt. 22:37-39; Mark 12:30-31; and Luke 10:27.

of learning, the earliest goal of teaching reading embedded the concept of performance and action into students. To read was to act.

The Effects of Idle Learning

Of the expectations for elementary teaching, the most important is that of teaching reading, especially considering that reading was performative. At its simplest, reading was done aloud, requiring students to master pronunciation; more complexly, reading led to dramatic orations, and the ideas fostered by reading enacted change upon the students and enabled students to become facilitators of change when they grew older, especially in service to the state (at least in Mulcaster's view). This foundation for Redcrosse is built upon sand because Idleness models such slothful inaction that Redcrosse becomes illiterate, failing to correctly read situations, and ultimately failing the scriptural mandate of the parable of the builders to be a hearer *and* doer of the word.¹⁵⁴

Redcrosse is undoubtedly an energetic character, a schoolboy, who embraces action. He loves to run ahead and foolishly peep in doorways against his mother's commands.¹⁵⁵ He pricks his horse, rushing into the beginning of the poem and into his adventure to "winne him worshippe [honor]" and to "proue his puissance [prowess] in battell braue."¹⁵⁶ He rashly wants to kill the false Una—when he thinks it is the real Una—as she sits by his bed tempting him with a kiss, but he stays his hand.¹⁵⁷ He later, with his "eye of reason" blinded with rage, tries to kill the false couple in bed, but Archimago stops him and, instead, chooses to abandon Una for the false Una.¹⁵⁸ Even though Redcrosse is a character who wants to act, his illiteracy due to his

¹⁵⁴ Matt. 7:24-27.

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter One, pages 66-7.

¹⁵⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 3, lines 4, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 50.

¹⁵⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 5-6.

childish nature causes him to misread most situations. Even in his most active, though, Redcrosse does not intentionally help others. He kills Errour whom he only stumbles upon because of his own error, and he defeats Sansfoy when “[w]ill was his guide, and griefe led him astray.”¹⁵⁹ The immature inattentiveness of Redcrosse corresponds with a remonstrance in Hebrews—instead prepare for the difficult lessons ahead:

Of whome [Christ as High Priest] we haue many things to say, which are hard to be vttered, because ye are dull of hearing. For when as cō[n]cerning the time ye ought to be teachers, yet haue ye need againe that we teache you the first principles of the worde of God: and are become suche as haue need of milke, and not of strong meat. For euerie one that vseth milke, is inexperte in the worde of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of age, which through lō[n]g custome haue their wittes exercised, to discerne bothe good and euil.¹⁶⁰

In this context, Redcrosse is still a babe, evidenced by his inability to discern good from evil and his need for milk, a more palpable type of learning for his age. Idleness fails to teach the elementary principles and instead nurses Redcrosse on anti-education; Redcrosse’s childishness fails to mature, and his reading skills—and thus his performance—worsens.

As it related to reading, the first major failed performance of Redcrosse happens at the House of Pride when he fights Sansjoy. Upon seeing each other, they immediately fight, and Lucifera must command them to stop. Sansjoy asks for Lucifera’s pardon, explaining the reason for the outburst, but Redcrosse remains mostly silent: “Him little answered th’angry Elfin knight; / He neuer meant with words, but swords to plead his right.”¹⁶¹ While several sins are potentially occurring for Redcrosse (pride and wrath namely), he is also refusing to take part in

¹⁵⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 12, line 4.

¹⁶⁰ Heb. 5:11-14.

¹⁶¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 42, lines 8-9.

several normal classroom exercises, namely loud speaking, the ability to orate to an audience.¹⁶² A student would be expected to speak and embody the virtues held within the reading primers given to him and modeled by his parents at home. In this, Redcrosse fails. From the perspective of Lucifera's (school)house, Redcrosse succeeds, he is exactly modeling the lessons of his anti-education that began as early as the parental stage with Errour's inability to digest books (learning) and speak them.

In *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England*, Richard Mallette concentrates on the spiritual illiteracy of Redcrosse. Mallette argues the knight fails to listen to good advice, he heeds bad guidance and plagued by illiteracy of the situation, counters warnings with his own wisdom that is "perhaps foolhardy self-righteousness."¹⁶³ Most importantly, Mallette notes that Redcrosse is mute in the House Pride until Sansjoy appears whereupon Redcrosse resorts to speaking with his sword.¹⁶⁴ Mallette argues, "By wishing to respond with swords, not words, to an infidel's reproaches, he literalizes and so distorts the Pauline metaphor of the sword of the spirit (Heb. 4:12)."¹⁶⁵ In embodying the bad reading practices of Idleness (and the earlier anti-educators), Redcrosse cannot speak because he has not practiced loud speaking, nor has he memorized any passages (another skill associated with dramatic learning) because he has not read. In failing to learn, Redcrosse has disarmed himself of the "sworde of the Spirit, which is the worde of God."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Redcrosse is also refusing to use personation (prosopopoeia). Redcrosse read as an elementary student is likely exempt from personation as the practice is associated with higher levels of grammar school education.

¹⁶³ Richard Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997): 24-31.

¹⁶⁴ Mallette, *Discourses of Reformation England*, 34.

¹⁶⁵ Mallette, *Discourses of Reformation England*, 34-35.

¹⁶⁶ Eph. 6:17

Finally, Redcrosse embodies the behavior of Idleness by tiring easily. Just as Idlennesse can barely “vphold his heauie head” and continually stops while leading the progression of the sins, Redcrosse leaves the House of Pride and “wearie” sits to “rest him selfe, foreby a fountaine syde, / Disarmed all of yron-coted Plate.”¹⁶⁷ His previous energetic youthfulness cannot last, especially when he has an anti-teacher who does not model physical exercise. In *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, Darryl J. Gless argues Redcrosse has been seeking his “salvation in himself”—an issue of pride perhaps embodied through Lucifera—and is overcome because of “spiritual labors which he does not comprehend and at which he can never succeed.”¹⁶⁸ Wearied Redcrosse sits “downe to rest in middest of the race” in the garden.¹⁶⁹ Gless draws attention to the phrase and its parallel in *Hebrews*: “Let vs runne with pacience the race that is set before vs, loking vnto Iesus the autor [author] and finisher of our faith, who for the joye that was set before him, endured the crosse [. . .]. Consider therefore him [. . .] lest ye shulde be wearied and fainte in your minds.”¹⁷⁰ Gless continues to discuss the racing imagery and the goal Redcrosse loses sight of: “Readings that relate this scriptural context to Spenser’s passage would infer that Red Cross’ otherwise unexplained weariness arises because he has lost sight specifically of ‘his dying lord.’ Failing to ‘consider Him,’ Red Cross becomes ‘wearied and faints’.”¹⁷¹ Redcrosse modeling Lucifera as master would help explain this behavior because her pride prohibits her from considering others just as Redcrosse’s pride makes him rely on his own strength. As a Master, Idlennesse offers a further explanation for Redcrosse’s behavior—Idlennesse sits and refuses to look where he is going.

¹⁶⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 19, line 5; canto 7, st. 2, lines 6-8.

¹⁶⁸ Darryl J. Gless, *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 116.

¹⁶⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 5, line 4.

¹⁷⁰ Heb. 12:1.3.

¹⁷¹ Gless, *Interpretation and Theology*, 118.

Now when it is time to run, Redcrosse cannot even walk. Mimicking the failure of Idlennesse to make progress, Redcrosse even resorts to “lying downe vpon the sandie graile [gravel]”; lowering himself even further than Idlennesse, he once again places himself on a foundation of sand.¹⁷² After drinking from the fountain, Redcrosse loses his strength, becoming “feeble” and “frayle,” and he becomes sick as cold attacks his blood, causing chills and a fever.¹⁷³ Just as Idlennesse “shunned manly exercise” and also suffered illness and fever, Redcrosse is now unable due to his health to serve God and the state.¹⁷⁴ The lack of physical training has severely harmed him. Even more damning, he fixates his eyes on Duessa (false faith), the anti-parent who has continually guided Redcrosse (often in the background). While Redcrosse rests in the garden, he gives all his attention to Duessa (now in the forefront):

Yet goodly court he made still to his Dame,
 Poured out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd,
 Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame [. . .].¹⁷⁵

It is immediately after this moment that the giant Orgoglio attacks, and Redcrosse is incapable of resisting. The armor of God, gifted by Una, is useless as it lies on the ground. The knight’s weapons prove equally useless as they are simply “vnready.”¹⁷⁶ After capturing Redcrosse, Orgoglio throws him in a dungeon where he must be saved by Prince Arthur guided by Una. By the time Arthur and Una reach the castle, Redcrosse is reduced to a “hollow, dreary, murmuring voice” and unable to wield a sword physically or figuratively.¹⁷⁷ The pattern that began with Error’s brood suckling on her malnourishment until bursting to death and that continued in Duessa nursing (broadly understood) Redcrosse now manifests in the hollowness of Redcrosse’s

¹⁷² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 6, line 2.

¹⁷³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 6, line 5.

¹⁷⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 20, line 2.

¹⁷⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 7, lines 1-3.

¹⁷⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 7, line 9.

¹⁷⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 38, line 1.

pitiful outpouring of soul. He too has become empty; poorly nursed, he has not fed himself (learned to replenish strength through reading and practice), and what begins as idleness has decayed to the more serious condition of ignorance.

CHAPTER 3

GRAMMAR: I HUNGER FOR THE WORD, BUT MY TEACHERS ARE STARVING TOO

Gregorius Reisch's *Margarita Philosophica Nova*, serving as both a university textbook and encyclopedia of general knowledge, contains a woodcut that illustrates Lady Grammar standing in front of the Tower of Learning, an emblematic representation of medieval education. In his overview of the different types of medieval schools, Nicholas Orme points to this woodcut as a summation of medieval study and how one gains entry:

[Lady Grammar] holds out an alphabet to a schoolboy. If he learns it, she will open the tower with her key. Inside are rooms on every storey teaching different subjects, through which he may climb to the top. The world of learning in medieval England was like this tower, although it was a little more complicated than the woodcut suggests. Knowing the alphabet you could enter the building and pass through reading, song, and grammar. After grammar there was a choice of routes. One direction led you to business studies such as letter writing, accountancy, and common law (i.e. English secular law). Another took you to the liberal arts and philosophy, which eventually became the basic studies in universities. Having graduated in these, you could make further ascents to postgraduate subjects of medicine, civil (i.e. Roman) law, canon (i.e. Church) law, or theology.¹

Most important to this present study is Lady Grammar, who keeps watch at the locked entrance of the tower. Only she holds the keys to unlock the door and permit entry. In her position as porter, she serves as an analogue to Ignaro, Redcrosse's jailer, who also carries keys and stands before a tower. Ignaro, though, fails to unlock the door that would allow Redcrosse to escape the dark dungeon beneath the tower and begin an ascent toward enlightenment.

¹ Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 53.

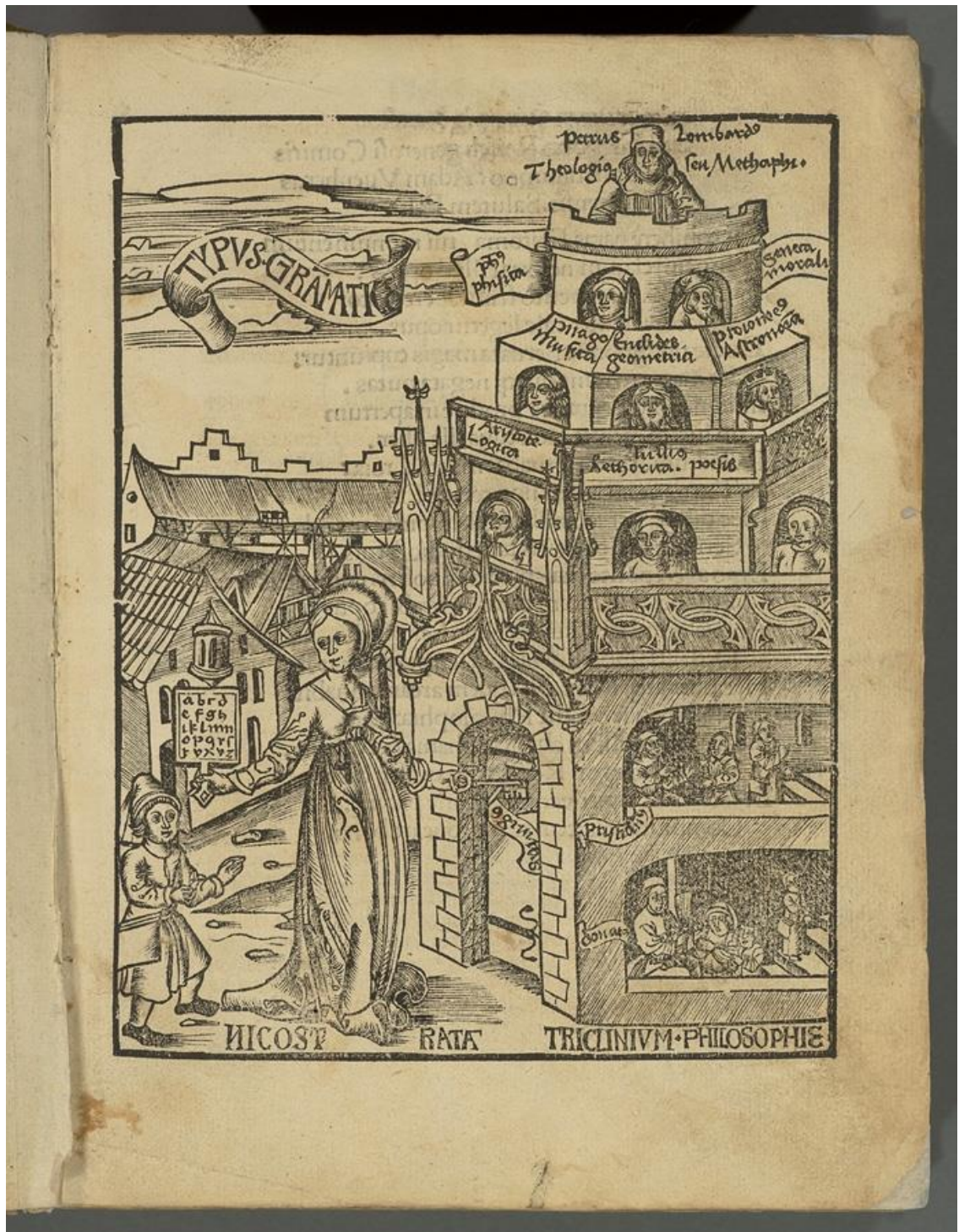


Figure 3.1. Lady Grammar unlocks the door to the Tower of Learning, at the top of which is Theology. Gregorius Reisch, *Margarita Philosophica Nova* 1508, *Columbia University Libraries Online Exhibitions*, accessed June 27, 2023, <https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/plimpton/item/14>.

While the medieval tower's foundation begins with grammar and moves to higher knowledge, the early modern period operates somewhat more fluidly. Undoubtedly, grammar, specifically Latin grammar, was key to unlocking knowledge, but as I detail in chapter two, many educators saw reading as foundational to learning. Mulcaster even positions reading and writing as the abilities that will allow students to scale his tower of learning: "For first he [the elementary student] hath purchased those two excellent faire wings [reading and writing], which will cause him towre up to the top of all learning, as *Plato* in the like case of knowledge, termeth *Arithmetick* and *Geometrie* his two wings wherwith to flie up to heaven, from whence he doth fetch the true direction of his imprisoned ignorant."² Of course, even in the sixteenth century the teaching of reading and grammar was often confined under the same roof, and not necessarily separate affairs since grammar schools often incorporated petty instruction at their lowest levels.³

We should also note what is meant by the terms "reading" and "grammar." Defining the former, Mulcaster frames reading as a way to inherit knowledge from the past and as an aid to memorization.⁴ Aligning with Mulcaster's definition, Rosemary O'Day discusses the reading of Catechisms in service and as a means of learning to read:

Catechisms took the form of a public debate: a question was posed and an answer supplied. The catechism was then (and is now) an oral exercise in which the memory plays a great part. The ability to read for oneself the text of the catechism was merely an aid to learning the questions and appropriate responses. This form of debate or disputation was part of the fabric of the learning process in medieval and early modern

² Richard Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 44.

³ According to the statutes of Merchant Taylors' School where Mulcaster served as Headmaster from 1561-1586, the headmaster must "first see that they [children] can [con, learn or memorize] the catechisme in English or Latyn, & that every of the said two hundred & fifty schollers can read perfectly & write competently, or els lett them not be admytted in no wise," H. B. Wilson, *The History of Merchant-Taylors' School, From Its Foundation to the Present Time* (London, 1812), 16, <https://archive.org/details/historymerchant00wilsgoog/page/n8/mode/2up>.

⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 50.

England: it was common at every level, ABC school, grammar school, university; it placed a premium on memorizing *accepted* thought and frowned upon free thinking.⁵

Reading was so much a means of transferring knowledge that not only was the learning of it a public practice but the practicing of it was also public. O'Day continues, "Even those who could not themselves read were introduced to the world of the mind by attentive listening to those who could and did read aloud; by memorizing long passages of books read; and by discussing what was read in a group situation."⁶ Depending on the time period, however, reading did not necessarily enable people to understand the content of what they were reading. For example, in the late medieval period, native English speakers would learn to read texts in Roman Latin [and to pronounce it correctly], but they would not be able to comprehend it.⁷

In the early modern period, most students who received an education began by learning to read English. However, teaching practices often focused on correctness rather than comprehension.⁸ Additionally, teachers tended to view reading as a preparation for what followed, the study of Latin grammar, which was more valued because it granted access to a greater knowledge base than what was in English.⁹ In the early modern period, grammar typically refers to Latin grammar. A slow shift occurs near the end of the sixteenth century with the meaning of the word, but it was not until seventeenth century that grammar took on a more generic meaning.¹⁰ Greek and Hebrew were also taught but were not as influential as Latin.

⁵ Rosemary O'Day, *Education and Society 1500-1800: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain* (New York: Longman 1982), 44.

⁶ O'Day, *Education and Society*, 44.

⁷ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 55-66.

⁸ O'Day, *Education and Society*, 47.

⁹ See Kenneth Charlton for discussion of reading practices, especially grammar masters' attitudes that reading was a prerequisite to learning the more important subject of Latin grammar, *Education in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 98-106.

¹⁰ "grammar, n.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed Nov. 2022, www.oed-com/view/Entry/80574.

Reading enabled students to recognize and properly pronounce letters forming words and publicly convey knowledge to themselves and an audience. Depending on the time period, that knowledge was often or sometimes locked in the next stage of learning. Grammar was the key to knowledge, and it opened much.¹¹

Fashioning Manhood through Latin Language Learning

The focus of the early modern period, unlike the medieval period's emphasis on training through rules, was on fashioning gentlemen who could then use their knowledge for right action, proving their worthiness as gentlemen.¹² Medieval education saw grammar as a foundation for learning, and while this is partly true for the early modern period, it is more accurate to describe grammar learning and the places it occurred, namely grammar schools, as a transitional period because it fashioned boys into gentlemen while dispensing to them vast amounts of knowledge through the imitation of their teachers and the texts they were translating.¹³

In "Latin Language as a Renaissance Puberty Rite," Walter J. Ong focuses on the transitional nature of Latin language learning in early modernity. Ong broadly defines education as a transference of experience: "Because, in being a preparation for the future, it is inevitably a

¹¹ For a discussion of literacy rates in the early modern period, see Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 146-54.

¹² See Lynn Enterline for an explanation of the shift in teaching practices from the late medieval period to the early modern period, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 10-11. Mulcaster does differ slightly in the belief of gentlemanly fashioning because he argues everyone should be taught to read and write English and receive the physical education that accompanies such training which is associated with gentlemanly activities. To defend his position, he argues these activities are related to health and not status. For an overview see, Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xxii-xxx. Compare Eric De Barros, who argues Mulcaster is not as progressive as he first appears and only educates children if they do not gain higher economic or social status, upsetting the status quo, "(Ig)Noble Lies: Personal Historicism and Richard Mulcaster's *Positions Concerning the Bringing Up of Children* (1581)," *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education* 20, no. 3 (September 2013): 317-26, doi:10.1080/1358684X.2013.816530.

¹³ For an overview of boys imitating their male instructors and the unintended outcomes of the process, see Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 6-7.

communication of what is available from past experience, education is always primarily a traffic in this experience and only secondarily a matter of theory.”¹⁴ For early modern educators, especially the humanists, most past knowledge was contained in Latin. Mulcaster addresses such issues when choosing to write his treatises in English. By writing in the vernacular, Mulcaster can communicate his positions on education to the “learned,” those who know Latin, and the “unlearned,” those who only know English.¹⁵ Furthermore, Mulcaster defends the length of his work, noting:

If I had had to do with either *Romain* [scholars], or *Grecian*, in their owne language, where these thinges be familiarly knowen [grounds related to his argument], I would not have taryed in them any long while, but dealing with my countrymen in my countrey tounge, in an argument not so familiar to my countrey, and yet desiring to become familiar unto her: I thought it good rather to saye more then enough, to leave some chippinges: then by saying to litle, to cause a new cruste, where none should be: and to referre the rest of my suppressed meaning to my learneddest reader, to whose use as I needed not to write, so in deede I do not, though I wish him well, and pray the like againe.¹⁶

Mulcaster could have written a shorter book if he had used Latin or Greek because the texts and knowledge within those languages would have served as gateways to construct his arguments. Since Mulcaster was writing in English, he could not rely on these key texts to unlock knowledge unavailable in English. He had to perform extra work to transfer knowledge over into the English, thus, lengthening his book.

Latin—and to a lesser extent Greek and Hebrew—operated as keys to unlocking knowledge unavailable in English, and even though Mulcaster defends writing in English, he

¹⁴ Walter J. Ong, “Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite,” *Studies in Philology* 56, no. 2 (April 1959): 103. www.jstor.org/stable/4173267.

¹⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 16-7.

¹⁶ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 288-89. Regarding Mulcaster’s metaphor of leaving chippings rather than creating a new crust, William Barker notes that Mulcaster’s chippings, “parings of the crust of a loaf of bread; i.e., his arguments chop the material pretty finely, but maybe this fine arguing is better than leaving it whole, and letting the reader do the chopping,” *Positions*, 289.4n.

describes the tongues learned in grammar school as “the waies to wisdome, the lodges of learning, the harbours of humanitie, the deliverers of divinitie, the treasuries of all store, to furnish out all knowledge in the cunning, and all judgement in the wise [. . .].”¹⁷ Mulcaster sees language as a way to access knowledge, a thing of value, which aligns with Milton, who sees language in *Of Education* as “the Instrument conveying to us things usefull to be known.”¹⁸ Milton continues: “And though a linguist should pride himselfe to have all the Tongues that *Babel* cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteem’d a learned man, as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only.”¹⁹ While the two do not specifically call language a key, the association is there. Without learning the classical languages, one would be locked out from knowledge and ultimately wisdom.

Layered onto this exchange of information is what Ong argues is a male puberty rite that toughens boys into men. Ong details the characteristics of puberty rites that coincide with Latin language learning: boys are cut off from home, they are separated from the maternal, some excesses are allowed, taboos are established, boys are made to do hard work often for work’s sake, an atmosphere of excitement is created, and the frightening power of the teacher becomes all in its didactic imprint.²⁰ In *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom*, Enterline examines grammar

¹⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 19. For more information of the books available in various languages, see Ong, “Latin Puberty Rite,” 103-104.

¹⁸ John Milton, *Of Education*, in *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Roy Flannagan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 980.

¹⁹ Milton, *Of Education*, 980.

²⁰ Ong, “Latin Puberty Rite,” 105-106. Complicating Ong’s analysis, Mulcaster at times encourages students to live at home and walk to school and advocates for those involved in a child’s life (teachers, parents, and neighbors) to meet and work together for the benefit of the student’s education, *Positions*, 277-86; 221-30. The theory of an educator, however, can often differ from the practice. See Andrew Hadfield, who raises questions concerning the accounts of Mulcaster’s teaching practices not aligning with his teaching theory, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 31.

school education from a similar perspective. The process removes boys from the maternal realm of the home, the vernacular language of English, and its associated folk texts, replacing it with the schoolroom, masters who position themselves in paternal roles, the language of Latin, and its associated classical texts.²¹ The goal of educational institutions of the sixteenth century was to fashion masculine gentlemen, especially through *imitatio*, the translating of texts (the imitating of ideas, style, and rhetorical devices) also through the physical imitation of schoolmasters to imitate and embody correct oratory techniques.²² Enterline, however, questions the reliance of Ong's arguments on the complex term puberty and normative gender categories such as male and female that even in the sixteenth century were complicated by a vast number of things, most notably drama and the tradition of cross-dressing: "With great frequency over the course of the sixteenth century, schoolboys preserved—indeed, extended—the long-standing medieval custom of playing female parts on holidays. And they did so as part of their induction into the successful performance of genteel masculinity."²³ Furthermore, Enterline argues the grammar school process undercuts itself. Since boys must imitate emotions from Latin texts that they are too young to embody and understand, including the emotions of women, they pick up and model distinctly feminine traits contrary to the intentions of the educational institution.²⁴

It is in this context that Redcrosse now exists as a grammar student with the theoretical expectation to transition from a boy to a man, to move from ignorance to knowledge while learning classical languages, most notably Latin. Furthermore, the practices of the educational institutions Redcrosse encounters may undercut those expectations and goals, and the

²¹ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 6-7.

²² Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 4.

²³ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 17-18.

²⁴ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 120-52.

transferring of knowledge that occurs is not necessarily what was primarily intended. We shall first examine the theoretical expectations for Redcrosse as a student before thinking about the realities of what a student might experience. As Redcrosse enters the grammatical level of education, he separates from the maternal realm as Duessa, his anti-parent, trades him for the giant Orgoglio, who “From that day forth” makes Duessa “his deare” when only a few stanzas earlier: “Yet goodly court [Redcrosse] made still to his Dame [Duessa].”²⁵ After Orgoglio takes Redcrosse to a castle and locks him in a “Dongeon deep,” Ignaro becomes the substitute for the parent in his role as the second anti-teacher.²⁶ He specifically serves in the position of a grammar master and fails all Mulcaster’s desired qualities, the most obvious of which is Ignaro’s allegorical ignorance: “For the verie least thing in learning, will not be well done, but onely by him, which knoweth the most, and doth that which he doth with pleasure and ease, by reason of his former store [memory].”²⁷ Moreover, Ignaro is not knowledgeable in classical languages (lacking all linguistic skills), he is not of good moral character (walking crooked paths), and most importantly, Ignaro fails because he does not serve in a transitional role as an educator.²⁸

Ignaro instead functions as Redcrosse’s jailor, imprisoning him in the castle dungeon after the giant Orgoglio captures him, stalling all progress. Just as Ong and Enterline comment on the transitional nature of Latin learning and grammar school, so too does Mulcaster point

²⁵ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Qveene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), bk.1, canto 7, st. 16, line 1; st. 7, line 1.

²⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 15, line 9.

²⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 234-5.

²⁸ For an overview of the grammar master’s requirements, see Mulcaster, *Positions*, 231-34. Also see the *History of Merchant Taylors’ School* which contains the statutes of the school, listing the qualities desired for the headmaster, specifically that the man be “in body whole, sober, discrete, honest, verteous, & learned, in good & cleane Latine l~rature [literature], &, also, in Greeke, yf such may be gotten,” Wilson, *History of Merchant-Taylors’ School*, 11. Many of the qualities are not far removed from the requirements Mulcaster outlines for the grammar master’s character and language abilities.

to the pliability of students during this time due to their young age and the grammar master's influence:

My greatest travell [travail, work] must be about the *grammer* maister, as ech parent ought to be verie circumspect [watchful/cautious] for his owne private that way. For he is to deale with those yeares, whereupon all the residew do build their likelyhoode to proue well or ill. Wherein by reason of the naturall agilitie of the soule and body, being both unsettled, there is most stirre, and least stay: he perfiteth the *Elementarie* in course of learning: he offereth hope or despaire of perfection to the *tutor* and uniuersitie, in their proceeding further.²⁹

In other words, parents should carefully watch grammar instructors who wield a high level of influence because of the pliability of students due to their malleable age. Duessa fails to be a watchful parent and does not examine the capabilities of Ignaro, a grammar master who causes ill effects for Redcrosse, specifically withholding learning needed to progress to the next level of education, the university, which according to Mulcaster destroys all hope of future learning.

By doing nothing, Redcrosse learns nothing. Seen from this perspective, Redcrosse's ignorance is an advanced form of idleness. Redcrosse will soon be in such an advanced state of illiteracy and un-learnedness that he will be incapable of learning advanced knowledge. The difference between the two states is evident in how Spenser portrays the blindness of Idlennesse and Ignaro. The character Idlennesse had the ability to see but was too lazy to use his sight; Ignaro cannot see. The shifting between a slothfully ignorant nurse to a decrepitly ignorant nurse further devolves Redcrosse's education. Of course, the playfulness of Spenser's allegory arises here. By locking Redcrosse in a hellish dungeon, Ignaro places Redcrosse in a hopeless situation from which he cannot himself escape without outside assistance, i.e., grace. However, by creating despair for Redcrosse, Ignaro does not allow the knight to proceed to the character

²⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 233; "circumspect, adj.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/33367.

Despaire. When Redcrosse does continue, Despaire (read as a university master) will demand knowledge of Redcrosse that he does not possess because he is ignorant. The overall point for Mulcaster is clear. The grammar master is a transitional figure of high importance. If he fails in his job, the child's past learning will stagnate and the child's future learning will fail.

The Negligent Teaching Practices of Ignaro

Most important to Ignaro's anti-teaching and the transition that should occur for Redcrosse but does not is the "bunch of keys" to "euery inner dore" that Ignaro carries as the "auncient keeper of that place."³⁰ As a grammar master, Ignaro's bundle of keys positions him in a similar light to Lady Grammar who unlocks the Tower of Learning with her key so that students can access—upon learning Latin—the knowledge contained within the tower's rooms. Instead of unlocking knowledge, however, Ignaro's deficient linguistic skills—evidenced by his inability to answer when Prince Arthur questions him—prove a poor model for Redcrosse to imitate, and the "rust" that covers Ignaro's "vnused" keys indicates he has not served his job well as "keeper of that place."³¹

In the broader critical reception of Ignaro, scholars read him as spiritual ignorance, often associated—at least by many sixteenth-century Protestants—with Roman Catholicism and ignorance of the true religion.³² The keys he carries also relate to his spiritual blindness as they have the potential to open knowledge, specially of scripture or the Word of God. At least one of the scriptural geneses of the allegory can be found in Luke 11:52: "Wo *be* to you, interpreters of the Law [generally Pharisees]: for ye haue take[n] away the keye of knowledge: ye entred not in

³⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 30, lines 6-8; canto 8, st. 31, line 7.

³¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 32-34; canto 8, st. 30, line 7; canto 8, st. 31, line 7.

³² For a brief commentary on Ignaro, see Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene: A Critical Commentary on Books I and II* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1977), 82-83; for additional commentary detailing Catholic connections, see Wilhelm Füger, "Ignaro," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 388.

your selues, and thē[m] that came in, ye forbade.”³³ An allusion can also be found in Matthew: “And I wil giue vnto thee [Peter] the keyes of the kingdome of heauen, and whatsoever thou shalt binde vpō[n] earth, shalbe bound in heauen: and whatsoever thou shalt lose on earth, shalbe losed in heauen.”³⁴ Both of these verses, place Ignaro as a gatekeeper, a keymaster, who controls access either to knowledge or to a location. The latter verse especially positions Ignaro as an anti-Saint Peter who is unable to bind or unlock and thus unable to allow progress.

As with Idlenesse and others before him, when placed in an educational context, Ignaro takes on new meanings, especially as a gatekeeper. Most notable are Ignaro’s responsibilities to his location, the castle, which give him similar duties to an usher (like Idlenesse before him), controlling who enters and exits.³⁵ Ignaro’s unused keys prevent transmission of knowledge—not just the spiritual—and a lost key keeps Redcrosse locked in a dungeon, stopping him from moving to the next stage of education. Both aspects stunt Redcrosse and prevent him from maturing from boy to man and from being fashioned into a gentleman. Most importantly, however, is Ignaro’s connection to languages as a grammar master and as a nourishing father, causing the concept of language operating as keys that unlock knowledge to overlap with motifs of nursing children with knowledge as sustenance.

Perhaps an early modern grammar book for students can best illustrate these combined motifs. John Holt, an educator associated with the Magdalen College, Oxford schoolmasters who produced influential humanist textbooks, wrote a grammar titled *Lac puerorum* (Milk for

³³ Luke 11:52 (The Geneva Bible, 1560). For more on Ignaro’s keys, see Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 82-83; A. C. Hamilton, *The Faerie Qveene*, by Edmund Spenser, rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), 1.8.30.6-9n.

³⁴ Matthew 16:19.

³⁵ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 139-141.

Children). Holt died in 1504, and printed editions of his book only survive after his death.³⁶ Holt's book provides elementary grammar instruction for younger students in grammar school, notably by being written in English and containing illustrations, allowing students to study Latin more easily.³⁷ The book provides milk for those not yet ready for the full meat of Latin, fulfilling the namesake reiterated in its English subtitle *Anglice [Angelic] Mylke for Children*.³⁸ We can easily see the overlapping of knowledge, specifically Latin, with sustenance.

Another shift had already occurred and was occurring to make this one feasible.

Grammar masters were framing themselves as parents, supplanting the boys' parents and homelife. In examining the effects brought about by students constantly imitating teaching masters, Enterline writes:

A long-standing topic or theme set for debate in school texts is whether a student owes more allegiance to his parents or his teacher; masters consistently represent themselves in loco parentis. In Lily's *A Short Introduction of Grammar*, the first lesson is how to decline the noun *magister*. The noun with which it is paired is *parens*. The commonplace substitution of 'master' for 'parent' does mean that masters sometimes did represent themselves as mothers or nurses; the title of an introductory text like *Lac puerorum* ('milk for boys') obviously casts language teachers in a maternal light.³⁹

³⁶ Nicholas Orme, "Holt, John (d. 1504), schoolmaster and grammarian," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, last modified 23 Sep. 2004, <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13617>.

³⁷ After a certain point, many elementary Latin grammars were written in English; however, another unique aspect of Holt's grammar is its numerous illustrations that help students better memorize rules. See Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 117-121, and Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 106. For a brief history of grammars and what would become more or less the standard, namely Lily's Latin Grammar, see Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 105-10; and Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England*, 101-2.

³⁸ Heb. 5:12: "For when as cōcerning the time ye oght to be teachers, yet haue ye need againe [that] we teach you the first principles of the worde of God: and are become suche as haue nede of milke, and not of strong meat." Compare 1 Cor. 3:2.

³⁹ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 144. See Enterline's discussion of gender in relation to male schoolmaster's adopting maternal titles, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 70-1.

Spenser frames Ignaro in the same way grammar masters represented themselves *in loco parentis* (in the place of parents).⁴⁰ Ignaro is a “foster father” to the giant Orgoglio.⁴¹ Fostering and nursing are equivalent as both have etymological ties to food and a responsibility to feed dependents.⁴² The piling on of imagery creates a complicated effect. Grammar masters acting as parents (predominantly fathers but with the ability to shift genders) taught languages, specifically Latin, that operated as keys to unlocking knowledge, which also took the form of sustenance.

As a supposed grammar master, Ignaro holds the “waies to wisdom, the lodges of learning, the harbours of humanitie, the deliverers of divinitie, the treasuries of all store, to furnish out all knowledge in the cunning, and all iudgement in the wise [. . .]”, yet as a crooked and ignorant father, he himself lacks the knowledge to teach or more appropriately nourish others.⁴³ It is no wonder then that once Arthur defeats Orgoglio, the giant and foster-son of Ignaro turns into an “emptie bladder” resembling the “dried dugs, lyke bladders lacking wind” of Duessa that previously failed to nourish Redcrosse.⁴⁴ The giant presents one type of a malnourished student and the result of such an empty education. *The Faerie Queene* presents many such pictures of teachers and their students, a complete representation of an educational system. Error has her babies, Duessa has Fradubio and Redcrosse, Ignaro has Orgoglio,

⁴⁰ The phrase *in loco parentis* does have modern legal ramifications concerning the relationship between students and educational institutions and minors and non-biological caregivers.

⁴¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 31, line 8.

⁴² For etymological discussion, see Introduction.

⁴³ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 19.

⁴⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 24, line 9; canto 8, st. 47, line 6. Arthur defeating Orgoglio, specifically him severing the giant's arm and its pouring blood (canto 8, st. 10), is the second instance of a nursed child—Error's offspring being the first—whose end parodies biblical nourishment relating to Christ and the crucifixion. Brooks-Davies writes, “The wounding of Orgoglio with the blood gushing like water from rock recalls Exodus 17:5-6 (Moses' smiting of the rock) and 1 Corinthians 10:2-4 where that event is interpreted typologically: ‘they dranke of the spiritual Rocke [. . .] and the Rocke was Christ’,” *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 81. See Chapter One, pages 86-7, for analysis of the parodic demise of Error's offspring.

Despaire has Trevisan and Terwin, and so on. Readers and Redcrosse can witness these educational systems and their outcomes. Unfortunately, Redcrosse misreads the situation most of the time. While we do not have time to examine all of the characters closely, we will examine Orgoglio more carefully momentarily.

Grammar Masters and the Failure to Provide Educational Nourishment

The combined images of teachers as parents, tongues as keys, and knowledge as food allude to possible analogues in Dante's *Inferno* and Chaucer's "The Monk's Tale." Both contain the story of Count Ugolino (circa. 1220-1289) and his imprisonment with his children, historically two sons and two grandsons.⁴⁵ After being held for several months, Ugolino and his offspring were left to starve in the tower. *The Inferno* contains perhaps the darker version because Ugolino's sons turn to him for physical and more importantly spiritual salvation and nourishment. Ugolino cannot provide physical nourishment as he cannot unlock the door to the prison, nor can he unlock spiritual knowledge through the Word of God because he has misused language as a traitor. In hell, Ugolino recounts to Dante the Pilgrim the moment he and his sons were locked in the tower:

They [Ugolino's sons] were awake by now; the hour drew near
at which our food was usually brought,
and each, because of what he'd dreamed, was anxious;
below, I heard them nailing up the door
of that appalling tower; without a word,
I looked into the faces of my sons.⁴⁶

Notable is the silence of Ugolino within the tower. He never utters a word once the doors are locked. The voices of his sons contrast his silence as they move to save him, offering their bodies

⁴⁵ Peter Armour, notes to *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, notes by Peter Armour (New York: Knopf, 1995), 619.13n.

⁴⁶ Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, in *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, notes by Peter Armour (New York: Knopf, 1995), bk. 1, canto 33, lines 43-48.

as sacrifices so that he may have sustenance and live. As good sons, they uphold familial bonds.

Then the silence continues:

Then I [Ugolino] grew calm, to keep them from more sadness;
 through that day and the next, we all were silent;
 O hard earth, why did you not open up?
 But after we had reached the fourth day, Gaddo,
 throwing himself, outstretched, down at my feet,
 implored me: "Father, why do you not help me?"⁴⁷

Gaddo's words mirror those of Christ on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"⁴⁸ Giuseppe Mazzotta labels the episode the "crucifixion of innocence" due to the "way in which the violence inflicted on Ugolino's children [who are positioned as blameless] seems to repeat or reenact the great drama of the Christian sacrifice."⁴⁹ Mazzotta describes the tragedy of the crucifixion as a moment "where the Son feels that he is completely abandoned and that the whole divine order is no longer responsive to him. It is a moment of theological despair."⁵⁰

Ugolino ends his monologue obscurely, saying, "then fasting had more force than grief."⁵¹ The line either suggests that Ugolino dies of hunger, bringing an end to his grief or that his starvation overwhelms his grief, perhaps causing him to eat his children, an image of the paternal taking back the life it gave.⁵² In this context, Ugolino's children die in a tower of spiritual despair, and are punished and possibly cannibalized for Ugolino's sin of treachery,

⁴⁷ Dante, *Inferno*, bk. 1, canto 33, lines 64-69.

⁴⁸ Matthew 27:46. See Mark 15:34; and compare Psalm 22:1.

⁴⁹ Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Reading Dante* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 112-13.

⁵⁰ Mazzotta, *Reading Dante*, 109.

⁵¹ Dante, *Inferno*, bk. 1, canto 33, line 75.

⁵² For Mazzotta's commentary on the ambiguity of the line, see *Reading Dante*, 112-13. Regarding parents devouring their children, the early modern period tended to gender the concept: mothers (or women) were most often depicted as eating their children. It is no surprise then that Errorr at the beginning of *The Faerie Queene* swallows—eats—her babies to protect them, i.e., in helping, she harms. See Enterline's examination of the issue, specifically through the lens of Venus and Adonis and the upsetting of gender roles with a headmaster providing Saturn as a classical example of a father who eats children while situating mothers in a saving role over students, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 70-72.

which is why he is located in the lowest circle of hell and cannibalizes others. Examining the sin of treachery in relation to societal and linguistic constructions, Mazzotta writes:

The question of treachery instead implies what Dante calls the erasure of the bonds of love because it involves one's friends, family, country, or hosts. Those who sin in this fashion annihilate all possible ties within a community, between the self and others.

As such, treachery is the language of nothing. It's a way of saying that nothing matters, that there's no such thing as a true attachment to another person. It's a severing of the self in the domain of pure arbitrariness. I may be above everything or perhaps below everything, but I certainly have no attachments to anything around me. And without attachments, without exchanges, there is no language at all.⁵³

Ugolino's silence in the passage is overwhelming. He offers no comfort to his children physically, mentally, or spiritually because he lacks the language to do so.

Ignaro's sin arises from a different cause, his ignorance, but the effects are similar. His castle is equally quiet, and those under his care suffer the consequences of the breakdown of language. When Prince Arthur enters to rescue Redcrosse, he sees no "living creature," and a "solemne silence" resides over the place.⁵⁴ Even when Arthur questions Ignaro, the gatekeeper never speaks directly. Spenser instead relates to the reader, "He could not tell."⁵⁵ As a result of "doted ignorance," language fails, becoming "sencelesse speech."⁵⁶ The learning that should occur, the learning that should sustain and nourish, never transpires. In *Elementarie*, Mulcaster identifies the two greatest enemies of learning: ignorance and prejudice.⁵⁷ Mulcaster writes: "Ignorance knoweth nothing, and therefore is no friend to ane vnknown good: preiudice knoweth and will not, and therefor is a great fo[e] to a not fauored good."⁵⁸ In some sense,

⁵³ Mazzotta, *Reading Dante*, 106.

⁵⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 29, line 5, 8.

⁵⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 32, line 9.

⁵⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 34, line 2.

⁵⁷ Richard Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chefelie of the right writing of our English tung* [. . .]. London, 1582, 46, *Early English Books Online*.

⁵⁸ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 46.

prejudice—having a “preconceived opinion not based on reason or actual experience”—has a connection to pride.⁵⁹

Ignaro does not hold a position of prejudice, but his foster son and giant Orgoglio does. As a precursor to his examination of the treachery of Ugolino in *The Inferno*, Mazzotta examines the treachery of the giant Nimrod and his attempt to build a tower that connects the gulf between earth and heaven. Mazzotta argues that “Nimrod wants to occupy a superior perspective; that’s what his being a giant means.”⁶⁰ Nimrod then bends others to his perspective instead of learning from others. In discussing the dangers of Ignorance to elementary education, Mulcaster describes the operations of prejudice in a similar light as Mazzotta:

But preiudice is a poison to anie common weall, so far as it stretcheth, which being at the first infected with the incurable disease of a cankred and a corrupt opinion gathered by confluence of sundrie ill humors will neither it self yeild to a right iudgement, nor will suffer anie other, where hir persuasion can take place. For by yeilding hir self she feareth the emparing of hir misconceiued estimation, and by suffring other to yeild, she feareth the encrease of knowledges frinds; whereby hir self shall com in dā[n]ger to be oppressed, both with truth of matter, and number of patrons. Wherefor she opposeth hir self, she bendeth all hir eloquence, she mureth vp all passages, so much as she maie, both by persuasion and entreatie, that none shall iudge right, which will hear hir speak, & regard hir autoritie, but shall take that musik to sound the swetest, which commeth from hir, tho she be but a mearmaid, which by offering of delite endeuoreth to destroie.⁶¹

Prejudice corrupts those around it because it refuses to be persuaded and will not allow others to be influenced under its control. If prejudice yields or submits its control of others, it will become in danger of being swayed by knowledge (truth).

Orgoglio, whose name means “pride, disdain, haughtiness,” is a giant of superior perspective. His size makes him unyielding in his combat because he has

⁵⁹ “prejudice, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2021, www-oed-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/Entry/150162.

⁶⁰ Mazzotta, *Reading Dante*, 107.

⁶¹ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 46.

So growen great through arrogant delight
 Of th'high descent, whereof he was yborne,
 And through presumption of his matchlesse might,
 All other powers and knighthood he did scorne.⁶²

However, Orgoglio does not have the more subtle manipulative characteristics of pride Mulcaster describes.⁶³ Instead of eloquence and persuasion that seduces through the musicality of the siren's song, Orgoglio makes a "dreadfull sownd," a "bellowing," upon seeing Redcrosse.⁶⁴ The strike of the giant's weapon also causes a "thundring noyse" that Spenser compares to a devil-wrought cannon.⁶⁵ Orgoglio instead captures the knight using "hastie forse [force]" and without the means of persuasion.⁶⁶

When Arthur fights Orogolio, the giant uses the same brute tactics as earlier. After Orgoglio tries to club him, Arthur severs the giant's arm, and Orogolio "loudly brayd with beastly yelling sound."⁶⁷ Spenser uses a simile, comparing the echoing of the giant's roaring to bulls bellowing lustfully for a herd of cows from which they are separated.⁶⁸ The imagery equates Orgoglio with concupiscence. Redcrosse was guilty of the same when he sexually desired Duessa, the result of which causes men to become beasts.⁶⁹ Orgoglio is nothing more than a bestial giant, bellowing at what stands before him and causing destruction and confusion. He is similar to the effects of the Mulcaster's poison of prejudice—its infection becomes an incurable opinion and will not "yield to right judgement, nor suffer anie other."⁷⁰ The main difference between the poison and Orgoglio is that the poison acts with subtly, often quietly destroying

⁶² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 10, lines 1-4.

⁶³ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.7.14.5n.

⁶⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 7, line 4; canto 8, st. 7, line 5.

⁶⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 13, line 6.

⁶⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 15, line 8.

⁶⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 11, line 3.

⁶⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 11, lines 3-9.

⁶⁹ See Chapter One, pages 99-101.

⁷⁰ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 46.

while the giant markedly rages in his destruction. Consequently, Orgoglio more resembles the description Mulcaster gives to ignorance: "Ignorance is violent and like vnto a lion, when it encountreth with knowledge, still in furie without feling, in rage without reason, and riseth of two causes, either infirmitie in natur, or negligēce [negligence] in labor."⁷¹

The two types of ignorance Mulcaster delineates present a challenge when examining Ignaro and Orgoglio as they do not neatly fit into these categories. The first type of ignorance is caused by infirmity in nature, and Mulcaster portrays this state of being as blind to the "beawtie" of learning and, thus, an enemy of knowledge "not of malice but of weaknesse." Mulcaster describes this type as a "more gentle" form of ignorance. Ignaro seems to have this natural infirmity relating to his ignorance as he offers no violence or resistance to Arthur who "from his arme did reach / Those keyes, and made hiselfe free entrance."⁷² Ignaro's blindness and backward turned head align him more with spiritual ignorance than intellectual impairment though the two are not necessarily separate issues.⁷³ Douglas Brooks-Davies writes on the issue: "Ignaro does not embody the retrospection of memory but, simply, spiritual backwardness. He is 'unlike to men' because such wilful denial of the understanding and reason is inhuman— hence he has foster-fathered the wild-man giant Orgoglio. Contrast the wood gods of vi. 7-10n. who are ignorant of revealed religion as Ignaro and Orgoglio are not, but whose ignorance is not willed."⁷⁴

⁷¹ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 47. For an analysis of Duessa and Orgoglio as an infection, namely syphilis, see Colin Milburn, "Syphilis in Faerie Land: Edmund Spenser and the Syphilography in Elizabethan England," *Criticism* 46, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 597-632, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2312724>. A connection exists between poisons and infectious diseases, which can operate undetected for a time before surfacing. In both cases, Orgoglio seems to be the later stage of an emerging condition.

⁷² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 34, lines 6-7.

⁷³ For commentary on Arthur's response to Ignaro and the role *scientia* (knowledge) plays, see Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 83.

⁷⁴ Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 83.

I agree with Brooks-Davies when reading Ignaro from the allegorical perspective of a more religious or theological reading. Spenser writes in the beginning of the faun and satyr episode:

Eternal prouidence exceeding thought,
Where none appears can make her selfe a way [. . .].⁷⁵

Hamilton glosses the line as a major doctrine of the poem and points to Ephesians 3:19: “And to knowe the loue of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all fulnes of God.” Ignaro should respond to Arthur’s courteous words, especially since Spenser positions Arthur as an extension of “heauenly grace” in the opening of Canto VIII.⁷⁶ As the Geneva gloss of Ephesians 3:19 states, in Arthur abound “all the graces of God.” Arthur’s squire blows upon his horn as they stand outside the castle where Redcrosse is imprisoned. The result is that every gateway in the castle opens:

No gate so strong, no locke so firme and fast,
But with that percing noise flew open quite, or brast.⁷⁷

The only exception is the iron gate or door to Redcrosse’s prison. The squire’s horn derives from Italian romance and, like Arthur, also becomes a method of delivering salvation, specifically by calling additional forces during battle. In *The Faerie Queene*, the sounding of the horn becomes associated with the Word of God: “But I demā[n]de, Haue thei not heard? No doute their sounde went out through all the earth, & their words into the ends of the worlde.”⁷⁸ That Ignaro does not respond to the love of God that surpasses all understanding and fails to respond to an unlocking version of the word sounding throughout the castle shows that he is inhuman. Of

⁷⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 6, st. 7, lines 1-2.

⁷⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 1, line 3.

⁷⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 4, lines 8-9.

⁷⁸ Rom. 10:18. For specifics on the sources Spenser uses for this episode, see Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.8.4n, and Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 81.

course, Ignaro's allegorical nature makes him so. He is spiritual ignorance personified. However, we can also read Ignaro from the perspective that he should be a grammar master teaching those under his care. He is a nurturer, which means in addition to his responsibility to teach students on moral and spiritual matters, he must also teach them physically and mentally. In this regard, Ignaro is not willful ignorance. Even if he once had the ability to reason and learn, he does not now, and like Ugolino in the tower, Ignaro possesses no language at all with which to remove himself from the prison of his ignorance or to unlock the iron door to free Redcrosse from his jail. Ignaro is a grammar master without a linguistic key, and from an emblematic perspective, stands in contrast to Lady Grammar, who holds the key to the tower of learning and allows students to enter who learn the alphabet.

The second type of ignorance Mulcaster describes results from negligence in labor (idleness) and is the "greater," i.e., worse type; it arises not from the inability to conceive knowledge but from its refusal.⁷⁹ Such an oppositional relationship with knowledge causes "malice" and "defiance" which leads not to the gentleness displayed by Ignaro's natural infirmity but to the violence exhibited by Orgoglio's prideful perspective. Even in this ignorant state, Orgoglio, acting as a co-student of Redcrosse, outmatches the knight because he more closely fulfills the desired and perhaps masculine qualities for a sixteenth-century schoolboy during a grammar school education. First, Mulcaster establishes two criteria that will help parents determine if a child is ready to attend school: wit and body.⁸⁰ What Orgoglio lacks in his mental faculty and ability to conceive ideas outside of his own perception, he more than makes up for in strength. Orgoglio possesses the "hight of three of the tallest sonnes of mortall seed."⁸¹ He

⁷⁹ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 47.

⁸⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 31. For discussions concerning wit and body, see Chapter One, pages 64-6.

⁸¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 8, line 9.

uses his “matchlesse might” to wield a “snaggy Oke [oak],” a tree associated with strength, as a weapon against his opponents.⁸² With the above traits, Orgoglio best fits one of four classifications Mulcaster outlines for students: a “dull witte in a strong body,” is the same type of student as Redcrosse at the beginning of the epic.⁸³ Orgoglio’s is more than able to perform any physical task required of him as he possesses a “body able to beare the travell [travail], which belongs unto learning.”⁸⁴ The giant’s prideful state makes learning inconsequential though.

While Redcrosse may have been a more competent student than Orgoglio concerning wit at the beginning of the poem, by the time Redcrosse is in the garden with Duessa, he is drained of all strength and the giant easily overtakes him without effort. Orgoglio outperforms Redcrosse physically, specifically because he more closely adheres to the physical training Mulcaster advises for students, and Orgoglio more closely fulfills the masculine qualities desired of a schoolboy during a grammar school education.⁸⁵ For the elementary stage of education, Mulcaster incorporates physical exercise as an equal part of education as he views the body as having a corresponding effect upon the mind, especially since it is the mind’s container. Mulcaster values exercise to such a degree that he advises masters of every educational level incorporate it.⁸⁶

⁸² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 10, lines 3, 7. For commentary on the mighty oak, see Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.7.10.7n.

⁸³ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 32. For a discussion of the types of students, see Chapter One, pages 64-5.

⁸⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 31.

⁸⁵ In comparison to Arthur, the effects of the giant are diminished because Spenser situates Orgoglio in relation to the heroics of Arthur, the perfect student who possesses both wit and strength. Spenser also employs the word *seems* to lessen the effects of Orgoglio’s fierceness. For example, when Arthur defeats Orgoglio, the giant falls. Instead of causing an earthquake, his fall “*seemd* to shake / The stedfast globe of earth, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 23, lines 8-9, (emphasis mine).

⁸⁶ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 50-53.

Mulcaster helpfully defines exercise: “This exercise of ours by forme of definition, is said to be a vehement, and a voluntarie stirring of ones body, which altereth the breathing, whose ende is to maintaine health, and to bring the bodie to a verie good habit.”⁸⁷ His definition fits within his overall conception of what is needed for a good education: “naturall abilities” and “artificiall principles.”⁸⁸ Mulcaster defines natural abilities as that “which natur planteth in our mindes and bodies, prepared by himself for vs to vse, but to be perfited [perfected] by ourselues.”⁸⁹ Artificial principles are devised by a person’s wisdom and act upon natural abilities to “take sure hold of all naturall inclinations and abilities, & bring them to perfection [. . .].”⁹⁰

Explaining how the two concepts work within an educational setting, William Barker writes:

The pupil brings to his education his “natural abilities,” which are acted upon by artificiall principles”; art makes manifest the universals inherent in the learner’s nature. If the nature of the child is not apt, or if the art of the master is wanting (that is, it does not match the nature of the child), then there will be no improvement of mind. Finally, to secure the fruitful combination of nature and art, a third quality— “practice” or “habit”—is needed.⁹¹

Mulcaster’s definition of exercise falls within this tripartite theory of learning. Students have natural abilities which they must act upon—stir and alter—to improve. To maintain the health they have bettered, students must continue through habit. While having natural strength, Redcrosse is guilty of idleness in art and habit. Additionally, he has encountered anti-teachers who lacking the art of instruction failed to improve his natural abilities; thus, he succumbed to idleness in practicing the abilities he did have, failing to maintain them. Orgoglio’s suffers a similar outcome as Redcrosse due to his genetic parents Earth and Aeolus and the subsequent

⁸⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 62. For more information on Mulcaster’s beliefs on exercise, see Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xxii-xxviii.

⁸⁸ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 30.

⁸⁹ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 29.

⁹⁰ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 30.

⁹¹ Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xviii-xix.

fostering by Ignaro. Orgoglio's birthright associates him with destructive elements: earthquakes and volcanoes.⁹² The giant also becomes a Wildman through his association with his club, the "snaggy Oke" he has ripped from his mother earth, another destructive and erotic act.⁹³ Ignaro taking Orgoglio as a foster child stunts the giant and prevents him from transitioning from a wild child into a less destructive being or a student that more fully resembles gentleman's education during the sixteenth century.⁹⁴ However, the giant still exceeds Redcrosse in most respects as a sixteenth century student, especially concerning the physical.

Exercise and Its Relation to Rhetoric

Mulcaster lists two exercises—walking and running—as the most natural because the legs and feet greatly service the body and in return should be kept healthy.⁹⁵ Mulcaster also prefaces walking as the best type of exercise because it can be practiced by anyone of any age anywhere.⁹⁶ Although he lists it as secondary, Mulcaster upholds running as an also easily performable exercise, and parents "do suffer their children to be more then halfe maymed, if they traine them not up in their youth to the use and exercise therof."⁹⁷ Even though Mulcaster lists the two exercises separately, the two naturally blend together, especially in the activities and combat Redcrosse and Orgoglio perform. Redcrosse begins the poem as an energetic child

⁹² For analysis of Orgoglio, especially the wind engendering natural disasters of the earth, see Brookes-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 71-2.

⁹³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 10, line 7; Brookes-Davies, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 72.

⁹⁴ A comparison between Una educating the Wildman Satyrane and Ignaro's failure to educate the Wildman Orgoglio might prove beneficial. Una educates Satyrane and transforms him into her protector knight. Admittedly, Satyrane begins from a different allegorical position than Orgoglio, enabling him to receive an education and make change. Orgoglio being read as allegorical pride cannot make such a transition; however, the important aspect is Una and Ignaro. The former offers such an opportunity, the latter does not.

⁹⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 95.

⁹⁶ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 89. With statements such as these, Mulcaster excludes the impaired and disabled by not even acknowledging their existence.

⁹⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 95. Mulcaster again writes from a perspective that excludes disabilities, equating normality with walking.

running ahead of his nurse to rush ahead and peep in doorways. While rushing onto the pages of the poem and constantly leaving Una behind, Redcrosse soon shows an aversion to strenuous physicality, desiring to sit or rest whenever he can. After abandoning Una, the knight rests with Duessa in the “coole shade” of the trees where “they sit” together.⁹⁸ After meeting his anti-teacher Idlenesse, Redcrosse’s energetic bursts further diminish as he stops practicing running or walking to finally sit “downe to rest in midst of the race” in the garden.⁹⁹

Orgoglio does not suffer the same physical flaws as Redcrosse. When the giant approaches Redcrosse near the fountain, he walks with “sturdie” and “stalking steps” as if he has been in the habit of practicing walking and his natural abilities have not atrophied.¹⁰⁰ Orgoglio also “towards him [Redcrosse] with dreadful fury prounce.”¹⁰¹ The now obsolete word prance means to “move, walk, or behave in an ostentatious or arrogant manner; to swagger; to flounce.”¹⁰² Hamilton defines the word as strut, an appropriate connotation for Orgoglio’s prideful status.¹⁰³ Most importantly, Orgoglio’s energetic manner of walking contrasts Redcrosse’s idleness by the fountain and his “vain” and “feeble” results of Redcrosse’s “pace” toward the giant when he does stand up to fight.¹⁰⁴ When Arthur later fights Orgoglio during the rescue of Redcrosse, the sounding of the Squire’s horn surprises Orgoglio who is with Duessa much in the same way Orgoglio surprises Redcrosse when he is with Duessa in the garden.¹⁰⁵ Although Orgoglio is “astownd” [confounded], he responds by “rushing forth,” demonstrating

⁹⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 29, line 2; st. 30, line 62.

⁹⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 5, line 4. For an analysis of Redcrosse’s Idlenesse, see Chapter Two, pages 147-52.

¹⁰⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 8, line 3; st. 10, line 6.

¹⁰¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 11, line 3.

¹⁰² “prance, v.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 17, 2021, www.oed-com/view/Entry/149338.

¹⁰³ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.7.11.3n.

¹⁰⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 11, line 4-8.

¹⁰⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 5.

that unlike Redcrosse who “[v]pstarted lightly” after being “astownd,” Orgoglio is still physically capable in his strength.¹⁰⁶ Orgoglio does suffer some affects from his “dalliaunce” with Duesa—or perhaps being confounded—as he suffers from “staggering steps.”¹⁰⁷ Another possible explanation is that Orgoglio is fighting Arthur, who is a more capable student because he possesses wit and strength in equal measures and because Arthur is the uncommon elect child whom Mulcaster describes an has received—because he must—a complete education.¹⁰⁸ Orgoglio has perhaps received a better physical education than Redcrosse in the sense that he has been ignored and his natural abilities left alone while Redcrosse has received bad instruction and his natural abilities have corrupted. Orgoglio’s physical education, however, is incomplete and pales when compared to the robust education of Arthur, an elite specimen of nobility that entitles him to the refined physical activities of a gentleman.

After first introducing exercise, Mulcaster provides a list, selecting several activities that are beneficial for a student to perform: “[O]ut of the whole heape I have pickt out these for within dores [doors], *lowd speaking, singing, lowd reading, talking, laughing, weaping, holding the breath, daunsing* [dancing], *wrastling, fensing, and scourging the Top*. And these for without dores, *walking, running, leaping, swimming, riding, hunting, shooting, and playing at the ball.*”¹⁰⁹ It should be noted that Mulcaster is advocating for several ideas in *Positions*, which complicates his stance on exercise within education. He argues that all students should be taught to read and write English, which argues for a much larger student population. In arguing that the education of the body should be coupled with the education of the mind, Mulcaster

¹⁰⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 5, line 6-7; canto 7, st. 7, line 8.

¹⁰⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 5, line 5, 8.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter One, pages 64-5, for an analysis of the types of students, specifically Arthur.

¹⁰⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 63.

joins activities that were once considered extra-curricular (though recommended) to the standard curriculum of study.¹¹⁰

Many of the activities listed such as riding, fencing, and hunting were traditionally associated with the gentry, and Mulcaster is potentially upsetting the status quo by advocating that these activities be practiced by all, regardless of status. To sidestep the issue, Mulcaster aligns his activities with exercise, arguing they are for the benefit of the body. In other words, as Barker writes, students should practice sports because they are “*scientifically sound*” not because they are “*socially correct*.”¹¹¹ With the expectation or goal in grammar school for boys to transition into gentlemen, Mulcaster’s theoretical distinction may not matter in Faery Land—or in England for that matter—especially where students must practice *imitatio* and mimic their teachers in both body and mind.¹¹² Whether the activities have benefits for health or associations with status, the tripartite theory of exercise (nature, art, and practice) seems to depend on a set of variables such as the status of the student, the quality of the teaching, and the abilities of the student. Thus, Arthur, a prince, in his private tutoring has perfected his physical actions; Orgoglio, a Wildman, possesses natural physicality but performs imperfectly because, lacking teachers, he has not honed his skills through the instruction of art; and Redcrosse, a knight, who has been publicly educated though badly has neglected and stopped the practice of his nature against the wishes of his parent Una.

Mulcaster lists too many exercises to address here; instead, I will analyze two more to conclude the analysis of Redcrosse, Orgoglio, and Arthur as co-students. Loud speaking and

¹¹⁰ Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xxii.

¹¹¹ Barker, introduction to *Positions*, xxvii.

¹¹² For a more detailed explanation of the goals of grammar school education and the practice of *imitatio*, see Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 1-11.

fencing are the two most appropriate exercises concerning the current themes related to learning language and the imitation of it because they both have a connection to physical activity and to the expression of words: loud speaking being one method of training for rhetoric and the sword being a metaphor for the word. Of the indoor activities, Mulcaster lists loud speaking first and writes on it in length “bycause it is both the first in rancke, and the best meane to make good pronouncing of any thing, in any auditorie [audience], and therefore an exercise not impertinent to scholers.”¹¹³ Mulcaster argues that the exercise serves “for the deliverie of voice, and utterance of speech” because it benefits the lungs in respiration, and “it increaseth, cleanseth, strēgtheneth [strengthens], and fineth [refines] the naturall heat.”¹¹⁴ Loud speaking physically exercises the voice and body, but it also works the mind by calling upon the matter it has memorized. Ursula Potter also reminds us that loud speaking involved an audience, making the classroom a “performance space.”¹¹⁵

Each of the students in *The Faerie Queene* performs for some end, whether realized or not. The performances each character gives upon the stage in Faery Land have some allegorical purpose for the reader, but those performances may not have an immediate purpose to those within the narrative, or more aptly, performances do not always provide an educational purpose for Redcrosse or for the character who represents that allegorical concept. For example, Ignaro depicts ignorance, but he can never learn from his own allegorical significance. Neither can Redcrosse learn from Ignaro as the narrative purpose of Ignaro is to keep Redcrosse locked in a dungeon of ignorance.

¹¹³ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 68.

¹¹⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 65. Barker describes natural heat as being “contained within the heart, and carried throughout the body as vital spirit in arterial blood,” *Positions*, 66.3n.

¹¹⁵ Potter, “Performing Arts,” 147.

Orgoglio offers another example, especially in performance, as he outmatches Redcrosse in loud speaking—at least in part—because he is louder due to his physical nature as a giant. As the son of the Earth and Wind, Orgoglio enters the world as a “monstrous masse of earthly slime” and “[p]uft vp with emptie wynd.”¹¹⁶ The son of the *Æolus*, the boisterous giant can naturally project his voice and does so whenever he seems to have an audience. When Redcrosse lies by the fountain with Duessa, we hear Orgoglio before seeing him:

Till at the last he heard a dreadful sownd,
Which through the wood loud bellowing, did rebownd
That all the earth for terror seemed to shake,
and trees did tremble.¹¹⁷

What is missing in Orgoglio’s loudness is Mulcaster’s desired quality of wit. During Orgoglio’s battle with Arthur, the prince severs the giant’s left arm, and Orgoglio “loudly brayd with beastly yelling sound.”¹¹⁸ The giant’s yelling echoes in the fields as a “heard of Bulles, whom kindly rage doth sting, / Doe for the milky mothers want complaine.”¹¹⁹ Spenser’s simile continues the emphasis on Orgoglio’s bellowing loudness. Even as he is being defeated, he outmatches Redcrosse in projecting his voice, but the giant is undercut by the connotations of the simile. It not only associates him with lust, bulls desiring cows, but as beasts, the bulls are incapable of articulate speech. Like the “hollow womb” from which Orgoglio was birthed, he dies incoherent, becoming nothing but “an emptie blader.”¹²⁰ Beyond Orgoglio’s allegorical purpose in the narrative, the giant is unable to perform his narrative purpose of keeping Redcrosse locked in the dungeon. Lacking substance, the giant is hollow, containing no quality education and no training. However, his arrogance and loudness, while lacking wit and articulation, would be

¹¹⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 9, lines 8-9.

¹¹⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 7, lines 4-7.

¹¹⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 11, line 3.

¹¹⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 11, lines 6-7.

¹²⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 9, line 2; canto 8, st. 24, line 9.

equated with boldness since in the sixteenth century, especially in the educational system, “Boldness was synonymous with masculinity.”¹²¹ Potter argues that “Mulcaster’s concern with the health of boys may be attributed to his desire to counter the popular perception that study and schooling in general was a sedentary and therefore not a masculine pursuit.”¹²² Regardless of Mulcaster’s intentions, “The aim [in early modern schools] was always to develop confidence in speaking and boldness of delivery, often referred to approvingly as “audacitie,” as well as to overcome shyness.¹²³ Thus, a quiet or silent student like Redcrosse would negatively be perceived as effeminate, and how Redcrosse wields his sword—a phallic object—only worsens this perception.

Mulcaster’s defense of fencing, “the use of the weapon,” as an exercise is fairly straightforward.¹²⁴ While having a history connected to war and violence, the sword—in the hands of the peaceful scholar—becomes a tool for exercising the body to great effect.¹²⁵ Mulcaster details three methods of exercising with a sword: against a person, against a pillar, and against the imagination (a shadow). The most beneficial, he argues, is with another person: “But of all these three, the exercise against an aduersarie [adversary] is both most healthfull, and most naturall to aunswere [answer] all assaies [assays]: and specially to canuase [canvass, i.e., to fully scrutinize] out a coward, that will neither defend his freinde, nor offend his foe: the cheife frute [fruit] that should follow fensing.”¹²⁶ The use of language and argument that becomes intertwined with swordplay cannot be overlooked in Mulcaster’s argument. Answering

¹²¹ Potter, “Performing Arts,” 149.

¹²² Potter, “Performing Arts,” 149.

¹²³ Potter, “Performing Arts,” 149.

¹²⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 85.

¹²⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 85-7.

¹²⁶ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 85-6. “canvass, v.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed December 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/27322.

has the etymological origin of responding often with the connotation to defend, so there is, built into the language, a measure of the aggressiveness of fighting despite Mulcaster's claim to peacefulness.¹²⁷ The linguistic implication is a child who is bold (skilled) in swordplay should also show boldness (skill) with verbal wordplay.

At the beginning of the epic, Redcrosse is ignorant in a childlike way of not wholly understanding what one has seen and heard. Against Una's warning, Redcrosse rushes into Error's cave where he uses his sword to "boldly" keep Error from escaping.¹²⁸ Though fighting bravely, Redcrosse lacks the skill that the experience of a full education would provide him, and he is unable to effectively use the sword. Only after listening to Una's instruction does he defeat Error by strangling her, a victory without the iconography of wordplay through swordplay. After meeting Idleness, the elementary teacher who should teach reading, Redcrosse's illiteracy worsens. Redcrosse, who was at least able to give good advice, though contextually bad, at the beginning of the quest becomes silent until the House of Pride until he fights Sansjoy, using his sword as his primary means of communication.¹²⁹ Mallette argues, "By wishing to respond with swords, not words, to an infidel's reproaches, he literalizes and so distorts the Pauline metaphor of the sword of the spirit."¹³⁰ Due to his lack of a proper education and his acting upon this hollow education, Redcrosse has disarmed himself of the "sworde of the Spirit, which is the worde of God."¹³¹ Later in the garden with Duessa, Redcrosse does more than just

¹²⁷ "answer, v.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/8146; "answer, n.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/8145.

¹²⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 17, line 3.

¹²⁹ Richard Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997): 24-34.

¹³⁰ Mallette, *Discourses of Reformation England*, 34-35.

¹³¹ Eph. 6:17.

figuratively disarm himself as he is physically unable to wield his sword and falls prisoner to Orgoglio.

Redcrosse finds himself locked in a dungeon with the gatekeeper Ignorance, who stands in the position of a grammar teacher. Unable to model correct grammar or gentlemanly behavior, Ignorance dooms Redcrosse to a worse form than the previous idle ignorance. What was once childlike ignorance that devolved into laziness—an unwillingness to learn—has now decayed to the more serious ignorance of one who no longer possesses the capacity for understanding. With Redcrosse locked in darkness, the imagery of Ugolino of Dante's *Inferno* reemerges. Like Redcrosse, Ugolino has been locked in a prison and disarmed of knowledge, specifically the Word of God that grants salvation; however, no outside grace comes to rescue Ugolino and he cannot save himself or his children. The connection between educational feeding and the outpouring of that education in the form of action often overlaps with the use of rhetoric and the iconography of the sword. Just as language operates as a key to opening locks, a good argument will pierce through an opponent's defenses like a sword, or in the words of scripture: "For the worde of God is liuelie [lively], & mightie [mighty] in operation, and sharper then anie two edged sword, & entreth through, euen vnto the diuiding a sonder of the soule & the spirit, and of the joynts, & the marie [marrow], and is a discerner of the thoghtes and the intentes [intents] of the heart."¹³² While Redcrosse loses the ability to speak, use a sword, and escape his prison due to his anti-teachers, Arthur's swordplay fulfills all the requirements of a desired sixteenth-century student.

Arthur, upon seeing Orgoglio, readies his arms and fills with "corage" and an "eger greedinesse," which Hamilton glosses as "intense eagerness for battle."¹³³ Arthur contrasts

¹³² Heb. 4:12.

¹³³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 6, lines 8-9; Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.8.6.6-9n.

Redcrosse's unpreparedness facing the giant, and he possesses a boldness, ready to answer an opponent with his sword. Orgoglio retains his positive masculine qualities by also rushing to face Arthur in battle, but perhaps his manliness is somewhat dimmed by his pride, his inability to perceive what is before him. Orgoglio rushes "to fight, / Inflamd with scornfull wrath and high disdain."¹³⁴ Thus, he faces Arthur, a superior fighter, with boldness touched by ignorance—a fool's bravery. Furthermore, when contrasted to Arthur, Orgoglio's lack of wit is more pronounced, his lack of rhetorical eloquence.¹³⁵ Orgoglio uses a "dreadfull club" as a weapon instead of a sword capable of cutting or piercing.¹³⁶ His fencing abilities match his lack of eloquence, so he tries to overpower his opponents with bruteness. Arthur, "wise and wary," dodges the "ydle stroke" that "[m]issing the marke" fulfills the practice of fencing (habit) but fails both the scriptural fulfillment of the Word as sword and rhetoric as sword. The swing of Orgoglio's club falls idly just as Redcrosse's arms became useless in combat. Perhaps this can be attributed to Orgoglio's entanglement with Duessa as Arthur surprises the giant just as the giant had previously surprised and attacked the unaware Redcrosse.¹³⁷

Alternatively, the giant's fight with Arthur is the first time he has faced a superior student, showing his lack of education. Regardless, Orgoglio's weapon is dull, and capable of hitting a target—although he misses both Redcrosse and Arthur—but not capable of piercing it

¹³⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 7, lines 1-2.

¹³⁵ A more prolonged discussion of Orgoglio's rhetoric and its early modern connection to eloquence is warranted, but space constraints prevent such an analysis. For more context, see John Webster's entry on rhetoric in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia* where he discusses Cicero's influence and his definition of eloquence in *Partitiones oratoriae* that had become commonplace: "*copiose loquens sapientia*" [wisdom speaking with abundance], "Rhetoric," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed, A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 598-99. Redcrosse and others such as Orgoglio are unable to perform because they lack eloquence; they lack the wisdom that has been brought forth from the fullness of the habit of study and the sustenance of knowledge found in good books and good teachers.

¹³⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 7, line 3.

¹³⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 5.

and cutting to the heart of an issue or argument. Contrasting the giant, Arthur uses his sword to defeat Orgoglio like an expert rhetorician, an eloquent orator, would take apart an opponent's argument. After dodging the first blow (argument) of Orgoglio, Arthur answers him by cutting off his left arm, effectively disarming the threat. After fighting Duessa's dragon, Arthur must once again respond to Orgoglio's attack. Instead of dodging the giant's oak club, Arthur blocks the strike with his shield, which unveils a "blazing brightness" of diamond that was previously covered.¹³⁸ The light stuns the giant who looks upon the shield and whose eyes cannot "endure to view."¹³⁹ Even though the light of the shield stuns and blinds, Arthur is ironically able to educate through it as Orgoglio "redd his end / In that bright shield."¹⁴⁰ While Spenser is likely using read here as a humorous and ironic undercutting of the giant, it is interesting that all of Redcrosse's anti-teachers, including Orgoglio's foster father, Ignorance, have failed to model reading practices correctly. It is only now that Arthur as a superior co-student, possibly an older student, is the first actually to teach Orgoglio. It becomes a successful debate in which one wins by convincing the opponent by simultaneously schooling them. With reading also comes the figurative word, and Arthur follows the shield with the blade, cutting off the giant's leg and then his head.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 19, line 4.

¹³⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 19, line 5.

¹⁴⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 21, lines 4-5.

¹⁴¹ Another reading suggests Arthur as a monitor. Latin schoolmasters often divided schoolrooms into groups: those who monitored, i.e., judged, the speaking, translating, and performing of Latin, and those who were being monitored. In this context, Orgoglio fails to correctly perform his exercises, and Arthur enacts discipline. Traditionally, the birch switch is associated with discipline and the monitor would alert the teacher who would dispense the proper amount for the error. Arthur condenses much of these processes, ultimately dispensing discipline through the sword. For the workings of the classroom involving monitors, punishment, and performance, see Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 38-48. I have not discussed Una's schooling of the satyrs and Satyrane in Canto VI, which further complicates the analysis but is beyond the scope of this dissertation as Redcrosse was not her student. Satyrane, however, provides a comparison to Redcrosse, Arthur, and Orgoglio as students (co-learners in Faery Land) and is an avenue for additional scholarship.

To this point, much has occurred in relation to the anti-education of Redcrosse. The ignorance of Redcrosse arises not from a singular cause, but from multiple anti-teachers, who due to their own insufficiencies, cannot apply quality artificial principles, the art of learning, to the natural abilities of Redcrosse. Instead, they model through the art of bad behavior over extended periods of time, which Redcrosse then chooses to imitate through habit. This tripartite theory of learning—nature, art, and habit—runs as an undercurrent through much of Mulcaster’s (and Spenser’s) texts. As a result, Redcrosse begins as a naturally strong child, although dull of wit, and Una artfully raises him up (nurses him) through the bestowal of armor and good guidance. After Redcrosse’s separation from her, his lack of practice of good behavior substituted with the habit of bad behavior incapacitates him. He becomes incapable of using language and the actions that arise from it. Further complicating the issue is that the ignorance of Redcrosse does not take the specific forms Mulcaster describes. Redcrosse does not possess a “naturall infirmitie,” an inability to learn that makes him resemble the Ignaro with his backwards turned head.¹⁴² However, the effect of his learning, his jailed condition makes him the same as Ignaro: he is incapable of removing himself from his unlearned position.

The practice of Redcrosse’s anti-learning—the lack of good habit—aligns with Mulcaster’s second type of ignorance, negligence in labor, the refusal to learn. Redcrosse has constantly stopped to rest during his quest, losing strength as the epic progresses, and he often refuses to listen because of his pride (or read the situation if continuing the idea of literacy). The effects of that learning do not resemble ignorance arising from negligence in labor because *Lucifera*, rather than *Orgoglio*, better resembles the ignorant and prideful disdain Mulcaster describes. She first of all matches the gender pronouns Mulcaster uses, but also, the second

¹⁴² Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 47.

type of ignorance has the ability to seductively persuade through siren's song. Redcrosse's increasingly silent behavior because of his ignorance pales in comparison to the persuasive Mermaid's music of prideful ignorance.¹⁴³ Even Orgoglio's animalistic yelling comes closer to persuasion than Redcrosse's failure to articulate.

Lucifera is only one part of Redcrosse's' anti-education. Pride becomes distorted and appears in other ways while idleness perhaps becomes the easier sin to imitate. Thomas P. Roche Jr. observes in his notes to the episode that many critics believe Orgoglio replicates Lucifera.¹⁴⁴ Roche Jr. then points to Tuve's *Allegorical Imagery* for a defense of Spenser: "The complaint about repetition is not infrequent [. . .]. But Lucifera is not a double of Orgoglio [. . .]. We keep meeting the Beast's shapes, but only in that sense of Leviathan himself. There is no repetition in Book I except as men eternally repeat the First sin, never recognizing it again when they see it—surely one of Spenser's points."¹⁴⁵ Even further complicating the analysis is the Mulcastrian strain of anti-teachers whom Redcrosse imitates can also be read as psychomachia. Not only is Redcrosse learning to model bad behaviors such as ignorance and pride, but characters such as Lucifera, Ignaro, and Orgoglio can also represent his internal condition; thus, the slipperiness of the discussion.

What is most important is Mulcaster's train of education and its antithesis found in the *The Faerie Queene*, specifically that Idlennesse, Redcrosse's Elementary teacher, does not prevent the state of ignorance. In listing the six reasons why an elementary education is

¹⁴³ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 46.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas P. Roche Jr., ed., *The Faerie Queene*, by Edmund Spenser (New York: Penguin, 1987), 1095.8-10n.

¹⁴⁵ Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Mediaeval Books and Their Posterity* (1966; repr., Princeton University Press, 2019), 108.35n, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat08646a&AN=mtsu.e1df7688.82da.4dcd.b7ee.dfafd824414d&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

beneficial for a child, Muclaster writes, “[t]he first praise of this Elementarie was, because it is the best mean to avoid generall ignorance, the mother to misliking [unhappiness or trouble], and to come by generall knowledge, which is the cause of allowance. A circumstance of great moment in the province of learning, as it is generally also in all other dealings.”¹⁴⁶ Even though in the best position to do so, Idleness fails to prevent that which will cause unhappiness or trouble, the “mother of misliking” and would also be the means to general knowledge. As a result of this failure, Redcrosse becomes a student of Ignaro, a grammar master who cannot correct the wrong of the previous teacher and in this case worsens the condition by becoming a pseudo foster-father to Redcrosse. As a teacher in place of the parent, Ignaro fails to nourish Redcrosse with words as sustenance; thus, the knight becomes hollow. Of course, Duessa who is also an anti-parent has led Redcrosse to these anti-educators and she continues to instigate and model, sometimes in the foreground, sometimes in the background, bad behavior.

Redcrosse’s Rescue: Learning through Violence and Grace

It might be appropriate to pause for a moment to examine the condition of Redcrosse in his captivity, especially the moment of his rescue, the moment grace arrives, which becomes one of the main differences from the story of Ugolino, who starves to death in his prison incapable of providing salvation for himself or his children through the life sustaining effects of language. After capturing the castle, Arthur searches for Redcrosse. Arthur finally hears a “hollow, dreary, murmuring voice,” asking:

O who is that, which bringes me happy choyce
Of death, that here lye dying euery stound,
Yet liue perforce in balefull darkenesse bound?¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 44. “misliking, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed December 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/119766.

¹⁴⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 38, lines 1-5.

Redcrosse who has been unable to escape from his living death arrives at a conclusion based on ignorant despair. He mistakes—or perhaps wishes—Arthur to be one who will end his suffering through erasure of himself and not through the changing of his conditions. Mulcaster’s analogy describing youths who miss their education is an appropriate comparison for Redcrosse’s situation. The drunk (youth) is lying in a ditch. He asks for blankets and demands someone extinguish the light, so that he can sleep. The light is the moon. His companions urge him inside, but he ignores their persuasions, believing himself in bed. The drunk’s friends must ultimately force him inside.¹⁴⁸ Mulcaster gives the analogy to defend his position that an elementary education, the first formal learning, is the most important because it provides a foundation for the entire educational journey of a student. Once miseducated, students are extremely difficult to reeducate, thus, the despair of their situation. It becomes paramount to educate students properly the first time. Arthur’s response is all the more interesting in light of Mulcaster’s analogy. Even though Redcrosse is miseducated and likely beyond help as far as a student’s education is concerned, Arthur intervenes, but it is an intervention by force. Arthur does not speak to persuade Redcrosse. Instead, he rips the iron door from its hinges.

Arthur, operating as co-student, now also slides into an image of Christ as savior. Arthur’s savior status casts him as both a brother and a parent since Christ holds characteristics of both. The parental title is especially of import as the dying Christ revives the children of God with his redeeming blood just as the pelican and its associated emblems nurses its children on its blood to feed them. While Arthur does not nurse Redcrosse in the above emblematic sense, he does harrow the hell Redcrosse is in and physically raises him out of the dungeon, fulfilling the etymological sense of nurse and perhaps reversing the anti-nursing of Error as parent when

¹⁴⁸ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 2.

Redcrosse descended into her cave. The grace Arthur gives, however, is filled with violence. In “Nature and Grace in the *Faerie Queene*,” Woodhouse argues that the iron door that will move for nothing expect for Arthur, which is “to the violence of grace.”¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, upon exiting the dungeon, the starved Redcrosse has decayed physically:

His sad dull eies deepe sunck in hollow pits,
Could not endure th’vnwonted sunne to view.¹⁵⁰

Spenser’s description of the emerging Redcrosse matches the description of Orgoglio’s eyes being blinded by Arthur’s unveiled shield:

Such blazing brightnesse through the ayer threw,
That eye mote not the same endure to vew.¹⁵¹

Arthur taught the giant violently through his swordplay as wordplay, ultimately conquering ignorance by teaching the giant to read “his end / In that bright shield.”¹⁵² Redcrosse has mimicked his male teachers well who have forsaken the sun/Son of God which illuminates all in a spiritually dark world. The knight’s dimness is not just a result from being in a dark place for a lengthy period and his eyes not adjusting when exposed to light. He should have listened to the wisdom that he gave Una when entering Error’s cave: “Vertue giues her selfe light.”¹⁵³ Now he makes the hard ascent out the dungeon, never truly having escaped the consequences of Error’s cave.

The raising out of the dungeon is akin to the prisoner emerging from the darkness in Plato’s allegory of the cave. It causes enlightenment but also pain as the prisoner is forcibly removed from his bonds and made to view increasingly bright sources of light ranging from fire

¹⁴⁹ A. S. P. Woodhouse, “Nature and Grace in the *Faerie Queene*,” *ELH* 16, no. 3 (Sep. 1949): 203, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871731>.

¹⁵⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 41, lines 1-2.

¹⁵¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 19, lines 4-5.

¹⁵² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 21, lines 4-5.

¹⁵³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 12, line 9.

to the sun. It is perhaps this pain that should now be the focus of the analysis. As co-student and especially parent, Arthur is stepping into the role of a disciplining teacher. Because schoolmasters often depicted themselves in the role of a parent (*in loco parentis*), they disciplined harshly, often with floggings, believing that a father's love for his son is shown through punishment.¹⁵⁴ Enterline points to the scriptural basis for their methods: "He [that] spareth his rod, hateth his sonne: but he that loueth him, chasteneth him betime."¹⁵⁵ Arthur's earlier defeat of Orgoglio perhaps shows the discipline of which he is capable, an extreme flogging of a ignorant student that removes the ignorance by killing the student (who is allegorical ignorance). For Redcrosse, Arthur shows more grace than he did Orgoglio, but it is still tinged with physical violence: the breaking down of doors (learning barriers) and the blinding of eyes so that students may (paradoxically) be illuminated.

Una also becomes important in the analysis of grace and learning, especially with her position as a parent to Redcrosse. She once again returns to nurse him, specifically by using her words to raise him up and sustain him. When exploring the teacher's supplanting the role of parents, Enterline examines the different types of discipline that fathers and mothers gave. Fathers were harsh and toughened boys while mothers were or were often portrayed as more lenient and at odds with the harshness of school teachers, either weeping and trying to save them from cruel punishments or depicted in translations as grieving mothers over dead children who ignored or escaped discipline.¹⁵⁶ Enterline concludes, "The 'puberty rite' of Latin training could begin only when sons left the care of English-speaking women for the rule of the schoolmaster's rod."¹⁵⁷ After Redcrosse becomes locked in the dungeon, the Dwarf finds Una,

¹⁵⁴ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 144.

¹⁵⁵ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 144; Prov. 13:24.

¹⁵⁶ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 145-6.

¹⁵⁷ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 146.

and when she sees him carrying Redcrosse's armor, shield, and weapons, she falls to the ground grieving, assuming that Redcrosse has died.¹⁵⁸ Una's behavior aligns with the depiction of mothers grieving their dead children that Enterline describes. Redcrosse ignored the lenient verbal correction of Una such as at the entrance to the cave of Errour, and he now faces the harsh consequences of his disobedient actions. As a loving parent, Una must now face them as well: just as Redcrosse has despaired, so too does Una despair. In her lament, Una says that with the death of Redcrosse, only sorrow exists for her now and she wishes light to be extinguished so that she may see sorrow no more.¹⁵⁹ She believes any purpose for her life is over now.

When Una reunites with Redcrosse after he emerges from the dungeon, she runs to him joyously, but upon seeing his physically sick condition, she cries. She is only able to speak "when her well of teares she wasted had."¹⁶⁰ Una's weeping continues to mold to the image of compassionate mothers, and her graceful welcoming of Redcrosse avoids any harsh discipline, blaming an "euill starre" for its "influence bad" on the knight instead of his own sins and fortune instead of the more obvious culprit, Duessa.¹⁶¹ Much has been made on the reunion of Una and Redcrosse, most notably the silence of Redcrosse and the problem it creates. He does not address Una's assumed infidelity, nor does he apologize for his sins. Instead, Una forgives all and even welcomes Redcrosse back as her "Lord, in wele or woe."¹⁶² In his gloss of the text, Hamilton writes that "she renews the marriage vow, 'in sickness, and in health'."¹⁶³ Una

¹⁵⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 19-21.

¹⁵⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 7, st. 22-23.

¹⁶⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 42, line 5. Wasted in this sense likely means used up or spent. "waste, v.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/226029.

¹⁶¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 42, lines 6-7; canto 8, st. 43, line 3.

¹⁶² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 43, line 1.

¹⁶³ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.8.43.1n.

positioning herself as a spouse and reestablishing marital bonds does complicate the current analysis because it pulls Una away from the parental position.

Richard A. Levin examines Una and Redcrosse's relationship from such a romantic perspective. Not only is Una Truth saving Redcrosse from Error, but she is a good woman saving him from lust: "A good woman is loyal and nurturing. A bad woman encourages sensuality and lassitude, and falsely promises loyalty."¹⁶⁴ Perhaps for the moment, Una's role slips out of the softness of the parental role and into the guiding wisdom of the wife due to her reestablishing marital bonds and the type of wisdom she provides. It is appropriate to again discuss Una's connection to Wisdom of Proverbs and her contrast to the strange woman, the Harlot who represents a disastrous life. Redcrosse up to this point has been partaking in the lustful and foolishly destructive life with Duessa. Now that he has been rescued, Una speaking as Wisdom unveils Duessa as the Harlot and shows Redcrosse the truth of what he has done. From Levine's perspective, Una is a good and faithful woman saving Redcrosse from error and lust, but the spousal or romantic depiction of Una is possibly at odds with the lenient parental role. Arthur gives Redcrosse the power to let Duessa live or die. A mother might choose either of those options to spare her child (and her)-(and herself) from seeing the uncomfortable truths of what the child has done. However, Una advises Redcrosse to choose a different option. She advises to disrobe Duessa, to unveil truth.¹⁶⁵ Una spares the life of Duessa and instead strips her of clothing, which Hamilton compares to Christ's mission in 1 John 3:8: destroying the works of the devil rather than the devil himself. Her actions do indicate a type of grace at work. Unlike Arthur's violent grace that ripped the door from the prison or the educating of Orgoglio's

¹⁶⁴ Richard A. Levin, "The Legend of the Redcrosse Knight and Una, or Of the Love of A good Woman," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 31, no. 1 (1991): 10, doi.org/10.2307/450441.

¹⁶⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 45; Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.8.45.7-9n.

ignorance that killed the giant, this is a subtler discipline that nulls the works of anti-parent Duessa without destroying her and simultaneously educates the student Redcrosse. The knight must now see or read what is before him—the truth without censor.

While Una's methods might be more graceful or motherly (if we can label them that), the effects merge close to the violence of Arthur's. When Arthur and Redcrosse see the disrobed Duessa, they are "amazd" just as many-headed beast Duessa rode was "amazd" and blinded by Arthur's shield and Orgoglio was "dazed" by the "blazing brightnesse" of the shield.¹⁶⁶ It is a learning experience when truth comes to light, and it is often a shocking one. In the case of Orgoglio, the educational experience was stunning, blinding, and destructive. Redcrosse survives the discipline of education possibly because he did not receive a physical thrashing, the sword as the word, from Arthur.¹⁶⁷ Instead, Redcrosse receives the finalization of his discipline from Una—at least in this canto—who guides him first with tears and then with the spoken word given as sustenance or in contrast to Arthur, the word as the sword. Perhaps the ultimate difference in parental discipline and education at least in *The Faerie Queene* is its overlapping with sustenance. Una's speaking of wisdom is a much heartier fulfillment of the word as sustenance than Arthur's swordplay as wordplay. Una's words may not have been tasty to Redcrosse. In fact, they lead to content that is gross. Spenser says his Muse even blushes to

¹⁶⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 49, line 1; st. 20, line 1; st. 21, line 9; st. 19, line 4.

¹⁶⁷ Redcrosse does still receive a type of physical discipline akin to that of Orgoglio as Spenser describes them similarly. When Arthur raises Redcrosse out of the dungeon, the knight "[c]ould not endure th'vnwonted sunne to view," and when Arthur unveils his shield during his fight with Orgoglio, the giant could not "endure to vew" the light. Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 41, line 2; st. 19, line 1. For a non-gendered perspective, See Carol V. Kaske's analysis of Una's and Artegall's punishments of Duessa. Una offers a private and merciful perspective while Artegall offers a public and violent decision concerning Duessa. Kaske argues that the outcomes are related to private and public responsibilities, especially the latter as Artegall is a knight who must uphold public justice, "Propositional Contradictions and Their Resolutions," in *Spenser and Biblical Poetics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 136-38, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctvr7f7ds>.

write at the details of Duessa's disrobing.¹⁶⁸ However, Una's discipline nourishes Redcrosse. It does not kill him. Without ever picking up a sword, Una can figuratively pierce the heart of Redcrosse and begin to address his educational needs.¹⁶⁹ Una's discipline is at once graceful and violent, and it is a discipline that does not necessarily align with the leniency of mothers.

Arthur should not be overlooked in the use of grace. Although Una is more lenient, Arthur does guide with his words as well. The prince summarizes a lesson that Redcrosse should learn after being seduced by Duessa's false beauty and then being imprisoned; however, Arthur positions it as a lesson for himself:

This daies ensample hath this lesson deare
Deepe written in my heart with yron pen,
That blisse may not abide in state of mortall men.¹⁷⁰

In addition to Arthur's delicate lesson giving, he is operating from a position of Monarchal power that complicates grace. Mulcaster argues in *Positions* that one of the main purposes of educating students within a monarchy is to teach them obedience so that they may serve the crown.¹⁷¹ To help enforce obedience, Mulcaster approved of corporal punishment, writing, "For the *rod* may no more be spared in schooles, then the *sworde* may in the *Princes* hand."¹⁷² The analogy between teachers and the monarch signals the potential effects of disobedience as the monarch can ultimately order one's execution. Arthur, knowing Redcrosse cannot obey a

¹⁶⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 49, line 1; st. 48, line 2.

¹⁶⁹ See Heb. 4:12.

¹⁷⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 44, lines 7-9. A late nineteenth-century editor of *The Faerie Queene*, H. M. Percival, wrote of Arthur's grace, "The lesson is meant for the Red Crosse Knight, but with what charming delicacy does Arthur, the magnanimous, speak of it as a lesson for himself!" Commentary to *The Works of Edmund Spenser, A Variorum Edition: The Faerie Queene Book One*, vol. 1, eds. Edwin Greenlaw, Charles Grosvenor Osgood, and Frederick Morgan Padelford (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 262.

¹⁷¹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 154-5.

¹⁷² Mulcaster, *Positions*, 270. For a brief contextualization of corporal punishment in the early modern period and exceptions to Mulcaster's practice such as not disciplining boys with natural disabilities, see Barker, ed. *Positions*, 269.34-5.n.

spoken command while he is in the dungeon, physically lifts Redcrosse out. Arthur does not waste time on words that cannot be obeyed and instead forces—with violence—obedience, yet there is grace in Arthur's actions because Redcrosse does not die by the sword as Orgoglio did. Una can be more lenient as Redcrosse is able to obey. She lets her words penetrate the heart through reason, the figurative sword. However, her words lead to a much more shocking and violent realization than Arthur's monarchical discipline.

After the removal of the anti-teachers and the administration of discipline, which sets Redcrosse on the correct path, the knight has the good models of Arthur and Una which he can now begin to imitate. Arthur and Una fulfill a variety of roles in relation to Redcrosse ranging from parent, sibling, and spouse. Regardless of the messiness of the interpretations that arise due to the overlapping of roles, all of them share a single commonality, that of a nurturer. They all raise up those in their care. Arthur and Una now begin the process of repairing the hollow education of the anti-teacher. Even with Redcrosse rescued and good examples in his path, he still chooses to rush ahead in his education when he sees Trevisan and hears of Despaire.¹⁷³ Mulcaster believes that rushing an education is one of the worst things a student can do. In *Positions*, Mulcaster uses the imagery of growing: plants bearing fruit. The problem is the process takes time: "*Time* enough is that meane which perfiteth [perfected] all, the *Elementarie* in his kinde, the *Grammarian* in his, the *Graduate* in his, and so profiteth the *common weale* by perfiting [perfecting] all: the *prerogatiue* to thought: the *mother* to truth: the *tuchestone* to ripenesse: the *enemy* to errour: mans only stay, and helpe to advice."¹⁷⁴ In relation to the stages of education, time is needed to perfect students and bring them to truth.

¹⁷³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 32, lines 1-2.

¹⁷⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 257.

What is noteworthy in relation to Redcrosse is that time is an enemy to error. In the first two cantos of Book One, Redcrosse rushes into his journey eager to prove himself, he hastily dives into Errour's cave against warnings, and he rushes out of Archimago's house, failing to consider the false images presented to him. Because of these early mistakes, Redcrosse loses much time later on in his journey. Mulcaster continues: "Once in, this is a certaine ground, and most infallible, that in tarying long, and perfiting [perfecting] well, there is no losse of time, specially seeing those qualities even alone, be a pretie furniture of houshold if they be well gotten. The hasting on to[o] fast to see the frute too soone, when circunstances [circumstances] perswade tarying is to winne an houre in the morning, and to lease the daye after."¹⁷⁵ In other words, spending a long time to fully perfect a student—to fully develop that student's knowledge in particular area—is not a time waster because that labor will be productive as the education contributes to growth and results in a student that contributes to England; however, if the student or teacher rushes the education, then the plant (the student) does not produce fruit.¹⁷⁶

Walter J. Ong's discussion of Latin language learning in grammar school as a puberty rite is relevant to Redcrosse's grammar learning or the lack thereof. Ong details the process, arguing that courage, i.e., "heart-iness, strength of heart," can emerge through the studying of Latin literature, and "[b]y seventeen the child has become something of a man, his courage has been proved and he must now practice what one practices after crossing the threshold of maturity, namely, control."¹⁷⁷ Redcrosse has not yet perfected himself—transitioning from boy to man—through the process of language learning, especially studying texts (imitating and embodying

¹⁷⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 258.

¹⁷⁶ "perfect, v.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 2022. www.oed.com/view/Entry/140705.

¹⁷⁷ Ong, "Latin as Puberty Rite," 117-8.

proper models) associated with courage and heart. Even though Redcrosse was rescued by Arthur and has Una guiding him, he chooses to rush ahead to face Despaire, which leaves the knight in an unprepared state. While Redcrosse is perhaps bold to face Despaire, he precedes through ignorance and with a fool's courage similar to Orgoglio's hollow liveliness and not Arthur's experienced action. The knight does not understand the enemy that awaits him despite the warnings he receives, and he lacks the experience of becoming a man. As a result, Redcrosse lacks courage and heart. Thus, the heartlessness of the Redcrosse in the Despaire episode is anticipated here. By the time Despaire finishes attacking the knight in canto ix, Redcrosse's "hand did quake, / And tremble like a leafe [. . .]"

And troubled blood through his pale face was seene
To come, and goe with tidings from the heart,
As it a running messenger had beene.¹⁷⁸

Renaissance physiology recognized the connection between emotions in the heart and blood rushing to (as in blushing) or draining from the face (as in paling in fear). As the House of Holiness chapter shows, Redcrosse lacks something else besides manliness and courage, because there, Redcrosse's positive (re-)education is not one solely of masculine boldness but is a product of harsh discipline, graceful discipline, and the leniency of parents, traditionally associated with mothers.

¹⁷⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 51, lines 3-6.

CHAPTER 4

UNIVERSITY: I TAKE MY EXAM WITH DESPAIRE

So far in the Mulcastrian pageantry of Redcrosse's education, Redcrosse has encountered Error and subsequently Duessa, who together represent parenting counter to the recommendations Mulcaster gives for early childhood education. Duessa then leads Redcrosse to Idleness and afterward Ignaro, who represent teaching counter to Mulcaster's proposals for the Elementary and Grammatical levels of education.¹ Redcrosse erred in his education and through inactivity has become ignorant of what he should know and do, a severe misstep according to the Christian humanist undergirding that education should lead one to virtuous action.² Even though Arthur and Una rescue Redcrosse from Ignaro's dungeon, Redcrosse—in his still ignorant and weakened state—meets Trevisan who is running from Despaire, the final anti-teacher in Redcrosse's path in Book One and the representative of the university education.

Redcrosse learns from Trevisan of Despaire's abilities to charm people toward suicide through speech. Redcrosse rushes to try himself against Despaire to prevent this villain from further harming vulnerable knights. Andrew Escobedo notes the knight's desire to test himself is often an overlooked motivation. Escobedo remarks that the desire for blood justice is the more commonly given impetus for Redcrosse's actions; however, that does not occur until he sees Terwin's corpse in Despaire's cave.³ Instead, after meeting Trevisan and hearing of Despaire,

¹ Richard Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 230-35.

² Reducing the epic to this formula is an oversimplification of the Mulcastrian pageantry found within Spenser's Faery Land. For an analysis of the stages of Redcrosse's journey, see Chapters One, Two, and Three for parenting, elementary school, and grammar school respectively.

³ Andrew Escobedo, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser," in *Volition's Face: Personification and the Will in Renaissance Literature* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), 154; Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), bk.1, canto 9, st. 37.

Redcrosse remarks how eager he is to be tested: "Certes (sayd he) hence shall I neuer rest, / Till I that treachours art haue *heard* and *tryde*."⁴

The actions of hearing and trying align with two main components of the early modern university: tutoring and disputations. While Mulcaster mentions reforms that he would like to see implemented at the university, a brief overview of university operations in early modern England, specifically involving tutoring and disputations, will help contextualize Redcrosse's final stage of the pageantry and Mulcaster's recommendations. While the act of hearing mostly aligns with tutoring and trying with disputations, a one-to-one equivalency does not occur, and for the purpose of this discussion, I will reverse, for two reasons, the analysis of hearing and trying and instead discuss disputations first and tutoring second. First, Despaire combines the two roles, but he favors the part of examiner, subordinating the role of the tutor. Second, Redcrosse often reorders the two actions, refusing to listen and instead preferring to test himself by hastening toward challenges for which he is unprepared. The pattern begins as early as Errour's cave when he ignores Una's warning not to enter and continues with Redcrosse hurrying to meet Despaire against the warning of Trevisan.

Trying mostly aligns with disputations, required formal exercises in which students orally debated questions; however, to win a debate, the participant in a disputation would need to listen to his opponent's arguments. The emphasis, though, was on trying, and these examinations tested students' performances in the art of rhetoric (how to argue) and demonstrated their knowledge of content (what to argue). Redcrosse and Trevisan's conversation further anticipates this type of exercise. Trevisan tells of Despaire's ability to lead

⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 32, lines 1-2 (emphasis mine).

people toward suicide through his “charmed speeches,” his sophistry.⁵ However, Redcrosse dismisses Trevisan’s warning, asking,

How may a man (said he) with idle speech
Be wonne, to spoyle the Castle of his health?⁶

The idea of winning and losing is immediately established and the test is one of words or rhetoric, specifically over a question. In this case, it happens to be a question involving suicide. The language of learning emerges in Trevisan’s reply when he tells the knight that Despaire’s “tryall” “did teach” and that Redcrosse should not “desire to try his guilefull traine.”⁷ The concept of a trial again suggests that Despaire will test Redcrosse and that it will be a dangerous educational process. Spenser’s mentioning of “traine” harkens back to Errour’s “endlesse traine,” the first erring of Redcrosse and all its results, of which Despaire is the most dangerous.⁸ In “Spenser’s Despair Episode,” Harold Skulsky recognizes Spenser’s dramatic technique as an *agon*, a contest, of Greek tragedy.⁹ The Despaire episode is the culmination of the anti-education pageantry, and its dramatic emphasis situates Redcrosse at the apex of an examination.

Hearing aligns with tutoring, one of the instructional methods employed at the university that helped guide students through their university stay and prepare them for disputations. As mentioned earlier, Despaire combines the role of examiner and tutor, but

⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 30, line 9.

⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 31, lines 1-2.

⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 31, lines 3,9.

⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 18, line 9. That the dragon battle is anti-climactic and that Despaire, in the penultimate position, is far more dangerous, retaining dramatic focus and pathos, see Michael F. N. Dixon, “Redcrosse as Courtier; Narrative as Argument,” in *The Politicke Courtier: Spenser’s The Faerie Queene as a Rhetoric of Justice* (Buffalo: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), 37-8.

<https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cats08646a&AN=mtsuc7842fbc.e645.4f90.90ce.3317def3e891&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

⁹ Harold Skulsky, “Spenser’s Despair Episode and the Theology of Doubt,” *Modern Philology* 78, no. 3 (Feb. 1981): 227, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/437863>.

because disputations often operated as tests, they cannot function in the same capacity as a tutor, one who aids in the consumption of knowledge. Therefore, the role of the tutor for Despaire is secondary. As an anti-teacher, he purposely hides information that would benefit Redcrosse in their debate. Despaire guides Redcrosse to despair by submitting him to an examination that the knight has no means of passing because Despaire has not tutored him adequately.

An Early Modern University Education

The average age of entry for the student in the early sixteenth century was between fourteen and fifteen; however, near the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, the average age rose.¹⁰ It is difficult to determine the exact education a student would encounter if he entered one of the colleges of Oxford or Cambridge during the sixteenth century. At that time, the universities were transitioning out of their medieval model, revising their statutes to reflect humanism, and would continue to develop, setting the basis for much of modern university learning. In this analysis, I exclude other avenues of learning such as the Inns of Court.¹¹ However, the statutes of the universities do give scholars an indication of the course of studies students would experience. Rosemary O'Day summarizes the seven-year course of studies needed to earn both a BA and an MA:

According to the university statutes of 1570 the Cambridge arts course covered seven years of study. At the end of four years the student might determine BA and proceed to study for the MA degree. In other words, the course was an arts

¹⁰ Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 131. For average ages of Oxford students, see Rosemary O'Day, *Education and Society 1500-1800: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain* (New York: Longman 1982), 107. Spenser was fifteen when he entered Cambridge, Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 54.

¹¹ For discussions of the Inns of Court, see Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 169-95; O'Day, *Education and Society*, 154-64; and Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 119-23. Like the universities, the Inns of Court held formal disputations called moots.

course, a seven-year unit, of which the BA degree was but an important stage in the student's total progress. The student studied rhetoric, logic and philosophy for the first four years and proceeded to study further natural, moral and metaphysical philosophy, astronomy, drawing and Greek for three years for the MA. At Oxford during the reign of Elizabeth the student studied grammar, rhetoric, dialectics or logic, arithmetic and music and, when he proceeded BA after four years, studied Greek, geometry, astronomy, natural philosophy, moral philosophy and metaphysics.¹²

Concerning these courses of study, one important point O'Day makes is that they were intended for progress. Although university requirements suggest rigidity, O'Day details an inherent flexibility that aided advancement. First, students who did not meet certain standards could employ the help of a tutor to catch up with what was required.¹³ The second point O'Day makes is that the course of study was just that. A student's studies were a route he took of consecutive classes (not simultaneous). Students completed rhetoric before moving to logic, and so on. If a student stopped at any point, he would still be a master of the parts he had completed, allowing him to find employment with his knowledge or allowing him to return, knowing exactly where to resume studies.¹⁴

One component of the student's studies was disputations, formal debates on questions.

Mark H. Curtis provides an overview of the statutory requirements of the disputation for the undergraduate student:

At the end of his first year in residence, when he was just beginning the study of logic, a scholar was to begin regular attendance at the exercises performed by the third- and fourth-year men. At Oxford he listened to the disputations *in parvisis*, i.e. disputations of the sophists, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from one to three o'clock in the afternoon. After a year of observation he was supposed to take an active part in the proceedings by disputing twice *pro forma*,

¹² O'Day, *Education and Society*, 106. For comments on the trivium and quadrivium in medieval university education and the developments of early modern education, see Mark H. Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642* (Oxford University Press, 1959), 86. Also see Jewell for a brief overview of what an undergraduate could expect when entering university, *Education in Early Modern England*, 110-11.

¹³ O'Day, *Education and Society*, 107.

¹⁴ O'Day, *Education and Society*, 107-8. For analytics regarding admissions and degrees earned, see Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 137-39.

once as a first opponent and once as a respondent. [. . .] Upon completion of a disputation in which he responded, the “master of schools”, i.e. the regent master who moderated these exercises, gave him a book of Aristotle’s logic, placed a plain hood over his head, and created him *sophista generale*, general sophister. In this capacity he was to continue attending disputations *in parvisis* until the end of his undergraduate course and to dispute *pro termino*, i.e. once each term, to provide disputants for the exercises of other scholars.¹⁵

Even though these are the requirements for Oxford, the differences between those at Cambridge are not worth noting.¹⁶ Before a student could be determined to their BA at Oxford or at Cambridge, he had to undergo determinations at Lent. Curtis observes, “At both Oxford and Cambridge these final disputations were, in general, public demonstrations of the proficiency of a scholar. They attracted considerable attention and gave opportunity to ambitious or highly competent scholars to distinguish themselves.”¹⁷ Redcrosse trying himself against Despaire within a disputation has serious implications. Redcrosse is beyond the observation stage of the first-year students because he is actively participating in a debate, but is he disputing *pro forma*, or has he already become a general sophister? Alternatively, is this his final disputation where he will be determined? Or, has Redcrosse foolishly skipped the observation stage and rushed to actively disputing Despaire? The text does not provide enough information to determine the exact situation; however, the fact that Redcrosse’s life is dependent on the outcome shows the seriousness of the circumstances. All progress will stop—not just his course of studies—if he fails.

Problems arose from university statutes likely due to the disconnect between the requirements of the statutes and their fulfillment. The most prominent example that Mark H. Curtis, Kenneth Charlton, and Rosemary O’Day mention is truancy—students not attending

¹⁵ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 89. Also see, Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 143-44; O’Day, *Education and Society*, 111-12.

¹⁶ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 89-90; O’Day, *Education and Society*, 111-12.

¹⁷ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 90.

lectures.¹⁸ Apparently, the problem was so widespread at Oxford that students even believed that payment of fines for non-attendance satisfied the requirements for attending lectures.¹⁹ Charlton even finds evidence that both students and teachers were neglecting disputations.²⁰ Curtis outlines the transitioning nature of the university system as the reason for such poor attendance of lectures. The printing press made books and knowledge more available to early modern students, so unlike their medieval predecessors, they were no longer reliant on lectures as the main source of their knowledge.²¹ Second, lectures, with the help of endowments [supporting chairs], were evolving from reading texts with aloud and offering commentary to actual expositions of topics.²² However, the change in methodology was occurring too slowly, which leads Curtis to argue that education was better happening through other means, specifically the rise and development of tutoring.²³

Charlton details two changes to universities that gave rise to the system of tutors:

In the first place, they [colleges] no longer remained the preserve of graduate fellows. Besides increasing the provision for poor scholars they also began to accept undergraduate 'commoners', as fee-paying members of the college, some of them, the *commensales* or gentlemen-commoners or fellow-commoners, being the sons of the nobility and the gentry who paid extra fees and even shared the fellows' table. Secondly, having absorbed the function of the medieval halls, the colleges also became teaching institutions, with the fellows taking on the teaching duties hitherto the responsibility of the university and carried out in the main by the Regent Masters, those younger fellows of colleges who were M.A.s of under three years standing. As a result of this too, the fellows increasingly came to regard their fellowship as a position for life, instead of until such time as they completed their post-graduate studies, though

¹⁸ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 96-9; Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 140-41; O'Day, *Education and Society*, 111.

¹⁹ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 97; Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 142-43; O'Day, *Education and Society*, 111.

²⁰ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 144.

²¹ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 100.

²² Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 101-2; Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 141-43.

²³ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 101-2.

they were still statutorily obliged to resign on marrying or on taking up an ecclesiastical benefice.²⁴

While fellows had responsibilities such as lecturing, the residential student population of undergraduates and graduates allowed for the development of pupils and tutors: wards and their watchers. This gave rise to what O'Day succinctly describes as a "unique contribution" to collegiate teaching: "the one-to-one relationship of student and tutor. This tutor guided the course of a student's studies, offered moral and spiritual supervision, and sponsored the student (that is, he guaranteed to the college authorities that the student would pay all his dues)."²⁵ Even though the university statutes were quite rigid or were often circumvented or even neglected, tutors were able to develop unique courses of study—often aligning with their own interests—to address students' individual educational needs.²⁶

Gabriel Harvey serves as an appropriate example of a fellow. He began his graduate studies at Cambridge in 1570, and "[i]n April 1574 he was appointed university praelector of rhetoric, lecturing at least four days a week to halls which were (by his own account) packed."²⁷ Even though we must rely on Harvey's personal account of his success, his lecturing serves as a reminder that a fellowship involved multiple duties including both lecturing and tutoring, and the two means of education may not have been at strict odds with each other.²⁸ Concerning

²⁴ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 132. For more on the development of the tutoring system, see Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 102-5.

²⁵ O'Day, *Education and Society*, 113. In the academic setting, tutor was first used to describe those who were responsible for the pupil's payments to the college. The role later merged with that of *informatores*, graduate fellows overseeing the academic labor of those assigned to them. See "tutor, n.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed May 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/207861; Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 102-3.

²⁶ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 108-14; O'Day, *Education and Society*, 113-18.

²⁷ Jason Scott-Warren, "Harvey, Gabriel (1552/3–1631), scholar and writer," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, last modified 23 Sep. 2004, <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12517>.

²⁸ O'Day points to Harvey's letters where he criticizes the fellows of Pembroke Hall for disregarding lectures in Latin and Greek; "Thus within a few years al shuld be turned topset tirvi [topsy-turvy]; and

Harvey's method of tutoring, it did not establish a new curriculum, but instead supplemented the course of studies and its perceived flaws with readings—often current or political—that would best help the student.²⁹ For example, as a tutor to Arthur Capel, Harvey specifically recommended reading—at Capel's "leisure"—John Cheke's *The Hurt of Sedition, A Mirror for Magistrates*, Roger Ascham's *Scholmaster*, Castiglione's *Courtier*, and any text by Osorius, Sturm, or Ramus.³⁰ Harvey also recommended to students works by Bodin, Guicciardini, and Machiavelli.³¹ Perhaps one of Harvey's biggest influences as a fellow and tutor was that he was a proponent of Peter Ramus, a protestant martyr, whose works influenced logic and rhetoric, specifically that the art of oration was as equally important as the argumentation supporting it.³²

Because of tutors competing with and perhaps supplanting education delivered through lecturing, and because of the individualized education they provided, Curtis argues, "The work of the college tutors rather than the readings of the college lecturers was probably in the sixteenth century and was definitely in the seventeenth century the most important influence on a scholar's education."³³ However, scholars are quick to point out that while a good tutor can strongly influence the course of a student's studies for the better, a bad or disinterested tutor can strongly influence a student for the worse.³⁴ Despaire assuming the tutor role and placing it

Pembrook Hal shuld set forth as mani good schollars as it hath now good students: and that is as few, I beleev, as ever you knew in the hows, sins you were first fellow," *Education and Society*, 113; and Gabriel Harvey, *Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey, 1573-1580* (Camden Society, 1884), 52-3, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32435025515982&view=1up&seq=6&skin=2021>. While Harvey may have held a captive audience with his lectures, his complaint suggests a widespread issue with lecturing.

²⁹ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 135; Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 58-9.

³⁰ Harvey, *Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey*, 167-8.

³¹ Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 59.

³² For more context, see Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 59-63. For the argument that reprintings of Ramus' books provide little overall influence on the human mind, see Ong, Walter J., *Ramus: Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 5.

³³ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 107.

³⁴ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 107-8; and O'Day, *Education and Society*, 113.

as a secondary function becomes incredibly important in the analysis of the character and how Despaire harms Redcrosse by neglecting his duties. Despaire's mistreatment of his duties is especially egregious because the tutor role, like that of the teaching master, assumes the parental mark.³⁵ Curtis describes James Duport as an example of a student who studied at Cambridge under the fellow Richard Holdsworth and who then later became a fellow at Cambridge: "Duport left no doubt that the tutor played the vital role in the instruction and education of young university students. 'Honor, and respect, and obey your tutor and esteem him *loco parentis*,'" he charged them.³⁶ O'Day also situates the tutor in the place of the parent due to the functions the tutor fulfills: "academic, moral, spiritual, [and] financial."³⁷

Charlton does question the extent of the tutoring system's effectiveness, specifically how much knowledge—and what kind—it supplied undergraduates despite the neglect of lectures and that it was providing a curriculum to enable gentlemen to serve the state.³⁸ Charlton argues that Curtis bases several of his claims from the analysis of the tutor Holdsworth. While Holdsworth was a prominent and noteworthy tutor, he cannot represent the majority of early modern tutoring.³⁹ Furthermore, Charlton claims Curtis's analysis tends to focus on recommended curriculum and the examination of students' books. These do not reflect how accurately these were studied or read.⁴⁰ Most students probably could not grapple with Holdsworth's demanding reading list.⁴¹ Historical accounts also lament the negative effects of bad tutors on students; although, no numbers are indicated. Finally, Charlton provides an

³⁵ For teachers supplanting the roles of parents, see Chapter Three, pages 165-6.

³⁶ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 114.

³⁷ O'Day, *Education and Society*, 130.

³⁸ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 145.

³⁹ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 146-7.

⁴⁰ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 150.

⁴¹ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 147.

alternative picture to an education that lifted students upward in society and prepared them for service to the state. He argues that education did little to unite the social classes within the halls of the school or improve social standing of the commoners:

[I]t is naïve to claim that “Yeomen’s sons and earl’s sons, merchant’s sons and heirs of the landed gentry were all bred together in learning”. They lived together within the walls of a college, but whether the earl’s son, dining as a gentlemen-commoner at the fellows’ table, took much cognizance of the yeoman’s son is highly doubtful. Again, though “education” came to be expected of the upper class, it never of itself “improved the means of social mobility”. This is a twentieth-century concept. In the Renaissance period it was landed wealth which first and foremost enabled a man to rise in the social scale [. . .].⁴²

Charlton, instead argues that the gentry sent their sons to university for social reasons, not educational, and the university was often a time for the “sowing of wild oats.” Charlton continues, “A gentlemen of Renaissance England fitted himself for his future role of governor more often than not *after* he left university [. . .].”⁴³ Regardless, the important position of the tutor was emerging in early modern university education and, depending on the circumstance, the tutor could immensely help or harm the student’s course of studies.

Spenser’s Cambridge Education

Spenser’s university education offers additional insight into an early modern education, especially regarding the analysis of Despaire. Spenser entered Cambridge University, specifically Pembroke Hall, at the age of fifteen.⁴⁴ Much of Spenser’s early life remains elusive, however. The identity of his mother exists mostly as a name, Elizabeth. Spenser’s father may have been

⁴² Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 149.

⁴³ Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 150. Tutors were responsible for their pupils’ spiritual and moral actions. Christopher Guise, a pupil at Oxford, blames his difficult studies on his negligent tutor. Guise, instead, spent much of his time seeking alcohol and sex from local establishments. See Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 107; O’Day, *Education and Society*, 113.

⁴⁴ Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 54-5; Willy Maley, “Spenser’s Life,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*, ed. Richard A. McCabe (Oxford University Press, 2010), 16.

John Spenser, a free journeyman clothmaker, but no evidence links Spenser directly to the identity of his father.⁴⁵ Spenser was, however, not born a gentleman, as Ruth Mohl writes, but “became one, without arms, by virtue of having studied at the university; later, by acquiring property in Ireland, he gained the status of a landed gentleman.”⁴⁶ Charlton’s assertion that a university education is not a means of social mobility finds some purchase in Spenser’s case. Much like Charlton outlines, Spenser’s status as a gentleman occurred after school through the acquisition of land and through his service to the state. Even though Spenser’s education did not grant him immediate social status, his learning arguably enabled him to perform his duties. Spenser’s life in Ireland further complicates the issue. His service and acquisition of land there allowed him to gain a status—similar to many others—that he would not have otherwise been able to reach by staying in England. Whether or not Spenser’s stay in Ireland was “punishment or preferment” is debatable.⁴⁷

Like Spenser’s family life, little is known about his early financial standing as a student. Other than the recorded payments Spenser received while at school, only assumptions can be made.⁴⁸ “Therefore,” Hadfield writes, “we cannot safely conclude that Spenser was in particular need or that he must have come from a poverty-stricken background.”⁴⁹ Spenser did serve at Cambridge as a sizar, an undergraduate student who worked for a portion or “size” of the room and board.⁵⁰ Hadfield specifies that “[s]izars were assigned to a fellow, shared the same room,

⁴⁵ For more on Spenser’s ancestry, specifically the identity of his father and Spenser’s possible ties to the Spencers of Althorp, a prominent family to whom Spenser claimed connection, see Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 19-22.

⁴⁶ Ruth Mohl, “Spenser, Edmund,” in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 668.

⁴⁷ Richard Rambuss, “Spenser’s Life and Career,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser*, ed. Andrew Hadfield (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 30-2.

⁴⁸ For an accounting of the payments to Spenser, see Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 51-3.

⁴⁹ Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 52.

⁵⁰ Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 55-6; Maley, “Spenser’s Life,” 16.

and slept beneath the high bed of the fellow in a truckle or trundle bed, often with other students.”⁵¹ In addition, sizars were allowed to eat the leftovers from the fellows’ meals. While at Cambridge, Spenser forged a friendship with Gabriel Harvey, a fellow at Cambridge. Hadfield speculates that Spenser was assigned as Harvey’s sizar as this would be one possible explanation for them to meet and foster their friendship.⁵² Beyond them being friends, we do not know specifics about their official relationship at the college. They probably inhabited the same spaces on campus (they are both of Pembroke), but they doubtless occupied those spaces holding different feelings. Regarding Spenser’s tutor, nothing is known.

Spenser had multiple absences numbering in the weeks. Most of these can likely be attributed to sickness or the fear of becoming sick due to plague. However, Spenser could have also been absent due to the need to work to earn more money.⁵³ As O’Day writes, the university statutes allowed flexibility, and Spenser’s frequent absences demonstrate that.⁵⁴ The larger point in discussing the historical context of a university education and Spenser’s education at Cambridge is to show that a complex balance of interconnected factors affected a student’s course of studies such as prior knowledge, motivation, health, social status, and the functions within the university. All these factors together have implications for Redcrosse. He has stopped several times on his journey, affecting his course of studies. Even though he has continued, he has never mastered any knowledge. Redcrosse makes the same mistakes at the beginning of the epic as when he goes to meet Despaire: the ignoring of guidance and the rushing to test himself. Redcrosse is not prepared to debate as the only course of study he has experienced is the anti-education of his previous anti-teachers. Instead of being well-equipped to use rhetoric,

⁵¹ Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 55.

⁵² Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 56-7.

⁵³ Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 52-3.

⁵⁴ O’Day, *Education and Society*, 107.

Redcrosse is only prepared to fail when meeting Despaire. Even under Despaire's tutelage, which should repair Redcrosse's inadequacies, Despaire guides Redcrosse toward failure.

Disputing Despair: Redcrosse's Hopeless Education

Scholars have thoroughly discussed the Despaire episode, especially the artfulness of Despaire's sophistry.⁵⁵ I do not intend to revisit these except in cases where directly applicable to Redcrosse and Despaire functioning within a disputation. Redcrosse's confrontation with Despaire begins with the knight entering the cave and seeing Despaire and Terwin's dead body on the floor. Redcrosse becomes motivated to avenge the dead knight, and asks Despaire:

What iustice can but iudge against thee right,
With thine owne blood to price his blood, here shed in sight.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ For discussions concerning rhetoric, see James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 152-55. *EBSCOhost*; Harold Skulsky, "Despair," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 213-14; Brian Vickers, *Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry* (New York: MacMillan, 1970), 157-60; Herbert David Rix, *Rhetoric in Spenser's Poetry* (Pennsylvania State College Studies: No. 7. Folcroft Library Editions, 1973), 68-9; Dixon, "Redcrosse as Courtier," 35-42; Ernest Sirluck, "A Note on the Rhetoric of Spenser's 'Despair,'" *Modern Philology* 47 no. 1 (Aug. 1949): 8-11, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/435568>. On the influence of traditions and outside texts, see Susan Snyder, "The Left Hand of God: Despair in Medieval and Renaissance Tradition," *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965): 18-59, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2857068>; Tamara A. Goeglein, "Utterances of the Protestant Soul in *The Faerie Queene*: The Allegory of Holiness and the Humanist Discourse of Reason," *Criticism* 36 no. 1 (Winter 1994): 1-19, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23116622>; Kathrine Koller, "Art, Rhetoric, and Holy Dying in the 'Faerie Queene' with Special Reference to the Despair Canto," *Studies in Philology* 61, no. 2 (April 1964): 128-139, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4173452>; Donald Beecher, "Spenser's Redcrosse Knight: Despair and the Elizabethan Malady," *Renaissance and Reformation* 11 no. 1 (Feb. 1987): 103-20, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43445515>; Ann E. Imbrie, "'Playing Legerdemaine with the Scripture': Parodic Sermons in *The Faerie Queene*," *English Literary Renaissance* 17, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 142-55, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43447214>; Richard Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 37-41; Patrick Cullen, *Infernal Triad: The Flesh, the World, and the Devil in Spenser and Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 57-67. On freewill and other theological sticking points, see Skulsky, "Spenser's Despair Episode," 227-42; Escobedo, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser," 135-71; Daniel Moss, "Spenser's Despair and God's Grace," *Spenser Studies* 23 (2008): 73-102, doi:10.1086/spsv23p73.

⁵⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 37, lines 8-9.

Hamilton notes that Redcrosse's question is an allusion to Genesis 9:6: "Whoso shedeth mans blood, by man shal his blood be shed: for in the image of God hathe he made man."⁵⁷

Concerning the subtext of Genesis, Redcrosse begins his challenge with Despaire on the basis of retributive justice—blood must be paid with by blood—but justice and vengeance often bleed into one another. The narrator leaves little doubt of Redcrosse's intent as the knight desires to "auenge" Terwin.⁵⁸

It is with Redcrosse's question that the rules of disputation begin. Disputations were formal debates that often arose from questions (interpretations) of texts. Curtis summarizes the three-part process:

A complete performance had three separate stages. A participant, called the respondent, first offered an answer or interpretation of the question and advanced arguments to support it. Next, an opponent, or opponents, for there usually were more than one, stating contradictory propositions and attacking flaws in the respondent's reasoning, replied to him. The final act was determination. The moderator, or determiner, who presided over the disputation, summed up the arguments *pro* and *con*, pointed out fallacies in the reasoning of the participants, called attention to treatments of the question that had been overlooked or insufficiently emphasized, reconciled differences where possible, bestowed praise and blame where each was due, and handed down the decision or "determination" of the question.⁵⁹

The disputation between Redcrosse and Despaire begins with a question of justice (tinged with vengeance) based on an allusion to the text of Genesis. Even though Redcrosse asks the initial

⁵⁷ A. C. Hamilton, *The Faerie Qveene*, by Edmund Spenser, rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), 1.9.37.8-9n; Gen. 9:6.

⁵⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 37, line 5. Redcrosse bases his question on an assumption, that Despaire is the cause of Terwin's death: "Thou damned wight, / The authour of this fact," Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 37, lines 6-7. Escobedo raises three ways to consider who is the author: it is Despaire as persuader, it is Terwin as a willful sinner, or it is God as authorizer of justice, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser," 156. The relation among these three answers offers little satisfaction in this thorny theological tangle.

⁵⁹ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 88. Also see, Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 143-4.

question, Despaire speaks first, situating himself as the respondent. One of two things seem to be occurring.

The first explanation is that the roles are reversed. Despaire is in the position of respondent as he offers the first answer to the question, and Redcrosse must oppose his answers. This seems to upset the whole purpose of reading Despaire as one in the university who wields power over Redcrosse. As a respondent, Despaire would be tested and not testing. Despaire should instead have the ability to attack Redcrosse, the position of an opponent. Even more problematic, Despaire at times slides into the role of moderator, confirming the correctness of his own arguments, which seems to let him wield additional power contrary to the role of the respondent. For example, Despaire gives Redcrosse the knife to commit suicide when Redcrosse does not take it up himself, in essence saying, *Yes, this is the right course of action because God's justice demands death for sin.*⁶⁰ One explanation for the role reversal is Redcrosse's hastiness. In his foolishness, the knight desired to try the rhetoric of Despaire. Because Redcrosse wants to attack and avenge, he positions himself as the opponent and not as the respondent, one who defends a position. The mindset of Redcrosse puts him at a disadvantage.

In "Spenser and Rhetoric," Peter Mack details the responsibilities of the two main roles within the disputation: "The opponent makes arguments against the view the respondent is required to uphold. The respondent must summarize the argument and then either assent to it or deny it [silence or not responding is considered assent]. The respondent must ensure that he neither contradicts himself, nor by implication denies the proposition that he is meant to be upholding, nor lets himself be reduced to confusion. In any of these cases he would lose the

⁶⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 51.

disputation.”⁶¹ While the respondent does have more responsibilities, namely knowing the full course of the argument by summarizing it and either agreeing or dissenting, the respondent does not have to overcome the opponent in the sense of having a better argument. He must only maintain his position. This is an easier stance to argue than the opponent who must overcome to win.

To defeat Despaire, Redcrosse does not need to attack but rather to defend himself. By attacking Despaire, Redcrosse establishes a cycle of defeat he can never overcome. Despaire is a respondent who even if he fails can return to practice for the examination. The cycle of nagging despair results in stalemate or suicide. In either outcome, Despaire wins because Redcrosse is prevented from advancing. Trevisan becomes noteworthy from the perspective of defending to win. When Redcrosse and Una first see the terrified knight, he is missing his helmet, which is the helmet of salvation.⁶² Hamilton writes that Trevisan is missing this piece of armor because “despair is an error of reason [. . .].”⁶³ Trevisan may have escaped Despaire, but the lack of the helmet, his fearful state, and the fact that a rope still hangs around his neck suggests he is still in the state of despair.⁶⁴ Hamilton further links the Trevisan episode to 1 Thessalonians 5:8, which specifically mentions the helmet representing the “hope of salvation.”⁶⁵ Hamilton argues Spenser had this passage in mind because of its following verse: “For God hathe not appointed vs vnto wrath, but to obteine saluatiō[n] by the meanes of our Lord Iesus Christ.”⁶⁶ Hamilton is likely correct because upon seeing Terwin’s body, Redcrosse “[w]ith firie zeale he burnt in

⁶¹ Peter Mack, “Spenser and Rhetoric,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*, ed. Richard A. McCabe (Oxford University Press, 2014), 427.

⁶² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 22, lines 1-2; For the full armor of God, see Eph. 6:11-18 (The Geneva Bible, 1560).

⁶³ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.9.22.1-2n.

⁶⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 22, line 7.

⁶⁵ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.9.22.1-2n; 1 Thess. 5:8.

⁶⁶ 1 Thess 5:9.

courage bold, / Him [Terwin] to auenge, before his blood were cold [. . .].”⁶⁷ While zeale can have positive connotations, in this context, it carries the notion of vehemence.⁶⁸ Redcrosse is not solely motivated by justice but by fiery anger that demands—before Terwin’s blood even cools—that other blood should be spilt.

Despaire’s first words to Redcrosse label the knight’s behavior: “What franticke fit (quoth he) [Despaire] hath thus distraught / Thee [. . .].”⁶⁹ Frantic reflects Redcrosse’s inner state, and Redcrosse’s foolish decisions are no doubt partly resulting from his frantic behavior. It is no surprise when Despaire opens his speech with such a remark and then immediately calls Redcrosse a “foolish man.”⁷⁰ However, the cause of the foolishness does arise from a specific source in this instance. The Latin root of frantic means delirious, and the outcome of such a state for the early modern period is typically violence and rage.⁷¹ That Redcrosse is in such a state seems to confirm that anger and vengeance earlier motivated the knight. Even though Redcrosse wears the armor of God, he is operating counter to its nature. He is seeking wrathful vengeance, a perverted form of the justice of God, instead of salvation, the grace of God. The mindset of Redcrosse is to attack, which negates the defensive nature of the armor of God. The one exception is the sword of the spirit, the only offensive weapon, “which is the worde of God.”⁷²

⁶⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 37, lines 4-5.

⁶⁸ “zeal, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed July 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/232724; See Brooks-Davies who notes Arthur’s constant zeal as the contrast of Redcrosse’s fiery state, Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene: A Critical Commentary on Books I and II* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1977), 90.

⁶⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 38, lines 1-2.

⁷⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 38, line 2.

⁷¹ “frantic, adj. and n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed July 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/74248; Hamilton glosses frantic as “mad with rage; guilty of extreme folly,” *Faerie Queene*, 1.9.38.1n.

⁷² Eph. 6:17. For an analysis of the Word of God used in a defensive nature, namely Jesus rebuking the devil’s temptations in the wilderness, see Moss, “Spenser’s Despair and God’s Grace,” 86-8. Moss warns that without Christ’s divine authority backing the citations of scripture, Redcrosse’s responses would

In the overlapping emblems of wordplay through swordplay, Redcrosse has been silent, misused language, or misused weaponry.⁷³ If the knight remains true to his experience, he should not be able to use language as a weapon without significant (and sustained) correction, which he has not received. Redcrosse, beginning the disputation with a question textually focused on justice (Genesis) but motivated by vengeance, allows Despaire to rhetorically use language within the context of a combat (a trial) and to the disadvantage of Redcrosse. The knight approaches the encounter with a desire to use physical weapons to exact vengeance; thus, the reason he prefaces his interaction with the question of justice. However, Despaire counters the question and Redcrosse's desire with words and surprises him with his sudden wit similar to how Arthur sidestepped and parried Orgoglio's attacks and then taught him to read his end.⁷⁴ Unlike Arthur's battle with Orgoglio where weapons were used as rhetoric, Despaire now uses rhetoric as weaponry. After Despaire convinces Redcrosse that justice demands judgement for the sinner, he reminds the knight that he has sinned with Deussa and against Una. While omitting any concept of grace, Despaire further reminds Redcrosse of the punishment for sin: death. As a result, Despaire scores a hit, injuring Redcrosse:

The knight [Redcrosse] was much enmoued with his speach,
That as a swords poynt through his hart did perse,
And in his conscience made a secrete breach,
Well knowing trew all, that he did reherse [. . .].⁷⁵

In parodic fashion to the word of God, the words of Despaire have breached his opponent's arguments like a sword, or in the words of scripture: "For the worde of God is liuelie [lively], &

falter: "Another way to put all this is that it does not matter how or with what text Redcrosse responds; his words prove—and without grace will always prove—as useless here as his sword has already fared against Orgoglio" (87).

⁷³ See Chapter Three, pages 183-7.

⁷⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 8, st. 7-24.

⁷⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 48, lines 1-4.

mightie [mighty] in operation, and sharper then anie two edged sword, & entreth through, euen vnto the diuiding a sonder of the soule & the spirit, and of the joynts, & the marie [marrow], and is a discerner of the thoghtes and the intentes [intents] of the heart."⁷⁶

The second and more likely explanation for Despaire's speaking out of turn during the disputation process is that Redcrosse is simply a terrible student, which has been the pattern from the outset and worsens due to his anti-education. After the question that begins the debate, the respondent should summarize the position within the text—in this case Genesis—and either affirm or deny the position. Redcrosse coming from an anti-education that preferred the idleness of useless silence (or hollow language) can only ask the question. Redcrosse is in the role of the respondent but omits his part due to his inadequacies as a student. Therefore, Despaire immediately presents his argument according to his role as the opponent.⁷⁷ Not too much else can be said of Despaire in this role except that it further emphasizes wordplay as swordplay. Despaire is not defending a position but actively attacking and urging Redcrosse to commit suicide. The problem is that Despaire cannot directly kill Redcrosse—unlike Arthur's sword that beheads Orgoglio. The violence of rhetoric only reaches so far, yet it ironically proves the most dangerous as Despaire's sophistry has already pierced Redcrosse's heart. Nevertheless, Redcrosse must choose—must reason however unsoundly—to pick up the weapon before him, in this case a knife, and stab himself. Even though pierced to the heart by rhetoric, the knight does not willingly pick up the knife to commit suicide. Despaire must place the knife in the knight's hand.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Heb. 4:12.

⁷⁷ See Dixon who argues that Despaire's speech, according to rhetorical theory, "operates as refutatio to Spenser's" *confirmatio*, "consisting of all arguments supporting the speaker's case," "Redcrosse as Courtier," 39.

⁷⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 51, lines 1-3.

The idleness demonstrated by Redcrosse's not picking up the knife is a result of his anti-education, but it is also a result of the true premise of the disputation. Before meeting Despaire, Redcrosse wonders how "idle speech" can persuade a person toward death.⁷⁹ The true nature of the disputation concerns suicide; Redcrosse only thinks he is debating justice (vengeance). Hamilton defines idle in this context as foolish, drawing from Matthew 12:36: "[E]uerie idle worde that men shal speake, they shal giue acounte thereof at the day of iudgment."⁸⁰ However, Redcrosse is also dismissive of the dangers of Despaire's words in labeling them idle. M. F. Dixon notes that upon meeting Despaire, Redcrosse can recognize evil, but he still mistakes physicality as the correct answer to spiritual threats. Dixon also notes that while Redcrosse is reunited with Una, he remains "under the aegis of Archimago," especially as he wonders how Despaire's idle words can cause harm.⁸¹ While Redcrosse may be under the parentage of Una after exiting Ignaro's dungeon, Redcrosse still suffers from the influence of his anti-parents, namely Archimago. As Skulsky writes, "Redcrosse's first demonic tempter, who is not only an arch-magician but an empty show par excellence, *an arch-image*; being an image maker as well as perverter of the imagination, he suffers the Psalmist's curse by being assimilated to his wares (Ps. 135.18) in moral imbecility."⁸²

Redcrosse has failed to learn of the dangers of language and its power when wielded through evil's perversion. However, he is equally ignorant of how to wield the power of language himself. Psalm 135 curses idolaters, saying they will not be able to speak or hear, resembling the idols they make: "Thei that make them, are like vnto them: so are all that trust in them." Like the idolaters, Redcrosse has become unable to hear—listen to warnings and

⁷⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk.1, canto 9, st. 31, line 1.

⁸⁰ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.9.31.1n; Matt. 12:36.

⁸¹ Dixon, "Redcrosse as Courtier," 38.

⁸² Skulsky, "Spenser's Despair Episode," 239.

consume a correct education—and subsequently, he is also unable to wield the power of right language.

Most problematically, Redcrosse's question concerning suicide and language touches upon several difficulties that the Despaire episode raises. "In Art, Rhetoric, and Holy Dying in the 'Faerie Queene,'" Kathrine Koller overviews the temptation of despair often administered through Satan:

Despair was one of the great temptations at the hour of death. At this moment the devil tried to remove all hope of God's mercy, and by the enumeration of man's sins, by describing the miseries of this present life and stressing the just punishment man deserved, lead him to suicide. Satan, when death is near, casts before man's eyes a mist, that unless he take heed, he shall see nothing but the fierce wrath and terrible judgment of God and sin, desperation, death and hell, and "whatever maketh unto utter confusion of man's conscience." If the assault of the devil is successful he has won the battle for man's soul. By despairing of God's mercy and by self-murder, man has brought about his physical and spiritual death and the eternal damnation of his body and soul.⁸³

In the battle between God and Satan over the soul, Redcrosse seems to have a modicum of freewill, especially as a rhetorician—however poor his skills may be—testing himself against Despaire. Herein lies the problem. Redcrosse is chosen—predestined—to be a saint. Equally true is his condition as a sinner. If Redcrosse is to become St. George, then how can he succumb to despair and choose suicide? As a "man of sin" who has seemingly made every wrong choice in the epic how can he move past such depravity to reach sainthood?⁸⁴

In "The Left Hand of God," Susan Snyder reminds us that both Redcrosse's predestination and his sinful state can be true.⁸⁵ Skulsky also gives some slight comfort arguing that even when one knows the destination, that knowledge does not indicate what to do in

⁸³ Koller, "Art, Rhetoric, and Holy Dying," 133.

⁸⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 46, line 1.

⁸⁵ Snyder, "The Left Hand of God," 20.

moment or how to choose to get there.⁸⁶ Snyder continues by analyzing the related concept of *tristitia*, sorrow. Godly sorrow for one's sins could lead to penance and salvation, but worldly sorrow can lead to death. The latter aligns with despair.⁸⁷ However, telling the difference between the two often proved difficult in the moment, which makes the arguments defending predestination such as knowing the destination but not knowing the choices to get there less satisfactory. Monastic tradition gave advice for discerning one's state: Godly sorrow is "humble, obedient, patient, forbearing" while worldly sorrow is "impatient, full of rancor, ineffective, irrational."⁸⁸ Escobedo also comments on the types of sorrow elicited by despair and notes that in Reformed thought the duration experienced signaled the difference as even the elect could despair for a time.⁸⁹ Despaire's sophistry tries to rush Redcrosse and leave little time for Redcrosse to consider the logic of the arguments or time itself. Skulsky noting the style of one of Despaire's sophisms remarks that it is "a mechanism of grammatical suspense constructed on the principle that the gull must on no account be given time to think."⁹⁰

Here, as throughout the Despaire episode, Redcrosse wrestles with the problem of knowledge, specifically ignorance. Telling the difference between two types of sorrow requires a knowledge that Redcrosse does not possess because he is emerging from an anti-education that denied him knowledge and the ability to situationally read his conditions. Furthermore, Redcrosse is predisposed to rashness. As a result, how can Redcrosse possibly slow down to know what he is experiencing and have the knowledge to counter it? Admittedly, Una is next to Redcrosse in the cave of Despaire. She serves as a guide and prevents Redcrosse from self-

⁸⁶ Skulsky, "Spenser's Despair Episode," 240.

⁸⁷ Snyder, "The Left Hand of God," 20.

⁸⁸ Snyder, "The Left Hand of God," 21.

⁸⁹ Escobedo, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser," 141.

⁹⁰ Skulsky, "Spenser's Despair Episode," 228.

murder. However, Skulsky writes on the difference between the reader's perception of Una and Redcrosse's. As readers, we have assurance of Una's identity, and through her faith in Redcrosse, his predetermined status. Redcrosse does not share the same perspective as readers and his identification of Una would not give such assurances to salvation.⁹¹ To be fair, Una has proved herself to him, but Redcrosse has proved a poor student, ignoring her, abandoning her, or preferring the teachings of his anti-teachers.⁹²

An equally problematic issue concerning freewill and Redcrosse's lack of knowledge is that Despaire's arguments would not logically urge Redcrosse toward suicide. If Redcrosse is convinced that he is doomed to the eternal damnation of God's justice and despairs because he cannot escape, he would not end his physical life to rush toward that judgement. Instead, the despairing person would want to prolong their life as long as possible to avoid the awaiting damnation.⁹³ The prominent connection between despair and suicide is puzzling because it does not arise from medieval theology.⁹⁴ It seems to come from literary and iconographical tradition. Judas, for example, and the rope he used to hang himself became emblems of suicidal despair by the early modern period.⁹⁵ Snyder also argues that death pervades the metaphors used to describe despair and that life without hope is a living death.⁹⁶ Finally, Snyder writes that one

⁹¹ Skulsky, "Spenser's Despair Episode," 232-4. Moss also notes that the cave of Despaire is dark and Redcrosse loses sight of Una and is only reminded of her when Despaire, who does see her, includes her in his temptations, "Spenser's Despair and God's Grace," 73.

⁹² Much has been left unsaid or oversimplified concerning religious doctrine on freewill and despair. Martin Luther argued that despair was necessary for the Christian to move toward salvation, and for the saint, who endured greater temptation, all the greater was the despair. John Calvin differed greatly, arguing despair was part of the conversion process, but the elect never doubted and never despaired. See Snyder, "The Left Hand of God," 19-30; Skulsky, "Spenser's Despair Episode," 234-7.

⁹³ Compare Doctor Faustus, Marlowe's prideful over-reacher, who dreads the tolling hour of his death. For more on the connection between the despair of Redcrosse and Faustus, see Escobedo, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser."

⁹⁴ Snyder, "The Left Hand of God," 50; Escobedo, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser," 145.

⁹⁵ For an overview of the despair and suicide connection, see Snyder, "The Left Hand of God," 50-9.

⁹⁶ Snyder, "The Left Hand of God," 50.

major contribution of the early modern period for the connection of despair to suicide was medical conditions such as melancholy; thus, the sufferer of melancholic despair could be making unreasonable choices to escape their present and seemingly hopeless condition, leading to suicide.⁹⁷

Escobedo argues that personification of Despair in literature results in action. For example, Wrath, while being a fictional character exhibiting the passion of anger, will eventually act in violence.⁹⁸ Escobedo writes, "This is to say, personification helps us to understand a concept not only by its appearance but also by its behavior."⁹⁹ Suicide is the only action that can result from such a personification of the hopelessness of despair.¹⁰⁰ Escobedo, however, identifies one challenge with Spenser's personification of Despair. Spenser's Despaire commits suicide but does not die. The concept of despair behaves according to its assigned nature but cannot fully enact that nature. Escobedo writes, "Emblems of despair are necessarily frozen in place, but they *don't* fail to commit suicide." Escobedo continues, "In this respect, his [Spenser's] emblem reveals that suicide is not the act of will corresponding to the passion of despair. Instead, it suggests that despair entails a death wish that the sinner cannot realize in the course of his despair. Suicide itself is beside the point. 'On the contrary,' as Kierkegaard observes, 'the torment of despair is precisely this inability to die.'"¹⁰¹ The emblematic nature of Spenser's Despaire, killing himself but never dying, further suggests Redcrosse's lack of freewill. While predestined, Redcrosse is still trapped in Ignaro's dungeon, ignorant of the knowledge

⁹⁷ Snyder, "The Left Hand of God," 54. For the connection between acedia, the state of spiritual torpor (spiritual idleness) and melancholy, see Donald Beecher, "Despair and the Elizabethan Malady," 103-20. Acedia shifted in its meaning in medieval theology from sloth to idleness brought about by *tristitia* or sorrow. Thus, it readily connected to suicide caused by melancholic despair.

⁹⁸ Escobedo, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser," 145-6.

⁹⁹ Escobedo, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser," 146.

¹⁰⁰ Escobedo, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser," 146.

¹⁰¹ Escobedo, "Despair in Marlowe and Spenser," 147.

that can save him. Again, herein lies the problem. Redcrosse has approached the situation with the intent of solving the problem with physical force, yet he is now presented with a situation that cannot logically be solved, nor can it be solved with physical violence against Despaire or against the self. The former is useless against a universal concept such as despair and the latter would rush Redcrosse toward eternal judgment which the despairing sinner fears.

The pageantry of Redcrosse's anti-education can only urge him so far, and that is to ignorant idleness. Skulsky writes, "A dedication to serving God in the active life is inevitably a dedication to repeated sinning and aggravated guilt; and here especially we must remember that what Despair has been recommending all along is not literal suicide but, far more generally, the abandonment of the former dedication."¹⁰² Despaire, is arguing for Redcrosse to abandon hope and if not stop through suicide, to suffer through the inaction of a living death.

Redcrosse's state of inaction is perhaps the truest moment of despair as it is the culmination of the pageantry of anti-education. It is anti-Mulcastrian and anti-Spenserian. When the purpose of education is to lead one to virtuous action and service to the state, inaction is a complete failure for Redcrosse. He is useless to himself, to others, to the state, and to God. He even ironically fails the intentions of Despair as an orator "to instruct, to please, and to arouse to action."¹⁰³ Ignaro's dungeon and Despair's cave become two contexts for comparisons as they are both situations where Redcrosse is incapacitated. Perhaps the biggest difference between the two situations is that we as readers travel with Redcrosse into the cave of Despaire whereas we only see Redcrosse in Ignaro's dungeon from the perspective of Arthur and Una who come to his rescue.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Skulsky, "Spenser's Despair Episode," 230.

¹⁰³ Koller, "Art, Rhetoric, and Holy Dying," 136.

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion of Despaire's cave as a marker of spiritual health, differing from the dungeon, especially one that illuminates "allegorically the darkest and most difficult mile of the Christian's path

Redcrosse leaves the darkness of the dungeon only to arrive at Despaire's cave, an equally obscure situation. Redcrosse is primed for failure within the debate because of the anti-education he experiences, beginning in the darkness of Errour's cave. The effects are telling. In Ignaro's dungeon, Redcrosse could not save himself and he mistook Arthur, the agent of salvation, as the agent of his death. Redcrosse lacked the ability to remove himself from his situation, and when outside help arrived, he lacked the knowledge to identify it, further showing his dependence upon grace. The only way for Redcrosse to proceed beyond the disputation with Despaire is through outside assistance. Ultimately, Una offers help within the debate. I will discuss her role within the disputation in the conclusion. It should be noted that within a university education, disputations were a means of learning and preparation, not just a means of examination. Only after a time of observation did students begin participating in exercises, and after they became general sophisters by completing their disputations, they still had to attend and participate. Nevertheless, these exercises favored public examination and performance. A university education also offered additional assistance for the student, specifically tutoring, a more private and less formal affair, and it is through such a role that Despaire fails to provide educational assistance to Redcrosse, necessitating Una's aid.

Despaire: Failing as a Tutor

In *Positions*, Mulcaster suggests four main revisions for the university. Colleges should be grouped according to professions. Students should be housed together according to their course of studies. Universities should reduce the number of colleges and therefore their grandness and living conditions for students. Finally, universities should establish "great

toward salvation," see Moss, "Spenser's Despair and God's Grace," 89-92. For additional connections between the two locations, specifically the hollowness of Redcrosse's face mirroring Despaire's, see Introduction.

pensions, and allowances [in every house] for continuall and most learned readers: which would end their lives there."¹⁰⁵ Only the last suggestion is significant to the present study because it most relates to Despaire as tutor.¹⁰⁶

Admittedly, Mulcaster's focus is on the reader or lecturer not on the tutor. Mulcaster writes, "For the *tutour* [. . .] I have nothing to saye, but leave the parentes to those helpes, which the place doth promise."¹⁰⁷ The tutor needs no consideration other than being carefully chosen by parents. However, in the late sixteenth century when Mulcaster's treaty was published, the roles of reader and tutor were undergoing change. Readings of lectures were seeing a rise in non-attendance and were possibly being supplanted by tutoring. Furthermore, graduate fellows took on responsibilities of teaching and tutoring. In other words, both roles within the university were often tended by one person. Many of Mulcaster's recommendations for readers do not seem to differ that much from historical accounts regarding the responsibilities of fellows at Oxford and Cambridge, especially concerning tutoring.

The first recommendation Mulcaster makes is that readers should be mature, experienced teachers. Mulcaster, for example, points to Plato who "taught above fiftie years" and "himself proved an excellent maister, and his hearers proved most excellent scholers."¹⁰⁸ Other than the immense knowledge that comes with such years of study, Mulcaster argues that maturity counters the "rash heads, which runne on to fast, being armed with some private opinion of their owne petie learning."¹⁰⁹ Despaire especially fails at the last intent. Redcrosse

¹⁰⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 235.

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of Mulcaster's reforms at the university level, see Richard DeMolen, "Richard Mulcaster and the Profession of Teaching in Sixteenth-Century England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, no. 1 (January-March 1974): 126-7, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2708747>.

¹⁰⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 231.

¹⁰⁸ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 231.

¹⁰⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 248. Mulcaster's argument for mature lecturers is seemingly at odds with the system of fellows, graduate students who began teaching at a young age. Barker writes, "In late sixteenth-

rushes into the cave determined to try Despaire, and Despaire hastens the knight toward a conclusion by overstimulating him with arguments and not allowing him time to process them. In other words, Redcrosse has a small amount of learning—God’s justice demands death—that rushes him toward a conclusion, i.e., suicide. Granted, this is an oversimplification of the Despaire episode, but small and rushed learning is one of the methods Despaire uses.

Mulcaster’s second recommendation is that the reader bring to the mind of the learner what he would not have encountered on his own: “Private studie tied to one booke led by one braine [. . .] cannot compare for the judiciall learning with the benefit of hearing one, nay of repeating to one upon interrogatories after reading, to trie his judgement, his keeping, and remembrance: which one has red and digested all the best bookes, or at the least all the best bookes in that kinde, whereof he maketh profession [. . .].”¹¹⁰ The sixteenth-century responsibilities of the tutor align with Mulcaster’s description of the reader here. The tutor was often in a parental position of power and guided students morally and spiritually. The courses tutors developed often catered to the unique needs of the students in addition to the interests of the tutor. In other words, the tutor’s suggested course of study pushed learners beyond what they would have encountered on their own.¹¹¹ Again, Despaire fails in this regard.

century England, teachers learned their profession by doing it, usually starting during their own grammar school days when, as senior students, they would be called upon to instruct the younger boys. [. . .] During the century there were a few observations on the need for the better training of teachers, but no school or institute as such was founded until the beginning of the nineteenth century,” William Barker, ed. *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, by Richard Mulcaster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 245.33-4n. It should be acknowledged, however, that fellows were increasingly seeing their appointments as lifelong positions, Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 132. Mulcaster advises for a college of education that would enable students to learn how to teach, a progressive idea for the time. See, DeMolen, “Mulcaster and the Profession of Teaching,” 126-7.

¹¹⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 249.

¹¹¹ Mulcaster seems to advocate for such guidance to occur through lecturing and then through teachers offering additional training to students through the creation of “hostelles” or halls. Barker writes, “Mulcaster is recommending a return to the medieval university in which teachers competed for pupils whom they trained for the university examinations. ‘A hall came into being when a master leased a building, usually on annual terms, from a townsman, an ecclesiastical corporation, or even a college, and

In his influential article, Ernest Sirluck overviews the central premise of Despaire's sophistry: "It consists quite simply in the suppression of one of a pair of essential terms (mercy) in the Christian equation of judgment, and the representation of the other (justice) as constituting the whole relation of God to human conduct."¹¹² Tamara A. Goeglein further analyzes Sirluck's premise writing that Despaire reduces his syllogisms to enthymemes—an incomplete syllogism in which one premise is suppressed—and speaks only half truths about God and justice, which highlights Redcrosse's sinful past and excludes future mercy.¹¹³ While in danger of oversimplifying how Despaire operates concerning the agency of Redcrosse and the power of Despaire's sophistry, the main thrust of this strain of criticism is that Despaire suppresses knowledge, which is incongruent with how a tutor should function.

Finally, Mulcaster outlines his third recommendation, calling for funding to enable readers to reside at universities. Mulcaster writes, "Wherfore such *readers*, or rather such *nurses* to studie, must needes be maintained with great allowance, to make their heaven there, where ye meane to use them."¹¹⁴ While Spenser never directly labels Despaire a nurse as he does all the previous anti-educators, Despaire does fit the description as I will shortly outline. However, instead of establishing a heaven where students can study, Despaire has created a hell. Trevisan calls Despaire a "man of hell" who "creeping close, as Snake in hidden weedes, / Inquireth of our states, and knightly deedes."¹¹⁵ The imagery Trevisan gives of Despaire serves as

then rented rooms to scholars over whom he may have exercised some measure of discipline' (Curtis[,] *Oxford and Cambridge*[,] 39). [. . .] The kind of extra-statutory instruction Mulcaster mentions here would be familiar to those readers who knew something of university life; teachers of foreign languages and other subjects ran small schools or tutoring services in both Oxford and Cambridge (Curtis[,] 137ff)," Barker, ed. *Positions*, 250.31.n.

¹¹² Sirluck, "Rhetoric of Spenser's 'Despair,'" 8.

¹¹³ Goeglein, "Utterances," 7-8.

¹¹⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 249.

¹¹⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 28, lines 5-9.

a stark reminder to the dangers and power of evil as it aligns with the serpent who tempted Adam and Eve, the first parents of humanity. Despaire, however, has not slinked his way into a paradisaal garden to tempt Redcrosse. He lives in a cave under a cliff, which is “[d]arke, dolefull, dreary, like a greedy graue, / That still for carrion carcasses doth craue.”¹¹⁶ Redcrosse has knowingly journeyed to and entered this hellmouth that feeds on death.¹¹⁷ Despaire’s domain is far from a heavenly place. Instead of raising one up, the function of a nurse, Despaire lowers those he encounters to death. Like those before him, he is a “nourse of sin,” aligning with the scriptural description of sin and how it arises: “Then when lust [desire] hath cō[n]ceiued, it bringeth forthe sinne, and sinne when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”¹¹⁸ This is the pathway of the anti-nurse, and this demonic anti-educator fails in his responsibilities as a tutor.

Despaire: Fulfilling the Function of a Tutor

Perhaps a more fruitful analysis is to read Despaire as a success because his role more closely aligns to an educator than any prior character. Previous anti-teachers, true to their label and their allegorical nature, personify themselves in ways that counter education and contrast the ideal education Mulcaster envisions. For example, Ignaro as ignorance lacks knowledge. One way of being an anti-grammar instructor, a master of languages, is silence (the failure to teach language and the failure to use language to transmit knowledge). Despaire, while failing at certain aspects of tutoring, upsets this method of personification because he aligns more closely with what Mulcaster prescribes than any other instructor.

¹¹⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 33, lines 4-5.

¹¹⁷ While a hellmouth, the cave of Despaire has strong associations to Saturn, the “god of melancholy, solitude, and grave-diggers, Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 89.

¹¹⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 18, line 6; James 1:15.

Despaire has taken up his “dwelling” in a cave, becoming a resident and fulfilling the concept that a teacher should live where they instruct.¹¹⁹ One of the purposes of being a paid resident scholar, according to Mulcaster, is that it allows the reader to “save their whole hier [year] in very bookes, which the student shall not so much neede, when his reader is his librarie [. . .].”¹²⁰ In this context, the reader is spending resources, namely time, to consume knowledge, which he then passes on to his students, becoming their library.¹²¹ Again, Mulcaster is here discussing the responsibilities of a reader and not a tutor; however, historically, the reading of lectures within Oxford and Cambridge were becoming neglected by faculty and through students not attending. The transmission of knowledge was likely occurring through better access to books and through tutoring. Despaire does fulfill this transmission of knowledge by acting as a library and by bringing ideas to the mind of Redcrosse that he would not have considered on his own.

A repository of classical and biblical texts undergirds Despaire’s rhetoric. While many of these become perverted in their use, Despaire nevertheless presents knowledge to Redcrosse, especially knowledge that is often accurate within the traditions from which it originates. Similar to how Una acts as a book, verbalizing wisdom and truth, Despaire acts as a book to Redcrosse, imparting knowledge and even the Word of God. Patrick Cullen, for example, notes that the Despaire episode operates as an infernal sermon that delivers doctrine and scripture as parody: “Literalizing Paul’s argument in Romans, Despaire requires a literal slaying of the old man, while

¹¹⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 33, line 2.

¹²⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 249. “year, n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed July 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/231475.

¹²¹ Spenser does not give an age for Despaire other than suggesting he is a being that is a universal concept. He cannot kill himself and thus is old, being around until eternity ends. His age and intellect fulfill Mulcaster’s desire for a mature scholar.

denying the birth of the new.”¹²² Richard Mallette argues that Despaire does not so much parody chiding sermons of the age aimed to convict sinners, but he accurately copies them. He simply omits any possibly for salvation while emphasizing justice. Mallette writes, “[Despaire] parodies, then, the Reformation preacher’s obligation to bring assurance that salvation is the hearer’s; instead, he brings assurance of damnation.”¹²³ The effect of Despaire’s speech is that Redcrosse learns, which is the purpose of the tutor. One indication that Despaire expands the small learning of Redcrosse is seen when Spenser writes, “The knight much wondred at his [Despaire’s] suddeine wit.”¹²⁴ In Redcrosse’s situation, wondered presents various meanings. In one sense, Redcrosse is surprised by the information. To be so means he had not thought to think in ways that Despaire has argued, and this brings the second sense of the word; the knight is straying in his thoughts and wandering from his quest(ion).

Additionally, Despaire works Redcrosse’s memory, which is something that none of the previous anti-teachers did.¹²⁵ After Despaire has drawn attention to Una’s presence, reminded Redcrosse of his unfaithfulness to Una with Duessa, and argued that sin requires death, Redcrosse “was much enmoued with his speach” and

Well knowing trew all, that he [Despaire] did rehearse,
And to his fresh remembraunce did reuerse [recall],
The vgly vew of his deformed crimes.¹²⁶

¹²² Cullen, *Infernal Triad*, 59-60.

¹²³ Mallette, *Discourses of Reformation England*, 38-9.

¹²⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 41, line 1. Compare Satyrane finding Una teaching the satyrs; his response mirrors Redcrosse’s as Satyrane “wondred at her wisdom heuenly rare,” *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 31, line 1.

¹²⁵ The anti-parents, although educators in their own right, are here not counted among the official educators because they often do take a more active and influential role in the downfall of Redcrosse, especially Duessa.

¹²⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 48, lines 1-6.

Despaire's interaction with Redcrosse involves three aspects of learning that Mulcaster describes for a child. Mulcaster writes that wit is the "capacity to perceive that which is taught them, and to imitate the foregoer," memory is a "quickenes to take, so a fastnesse to retaine," and discretion is the "ability to discern, what is good, and what is ill."¹²⁷ Previous anti-teachers mostly employ wit, aligning with practices of imitation where schoolmasters in grammar schools modeled ideas of gentlemanly physicality and behavior through themselves and the translating of classical texts.¹²⁸ Despaire departs from a strict adherence to this pattern and most notably works memory and discretion in Redcrosse, which his previous anti-teachers neglected. While the knight has been slow to learn throughout the poem, he has, under the tutelage of Despaire finally retained the memories of his sins. Furthermore, he can discern that his actions are, indeed, bad, especially in relation to God whose law must "[!]et euery sinner die."¹²⁹

One further remark can be made when reading Despaire as a successful tutor. Despaire emphasizes justice in his attempts to urge Redcrosse toward suicide. A small part of Despaire's rhetoric emphasizes monetary payment as a form of justice. The tallying at the day of judgment will be just right, a precise figuring. Despaire argues that Redcrosse should not continue to live in order to avoid adding more days and more sins for which he must pay:

Why then does thou, O man of sin, desire
To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree?
Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire [wages]
High heaped vp with huge iniquitee,
Against the day of wrath, to burden thee?¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 38-9.

¹²⁸ For more on *imatatio*, see Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 2-8.

¹²⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 47, line 5.

¹³⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 46, lines 1-5; "hire, n.," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed July 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/87207. Hamilton glosses burden: "playing on its double sense: as God's word lays a 'charge' (OED 2) on the knight, he carries its weight," *Faerie Queene*, 1.9.46.3-5n.

One of the responsibilities of a university tutor was to ensure that the student made his payments to the university.¹³¹ Despaire fulfills this in a perverse way through his warnings of the wages of sin. He wants the fulfillment of justice, the exact measuring of Redcrosse's payments for his sins, but Despaire does not want Redcrosse to complete the fulness of life or experience grace to erase Redcrosse's debts.

All these elements together seem to suggest Despaire is fulfilling the university statutory requirements and is propelling Redcrosse forward in his course requirements. However, Redcrosse's sight is compromised after seeing a painted picture of the torments of hell, and he can only despair. The knight has no knowledge or memory of the grace or forgiveness of God despite Una standing next to him, a person who previously came to his rescue. Spenser describes Redcrosse's response to the picture:

The sight whereof so throughly him dismayd,
That nought but death before his eies he saw,
And euer burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th'Almighties law [. . .].¹³²

From a skewed perspective, Despaire is an educator who performs his job well and propels Redcrosse forward in a course of studies, but that is the problem. It is a distorted view. While providing knowledge, Despaire resembles his predecessor Ignaro and prompts Redcrosse to the forgetfulness of grace. Redcrosse becomes so dismayed that he is ignorant of all except death and the wrath of God. While stimulating the memory, Despair builds upon the foundation of the first teacher, Idlennesse, although he more closely resembles an extreme form of Idlennesse who is too lazy to even live, advocating for suicide. Despaire advances the temptation in a more alluring fashion: "But here ly downe, and to thy rest betake."¹³³ Despaire has not departed from

¹³¹ O'Day, *Education and Society*, 113.

¹³² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 50, lines 1-4.

¹³³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 44, line 2.

the pageantry of anti-education even though he seems to educate Redcrosse. That, however, is the danger and complexity of Despaire. The anti-education has prepared Redcrosse well, and it is Despaire's job as the final unholy teacher to advance Redcrosse in his course of studies.

With authority, Despaire names Redcrosse "man of sin," filling him with the last piece of information the knight needs, identity, and the observation of what his earthly fame has amounted to at this point.¹³⁴ Despite being filled with this information, the knight is empty. He lacks hope, and if he commits suicide, he will be emptied of his life blood. Like the blood from the suicide on the cave floor, Redcrosse's will become a "gushing flood," completing the pageantry set forward by Errour with her children's "bowels gushing forth."¹³⁵ Despaire's tutoring has amounted to nothing. It is just as empty as all the previous anti-education.

Una's Delay: Why Let a Failing Student Continue to Despair?

It is only as Redcrosse is about to stab himself that Una "snatcht the cursed knife" from the knight's hands and "threw it to the ground."¹³⁶ Una actions or rather her delayed actions cause problems. In "Spenser's Despair and God's Grace," Daniel Moss reviews the problems of freewill in relation to despair and focuses on Una's part in the equation. Only God's grace, an external force that is personified by Una in the poem, can save Redcrosse. The problem is Una's silence during the debate and her delayed intercession. Moss argues: "Because of the delay of Una's fully sufficient answer to Despair itself enables the full articulation of the demon's temptation—the unfolding of the episode as narrative—any critical effort to interpret Spenser's allegory without reference to this delay must fall short."¹³⁷ No amount of knowledge from Redcrosse, or from the reader on Redcrosse's behalf as Moss argues, can extricate Redcrosse

¹³⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 46, line 1.

¹³⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 36, line 9; canto 1, st. 26, line 6.

¹³⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 52, lines 4-5.

¹³⁷ Moss, "Spenser's Despair and God's Grace," 76.

from the situation. Moss continues, “[T]here is no agency by which to repudiate Despair, save the grace for which Una as the true church is the only vector within the narrative, and for which Christ is the sole agent overseeing any Protestant narrative, allegorical or otherwise.”¹³⁸ In other words, Redcrosse having knowledge of scripture, or the lack thereof, does not matter. The urge on the reader's part to suggest knowledge and scripture that would be beneficial for Redcrosse to use to combat Despaire is useless. Both Redcrosse and the reader lack agency to defeat Despaire. Only God's grace can intercede. Moss writes, “[T]here has been little movement away from the notion that Despair's sermon can easily be recognized as parody by the reader, and almost as easily refuted with reference to any number of outside texts espousing correct doctrine.”¹³⁹ Moss continues, “[I]t is still critical commonplace that the better one reads *The Faerie Queene* and its allegory, the more apparent will be the falsity of the villain's sophistical claims.”¹⁴⁰

The slow shift in critical trends is what makes a reading of Despaire as a bad tutor less compelling than him as a successful one. Bad tutoring, the withholding of knowledge, ultimately suggests that Redcrosse could win the encounter had he enough information to do so. In other words, education would grant Redcrosse agency. Such a reading falls into the trend that Moss criticizes. The more compelling reading is Despaire as a successful tutor who imparts knowledge and moves Redcrosse forward in a course of studies. Granted the movement is toward despair and suicide, and the problem of freewill still plagues the episode because of Redcrosse's lack of agency, but the focus of the reading is the education of Redcrosse, not the suppression of information. There is movement, nonetheless. Redcrosse is still damned without grace, but he

¹³⁸ Moss, “Spenser's Despair and God's Grace,” 76.

¹³⁹ Moss, “Spenser's Despair and God's Grace,” 79.

¹⁴⁰ Moss, “Spenser's Despair and God's Grace,” 79.

does learn. When Una does arrive, she presents a choice or at least the illusion of choice depending on one's stance concerning predestination theology. Unlike Despaire's course of studies that only presents suicide or a living death, Una offers the choice between faith in God's grace or continuing to despair. Moss writes, "For Spenser—for his Protestant saint—this is how grace functions: briefly and decisively as the perfection of the fully sufficient Word; first a lifetime of sin, and then, for the elect, an instant of grace, presented to us by one outside ourselves, accessing us through our faith. Our despair is our own, but grace is God's alone to give."¹⁴¹ Without Despaire's tutoring, Redcrosse would not realize the need for such grace.¹⁴²

The problem of Una's delay remains. Why wait to the end when Redcrosse has lost the debate and has the knife in his hand ready to plunge it into his heart? One way to account for such prolongment is to consider the entire episode a disputation, including Una's participation. As stated earlier, a disputation has three stages. The respondent began the debate. The opponent replied with counters and attacked any weak arguments. Finally, the moderator ended the debate by summarizing and analyzing the arguments, by evaluating the participants, and by determining who won.¹⁴³ If the Despaire episode is a disputation and Una adopts the role of the moderator, then Una delaying makes a modicum of sense. The moderator would delay comments until the end when the disputation had fully played out. Not only does Una do this, but she fulfills some of the other responsibilities as well. Most notably, after Redcrosse succumbs to despair and raises the knife to stab himself, Una assigns blame, telling Redcrosse,

¹⁴¹ Moss, "Spenser's Despair and God's Grace," 93.

¹⁴² Compare Nohrnberg's analysis of Despaire's temptations, arguing that Despaire does not prepare the sinner but aims to incapacitate because despair is an attempt to disrupt the hero's quest, *Analogy of Faerie Queene*, 203.

¹⁴³ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 88.

“Fie, fie, faint hearted knight, / What meanest thou by this reprochfull strife?”¹⁴⁴ She then calls attention to information that was overlooked, first asking rhetorically, “In heauenly mercies hast thou not a part,” and then telling Redcrosse, “Where iustice growes, there grows eke greter grace.”¹⁴⁵ Finally, she states, “Arise, Sir knight arise, and leaue this cursed place.”¹⁴⁶ In other words, Una determines the outcome of the disputation: Redcrosse leaves because of her and continues his quest and his education. Yet, more needs to be said. Una offers no comment on who won the debate.

Under the rules of a disputation, Redcrosse lost. He was not able to defend his position. Una had to intervene to stop him from ending his life and remind him of counter arguments he could have used against his opponent. Redcrosse then walks away without a word: “So vp he rose, and thence amounted streight.”¹⁴⁷ In the allegory of the Christian pilgrimage, this is where the overlapping educations of the Christian and the early modern student begin to diverge. Escobedo notes that Redcrosse’s lack of response differs from tradition where repentance follows the just adverted suicide. Redcrosse’s silence combined with Despaire’s inability to kill himself suggest that “[e]scaping from suicide does not amount to escaping from despair.”¹⁴⁸ Moss also comments on the inability of the Christian to escape despair. Even after Christ overcame Satan’s temptations in the wilderness, Satan “departed from him for a little season.”¹⁴⁹ What this portends for Redcrosse regarding his Christian pilgrimage is complicated.

¹⁴⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 52, lines 6-7. Una does not summarize the arguments, likely because Despaire’s arguments are one-sided. Una, instead, offers the counter to justice. As Moss argues, Despaire has left much of the educational responsibility to occur in the House of Holiness, “Spenser’s Despair and God’s Grace,” 91. Una is a step in a lifelong process for the Christian pilgrim.

¹⁴⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 53, lines 4 and 6.

¹⁴⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 53, line 9.

¹⁴⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 54, line 1.

¹⁴⁸ Escobedo, “Despair in Marlowe and Spenser,” 152.

¹⁴⁹ Moss, “Spenser’s Despair and God’s Grace,” 93.

Redcrosse is saved from the situation. His elected status guarantees salvation, but his actions do not indicate an exact placement in the salvation or sanctification process. He must continue to the House of Holiness for additional spiritual guidance.

Concerning the university education of Redcrosse, it is markedly not finished because he failed to pass his disputation. He is a student, not one who has completed a course of studies. Worse still, he must be reeducated. His anti-education has trained him to become useless. He is ignorant and has advanced far above where he should be in his education. Therefore, Una takes him to the House of Holiness. The outcome does not differ drastically from the religious allegory. Both end in reeducation. However, Mulcaster has much to say about a failed education. Mulcaster believed that reeducation was an impossible task because the student would either not want it or when the student realized education's need, old age would prevent its benefit to the state. To demonstrate the resistant learner, Mulcaster describes a drunk lying in a ditch. His friends appeal to him to go inside, but the drunk refuses, forcing them to carry him inside.¹⁵⁰ Mulcaster's analogy and nationalistic opinion on reeducation leaves little room for grace. There is a point of no return for a student. Elsewhere, Mulcaster writes of the purpose of education under the Monarchy: God has "appointed him [the youth] for the use of learning to be ruled by his betters, and to rule his inferiours [. . .]."¹⁵¹ Implied in the analogy and inherent to monarchical rule is the idea of force. Those who fail to serve the state obediently will be forced to serve it correctly or suffer the consequences. Mulcaster does, however, leave some room for grace, describing how the monarch—through their good judgment—can decide when a law grows too severe and can grant mercy.¹⁵² Things become complicated under predestination

¹⁵⁰ Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 2.

¹⁵¹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 156.

¹⁵² Mulcaster, *Positions*, 285-6.

theology for Redcrosse—does Redcrosse have any choice but to obey? Mulcaster’s analogy suggests that Redcrosse, at the least, has the capacity for education and by comparison is in a far better position in Despaire’s cave than the drunk lying in the ditch who is forced to come inside against his will.

Unlike the drunk who lacks self-awareness and cannot be convinced of anything, Redcrosse, under the tutelage of Despaire, understands new knowledge and is also convinced by an argument. To be fair, the end of the argument leads to suicide, but many steps of that pathway deal with legitimate issues such as God’s justice and Redcrosse’s sin. Without these steps, Redcrosse may not have stepped toward his realization for the need of grace. While Redcrosse, however, remains in the cave of Despaire, he does not progress physically on his journey—his educational pageantry—just as the drunk remains stuck in the ditch. Not until Una’s intervention does the knight leave. Unlike the drunk, Redcrosse does make intellectual progress by learning of his perverse nature in relation to God. Even in the darkness of Despaire’s cave, surrounded by death, Redcrosse moves closer to God by gaining awareness of who he is, a sinner, and how far that removes him from God. Furthermore, Arthur’s necessary use of force to remove Redcrosse from Ignaro’s dungeon suggests that the prison was a far worse place because not only did it necessitate violent grace to extract Redcrosse, but the knight also lacked self-awareness while there, evident by the knight mistaking Arthur as his destruction instead of his salvation. Una’s intervention in the cave of Despaire contrasts Arthur’s earlier intervention, especially in relation to the analogy of the drunk. Una does use a modicum of force when she “snatcht the cursed knife, / And threw it to the ground [. . .].”¹⁵³ Perhaps how one interprets Una’s action determines the depths of Redcrosse’s despair. Unlike Arthur who must carry

¹⁵³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 52, lines 4-5.

Redcrosse out of the dungeon, Una uses her words to convince the knight to leave—something the drunk is incapable of doing.¹⁵⁴ The importance and power of the tutor can be seen in Despaire, especially how he bears the parental mark in the shaping of Redcrosse. He successfully tutors Redcrosse toward hopelessness and suicide, and while the tutoring is built on a pageantry of anti-education, it is the truest education that Redcrosse has received. It is not until Una, the true parent, steps in and establishes discipline that Despaire's tutoring and examining, by comparison, fail.

¹⁵⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 54, line 1.

CHAPTER 5

AS I WALK THROUGH THE HOUSE OF HOLINESS, DISENCHANT MY EVIL STEPS

In *Acts and Monuments*, John Foxe details the forced abjuration of James Bainham's Protestantism by Catholics. Accused of heresy in 1531, Bainham was arrested, examined, tortured, and threatened with execution. Bainham resisted but eventually abjured. As a sign of his faith, Bainham had to swear an oath to the articles of abjuration, sign and kiss the book in which they were contained, pay a fine to the king, and show public penance by holding a bundle of sticks while standing before the priest at Sunday sermon at St. Paul's Cross.¹ Bainham's convictions, however, led him to return to Protestantism and ask "God and all the world forgeuenes."² He first "vttered his fall to all his acquayntance"; second, he publicly confessed to his congregation at a warehouse in Bowlane; and third, he confessed on full display at Saint Austin's.³ Bainham's rejection of Catholicism led to his arrest, his reexamination, and ultimately his burning at the stake in 1532.

In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Stephen Greenblatt writes on the events of Bainham's abjuration and martyrdom, arguing that Bainham's acts of repentance in returning to Protestantism recreated the process of abjuration to nullify it.⁴ Greenblatt writes, "Since his abjuration had had a public as well as an inner aspect, so too his return to God would have to be

¹ John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of Matters most Speciall and Memorable, Happenyng in the Church with an Vniuersall History of the Same, Wherein is Set Forth at Large the Whole Race and Course of the Church* [. . .]. London, 1583, 1027-29, *Early English Books Online*.

² Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 1029.

³ Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 1029-30.

⁴ Stephen Greenblatt, "The Word of God in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 81-2. The main thrust of Greenblatt in this chapter is the conflict between Sir Thomas More and William Tyndale and the causes they championed or suppressed. Greenblatt succinctly ends the chapter, writing, "Both More and Tyndale die in the attempt" (114). Bainham, as many other followers, was equally caught up in the religious turbulence of the times.

performed publicly. Had not Christ said, ‘whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven’ (Matt. 10:33)? Bainham had to affirm Christ before men as he had denied him before men.”⁵ Greenblatt reasons that the trajectory of Bainham’s confessions aligns with his examinations and interrogations. The private confessions to his acquaintances nullify the private examination by Sir Thomas More at Chelsea. The public confession to his fellow Protestants counters the formal interrogation at the Tower. Finally, Bainham’s fully public confession at Saint Austin’s counters the full display of his penance at St. Paul’s Cross.⁶

Bainham’s reversal, the process of undoing his abjuration, was not an uncommon practice for the period. Foxe’s account of the martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, offers a narrative of similar comparison. Serving first Henry VIII and then Edward VI, Cranmer found himself charged with being a traitor and heretic under Mary I’s reign. After three years of imprisonment and interrogations, Cranmer signed a letter of recantation, which was subsequently printed and “set abroad in all mēs [men’s] hands.”⁷ Despite his actions, Mary still had Cranmer executed. On the day that he was to be burned, Cranmer recreated and nullified the writing of his recantation by first rejecting Catholicism publicly, saying the letter that he wrote was not true. To signify that his actions matched his heart, Cranmer said of the hand that wrote the letter: “And for asmuche as my hand offended, wryting cō[n]trary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished therefore: for may I come to the fire, it shalbe first burned.”⁸ After Cranmer prepared himself and the fire was set, “the fire began to burne neere hym, stretching out his arme, he put hys right hand into the flame: which he held so stedfast & immouable

⁵ Greenblatt, “Word of God,” 82.

⁶ Greenblatt, “Word of God,” 82.

⁷ Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 1884.

⁸ Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 1887.

(sauing that once with the same hand he wiped his face) that all men might see hys hande burned before his body was touched.”⁹

Such practices of undoing find their way into *The Faerie Queene*.¹⁰ After Redcrosse and Una escape the cave of Errour, they too must undo what lead them there:

Then mounted he [Redcrosse] vpon his Steede againe,
And with the Lady *backward* sought to wend;
That path he kept, which beaten was most plaine,
Ne euer would to any byway bend
But still did follow one vnto the end [. . .].¹¹

Their backtracking of the beaten path reverses the broad and wide way that led them there, specifically its well-traveled— “with footing worne”—pathways.¹² By keeping on the path and never veering off, they undo their earlier straying when they “wander[ed] too and fro in waies vnknowne.”¹³ The Errour episode is especially relevant because, as James Nohnberg writes, it operates at the threshold of the entire poem and operates as the poem in miniature, establishing the structure of the poem and teaching readers how to engage with the epic.¹⁴ Not

⁹ Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 1888.

¹⁰ Greenblatt rests part of the basis of his analysis on “Freud’s concept of *undoing what has been done*— ‘un-geschehenmachen’ or, literally, “making unhappened.’ Undoing, writes Freud, ‘is, as it were, negative magic, and endeavours, by means of motor symbolism, to ‘blow away’ not merely the *consequences* of some event (or experience or impression) but the event itself,’” “Word of God,” 83-4. Freud’s undoing is an unconscious act, and Greenblatt applies the concept to real people through his diverging exploration of it. My dissertation does not analyze the motives or psychologies of historical persons, nor does it analyze literary characters through a psychoanalytic lens. My focus, instead, is on doing and undoing as a structure within literature, specifically *The Faerie Queene*, which also becomes tangled in the age’s abjuration or disenchantment tropes and the cultural slippage between religion and magic.

¹¹ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), bk.1, canto 1, st. 28, lines 1-5 (emphasis mine).

¹² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 7, line 8.

¹³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 10, line 5. John M. Steadman compares the escape from Errour’s labyrinth to rites of disenchantment, see “Error,” in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 252-3.

¹⁴ James Nohnberg, *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 135-38. EBSCOhost.

only can readers expect that Redcrosse will err, but they can expect that he will also negate his missteps through a reversal.

Even in later books, the pattern of doing and undoing is oft repeated. One notable instance occurs in Book Three when Britomart rescues Amoret from the enchantments of Busyrane. Once Britomart makes her way to the inner chamber of Busyrane's castle, she finds that Amoret's hands "[w]ere bounden fast" and her "waste girt round with yron bands, / Vnto a brasen pillour."¹⁵ Furthermore, Busyrane works his magic on Amoret through writing:

Figuring straunge characters of his art
With liuing blood he those characters wrate,
Dreadfully dropping from her [Amoret's] dying hart.¹⁶

After Britomart incapacitates Busyrane, she forces the wicked enchanter to unsay (literally pronounce backwards) the charms he cast on Amoret, to break the bonds and to put her heart back in her chest and close her wound.¹⁷ Words affecting the heart are a common occurrence in *The Faerie Queene* and often demonstrate the need for an outward performance that reflects or

¹⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 3, canto 12, st. 30, lines 7-10.

¹⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 3, canto 12, st. 31, lines 2-4.

¹⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 3, canto 12, st. 35-37. See Michael D. Bailey, who discusses disenchantment rites from a Christian perspective during the late medieval period to the late fifteenth century and writes that divinity cannot be manipulated by humanity; therefore, rites are useless in compelling higher beings to action. God should respond to sanctioned rites involving faithful intent, but more superstitious activities were often discouraged. However, malevolent powers will only cause harm. People were advised not to seek help or healing through magic or witchcraft because even if it healed the body, it imperiled one's soul. This did not stop rites or questionable practices as the line between magic and religion often blurred, "The Disenchantment of Magic: Spells, Charms, and Superstition in Early European Witchcraft Literature," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 2 (April 2006): 386-90. doi:10.1086/ahr.111.2.383. Britomart's forcing Busyrane to cure Amoret with magic possibly rides a dangerous line since in seeking a cure, Britomart is placing herself and the patient in more than just physical danger. Spenser, though, is not just playing with magic but is also drawing from the tradition of Petrarchan imagery, especially Amoret's love wound, the emblematic pierced heart. For a brief overview of Spenser and the early modern period exploring the power of magic, see Gareth Roberts, "Magic, Amatory," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 446-7. Even though Amoret is rescued, Britomart does not escape unscathed. Just as Busyrane's charmed words pierce the heart of Amoret, so do they work their way to Britomart's. When the knightess hears the reversed reading, "Horrou gan the virgins hart to perse, / And her faire locks vp stared stiffe on end," Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 3, canto 12, st. 36, lines 5-6.

even affects the inner condition. Redcrosse is no different as his anti-education ends with Despaire scoring a hit during their rhetorical battle:

The knight was much enmoued with his speach,
That as a swords poynt through his hart did perse,
And in his conscience made a secrete breach.¹⁸

Not only does this piercing counter Una's equally penetrative teachings after rescuing Redcrosse from Ignaro's dungeon, but the wounds of Redcrosse's heart now need healing.¹⁹

The patterns of doing and undoing in *The Faerie Queene* create an expectation for reading the Redcrosse knight's journey: that his errors will undergo a reversal or some type of disenchantment to correct them. The place of this reversal—this healing—is undoubtedly the House of Holiness where, as Spenser describes in the argument for Book Ten, Redcrosse “is taught repentaunce.”²⁰ In addition to the place of correction, we can also see that Redcrosse would specifically undergo a process of education that would repair the anti-education he suffered under Errour, Duessa, Idlenesse, Ignaro, and Despaire.²¹ In other words, since the

¹⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 48, lines 1-3.

¹⁹ For a discussion of Una's redemptive teachings delivered in the context of wordplay as swordplay, see Chapter Three, pages 196-7.

²⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10.

²¹ The concept of re-education is problematic, especially considering the happenings of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries when “re-education” combines with incarceration and forced labor to brainwash people into certain political party lines or ideological practices. When using the word, I am not implying these inhumane practices. When Redcrosse receives an education at the House of Holiness to offset the negative effects of his bad education, he has entered the house of his own accord if we do not examine problems of predestination theology too closely. He would not be there unless he chose to be. However, some aspects of the negative connotation do linger. The House of Holiness is predominantly a Protestant place and many of Redcrosse's anti-teachers exhibit Catholic characteristics. Overall, Redcrosse's re-education is not one of conversion but of sanctification, but we cannot ignore the historical context of the Reformation or Spenser's political motives. Douglas Brooks-Davies writes: “As St George (potentially at least), Redcrosse stands for England; Una is the true Church, the one faith (Elizabethan Anglicanism; that is, the primitive Catholic Church restored, purged of Roman Catholicism's temporal excesses). He is separated from her by Archimago and Duessa (the papal Antichrist) but they are finally reunited and betrothed, thus symbolizing the reunion under Elizabeth, after Mary's Catholic interregnum, of country and true faith. This is the allegorical level of Book I; and it is to this level that most of the echoes of Revelation – that Biblical book indispensable to Protestant reformers which seemed in every chapter to be fulminating against and heralding the overthrow of the infernal powers of Roman Catholicism – belong. Allegory becomes, simply but importantly for the contemporary reader, Protestant propaganda,”

Mulcastrian pageantry of miseducation was present in the doing of Redcrosse's misdeeds, that pageantry should also be present in their undoing.

Undoubtably a reversal does occur in the House of Holiness as Redcrosse receives an education that corrects his missteps and allows him to become St. George and accomplish what Una raised him up to do. However, the corrective that occurs is not a clean reversal. Most of Mulcaster's formal stages of education are absent, and the concepts and emblems associated with the anti-teachers are missing or differ in order and presentation. What is expected to be there is not, and what is there is not in the right place. Why is the House of Holiness in such disorder concerning the pattern of doing and undoing. Further, since there is an abandonment of the pattern, what does it mean? Why does Spenser adhere to Mulcaster's educational ideals throughout the majority of Book One only to depart from them when offering a corrective?

How the House of Holiness Heals

As to why the house is in such disorder, the focus for Spenser's reversal is not likely Mulcastrian but located elsewhere. Åke Bergvall argues that the structure of Spenser's discussion on Holiness is overwhelming influenced by St. Augustine's *The City of God*, namely its two opposing cities and the ideologies they represent. The House of Pride aligns with the temporal earthly city whose inhabitants veer toward pride and self-love, and the House of Holiness aligns with the eternal City of God whose inhabitants practice humility and love.²² Bergvall's purpose within the article is to examine Redcrosse semiologically—as a sign to be interpreted. In addition to *The City of God*, an understanding of St. Augustine's *On Christian*

Spenser's Faerie Queene: A Critical Commentary on Books I and II (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1977), 9-10. Compare C.S. Lewis's argument that "Catholicism is allegorical" and for Spenser to achieve his purpose as an allegorist, he must use symbols already in use by Catholicism, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (1936; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 322.

²² Åke Bergvall, "The Theology of the Sign: St. Augustine and Spenser's 'Legend of Holiness,'" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 33, no. 1 (January 1, 1993): 21-2, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/450844>.

Doctrine guides readers on how to interpret signs and how to love God. Bergvall argues that the Augustinian system in place within Book One equates sin to being enslaved to a sign or signs whose signifiers offer no ultimate meaning, unlike the City of God whose anchor is in the transcendent Signified.²³ Bergvall explains Redcrosse's movement between the two cities:

The opposing cities furnish the book's structural poles, yet it is Redcrosse's love for two ladies that creates the momentum of the plot. In Augustine we find the link between structure and plot: "Two loves make up these two cities: love of God maketh Jerusalem, love of the world maketh Babylon." Redcrosse's changing loves propell the plot towards the structural centers: love of Una towards the new Jerusalem, love of Duessa towards the House of Pride. As we shall see, the two loves were for Augustine intimately connected with his theory of signs. Misdirected love, or lust, is equated with bondage to lower signs. Redcrosse's loss of Una, and willful attachment to Duessa ("Will was his guide" [FQ 1.2.12]) demonstrate his fall from *caritas* [charity] to *cupiditas* [desire], from The City of God to the city of man.²⁴

In other words, the House of Holiness offers an educational corrective for Redcrosse, a way for him to humble himself, readjust his sight to love correct things, and finally to perceive and read signs correctly.²⁵ Only then is he able to connect the signifier, St. George, to the sign that has been on his shield the whole time, the red cross.

Another influencing element of the allegory is the anthropomorphic Houses of Pride, Holiness, and Temperance. Robert L. Reid connects the spiritual House of Holiness in Book One with the bodily House of Alma in Book Two by examining how Spenser explores the connection between the soul and body. Reid finds that Spenser adopts the tripartite theory of the embodied soul mostly from Plato but with influence from others; thus, the embodied soul appears as a "tripartite hierarchy of powers, as three ascending levels of vision and desire: on

²³ Bergvall, "The Theology of the Sign," 30-1.

²⁴ Bergvall, "The Theology of the Sign," 23-4.

²⁵ Compare Tamara A. Goeglein's analysis of the emblematic pageantry in the House of Holiness where she explores the implications of Redcrosse being a reader of the emblems he sees and the readers of the poem enjoying a larger vantage point than him, "The Emblematics of Edmund Spenser's House of Holiness," *Spenser Studies* 25 (2010): 21-51, doi:10.7756/spst.025.002.21-51.

the lowest level is sensory awareness or appetites (seated in the belly); on the middle level are the nobler passions (seated in the heart); and at the top, governing the two forms of lower desire, is reason (seated in the brain)."²⁶ Reid sees the undergirding scheme as affecting much more than just the houses within *The Faerie Queene*. First, groupings of characters form a "composite human image of three figures."²⁷ Redcrosse, Una, and the Dwarf, for example, represent man, woman, and child or, respectively, intellect, soul, and the lower appetites. Sinister characters form perversions of this composition.²⁸ Second, temptations often occur through a three-part sequence, affecting the three parts of the embodied soul.²⁹ Third, the House of Holiness and House of Alma form the structure of a "three-layered figurative castle" in which the three corresponding levels of the hero's soul or body are mended.³⁰ Fourth, each of the first two legends ends with a "three-part image of Eden."³¹ Reid summarizes:

[T]he allegorical figures which embody Spenser's concept of psychology include, first, the composite group of three figures at the outset of each quest and the demonic parody of this grouping in the latter half of each legend; second, the sequence of triple temptation at the center of book 2 illustrates the three desires by which the powers of the soul are threatened; third, the figurative castle of three levels, which appears in cantos 9 and 10, shows the proper condition of the three levels of consciousness in man; and finally, in canto 12 each quest is concluded in a three-part Edenic setting which ultimately tests, or fulfills, the three powers of man's soul.³²

²⁶ Robert L. Reid, "Spenserian Psychology and the Structure of Allegory in Books 1 and 2 of 'The Faerie Queene,'" *Modern Philology* 79, no. 4 (May 1, 1982): 359-60, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.437723&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

²⁷ Reid, "Spenserian Psychology," 360.

²⁸ Reid, "Spenserian Psychology," 360.

²⁹ Reid, "Spenserian Psychology," 361.

³⁰ Reid, "Spenserian Psychology," 361.

³¹ Reid, "Spenserian Psychology," 362.

³² Reid, "Spenserian Psychology," 362.

Again, in terms of doing and undoing, the House of Holiness operates as a reparative for what precedes it—the structure guided by Platonic tripartite psychology—and prepares Redcrosse for what follows.

When examining the type of corrective that occurs within the House of Holiness, Reid analyzes its three-part process as it relates to the Christian soul:

The three stages of Redcross Knight's spiritual development (which so closely parallel the tripartite psychology of Alma's Castle) are an exact allegorization of the threefold mystical way to God. Fidelia's teachings correspond to Purgation, Charissa's teachings to Illumination, and Heavenly Contemplation's teachings to Union, since the knight's vision of New Jerusalem is a foretaste of the beatific condition which is man's end. In this portrayal of levels of vision and Plato's conception of the soul, as it was unfolded by Neoplatonists, by Augustine, and by Medieval mystics, became the basis for the Christian conception of tripartite psychology which pervades the allegory of *The Faerie Queene*.³³

Reid's discussion of Christian mysticism is indebted to Joseph B. Collins' analysis of the House of Holiness as a place of spiritual regeneration, arriving after the first nine cantos, which are an allegory of the struggles of the Christian pilgrimage.³⁴ Yet again, the House of Holiness not only corrects what comes before but moves the soul toward perfection. As such, Collins' analysis provides a slightly different perspective from which to consider the pattern of doing and undoing in the House of Holiness.

While upholding the anthropomorphic houses as allegorical cores of Books One and Two, Kenneth Borris urges readers to avoid sharp divisions between the body and soul and their associated trappings because the divine image of God in created beings is both physical and

³³ Reid, "Spenserian Psychology," 370.

³⁴ Joseph B. Collins, *Christian Mysticism in the Elizabethan Age with Its Background in Mystical Methodology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), 192-203. Reid's discussion of Platonic tripartite psychology expands Collins' focus beyond the walls of the House of Holiness, "Spenserian Psychology," 361.

spiritual; the two cannot be separated in anthropomorphic representations of that divine image.³⁵ Borris bases his argument on Paul's somatic theology and its influence on Spenser:

According to Paul, σάρξ (*sarx*, flesh) and πνευμα (*pneuma*, spirit) each refer to the whole person, both body and soul, under different aspects. Paul sharply distinguishes the body itself (σωμα, *soma*) from the pejorative flesh, for the body can be subsumed in the flesh or the spirit, and spiritually comes to constitute God's temple, to be restored and glorified in the general resurrection.³⁶

In other words, flesh and spirit, while two parts, form one whole individual through the body. What happens to one part affects the whole, which in turn affects the other part. Borris points to Romans 8:13 as a central tenet for Paul's theology: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye mortifie the deeds of the body by the Spirit, ye shall live."³⁷ Within the House of Pride, Spenser provides a picture of and "satirizes conditions of the flesh through anthropomorphic values," ultimately having Redcrosse excreted through the lower bowels of the House of Pride.³⁸ Even though Redcrosse goes to the House of Holiness afterward for spiritual regeneration, he receives "fleshly mortification through mixed medical and religious discourses" that affects both spirit and flesh.³⁹ In the House of Alma, temperance and self-discipline are needed to control the assault of Maleger's forces representing the flesh.⁴⁰ Borris summarizes the overall process: "For Spenser, unregenerate flesh deforms human potential, spirit renews it, and Temperance, building on Holiness, is a main means of further regeneration."⁴¹ The House of Holiness

³⁵ Kenneth Borris, "Flesh, Spirit, and the Glorified Body: Spenser's Anthropomorphic Houses of Pride, Holiness, and Temperance," *Spenser Studies* 15 (2001): 17–52, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2002702565&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

³⁶ Borris, "Flesh, Spirit, and the Glorified Body," 21.

³⁷ Borris, "Flesh, Spirit, and the Glorified Body," 29; Rom. 8:13 (The Geneva Bible, 1560).

³⁸ Borris, "Flesh, Spirit, and the Glorified Body," 22–5.

³⁹ Borris, "Flesh, Spirit, and the Glorified Body," 29.

⁴⁰ Borris, "Flesh, Spirit, and the Glorified Body," 32–3.

⁴¹ Borris, "Flesh, Spirit, and the Glorified Body," 23.

maintains its position within the structure of undoing what has been done before and setting up what is to be done after. In this case, the process is from the viewpoint of Paul's theology.

Many of the structural patterns of Book One derive from works and ideas other than Mulcaster, namely Augustine's two cities, Plato's embodied tripartite soul, St. Paul's somatic theology, not to mention all those who added to and adapted these in the interim. In other words, Spenser is adapting source material and is more deeply concerned with doctrinal issues than is Mulcaster. However, some of the Mulcastrian educational imagery is still there and undone. It does not, however, remain intact in its order and presentation.

Undoing a Miseducation through Antithesis

The first person Redcrosse and Una meet at the House of Holiness is the porter Humilta, who contrasts both Malvenu in the house of Pride and Ignaro.⁴² Humilta particularly resembles Ignaro in that they are both old, grey or white-headed, feeble in their steps, and use staffs.⁴³ The response from Humilta ends the similarities. Unlike Ignaro who possessed keys but could not unlock knowledge for himself or others, Humilta allows Redcrosse and Una to enter. From the perspective of repairing a previous single encounter, Humilta's presence does the trick as the porter offers a good welcome and opens doors that were previously shut, countering the ignorance of the anti-teacher Ignaro.⁴⁴ If, however, the House of Holiness is to be read as a performative and disenchanting reversal of the pageantry of Redcrosse's errors, then it should occur in one of two ways. Redcrosse should retrace his steps starting with the last and moving toward the first in order to undo them just as he and Una "backward sought to wend" their way

⁴² See Douglas Brooks-Davies who notes the porter connection as well, *Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 93.

⁴³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 30, lines 1-3; canto 10, st. 5, lines 5-7.

⁴⁴ See Chapter Three for discussion of language operating as keys unlocking knowledge. Also note this passage's scriptural allusion, which begins with the act of using language. Matt. 7.7: "Aske, and it shalbe giuen you: seke, & ye shal finde: knocke, & it shalbe opened vnto you."

out of the woods of error.⁴⁵ The other option is to replicate the order of operation but do so in a positive context, just as James Baynham did, repeating the movement from private to public confession or as Cranmer burned his hand to purify it. Neither seems to occur in the House of Holiness.

By meeting the porter first, Redcrosse has already skipped the parental and elementary stages of his education and jumped to the grammatical, the middle and lowest point of his journey. He seems to be meeting Humilta primarily as a corrective for Ignaro as grammar teacher. If read this way, Redcrosse is following neither corrective structure. He is not following his path backwards, nor is he repeating his journey from beginning to end in a positive manner.

To complicate matters further, the porter is not the first character mentioned in the canto even though he is the first character Redcrosse and Una meet. Instead, Spenser first introduces Caelia, the matron of the house, who is “mother of three daughters, well vpbrought / In goodly thewes [discipline], and godly exercise [. . .].”⁴⁶ Readers see the mother and her daughters—Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa—at the beginning of the canto, representing what is to come: faith, hope, and charity. The canto opens with a poem in miniature much like the epic does with the Error episode. Each opening teaches readers how to read what follows, book and canto. Unlike the Error encounter, the focus with Caelia is the forthcoming restoration instead of the errors to come. Thus, the House of Holiness seems to undo what came before. Instead of a mother of errors, readers encounter a mother of virtues. However, Redcrosse does not meet or see Caelia or her daughters in this opening section; readers encounter them instead. At this moment, Caelia and her daughters do not offer a corrective for Redcrosse. The reality of what

⁴⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 28, line 2.

⁴⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 4, lines 3-4.

they offer will not occur for Redcrosse until he is inside the House of Holiness a few stanzas later.

Tamara A. Goeglein comments on this aspect of seeing in the House of Holiness as she argues the scene is one of reading. Both readers and Redcrosse as a reader are tasked with interpreting the emblematic devices within the narrative. Readers, however, “‘see’ more than the hero, because the narrator of Redcrosse’s experience calls our attention to visual details that Redcrosse does not, perhaps cannot see or ‘see.’”⁴⁷ Goeglein’s perspective focuses more on emblematic literacy of those in sixteenth century and of modern readers in relation to *The Faerie Queene*, and while her calling attention to the split perspective of readers and Redcrosse is valuable concerning the pattern of Redcrosse’s corrective, it may only show how that pattern continues to fall apart.

Caelia and her daughters begin the reenactment of Redcrosse’s journey in a positive manner: a good parent with healthy, good children contrasts or repairs the earlier bad parent with poisoned spawn. Readers who have been trained how to read by the text itself and have been traveling with Redcrosse can see this pattern and be educated by it even if Redcrosse cannot. The pattern, at first at least, is one that matches the order of Redcrosse’s journey, but the events in the House of Holiness do not continue to match Redcrosse’s anti-education. As noted earlier, the next character who the readers and Redcrosse meet is Humilta who mainly represents Ignaro and skips major phases of the Mulcastrian pageantry. Things simply fall apart if readers are looking for a neat, structured reversal. A better way of reading the canto is to look for images that correct previous ones, despite in what order they appear. Charissa and Contemplation provide two such examples.

⁴⁷ Goeglein, “Emblematics,” 22.

Before examining these characters, Carol V. Kaske's scholarship in *Spenser and Biblical Poetics* will give a framework for the following discussion. Kaske addresses Spenser's relationship with the Bible, specifically how reading practices of scripture informed Spenser's creation of *The Faerie Queene* and how those practices affect readers' interpretation of Spenser's texts. Kaske first points to images or motifs appearing repeatedly in a text although admittedly in the Bible some distance can separate these images.⁴⁸ Hook-words, especially in scripture, allow readers to recall earlier passages of scripture as the hooks will echo the earlier passages strongly through their allusions.⁴⁹ Kaske argues that Spenser similarly uses this technique: "Consequently, in reading the FQ, and also *Amoretti and Epithalamion*, I submit that we should pay attention to the signifiers, collate those passages that contain the same hook-words, and compile a mental concordance."⁵⁰ A compilation of images, however, will often result in noticing differences, specifically contradictory images that result in new meaning. Kaske writes, "When the alteration [contradiction] occurs in adjacent sentences [. . .], it can often be labeled antithesis, or definition of a thing by its contrary; it is common to all discourse. But when widely separated [Kaske argues] it is distinctively biblical; it has no counterpart, for example, in Renaissance rhetorical manuals and occurs with much less frequency elsewhere."⁵¹ In other words, Spenser places images throughout *The Faerie Queene*—sometimes close together, other times far apart—and these images often create an antithesis, presenting a bad image that is later contrasted in the poem with a good image (containing a hook-word that draws the previous passage to the minds of readers). This way of distinguishing meaning is known as *in*

⁴⁸ Carol V. Kaske, "Structure, Meaning, and Images Repeated in *bono et in malo*," in *Spenser and Biblical Poetics* (Cornell University Press, 1999), 20-1. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctvr7f7ds.8>.

⁴⁹ Kaske, "Structure, Meaning, and Images Repeated," 21.

⁵⁰ Kaske, "Structure, Meaning, and Images Repeated," 21.

⁵¹ Kaske, "Structure, Meaning, and Images Repeated," 23.

bono et in malo [in good and in evil].⁵² In the House of Holiness where Redcrosse experiences a reversal of his previous anti-education, each hook-word Spenser uses recalls a specific earlier passage and a specific bad image. Thus, with each antithesis, the previous anti-education is countered, and the new education modifies it, redefines it.

Charissa appears a little under halfway into the canto and is the last of the three sisters, representing the three Christian virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love. As a parent who is nursing children, Charissa is well situated to counter the anti-education Redcrosse received within the parental stage, specially from Error and Duessa. Spenser describes Charissa as recently having given birth; Redcrosse is likely her newborn due to his renewed faith.⁵³ As a result, Charissa is just now leaving “her *fruitfull* nest.”⁵⁴ Interestingly, this passage is perhaps more of an education for readers than it is for Redcrosse since the knight cannot yet see Charissa from his perspective even though he is allegorically an offspring of her fruitful nest. Readers, rather, being more literate than Redcrosse concerning Charissa’s description are able to read the word *fruitful* as one of the first hook-words in the passage. The word recalls Error attacking Redcrosse by vomiting her offspring, “[h]er *fruitfull* cursed spawn of serpents.”⁵⁵ The passage from the Error encounter recalled in the minds of readers is one of encumbrance due to the monstrous, deformed, and fowl offspring who swarm Redcrosse. Charissa’s nest, the good image, contrasts drastically as she too thrusts a swarm of babies forth, but not as an attack:

A multitude of babes about her hong,
Playing their sportes, that ioyd her to behold,

⁵² Kaske, “Structure, Meaning, and Images Repeated,” 23.

⁵³ See A. C. Hamilton, *The Faerie Queene*, by Edmund Spenser, rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), 1.10.29.7-9n; James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton University Press, 1980), 278, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat08646a&AN=mtsu.e0dab6a7.c978.49a8.9842.5258b5dce780&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

⁵⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 29, line 8 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 22, line 6 (emphasis mine).

Whom still she fed, whiles they were weak and young,
But thrust them forth still, as they waxed old [. . .].⁵⁶

Redcrosse, now as one of Charissa's offspring, is no longer encumbered but is one who is being nurtured and enabled to continue his journey.⁵⁷

The next hook-word occurs from the perspective of Redcrosse as he and Una enter to meet Charissa and "her happy *brood*."⁵⁸ Similar to fruitful, brood also recalls a passage concerning Error and her offspring, helping make the antithesis between Error and Charissa stronger. Redcrosse has just defeated Error by cutting off her head, and her children react to the death:

Her scattred *brood*, soone as their Parent deare
They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare,
Gathred themselues about her body round,
Weening their wonted entrance to haue found
At her wide mouth: but being there withstood
They flocked all about her bleeding wound,
And sucked vp their dying mothers bloud,
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.⁵⁹

After Redcrosse kills Error, her offspring, which she had previously scattered, return to find safety. As they devour their mother, they die with their "bowels gushing forth: well worthy end, / Of such as drunke her life, the which them nurst [. . .]."⁶⁰ Spenser's added commentary remarks on the lifestyle of error and its end: Error's offspring chose to nurse Error; thus, they are receiving the consequences of such an upbringing. Charissa's brood offers a stark contrast,

⁵⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 31, lines 1-4.

⁵⁷ See Goeglein on the nature of the emblematic imagery and the progression of time: "Charissa's pedagogy is designed for a fully formed student, or nearly so: he seems to come to her already 'waxed old' and she seems to be thrusting him forth (l.x.31.4). [. . .] The sight of Redcrosse nursing at Charissa's breast would possibly be too much for the mythological to sustain, so Charissa 'thrusts' Redcrosse 'forth' to 'the ready path' (l.x.33.9)." Goeglein, "Emblematics," 40.

⁵⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 32, line 2 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 25, lines 1-9 (emphasis mine).

⁶⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 26, lines 6-7.

especially the description that follows of Charissa's nurturing. Una asks Charissa that she "schoole" Redcrosse in "vertuous rules," establishing that this is indeed a place of positive learning.⁶¹ Charissa then takes Redcrosse by the hand to "instruct" him until he is "well instructed."⁶² She also "teacheth [shows] him the ready path."⁶³ Finally, while the knight's steps are weak, "wandring," and need guidance, Charissa enlists the help of Mercy.⁶⁴ This "godly Matrone" contrasts Duessa who leads Redcrosse from the straight path and to additional anti-teachers.⁶⁵ Not only does Mercy guide Redcrosse to Contemplation furthering the knight's education, but she keeps him on the straight path:

She held him fast, and firmly did vpbeare,
As carefull Nourse her child from falling oft does reare.⁶⁶

Such an emphasis on learning and its positive results contrast sharply Errour's brood and her inability to nurse them to a fruitful end.

Contemplation offers a similar example to Charissa in that he contrasts earlier characters through the use of hook-words. However, Contemplation offers a much more complex antithesis as he juxtaposes a wider range of characters, further upsetting any type of structured undoing of the Mulcastrian pageantry. Immediately, readers learn that Contemplation does not apply himself to "*worldly* business" because he is devoted to meditating on "God and goodness" day and night.⁶⁷ The passage recalls Idleness, who "[f]rom *worldly* cares" has withdrawn and claims to live without work "[f]or *contemplation* sake."⁶⁸

⁶¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 32, line 6.

⁶² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 33, lines 3 and 8.

⁶³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 33, line 9.

⁶⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 34, line 1.

⁶⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 35, line 1.

⁶⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 35, lines 8-9.

⁶⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 46, lines 7-9 (emphasis mine).

⁶⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 4, st. 20, lines 1-4 (emphasis mine).

While Idlennesse is too lazy to lift his head to see where he is going, Contemplation often sees God “from heauens hight.”⁶⁹ However, Contemplation’s sight is due to grace as his eyes are “both blunt and bad / And through great age had lost their kindly [natural] sight [. . .].”⁷⁰ Even though containing no direct hook-word, the imagery recalls Ignaro whose “eye sight [. . .] fayled long ygo.”⁷¹ In addition to the failed eyesight, Ignaro’s old age further incapacitates him with “feeble steps.”⁷² Contemplation’s body is equally as feeble as his “fraile thighs” are “weary” and “fordonne [exhausted].”⁷³ Contemplation’s frailness does not prevent him from scaling the hill as again grace is his help, the origin of which is God, the focus of Contemplation’s meditative sight. Readers do not have long to focus on these connections as the next stanza focuses on the physical description of Contemplation, recalling a different passage and different anti-educator.

Redcrosse and Una find Contemplation “[w]ith snowy *lockes* adowne his *shoulders* shed [. . .].”⁷⁴ Contemplation’s hair falling upon his shoulders recalls the physical description of Despaire whose “griesie *lockes*, long growen, and vnbound, / Disordred hong about his *shoulders* round [. . .].”⁷⁵ The alignment between the two passages continues as both reader and Redcrosse notice details pertaining to Contemplation that recall Despaire as he dwells in his cave:

Each *bone* might through his body well be red [seen],
 And euery sinew seene through his long fast:
 For nought he car’d his *carcas* long vnfed;
 His mind was full of spirituall repast,
 And *pyn’d* his flesh, to keepe his body low and chast.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 47, line 2.

⁷⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 47, lines 3-4.

⁷¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 30, line 5.

⁷² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 30, line 3.

⁷³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 47, line 8.

⁷⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 48, line 2 (emphasis mine).

⁷⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 35, lines 4-5 (emphasis mine).

⁷⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 48, lines 5-9 (emphasis mine).

Contemplation physically starves himself through fasting so that his body becomes a carcass with its bones visible and its flesh pining, i.e., suffering. Hamilton notes the etymological sense of *carcass* in the passage, dead or fallen flesh.⁷⁷ However, Contemplation is spiritually sustained and full. The allusion for this passage is in Romans: “For if ye liue after the flesh, ye shal dye: but if ye mortifie the dedes of the bodie by the Spirit, ye shal liue.”⁷⁸ Despaire is similarly described:

His raw-*bone* cheeks through penurie and *pine*,
Were shronke into his iawes, as he did neuer dyne.⁷⁹

Since Despaire also starves himself, his appearance is skeletal in nature. The bodily pining and deprivation also result in a corpse, but it is not Despaire’s. Trevisan’s fellow knight, Terwin, lies upon the floor of the cave, a “dreary corse, whose life away did pas [. . .].”⁸⁰ Despaire’s goal, unlike Contemplation’s, is not life, but death—urging those who enter his cave toward suicide.

As the final positive teacher in the House of Holiness, Contemplation presents an amalgamation correcting the negative aspects previously exposed to Redcrosse: he reveals the vision of the New Jerusalem, identifies Redcrosse as St. George, and ultimately offers life where the previous anti-education ended with death. Commenting on Contemplation’s status, McManus points out that women in the House of Holiness teach Redcrosse in his newly birthed state until his age and education reaches a level needing a male authority figure who presents the “male realm of humanist scholarship or ‘higher’ learning (represented by Contemplation)” and reveals Redcrosse’s “true identity as Saint George.”⁸¹ The character Contemplation culminates the chain of positive female spiritual education revealing the vision of the New

⁷⁷ Hamilton, *Faerie Queene*, 1.10.48.7n.

⁷⁸ Rom. 8:13.

⁷⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 35, lines 8-9 (emphasis mine).

⁸⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 36, line 5.

⁸¹ Caroline McManus, “The ‘Carefull Nourse’: Female Piety in Spenser’s Legend of Holiness,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (January 1997): 404, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3817786>.

Jerusalem and the realization of who Redcrosse will be, enabling the knight to finish his quest. Contemplation is an antithesis to Despaire, who caps the line of negative and mostly male spiritual education revealing Redcrosse for the “man of sin” he is and suggests suicide, potentially erasing the knight’s earthly identity and stopping him from finishing his quest.⁸²

What Remains after Things Fall Apart

Despite Redcrosse not experiencing an exact reversal that undoes the Mulcastrian pageantry of anti-education that he has undergone, the House of Holiness—often using hook-words—recalls earlier anti-educators who are then redefined or corrected through antithesis. For each character mentioned in the previous analysis, however, many had to be omitted. The franklin Zele; the other two sisters, Fidelia and Speranza; and the seven Beadmen, to name a few, offer multiple examples of antithesis that modify Redcrosse’s education and further disrupt the order of the previous pageantry. The purpose of an antithesis, though, is to define through contrary images and is akin to the “habit of ‘distinguishing’ an image [which] gives rise to a list of meanings called a *distinctio* (plural, *distinctiones*), which purports to exhaust all the meanings of a given word, object, or concept in Scripture.”⁸³ Spenser is undoubtedly doing this in the House of Holiness, but the antithesis is dominantly religious in its allegory, which is the point of the passage, the education of the Christian pilgrim, especially in relation to Protestant regeneration and Holiness. However, an undercurrent flows throughout the passage as well, which is the education of an early modern student (Redcrosse) within a school system (the House of Holiness). The differences in the school system of the House of Holiness—regardless of the focus of the religious allegory—and the systems of education that came before are striking.

⁸² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 46, line 1.

⁸³ Kaske, “Structure, Meaning, and Images Repeated,” 24.

In the House of Holiness, Redcrosse undergoes an education that is both private and maternal in nature. Not only does the setting resemble a medieval court of love or a feudal castle, but it is “gouernd” and “guided” by the “matrone” Caelia who oversees the house and those in its care.⁸⁴ Even though Redcrosse’s education is finalized by Contemplation who represents higher learning, the House of Holiness focuses on teaching and especially reading delivered through the maternal in a private setting, i.e., a mother teaching a child or a tutor working individually with a student. Redcrosse’s previous education—except for the parental stage—differs drastically, resembling the stages of a public education (elementary school, grammar school, university) and was delivered through male anti-teachers (Idlennesse, Ignaro, and Despaire). Redcrosse’s reeducation in the House of Holiness instead more resembles Arthur’s education in that Arthur was privately educated in the household of Timon the “wisest” man “now on earth.”⁸⁵ The House of Holiness is also a place of wisdom as Caelia governs it “[t]hrough wisdom of a matrone graue and hore [venerable].”⁸⁶ Furthermore, Arthur’s educators nurse him in a positive manner like the women in the House of Holiness. Arthur calls Timon’s teaching his “Tutors nouriture” [Tutor’s nurturing], and Merlin oversees the young prince, who is called his “noursling.”⁸⁷ The House of Holiness even contains a hook-word recalling Arthur’s education, so Spenser seems to have had the passage in mind. The daughters of Caelia were “well vpbrought / In goodly thewes, and godly exercise [. . .].”⁸⁸ Arthur was

⁸⁴ See Brooks-Davies and Robert L. Reid for commentary on the House of Holiness and its architecture: Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene*, 92-3; and Reid, “Holiness, House of,” in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 373; Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 3, lines 4-5. McManus also notes that all the male figures in the house serve “‘the Ladie of the place’ (l.x.8),” “Carefull Nourse,” 387.

⁸⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 4, line 4.

⁸⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 3, line 5.

⁸⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 5, line 4 and bk. 2, canto 8, st. 20, line 3.

⁸⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 4, lines 3-4 (emphasis mine).

delivered to Timon “[t]o be *vpbrought in gentle thewes and martiall might.*”⁸⁹ However, Arthur’s education lacked maternal influence because he was removed from his mother’s breast, and Timon’s house is devoid of maternal influence as only male educators are mentioned.⁹⁰ The obvious reason for Arthur’s placement in Timon’s house is the Arthurian and chivalric tradition backing it, but another reason is related to the practice of nobility being educated in households of a social superior, especially with “male-oriented training.”⁹¹ Concerning this other tradition, Helen M Jewell writes, “The purpose of this traditional chivalric education was not academic, but vocational, in a military, feudal, landholding society. The training inculcated physical hardiness and generosity of spirit. Practically, the boys learned horsemanship and appropriate skills in arms. Emotionally, they learned self-control and the dignity of service: due deference to superiors, magnanimity in good fortune and bad.”⁹² The in-house type of education extended into the sixteenth century and began to emphasize academics, especially Latin and Greek language learning.⁹³ It is difficult to tell if the presence or lack thereof of the maternal makes a difference in the quality of education Redcrosse and Arthur receive. In the House of Holiness,

⁸⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 3, line 9 (emphasis mine).

⁹⁰ Mulcaster advises the use of public schooling and encourages those who are privately teaching their children to “make your private publike,” *Positions*, 192. In other words, parents should open their homes to common children and teach them in addition to their own child or children. William Barker notes, “The best example of a private household which also served as a school was at Cecil House in London, where Lord Burghley accepted wards of the court into his care; at one time there were as many as twenty young gentlemen studying there (this ‘school’ is described in Hurstfield *The Queen’s Wards* 255-9). At an earlier period, young men and women were regularly brought up in the households of the nobility; such was the education of Thomas More in the household of Cardinal Morton. During Elizabeth’s reign the old custom still prevailed, but boarding schools were found increasingly to be an acceptable substitute (Philip Sidney, for instance, was sent to Shrewsbury). It might be said that certain teachers also made ‘their public private’ by taking in boarders in their own households,” *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, by Richard Mulcaster, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 192.31.n. While the House of Holiness is open to anyone who knocks making it a less private setting, Redcrosse is seemingly taught as a single student and lacks interactions with other students.

⁹¹ Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 52-3.

⁹² Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England*, 53.

⁹³ Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England*, 53-4. Jewell notes Sir Thomas Elyot’s *The Governour* and Roger Ascham’s *The Scholemaster* as evidence of the shift, *Education in Early Modern England*, 54.

the maternal is undoubtedly and positively influential, yet their presence renews the focus on gendered expressions of education, especially through violence and grace.

Redcrosse is placed—at Una’s request—in Fidelity’s “schoolhouse” where he “heares the wisdom of her wordes diuine,” as “she him taught celestiall discipline [. . .].”⁹⁴ Fidelity then uses her book “[t]hat none could reade, except she did them teach,” and she “did preach” from it to teach Redcrosse.⁹⁵ Within the nurturing that Fidelity provides Redcrosse, resides underlying violence. Her “goodly speech” can “kill.”⁹⁶ Yet, she is able to “rayse againe to life the hart, that she did thrill.”⁹⁷ The language distinctively recalls that of Despaire whose sophistic speech like a “swords poynt through [Redcrosse’s] hart did perse.”⁹⁸ Despaire continues to argue for Redcrosse to commit suicide, specifically through the use of a dagger capable of stabbing his heart. The violence of Fidelity’s education also resembles Arthur’s hard discipline that simultaneously teaches Orgoglio to read through the sword as the word and kills him as an ignorant enemy of the word.⁹⁹ Fidelity’s educational violence is tempered through grace. Although her words “thrill,” i.e., pierce the heart, they also bring life, and Redcrosse is able to grow from her lessons.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, Fidelity’s words cause the knight “anquish” as he remembers his sins and “desirde, to end his wretched dayes.”¹⁰¹ Speranza follows Fidelity’s teachings and offers some counter to harsh feminine discipline. She provides “comfort sweet”

⁹⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 18, lines 4-8.

⁹⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 19, lines 2-4. See McManus on how a literal reading of Fidelity’s teaching and preaching may upset limitations on women preaching from pulpits in the sixteenth century, “Carefull Nourse,” 401-402.

⁹⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 19, lines 7-8.

⁹⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 19, line 9.

⁹⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 9, st. 48, line 2.

⁹⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the violent grace delivered by Arthur, see Chapter Three, pages 192-3.

¹⁰⁰ “thrill, v.1”, *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed May 2023, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/201260>. For an analysis of Una’s violent grace that rescues Redcrosse and pierces his heart, see Chapter Three, pages 193-7.

¹⁰¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 21, lines 6-8.

to the knight and “taught him” faithful assurance.¹⁰² Redcrosse then makes his way through the teachings of Charissa and Mercy, which have been detailed above.

In summation, Spenser portrays Redcrosse’s anti-education through the pageantry of Mulcaster’s ideal public education that Mulcaster outlines in *Positions* and *Elementarie*. Except for the parental stage, this anti-education is predominantly provided by bad male characters in public contexts. In the background of this pageantry, Spenser portrays a good education through Arthur, an ideal character. Arthur’s education is private and provided by good male educators. Finally, Spenser portrays another good education, in this case a reeducation, through Redcrosse in the House of Holiness. This education is predominantly private and maternal. Spenser has provided an antithesis of education, distinguishing it through multiple contradictory images, and we are left asking how does Spenser define education through this technique? In this instance, multiple contradictions create an unresolvable context, a relativism, and the most that can be said of the situation, to borrow Kaske’s words concerning irreconcilable contradictions: “it provokes a debate.”¹⁰³

Both Mulcaster and Spenser desire to raise up England as a nation, especially through the legitimization of the English language. England was large enough for them to do this as their methods, while different, were not necessarily incongruous.¹⁰⁴ England as Faery Land—as large as it is in the imaginations of readers—is possibly too small for the ideas of Mulcaster and Spenser to coincide, especially concerning education. Mulcaster believed that every child

¹⁰² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 10, st. 22, lines 1-3.

¹⁰³ Carol V. Kaske, “Images, that Correct their Predecessors,” in *Spenser and Biblical Poetics*, (Cornell University Press, 1999), 72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctvr7f7ds.9>.

¹⁰⁴ For more details on Mulcaster and Spenser fashioning themselves in relation to England as a growing nation, see Chapter One, pages 44-5.

(regardless of gender) should be taught to read and write English.¹⁰⁵ He also believed the best type of education was a common, i.e., public one, especially for boys whose later “use” was also public.¹⁰⁶ Education for girls could be private as their responsibilities were mainly for use in the private household. Mulcaster believed public education was better for several reasons. Learning and obedience is held more accountable in public as a child who is educated alone can go easily astray if he and/or his educator is lax.¹⁰⁷ In a common education, “faultes [are] more seene, and so sooner amended.”¹⁰⁸ Public education best prepares a child to live and work with others; private instruction keeps a student separated, causing feelings of inequality, pride, and ultimately dissent and is not the best preparation for service to the state.¹⁰⁹ As Mulcaster defines education, it “is the bringing up of one, not to live alone, but amongst others, [. . .] whereby he shall be best able to execute those doings in life, which the state of his calling shall employ of him [. . .].”¹¹⁰ Spenser in *Faery Land* seems to favor private education as that is the mode of learning that administers correct instruction in Book One. Furthermore, Spenser seems to prefer learning administered by women. Arthur’s schooling, even though positive and dominated by male nurses, is only described in a few stanzas. The education in the House of Holiness, which is largely maternal, is the longest canto in Book One.

Does the Mulcastrian pageantry found in *The Faerie Queene* and its alignment with a miseducation indicate a criticism of Mulcaster’s ideal education? Do the depictions of bad and good educations and their alignment with public and private instruction suggest that private is

¹⁰⁵ For Mulcaster’s defense of educating “young maidens,” see, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 168-84.

¹⁰⁶ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 185.

¹⁰⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 187.

¹⁰⁸ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 192.

¹⁰⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 187-88.

¹¹⁰ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 186.

better, which would further contrast with the Mulcastrian ideal? Redcrosse, even though he represents England and all its people, is of special importance. He is ordained and elected, thus, giving him special status as a student. Does this type of student deserve a better education in Spenser's mind and does that learning equate to a private one? Finally, does Spenser's emphasis on good women teaching—nurses who offer the wisdom and the Word of God through the mother tongue of English—provide commentary on the teaching of English within England?

Returning to the account of James Bainham mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Bainham was holding a copy of Tyndale's 1525 English New Testament when he repented. Greenblatt argues that even though Bainham was trained in Latin, a Bible in the vernacular would have spoken to him at a much more intimate level than one in the father tongue. Greenblatt frames Bainham's choice as one between the institution of the Church and that of vernacular scripture:

Bainham's interrogators offered him the embrace of the Holy Mother Church—"the bosom of his mother was open for him" (700), they told him. The Reformers offered a different intimacy, the intimacy not of the institution, imaged as the nurturing female body, but of the book, imaged, in terms displaced from that body, as self, food, and protection: "As thou readest," Tyndale writes in the *Prologue to Genesis*, "think that every syllable pertaineth to thine own self, and suck out the pith of the Scripture, and arm thyself against all assaults."¹¹¹

If Protestants separated the scripture from the Catholic church as nurturing mother, and saw scripture as sustenance unto itself, then did they begin to replace the institution with reformed mothers who then had the responsibility to nourish their children physically and spiritually? Are we witnessing the reunification of the Word to the nurturing female body through English in the House of Holiness? Is that what is occurring within *The Faerie Queene*? In the end, more

¹¹¹ Greenblatt, "Word of God," 96.

questions remain than answers. Some questions are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Others cannot be satisfactorily answered.

Faery Land contains multiple types of education. Some are decidedly bad, such as the House of Pride that imitates an elementary school. Others are undoubtedly positive, such as the House of Holiness. Spenser may not be commenting on the type of school but the manner in which it is run. Additionally, Arthur's in-house education is traditionally one of the nobility, and when associated more with chivalry and less with academics as Arthur's seems to do, it places Arthur's schooling in a medieval setting. Spenser is playfully shifting the bounds of time in his narrative and/or he is commenting on the history of schooling by including different types of schools from multiple eras. Even then, debate remains as my analysis is incomplete. I have only examined Book One. The education of youthful knights continues, particularly with Guyon and Britomart in Books Two and Three, and Calidore in Book Six, continuing the early modern period's emphasis in literature on testing the virtue of educated youth, especially through sexual temptation.¹¹² Guyon offers a distinct contrast to the aged Palmer, establishing the roles of youth (passion) and old age (reason).¹¹³ In his allegorical significance, Guyon represents temperance, and while proper sexual conduct is only a subset of the larger virtue, his adventures contain many overtly sexual educational experiences and challenges. While many uncontrolled passions are swirling around in Book Two, lust is the cause of Mortdant's adultery with Acrasia in Canto I, leading to his poisoning and the suicide of his wife Amavia. In Canto IV, the Squire tells of his betrayal by Philemon involving lust, jealousy, and anger. In Canto XII,

¹¹² For a detailed discussion on the topic, see the Introduction.

¹¹³ René Graziani links Guyon and his heroics of morality in Book Two of *The Faerie Queene* to the age of seventeen when Elyot deemed young men old enough to begin studying *Nicomachean Ethics*, see "The Faerie Queene, Book II," in *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 267.

Guyon must resist several scenes of sensual beauty in Acrasia's Bower of Bliss, including a voyeuristic scene of nude women bathing in a fountain, all which Spenser relates through the language of erotic poetry. Britomart, in Book Three, falls into the category of a young knight as well because the narrator tells us she has recently started menstruation, thus having to deal with the beginnings of physical maturity, which Spenser frames as encountering sexual maturity as well.¹¹⁴ Since Britomart is Chastity, she must face temptation involving love and all its complexities, including the sexual. Book Six also offers a valuable perspective as the knight Calidore represents courtesy, an important subject in the education of a youth. In the sixteenth century, Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* and similar courtesy books were highly influential in offering advice on proper behavior, especially in court life. Calidore offers a final perspective into the public fashioning and refining of a gentleman. These books offer a rich collection when exploring the complex concept of early modern education.

For now, the previous overview of scenes of education in other books may offer no more than sweeping generalizations. Education is important to both Spenser and Mulcaster because it was a major influencing factor in fashioning the nation. Spenser is perhaps more radical than Mulcaster as he, at least in Faery land, offers more grace to students who refuse learning when younger, allowing them a chance at reeducation as evidenced by Redcrosse. Spenser also allows women more influence within education, especially in dispensing learning that comforts but at times harshly disciplines. While the House of Holiness is a place of regeneration and education, it unsettles so much that precedes it, including the Mulcastrian pageantry that has been building throughout Book One. Things fall apart. There is a desire to sift

¹¹⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 3, canto 2, st. 39.

through the pieces that remain, like some oracle, to find meaning. Perhaps the most that can be said is educating youth has and will continue to be a complex matter.

EPILOGUE

AND I SAW A GREAT DRAGON AND BESIDE IT A MOTHER TENDING HER CHILD

After leaving the House of Holiness, Redcrosse goes with Una to her kingdom to fight “that old Dragon,” a reference that alludes to, among other things, the biblical dragon of Revelation (“the great dragon, that olde serpent, called the deuill and Satan”).¹ The apocalyptic tone of Book One situates the beast in relation to eschatological matters and pushes it allegorically beyond just the enemy of Una, defended by Redcrosse. The length of the battle and the size of the dragon are proportional to its status as *the enemy*. The fight is immense, lasting three days; the dragon is huge: measured in relation to the landscape, it bounces from the earth into the sky and from page to page, “swoln with wrath, and poyson, and with bloody gore.”² The dragon’s anatomical landscape culminates the epic in four uses of the adjective *hollow*, a continuation of the poem’s motif of malnourishment in education. The dysregulated monster shows the cumulative consequences of a bad educational system at the national level.³ The dragon’s eyes are hollow glades, an image that combines the landscape of Faery and the facial gauntness of Despaire, and of Redcrosse too, when he emerges from Ignaro’s dungeon. The “glaring lampes” of the dragon’s eyes, however, indicate no blindness many previous anti-teachers suffer; instead these lamps seek to transfix those whom the beast would destroy.⁴ The

¹ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al. rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007), bk.1, canto 11, Argument; Rev. 12:9 (The Geneva Bible, 1560); see Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Spenser’s Faerie Queene: A Critical Commentary on Books I and II* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1977), 104.

² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 8, line 9. See J.R.R. Tolkien who notes that dragons function as “older and more elemental” enemies of mankind, “Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics,” in *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (London: Harper Collins, 2006), 32; and Maik Goth, who examines dragons as terrifying creatures beyond human comprehension and, thus, related through paradoxical descriptions, *Monsters and the Poetic Imagination in The Faerie Queene: “Most ugly shapes, and horrible aspects”* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 47-67.

³ For a discussion of the motif, see the Introduction.

⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 14, line 9.

size of “a great hill,” jaws cavernous as the “mouth of hell,” the dragon’s “hollow maw” recalls two previous caves in Book One.⁵ Redcrosse and Una stumble upon Errorr’s “hollowe cave,” and they later enter Despaire’s “hollow cave.”⁶ The encounter with the dragon encompasses three major foes with connections to ground-level hollows and shows the “bottoming-” or “hollowing-out” progression of wrong doers: error leads to despair, and despair leads to a hell of insurmountable proportions (paralysis in Redcrosse’s yielding to Despaire’s “what’s the use” arguments). Errorr demonstrates the beginning of a bad education, Despaire the end of ignorance, and the Dragon the scope of the national result. A beast the scale of Purgatory, or paralysis, bad pedagogy is the obstacle too, terrorizing the health and happiness of a nation. The dragon of mal-education holds government—king and queen (Adam and Eve)—hostage, and future generations (Una and Redcrosse) may not come to prosperity and fruition.

While the dragon remains a terrorizing obstacle and retains its significance as the enemy of humanity, previous villains, especially Ignaro and Despaire, posed a greater threat to Redcrosse as their anti-education affected him more directly. By the time Redcrosse reaches his culminating test, he has been soundly educated, and the destructive nature of the dragon, its sort of black-hole hollowness, and the self-destructive exhaustion of the former knight’s ignorant self no longer cling to him. Undoubtedly, the dragon fight does affect Redcrosse as many of its descriptions recall earlier passages with hook-words, not to contrast and correct, but to re-erect obstacles in the now-mature Redcrosse’s path of life.⁷

⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 4, line 6; st. 12, line 8; canto 11, st. 53, line 8.

⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 11, line 6; canto 9, st. 33, line 2.

⁷ On the use of hook-words, see Chapter Five, pages 256-7. Also see Åke Bergvall’s discussion of the educated Redcrosse remaining a sinner even after the dragon fight, a perfected hero still needing tutoring, “To ‘Maister the Circumstance’: Mulcaster’s *Positions* and Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*,” *Spenser Studies* 34 (2020): 17-8, <https://doi.org/10.1086/706175>.

At the beginning of the battle, Redcrosse jousts with the dragon, but his spear proves utterly ineffective:

But *th'ydle* stroke yet backe recoyld in vaine,
And found no place his deadly point to rest.⁸

Redcrosse's idle, or useless, weapon evokes earlier passages, specifically his fight with Sansfoy where the two also joust and like rams knock each other "sencelesse."⁹ The result of that bout is that they break their spears and stare at the broken remains that they "*idely*" hold in their hands.¹⁰ The keyword "idle" also recalls Arthur's fight with Orgoglio who uses a club and brutally overpowers his opponents. Arthur, an experienced warrior, dodges the "*ydle* stroke" that "[m]issing the marke" shows the inferior swordsmanship of Orgoglio to be.¹¹ In the dragon fight, despite Redcrosse not landing a killing hit with his spear, he does not break his weapon as in his previous fight, nor does he succumb to a superior opponent as Orgoglio does to Arthur. In fact, the passage emphasizes that the dragon has tested multiple knights before: "Yet had he [the dragon] prou'd the powre of many a puissant knight."¹² An ironic understatement, the line shows how powerful the dragon is as the enemy of humanity—allegorically, the dragon-test is the exam many fail to pass through bankrupt education. Redcrosse is well prepared due to his sterling education in the House of Holiness, and even though the first spear hit was in vain, the dragon, stunned, had never felt "[s]o wondrous force, from hand of liuing wight."¹³ As a result, Redcrosse is able to continue fighting and deftly wielding his weapons. The dragon flies into the air and attacks him from above, but Redcrosse thrusts under the dragon's wing with his spear,

⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 17, lines 3-4 (emphasis mine).

⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 16, line 5.

¹⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 2, st. 16, line 8 (emphasis mine). Hamilton glosses "*idely*" in this instance as *vain*, *Faerie Queene*, 1.2.16.9n.

¹¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 8, st. 8, lines 2-3.

¹² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 17, line 9.

¹³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 17, line 8.

effectively clipping and grounding the beast. Only at this point does the spear break, not because of Redcrosse's negligence or inferior combat experience, but because the dragon claws it out of its wound and breaks it.

Losing his spear and thrown from his horse, Redcrosse resorts to his sword. The knight lands his strike on the skull of the dragon, but his attack is again inconclusive:

Vpon his [the dragon's] crest the hardned yron fell,
But his more hardned crest was armd so well,
That deeper dint therein it would not make [. . .].¹⁴

The sword bounces off the dragon's "crest" because the dragon is such a formidable opponent—hardened to resist such attacks. Redcrosse's poise is emphasized again as he strikes with "more outrageous might."¹⁵ The result is the same:

[. . .] backe againe the sparcling steele recoyld,
And left not any marke, where it did light;
As if in Adamant rocke it had beene pight.¹⁶

However hard and nimble Redcrosse's hits, however hard his sword—tempered steel instead of the earlier iron—the dragon's body seems harder. The dragon does try to retreat as Redcrosse's attacks ensue "fierce and forcible,"¹⁷ but its wing wound is too severe to prevent escape by flight. Spenser describes the dragon's reaction to its besting:

Then full of griefe and anguish vehement,
He *lowdly brayd*, that like was neuer heard [. . .].¹⁸

The lines use another hook-word to recall a previous passage in the *Errour* episode. After the knight enters *Errour's* cave, she tries to retreat, especially from the light his armor makes.

¹⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 24, lines 4-6.

¹⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 25, line 2.

¹⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 25, lines 3-5.

¹⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 25, line 7.

¹⁸ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 26, lines 1-2 (emphasis mine).

Redcrosse pursues with his sword, and Errour, “enrag’d, [. . .] *loudly gan to bray*.”¹⁹ Like the dragon, Errour finds she is unable to escape the better force and is angered and anguished together. Both beasts prepare to attack as a result. In Errour’s case, she resorts to attack with her poisoned tail, but Redcrosse counters with his sword. His stroke does not kill her but does prove more effective than his sword-attack on the dragon (“[m]uch daunted with that dint, her sence was dazd [. . .]”).²⁰ Incensed, Errour jumps on Redcrosse and vomits on him poison and her weaponized spawn who swarm the knight, but immature pupae, they cannot harm him, amounting to nothing more than a “cloud of cumbrous gnattes.”²¹ The dragon differs in its fury, not giving another opportunity to strike but immediately attacking with vomited fire:

And from his wide deuouring ouen sent
A flake of fire, that flashing in his beard,
Him all amazd, and almost made afeard:
The scorching flame sore swung all his face,
And through his armour all his body seard,
That he could not endure so cruell cace,
But thought his armes to leaue, and helmet to vnlace.²²

Both Error and the dragon use attacks oral in nature. Errour regurgitates what she has devoured and the dragon spews fire from his heart-furnace (hearth-oven). The former, ineffective, the latter proves much more crafty, roasting Redcrosse in armor meant to save him. Once again, the dragon proves the stronger opponent.

In the education of an early modern student for service to the state, it seems knowledge and preparation only go so far. Redcrosse is unable to defeat an enemy with which he has been preparing to do battle. The grace of God is needed in the end. Roasted by the fire in his armor, Redcrosse falls into the water in the well of life. The waters restore him, and the next day, he

¹⁹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 17, line 5 (emphasis mine).

²⁰ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 18, line 1.

²¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 1, st. 23, line 5.

²² Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 26, lines 2-9.

arises a “new-borne knight.”²³ The negative effects of the dragon are not ever-lasting. Compared to the miseducation Redcrosse received through wanderings due the effects of Error’s train, experienced throughout the entirety of Book One, the damage of the dragon’s fire is washed away in a single night and a few stanzas. Redcrosse is not trapped (in Ignaro’s dungeon) due to his own ignorance, nor is he trapped in a cave in a suicidal debate with Despaire (from which he alone could not escape to seek future, competent education). The dragon fight, instead, suggests insurmountable obstacles to serving the nation and God through the use of what has been learned. Redcrosse must ultimately depend on grace. Instead of learning being the primary focus, Redcrosse offers a new teaching, in this case, hard discipline and correction must be assisted by grace.

The final correction that Redcrosse deals to the dragon is with his “weapon bright,” possibly his sword, with which he kills it.²⁴ Swords are particularly significant as they represent the Word of God: “For the worde of God is liuelie, & mightie in operation, and sharper then anie two edged sworde, & entreth through, euen vnto the diuiding a sunder of the soule & the spirit, and of the joynts, & the marie [marrow], and is a discerner of the thoghtes and the intentes of the heart.”²⁵ From an educational perspective, Redcrosse is beating the dragon over the head with the Word of God, but nothing is retained. The knight must then fight the beast using a different biblical precept that combines the word of God with nourishment: “But he [Jesus] answering [the devil], said, It is writtē[n], Man shal not liue by bread onely, but by euerie worde

²³ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 34, line 9.

²⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 11, st. 53, line 5. The weapon is not specifically identified as a sword. It could be Redcrosse’s spear, but if reading literally, Redcrosse’s lance has already been broken. The *weapon* also signifies Redcrosse as Christ who harrows the hell mouth of the dragon.

²⁵ Heb. 4:12; For a discussion of Arthur’s schooling of Orgoglio and the overlapping of swordplay with wordplay, see Chapter Three, pages 185-7.

that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”²⁶ The education only works in this case through a parody and violent combination of the Word as sword and the Word as sustenance. When the dragon tries to eat Redcrosse, the knight uses his “weapon bright” to stab the dragon in the mouth. Only during this fatal ingestion does the dragon consume the Word of God, delivering life and death simultaneously.²⁷

In canto XI, the dragon fight fades into the background. Redcrosse now reigns victorious, and the inhabitants of the kingdom begin parading out to meet the knight and celebrate. Robert L. Reid sees Spenser’s structuring of the conclusion as restorative of social and psychological institutions. The three groups that meet Redcrosse and Una align with Plato’s tripartite soul of the *Republic*, albeit with some Christian revision on the part of Spenser.²⁸ The first group to meet the victorious Redcrosse is the rulers and guards of the city, who are mostly men, aligning with the reasoning and spirited parts of the soul. The second group diverts from Plato as Spenser assigns as the middling group the women and children who meet and praise Una. Instead of aligning with the spirited part of the soul, they represent “emotional purity” and “innocent impulses.”²⁹ The third group who rushes out and views the dragon is the common folk. They represent the lowest part of the soul, the appetite.³⁰ Reid concludes that the common folk, representing the “lowest part of consciousness, which judges by external appearances,” serves the two higher powers.³¹ While this consciousness is often fearful, it can render practical

²⁶ Matt. 4:4.

²⁷ The Geneva gloss on Hebrews 4:12 states, “For it [the sword] mortally woūdeþ [wounds] the rebellious, and in the elect it killeth the olde man that they shulde liue vnto God.”

²⁸ Robert L. Reid, “Spenserian Psychology and the Structure of Allegory in Books 1 and 2 of ‘The Faerie Queene,’” *Modern Philology* 79, no. 4 (May 1, 1982): 373-4, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.437723&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

²⁹ Reid, “Spenserian Psychology,” 374.

³⁰ Reid, “Spenserian Psychology,” 374.

³¹ Reid, “Spenserian Psychology,” 374.

aid; however, “even at its best it was seen as base, diminutive, and perhaps even unnecessary to the ultimate reality of man.”³²

Reid’s interpretation is insightful, especially when reading Spenser from a religious and classical perspective. When thinking in terms of visual perspective, the focus of the scene becomes slightly different. The main motifs representing St. George and the dragon in medieval and early modern visual art are a victorious St. George on horseback sitting above the dragon whom the knight has stabbed with a lance. Often the princess being rescued resides in the background (or to the side).³³ Spenser seems to take a different approach with the imagery he creates. The dragon and even Redcrosse as the conquering St. George are relegated to the background, as Spenser’s description focuses on those commoners coming to praise the victor. While the rulers—the most important—are mentioned first, Spenser ends with the common folk. They do make much ado about the dragon, fearing that it still might present a modicum of danger since “in his wombe might lurke some hidden nest / Of many Dragonettes, his fruitfull seede.”³⁴ A different commoner says that in the dragon’s “eyes did rest / Yet sparckling fyre,” and yet another says that “he saw him moue his eyes indeed.”³⁵ However, Spenser emphasizes the common folk by describing “[o]ne mother” and her “foolehardy child.”³⁶ The mother rebukes her child for playing with the talons of the dragon and scaring her “[h]alfe dead through

³² Reid, “Spenserian Psychology,” 374.

³³ For examples of such imagery, see Bernat Martorell’s *Saint George Killing the Dragon* (1435), Paolo Uccello’s *Saint George and the Dragon* (1470), Raphael’s *St. George* (1504), Raphael’s *St. George and the Dragon* (1505), Gillis Coignet’s *St. George the Great* (1581), and Peter Paul Rubens’ *Saint George and the Dragon* (1605-7). For an example that deviates from the norm, see Tintoretto, who foregrounds the princess, in *Saint George and the Dragon* (1558). The only woodcut in the 1590 and 1596 publications of *The Faerie Queene* is an image of St. George slaying the dragon, appearing at the end of Book One, Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, 156.

³⁴ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 12, st. 10, lines 5-6.

³⁵ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 12, st. 10, lines 7-9.

³⁶ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 12, st. 11, line 1.

feare” because the talons may yet cut the boy.³⁷ Thus, at the end of Book One, Spenser leaves us a reminder, an image of a good mother—possibly on the overprotective side—keeping her child from playing with the dead dragon’s talons and shielding him from any potential harm that might come from that hollow apocalyptic beast. When thinking in terms of perspective, the woman is in the foreground of the readers’ minds as they begin to leave Book One of *The Faerie Queene*. The dragon, Redcrosse, and the other inhabitants of the kingdom are in the background.

Book One begins with Una—a good mother—warning her foolhardy child not to enter the cave of a serpent. In this case, Redcrosse suffers the consequences of an anti-education, failing fully to defeat Errour, and becoming tangled in her serpentine coils. The book ends also with a good mother, warning her foolhardy child not to play with an already-dead, but possibly still dangerous, dragon. Despite being farthest socially from the rulers of the city who represent the intellectual powers of the soul, and despite possibly having a faulty perception in fearing a defeated dragon, the mother inhabits the responsibility of a good parent raising her child—her wisdom no hollow education, a necessary complement to the tempering to come.

³⁷ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. 1, canto 12, st. 11.

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