Georgia State University
ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

English Honors Theses | Department of English

2-7-2007

The "Root of Civil Conversion": Redefining Courtesy in Book VI of the Faerie Queene

Michelle Golden

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_hontheses

Recommended Citation
Golden, Michelle, "The "Root of Civil Conversion": Redefining Courtesy in Book VI of the Faerie Queene." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2007.
http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_hontheses/4

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

THE "ROOTE OF CIUIL CONUERSATION":

REDEFINING COURTESY IN BOOK VI OF *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

by

MICHELLE GOLDEN

Under the Direction of Wayne Erickson

ABSTRACT

Book Six of *The Faerie Queene* deals with the complexities of courtesy in a socially changing world. Calidore, the protagonist of Book Six, sets out to defeat the Blatant Beast, the chief enemy of courtesy, but abandons his quest midway through the book in order to live the shepherds' life. Despite the ethical ambiguity associated with Calidore's abandoning his quest, this pastoral setting should enable him to deepen his understanding of the nature and practice of courtesy. However, Calidore is unable to grow, and the poet essentially gives up on his own poetic quest.

INDEX WORDS: *The Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser, Book Six, Calidore, Courtesy, Courtliness, Renaissance Courtesy Theory, Pastoral, Pastorella, Mount Acidale

THE “ROOTE OF CIUIL CONUERSATION”:

REDEFINING COURTESY IN BOOK VI OF *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

by

MICHELLE GOLDEN

An Honors Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for Graduation with Undergraduate Research Honors

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2006

Copyright by
Michelle Lynn Golden
2006

THE "ROOTE OF CIUIL CONUERSATION":

REDEFINING COURTESY IN BOOK VI OF *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

by

MICHELLE GOLDEN

Honors Thesis Director: Wayne Erickson

Honors Program Director: Robert Sattelmeyer

Electronic Version Approved:

Honors Program
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
May 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Wayne Erickson for his advice and insight, for his tireless commitment, and for encouraging me to develop an “attitude” towards *The Faerie Queene.*

I would also like to thank Noel Kirkpatrick for helping me find and keep perspective whenever I lost it.

Finally, I thank my parents, Susan and Stuart Mitchell, for instilling in me a drive to succeed and to excel in all of my endeavors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
Introduction	1
Contextualizing Courtesy in *The Faerie Queene*	1
Calidore Displays Courtliness	7
Calidore in the Pastoral World	13
Mount Acidale: Vision and Ruin	21
The Poet Breaks his Pipe	27
Conclusion	30
Works Cited	33

Introduction

Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, composed of six books that are each dedicated to a virtue, reaches the height of its complexity and nuance in the sixth and final book: the book of Sir Calidore, or of Courtesy. This book tells the legend of Sir Calidore, who ostensibly represents courtesy, and whose quest is to capture the Blatant Beast. Possibly because courtesy is such a complex virtue, Calidore seems to fall short of mastering or even understanding it. Calidore's initial pursuit of courtesy manifests itself as a battle against discourtesy in the form of the Blatant Beast, which has, most discourteously, been biting seemingly innocent victims and leaving their wounds and reputations to fester in his wake. During his pursuit of the Beast, Calidore suddenly finds himself among shepherds in a pastoral world, where he falls in love and appears to abandon his quest. This truancy is one of the most debated elements of *The Faerie Queene*. When Calidore gives up his quest, he is actively disobeying the orders of his sovereign, which has brought much criticism upon his head. The cause of his truancy, however, may be the complex nature of his virtue. Courtesy requires some degree of leisure to flourish, so Calidore's truancy could be the only way that he can learn the nature of the virtue for which he strives.

Contextualizing Courtesy in *The Faerie Queene*

The Book of Courtesy presents the most difficult of Spenser's virtues. Courtesy in *The Faerie Queene* is a force that creates a harmonious society, encouraging

individuals to set aside their selfishness in order to serve society. This goal of overarching social harmony draws the reader back to Book One, The Book of Holiness, in which an individual seeks personal spiritual harmony. The parallel structure of the two books suggests that the social harmony brought about by courtesy is akin to holiness. In the first book of *The Faerie Queene*, the Red Cross Knight must have time to devote to contemplation before he can achieve a greater understanding of his virtue, holiness. The hermit Contemplation helps the Red Cross Knight see a larger goal:

> Then seek this path, that I to thee presage,
> Which after all to heauen shall thee send;
> Then peaceably thy painefull pilgrimage
> To yonder same *Hierusalem* doe bend,
> Where is for thee ordaind a blessed end. (1.10.61)[1]

Upon seeing the vision of *Hierusalem*, the Red Cross Knight wants to abandon his quest:

> O let me not (quoth he) then turne againe
> Bake to the world, whose ioyes so fruitlesse are,
> But let me heare for aie in peace remaine. (1.10.63)

Though Calidore actually does abandon his quest and Red Cross Knight does not, the two episodes can be viewed in the same light: each man must give up the active nature of his quest and spend time in a contemplative life in order to actually learn about his virtue. In the pastoral world, Calidore has the opportunity to experience *otium*: a degree of apparent idleness that allows spiritual growth. In this case, the growth manifests itself as love, which can be read as a small-scale representation of courtesy. A

[1] *The Faerie Queene* and the letter to Ralegh are both cited from Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Hamilton. All subsequent citations to these texts are from this edition and shall be cited internally by book, canto, and stanza.

loving relationship between two people must be governed by the same social harmony that should be used to govern larger social relationships. It is this time in the pastoral setting that should allow Calidore to experience a fuller conception of courtesy than he has available to him in the court world.

Spenser's conception and representation of courtesy are somewhat more complex than many portrayals of courtesy in the Renaissance period. Spenser writes in the midst of a rich tradition of focus on the courtier: the Italian Renaissance produced many style and courtesy manuals that were written to teach noble men how to live courteously. These manuals—the most famous of which is Baldesar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*—were translated into English and were widely circulated throughout England. Many of the books set out guidelines of etiquette for the aspiring courtier by describing the absolute ideal courtier. For example, Castiglione sets his courtesy theory in the framework of an aristocratic game: courtiers sit around and try to describe the perfect courtier. They focus on details of how he should move, act, speak, and interact with others. The most desirable trait in this perfect courtier is the quality of *sprezzatura*, the art of appearing artless. Castiglone suggests that appearing completely natural in every situation is "most attractive to the eyes and minds of men, who are always afraid of being tricked by art" (86-7). He also suggests that a courtier should "practise in all things a certain nonchalance which conceals all artistry" (67). Castiglione focuses on only the actions and the appearances of the perfect courtier.

A lesser-known but more comprehensive model of courtesy is set out by Stefano Guazzo in *Le Civil Conversationes.* John Lievsay suggests that Guazzo's book "offer[s] a broadly reasoned defense of social living as opposed to an egocentric individualism"

(44). The center of Lievsay's criticism of *The Book of the Courtier* focuses on the fact that Castiglione concentrates on outlining a set of arbitrary rules that will allow the upper class to remain in the upper class,[2] whereas Guazzo engages in a genuine discussion about the nature of courtesy and how different levels in a society can and must learn to work together in the changing Renaissance world, in which the lines between classes were not quite as clear as they had once been (44). Castiglione seems to be motivated by the same concern, but reacts to it differently; he seeks a means of maintaining the separation of the classes, and he finds it with *sprezzatura*. If a courtier comes by his virtues naturally and does not have to work to become great, his nobility will seem legitimate because he appears to have been born with it. Castiglione's courtesy functions more as a tool of deceit than a means of obtaining social harmony. While Guazzo seems to be rooted in realistic intra-social relationships, "the gracefully ceremonious, but artificial, life of the Court […] dominates *The Courtier* from beginning to end and underscores its insistence on the value of *appearance"* (Lievsay 44).

Spenser's version of courtesy more closely follows Guazzo's model than Castiglione's. Lievsay and Humphrey Tonkin both liken Spenser's courtesy to Guazzo's: "a marked community of interests and premises, a basic sameness of attitude can be seen in the works of the two men" (Lievsay 97).[3] Tonkin agrees, saying that Spenser's perception of courtesy is much closer to Guazzo's moral and social courtesy theory than to Castiglione's "social graces" (*The Faerie Queene* 174). Much of Book Six requires

---

[2] In Frank Whigham's entry in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, he claims that the end of all courtesy manuals was to "order and manage [the] controversy over social legitimacy" that was brought about by the surge of upper-middle class in Elizabethan England (195).

[3] Some resemblances are quite specific: Guazzo suggests that "the chiefest vertue is to abstaine from vice" (133), which is virtually identical in theory to the hermit's advice to Serena to "auoide the occasion of the ill" (6.6.14).

adaptation in the face of discourtesy; some of Calidore's problems come from the fact that he does not seem to be able to adapt effectively. While Castiglione's rigid rules of conduct leave little room for adaptation, Guazzo encourages it: "If then civile conversation ought to varie according to the varietie of the persons, I doubt mee at least the rules, which you shall set downe, wilbe long and hard: for that we are driven by diverse accidentes to have to deale with diverse persons" (114). Furthermore, Lievsay praises the fact that Guazzo incorporates religion and morality in his version of courtesy, while Castiglione sidesteps the issue (45). Kenneth Borris agrees that some aspects of religion are important to Spenser's version of courtesy: "Not always simply a secular code of behavior involving etiquette, affability, and humanity, medieval courtesy had theological implications, for its affinities with charitable love of one's neighbor opened it to religious treatment" (194).[4] The parallels between Book Six and Book One of *The Faerie Queene* create a relationship between courtesy and religion that suggests that Spenser appreciated Guazzo's interpretation of courtesy. Calidore's interactions with various social classes and his attempts at courteous behavior among the classes also suggest that Spenser's model is closer to Guazzo's than Castiglione's.

Spenser suggests a didactic purpose for his epic that is similar to courtesy literature in a letter to Sir Walter Ralegh written just prior to the poem's publication. Spenser claims to tell Ralegh the "general intention and meaning" of the poem: that "the generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline" (714). This seems like a legitimate statement of purpose,

[4] Borris distinguishes between medieval courtesy theory and Renaissance courtesy theory, claiming that Spenser represented a medieval (rather than Renaissance) courtesy theory. Earlier perceptions of courtesy focused more on morality and tended to "link manners and courtesy with virtue and spiritual salvation" (194).

given the division of the poem into books based on virtue. As Wayne Erickson points out, "in both earlier and contemporary criticism, the phrase about fashioning a gentleman in discipline is tirelessly reiterated to establish Spenser's serious moral purpose" (156). As Erickson goes on to explain, this reading ignores the nuances of language within the letter[5] and the irony and jests that would have been implicit in Spenser's letter to a friend. Though there is likely a serious element to the assertion, Spenser is potentially also playing with the idea of writing his own courtesy manual. When compared to Castiglione's work, *The Faerie Queene* acts almost as a mock courtesy manual. Instead of using ideal courtiers who completely embody their virtues, Spenser utilizes characters who are, above all else, innately human and fallible. The characters are not ideal, and that is made painfully and awkwardly obvious when they make (sometimes very large) blunders during their quests. If, however, Guazzo is Spenser's model, then Spenser could have something more noble in mind: to depict relatively average people trying their hardest to make a complex society work harmoniously.

Because Spenser's characters are so human, it is difficult to determine the relationship between each character and his virtue. The complete title of Book Six, for example, is "The Sixte Booke of the Faerie Qveene. Contayning the Legend of S. Calidore or of Covrtesie." Though many critics call Calidore the Knight of Courtesy, one even going so far as to label him "a perfected knight of courtesy" (Williams 57), the title of the sixth book of *The Faerie Queene* does not necessarily imply that connection. The word "or" leaves some ambiguity: "there is finally no deciding whether that enigmatic *or* balances synonyms or pivots between alternatives" (Miller 128). The grammatical structure of the title implies that the legend is either "the Legend of Sir Calidore" or it is

[5] Especially Spenser's use of the word "fashion" 156-8.

"the Legend of Courtesy." It does not necessarily follow that Calidore and courtesy are the same thing; the book could be about the journey of each: Calidore's quest and also the state of courtesy in different social spheres. We might say that Calidore functions as an imperfect vessel, through which Spenser and the reader explore the conception and execution of courtesy. It is difficult to consider Calidore the "Knight of Courtesy" when he essentially fails in his quests to subdue the Blatant Beast and to embody courtesy.

Calidore's quests for the essence or ideal of courtesy and for the defeat of the Blatant Beast ultimately fail because he never truly understands the nature of Courtesy. Calidore's perception of courtesy follows Castiglione's ideas of appropriate social graces and should be called something more like "courtliness" rather than courtesy. Because Calidore is unable to move beyond courtliness to an understanding of what is required to live harmoniously in a varied social environment, he can neither teach others to be courteous nor defeat the enemy of courtesy, the Blatant Beast. Though the social situations in which Calidore finds himself become more complex with the progression of the cantos, Calidore's understanding of courtesy shows no corresponding evolution. Because Calidore's practice of courtliness differs from the narrator's and the poet's courtesy, Spenser seems, in the end, to give up on his character (and perhaps his own "quest") in desperation.

Calidore Displays Courtliness

The situations in which Calidore must act courteously grow more complex as the cantos progress throughout Book Six. Calidore acts in a courtly manner to the best of his understanding, but his inability to grasp a deeper courtesy that speaks to dynamic human

relationships limits his ability to adapt to situations that require courtesy or delicacy and eventually implicates him in discourteous actions. The early cantos in Book Six show Calidore at his best, moderately equipped to deal with social complications in an environment with which he is familiar. However, with each episode, Calidore becomes progressively less successful.

In the first three cantos of Book Six, Calidore is confronted with three situations: Crudor and Briana's discourteous behavior towards each other and others, Tristram's violation of the rules of chivalry, and Priscilla and Aladine's affair and its interruption. Crudor and Briana's brand of discourtesy is probably the most common and the easiest to deal with: they lack all sense of hospitality. Before allowing anyone to even pass by her castle, Briana collects a toll of human hair. She plans on creating a mantle out of the hair—a task set forth by Crudor in order for her to win his love. Calidore, however, tells her to "forgoe / This euill manner […] and doe in stead thereof mild curt'sie showe […] that shall you glory gaine / More then his love" (6.1.27). His suggestion to Briana is that courtesy will do her much more good than will Crudor's love. Crudor himself shows discourtesy toward Briana by demanding a gift for his love rather than giving it freely. Love can be seen as a subset of courtesy, and in this case, abuse of love is equivalent to an abuse of courtesy (Cheney 190). Despite his discourteous demand from Briana, Crudor otherwise mimics the life of a knight, especially in the art of battle. Crudor has mastered fighting, which is one of Castiglione's courtier's most important traits; however, his relationships with and treatment of other people negate his positive attributes (Tonkin, *The Faerie Queene* 176).

Though Crudor and Briana both seem to live the lives of courtiers, the corruptions in their personalities—mainly pride and insecurity—corrupt their relationships with others (Archer 18). Though Crudor and Briana seem to agree to act courteously in the end, Crudor swears that he will be more civil in his behavior only after Calidore nearly kills him and then spares his life. Likewise, Briana stops her discourtesy only because she gets what she wants, not because she understands what it means to be courteous (Danner 8). Furthermore, after she gets what she wants, Briana offers to give land or payment to Calidore, who refuses because he does not believe that he should receive payment for his courtesy. Crudor and Briana's behavior may have changed, but there is no indication that their understanding of courtesy has changed.

After leaving Briana and Crudor, Calidore comes across a second, slightly more complex opportunity to uphold the rules of courtesy. He sees a knight on horseback fighting a young man on foot. This immediately seems suspect: why would a knight attack an unarmed young man on foot? Calidore's concern immediately shifts, however, when the young man kills the knight. He becomes more concerned with the knight, and why the youth stepped out of his "place" and killed a man of higher rank than himself. Upon questioning the boy, Tristram, Calidore finds that the knight had been abusing his own lady, and the youth had defended her. In this case, the knight, who should be the champion of virtue, blatantly neglected common courtesy. When an unarmed boy questioned his treatment of the lady, the knight immediately attacked the boy. Calidore is faced with a question of status in society versus status in virtue. Tristram's attack of the knight shows that the rules of chivalry may not apply when discourteous behavior is present (Tonkin, *The Faerie Queene* 177). In light of this, Calidore's favoring of

Tristram's side makes sense. Calidore's behavior becomes somewhat suspect, however, when he allows Tristram to take the knight's armor as spoils from the battle (Danner 12). For the first time, we see Calidore exhibiting behavior that is not pristinely courteous. Though he legitimately has the authority to turn Tristram into a squire, allowing him to take an older knight's armor seems callous and inappropriate.

Before his death at Tristram's hand, the discourteous knight had run across two unsuspecting lovers in the woods, wounding the man and embarrassing the woman. Finding this out from the knight's lady, Calidore sets out to control the damage that has been done. Calidore finds the lovers, Aladine and Priscilla, in bad shape. He carries Aladine back to his father's house, and Priscilla follows and stays there at Aladine's bedside overnight, despite the damage this may do to her reputation. Calidore, however, devises a plan that will enable her to save face with her parents. He goes back and cuts the discourteous knight's head off and presents it to Priscilla's family, telling them a lie: that he "did free [her] from feare / Of a discourteous Knight, who her had reft / And by outrageous force away did beare" (6.3.18). Calidore lies for Priscilla to save her embarrassment and to preserve the appearance of her innocence. Though this seems courteous, Calidore has now violated the body of the dead knight twice—by allowing Tristram to remove his armor, then by cutting his head off—and has blatantly lied to Priscilla's family. Though Calidore seems essentially courteous and he is doing his best to uphold harmony, he is doing so with the sacrifice of his own character, and his ethics have now been tarnished (Tonkin, *The Faerie Queene* 177). The next episode continues this trend of escalating ethical ambiguity.

Though Calidore's honor does not seem perfect in the first few cantos, he is doing his best to fix other people's problems. His ethics may be questionable, but this ambiguity is tempered by the fact that Calidore only acts in response to the discourteous discord that has been left behind by others. After leaving Priscilla with her family, Calidore continues upon his journey until he blunders upon Calepine and Serena, who are lying together in a "couert shade" (6.3.20). This immediately follows and parallels the Priscilla and Aladine episode, wherein a discourteous knight interrupts the lovemaking of a hidden couple. Calidore suddenly finds himself in the position of the discourteous knight. Despite the fact that critics such as Humphrey Tonkin claim that Calidore follows the rules of courtesy after the interruption (*The Faerie Queene* 177), the Blatant Beast reenters the narrative here and bites Serena. Because allegory demands a degree of causality in both how and when characters are used, the Blatant Beast's appearance here must be purposeful rather than coincidental.

Calidore, therefore, is complicit in Serena's bite in several ways. First, he interrupts the lovers. The description of their love indicates solitude and harmony—a harmony that is destroyed by Calidore's interruption. Though he is somewhat diplomatic after the interruption, Calidore does not leave the lovers. He stays, ignoring Serena and talking instead about knightly matters with Calepine. Serena, bored, wanders off to pick flowers and is left vulnerable to attack because the men ignore her (Cheney 199-200). The men should be protecting both the honor and the physical well-being of the lady, but they are involved in their own conversation. This shows the hypocrisy of court life; knights are generally more involved in talking about being knights than actually performing the duties of chivalry. Implicitly, then, Calidore brings the Blatant Beast to

Serena in some capacity: either by interrupting her and Calepine in the first place (though it seems that if this were the case, the Blatant Beast would have gone after Priscilla earlier); by not responding to the interruption as he should; by judging Serena, which changes her reputation in his eyes, even if in no one else's; or, finally, because, as a member of the court, he represents the court's corruption, in which case the Blatant Beast acts in response to the interaction of the corrupt court with a woman whose ethics have been compromised.

The appearance of the Blatant Beast at this moment, when Calidore himself has caused discourtesy, must be significant. Calidore has trouble finding the Blatant Beast until he summons it through discourtesy. Though there are aspects of Serena's personality—such as the importance she puts on appearances over actuality and her inability to take responsibility for her own actions (Archer 26)—that implicate her as well, much of the blame must be laid on Calidore. After his discourtesy conjures the Beast, Calidore continues his discourteous behavior. He becomes so engaged in following the Beast that he leaves Serena bleeding on the ground, certain that Calepine will clean up the mess that he has left. This is a transitional moment of the book. Calidore disappears for five cantos; in his stead, Calepine tries to deal with the discourteous world Calidore leaves in his wake. Calidore's actions and possibly his associations with the Court enable corruption in the area, which Calepine is ill-equipped to deal with in Calidore's absence.

Calidore in the Pastoral World

Calidore reenters the narrative in canto nine of Book Six chasing the Blatant beast all over the land:

> Him first from court he to the citties coursed,
>
> And from the citties to the townes him prest,
>
> And from the townes into the countrie forsed,
>
> And from the country back to priuate farmes he scorsed.
>
> From thence into the open fields he fled. (6.9.3-4)

Calidore is now in the pastoral world, where he immediately loses track of the Blatant Beast. He stops and rests with the shepherds for a while and notes the simplicity of their lives. Almost immediately, he spots Pastorella in a version of the vision he will see later; Pastorella dances on a hill, surrounded by a ring of dancing shepherd girls. At that moment, he falls in love with Pastorella and "Ne any will had thence to moue away, / Although his quest were farre afore him gon" (6.9.12). This is the moment at which Calidore becomes truant. He leaves his official quest to stay in the pastoral world, a move that may be necessary for him to learn about courtesy and to confront the Blatant Beast.

When Calidore first enters the pastoral world, it seems to function as a perfect representation of an ideal, harmonious society. Pastoral was frequently used in English Renaissance literature either to represent an ideal society or to highlight the corruption of the court world. The shepherds in pastoral often represent courtiers who have been put into a simpler setting in order to emphasize the more important aspects of life. Often, love is a major theme in pastoral literature, as the shepherds' leisure time enables the

development of human relationships. By inserting an actual courtier into a society that had generally been used to represent courtiers, the poet places Calidore in the position of an outsider or intruder. Thus, what initially seems to be a chance encounter between Calidore and the shepherds becomes a destructive intrusion.

Before Calidore's arrival, the pastoral world appears to be thriving: his first sights of the shepherds include "shepheard groomes, / playing on pypes, and caroling apace" (6.9.5) and Pastorella "Vpon a little hillocke […] Enuiron'd with a girland, goodly graced, / of louely lasses" (6.9.8). A distinction is immediately made between the shepherds and Calidore upon his arrival: while the shepherds are engaged in easy leisure, Calidore "yet sweating comes"(6.9.5). Calidore's sweating shows that he is working hard, while the shepherds' work is quite easy. When Calidore asks the shepherds whether they have seen the Blatant Beast, they reply that "no such beast they saw, / Nor any wicked feend, that mote offend / Their happie flockes, nor daunger to them draw" (6.9.6). The shepherds perceive no danger; even if it does exist within their world, it does not emerge before Calidore's intrusion into their lives. Again, when Meliboe describes his life, he creates a vision of harmony: "The little that I haue, growes dayly more / Without my care" (6.9.21), and "all the night in siluer sleepe I spend, / And all the day, to what I list, I doe attend" (6.9.22). The life cycle in this pastoral world seems to run itself. The shepherds loosely supervise their flocks and their plants but do not necessarily need to. Meliboe sleeps soundly and without cares every night, and he does what he wants during the day. This picture of a harmonious society, however, is demolished by the end of Calidore's stay with the shepherds.

The pastoral interlude is one of the most puzzling episodes of *The Faerie Queene*. Critics have often criticized Calidore's truancy as an abandonment of his official quest for the sake of laziness or love. According to Helen Cooper's entry in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, this "critical uncertainty" about whether the pastoral episode is "morally good or bad reflects a degree of ambivalence in the poem itself," though Spenser clearly considers the pastoral world in general to be a good thing (532). Much of the controversy about Calidore's truancy is due to the beginning stanzas of canto 10. The first stanza criticizes Calidore for abandoning his quest:

> Who now does follow the foule *Blatant Beast*
> Whilest *Calidore* does follow that faire Mayd,
> Vnmyndfull of his vow and high beheast,
> Which by the Faery Queene was on him layd,
> That he should never leaue, nor be delayd
> From chacing him, till he had it attchieued?
> But now entrapt of love, which him betrayd,
> He mindeth more, how he may be relieued
> With grace from her, whose love his heart hath sore engrieued. (6.10.1)

This open criticism, however, is followed by "Ne certes mote he greatly blamed be" for staying in the pastoral world and "neuer more delight[ing] in painted show / Of such false blisse" (6.10.3). The speaker turns around immediately and suggests that Calidore is justified in leaving the "painted show[s]" of court for the simpler, blissful pastoral life. Spenser seems to want his readers to be conflicted at this point. Though Calidore is being irresponsible because he has abandoned his quest, his response to Pastorella and his

desire to stay in the pastoral world are natural human urges. However, the situation is further complicated by the fact that, while the speaker and the readers realize the ethical problems in his choice, Calidore does not even consider (or seem to remember) his quest after he decides to stay.

Because of these problems in the text, the critical history of Calidore's truancy is marked by contradiction. Critics are unsure of what to do with Calidore's abandonment of his quest, so they tend to qualify or to outright negate their own statements. Douglas Northrop claims that Calidore should be blamed completely for his truancy and that the speaker thinks so as well; although the speaker says that Calidore should not be "greatly blamed," that is not the same, according to Northrop, as being innocent of blame (217-8). Calidore's mistake is taking the virtually unsurpassed beauty of Pastorella as a substitute for the wholly unsurpassed beauty of the Faery Queene; he "has chosen the glory that is second, not the one that is first" (Northrop 218). However, Northrop later states that the pastoral interlude is necessary because "Calidore needs instruction or inspiration beyond the court and so comes to the pastoral landscape […] for his final growth in courtesy" (224). Northrop asserts that Calidore should, in fact, be blamed for his own truancy, but then says that the truancy is necessary as a plot device: in effect, he blames Calidore for something that is necessary for the development of his character and the poem as a whole.

Humphrey Tonkin and Arnold Williams both take a more sympathetic stance towards Calidore. Both critics point out the similarity between Calidore's truancy and the Red Cross Knight's spiritual quest, each of which is required to equip the protagonist

to fight his foe and to realize the fullness of his virtue[6]. Tonkin suggests that the truancy gives the reader mixed feelings because we, along with Calidore, are not sure what is right and wrong in the situations that Calidore is given. Instead of clearly defining Calidore's virtue, the poet forces both Calidore and the reader to learn courtesy as they travel through the book (*The Faerie Queene* 174). However, Tonkin also questions the motives of the poet when Calidore is "rewarded" for abandoning his quest with the vision of the Dance of the Graces (172). To some degree, Tonkin contradicts himself by first sympathizing with Calidore and then questioning what he perceives as the poet's sympathetic treatment of the same character. Williams tends to have the opposite problem: instead of contradicting himself, he never qualifies his statements about Calidore's truancy. He claims that Calidore's experiences in Arcady[7] "are really preparation for success in his quest" (11). He goes even further in his defense of Calidore when he claims that time in Arcady may be magic and that Calidore may not actually be gone from his "real world" quest for more than a few hours (30-1). Though this is an interesting concept, Williams does not seem to blame Calidore at all for his truancy. Many other critics take blame away from Calidore by attributing the ills that befall the pastoral world during his stay to mere Fortune.[8] Stanley Stewart also excuses Calidore's truancy, saying that by falling in love with Pastorella, Calidore falls to the level of those whom he has been helping and becomes vulnerable (75). Though I may sound as though I am contradicting myself, I am suggesting that these critics can neither

---

[6] See Williams 11-2 and Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 122.
[7] Williams' term for the pastoral world.
[8] Montrose claims that "cosmic mutability" is a constant force against courtesy (58); Danner says that Calidore's world needs force because it is constantly attacked by a hostile Fortune (4); Tonkin addresses the issue at length in *The Faerie Queene* (143, 178, 187); Cheney explains that Calidore must use courtesy to fight the vagaries of fortune (189).

effectively admit to the complexities of the issues around the truancy nor frame their arguments cleanly around the ambiguities inherent to the sixth book of *The Faerie Queene*. Though in many cases Calidore's less-than-courteous intrusion into another society could be harmless, in this case, Calidore invades the pastoral world, and he brings with him the most dangerous kinds of discourtesy.

Regardless of Calidore's culpability in his decision to remain in the pastoral world, he does remain. Though Pastorella's beauty (or Calidore's "love" for Pastorella) makes Calidore stay initially, there are other aspects of the place that appeal to him. Pastorella's father, Meliboe, invites Calidore to stay with them, and Calidore learns that Meliboe had lived in the court world for a time. He had, ambitiously, left his simple home in search of something else, forsaking his lowly upbringing, but had returned to his rightful place after ten years (Archer 20). Meliboe delivers a speech detailing his stay at court and how he decided that it is better for him to stay in his own place and to live the life that he was born into, and to be happy with that. He is sure, however, to emphasize that his shepherd life is a choice, not an obligation (Williams 11). Calidore's response to this speech is strange: he was "rapt with double rauishment," and "twixt his pleasing tongue, and her faire hew, / He lost himself, and like one halfe entraunced grew" (6.9.26). Calidore's reaction to these people is strong and unnatural. He claims to wish he had been born into that world instead of his own, and is fascinated by their life. He calls their meal "meane food" and their home a "cabin," yet he vows that he will embrace their way of life (6.9.32). This is almost insulting; he is so fascinated by their life that he wants to wear it like a cloak over his own life.

By embracing the pastoral life, which he sees as quaint, Calidore abandons his own life and insults theirs by reducing it to something that lacks a certain element of humanity. Just in case any hapless reader does not understand that Calidore does not fit into this world, Spenser has him offer to pay Meliboe for his courtesy. Earlier, of course, Calidore refuses payment from Briana for his courteous service, but now he offers payment for the same, putting himself in the position of Briana. In both cases, the discourteous party tries to stop acting discourteously, but in reality does not understand what courtesy is or why the initial action was discourteous. Calidore has changed roles: in his own world, he was (or tried to be) the model of courtesy. In the pastoral world, he is the discourteous visitor who must learn how to live within the harmony of an alien society.

Though an alien society may be necessary to challenge Calidore's courtly perception of courtesy, Spenser specifically chose to use pastoral, which suggests that he is either building on or critiquing pastoral literary tradition. Paul Alpers distinguishes between Calidore's motive for pastoral—to "escape from worldliness and its discontents"—and the poet's—to use "a mode of courtly and humanist self-representation" (239, 250). Following the conventions of allegory, this use of pastoral has a dual purpose. Alpers suggests that the character of Calidore is given motive for the use of pastoral within the text: escape form courtly corruption, a commonly stated pastoral theme. The poet, however, uses pastoral to criticize courtly society, expose Calidore's shortcomings, and reveal his own vision of poetic creation. The reader is shown good and bad in both pastoral world and court world based on Calidore's pastoral stay. The chief element that Calidore seems to bring into the pastoral world, however, is

false pretence. He claims to want to stay because of the way of life, though he really stays because of love (or beauty). In his initial interaction with Pastorella, he entertains her "With all kind courtesies, he could inuent" (6.9.34).

Now Calidore has moved from unintentional discourtesy (interrupting Serena and Calepine) to intentionally using courtesy as a tool to win Pastorella's heart. These attempts seem only to bewilder and confuse Pastorella, who does not understand the conventions of Court courtesy (Tonkin, *The Faerie Queene* 183). When Calidore sees that his attempts to impress Pastorella are not working, he decides to "chaunge […] his loftie looke; / And doffing his bright armes, himselfe addrest / In shepheards weed" (6.9.36). Though he appears to embrace the shepherd's life, Calidore wears shepherds' clothes only as another trick to win Pastorella (Stewart 77-8). Furthermore, Calidore uses his "courtesy" to humiliate Coridon and lower Coridon's status as a suitor for Pastorella. When Calidore wins a flowered garland from Pastorella, he passes it on to Coridon, which causes Calidore to seem chivalrous and Coridon to seem inept. Calidore uses what he has learned about courtesy in his own world to manipulate the characters in the pastoral world.

Calidore's actions, however he intends them, also move him in the direction of learning about courtesy. Removing his armor could be a trick to win Pastorella. It could also be a sign that he is neglecting his duties to his sovereign, or a sign that he takes his safety for granted in this world. However, dressing himself in shepherds' clothing enables him to enter the pastoral world, and allows him to put down his defenses, which is essential for him to learn courtesy from the shepherds (Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 122).

Calidore's defenselessness aligns him as a member of the pastoral world. Though the shepherds' trusting natures are socially positive, they create a fragile world. As in the rest of the poem, outside forces constantly threaten to break into the shepherds' world (Tonkin *The Faerie Queene* 182). In such a delicate world, "shepherd poets can maintain their otium only by closing their eyes and ears to the unpleasant actualities impinging upon the pastoral world" (Montrose 49). Perhaps these forces are inevitable; Williams claims that Arcady will not work as a culture because it lacks adequate defenses (79). The impending doom surrounding the pastoral world represents the fact that discord may always want to spread into places of harmony, while harmony can be created only with the naïve pretense that there is no discord anywhere near the harmony. Spenser, in essence, depicts an ideal society to suggest that there is no ideal society. The Dance of the Graces, created by simple Colin Clout's playing, shows that an ideal courtesy may exist in art, but the overall effect of Book Six suggests that Spenser did not believe, contrary to what his letter to Sir Ralegh suggests, that art could change people.

Mount Acidale: Vision and Ruin

Much of *The Faerie Queene*'s plot structure is crafted around parallels; scenes mimic other scenes, characters parallel the actions of other characters, and characters are presented with situations in which they must contradict their own earlier actions. Just as Calidore interrupts Calepine and Serena's lovemaking, Calidore intrudes upon another scene late in Book Six. Colin Clout sits piping while naked ladies—nymphs and maidens—dance around in a ring, with four Graces dancing in the center of the ring. Calidore stops and watches for a while, entranced by this vision of "a symbol of the

divinely-patterned unity which God's love providentially gives to those circumstances in earthly life which seem fragmented, unconnected, and inconclusive" (Archer 30). He sees this unity and the grace and harmony that the dancers so openly share with each other and with Colin Clout. Williams calls the Mount Acidale vision the "realization of courtesy in its absolute form" because it is a "sight of beings superior to men acting voluntarily in perfect order towards one another" (57).

Perhaps because the Mount Acidale vision is the last and possibly most striking vision in *The Faerie Queene*, critics have focused on it as the key element to Book Six. However, the vision, like Calidore's actions, is ambiguous. This, again, leads to critical confusion, and many critics will make a blanket statement of what the vision "means" without justifying their perception with any proof.[9] Most critics agree, however, that the Dance of the Graces represents some manifestation of the ideal of courtesy in the form of harmony. Archer sees the Dance of the Graces as an ideal courtesy because it shows the "free and virtuous reciprocity of benefits" (30). Because the vision of courtesy is in the form of a dance, this idea of reciprocity is appropriate. In an elaborate dance with so many characters involved, each must give and take exactly what is necessary for the promotion of their graceful harmony. Though in his earlier book, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral*, Tonkin claims that the Mount Acidale vision is incomprehensible because readers perceive it in the same way that Calidore does, in his later book he sees the vision as a culmination of artistic harmony: "this confluence of social order, natural order and

[9] For example, Tonkin claims that Calidore "ascended the mount to learn the meaning of courtesy" and must afterwards "descend to the bowels of the earth to rescue the flower of courtesy [Pastorella] from the hands of despoilers" (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 144-5). He offers no explanation about how Calidore learns the meaning of courtesy or how he could use it to rescue Pastorella.

poetic order within the pastoral vision is sanctioned by courtesy literature, […] the 'social tropes' of Elizabethan courtesy, and by poetic theory" (*The Faerie Queene* 176).

An aspect of the Dance that has received much attention from critics is the matter of the Graces in the center of the dance. Depending upon how one reads the text, there are either three Graces dancing around a girl in the center of all of the circles, or a girl is dancing in a circle of four with the three graces[10]. Either way, this girl is a humble shepherdess who has been elevated to a high status within the dance. Though many see the girl specifically as Colin's mistress, Tonkin also suggests that she could represent Pastorella or even a universal, general ideal of simple girlhood (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 143). Lila Geller struggles to fit the use of this humble girl into her theory that Spenser favored aristocracy and used *The Faerie Queene* to indicate the dangers of a rising middle class. She claims that because the girl is lowborn, her existence as an element of the Graces must be Providential. She suggests that this fourth grace is only humble because Colin creates the vision, and his vision is somewhat flawed (53). Though it is admirable of Geller to address the most obvious argument against her theory of nobility, her inability to justify the use of a lowborn woman as the fourth grace undermines her argument. Louis Adrian Montrose suggests that Colin elevates his "shepherd lass" by virtue of the grace and courtesy of a mutual love that transcends conscious effort (57). He describes Spenser's goal in creating the Dance of the Graces as an attempt to portray a humble poet celebrating feminine perfection in the form of either a woman or a goddess (34). Whereas critics seem to want to avoid the issue of Calidore's

[10] See Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 138-40 for an in-depth visual explanation of the two interpretations

truancy, the ambiguity of the Mount Acidale vision lends itself to specific individual interpretations[11].

The Mount Acidale vision is almost exclusively regarded as a depiction of an artist creating his work; Colin Clout may be Spenser himself, and the Dance of the Graces either artistic creation or the moment of artistic inspiration. In this case, the shepherd lass would be Spenser's own love, Elizabeth Boyle. As Williams put it, "the perfect order is, then, a product of the imagination, of art, of a world above the practical one in which Calidore lives and acts" (58); Colin has access to this world, while Calidore does not, possibly because Colin is a creator while Calidore is merely an observer. Most critics agree that Mount Acidale is about creating art or, specifically, writing poetry. They do not, however, agree about what Calidore learns or is meant to learn from this vision.

Some critics see Calidore's ability to witness this vision as a gift or as something that he has earned. According to them, he has shed his courtly pretences and has embraced the shepherd's life, so he is blessed with this vision. Tonkin, who thinks of the vision as a reward, calls the Dance of the Graces a "glorious vindication of Calidore's decision" (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 125). James Nohrnberg explains that the "rusticated" Calidore, who has taken on shepherds' clothing and participates in their sports, is able to witness the Dance of the Graces because of his adaptation (4).

Despite the views of these critics, I read the interruption as unintentional and uninvited. Like his encounter with Calepine and Serena, this intrusion gives Calidore an opportunity to respond in a courteous manner, yet Calidore's intrusion upon Calepine and

---

[11] One such interpretation is Seth Weiner's "Minims and Grace Notes," in which Weiner uses an interpretation of the music of the Dance of the Graces to analyze Spenser's ultimate purpose for the Dance.

Serena led to the Blatant Beast's biting Serena, and his discourteous response led to a dissolution of harmony in Calepine and Serena's relationship. Calidore accidentally witnesses the scene on Mount Acidale, but instead of retreating discreetly, Calidore stays because the vision fascinates him. His desire to be a part of the harmony that he sees leads to a dissolution of the entire vision. Calidore, who should have learned enough courtesy to not interrupt in the first place, seems to have learned nothing from his time in the pastoral world. He does not even understand what he sees; though he senses the power and the beauty of the vision, he has no idea what it actually means or who the women in the vision are. Poor Colin Clout, who is so frustrated when the vision disappears that he breaks his pipe, has to explain the vision to Calidore. He tells Calidore that the women are the Graces, whom Venus places on Earth to teach men civility—courtesy:

> That all those Ladies, which thou sawest late,
>
> Are *Venus* Damzels, all within her fee,
>
> But differing in honour and degree:
>
> They all are Graces, which on her depend.
>
> ……
>
> They teach vs, how to each degree and kynde
>
> We should our selues demeane, to low, to hie;
>
> To friends, to foes, which skill men call Ciuility. (6.10.21,23)

Calidore should glean some sense of harmony and courtesy from watching the dance, but if he has taken any idea of the "essence" of courtesy from the vision, Colin would not need to explain what the Graces do for humanity. The mere fact that Calidore has no

understanding of what he has seen is the first indication that he does not learn from the vision. Furthermore, Colin explains, the graces "also naked are, that without guile / Or false dissemblaunce all them plaine may see" (6.10.24). This speaks straight to Calidore's character, which often uses guile in speech or action to get what he wants, especially in regard to Pastorella. The reference to the Graces' nakedness implies that it does not matter what clothing Calidore adopts: just wearing the shepherds' clothing will not make him truly appreciate or understand their lives. Colin is the only one allowed to witness and participate in the vision—he has simplicity and purity that Calidore lacks. Calidore cannot be a part of the vision because he comes from another world, what Williams calls the "higher world of perfect social order" (58).[12] Calidore is even so shortsighted that he does not admit his own responsibility in disturbing the vision; instead, he blames fortune for not allowing him to stay with the vision longer (Tonkin *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 140).

Many see the Mount Acidale vision as the climax of Book Six and of *The Faerie Queene* as a whole. If Acrasia's Bower of Bliss is the ultimate corruption in the book, Mount Acidale stands opposite as the ideal harmony, yet both are destroyed. The lines between good creation and bad creation are blurred by the fact that both have a negative end. If the vision is the climax of the epic, the reader has struggled long to get there, and it is deflated in an instant. Calidore takes one step and the entire point of the poem vanishes. All we have left is flawed Calidore (a reader, perhaps?) and frustrated Colin Clout (the author). Already at the end of Mount Acidale, there is a sense of futility that will continue until the end of Book Six, and *The Faerie Queene* as a whole.

---

[12]He, however, does not explain why Colin *is* allowed to be a part of the vision.

The Poet Breaks his Pipe

Part of the futility at the end of *The Faerie Queene* comes from the fact that Calidore does not learn from the harmony that he sees. He has been granted an opportunity to understand the nature of courtesy, in some capacity, and to grow, and he does not take advantage of it. Colin has created a vision of harmony and beauty, and the courtier does not understand it. Recalling that Colin represents Spenser, this is the moment of resignation. Instead of the courtier's having an epiphany and realizing the greatness and value of the art before him, the artist realizes that the observer does not understand the vision, and perhaps never will. The poet gives up. As Colin breaks his pipe in frustration, the poet seems to give up on his characters and leave them to the mess that they have made. Calidore goes back to the same games with Pastorella and Coridon that he was playing before:

> And euermore the shepheard Coridon,
>
> What euer thing he did her to aggrate,
>
> Did striue to match with some strong contention,
>
> And all his paines did closely emulate. (6.10.33)

Calidore still competes with Coridon to win Pastorella's favor by means of the false lifestyle that he has taken on.

While Coridon, Pastorella, and Calidore are walking through the pastures one day, a tiger attacks them. The tiger is the first sign of trouble in the pastoral world. It serves as a premonition and perhaps a warning of the dangers to come. When it tries to attack Pastorella, Coridon runs away and Calidore attacks and kills it. While Coridon obviously shows cowardice, running from a tiger seems quite logical for preservation and may be

what the shepherds normally do. If this is the case, Calidore once again imposes the standards and practices of his own society on the Pastoral world. He has not adapted to their natural social order, and his encounter with the tiger may be his last opportunity to show that he has learned how to live harmoniously in the pastoral world. After he kills the tiger, he chops its head off and presents it to Pastorella. With this action, he opens the door for other violence to enter this peaceful world. The action also mirrors his presentation of the knight's severed head that he presents to Priscilla's parents when he lies to them. This parallel structure reminds the reader that Calidore is not always honest and may be acting, again, with ulterior motives.

With the tiger attack, Calidore wins Pastorella over. Her final acceptance of Calidore's affection is the proverbial "nail in the coffin" for the pastoral world. Calidore's false courtesy has been accepted by the central figure in the pastoral, and this loss of defense guarantees that other corruption will now infiltrate the world. The language that Spenser uses in reference to Calidore's winning Pastorella is highly ironic: "So well he woo'd her, and so well he wrought her" emphasizes that he had to work at gaining her love (6.10.38). His "comely guize" and "gracious speach" win her over in the end, after he learns to adapt superficially to her life (6.1.2). Of Calidore's ability to win people with his speech, Tonkin says, "his ease of conversation is both a major asset and a liability. One begins to fear that he might deceive himself with his own eloquence" (*Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 117). Spenser again criticizes the idea of *sprezzatura*, only this time it is more dangerous because it is a courtier's art of manipulation, rather than his courtly skill, that is disguised. The danger lies in the fact that his outward

appearance and actions seem to fit the pastoral model of courtesy in most aspects, while on the inside, Calidore carries courtly corruption with him.

Calidore's corruption sets the precedent for corruption in the shepherds' lives: one day when Calidore is hunting in the woods, brigands come to the Pastoral world and destroy it. The brigands represent the ultimate form of discourtesy. They go into a village, steal everything for their own use, and sell the people into slavery. If harmony has an opposite, I would say it is an entire village being ransacked and all of its members being sold into slavery. This removes the humanity of the people—an ultimate affront to courtesy. When Calidore returns to find his mimicry of an ideal world ruined, he is hysterical; his vision of beauty and perfection has been obliterated (Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral* 145-6).

Because Calidore's perception of the pastoral ideal has been ruined, Spenser switches back to a heroic mode of narrative. Calidore once more has a quest—to save Pastorella—and nothing will stand in his way. Along with Coridon, the only survivor from the siege (because he had run away), Calidore goes after the brigands and manages to save Pastorella, but Meliboe is dead. He takes Pastorella out of the pastoral world, giving all of Meliboe's sheep to Coridon, leaving him in charge of what was left of the world (which is almost nothing).

Calidore's leaving the pastoral world in shambles presents many problems. Williams claims that Calidore, "the champion of courtesy," "always cleans up the individual problems of victims of discourtesy before resuming his pursuit of the Beast" (59). This is in no way true for the pastoral world, whose exposure to Calidore essentially leads to its destruction. Calidore neither seems to notice nor to care. By

restoring the flocks to Coridon, Calidore has set up a temporary order, but it is vulnerable and unstable (Danner 16). Before he comes into the society, it is harmonious. Any society that can be graced with the vision of Mount Acidale and, in fact, imitate that harmony in many ways, must have a strong understanding and practice of courtesy. Calidore was given the opportunity to leave his world, which upheld the strictly surface courtesies of the court—courtliness rather than actual courtesy—and to enter another society, in which he could learn and practice that deeper courtesy that leads to harmony. If his "surface quest" is to subdue the Blatant Beast, his deeper quest is to learn the true nature of a society that is naturally impervious to the harms of the Blatant Beast. Instead, Calidore inflicts his own perceptions of courtesy on that world, upsetting its harmony and causing the entire society to fester. In essence, Calidore becomes the Blatant Beast. He is, in fact, doubly implicated: first he introduces discourtesy into the society, which would make it vulnerable to the Beast, and then he unintentionally "bites" it, causing its destruction.

Conclusion

The last canto of Book Six leaves more loose ends than it ties up. In a typical ending to a romance story, Pastorella is suddenly reunited with her long-lost family. Calidore leaves her with them, promising to return to her after he fulfills his quest. He finds the Blatant Beast attacking and destroying churches. In a battle of wills, Calidore subdues and muzzles the beast, then travels around Faeryland, displaying his victory. After the Blatant Beast's capture, the speaker says that the Beast's "blasphemous tong"

will “neuer more defam[e] gentle Knight, / Or vnto louely Lady d[o] wrong” (6.12.34), and that former victims of the Beast “Reioyced much to see his captiue plight” (6.12.37).

Calidore’s parading around the countryside with the Beast is also strange considering that in the pastoral world, Calidore in essence became the Beast. Now they are one again, because the chains with which Calidore subdues the Beast now join them together. If the Beast is muzzled, but traveling around with Calidore, one must question whether Calidore has become the voice of the Beast. Eventually, whether it is let free or naturally re-created by society, the Beast is once again loosed upon the world, and, according to the poet, is thriving in Elizabethan England. The end of the book expresses the havoc that the Blatant Beast wreaks upon Elizabethan England:

> So now he raungeth through the world againe,
> And rageth sore in each degree and state;
> Ne any is that may him now restraine,
> He growen is so great and strong of late,
> Barking and biting all that him doe bate,
> Albe they worthy blame, or cleare of crime,
> Ne pareth he most learned wits to rate,
> Ne spareth he the gentle Poets rime,
> But rends without regard of person or of time. (6.12.40)

In the last stanza, the poet expresses his fear that the Beast will attack his own poetry: “Ne may this homely verse, of many meanst, Hope to escape his venomous despite” (6.12.41). The poet’s last two lines—“Therfore do you my rimes keep better measure, / And seeke to please that now is counted wisemens threasure”—seem sad and resigned

(6.12.41). The poet now hopes only that his poems will please, rather than instruct. Whether or not he actually intended to “fashion a gentleman,” as he told Ralegh, Spenser sought to do something more than merely entertain with his poem, and these last lines indicate that, in his own mind, his poetic quest and vision fail.

Works Cited

Alpers, Paul. "Spenser's Late Pastorals." *Critical Essays on Edmund Spenser*. Ed. Mihoko Suzuki. London: Printice Hall, 1996.

Archer, Mark. "The Meaning of 'Grace' and 'Courtesy': Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*." *SEL* 27 (1987):17-34.

Borris, Kenneth. "Courtesy." *The Spenser Encyclopedia.* 194-5.

Castiglione, Baldesar. *The Courtier*. Trans. George Bull. London: Penguin Books, 1967.

Cheney, Donald. *Spenser's Image of Nature: Wild Man and Shepherd in The Faerie Queene*. New Haven: Yale U P, 1966.

Cooper, Helen. "Pastoral." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. 529-32.

Danner, Bruce. "Courteous Virtu in Spenser's Book 6 of The Faerie Queene." *SEL* 38 (1998): 1-18.

Erickson, Wayne. "Spenser's Letter to Ralegh and the Literary Politics of *The Faerie Queene'*s 1590 Publication." *Spenser Studies* 10 (1992): 139-174.

Geller, Lila. "Spenser's Theory of Nobility in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*." ELR 5 (1975): 49-57.

Guazzo, Stefano. *La Civil Conversatione.* Trans. George Pettie. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925.

Lievsay, John Leon. *Stefano Guazzo and the English Renaissance.* Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1961.

Miller, David Lee. "Calidore." *The Spenser Encyclopedia.* 127-128.

Montrose, Louis Adrian. "'The perfecte paterne of a Poete': The Poetics of Courtship in *The Shepheardes Calender*." *TSLL* 21 (1979): 34-65.

Nohrnberg, James. "Acidale." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. 4-6.

Northrop, Douglas A. "The Uncertainty of Courtesy in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene.*" *Spenser Studies* 14 (2000): 215-232.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene.* Ed. A. C. Hamilton. London and New York: Longman, 2001.

The Spenser Encyclopedia. Ed. A. C. Hamilton. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990.

Stewart, Stanley. "Sir Calidore and 'Closure'." *SEL* 24 (1984):69-86.

Tonkin, Humphrey. *The Faerie Queene.* London: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

---. *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1972.

Weiner, Seth. "Minims and Grace Notes: Spenser's Acidalian Vision and Sixteenth-Century Music." *Spenser Studies* 5 (1984): 91-112.

Whigham, Frank. "Courtesy as a Social Code." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. 195-7.

Williams, Arnold. *Flower on a Lowly Stalk*. Michigan: Michigan State U P, 1967.