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Author(s): Ray Heffner

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SPENSER'S ALLEGORY IN BOOK I OF THE  
*FAERIE QUEENE*

By RAY HEFFNER

In the study of Spenser's sources and allegory in the *Faerie Queene*, an important body of material has been too much neglected, namely, the tournaments and pageants which were popular throughout the long reign of Elizabeth. In this paper, I shall consider only those pageants presented to Elizabeth on her progress through London to her coronation on Saturday, January 14, 1558-9. An account of this progress was published by Richard Tottel,<sup>1</sup> "*cum privilegio*," on January 23—just nine days after the event. Another description of the pageants is given by Il Schifanoia,<sup>2</sup> the Mantuan Ambassador in London, in a letter to the Castellan of Mantua.

As Elizabeth came from the tower through the city she was greeted near Fanchurch with an oration of welcome, which promised her two gifts; the first, blessing tongues, and the second:

. . . true hertes which love thee from their roote whose sute is tryumphe now, and ruleth all the game which faithfulness have wone, and all untrithe driven out.<sup>3</sup>

The significance of this last phrase is clearly shown in the opening paragraph of the account of the pageants sent by Il Schifanoia. The Mantuan writes (p. 11):

<sup>1</sup> *The Passage of our most drad Soverainge Lady Quene Elyzabeth through the city of London to Westminister, the daye before her coronation, Anno 1558 (-9)*. Imprinted at London, in Flete-strete, within Temple barre, at the signe of the Hand and Starre, by Richard Tottill, the xxiii day of January, cum privilegio.

Another edition is in the Bodleian Library: *The Royal Passage of her Majesty from the tower of London to her Palace of Whitehall, with all the Speeches and Devices, both of the Pageants and otherwise, together with her Majesties severall answers, and the most pleasing Speeches to them all*. Imprinted at London by S. S. for Jone Millington, and are to be sold at her shop under S. Peter's Church, in Corne-hill, 1604. (Nichols, *Progresses*, I, 38.) Reprints may also be found in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, IV, 158 ff.; and in Pollard's *Tudor Tracts*, 365 ff.

<sup>2</sup> "To the Castellan of Mantua," *CSP., Venetian*, 1559-1581, pp. 11-19, dated "London, 23rd January, 1559."

<sup>3</sup> Nichols, I, 40.

As I suppose your Lordship will have heard of the farce performed in the presence of her Majesty on the day of the Epiphany, and I not having sufficient intellect to interpret it, nor yet the mummery performed after supper on the same day, of the crows in the habits of Cardinals, of asses habited as Bishops, and of wolves representing Abbots, I will consign it to silence, as also the new commencement of ritual made in her Majesty's Chapel with the English Litanies, which omit Saint Mary, all the Saints, the Pope and the Dead. Nor will I record the levities and unusual licentiousness practised at the court in dances and banquets, nor the masquerade of friars in the streets of London, nor the statute of St. Thomas stoned and beheaded, which is thrown down entirely, and the stucco statue of a little girl placed in its stead; limiting myself exclusively to the coronation, entertainments, ceremonies, pomps, and pageants, as you will see by the accompanying copies.

The first of the pageants was in the form of an arch of three stages, on the first of which was represented Henry VII and his Queen, or the union of the houses of Lancaster and York. On the second was Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn; and on the third was seated Elizabeth herself. Tottel explains the omission of Edward VI and Mary by saying, "forsomuch as she [Elizabeth] is the onely true heire of Henrye the Eighth." The verses explaining the pageant make this clear:

Henry the Eighth did spring  
In whose seat, his true heire, thou Quene Elisabeth doth sit.<sup>4</sup>

Such, then, is Spenser's authority for the omission of Edward and Mary from his genealogy in Canto x of Book II.

Of more significance, however, was the second pageant, "in the nether ende of Cornehill," which showed "a chylde representing her Majesties person, placed in a seate of Government, supported by certayne vertues, which suppressed their contrarie vyces under their feet." The first of these virtues was Pure Religion, "which did tread opon Superstition and Ignorance." Not only did each of the personages in the pageant have his name written upon his breast, "but also every of them was aptly and properly apparelled, so that hys apparel and name did agre to expresse the same person that in title he represented."

Il Schifanoya interpreted this pageant as follows (p. 13):

Farther on she found the second arch, with a very extravagant inscription purporting that hitherto religion had been misunderstood and misdirected,

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<sup>4</sup> Nichols, p. 42.

and that now it will proceed on a better footing, which was exemplified by a queen seated aloft on a throne, there being on one side persons clad in various fashions (fittingly), with labels inscribed *Religio Pura*, *Justicia Gubernandi*, *Sapientia*, *Prudentia*, and *Timor Dei*. On the other side hinting I believe at the past, were *Ignorance*, *Superstition*, *Hypocrisy*, *Vain Glory*, *Simulation*, *Rebellion*, and *Idolatry*.

When her Majesty arrived at the Little Conduit in Cheap, she enquired the meaning of the pageant (the fourth) and was told that it signified *Time*. "Tyme, quoth she, Tyme hath brought me hether." The pageant represented two mountains, one green and flourishing, the other withered and dead, contrasting the past with the hoped for future under Elizabeth. Out of a cave came Time leading his daughter Truth, "all cladde in whyte silke," with *Veritas* written on her breast and a Bible in English in her hand. A child explained the meaning with the following verses:

This olde man with sythe, olde Father Tyme they call,  
And her his daughter Truth, which holdeth yonder boke  
Whom he out of his rocke hath brought forth to us all  
From whence for many yeres she durst not once outloke . . .  
Now since that Time again his daughter Truth hath brought,  
We trust, O Worthy Quene, thou wilt this Truth embrace—

And at the conclusion of the verses, the Bible in English was presented to Elizabeth, who took it, kissed it, "and with both her handes held up the same, and so laid it upon her brest, with great thankes to the citie therefore." At the end of all the pageants, a child spoke these verses as a farewell:

For all men hope in thee, that all vertues shall reygne;  
For all men hope that thou none error shall support;  
For all men hope that thou wilt truth restore agayne,  
And mend that is amisse to all good mennes comfort. . .  
Farewell, O worthy Quene, and as our hope is sure,  
That Errours place thou wilt now Truth restore; . . .<sup>5</sup>

Tottel adds:

Whyle these words were in saying, and certain wishes therein repeted for maintenance of Trueth and *rooting out of Error*, she now and then helde up her hands to heavenwarde, and willed the people to say amen.

When the childe had ended, she said, "Be ye well assured I will stande your good Queene."

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<sup>5</sup> Nichols, p. 57.

Here is Spenser's Una (Truth) and a representation of Elizabeth in that character. It is to be remembered that Una's first achievement through her champion, the Redcrosse Knight, is the *rooting out of Error*. Elizabeth's connection with the character of Una is more clearly shown in the third pageant, in which eight beatitudes are applied to her. The verses in explanation make the following pointed references to her persecution under Mary:

Thou hast been viii times blest, O Quene of worthy fame,  
By mekenes of thy spirite, when care did thee besette,  
By mourning in thy grieffe, by mildnes in thy blame,  
By hunger and by thyrst, and justice couldst none gette.\*

Thus Truth, who for many years "durst not outlook from her cave," in the pageants has a double meaning—the reference is to Elizabeth as well as to the True Religion; but Truth, or True Religion, is thereby identified with Elizabeth. We see here the very essence of Spenser's allegorical method, the blending of moral, political, and religious allegory. We notice, too, that the method of the pageants is essentially that of Spenser in the praise of Elizabeth through her association with the virtues and her opponents with the vices.

Spenser was able to find in such pageantry not only a model for his blending of political, moral, and religious allegory, but also a suggestion for the use of romance material. Il Schifanoia, after describing the ladies, "so handsome and beautiful that it was marvellous to behold," gives the following description of a banquet that followed the actual coronation ceremonies (p. 18):

After the second course, which was brought like the first one to the trumpets' sound, and preceeded by the Earl of Arundel and the Duke of Norfolk on horseback, a knight in steel armour, spear on thigh, and on a very handsome barbed charger, after saluting the Queen, proclaimed three times to the people that if there were any grade or condition who denied, disputed or contradicted that the Queen his Sovereign (pointing at her) was not the true and legitimate crowned Queen of England, France, and Ireland, he was ready to maintain it by force of arms to the death, throwing down his gauntlet each time; and as no one answered him he took leave of her Majesty, who drank to his health and thanked him, giving him a silver cup worth 200 crowns.

On Monday, the 16th, these English personages (signori) had prepared

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\* Nichols, p. 47.

a joust, but it was postponed until the morrow, her Majesty feeling rather tired. I was not present. They could not finish it on the first day, the challengers, viz., the Duke of Norfolk, Sir George Howard, and Lord Robert Dudley having as many hits as the adventurers. The judges therefore could not award the prize, which, as they jousted for love, was a diamond.

If we take into consideration the fact that these masques, pageants, and jousts became an annual event on "Coronation Day," it is not surprising that Spenser should group them together and fuse the elements into one story. Moreover, when we find that in another pageant<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth is represented as "Debora the judge and restorer of Israel," consulting for the good of her common weal, it becomes clear that we have in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* the celebration of such triumphs of Elizabeth as are promised to her in the pageantry on her coronation. Let us notice that the method in his poem is essentially that of these masques, the praise of Elizabeth through the virtues attributed to her, with the inclusion of their opposites (the vices) in their relation to her opponents.

The significance of these pageants was recognized by others as well as by Il Schifanoja. They signified that the English people looked to Elizabeth as a spiritual as well as a temporal leader. Her coming to the throne was, therefore, regarded as the establishment of the true religion. During Mary's reign Elizabeth was the chief hope of the Protestant party. This is seen not only in the great outbreak of popular enthusiasm on her accession to the throne, but also in many subsequent treatments. A good illustration of the use of these pageants is George Whetstone's *English Myrror*, published in 1586 when the Catholic menace was at its peak, and when, in all probability, Spenser was writing his *Faerie Queene*. Whetstone's use of the pageants is of enough interest to warrant the following quotation. His book has this long but descriptive title:

The *English Myrror*: a regard wherin al estates may behold the Conquests of envy. Containing ruine of common weales, murther of princes, cause of heresies, and in ages spoil of devine and human blessings, unto which is adioyned, *Envy conquered by vertues; publishing the peaceable*

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<sup>7</sup> Others that are suggestive but which do not relate directly to this subject are: (1) the allegorical representation of Elizabeth as the incarnation of the eight beatitudes, (2) a tower on which were painted all the English Kings, and (3) the giants "Gotmajot the Albione, and Corineus the Briton."

*victories obtained by the Queenes most excellent majesty, against this mortall enimie of publike peace and prosperitie, and lastly a Fortres against Envy. Builded upon the Counsels of Sacred Scripture, lawes of sage philosophers, and pollicies of well governed common weales; wherein every estate may see the dignities, the true office and cause of disgrace of his vocation. A worke safely and necessarie to be read of everie subject. By George Whetstones, Gent. Malgre. Seene and allowed, at London: Printed by J. Windet for G. Seton, and are to be sold at his shop under Aldersgate. 1586.<sup>8</sup>*

The book is dedicated to Elizabeth. At the back of the title, the royal arms are placed above an acrostic on Queen Elizabeth. It is divided into three parts. The first part deals with former history, but the second is devoted to events in the author's own time and has a "sonnet of triumph to England" prefixed. Brydges extracts the following from chapter vii of Book II, which treats "of the peaceable entrance of Queene Elizabeth, with the crowne and diademe of England, and other observances of God's especial favor and mercy":

Her Majesty, the 17 day of November 1558, the very day of Queene Mary, her sisters death, with the sound of a trumpet, both at Westminster and in the City of London, was proclaymed by the name of Elizabeth, Quene of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, etc. The newes whereof raised a suddaine joy among the people, so hartly, as their loving affection was presently seene by publike feasting, banqueting, and bonfires, in the open streets. The 22 of January following, her Majesty passed through the city of London toward her coronation, but before her chariot set forward, her Majesty lifted her eies up unto Heaven, and acknowledged God's mercie in this thanksgiving:

"O Lord Almighty, and everlasting God, I give the most hartly thankes that thou hast been so mercifull unto me as to spare me to behold this joifull day; and I knowledge that thou hast dealt as wonderfully with me, as thou didst with thy true and faithful servant Daniel the prophet, whom thou deliveredst out the den, from the cruelty of the greedy raging lions. Even so was I overwhelmed, and only by the delivered. To thee therefore be only thankes, honor, and praise for ever. Amen."

Her Majesty by this thanksgiving, published her sure confidence in God; the effects, the tyranny of her enemies; and the conclusion, a special comfort to the godly.

The citizens of London, to shew their zeale in welcome of her majesty, attyed the citie with many stately showes, *the most whereof they derived*

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<sup>8</sup> Brydges, *Censura Literaria*, Vol. VI, art. cccxxxiv.

from her proper virtues, who was the lively substance of all their painted beauties. The first pageant shewed the long desired unitie which (God and her majesty be thanked) is knit betwene us and the holy gospell of our Saviour Christ. The second set forth the seat of governance, which her majesties lively vertues bewtified more than their gorgeous devises. The third (which they applied unto her majesty) depainted the eight beatitudes mentioned in the 5 of S. Mathew: and, truly, if any earthly creature deserved them, they are worthely heaped on her Majesty. The fourth declared the ruinous state of this realme, which (as they prophesied) is by her Majesty restored to the dignity of a flourishing common weale. The fift compared the expectation which her heroycall vertues promised, with the politicke government of the worthie Debora, . . . etc.

The historians all agree that Elizabeth's first care on coming to the throne was the restoring of the Protestant, or true, religion. In Camden's *Annals*, we find:

In the first beginning of her Raigne, she applyed her first care (howbeit with but few of her inwardest counsailors,) to the restoring of the Protestant Religion.<sup>9</sup>

And in a marginal note, the translator, "R. N.," adds: "Her first care is for Religion."

Sir John Hayward in his *Annals of the First Four Years of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*<sup>10</sup> gives an account of the pageants and mentions her first care of the restoring of the Protestant religion. Holinshed<sup>11</sup> attests the same fact.

Fulke Greville's account I will quote:

Againe, for the next object, looking backward upon her sister's raigne, she observes religion to have been changed; persecution, like an ill weed, suddenly grown up to the highest . . .

This view brought forth in her a vow, like that of the holy kings in the Old Testament; viz: that she would neither hope nor seek for rest in the mortall traffique of this world, till she had repaired the precipitate ruines of our Saviour's militant Church, through all her dominions, in the rest of the world, by her example. Upon which princely resolution, this She-David of our's ventured to undertake the great Goliath amongst the Philistines abroad, I mean Spain and the Pope; despiseth their multitudes, not of men, but of hosts; scornfully rejectes that holy Father's

<sup>9</sup> English translation printed by B. Fisher, London, 1630, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Reprint by Camden Society, pp. 14-19.

<sup>11</sup> IV, 158 ff.

wind-blowne superstitions, and takes the—almost solitary—truth, for her, leading star.<sup>12</sup>

As late as 1680 we find the following publication :

*The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth*, with the Restoration of the Protestant Religion: or the Downfall of the Pope. Being a most excellent Play, as it was acted at Bartholomew and Southwark Fairs. This present year 1680.<sup>13</sup>

But Pure Religion was not to be established over night, even by Elizabeth. On coming to the throne, she proceeded cautiously, and to many the exact state of religion in the kingdom was doubtful for some time. Elizabeth, as usual, was playing on the safe side, feeling out the situation. We must remember, however, that when she came to the throne, her council and all the machinery of government were Catholic. Her position was dangerous and a false step would have caused her utter undoing. So, she waited and restrained the people as much as she could. She issued an order forbidding just such demonstrations as took place at her coronation. The following extracts from the *Venetian Calendar* show her position :

There are many frivolous and foolish people who daily invent plays in derision of the Catholic faith, of the church, of the clergy, and of the religion, and, by placards posted at the corners of the streets (*per gli cantoni*), they invite people to the taverns, to see these representations, taking money from their audience.<sup>14</sup>

The demonstrations and performance of plays by the London populace in the hostels and taverns, which as written by me had been prohibited by the Queen, were, according to the account given me by a trustworthy person who has come hither from those parts, so vituperative and abominable that it was marvellous they should so long have been tolerated, for they brought upon the stage all the personages whom they wished to revile, however exalted their station, and among the rest, in one play, they represented King Phillip, the late Queen of England, and Cardinal Pole, reasoning together about such things as they imagined might have been said in the matter of religion; so that they did not spare any living person, saying whatever they fancied about them.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. by A. B. Grosart, *Fuller Worthies Lib.*, 1870, pp. 164-65.

<sup>13</sup> Hazlitt, *Handbook*, p. 183.

<sup>14</sup> *CSP., Venetian*, 1558-80, p. 27, Il Schifanoja to Ottaviano Vivalidano, London, 6 Feb. 1559.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81, Paulo Tiepolo, Ambassador at Brussels to the Doge and Senate, dated Brussels, 4 May 1559.

But notice the difference in 1586:

But what has enraged him (Philip) more than all else, and has caused him to show a resentment such as he has never before displayed in all his life, is the account of the masquerades and comedies which the Queen of England orders to be acted at his expense. His Majesty has received a summary of one of these which was recently represented, in which all sorts of evil is spoken of the Pope, the Catholic religion, and the king who is accused of spending all his time in the Escorial with the monks of S. Jerome, attending only to his buildings, and a hundred other insolences which I refrain from sending to your Serenity.<sup>16</sup>

The Elizabethan attitude toward, and understanding of, the problem confronting the Queen at this time is illustrated in the following extract from Lady Diana Primrose's *A Chaine of Pearle* (1603):

The First Pearle—Religion.

The goodliest Pearle in faire Eliza's chaine  
Is true Religion, which did chiefly gaine  
A Royal lustre to the rest, and ti'de  
The hearts of all to her when Mary di'de  
And though she found the realme infected much  
With Superstition, and abuses, such  
As (in all humane judgement) could not be  
Reformed without domesticke mutiny,  
And great hostility from Spain and France,  
Yet shee undaunted, bravely did advance  
Christ's glorious ensigne, magre all the feares  
Or dangers which appear'd; and for ten yeares  
She swaid the scepter with a Ladies hand.

. . . . .

Then follows a history of her religious difficulties—but

with a Lyon's heart

Shee bang'd the Pope, and tooke the Gospell's part.<sup>17</sup>

It seems to me, in the light of the foregoing, that the answer to the question as to why Spenser chose religion as the subject for his first book of the *Faerie Queene* lies not in an examination of Aristotle's virtues, where it has usually been sought, but in such materials as I have presented here. Spenser says in many places

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182, letter no. 383, Hieronimo Lippomano, Venetian Ambassador in Spain, to the Doge and Senate. July 20, 1586.

<sup>17</sup> Reprint in Nichols, III, 640-50.

that the subject of his poem is Elizabeth. It was only natural, therefore, that he should choose as a starting point her first problem—Religion. Her solving of the first problem was, therefore, the first virtue. This was the attitude of all her other panegyrists and historians, and it is only natural to suppose it to be Spenser's as well. If this is true, we are to look to Book I not for a history of the Reformation in England, but for Elizabeth's part in that movement.

Moreover, Spenser's contemporaries read his allegory in this manner. They saw the first book of the *Faerie Queene* as the allegory of Elizabeth's relations to religion.

Elizabeth's coronation day was celebrated each year on November 17, by a great display of impress and chivalry. George Peele gives in his *Anglorum Ferieae* a poetic account of such a celebration. The following extract from his work will serve to show both the connection with the pageants in 1559 and the similarity to Spenser's method in the *Faerie Queene*.

Descend, ye sacred daughters of King Jove: . . .  
 Clio, the sagest of the Sisters Nine,  
 Conduct thy learned company to court,  
 Eliza's court, Astraea's earthly heaven; . . .  
 And in her praise tune your heroic songs: . . .  
 Write, write, you chroniclers of time and fame,  
 Elizabeth by miracles preserv'd  
 From perils imminent and infinite:  
 Clio, proclaim with golden trump and pen  
 Her happy days . . .

Her birthday being celebrated thus,  
 Clio, record how she hath been preserv'd,  
 Even in the gates of death and from her youth,  
 To govern England in the ways of truth; . . .

To pass the story of her younger days,  
 And stormy tempests happily overblown,  
 Wherein by mercy and by miracle  
 She was rescu'd for England's happiness,  
 And comfort of the long afflicted flock  
 That stray'd like scatter'd sheep scar'd from the fold;  
 To slip remembrance of those careful days,  
 Days full of danger, happy days withal,  
 Days of her preservation and defence; . . .  
 Wherein pale Envy, vanquish'd long ago,  
 Gave way to Virtue's great deserts in her,

And wounded with remembrance of her name,  
 Made hence amain to murmur that abroad  
 He durst not openly disgorge at home, . . .  
 Among those erring fugitives that pine  
 At England's prosperous peace and nothing more  
 Do thirst than alteration of the state,  
 And nothing less than our good queen affect,  
 A number of unnatural Englishmen  
 That curse the day so happy held of us, . . .  
 False architects of those foul practices  
 That end in their dishonor and their shame,  
 Those bloody stratagems, those traitorous trains,  
 And cruel siege they lay unto her life.<sup>18</sup>

In Peele's *Speeches to Queen Elizabeth at Theobalds* (1591), we find a reference to Elizabeth's twelve virtues. The Gardner says to her Majesty:

All the Virtues, all the Graces, all the Muses winding and reathing about your Majesty, each contending to be chief . . . the virtues were done in roses, flowers fit for the *twelve* Virtues.

Here Peele seems to have reference to Spenser's "twelve moral virtues" of the "Letter to Raleigh."

In his *Farewell to Drake and Norris* (1589), he anticipates both Spenser's treatment of Saint George and championship of the Protestant cause. Elizabeth is represented here very much as she is in Book V of the *Faerie Queene*:

Under the *sanguine Cross*, brave England's badge  
 To propagate religious piety,  
 And hew a passage with your conquering swords . . .  
 Even to the Gulf that leads to lofty Rome;  
 There to deface the pride of Antichrist,  
 And pull his paper walls and popery down—  
 A famous enterprise for England's strength,  
 To steel your swords on Avarice' triple crown,  
 And cleanse Augeas' stalls in Italy. . . .  
 You fight for Christ, and Englands peerless queen,  
 Elizabeth, the wonder of the world,  
 Over whose throne the enemies of God  
 Have thnder'd erst their vain successful braves.

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<sup>18</sup> Peele, "Anglorum Feriae, Englandes Hollydayes, celebrated the 17th of Novemb. last. 1595, begininge happily the 38 yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne Queene Elizabeth." In *Works*, ed. Dyce, London, 1861.

O, ten-times-treble happy men, that fight  
Under the cross of Christ and England's Queen.<sup>19</sup>

Selden in his notes on Drayton's *Polyolbion* (4th song, l. 215) gives a history of the Saint George legend, after which he says:

Your more neat judgments, finding no such matter in true antiquity, rather make it symbolical than truly proper. So that some account him an allegory of our Saviour Christ, and our admir'd *Spenser* hath made him an emblem of Religion.

Selden implies that Spenser was the first to make of the saint an emblem of religion. If that is true, the following quotations seem to refer to Spenser and, in a measure, interpret his allegory:

*Saint George for England*

Conculabus Leonem et Draconem. Psal. 91

A Virgin Princesse and a gentile Lambe  
Doomb'd to death to gorge this ugly beast:  
This valiant victor like a Souldier came,  
And of his owne accord, without request:  
With never daunted spirit the Fiend assail'd,  
Preserv'd the Princesse and the monster quail'd.  
  
Saint George, the figure of our Saviour's force,  
Within the Dragon's jawes his speare hath entred:  
Whose sword doth threaten, banishing remorse,  
And hee that in his noble part hath ventred,  
Spewes forth his poyson on the sullen ground,  
And stands in danger of a deadly wound.  
  
And may my soule, oh Jesus! speake with zeale?  
Thy Woord, thy sword, will Sathan's pride consume?  
So doth thy Father's holy will reveale,  
And with that beast all those that dare presume:  
That peece of wood whereon thy body dide,  
Hath made a mortall passage in his side.  
  
Saint George's Knight, goe noble Mountjoy on,  
Bearing thy Saviour's badge within thy breast:  
Quell that Hell's shape of divellish proud tirone,  
And cover with the dust his stubborne crest:  
That our deere Princesse and hir land be safe,  
Such power to him, oh Jesus Christ vouchsafe.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Works*, p. 549.

<sup>20</sup> Vennard, Richard, *The Right Way to Heaven: and the true testimonie of a faithfull and loyall subject: compiled by Richard Vennard, of Lin-*

Mountjoy, then, represents St. George in exactly the same way as Redcrosse, as the champion of Elizabeth, Pure Religion against her Catholic enemies.

Another similar interpretation of the Saint George legend is Gerard Malynes' *Saint George for England, allegorically described*. In the dedication to Lord Keeper Egerton he explains the allegory thus:

Wheras under the person of the noble champion, St. George, our Saviour Christ was prefigured delivering the Virgin (which did signify the sinfull souls of Christians) from the dragon or devel's power; so her most excellent majesty by advancing the pure doctrine of Christ Jesus, in all truth and sincerity, hath been used to perform the part of a valiant champion, delivering an infinite number out of the devil's power, whereunto they were tied by the forcible chains of darkness. In which sense, retaining St. George for England, not only as the patron for the noble order of the Garter, but as the head and patron of our eternal glory . . .<sup>21</sup>

Since I have been unable to secure the full text of this curious work, I am not able to point out any direct borrowings, but the interpretation of Malynes of the Saint George legend is identical with that of Spenser—Saint George is made an emblem of religion, that is, Protestantism. Saint George is, however, Elizabeth herself. In Spenser he is Una's champion.

Richard Niccol gives, however, in his *England's Eliza* (1610) an unmistakable abstract of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Niccol attempts to give a summary of Elizabeth's reign and in his induction pays his respects to Spenser as Elizabeth's Poet. The following in the beginning of the poem:

## 1.

When England's Phoebus *Henrie's* hopeful sonne  
The world's rare Phoenix, princely *Edward* hight,  
To death did yeeld, his glasse outrun,  
And Phoebus-like no more could lend his light:  
Then men did walk in shades of darkesome night,  
Whose feeble sight with error blacke strooke blind  
Could in no place time's faire *Fidessa* find.

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*colone's Inne. At London Printed by Thomas Este. 1601 Nichols, III, 532 ff.*

<sup>21</sup> *Saint George for England, allegorically described. By Gerard de Malynes, Merchant, 1601.*

In Harleian Library, Cf. *Harl. Miscell.* 10., 359.

## 2.

That blind borne monster, truthe's sterne opposite,  
 Begotten first in Demogorgon's hall,  
 Twixt uglie Erebus and grizlie night,  
 The sonnes of truth did horrible appall  
 With her approach, much dreaded of them all:  
 Whoever came in reach of her foule pawes,  
 She in their blood imbu'd her thirstie iawes.

## 3.

Witnesse may be the manie a burning flame,  
 Made with the limbes of saints to mount on high,  
 Whose constant soules without the least exclaime,  
 In midst of death down patiently did lie,  
 And in bright flames did clime the clow'd-brow'd skie:  
 Yea, let Elizae's woes in that blind age,  
 A witnesse be of bloodie error's rage.<sup>22</sup>

Niccol's borrowings from Spenser are apparent. It would seem, then, that he interpreted Spenser's Book I as referring to Elizabeth as Princess as well as Queen. His reference to "time's faire Fidessa" indicates that he had the pageants in mind. Thus, Niccol links Spenser's *Faerie Queene* with the pageants. In his eighth stanza he seems to refer to the third pageant.

## 8.

No sooner did this empire's royall crowne  
 Begirt the temples of her princelie hed;  
 But that Jove-borne Astrea straight came downe  
 From highest heaven againe, to which in dread  
 Of earth's impietie before shee fled:  
 Well did she know, Elizae's happie reigne  
 Would then renew the golden age againe.

## 9.

And fruitfull plentie did her land adorne  
 With richest gifts, powr'd from her plenteous horne,  
 The happie seedes, which th' hands of peace did sow  
 In every place with goodlie fruit did grow.

## 10.

Devouring Mulciber, whose flames before  
 With blood of holy men were heard to hisse,  
 Of England's happie sonnes were seene no more:  
 But truth and mercie did each other kisse,

<sup>22</sup> Quoted from *Mirror for Magistrates*, Part 5, ed. by Joseph Haslewood, London 1815, III, 812-944.

Error's brood to him represented the Catholics sent over by the Pope and Spain to annoy Elizabeth and turn the country against her—the Jesuits, and seminary priests.

68.

Meane time Rome's dragon rousde his bloodie crest  
And wav'd his wings, from whence that rabble rout,  
That hell-hatch'd brood, who, fed or error's brest  
And suck'd of her poysonous dugs, came crawling out  
As was their wont, to file the world about:

For those he hatch'd beneath his shadie wings,  
T'imploie gainst potentates and mightest kings.

69.

Many of these to England's shores he sent . . [e. g., the Armada]

70.

Most of the which (O that time's swan-white wings  
Could sweepe record of such foule shame)  
Were home-borne impes, untimely shot up, springs  
Of Britaine brood, Britaine's alone by name . . .

71.

Unkindly impes, even from your birth accurst,  
Detested stock of viper's bloodie brood,  
That sought to satisfie your burning thirst  
By drinking up your dying mother's blood,  
Make her death your life, her hurt your good.

Aside from Niccol's *Eliza* the most interesting work in this connection is Dekker's *Whore of Babylon*, published in 1607, but written before 1603. The *Lectori* explains the purpose of the play thus:

The Generall scope of this Drammaticall Poem, is to set forth (in Tropicall and shadowed collours) the Greatnes, Magnanimity, Constancy, Clemency, and other Heroical vertues of our late Queene and (on the contrary part) the inveterate Malice, Treasons, Machinations, Underminings and Continual bloody strategems, of that Purple Whore of Roome. . . .

And where as I may (by some more curious in censure, then sound in iudgement) be Critically taxed, that I falsifie the account of time, and set not down occurments according to their true succession, let such (that are so nice of stomach) know, that I write as a Poet, not as an Historian, and that these do not live under one law. . . .<sup>23</sup>

In other words, Dekker sought to write an allegorical play on the same principles which Spenser had used in his *Faerie Queene*.

<sup>23</sup> *Works*, London, 1873, II, 185 ff.

Their methods are the same—Elizabeth is represented by the virtues and her enemies by the vices. Spenser spoke of his allegory as “a dark conceit”; Dekker refers to his as “Tropicall and shadowed collours.” Moreover, in his reference to “a Poet” in the last part of the quotation, Dekker, I believe, had reference to Spenser. I shall show that he borrowed frequently from the *Faerie Queene*. If Dekker is correct in making his distinction between the historian and the poet, we make a great mistake in trying to interpret Spenser’s “continued allegory” as continued history. A poet, according to Dekker does not live under the same law as the historian—he is not bound to treat events in chronological order. He may, therefore, select from the life and reign of Elizabeth those events which illustrate his theme and arrange them in their most effective sequence. This Dekker has done. And by implication he is following Spenser.

The play begins with a dumb show:

He drawes a curtaine, discovering Truth in sad habiliments; uncrownd; her haire disheveld and sleeping on a Rock: Time (her father) attired likewise in black and al his properties (as Sithe, Howre-glasse and Wings of the same cullor) using all meanes to waken Truth, but not being able to doe it, he sits by her and mourns. Then enter Friers, Bishops, Cardinals, before the Hearse of a Queen, after it Councillors, Pentioners, and Ladies, al these last having scarfes before their eyes, the other singing in Latin. Truth suddenly awakens, and beholding this sight, shews (with her father) arguments of Ioy, and *exeunt*, returning presently: Time being shifted into light cullors, his properties likewise altered into silver, and Truth crowned, (being cloathed in a robe spotted with Starres) meete the Hearse, and putting the veiles from the councellers eyes, they wondrous while, and seeming astonished at her brightnes, at length embrace Truth and Time, and depart with them: leaving the rest going on.

This being done, Enter Titania (the Farie Queene) attended with those Councillors, and other persons fitting her estate: Time and Truth meete her, presenting a Booke to her, which (kissing it) shee receives, and shewing it to those about her, they drawe out their swordes, (embracing Truth,) vowing to defend her and that booke: Truth then and Time are sent in, and returned presently, driving before them those Cardinals, Friers, etc. (that came in before) with Images, croziar staves etc. They gon, certaine grave learned men, that had beene banished, are brought in, and presented to Titania, who shewes to them the booke, which they receive with great signes of gladnesse, and *exeunt omnes*.

The subject of this dumb show is Elizabeth’s coming to the throne and the resulting restoration of the Protestant religion.

That Dekker used the pageants presented to Elizabeth on her coronation is unmistakable; the characters of Truth and Time and the presentation of the Booke prove this beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Now in the *Dramatis Personae* there are unmistakable allusions to the *Faerie Queene*. Here we find:

*Titani* the Faerie Queene: under whom is figured our late Queene Elizabeth.

*Fideli*

*Florimell*

*Elfiron*

*Paridel*

*The Empresse of Babylon*: under whom is figured Rome.

Within the play itself there are many Spenser allusions and borrowings. For example:

*Empr.* That strumpet, that enchantresse, (who in robes  
White as is innocence, and with an eye  
Able to tempt stearne murder to her bed)  
Calles her selfe Truth, has stolne faire Truth's attire,  
Her crowne, her sweet songs, counterfets her voyce,  
And by prestigious trickes in sorcerie,  
Has raiz'd a base impostor like Truths father:  
This subtile Curtizan sets up againe,  
Whom we but late banisht, to live in Caves  
In rockes and desart mountaines.

*I. King* Feare her not, shee's but a shadow.

*Empr.* O t'is a cunning Spider,  
And in her nets so wraps the Fairie Queene  
That she suckes even her breast: Sh'as writ a booke  
Which shee calles holy spels.

. . . . .  
Shee, they Titania, and her Fairie Lords,  
Yea even her vassaile *elves*, in publick scorne  
Defame me, call me Whore of Babylon.<sup>24</sup>

There can be no doubt as to the source of the following genealogy for Elizabeth:

all those wounds  
Whose goary mouthes but lately stained our Bounds

---

<sup>24</sup> *Whore of Babylon*, p. 195.

Bleed yet in me: For when great Elfiline (Henry VII)  
 Our grandsire fild this throne. . . .  
 He to immortal shades being gone  
 (Fames Minion) great King Oberon (Henry VIII)  
 Titaniaes royall father. . . . etc.<sup>25</sup>

Likewise, the source of the following is obvious:

Dumb shew. A cave suddenly breakes open, and out of it comes Falsehood (attir'd as Truth) her face spotted, shee stickes up her banner on top of the cave; then with her foot in severall places strikes the earth, and up riseth Campeius; a Frier with a boxe: a gentleman with a drawn sword, another with rich gloves in a boxe, another with a bridle. Time, Truth with her banner, and Plain-dealing enter and stand aloofe beholding all.

*Time.* See there's the cave, where that Hyena lurkes. That counterfits thy voyce and calls forth men to their destruction. . . .

*Plain.* . . . but this freckled queane, may be a witch.

*Time.* She is so; shee's that damned sorceresse,  
 That keeps the enchanted towers of *Babylon*.  
 This is the *Truth*; that did bewitch thee once.

*Plain.* Is this speckled toade shee. Shee was then in mine eye,  
 The goodliest woman that ever wore fore part of Sattin. . . .

*Time.* Lets follow.

*Plain.* With hue and crie, now I know her: this villanous drab is bawd,  
 now I remember, to the Whore of *Babylon*; . . .  
 (Enter) Titania, Elfiron, Florimel, a gentleman standing aloofe,  
 and Ropus.

*Titan.* What comes this paper for?

*Fidel.* Your hand.

*Titan.* The cause?

*Fidel.* The Moone that from your beames did borrow light,  
 Hath from her silver bow shot pitchy clouds  
 T'eclipse your brightnes: heauen tooke your part,  
 And her surpriz'd; A jurie of bright starres,  
 Haue her vnworthy found to shine agen:  
 Your Fairies therefore on their knees intreat,  
 Shee may be puld out from the firmament,  
 Where shee was plac'd to glitter.<sup>26</sup>

Florimell, after Titania's protest, replies, "You must not (cause hee's noble) spare his blood."

The change from *shee* to *hee* is significant. Originally the inci-

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202-3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 243-6.

dent referred to Mary Queen of Scots; but obviously in 1605, Dekker could not publish so uncomplimentary an account of Mary. Therefore, he changed it to refer to Essex's rebellion. At least, this is the explanation offered by Dekker editors and commentators. As the scene now stands, the resemblance to the Duessa of the *Faerie Queene* is fairly close, but it must have been even closer in the original version.

With this account, we should consider Ben Jonson's statement to Drummond:

that in yt paper S. W. Raughly had of ye allegories of his Fayrie Queen by the Blating beast the Puritans were understood and by ye false Duessa the Q of Scots.<sup>27</sup>

If Drummond has reported Jonson correctly, this statement implies a second letter to Raleigh on the *Faerie Queene*, which of course was not published. In another place in the *Conversations*, Jonson spoke of "ye papers Sir W. Raughly had of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*." However, it is my opinion that Jonson was merely giving his own interpretation of the poem and that Drummond confused it with the letter to Raleigh.

The reference shows, then, merely Jonson's interest in the political allegory of the *Faerie Queene*, and is another instance of a contemporary recognition of such allegory.

But to return to Dekker, we have this unmistakable reference to Spenser: (the Empress's instructions to Campeius, Parydell, and Lupus) <sup>28</sup>

Haue change of haire, of eie-brows, halt with soldiers,  
Be shauen and be old women, take all shapes . . .  
He that first sings a Dirge tun'de to the death  
Of that my onely foe the Fairie Queene,  
Shal be my loue, and (clad in purple) ride  
Vpon that scarlet-coloured beast that beares  
Seuen Kingdomes on seuen heads.

These, with many other borrowings, such as the frequent references to Fairy-strond, Fairie Queene (Elizabeth), and elves and Fairies show Dekker's debt to Spenser's epic. Dekker borrowed

<sup>27</sup> *Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden*, 1619, Reprint, The Bodley Head Quartos, ed. by G. B. Harrison, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Campeius is Campion; Parydell is Doctor Parry; and Lupus is Lopez.

from Spenser because he recognized in the *Faerie Queene* an allegory similar to the one he would employ. Moreover, his method is precisely that of Spenser—the praise of Elizabeth in terms of the virtues attributed to her, and the application of the vices (virtues' opposites) to her enemies. His use of the pageants along with Spenser is significant: he recognized in them the same matter and method as he found in the *Faerie Queene*.

From these notes in general, I draw the following conclusions:

1. Spenser seems to have got from the pageants at Elizabeth's coronation a suggestion for his Una (Truth) and his allegorical method in Book I.

2. Spenser chose Religion as the subject for Book I because he viewed it not only as the first problem to confront the Queen, but also as the first of her virtues.

3. Spenser's contemporaries read Book I as the allegory of Elizabeth and her relation to the establishment of Pure Religion.

If these contentions are correct, we should look to the life and reign of Elizabeth for the events which are allegorically set forth in Book I.

*The Johns Hopkins University.*