A "Debauchery of Judiciousness" Directed at *The Faerie Queene*, Book IV Canto iv

By Katharine Addis (University of Sussex)

In the "Polemical Introduction" to his 1957 *Anatomy of Criticism,* Northrop Frye compares literary critics to medieval chroniclers: they have no conceptual system, derived from their object of study but extrinsic to it, that allows them to achieve analytical perspective. Such critics are viewed by the public as, at best, superior readers elevated above their culture as arbiters of its good taste; at worst, failed writers or poets pursuing the bitter alternative of criticizing successful ones. Either way, they are parasitical. This kind of critic makes aesthetic value judgments, but those judgements only really express "prejudice derived from his existence as a social being."[1] By contrast, when criticism achieves scientific maturity "there is no itch to make weighty judgements, and none of the ill effects which follow the debauchery of judiciousness" (25).

Frye's argument dignifies literary criticism, which becomes a disciplined skill "like playing the piano, not the expression of a general attitude to life, like singing in the shower" (28). But as Andrew Hadfield discussed in the last issue of this publication, dignifying the profession may have detached it from an atmosphere in which its cultural validity was taken for granted, forcing it to justify itself in overblown ways.[2] Frye's argument against value judgements, having long seemed absolutely

[1] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism, Four Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 22. All further citations will be parenthetical in the text. All quotations from Spenser's epic follow A.C. Hamilton et al., ed., Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Revised 2nd edition, (London: Pearson Education [Longman], 2007).

[2] See Andrew Hadfield, "John Guillory, *Professing Criticism: Essays on the Organization of Literary Study*," *The Spenser Review* 53.2 (2023).

accepted, can be reanimated by this concern. If literary critics must now routinely claim life-changing impact, has the aesthetic value-judgement that once smacked of arrogant entitlement somehow become the path of humility? Who are we *not* to judge? Alternatively, is it the path of self-destruction, gambling away the core-values of the profession in a defensive maneuver that destroys precisely what it would save? Luckily this is moot; no branch of literary criticism is considering retrenchment to the arbitration of taste. But perhaps we are now far enough away from the "ill effects" of aesthetic value judgement in literary criticism to safely reconsider its relation to the modes and objectives of our analysis, for that to have become interesting again. I cannot claim to have got even this far in the present essay, which, as a preliminary experiment, attempts to track down and articulate my own sense that Book IV canto iv of *The Faerie Queene* might not be as good as the rest of it, and to find out by doing so where that might lead.

An atmosphere in which the value of literary criticism appears to have been taken more for granted than it is now, was an atmosphere in which affordable, paperback anthologies of criticism were available for 50p. This essay seeks premises for its own judgement of Book IV canto iv in a 1969 Penguin Critical Anthology on Edmund Spenser, edited by Paul Alpers as part of a short-lived series on canonical writers.[3] The book is divided into three parts, "Contemporaneous Criticism," "Neoclassical and Romantic Criticism," and "Modern Views." Alpers's artful extraction and curation means that reading the anthology from start to finish produces an artificially conversational sense of extremely varied historical responses to Spenser's poetry (predominantly *The Faerie Queene,* after a first flurry of discussion on the language of *The Shepheardes Calender*), as if they had all been articulated in direct response to one another at one long, slightly fractious dinner party, a party at which everyone was trying to explain why Spenser's poetry was good or bad. Because I want

[3] Paul Alpers ed., *Edmund Spenser,* Penguin Critical Anthologies (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969). All further citations from the anthology will be cited by page number in the text, with the addition of the original author's surname where that is unclear. The original texts, in order of their inclusion in section two of this essay and as titled in Alpers's anthology, are: E.K., Dedicatory Epistle to *The Shepheardes Calender* (1597); Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry* (1595, written c. 1582); Edmund Bolton, from *Hypercritica* (?1618); Sir Kenelm Digby, "Concerning Spenser that I wrote at Mr May's desire" (1638); Ben Jonson, from *Timber, or Discoveries* (before 1637, published posthumously 1640); Edmund Spenser, Letter to Sir Walter Raleigh (1590); Martha Craig, "The Secret Wit of Spenser's Language" (1967); Joseph Spence, from *Polymetis* (1747); Thomas Warton, from *Observations on 'The Faerie Queene' of Spenser* (1754, second edition 1762); William Hazlitt, from *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818); James Russell Lowell, from 'Spenser' (1875); S.T. Coleridge, from notes for lectures and marginal notes in a copy of *The Faerie Queene* (1818); Charles Lamb, 'Sanity of True Genius' (1826); Edward Dowden, from 'Spenser, the Poet and Teacher', *Transcripts and Studies* (1888, first published 1882); W.B. Yeats, from 'Edmund Spenser', Introduction to his edition of *Poems of Spenser* (1902); C.S. Lewis, from *Allegory of Love* (1936); G. Wilson Knight, from 'The Spenserian Fluidity', *The Burning Oracle* (1939), revised for *Poets of Action* (1967); William Empson, from *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930, revised 1947); Frank Kermode, from 'Spenser and the Allegorists' (1962); Roger Sale, from *Reading Spenser* (1968). For the history of the Penguin Education division (1967-74) that published the Penguin Critical Anthologies, and to find the other titles in the series, see http://www.penguinfirsteditions.com/index.php?cat=mainX.

to convey this impression below, I will introduce various writers as if they were speaking, with footnotes marking the original context. The limits of this approach—a selective survey of a heavily curated critical anthology with nothing in it published later than 1969, followed by a cursory attack on Book IV canto iv—are so glaring that I hope caveats are superfluous.[4]

I.

E.K. (1579) makes two sharp thrusts in the direction of Spenser's critics: those who condemn his obscure language are bad and arrogant readers who imagine that because they do not understand Spenser's poetry nobody else can either, "like to the mole in Aesop's fable that, being blind herself, would in nowise be persuaded that any beast could see." Moreover, such lazy judges leave all the work to Spenser (doing nothing themselves to revitalize the English language) and then condemn him for doing it, "like to the dog in the manger, that himself can eat no hay and yet barketh at the hungry bullock that fain would feed" (Alpers, 28).

Nonetheless, a few apologetic voices express their reservations: Philip Sidney (1595) "dare not allow" Spenser's imitation of "old rustic language" but concedes that there is "much poetry in his eclogues, indeed worthy the reading, if I be not deceived" (37). Edmund Bolton (1618) "cannot advise the allowance" of Spenser's language as a basis for "practic English" (in all his poems except for the Hymns), but he also admits, "my judgement is nothing at all in poems or poesy, and therefore I dare not go far" (53). Kenelm Digby begins, "with a hoarse voice and trembling hand," to argue that Spenser's "obsolete words" and "ancient forms of speech" are designed to "express more lively and concisely what he would say" (58).

Poems, it is suggested, are in any case not reducible to their language. Philip Sidney thinks one can prove whether verse truly has "poetical sinews" by putting it into prose, "and then ask the meaning" (38). Ben Jonson (c. 1637) remarks that while Spenser "writ no language; yet I would have him read for his matter" (57). Spenser himself (1590) insists that readerly judgements be based on "the general intention and meaning which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned" rather than the "particular purposes or by-accidents therein occasioned" (41). A displeasing detail (like an obsolete word) can be viewed as an "accident," and the magnitude of the poem

[4] For a sustained engagement with the history of Spenser criticism see Catherine Nicholson, *Reading and Not Reading the Faerie Queene: Spenser and the Making of Literary Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

should allow it to survive any amount of critical dissection. This is the reverse of E.K.'s preface, in which language is everything, and the "general drift and purpose of his aeglogues" is given short shrift (30).

Martha Craig (1967) cuts in here to advance a Platonic viewpoint that puts pressure on any separation of language and true meaning, suggesting that (for Spenser) truth lay in or through words, words that, in the right form, could draw closer to their ideal referent (322-39). Kenelm Digby agrees. Spenser's language acts Neoplatonically; it "bringeth down the highest and deepest mysteries that are contained in human learning." It is good *because of* its obscurity. The inattentive reader "will think he hath met with nothing but familiar and easy discourses; but let one dwell awhile upon them and he shall feel a strange fullness and roundness in all he saith" (60; and cited by Craig, 339).

An eighteenth century section of the group spends a long time enumerating glitches in the allegory, tempering this activity now and again with vague praise. Joseph Spence (1747) produces a catalogue of "preposterous" overcomplications (97). Thomas Warton (1754), disavows judgement of "Ariosto or Spenser by precepts which they did not attend to," but he must draw a line with the castle of Alma, for the warders of the mouth (the teeth) "did obeysaunce" to Alma when she passed (102). "But how can the teeth be said to rise up and bow to the mind?" (109). These critics honor the earlier distinction between particular faults and general strengths, such as "warm imagination" (102), or "life and motion" (113). The former stem from an absence of "deliberate judgement"; hence "in reading Spenser, if the critic is not satisfied, yet the reader is transported" (103).

This opposition between the "feelings of the heart" and the "cold approbation of the head" (Warton, 102) seems to have given rise to an enduring association of Spenser's poetry with *life,* that which, whether sensual and abundant or energetic and vital, cannot be controlled by the head alone.[5] Digby's depiction of Spenser's poetry as pregnant with hidden meaning already implied it was coming alive but for the nineteenth-century critics Spenser's epic romance is so living it is quasi personified. William Hazlitt (1818) finds in it "an exuberance of fancy" and "an endless voluptuousness of sentiment" (131) and a "voluptuous pathos and languid brilliancy of

[5] See Frye on "exuberance" as the emotional product of great art; *Anatomy of Criticism,* 93-94; and Thomas Greene—"the ultimate epic quality is less susceptible of analysis—the quality of heroic energy, the superabundant vitality which charges character and image and action alike"—in *The Descent from Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1963), 22.

fancy" (133). For James Russell Lowell (1875) "No poet is as splendidly superfluous" (158), Spenser's moral is like "a bit of gravel in a dish of strawberries and cream" (159). This Spenser is also the poet of "our waking dreams," the no-place internal world of Faerie, "lulling the senses into a deep oblivion of the jarring noises of the world" (Hazlitt, 138). "The poet has placed you in a dream, a charmed sleep," says Coleridge (1818), adopting the tone of a hypnotist himself (144).

Charles Lamb (1826) starts to bring life back together with judgement by insisting, in Neoplatonic fashion, that dreams and reality need not be opposed: Spenser's world is poetic and placeless, but its characters and events are nonetheless more awake to the world and more grounded in judgement than the realist romance novels that speak of "Bath and Bond-street" (149). That we are lost in "the most rambling dream" and "our judgement yet all the time awake" is proof of "the hidden sanity which still guides the poet in his widest seeming aberrations" (150). Lowell qualifies Spenser's dreaminess with the claim that the "airy and immortal shapes" of his world "hint at some kind of foregone reality" (160).

Edward Dowden (1882) takes life even more seriously: "Spenser breathes into us a breath of life, which has an antiseptic power, which kills the germ of disease, and is antagonistic to the relaxed fibre, the lethargy, the dissolution, or disintegrating life-in-death of sensuality" (167). Spenser's spiritual capacities are ultimately directed to something vaguely biological that he calls a "self-culture": "the formation of a complete character for the uses of earth" (168). W.B. Yeats (1902) observes irreverently that Spenser, caught between his old world "Latin gaiety" and his new Protestant "masters," fastened his knights and ladies "with allegorical nails to a big barn-door of common sense, of merely practical virtue" (173).

C.S. Lewis (1936) has been brooding on the "Elfin Spenser" whose "only merit is voluptuousness and daydream." He thinks this idea has opened a long poem up to unfair local criticism. A reader who expects a purely and vaguely 'poetical' Spenser, and then reads IV.viii.58 (a particularly involuted, functional stanza), "excusably throws the book away" (196). Spenser wields the power (and must therefore evince the weakness) of the prosaic in his poetry. *This* is the true ground of association between Spenser's epic and life: "the things we read about in it are not like life, but the experience of reading it is like living" (211).

G. Wilson Knight (1939) deflates all this life stuff by comparing *The Faerie Queene* to a worm: "there is nothing to stop his poem going on forever, and, worm-

like, its organic perfection suffers little from its having been chopped off half-way" (224). It is "a boneless, piecemeal work" (227), and even its highlights are "rich rather with a cancerous and upstart vitality, drawing attention from the whole they should serve" (228).

A number of people in modern garb rush to Spenser's defense.[6] Where the whole of *The Faerie Queene* once made up for its parts, the parts now begin to make up for the whole. William Empson (1930) rescues the Spenserian stanza, which has taken the fall for his linguistic complexity one too many times (189-90); Frank Kermode (1962) resists the poem's "dubious salvation by archetypes"; Martha Craig rescues the language (291; 360). While the eighteenth century critics disapprovingly paraphrase stanzas of *The Faerie Queene* to show up his "ridiculous redundancy and repetition" (Thomas Warton, 106), Roger Sale (1968) urges everyone to notice how much is lost in paraphrase, even of stanzas that seem unimportant (360). He also gets the last laugh by summarizing the subject of *The Faerie Queene* as "human life in the universe" (354).

II.

The Faerie Queene temporarily ceases to breathe its breath of life into me from around IV.iv.17, during the first day of Satyrane's tournament. The clashing of knights produces stilted, repetitive lines that seem, like the knights themselves, to keep falling into a stupor:

> So furiously they both together met,
> That neither could the others force sustain
> […]
> So these two champions on the ground were feld,
> Where in a maze they both did long remaine,
> And in their hands their idle troncheons held,
> Which neither able were to wag, or once to weld.
>
> (IV.iv.18)

This cartoonish image is followed by three stanzas that open with "which," emphasizing sequence without drama:

> Which when the noble *Ferramont* espide,
> He pricked forth in ayd of *Satyran*;
> And him against Sir *Blandamour* did ride
> With all the strength and stifnesse that he can.

[6] This tracks with the critical story told by Catherine Nicholson in *Reading and Not Reading the Faerie Queene,* esp. 20-21; it is also where Northrop Frye enters her tale.

But the more strong and stiffely that he ran,
So much more sorely to the ground he fell,
That on a heape were tumbled horse and man.
Unto whose rescue forth rode *Paridell*;
But him likewise with that same speare he eke did quell.

Which *Braggadocchio* seeing, had no will
To hasten greatly to his parties ayd,
Albee his turne were next; but stood there still,
As one that seemed doubtfull or dismayd.
But *Triamond* halfe wroth to see him staid,
Sternly stept forth, and raught away his speare,
With which so sore he *Ferramont* assaid,
That horse and man to ground he quite did beare,
That neither could in hast themselves againe upreare.

Which to avenge, Sir *Devon* him did dight,
But with no better fortune then the rest:
For him likewise he quickly downe did smight,
And after him Sir *Douglas* him addrest,
And after him Sir *Palimord* forth prest,
But none of them against his strokes could stand,
But all the more, the more his praise increst.
For either they were left uppon the land,
Or went away sore wounded of his haplesse hand.

(IV.iv.19-21)

One thing leads to another, but the repeated batting of knights to the ground prevents any real build-up of momentum. The lines tend to shuffle the action into discrete units, producing a stacking effect that W.B. Yeats' compared to "bars of gold thrown ringing one upon another" (Alpers, 177). Except these bars do not ring, they clack. Here, from later in the canto, is a contender for clunkiest central couplet of a Spenserian stanza. Triamond is looking for his armor:

In vaine he sought; for there he found it not;
Cambello it away before had got:

(IV.iv.33)

And here is a runner up for most vacuous Alexandrine combined with limpest rhyme:

But naught he car'd for friend or enemy,
For in base mind nor friendship dwells nor enmity.

(IV.iv.11)

An unusual shortage of vocabulary in this canto seems to produce formulaic structures of repetition and inconsequential options like "doubtfull or dismayd." This coincides

in the three "which…" stanzas with some uninventive phallic imagery. Blandamour rode with "strength and stifnesse." Unsurprisingly, the more "strong and stiffely that he ran," "so much more sorely" did he fall. The four lines in which Braggadocchio misses his "turne" suspend the sequence momentarily, but to no real effect; cowardice is a blip in the circuit, one knight can always substitute for another (as Triamond and Cambell will demonstrate). Triamond steps in to fight Ferramont. Once down it is difficult for Ferramont to get up again. Courtiers tilting in heavy armour must indeed have struggled with this, and I can't imagine it always looked dignified. A sequence of epic similes compares combatants to "fierce Buls" (iv.18); "two wild Boares" (iv.29); "a Lion" (iv.32); and "two greedy Wolves" (iv.35). They are relatively short and generic, emphasizing without particularly complicating (or convincing us of) the fierceness of the fighters.

Spenser's description of the tournament lacks a poetic energy that we know he can produce. Witness Guyon fighting with Pyrochles in Book II:

> With that he drew his flaming sword, and strooke
> At him so fiercely, that the upper marge
> Of his sevenfolded shield away it tooke,
> And glauncing on his helmet, made a large
> And open gash therein: were not his targe,
> That broke the violence of his intent,
> The weary sowle from thence it would discharge,
> Nathelesse so sore a buff it to him lent,
> That made him reele, and to his brest his bever bent.
>
> (II.v.6)

The physical movements of the knights' bodies, the materiality of their garments, their flesh, their feelings, and the lines themselves all seem locked in struggle, displacing and modulating one another. Pyrochles' first strike is carried by three dramatic enjambments through the first six lines of that stanza until "the violence of his intent" —his inner force taking over the physical act entirely—is stopped, along with my comprehension, by the stubbornly material "targe" (a term of Old English origins for a light shield).[7] After a flash of Guyon's "weary sowle" reminds us of what is at stake in the metaphysical dimension, we watch his body double over in a movement unforgettably displaced onto his armor: "to his brest his bever bent." I think this is brilliant. The second it takes us to figure out the image puts the movement into slow

[7] Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "Targe, n.1"

motion. Whereas book IV canto iv's tournament can finish off multiple knights per stanza, sending them to ground with numbing regularity, here one single blow and its impact moves across a whole stanza, accruing an energy that is transferred into the next. These knights do not bounce off each other sequentially, they interact consequentially. Guyon's shame that Pyrochles should "make him stoup so low" gathers together the literal and figurative dimensions of combat and gives directly oppositional energy to his next move, "hurling high his yron braced arme" (II.v.7). In return for Pyrochles' "open gash," Guyon "opened wide a red floodgate" (II.v.7).

Everything now speeds up as Pyrochles loses his grip on chivalric technique:

He hewd, and lasht, and foynd, and thondred blowes,
And every way did seeke into his life,
Ne plate, ne male could ward so mighty throwes,
But yielded passage to his cruel knife.

(II.v.9)

Contrast the tournament's tumbling with this proliferation of verbs for "hit," the sense of metal-melting violence, the panic-inducing concept of "life" as something inside you which can be accessed by multiple routes. Guyon, remaining calm, directs Pyrochles' excess energy toward a magnified re-enactment of his own earlier indignity:

He made him stoup perforce unto his knee,
And doe unwilling worship to the Saint,
That on his shield depainted he did see;
Such homage til that instant never learned hee.

(II.v.11)

"That instant" turns Pyrochles into an image of fiery temper subdued by temperance to sovereign power. The whole fight is summed in one, stanza-length epic simile of a lion who, by dodging at the right moment, tricks a unicorn into impaling his horn in a tree. There, like a canapé on a cocktail stick, the unicorn "yields a bounteous feast" (II.v.10). This is magnificently horrible and evocative compared to the fighting bulls, boars and wolves of IV. iv. If the tournament is not entirely *bad*, it is at least worse than this.

I may have chosen an easy target, which isn't an interesting or generous thing to do. As far as I am aware nobody argues that this tournament is a high point of Spenser's poetry, and it often seems to get discreetly past over.[8] I can try, in my

[8] For an early example see Kate Mary Warren [1899], in *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Varorium Edition,* eds. Edwin Greenlaw, Charles Grosvenor Osgood, Frederick Morgan Padelford (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), 286; Jeff Dolven does not discuss it in his

defense, to justify this judgement as analytical rather than prejudiced by following Northrop Frye toward some frame of reference larger than my own experience of reading the poem (an experience Frye insists is essentially "incommunicable" (28)). This will exonerate Spenser as well by making the faults of his poem seem deliberate; in this case, intended not so much to make an allegorical point as a point about allegory.

The artificiality of the historical tournament offers one framework. How can it be truly energetic when it is punctuated by trumpets that "did warne them all to rest" (IV.iv.36)? At the end of the canto, the poet-narrator signals that he feels drained himself; "I with sound of trompe will also rest a whyle" (IV.iv.48). There are four main kinds of canto-ending in the *Faerie Queene*: when the narration simply stops without fanfare; when the narrator says he is going to need more space to finish his story (often signaling a narrative restructuring of some kind); when the characters reach some sort of resting place or night-time falls; and when the poet-narrator *himself* says that he needs to rest. The fourth is uncommon. There are only six of these canto-endings in the *Faerie Queene* by my count (1.xii; 3.xii; 4.iv; 4.v; 4.xi; 5.iii), and four of them complete cantos in which a tournament or pageant-type scenario is narrated.

To extend the metaphor that has animated so much critical discourse on this poem, one could argue that by turning directly towards Elizabethan pageantry, Spenser temporarily cut his poem off from its own "living spring."[9] It is one thing to *draw on* the imaginative world of Fairy Queens, hermits and Wild or Unknown Knights evoked at the Accession Day tilts, quite another to depict a tournament itself. When Ivan L. Schultze says of the devices of the Elizabethan pageantry that "some of them out-Spenser Spenser completely" (285), he is onto something. The life-source needs to lie behind, not in front of the poetry, whose life in any case depends on real oppositions not staged ones.

Jeff Dolven discusses the earlier tournament of Cambell with the brothers Priamond, Diamond and Triamond in terms that are strikingly relevant to the opening

essay about theatrical forms, but focusses on the shorter, more exciting tournament that precedes it in Book IV.iii. Jeff Dolven, "Spenser and the Troubled Theaters," *English Literary Renaissance* 29.2 (1999): 179–200, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.1999.tb01147.x.

[9] I am quoting Francis Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1975), 75. See Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Thames and Hudson, 1977), Chap 5; hereafter cited in the text. Ivan L. Schulze offers a succinct breakdown of resonances between Elizabethan pageantry and the tournaments of IV.iv and V.iii in "Reflections of Elizabethan Tournaments in the *Faerie Queene*, 4.4 and 5.3" *English Literary History* 5.4 (1938), 278-84. I have neglected Spenser's other sources here, among them Chaucer's Knight's and Squire's tales, and Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, each of which further illuminate the repetitive nature of the verses I've singled out. For an excellent discussion of Spenser's "updated" Chaucerian rhyming in the Cambell and three brothers episode, and its accentuation of that fight's interminability, see Richard Danson Brown, "Wise wights in privy places: Rhyme and stanza form in Spenser and Chaucer" in *Rereading Chaucer and Spenser: Dan Geffrey with the New Poete*, eds., Rachel Stenner, Tamsin Badcoe, and Gareth Griffith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 113-36; esp. 120-27.

discussion of this essay. “The onlookers are “amaz’d” by the “piteous spectacle” (IV.iii.21) or “filled…with rufull tine” (IV.iii.37) but never moved to respond in anything like a critical way: they are simply passive connoisseurs of the escalating violence” (193). In Dolven’s brilliant reading—part of a larger reflection on Spenser’s engagement with theatre—Cambina’s arrival in her chariot represents the reintroduction of allegorical order to “the meaningless drift of the fighting” (197) which, like “the basest playgoing,” has been “a narcotic for our moral and analytical faculties” (196). We might jump from here to the conclusion that tournaments in general, for Spenser, represent the materials of allegory without the analytical framework that gives it meaning. This is just the kind of flattened perspective that Northrop Frye accused judgmental literary critics (and medieval chroniclers) of having in a book that itself began as a study of *The Faerie Queene*.[10] According to this line of thought, in adopting the imaginative figures of courtly pageantry, Spenser showed what allegorical poetry could do that Elizabethan tournaments, which featured their fair share of uninspired verses, couldn’t. To hammer his point home, Spenser wrote bad poetry when he depicted tournaments. Whether I can really allow myself this value judgement, and on what terms, remains an open question for me. I am, either way, much more interested in book IV canto iv than I was before.

[10] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism,* vii. See Catherine Nicholson’s brilliant discussion of *The Faerie Queene* as a key weapon in the war between amateur and professionalized reading in the first half of the twentieth century, *Reading and Not Reading the Faerie Queene,* Introduction, 1-25.