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Allegorization and Racialization in *The Faerie Queene*

Ania Loomba has suggested that we attend to two techniques of racialized governance in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England: “the creation of internal hierarchies within a population” and the increasingly reified assumption of “correspondence between the ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ of human beings.” This essay claims that *The Faerie Queene* produces a surprising resemblance between racialization and allegory as a literary form. Testing this hypothesis primarily in Book V’s scenes of racialized punishment, it explores how allegory produces internal hierarchies and a correspondence between the outside and inside of beings in the poem. At the same time, it suggests Spenser’s immanent critique of allegory as technique and mode might also be viewed as the poem’s own analysis of the intimacy between racialization and colonial violence, repeatedly revealing the failure of the production of difference and the instability of racialized hierarchy.

In an influential intervention, Ania Loomba has directed premodern race studies to attend to two techniques of racialized governance in early modern Europe: “the creation of internal hierarchies within a population” and the increasingly reified assumption of “correspondence between the ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ of human beings.”¹ This way of thinking about race in the early modern world comprises two essential pieces. First,

race is not a preexistent thing; it is made in order to produce differential hierarchies within and between communities. And second, these hierarchies are naturalized through the production of a correspondence between how people look and what they are. Geraldine Heng's *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* extends Loomba's reasoning across a longer historical period, arguing in a much-cited passage that "race-making . . . operates at specific historical occasions in which strategic essentialisms are posited and assigned through a variety of practices and pressures, so as to construct a hierarchy of peoples for differential treatment." Heng proclaims race to be a structural relationship for the "articulation and management of human differences, rather than a substantive content."²

Such an understanding of race-making—that it aims to produce legible hierarchies of human types and correspondences between the inside and outside of persons—can help us understand how racialization works in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596), a poem that takes such hierarchies and correspondences to be fundamental to both its form and content.³ Analyzing the allegorical representation of a series of Muslim knights and an Irish criminal in the Books of Holiness and Justice, I will demonstrate how Spenser's distinctive use of allegory as a literary technique aids in and mirrors the production of racial difference in the text. In a sense, this is not particularly surprising; by definition, allegory articulates the correspondence of insides and outsides, some of which are virtuous and some of which are not. But Spenser scholars have not commented much on the relationship between allegory and racialization.⁴ Dennis Austin Britton, in his study of religious conversion and racial identity in *The Faerie Queene*, gestures in this direction when, in an extremely suggestive comment, he claims that individual allegorical figures, such as the personifications of lust and wrath, "merely act out racialized character traits," but he proposes that in doing so, they stray from the allegorical and even become antiallegorical.⁵ To complement Britton's study, I argue for a formal kinship between allegorization and racialization at key moments in the poem. I also claim—and this part might be more surprising—that Spenser's generic experimentation, where allegory and narrative tend to complicate each other within the unfolding of his poem, self-consciously displays and potentially even critiques its own practices of racialization.⁶ Analyzing the uncertain and unstable process of racialization in *The Faerie Queene* will allow us to consider the link between ideas about race and the poem's uniquely self-reflective literary form. In turn, the kaleidoscopic literariness of *The Faerie Queene* can provide insight into the vexed operations of historical racialization in the early modern period more generally.

I. ARRESTING ALLEGORY

The following sections of this essay will explore key examples to refine and complicate my claim about the entanglement of allegorization and racialization in the poem. But first, because “allegory” is a term used in more and less precise ways, this section will define its meaning-making (and policing) function in *The Faerie Queene*. Following Isabel MacCaffrey, theorists of Spenserian allegory tend to agree that the mode is “analytic” in its purest sense: allegory breaks things down and creates clear divisions, seeking to order meaning in and against the disorderly genre of romance, to subordinate narrative to the establishment of characters as iconic concepts.⁷ As Jeff Dolven puts it, “The characters [in *The Faerie Queene*] are concepts, and the poem thinks by combining and recombining them in the logic, or the stream of consciousness, of its narrative”; characters become “icons for thinking with.”⁸ To make this happen, the poem needs to invent characters that are reducible to stable meaning and secure positions, to give them “emblematic fixity,” to arrest them.⁹ Allegory works differently at different moments in the poem. Sometimes, these character-concepts are externalized versions of internal impulses of the protagonists: when the knight of holiness errs, he encounters Error. At other times, character-concepts are embodiments of things that are actually external and not only projections (especially in Book V, where the protagonists meet a character named Belge, who represents Belgium). In one case, when Malbecco metamorphoses into Jealousy, a realist human character turns into a concept, suggesting, to borrow an insight from Susanne Wofford, that perhaps all allegories once lived unallegorical lives in the poem.¹⁰ But in general, allegory, insofar as it makes characters into concepts, assumes at a structural level that the fictional world it upholds is like a puzzle in which each piece can be represented as one interacting part within a whole. Each piece fits—and can be fixed—in one particular place and has the appearance, obvious or eventually demonstrable, of the kind of thing it is.

At its most generous, the poem’s allegorical operations provide tools for thinking. Character-concepts can be heuristics, playful or polemical ways of making sense of the world’s messiness. But Spenser’s interest in using allegory as a heuristic structure is not always innocent. Gordon Teskey has noted that allegory, when used to produce absolute meaning and fixity, enters into conflict with narrative in the poem. Temporal flux and romance error tend to “subvert imposed structures of meaning,” and allegory requires violence to reassert those structures: “the more powerful the allegory,

the more openly violent the moments in which the materials of narrative are shown being actively subdued."¹¹ The policing function of allegory is sometimes only implicit in Teskey's argument, but it can be stated explicitly: the imposition of such "structures of meaning" produces and maintains hierarchies of character types. Allegorical violence works to make a world in which hierarchies of characters are established and patrolled through and with reference to their legible appearances.

The political consequences of Spenser's allegory are thematized within the poem, perhaps most significantly early in Book V, the Book of Justice, where the knight Artegall, battling vaguely Irish and Catholic and Spanish and Muslim enemies in a vaguely Irish landscape, energetically seeks to turn this landscape into an allegory: to put people in their appropriate positions in a hierarchy and to make what he takes to be their essential beings legible in their appearances. Unlike the poem's earlier protagonists, who tend to find themselves in allegorical settings that relate to their inner states, the knight of justice actively carves mobile narrative and complex character into static emblem and icon. He articulates the goals of this allegorical project in the second canto when he debates the so-called Egalitarian Giant, who is organizing a multitude of peasants for a rebellion against political and economic injustice.¹² Artegall recognizes the planned uprising as a threat not only to economic and political hierarchy but also to the cosmic and allegorical order that his colonial violence is working to instantiate. This is how he responds to the Giant's arguments:

Such heauenly iustice doth among them [all things in the natural order] raine,

That euery one doe know their certaine bound,
In which they doe these many yeares remaine,
And mongst them al no change hath yet beene found.
But if thou now shouldst weigh them new in pound,
We are not sure they would so long remaine:
All change is perillous, and all chaunce vnfound.

Therefore leaue off to weigh them all againe,
Till we may be assur'd they shall their course retaine.

(V.ii.36)

Artegal's perspective could not be more dissonant with that of the narrator in the proem to Book V, for whom "all things else in time are chaunged quight. / Ne wonder; for the heauens reuolution / Is wandred farre from,

where it first was pight” (V.proem.4). Artegall’s “heavenly iustice” consists of everyone always “know[ing]” his place within the whole, his “certaine bound”—implying both limitation and bondage. The appearance of each individual in his “certaine bound” and “course” remains consistent and legible: “no change hath yet beene found.” In this way, heavenly justice resembles an overwrought allegory, in which “euery one” has an assigned place, “remain[ing]” fixed in time, space, and meaning. Anyone who attempts to change their place is a threat to political and environmental stasis and cosmological order; Artegall declares that “all change is perillous.” The heavenly justice the knight of justice wants to impose on the world would therefore produce a fantasy of arrest, absolute stasis, a perpetual “retain[ing]” of the “certaine bound” of things as they are and are meant to be. This is allegory at its most totalitarian and antinarrative, a cosmic naturalization of the state in which every being is legible because it remains unchangingly bound to its place.

II. MIRRORING MUSLIMS

What does Artegall’s metacommentary on allegory as not only a literary technique but a way of ordering the world in static and legible hierarchy have to do with racialization? It is no coincidence that Artegall’s allegory of heavenly justice follows immediately upon his killing of Pollente, first introduced to us and to Artegall as a “cursed cruell Sarazin” (V.ii.4) who guards a bridge and collects a toll from all who want to pass.¹³ In both episodes, the goals of allegory are to produce social and cosmic hierarchy, as well as a correspondence between the outside and inside of beings. That correspondence reveals that outer appearance, when read correctly, just *is* inner identity—an index of a character’s position within a cosmological hierarchy. In the wake of Artegall’s pitching Pollente’s “blasphemous head” upon a pole for “all” to see, this hierarchy—and the idea of the human that Artegall produces and polices—is explicitly racialized. The Pollente episode thus allows us to see the connection between the logic of racialization at work there and the larger dynamic of hierarchical identity-indexing in the poem. His allegorical punishment prepares for and complicates representations of colonial violence later in the canto and beyond in Book V.

That the poem introduces Pollente as a “cursed cruell Sarazin” is relevant to how it thinks about allegorical racialization, since “Sarazin” is itself a willful abstraction rather than a precise descriptor. The term, like “Turk” or “Moor,” underwrites early modern European attempts, as Benedict Robinson describes it, “to name the whole Islamic world, that is, to produce a version of the ‘Islamic world,’ to impose a fantasy of that world onto a heterogeneous collection of cultures, histories, and encounters,” even in a moment when England was gaining considerably in knowledge of the Islamic world’s diversity.¹⁴ It is unclear how much Spenser himself knew about Islam. He does not take the time to draw much attention to specific historical or theological details in his representation of “Saracens,” as his Italian precursors Matteo Maria Boiardo, Ludovico Ariosto, and Torquato Tasso (who lived and wrote in nearer proximity to Muslims of the Mediterranean) sometimes do.¹⁵ But we should not dismiss Spenser’s engagement with Islam as merely literary either. His use of the “Saracen” as a literary figure or commonplace offers very specific resources for understanding how Spenser intervenes in the literary history of abstracting and racializing Muslims.

When Artegall and his partner-in-justice, Talus, approach the bridge that this “Sarazin” guards, Pollente’s assistant (we learn later that his name is Guizor) asks them for money, and the narrator notes this is “according to the custome of their law” (V.ii.11). Whose custom and whose law is not specified—it could, presumably, be a custom Pollente has imposed in this seemingly Irish space, or an indigenous custom here enacted by a Muslim.¹⁶ Regardless, Artegall declares Pollente and Guizor’s tax-collecting lawless, a kind of theft, and, like a corny superhero in a Marvel film, announces with comic timing, “Loe there thy hire,” and punches Guizor so hard that he dies instantly. Pollente is not exactly pleased about this; he and Artegall scuffle, and Artegall decapitates the Muslim knight. The last image the poem gives us of Pollente is a description of what Artegall does with his severed head:

His corps was carried downe along the Lee,
 Whose waters with his filthy bloud it stayned:
 But his blasphemous head, that all might see,
 He pitcht vpon a pole on high ordayned;
 Where many years it afterwards remayned,
 To be a mirrour to all mighty men,
 In whose right hands great power is containd,
 That none of them the feeble ouerren,
 But alwaies doe their powre within iust compasse pen.
 (V.ii.19)

Dolven has read the first two cantos of Book V, including the Pollente episode, as an investigation of poetic justice, the process by which a supposed criminal is “punished in a manner that symbolically invokes the nature of his crime” such that the crime is legible on his person.¹⁷ The neatest example of this, in canto i of Book V, is Sanglier, a knight who kills a maid and has to wear her severed head around his neck for a year so that everyone can see his crime on his person.¹⁸ Poetic justice, as a kind of allegory-making, transforms characters into emblems of their crimes. Pollente is a more complex case than Sanglier, though, because the scene links poetic justice more explicitly with racialization.

That Guizor’s and Pollente’s punishments for unlicensed taxing are much more brutal than that of a White knight who decapitates a woman is itself already potentially evidence for the racialization of punishment.¹⁹ But the entanglement of racialization and punishment in this scene is knottier. Artegall has a tendency to dismember bodies when he wants to turn them into signs of their crimes, and pieces of Muslim corpses in Book V are made available for especially important allegorical work: Pollente’s daughter Munera, for example, has her gold and silver hands and feet cut off and crucified.²⁰ Here, Pollente’s body has been sent down the Lee, his blood staining the water that he previously had taxed people to cross, while his “blasphemous head” is raised up high on a pole as it is transformed into “a mirrour to all mighty men.” Pollente’s allegorical punishment is to become an exemplar of his name and his crime, and Spenser cannot resist the pun: pagan Pollente “pitcht vpon a pole” for polling. This figure of dangerous and illegal Islamic power (the etymology of his name is in the Latin *pollentia*, power) becomes a cautionary symbol of just that for “all mighty men” to see. (How the decapitated head’s decomposition over the course of “many years” plays into this is only one of many questions the episode leaves unanswered; Artegall also does not leave a sign to explain the context of Pollente’s punishment, though perhaps the racializing tableau is meant to make it immediately obvious.) The process of rendering Pollente’s allegorical position in Artegall’s hierarchy is clear: Pollente, as a Muslim, can only ever wield power unjustly, and so his race and faith, embodied in his “blasphemous head,” become an emblem of a crime that his racial and religious type is necessarily inclined toward. In this case, Artegall’s poetic justice, his attempt to reduce Pollente’s entire being to his legible crime, is also an act of racialization, for he produces an emblem of criminal abuse of power that is meant to seem essentially Muslim.

That Pollente’s head becomes a “mirrour,” though, complicates his emblematic status in the narrative. A “commonplace in discussions of exemplarity,”

a “mirror” could simply be a guidebook or collection of exempla and stories that would provide lessons (as in the 1555 *Mirror for Magistrates*),²¹ and the end of the stanza suggests that Pollente’s head is indeed a warning to those who are not like him—at least not yet. Those “in whose *right* hands great power is containd” (my emphasis) are reminded to “pen” their power in “iust compasse.” But the highlighting of vision in this stanza—the point of the head is to “see” it—suggests the possibility that Pollente’s head has somehow become a reflective surface for identification and projection, for people to see themselves mirrored in his crime and punishment. Insofar as Pollente’s head is decorporealized and transformed into a symbol through Artegall’s punishment, his head blurs the boundary between an exemplary mirror warning viewers against his fate and a literal mirror reflecting what they already are or can become.²²

In this latter sense, Christians who view Pollente’s head see themselves as Muslim, and see their crime as, somehow, intrinsically Islamic. If Barbara Fuchs is right that the fight between Artegall and Pollente already involves a complicated kind of mirroring, where Pollente can be seen to represent both the Moorish enemy of Christian Spain and Spain itself, then the assemblage of identifications gets much more complicated when Pollente’s decapitated head actually becomes a reflective surface.²³ Denis Guénoun and Gil Anidjar’s claim that Christian Europe and Islam are “intimately [and constitutively] involved in a specular formation of mirror images” that historically constitute Islam as exteriority but continually reveals Islam’s presence at the heart of Europe is here reflected with uncanny precision.²⁴

Artegall’s goal is to put Pollente in his place within the Christian European hierarchy he is attempting to create through colonial violence. He strives to make Pollente’s head a visible symbol of his crime, which defines who he is (or was): a “blasphemous” Muslim criminal. Here we can see the resonance of the dual techniques of racialization that Loomba and Heng have analyzed: producing or consolidating a hierarchy between people, and rendering outer appearance synonymous with inner being. The entire process suggests the essential criminality of Islam and of figures the poem labels “Sarazins.” But the ambiguity of the specular lesson as it unfolds in the narrative disrupts the racialized hierarchy the episode seems to produce, since the allegorical racialization of Pollente also turns him into a surface in which “all mighty men,” and possibly “all” people, can find their faces reflected. The wide-ranging availability of reflection underscores Spenser’s relative lack of interest in attaching phenotypic characteristics to Muslims, further blurring the difference between Christians and Muslims.²⁵ Book V’s continually failed production of a hierarchy of legible difference poses a

significant problem for the larger project of colonial domination and “reform” that emerges most explicitly at the end of that book. This includes the showdown with the ambiguously Muslim and Catholic Souldan in canto viii, where Artegall “turns Turk” and Arthur defeats the tyrant with a mirrored shield, destroying him through another act of reflection, one modeled on Ariosto’s “Saracen”-raised Ruggiero, who kills the Orc with a shield whose magic is associated with its original owner, the North African wizard Atlante.²⁶

The specular dynamics of allegorical racialization also resonate with the more obviously psychomachic mirroring encounters with Muslims earlier in the poem, especially the first “Sarazin[s]” (I.ii.12) we meet, the Sans brothers Redcrosse, the knight of Christian holiness, encounters in Book I: Sansfof, Sansjoy, and Sansloy, personifications of a purportedly Muslim lack of faith, joy, and law. The 1590 *Faerie Queene* tends to offer very different kinds of allegorical encounters than in the later Book V (first included in the 1596 edition), where Artegall seemingly starts out fully formed and continually tries to transform the world into stable signs of a colonial order and meaning he bears with him. In Book I, Redcrosse is not yet formed, and he encounters allegorical figures who are projections of himself. But insofar as Redcrosse encounters allegorical characters who are manifestation of his internal states, his meeting with a mirrored version of himself as a “faithless” Muslim also displays the dizzying psychic dynamic that, as we saw in Artegall’s emblemization of Pollente’s head as a mirror, results from racialization’s hierarchical articulation of the relationship between internal and external, being and appearance. Though the Sans brothers are, as far as Redcrosse consciously knows, Muslim knights he encounters in the world and has to try to defeat, from our perspective, once we learn to read allegorical characters as projections of Redcrosse’s internal struggle, the Sans brothers are aspects of Redcrosse, externalizations of his own incapacity to maintain Christian faith, joy, and law. The poem exerts effort to make Redcrosse and the Sans brothers indistinguishable from each other within the stanzas where they fight, conflating their appearances and even their persons through pronominal ambiguity, affective mirroring, and similes in which they appear identical. The first instance of this is exemplary. When Redcrosse and Sansfof first strike each other, they stand looking at each other “astonied with the stroke of their owne hand,” as though they have struck each other with the same—“their owne”—hand, and, as if mimicking each other as they shake off the stound, both “backe rebutte,” moving perfectly reciprocally to yield land “ech to other” (I.ii.15–16).²⁷ And in that sense, from the very beginning of the poem, Christian knights find themselves

in a specular relationship with Islam, one that they either experience unknowingly (as with Redcrosse, where he comes across a part of himself externalized in the world that he does not recognize as such) or themselves produce (as with Artegall, who transforms a Muslim knight's decapitated head into a mirror for Christian men to see themselves in). In these examples, the poem seems to produce "the Muslim" as a racialized other only then to suggest that the Muslim is a complex reflection of the Christian imaginary—one that is perhaps supposed to be expurgated but that continues to return as a source of resistance to that imaginary from within.²⁸

Barbara Fuchs has argued that early modern Christians, especially but not exclusively in England, looked in their literature to appropriate mimetically the kind of might that they associated with Islam. The English imitate Muslims to defeat them, making mimesis a tool of empire. But such mirroring or emulation, Fuchs argues, could also unsettle imperial identity.²⁹ Spenser examines these dual possibilities for mimesis by literalizing them in these scenes of mirroring or projection. From one perspective, Redcrosse's and Artegall's encounters with Muslim knights give them an opportunity to impose a kind of racialized hierarchy on the world they inhabit, and in Artegall's case, his allegory-making leads him to render Pollente a symbol of what Islamic criminality essentially is in his cosmic and colonial idea of order. In this sense, allegory works as an instrument of racialization in the service of ideology, reducing characters to their crimes and making their crimes legible in their appearances. But in both cases, the racialized Islamic other proves to be a complex reflection or projection of Christian knights, which allows Spenser's narrative to deconstruct the very process of racialization that it abets through allegory. Spenser's poem thus shows us how racialization in allegory functions as what Teskey calls "capture," whereby the poem reveals how complex identities are forced, through violence, into a legible hierarchy in which they are made to be what they look like, and what they look like is meant to indicate what they are.³⁰ Whether Spenser's poem functions as a critique of the intimacy between Islamophobic racialization and colonial violence is a thornier question.

III. DECEIVING IRISH

The relationship between allegorization and racialization does not only apply in cases of Muslims. It is equally—and relatedly—at play in Spenser's

representation of the Irish as racial others. In this section I take the entanglement of Islamophobic and anti-Irish racism as a starting point for reflecting on the problems that the depiction of Irish criminality produces for Spenser's allegorical project, particularly in the instance of Malengin, one of the poem's most infamous examples of the brutal production and policing of racialized difference. The killing of Pollente, as we have seen, brings Islam and Ireland together; the Muslim's body, shorn of its head, is sent down the river Lee. As Fuchs has demonstrated, this crossing of Islamic and Irish referents at this moment in Book V and elsewhere evokes the Black Legend, through which Irish, Spanish, and Moorish origins are inextricably if inexactly entangled. Expanding her analysis to *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, Fuchs argues that Spenser's prose dialogue about Irish colonialism "relies heavily on a historical view of both Irish and Spanish origins: for Spaniards, read Moors; for Spanish origins of Ireland, read Moorish or African origin."³¹ This interweaving of the Irish, Catholic, and Islamic in the English imaginary provides a contextual link between the killing of Pollente and the murder of Malengin, and both episodes display and worry about racialized violence. Artegall and Arthur's encounter with Malengin literalizes the problem of allegory as racialized capture and exposes the desire for the achievement of such capture as fruitless at best, and dangerously pathological at worst.

Malengin, a personification of "Guyle" according to the headnote to canto ix and "deceit" according to the summary of his killing (V.ix.19), is positioned as a threat to legal order, or as an obstacle that needs to be overcome before Artegall, Talus, and Arthur can, later in the canto, arrive at Mercilla's court. As with many cantos that have a divided structure, the wilderness and the court provide contrasting perspectives on a related problem: the methodical, "indifferent" (V.ix.36) proceedings of the court (the marshal is named Order; a guard named Awe keeps out "guile" [V.ix.22]) are set off against the ad hoc, extrajudicial "justice" that the knights execute in the labyrinthine wilderness, where Malengin lives "vnassaylable" (V.ix.5) by the rule of law.³² Malengin is set apart racially as well as geographically and juridically, and there is some suggestion that his allegorization has been begun by some community within the poem, rather than by the poet himself—we only know him by the name given him by nameless characters: "*Malengin* they him call" (V.ix.5)—and that this allegorization, as a process of racialization, will be completed by the knights and Talus. Critical accounts tend to associate Malengin with Irish rebels or Catholic missionary priests, both of whom were racialized in late sixteenth-century England,³³ and his cavern with a tunneled souterrain, where anticolonial Irish might

hide out and store supplies, or a “priest-hole,” where Catholic clerics could conceal themselves when homes were searched.³⁴ For my purposes the Irish associations are the most relevant, and in addition to the evocation of the souterrain, Malengin’s initial description fleshes out this connection for an early modern English readership: he has “hollow eyes deepe pent,” “long curld locks,” and wears “vncouth vestiment / Made of straunge stuffe” (V.ix.10). As Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have demonstrated, English writers who worked to produce a perception of the Irish as unassimilable racial others who could not be civilized through the imposition of English common law obsessively returned to “the problems of [Irish] hair, clothes and language”: the “glibe” (also “gleb,” “glebe”) was a hairstyle the English associated with the Irish who could use it to disguise their faces and transform their identity, and the Irish vestment or mantle was also understood to make available a ready disguise.³⁵

The name people have given to Malengin links him with evil wit, and we learn of his history of kidnapping and theft as an introduction to the racializing description of his embodiment. But Artegall, Arthur, and Talus are the ones whose guileful entrapment of Guyle continues, less literally but not less markedly, the uncanny cross-racial mirroring that we already witnessed in the episode with Pollente. Malengin hides in an inaccessible underground maze and can only be known and punished if he is brought to the surface. This inaccessibility is what stokes Arthur and Artegall’s desire to develop strategies to lure him out:

Through these his slights he many doth confound,
 And eke the rocke, in which he wonts to dwell,
 Is wondrous strong, and hewen farre vnder ground
 A dreadfull depth, how deepe no man can tell;
 But some doe say, it goeth downe to hell.
 And all within, it full of wyndings is,
 And hidden wayes, that scares an hound by smell
 Can follow out those false footsteps of his,
 Ne none can backe returne, that once are done amis.

Which when those knights had heard, their harts gan earne,
 To vnderstand that villeins dwelling place,
 And greatly it desir’d of her to learne,
 And by which way they towards it should trace.

(V.ix.6–7)

As with the Pollente episode, the twin projects of allegorical capture and racialization come up against the resistance of narrative, and here the key characteristics of romance are more emphatically present. The cave's "dreadfull depth," inaccessible and unknowable, echoes the topography of romance wandering—and romance's tendency to muddy interpretive transparency—since "it full of wyndings is, / And hidden wayes."³⁶ This could be another opportunity for Artegall to get lost or seriously delayed; only a canto ago he was still a captive of the Amazons, and we will learn soon, in the conversation with Sir Sergis, how dire Artegall's delays have been for Irena, the figure he is supposed to rescue (V.xi.39). (It is a running joke, more obsessively called attention to in Book V than elsewhere in the poem, that Artegall keeps getting off track and having to return to his "first aduventure" or "first intent" once again.)³⁷ The fact that hearing about this cave's unknowability produces desire further suggests that Malengin's lair could be an additional threat to the larger quest: "their harts gan earne," "and greatly it desir'd of her to learne." Samient, their recently rescued female companion, introduces the story of Malengin to them in romance terms: as "a straunge aduventure, which not farre thence lay" (V.ix.4). Her description stokes their desire in the first place, but also seems to suggest now is not the time for such an adventure: it will "let" their "pace" from their allegorical destination, slow them down, and take them off track (V.ix.7). But Arthur and Artegall are committed, and let a pun on Samient's "let your pace" (slow you down) bury the worry and the question of her consent to their plot: "Then let not that (said they) stay your intent; / For neither will one foot, till we that carle haue hent" (V.ix.7). The strategy that they develop, though, leads in a different direction. They displace or double their desire to "vnderstand that villeins dwelling place" in a significantly riskier stratagem:

So both agreed, to send that mayd afore,
Where she might sit nigh to the den alone,
Wayling, and raysing pittifull vprore,
As if she did some great calamitie deplore.

(V.ix.8)

Here is the game Arthur and Artegall, "both agreed," play: Samient, whom they had just used in a similar tactic to defeat the Souldan in the previous canto, will sit "alone" by the entrance to Malengin's den and raise "pittifull vprore"; Malengin should leave his cave to find her, and Artegall will "ensnarle" him when he is on the surface, "ere to his den he backward could

recoyle" (V.ix.9), with Artegall blocking the entrance to the cave. The knights are making a concerted effort to fabricate a romance plot here by exploiting Samient's fabricated vulnerability. They are also redirecting the desire to "vnderstand" Malengin's cave to a desire to ensnare him—both physically and, in the way we have already seen with Artegall and Pollente, in a racialized hierarchy.

Arthur and Artegall play this game of entrapment because it allows them pleurably to instantiate their desire: to know about Malengin (if not his cave, which falls out of the picture) and to cast themselves as heroes rescuing a woman in danger—though a danger they have themselves manufactured. As the game unfolds, their desires turn out to be even more complicated. Malengin repeatedly escapes their attempts to capture him by metamorphosing into different animals and objects. And here an intriguing tension between two modes of racialization emerges. On the one hand, Malengin's initial description racializes him as Irish, in accordance with the tendency of racialization to fix—to arrest—identity through allegory. As with Pollente, the poem connects Malengin's outer appearance with his inner essence. On the other hand, Malengin's role as personification of guile makes his appearance entirely unstable, ever changing.³⁸ Paradoxically, his fluctuating appearance, like his initially static description, is also supposed to match his inner being, his guileful criminality.

Yet as Joe Moshenska argues, it is this capacity for swift movement and dynamic flux that also makes Malengin sympathetic to readers, makes him seem like something other than the Irish or Catholic guileful criminality that he is meant to embody. Though Malengin's dancing and flowing are clearly moralized, the poem has a hard time not evincing some admiration for his ludic dexterity: "Vp to the rocke he ran, and thereon flew / Like a wyld Gote, leaping from hill to hill, / And dauncing on the craggy cliffes at will" (V.ix.15).³⁹ It is this dexterity, this refusal to maintain a static exterior that could become a sign of stable racialized and criminalized meaning, that leads Talus cruelly to kill him, after which Arthur and Artegall unceremoniously leave his corpse as carrion:

he with his yron flayle
 Gan driue at him, with so huge might and maine,
 That all his bones, as small as sandy grayle
 He broke, and did his bowels disentrayle;
 Crying in vaine for helpe, when helpe was past.
 So did deceit the selfe deceiuer fayle,

There they him left a carrion outcast;
 For beasts and foules to feede vpon for their repast.
 (V.ix.19)

This is one of the most brutal of Artegall and Talus's murders; the brutality, especially the disembowelment, echoes the punishment of supposed traitors, including Irish rebels and Catholic priests.⁴⁰ But unlike with the killing of Pollente, it is unclear whether this punishment is meant to yield a lesson. Possibly the process of "disentrayl[ing]" Malengin's bowels makes externally visible and thus allegorically captures the subterranean windings of Malengin's cave, and the link between romance winding and his metamorphic abilities. But despite the syntax of "so did deceive the selfe deceiuer fayle," which suggests the transformation of Malengin's corpse into a sign no longer of deceit but of self-deception, no such didactic allegorization really takes place here. Malengin's brutal execution is not sublimated into any lesson, even one that the poem could later complicate or erase. We only get the vivid description of his annihilated body, with its bones broken "as small as sandy grayle," "his bowels disentrayle[d]," his corpse left as "carrion outcast." This cruelty is in marked contrast to Mercilla's "yeelding the last honour to [Duessas] wretched corse" (V.x.4) after she is tried in the second half of canto ix and ultimately executed. The contrast between the vicious, elaborately described execution in the wilderness and the institutionally sanctioned, gently elided execution within Mercilla's court is underscored by a surprising echo: the sympathetic description of Malengin's "crying in vaine for helpe, when helpe was past" repeats Samient's "crying for helpe aloud" at the beginning of Arthur and Artegall's game, continuing the mirror effects that subtend racialization in the poem. Though Samient's cries are manufactured to lure Malengin out, the echo nonetheless manages to undercut the difference between Samient, an appropriate object of sympathy, and Malengin, an inappropriate one, drawing us to question more deeply the motives for his murder.

But if there is a lesson that we as readers can take from this whole chain of events, moving from Arthur and Artegall's desire to understand Malengin's cave, to their self-ennobling game of entrapment, to the unyielding cruelty inflicted on Malengin, it is this: the poem is staging and diagnosing the way that pleasure in acts of racialized policing and detection can quickly manifest as sheer brutality, shorn of any pedagogical value for the characters in or readers of the poem. I am suggesting not that readers experience pleasure in this scene of entrapment and punishment but that Arthur and

Artegall do—first in their desire to plumb the depths of Malengin’s cave, then in their game to lure him out—and that, with a protean energy that mirrors Malengin’s own physical metamorphoses, that pleasure precipitously turns into a brutality that cannot be separated from pleasure when their game does not go as planned.

This brutality can be explained not so much by Malengin’s specific threat as by the two modes of his racialization, which render his appearances (as both legibly Irish and irreducibly amorphous) clear indicators of what he is. Malengin’s allegorical relationship to the guile associated in the English imagination, including in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596), with Irish anticolonial rebels is especially relevant when considering the racialized pleasures of punishment in this scene. As Katarzyna Lecky has recently shown, there is a debate among interpreters of *A View* about how it racializes the Irish. While some find the racist colonial thinking represented in that text to identify and pathologize the “uncivilized” Irish body and mind, others, like Lecky herself, argue that Spenser depicts the Irish as weirdly unidentifiable, a “shifting mass of amorphous, indistinct entities” that are “at once undeniable and indefinable”: “human matter stripped of its humanity.”⁴¹ We can see how Spenser has already anticipated this scholarly debate about *A View* within the Malengin episode, since Malengin is at first described in a way that makes him resemble an English fantasy of pathological Irish embodiment (remember the “hollow eyes deepe pent,” the “long curld locks,” the “vncouth vestiment / Made of straunge stuffe” [V.ix.10]),⁴² but then turns out to be totally protean, able to transform his body into anything. What seems like it might be a clear example of Loomba’s analytic for racialization in the early modern world (hierarchy based on a correlation between the inner being and outer appearance of a person) is reshaped when outer appearance is ever changeable. Artégall, Arthur, and Talus’s realization that Malengin is not always stably identifiable as Irish, dramatized by his metamorphoses, becomes the reason they are so determined to arrest him, both to seize his body and to fix its appearance. This is an instance of racialized capture—in the sense that the poem is showing the violence needed to produce racialization as a kind of allegory—because it demonstrates to the reader that when the former mechanism of racialization, static personification, does not work, when Malengin cannot be caught and reduced to a “proper forme” because he can always “leauē” and take “other shape” (V.ix.16), then another mechanism of racialization emerges. Talus brutally disembowels and annihilates him, breaking his bones into the smallest possible pieces (“sandy grayle”) and leaves his corpse to rot without burial.

I am not sure we should be too quick to conceive of what Teskey calls capture's "revelation" of allegory's instrumental violence in the creation of its personifications as autocritique.⁴³ But the poem is at the very least skeptical of Artegall and Arthur's violent game with Malengin. It mirrors his guile, of course, and it leads to extreme violence that the reader cannot easily recuperate as pleasurable or pedagogical. It is also violence that, as several scholars have suggested, may not actually be effective at conquering "guyle," not least because the second half of the canto states explicitly that "guyle"—even after the death of its personification—lives on and can still make its way into Mercilla's court, where a figure of "gyantlike resemblance" needs to guard its gate "to keepe out guyle" (V.ix.22).⁴⁴ The uninstrusive brutality and the likely inefficacy of Artegall, Arthur, and Talus's guileful capture and murder of Malengin suggest that the poem is inviting us to think with it, to be receptive to its own skepticism toward its racialized violence and the complex mirroring that repeatedly takes place in moments where violence is meant to produce and sustain racial hierarchy.

Spenser's deep ambivalence to his own allegorical project gives us a unique perspective on how allegorization and racialization are interrelated mechanisms of the sort of power the poem at times champions and at other times criticizes. Spenser made a powerful choice to place a figure for such ambivalence—in some sense a mirror image of himself, but also connected to guile⁴⁵—directly in between the murder of Malengin and the execution at Mercilla's court. In the two central stanzas of Book V, canto ix, we find Spenser's most tortured representation of a poet: BON FONT is transformed into Malfont by his allegorical punishment, his former name, which "few could rightly read," crossed out and overwritten with his new one, while his tongue is "nayed to a post" for having blasphemed "that Queene for forged *guyle*" (V.ix.25–26; my emphasis). *The Faerie Queene's* relationship to racialization is as ambivalent as its relationship to allegory: something it will repeatedly produce, but then turn around and reveal the violence that is required for its unstable and uncertain production. The poem perpetually explores its own failure to sustain the hierarchies that it seems to want to achieve.

What kind of critique of allegorical racialization is this? I still find invaluable Harry Berger Jr.'s suggestion that *The Faerie Queene* "produces the desire and the readiness to find the critique already (but *not always* already) alive in [its own] textual activity."⁴⁶ But it would feel reductive to declare Spenser's poem's ambivalence toward racialization a principled critique. It more often seems to be produced out of shame. Dolven has argued that *The Faerie Queene* "is haunted by a kind of ideological shame, the shame of

ideology, pathologically self-conscious about what disappears from its view whenever it believes in anything at all."⁴⁷ Any critique of racialization like Spenser's that is motivated more by panic than by principle, more by shame than by a desire to liberate, is a limited one to be sure. This is why an undergraduate's asking me years ago whether Spenser "believes in social justice" stays with me, not least because one certainly cannot answer affirmatively in any contemporary sense of the term. But I do not think this student's question—which sought political certainty in a text that tends to render any of its beliefs uncertain—is by any means beside the point. To the contrary. Even if I do not see my task as either redeeming or condemning a poet like Spenser for his political beliefs, the force of this student's question has helped me understand a critical point: scholars who resist early modern race studies in part because they believe it imposes a certain politics (an unequivocal stance against racism, anti-Blackness, and White supremacy) onto Renaissance texts' rich ambiguity neglect the possibility that an interpretive lens informed by contemporary politics and a desire for liberation does not obscure literary nuance.⁴⁸ Political commitment and literary nuance should not be posed as mutually exclusive. They can be dialectically related, in a way that enriches our understanding of both politics and poetics, the past and the present. In the case of *The Faerie Queene*, I have argued that the precarious projects of allegorical and racial capture are intimately connected. Interpreting that relation can help us see that the poem's compulsive, critical examination of its own allegorical mode provides lessons for how allegory shapes racialization in the poem and in our world today. And—perhaps most importantly—it reveals how the unstable project of racialization must continually fail to reduce individuals and communities to the meanings they are supposed to embody, just as readers of *The Faerie Queene* will continue to discover the gaps and unassimilable narrative materials that unsettle the poem's allegorical edifice.

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NOTES

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1. Ania Loomba, "Outsiders in Shakespeare's England," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 160. Loomba's argument is developed in more expansively historical and theoretical terms in "Race and the Possibilities of Comparative Critique," *New Literary History* 40, no. 3 (2009): 501–22.

2. Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 32.

3. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, rev. 2nd ed., ed. A. C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita, and Toshiyuki Suzuki (London: Routledge, 2013). This edition is cited hereafter parenthetically by book, canto, and stanza.

4. Though see Benedict Robinson's essay in this volume for important commentary on the racialization of Spenser's Phantastes's "swarthy" and "black" melancholy.

5. Dennis Austin Britton, *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation, and Early Modern English Romance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 72.

6. Susanne Lindgren Wofford articulates with particular clarity a "theory of how to read *The Faerie Queene* that gives interpretive priority to the difference obtaining between the discourse of heroic action—which includes Spenser's complex meditation on and imitation of epic and romance precursors—and the figural argument of his allegory," in *The Choice of Achilles: The Ideology of Figure in the Epic* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), chaps. 4 and 5 (quote at 295).

7. Isabel Gamble MacCaffrey, *Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 37–38.

8. Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 139.

9. Ibid.

10. Wofford, *The Choice of Achilles*, 299: "behind the allegorical text lies the possibility of an infinite expansion in which every personification would receive its due prior narrative." For a thought-provoking extension of this suggestion, see Joe Moshenska, "The Forgotten Youth of Allegory: Figures of Old Age in *The Faerie Queene*," *Modern Philology* 110, no. 3 (2013): 389–414.

11. Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 23.

12. For a fuller account of the allegorical stakes of Artegall's encounter with the Egalitarian Giant and the peasants who swarm in revolt after his death, see my *Unknowing Fanaticism: Reformation Literatures of Self-Annihilation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 44–58.

13. Shokoofeh Rajabzadeh has persuasively reminded us that “Sarazin” (or “Saracen”) was a racializing term in the Middle Ages and has argued that we not reproduce it in our scholarship as a replacement for “Muslim.” See Shokoofeh Rajabzadeh, “The Depoliticized Saracen and Muslim Erasure,” *Literature Compass* 16, nos. 9–10 (2019): 1–8.

14. Benedict S. Robinson, *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 5. On the growing knowledge of Islam and the Islamic world in early modern England, see (among other valuable recent studies) Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558–1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008). On the medieval history of abstraction that produces the figure of the “Saracen,” Heng's chapter on this “race figure” in *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, 110–80, and John V. Tolan's *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) are particularly helpful. Though not immediately relevant for a study of Spenser or the context of early modern allegory, I have learned a lot about the relevance of the category of abstraction for thinking about race from Sara-Maria Sorentino; see her “Natural Slavery, Real Abstraction, and the Virtuality of Anti-Blackness,” *Theory and Event* 22, no. 3 (2019): 630–73, and “The Abstract Slave: Anti-Blackness and Marx's Method,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 96 (2019): 17–37.

15. For example, Tasso's Clorinda lectures briefly about the Islamic prohibition on images when she meditates on the decision to put a stolen statue of the Virgin in the Great Mosque of Jerusalem—the kind of (minimal) detail that never really makes its way into Spenser's poem. See Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered* (*Gerusalemme liberata*), trans. Anthony M. Esolen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2:50–51. On the complex presence of Islam in Boiardo and Ariosto, see Jo Ann Cavallo, *The World beyond Europe in the Romance Epics of Boiardo and Ariosto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). John Patrick Donnelly finds Ariosto and Tasso's representation of Islam to be nonetheless largely shapeless and ignorant; see his “The Moslem Enemy in Renaissance Epic: Ariosto, Tasso and Camoëns,” *Yale Italian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1977): 162–70.

16. The changes Spenser has made to Pollente's model from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Rodomonte, King of Algiers, downgrading him from sovereign to petty tax collector, do not solve the puzzle. There is a reason for the tax in *Orlando Furioso*: Rodomante is raising funds to deck out his beloved's tomb with trophies

and arms—after he himself has killed her. See Ludovico Ariosto, “*Orlando Furioso*”: *Translated into English Heroical Verse by Sir John Harington*, ed. Robert McNulty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 29.34. Rodomonte’s arc stretches across cantos 29, 31, and 35 of *Orlando Furioso*. For an account of Spenser’s changes to Ariosto’s story, see John Erskine Hankins, *Source and Meaning in Spenser’s Allegory: A Study of The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 91–92.

17. Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction*, 213.

18. The neatness of this example is complicated by the fact that Artegall’s punishment redoubles the violation of the murdered woman. Rather than receive a mournful burial, she—in particular, her decapitated head—is turned into an instrument of his poetic justice.

19. When Dony, Florimell’s dwarf, makes a brief cameo in Book V, he claims that Pollente “keeps a Bridges passage by strong hond, / And many errant Knights hath there fordonne” (V.ii.4) and later describes how Pollente uses a trap door to drown those who try to cross the bridge without paying (V.ii.7–8). But in between these two descriptions he suggests that Pollente, less brutally, either successfully enforces the tax or “beat[s] away” those who would cross the bridge (“But he him makes his passage-penny pay: / Else he doth hold him backe or beat away” [V.ii.6]), suggesting that Pollente has not necessarily killed those who have attempted to cross. In any case, Artegall never investigates what Pollente has done to those who refuse or are unable to pay the toll, and Pollente fights Artegall only because Artegall immediately kills Guizor when Guizor announces the toll, without either Pollente or Guizor making any threat on Artegall’s life if he does not pay.

20. Talya Meyers has suggested that Munera is nowhere marked as a “Sarazin” and thus queries what it might mean that Islam does not seem to be transmitted by birth in *The Faerie Queene*. Talya Meyers, “Saracens in Faeryland,” *Spenser Studies* 29 (2014): 37–61, see esp. 49. But I am persuaded by Tess Grogan’s argument (in her essay in this volume) that the description of Munera’s “guilty blood” (V.ii.27) being washed away by the same river that is “stayned” with Pollente’s “filthy bloud” (V.ii.19) implicitly racializes her as Muslim too and suggests the inheritability of race in this episode. Grogan argues that Muslim remains remaining unburied in *The Faerie Queene* is part of how the poem racializes them.

21. Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 21.

22. Herbert Grabes helpfully describes Spenser’s wide-ranging interest in both “real” mirrors (which can reflect an individual’s present image back or provide a prophetic vision of the future, as with Merlin’s magic looking glass in III.ii.18–21) and metaphorical mirrors in *The Faerie Queene*, which figure exempla or the earthly embodiment of the divine, as when Elizabeth is said to be the “mirroure of grace and Maiestie diuine” (I.proem.4; “Mirrors,” in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al. [London: Routledge, 1990], 1253–55). For Grabes’s more general analysis of mirror imagery in medieval and Renaissance literature, see *The Mutable Glass*:

Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and the English Renaissance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). On the relationship between developments in glassmaking and poetics in the English Renaissance, see Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), esp. chap. 4. I have learned much from Promise Li's analysis of the problems the mirroring in this episode produces for the poem's attachment to didactic exemplarity in "Imitatio Immanis: Exemplarity and Inhumanity in Spenser's Book of Justice" (unpublished manuscript).

23. See Barbara Fuchs, "Spanish Lessons: Spenser and the Irish Moriscos," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 42, no. 1 (2002): 43–62, at 54: "On the one hand, [Artegall] is fighting an Islam closely identified with Spain, prefiguring his many encounters with actual allegorical figures for Spain. On the other hand, Spain's own powerful myth of the reconquest of its territory from Islam—a myth contiguous with the story of Orlando that Ariosto tells—renders Artegall akin to a Spanish knight, removing Moorish obstacles to safe passage."

24. Quotation is from Denis Guénoun, *Hypotheses sur l'Europe: Un essai de philosophie* (Belfort: Circe, 2000), 63, translated, discussed, and developed in Gil Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), xix–xxii.

25. See Fuchs, "Spanish Lessons," on Spenser's imagining of Moors as racialized others despite the fact that they could be, phenotypically, any color, including white; I will return to Fuchs's argument in more detail below. On race as religion in *The Faerie Queene*, see Britton, *Becoming Christian*, chap. 2. See also Jean Feerick's important insight that Spenser's inclination toward humoralism "was a proto-racial discourse which was riddled with contradictions only subsequently effaced by the organization of the world's human 'races' on a grid of skin coloration"; Jean Feerick, "Spenser, Race, and Ire-land," *English Literary Renaissance* 32, no. 1 (2002): 85–117, at 117. Feerick's insight is developed further in Sorentino's account of transatlantic slavery's belated "blackening" of the Aristotelian concept of the natural slave in "Natural Slavery, Real Abstraction, and the Virtuality of Anti-Blackness." Concerning the history of Islamophobia's capacity to generate "a supplemental racial dynamic irreducibly to the assignation of color," see Leerom Medovoi, "Dogma-Line Racism: Islamophobia and the Second Axis of Race," *Social Text* 30, no. 2 (2012): 43–74. On the importance of skin color racialization in the Renaissance, though, see (among many other studies I have learned from) the classic work by Kim Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995) and, more recently, focused on the Spanish context, Nicholas R. Jones, *Staging Habla de Negros: Radical Performances of the African Diaspora in Early Modern Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019). Benedict Robinson's essay in this volume marks several important moments where Spenser connects race to skin color in significant ways, and in particular, contra Feerick, where the discourse of humoralism (esp. melancholy) is attached

to color-based racism. And both Urvashi Chakravarty's and Melissa Sanchez's important essays in this volume track what Chakravarty, adapting Heng, calls a "hermeneutics of epidermal whiteness and blackness" in Spenser's prose and poetry.

26. Justin Kolb subtly analyzes the mimetic, reflective aspects of this episode in "In th' armor of a Pagan knight': Romance and Anachronism East of England in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* and *Tamburlaine*," *Early Theater* 12, no. 2 (2009): 194–207. For important analysis of the conflation of Catholicism and Islam through English nationalist fantasies of Spanish origins, consider also Fuchs, "Spanish Lessons." On Spenser's "perverse" translation of Atlante's shield into Arthur's, see Paul J. Alpers, *The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 167–78. This moment is modeled on *Orlando Furioso* 10.109. Andrew Wodoski emphasizes the further triangulation with Tasso's refiguration of the shield mirror (and the lessons this may hold for Spenser's very difficult use of allegory) in "Spenser, Tasso, and the Ethics of Allegory," *Modern Philology* 111, no. 3 (2014): 365–83. David Quint reminds us that Boiardo is further in the background: see his "The Figure of Atlante: Ariosto and Boiardo's Poem," *Modern Language Notes* 94 (1979): 77–91.

27. Robinson analyzes this tendency to mirror Redcrosse in the Sans brothers in *Islam and Early Modern English Literature*, 49–51.

28. Colin Burrow has suggested that Spenser's uncanny mirroring of the Muslim and Christian may derive from Tasso's tendency in the *Gerusalemme liberata* "to take the violence of pagan sacrilege into the heart of its hero, into the innermost crannies of its structure." *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 99.

29. Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Again, see also Kolb's "In th' armor of a Pagan knight" about how this mimetic impulse gets literalized in the episode with the Souldan.

30. Compare Teskey's comments on the gendering of allegorical violence, in *Allegory and Violence*, 19: "In a literary genre concerned more than any other with the metaphysical implications of gender, such moments [where men violently inscribe their will on women's bodies] are infrequent. It is more broadly characteristic of allegory—though by no means more true of it—for violence such as this to be concealed so that the female will appear to embody, with her whole body, the meaning that is imprinted on her. When this occurs we have personification. But the violence inside personification is exposed when that figure is, by an act I shall refer to as capture, turned inside out. What the act of capture exhibits is the truth over which allegory is always drawing its veil: the fundamental disorder out of which the illusion of order is raised." For more on allegory and gendered violence, see also Wofford, *The Choice of Achilles*, 359–71, and Katherine Eggert, "Spenser's Raviishment: Rape and Rapture in *The Faerie Queene*," *Representations* 70 (2000): 1–26.

31. Fuchs, "Spanish Lessons," 52–54.

32. On the problem of colonial jurisdiction and the tensions between custom and common law in Books V and VI, see Bradin Cormack, *A Power to Do Justice: Jurisdiction, English Literature, and the Rise of Common Law, 1509–1625* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 133–76.

33. See Feerick, “Spenser, Race, and Ire-land”; Fuchs, “Spanish Lessons”; and Barbara Fuchs, “The Spanish Race,” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in Renaissance Empires*, ed. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 88–98.

34. See, respectively, Thomas Herron, “Irish Den of Thieves: Souterrains (and a Crannog?) in Books V and VI of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*,” *Spenser Studies* 14, no. 1 (1999): 303–17; and Jennifer R. Rust, “Malengin and Mercilla, Southwell and Spenser: The Poetics of Tears and the Politics of Martyrdom in *The Faerie Queene*, Book 5, Canto 9,” in *Redrawing the Map of Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Lowell Gallagher (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 185–209. For more on the Irish resonances, see also Angus Fletcher, *The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 234–35; and Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser’s Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 160–66. And for more on the Catholic context, see Elizabeth Heale, “Spenser’s Malengine, Missionary Priests, and the Means of Justice,” *Review of English Studies* 41, no. 162 (1990): 171–84; and Cyndia Clegg, “Justice and Censorship in Book V of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*,” *Studies in Philology* 95, no. 3 (1998): 237–62.

35. Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, “Dismantling Irena: The Sexualizing of Ireland in Early Modern England,” in *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, ed. Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger (New York: Routledge, 1992), 157–71, quotes at 158, 165. Jones and Stallybrass trace these tropes used to racialize (and sexualize) the Irish through many documents but find their fullest elaboration in Spenser’s *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. Hamilton’s footnote helpfully compares with Irenaeus’s description of the Irish as having “mantles and longe glibs which is a thick curled bush of hair hanging down over their eyes, and monstrously disguising them” (*A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. W. L. Renwick [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970], 50); Spenser’s Irenaeus later connects the Irish glib explicitly to what he conceives of as the pathological tendency of Irish criminals to change their appearance: “I fear not the blame of any undeserved mislikes, but for the Irish glibs I say that besides their savage brutishness and loathly filthiness, which is not to be named, they are fit masks as a mantle is for a thief, for whensoever he hath run himself into that peril of law that he will not be known, he either cutteth of his glib quite, by which he becometh nothing like himself, or pullet it so low down over his eyes that it is very hard to discern his thievish countenance, and therefore fit to be trussed up with the mantle” (53). For more on the racialization and sexualization of the Irish mantle in early modern England, see John R. Ziegler, “Irish Mantles, English Nationalism: Apparel

and National Identity in Early Modern English and Irish Texts,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2013): 73–95. The racialization of clothing continues in our own moment, most obviously in the targeting of Muslim veils, most notoriously in France and North Africa. See Alia Al-Saji, “The Racialization of Muslim Veils: A Philosophical Analysis,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 36, no. 8 (2010): 875–902; Mayanthi L. Fernando, *The Republic Unsettled: Muslim French and the Contradictions of Secularism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), esp. chap. 4; and the classic analyses in Frantz Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled,” in *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. H. Chevalier (New York: Grove, 1965), 35–67, and *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. C. L. Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967), 190–94.

36. For the classic account, see Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

37. See V.iii.3, V.vii.43, V.viii.3, V.x.17, V.xi.35, and V.xi.36. Daniel D. Moss calls the Malengin episode “a digression from a digression” in *The Ovidian Vogue: Literary Fashion and Imitative Practice in Late Elizabethan England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 112. There Moss also demonstrates how this episode reworks the earlier depiction of Proteus in Book III, canto viii.

38. Guile preexists Malengin’s entrance, of course: a few cantos earlier, Radigund is described as subduing Artegall “by guile” (V.v.headnote). Radigund’s connection to Malengin might be explored more fully in light of Clare Carroll’s suggestion that Britomart and Talus’s defeat of Radigund and the Amazons echoes descriptions of colonial military rescue of English colonizers from the supposedly feminizing and uncivilizing influence of the Irish; see “The Construction of Gender and the Cultural and Political Other in *The Faerie Queene* 5 and *A View of the Present State of Ireland: The Critics, the Context, and the Case of Radigund*,” *Criticism* 32, no. 2 (1990): 163–92.

39. See Joe Moshenska, “Spenser’s Toys” (unpublished manuscript) for more on the ambivalent representation of Malengin’s playfulness.

40. See John D. Staines, *The Tragic Histories of Mary Queen of Scots, 1560–1690: Rhetoric, Passions and Political Literature* (London: Routledge, 2009), 126.

41. Katarzyna Lecky, “Irish Nonhumanness and English Unhumanity in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*,” *Spenser Studies* 30 (2015): 135.

42. Hamilton’s note on this stanza provides some detail on the paralleled descriptions of Irish rebels in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*.

43. Teskey, *Allegory and Violence*, 30.

44. See also Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser’s Irish Experience*, which claims that Spenser in this canto depicts a “fantasy of easy victory” over Guyle, since the “re-absorb[ment of Malengin’s corpse] into the landscape when eaten by beasts and fowl . . . mocks the failure of the human imposition of law; the implication is that Malengin, like Error, has been destroyed only for his legacy to become even more ghostly and terrifying as it becomes part of the very landscape and, hence, virtually invisible and even more protean than the ‘human’ figure” (163); and Christopher

Burlinson, *Allegory, Space and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), which notes that “the fantasy of utter destruction, which is enacted here . . . does not extend to destroying the ‘fastnesse’ which enables Malengin to engage in plunders and attacks. . . . Talus’s failure to destroy the cave along with Malengin leaves open the possibility that it could be occupied, and used for the same nefarious purposes, by other malefactors” (143). To borrow from the language of a recent study by Daniel Nemser, Artegall and Talus seem to have forgotten that projects of colonial racialization also need to control and reshape the landscape. See *Infrastructures of Race: Concentration and Biopolitics in Colonial Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), esp. chaps. 1 and 2.

45. See Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 1–10, on Bon font / Malfont as “mirror image” of Spenser.

46. Harry Berger Jr., “Displacing Autophobia in *Faerie Queene* I: Ethics, Gender, and Oppositional Reading in the Spenserian Text,” *English Literary Renaissance* 28, no. 2 (1998): 163–82, quote at 182.

47. Jeff Dolven, “Panic’s Castle,” *Representations* 120, no. 1 (2012): 1–16, quote at 12.

48. It is worth keeping in mind Catherine Nicholson’s claim that “those who advocate reading the text [Book V of *The Faerie Queene*] more deeply, subtly, and suspiciously” have often been working “to mitigate, if not altogether avoid, the pressures of politics in and on the poem.” But deeper, subtler, more suspicious reading can also allow us to come to a more incisive understanding of precisely those political pressures, as well as the complex relationship between political positions we might inhabit today and the distinctly *poetic* pressures of Spenser’s verse. Catherine Nicholson, *On Reading and Not Reading “The Faerie Queene”: Spenser and the Making of Literary Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 185.