

# Approaching the Shepherds' World: Witnessing and Wondering in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*<sup>\*</sup>

---

Lu Chen

---

## 1

In Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596), the chivalric knights often lose themselves, fascinated by the wondrous visions in front of them. In Book 1, the knight of the Redcross is tormented by the evil enchanter Archimago and is amazed at the "great passion of vnwonted lust" (1.1.49.1) emerging inside him. He then abandons his lady Una and fights for the false Duessa with the pagan knight Sans Foy. In doing so, Redcross apparently walks right into Archimago's trap and loses his reason. He turns out to be an inexperienced knight, "too simple and too trew" (1.2.45.7). In book 4, when Britomart's face is revealed to Artegall, the manly savage knight "fell humbly downe vpon his knee" (4.6.22.2) and "trembling horror did his sense assayle" (4.6.22.8). He willingly loses the battle and gazes upon Britomart for a long time, as if wondering at and worshipping a heavenly goddess. Also in Book 6, Sir Calidore is amazed at the beauty of the shepherdess Pastorella and intends to put aside his heroic life for a pastoral life. As these cases demonstrate, most of the knights are struck dumb with amazement, and this amazement frequently leads to their unexpected fall. In other cases, they stray from their heroic pursuits, with ruinous consequences.

An earlier critical study, "'Rapt With Pleasaunce': Vision and Narration

in the Epic” by Lee W. Patterson, discussed a variety of entranced gazing behaviors depicted in medieval and Renaissance literature. Starting from the precedent of Aeneas’s gazing in Book 1 of *Aeneid*, Patterson emphasizes the domination of the first gaze, which “is one pole of a dialectic of which the other is some form of discursive exposition.” Thus, the gaze “implies a nostalgic evasion of understanding, a lowered state of consciousness that is figured by a trance-like stupor that must be broken, both to disarm its dangerous seductions and to unlock the riches its object contains” (Patterson 458). Although this study did not include Calidore’s stupor at Mount Acidale, Patterson regards this as a scene to which this examination could be applied. Later studies, including Theresa M. Krier’s *Gazing on Secret Sights* and A. Leigh DeNeef’s “Rethinking the Spenserian Gaze,” analyze Calidore’s gazing and stupor from the perspective of gender. Krier regards Calidore’s vision at Mount Acidale as an “access to feminine life” (238). Calidore and Colin’s gazing during the dance of the Graces is an encounter between the male gaze and feminine consciousness. It “allows Spenser to reconstruct some ideals of mutual human presence, and eventually to return to large-scale depictions of men’s and women’s presence to each other” (249–50). DeNeef further concludes, “The Spenserian gaze, in short, is a psychic scenario in which one gender confronts the radical alterity of its other and adopts certain postures of power to negotiate that difference” (163). Anne Fogarty, however, treats Book 6 as a book about Spenser’s ideal of the language colonization towards Ireland. Fogarty notes the repeated use of scene of “scopic desire which centres on the iconic figure of a woman whose presence can only be partially captured and represented” (204). The incompleteness of such visions is a metaphor for the discontinuities of the narrative, which represents the impossibility of Spenser’s ideal of language colonization (Fogarty 204–209).

These discussions raise the problem of the function of the knights’ seeing and wondering process, and of the positioning of Calidore’s visions

in Book 6. This paper addresses the theme of Calidore's witnessing and wondering, especially the role of his actions when facing the distinctive world of the shepherds. I argue that Calidore's behaviors position the pastoral world as a cultural other, while the pastoral world is in essence an Eden beyond his reach. Referring to Stephen Greenblatt's arguments on the wonder of the New World, my interpretation involves the relation between Calidore's wondering and the problem of occupation. Unlike Greenblatt's colonist process of wondering and declaring possession, Calidore's wondering is suspended before the next step of possessiveness. Witnessing and wondering not only provide a tool for the knights to encounter and understand the world, but through which we can get a better comprehension of the relation between the pastoral and secular worlds in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*.

In the next section of this paper, I will examine Calidore's seeing and wondering in detail, referencing Fogarty's discussion of "anatomising scrutiny" (Fogarty 208). In the third section, I propose an interpretation of the problem of possession that arises from this process of seeing and wondering. I will mainly focus on Calidore's attitude and approach towards the pastoral world. Section 4 is an overall summary of the argument of this paper.

## 2

Spenser's titular knights' easy amazement and vulnerability to visual images show *The Faerie Queene* to be a work of high visualization. The knight of the Redcross sets a typical example at the start of the work when he is ravished by an erotic allusion. Artegall openly worships Britomart and is also astonished at the beauty of Radigund, the queen of Amazon, and loses the battle easily. Even the female knight Britomart is amazed and vexed by the image of Artegall in Merlin's magic mirror. While Sir Guyon gazes amazedly at two "naked Damzelles" "bathing" in

the water (2.12.63–68), as the knight of Temperance, he finally breaks down everything in the Bower of Bliss, showing his exceptional resistance to such tempting visions. Visual temptation is everywhere for the knights throughout this work, and visions function frequently as the impetus for plot development and narrative turns. Across genders, Spenser's chivalric knights are vision-driven.

In cantos 9 and 10 of Book 6, Calidore suspends his chase of the Blatant Beast and spends most of his time in the pastoral world. In *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral*, Humphrey Tonkin does not interpret Calidore's rest negatively: "Calidore's arrival in the pastoral world is not the result of a turning aside from the quest" (114), but a means of "spiritual enrichment" (120). Thus, it becomes a step towards Calidore's final accomplishment. In the world of the shepherds, especially through his witnessing the dance of the three Graces, Calidore learns the essence of true courtesy and is thus provided with a new power to cope with the reality of the secular world outside (Tonkin 300–06). Although Tonkin observes that "Calidore's arrival in the pastoral world" is "an accident" (114) while chasing the Blatant Beast, Calidore's lingering in the pastoral space is totally voluntary. Even after learning that the Beast has not been there, Calidore does not return from the shepherds' world. Upon entering into the pastoral world, Calidore is struck by the wondrous appearance of beautiful Pastorella:

So stood he still long gazing thereupon,  
 Ne any will had thence to moue away,  
 Although his quest were farre afore him gon;  
 But after he had fed, yet did he stay,  
 And sate there still, vntill the flying day  
 Was farre forth spent, discoursing diuersly  
 Of sundry things, as fell, to worke delay;  
 And euermore his speach he did apply

To th'heards, but meant them to the damzels fantazy. (6.9.12.1-9)

After a long absence from the middle part of the book, Calidore enters the pastoral world not long after his reappearance. His long gaze upon the shepherdess Pastorella here is described as a fit of ecstasy, with his quest "farre afore him gon." Afterwards, during the discourse with the old shepherd Meliboe, he again falls into rapture:

... he was rapt with double rauishment,  
 Both of his speach that wrought him great content,  
 And also of the obiect of his vew,  
 On which his hungry eye was alwayes bent;  
 That twixt his pleasing tongue, and her faire hew,  
 He lost himselfe, and like one halfe entraunced grew. (6.9.26.4-9)

At this time Calidore is fascinated by both Pastorella's figure and Meliboe's words and loses himself. The direct consequence of this amazement is that Calidore intends to dwell in the shepherd's home and even become a shepherd. In a note concerning this part, A. C. Hamilton remarks that "Unlike Meliboe, Calidore is not content with what he has." In the Mount Acidale episode, when he watches the dance of the Graces, he desires to come closer and know more, so he takes one step forward:

Much wondred *Calidore* at this straunge sight,  
 Whose like before his eye had neuer seene,  
 And standing long astonished in spright,  
 And rapt with pleasaunce, wist not what to weene;  
 Whether it were the traine of beauties Queene,  
 Or Nymphes, or Faeries, or enchanted show,  
 With which his eyes mote haue deluded beene.  
 Therefore resolving, what it was, to know,  
 Out of the wood he rose, and toward them did go. (6.10.17.1-9)

In front of the marvelous vision, Calidore is again “astonished in spright” and “rapt with pleasaunce.”

When further examining the objects of Calidore’s gaze, we find that they follow a fixed pattern. Before addressing the details of Calidore’s gazing, it is necessary to focus on the scene of Serena being seen by the cannibals in canto 8 of Book 6. This scene sets the fundamental pattern of seeing for Book 6:

Her yuorie necke, her alablaster brest,  
 Her paps, which like white silken pillowes were,  
 For loue in soft delight thereon to rest;  
 Her tender sides, her bellie white and clere,  
 Which like an Altar did it selfe vprere,  
 To offer sacrifice diuine thereon;  
 Her goodly thighes, whose glorie did appeare  
 Like a triumphall Arch, and thereupon  
 The spoiles of Princes hang’d, which were in battel won. (6.8.42.1-9)

When interpreting this scene, Fogarty uses the term “anatomising scrutiny” (208). As Fogarty has argued, in this scene Serena “is dissected and violated by the invasive seeing of this ‘salvage nation’ and of the narrator who shares their point of view.” Moreover, this scene “acts as a nightmare inversion of the visionary idealism which marks the opening of this book” (Fogarty 205). Here Serena’s body is presented as the fragments of “her yuorie necke,” “her alablaster brest,” “her paps,” “her tender sides,” “her bellie” and “her goodly thighes.” In this way “she is anatomised” (Fogarty 205). The cannibals’ seeing is treated as base barbarian lust, which Fogarty distinguishes from Calidore’s gazing, while my argument concerning this behavior is that greedily seeing a beauty is not an act of only the cannibals or only the knights. Although what Calidore and the cannibals represent offers a striking contrast between

civil courtesy and savageness, Calidore's gazing takes the same scope as that of the cannibals, in terms of decomposing, anatomizing, and voyeurism. Calidore's gazing on Pastorella and on the dance of the Graces is a renovated version of this kind of anatomic seeing.

The first hint is the relevance of desire of seeing to the appetite for food. When Calidore encounters a group of shepherds on the way to chasing the Beast, the following unfolds:

They [the shepherds] prayd him sit, and gaue him for to feed  
Such homely what, as serues the simple clowne,  
That doth despise the dainties of the towne.  
Tho hauing fed his fill, he there besyde  
Saw a faire damzell, which did weare a crowne  
Of sundry flowres, with silken ribbands tyde,  
Yclad in home-made greene that her owne hands had dyde. (6.9.7.3-9)

Here Calidore beholds Pastorella after "hauing fed his fill." His manner of seeing evokes his voracious appetite for food, echoing the description of the cannibals' advisement of how to eat Serena before they had their "loose lasciuious sight" (6.8.43.3) of her:

Then gan they to deuize what course to take:  
Whether to slay her there vpon the place,  
Or suffer her out of her sleepe to wake,  
And then her eate attonce; or many meales to make. (6.8.37.6-9)

The close viewing of the beauty immediately following an appetite for food represents both Calidore's and the cannibals' instinctive response for both food and female vision. The difference is that the shepherds Calidore encounters "Offred him drinke, to quench his thirstie heat,/ And if he hungry were, him offred eke to eat" (6.9.6.8-9). So, his instinctive

response to his visual appetites is partly satisfied by the heavy meal immediately before seeing Pastorella.

Further, when examining the depiction of Pastorella's appearance, we find it is not as explicitly detailed as Serena's. Pastorella's dress and adornments present the impression of her, that she "weare[s] a crowne/ Of sundry flowres," and she is "Yclad in home-made greene" (6.9.7.7-9). Details of her body are displayed as "full fayre of face" and "well shapt in euery lim" (6.9.9.1-2). Pastorella's beauty is represented as an incoherent collection of adornments and body segments. There is a lack of integrity and inclusiveness in the image of Pastorella. Our abstracted understanding of Pastorella's fairness is largely dependent on the ecstatic responses of Calidore and other shepherds:

Who her admiring as some heauenly wight,  
Did for their soueraine goddesses her esteeme,  
And caroling her name both day and night,  
The fayrest *Pastorella* her by name did hight. (6.9.9.6-9)

The figure of Pastorella is indeed extremely vague. She does not utter a word nor make any eye contact, nor do we know anything about her expressions, personality, or way of thinking. Her biggest role in this scene is reflected in her powerful influence upon Calidore, making him "long gazing thereupon" (6.9.12.1) without any will to move away.

This is similar to the scene of Mount Acidale, when Calidore gets close to the spot,

He durst not enter into th'open greene,  
For dread of them vnwares to be descyde,  
For breaking of their daunce, if he were seene; (6.10.11.1-3)

In Fogarty's words, "a tension is set up between Calidore's wish to

understand and interpret, and his longing for passive voyeuristic pleasure” (207). Then there is the mention of “Another Damzell,” who “as a precious gemme,/ Amidst a ring most richly well enchaced,/ That with her goodly presence all the rest much graced” (6.10.12.7–9). In particular, the Crown of Ariadne is given a detailed description in canto 13. After that, the vision of Mount Acidale receives only a simple summary:

Such was the beauty of this goodly band,  
Whose sundry parts were here too long to tell. (6.10.14.1–2)

Moreover, “the perspectives provided by the text are even more blurred and confused than in the previous scenes of scopic desire,” and “the entire spectacle is dislodged and fragmented into further ‘sundry parts’ by the explanatory interjections of the narrator” (Fogarty 207–08). Fogarty treats this restrained vision as a metaphorical expression of narrative and language, which emphasizes the role of language when Colin and Calidore expose the vital meaning of the dance of the Graces. The language “protects it [the scene at Mount Acidale] from further profanation, while still subjecting it to the scopic regime of reading” (208). Calidore is indeed a voyeur in this scene, which evokes Ovid’s Actaeon and Diana. Both episodes show a mortal youth stealing a glance at the goddess’s body, which brings significant unexpected results. These consequences suggest the danger of such voyeuristic behavior. Calidore’s fear of being seen and the consequence of the interruption suggest an impassable gulf or a clear boundary between him and his vision.

Then why does Calidore’s visions have to be segmental and vague? Concerning such “anatomising scrutiny,” Fogarty mainly focuses on its allegorical interpretation of “a narrative which flirts with and is threatened by its own ultimate breakdown” (209) in order to suggest the impossibility of Spenser’s political ideal. My concern is with the process of witnessing itself. In the next section, I will use the phrase “anatomising scrutiny” in

describing my own distinctive emphasis on witnessing and wondering when the knight is facing with a cultural other.

### 3

In early modern Europe, a process similar to the cannibals' and Calidore's scrutiny is frequently occurred. There was an interest among aristocrats and scholars in the wonder-cabinet, which contained spectacles of the alien to be displayed in a gentleman's room. In the third chapter of *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England*, Steven Mullaney examines the representation of such exhibitions. In a wonder-cabinet, curious objects from around the world are displayed randomly, ungrouped and uncategorized:

In the space of such a room, under the gaze of a spectator. . . the New World coincides with the Old and is even woven into the very fabric of European beliefs. . . . This is a room of wonder, not of inquiry. It requires and to a certain extent produces an audience that is at once passive and attentive, willing to suspend its critical faculties in order to view "strange things" as precisely that: as known but in a certain sense unaccountable, alien yet recognized as such, and so granted temporary license to remain without "authentic place" (as Ulysses says in his speech on Degree) in the cultural and ideological topography of the times.

(Mullaney 62-63)

In form, the wonder-cabinet forms an enclosed space to confine those alien objects. Thus, it reflects the collector's ownership as well as early modern Europe's cultural domination over otherness. On the other hand, as Mullaney has argued, through spectators' passive amazement and wondering, Europe and the New World are able to encounter and face each other. The exhibition of such exotic fragments represents a symbolic viewing of the whole image of the New World (62-64). Further,

eyewitnessing as firsthand experience is highlighted in Mullaney's argument:

...a Renaissance ethnographer like Jean de Léry insists on an irreducible, inexpressible, but compelling residuum of difference in the lands and people he describes. After a full and evocative portrait of native Brazilians comes this disclaimer: "Their gestures and countenances are so different from ours, that I confess to my difficulty in representing them in words, or even in pictures. So, to enjoy the real pleasures of them, you will have to go and visit them in their own country."

Difference draws us to it; it promises pleasure and serves as an invitation to firsthand experience, otherwise known as colonization. (Mullaney 64-65)

The emphasis on the "firsthand experience" to "go and visit" is actually an affirmation of the power of seeing with one's own eyes. The practices of European's early adventures and colonizing expansions are on the basis of such curious viewing. Although the action of seeing plays a significant role in encountering a completely new other, these early seeing experiences are random, segmented and unilateral, as Mullaney has suggested. This is why when facing the unfamiliar visions of beauty, what Calidore sees are only body parts or blurred images. His first gazing on the pastoral world is that of a colonist on the cultural other.

For Tonkin, the pastoral world is an incarnation of the Golden Age and of the old times of innocence. Fogarty, however, treats Book 6 as a revelation of Spenser's political ideal of colonization. Referencing Foucault's theory of heterotopia, Fogarty regards the pastoral world as an "other space" that reflects "social and political regimes" of the poet's own time (197). In this way, Calidore's adventure turns out to be a process of subduing a new world. While I agree with Tonkin that the pastoral world in Book 6 is in essence an archetypal model of an idealized past, Calidore's first approach to it is that of a colonist. Nevertheless, it is necessary to

highlight that Calidore does not attempt any colonizing. He neither confronts the distinctive world as a conqueror nor declares possession of it.

A typical colonizing gesture when facing a cultural other is what Greenblatt calls “the mobility of spectacle” (Introduction 6) in *Marvelous Possession*. The procedure of seeing and wondering is the starting point of a possessive desire, which forms part of European colonial aggrandizement. As Greenblatt asserts: “Everything in the European dream of possession rests on witnessing, a witnessing understood as a form of significant and representative seeing” (Greenblatt 122). Greenblatt not only affirms the power of eyewitnessing to arouse wonder, but also links such wonder to the desire for possession in his analysis of Columbus’s voyage of discovery:

There is by the third voyage a specific political and rhetorical reason for the performance and production of wonder: the marvelous is precisely the sense that will confirm the power and validity of Columbus’s claims against those cavilling skeptics who want more tangible signs of gain. (Greenblatt 73)

During Columbus’s colonist expansion, the arousal of wonder becomes a designed action and a method of decriminalizing his process of possession:

The production of wonder then is not only an expression of the effect that the voyage had upon Columbus but a calculated rhetorical strategy, the evocation of an aesthetic response in the service of a legitimation process. . . . we should recall that Columbus’s first use of the marvelous refers not to the land itself but to its possession—Columbus gives thanks to the ‘Divine Majesty, Who has marvelously bestowed all this.’ (Greenblatt 73–74)

During this process, Columbus’s action of arousing wonder becomes a

method of claiming possession.

In contrast to Columbus, Calidore does not claim possession of anything. Calidore, motivated by the beauty of Pastorella, intends to stay in the shepherd's world to gain her love. Since Pastorella "litle whit regard his courteous guize" (6.9.35.6) and "His layes, his loues, his lookes she did them all despize" (6.9.35.9), Calidore changes himself into a shepherd:

Which *Calidore* perceiuing, thought it best  
To change the manner of his loftie looke;  
And doffing his bright armes, himselfe address  
In shepherds weed, and in his hand he tooke,  
In stead of steelehead speare, a shepherds hooke. (6.9.36.1–5)

When facing a different culture, Calidore's first response after astonishment is to enter into it. All of Calidore's behaviors in the shepherds' world are an effort to enter the world and make himself less foreign and less hostile, even though he must eventually return to his quest, and his efforts ultimately end in failure. His effort to enter and assimilate into the shepherd's world reflects as his rejection of his status as a knight, but he goes no further than this, for at Mount Acidale, the vision of the Graces vanishes as soon as he steps out to know what they are (6.10.18). The vanishing of the vision of the Graces shows its substance as beyond Calidore's reach.

The relation between Calidore and the pastoral world is unlike the relation between a colonist and a new land. It is neither like the relation between an adventurer in the Middle Ages like Mandeville and the cultural other cited by Greenblatt, although both of them take possession of nothing. Greenblatt highlights Mandeville's rejection of possession as a counter-example to Columbus. Greenblatt interprets Mandeville's abnegation as a "self-definition, a way of aligning himself not with merchants and adventurers but with the great Franciscan voyagers like

William of Rubruck and Odoric of Pordenone” (Greenblatt 26). Mandeville’s resistance to capture reflects and defines his Christian perspective when facing a cultural and religious other:

Mandeville is not a monk—he is a knight and a man of the world—but he has his own version of renunciation in the service of the Christian faith: the Sultan of Egypt, whom Mandeville purports to have served for several years, ‘would have married me richly with a great prince’s daughter and given me many great lordships, so that I would have forsaken my belief and turned to theirs; but I would not.’ (Greenblatt 27)

Formally, neither Mandeville’s travel nor Calidore’s adventure at Mount Acidale are associated with any physical form of possession. They stop at the point of seeing and being seen, wondering and being wondered about. But their behaviors are fundamentally different. If Calidore simply entered the pastoral world and withdrew with nothing, he would be no difference from a foreign traveler of the Middle Ages. The difference between Mandeville and Calidore is that the former had the experience of being offered something that he initiatively refuses, while Calidore does not go through the process of choosing and refusal. He is willing to know more and want more from Mount Acidale, but he is not able to. He is rejected by the vision. Calidore in the pastoral world is always in a passive position. His attempt at assimilation turns out to be a failure. The collapse of the pastoral world near the end of Book 6 further shows its inaccessibility to Calidore. Moreover, such a turn positions the shepherds’ world as an unreachable idealized past rather than a new world to be conquered.

When starting to explore the pastoral world, Calidore is astonished, fascinated, and rapt, just like an explorer marveling at a cannibal country. His anatomizing viewing of Pastorella and of the Graces is consistent with the witnessing habits of the early modern Europeans facing a cultural

other, which encompass dissembling and inspecting. The chivalric knights' journey is largely similar to the exploration of the new world in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. While facing the wondrous new world, Europeans begin colonial expansion and occupation. The sense of wonder operates on them as a productive dynamicity, while the land brings Calidore a motionless status, locating him in the dream of an idealized past. Calidore's entrance into the pastoral world is in essence a regression. His wonder only stops at the step of anatomical viewing before he has any possessing ambition. As the episode of Mount Acidale shows, what is in front of him is something beyond Calidore's reach. The idealized past cannot be claimed by a chivalric knight. The knight of the Redcross still need many years of experience and toughening before he could leave the secular world for the new Hierusalem. Sir Guyon thoroughly destroys the Bower of Bliss. Scudamour removes Amoret from the Venus Temple. As Spenser's epic heroes, they would finally return to the authoritative court.

4

Spenser seems to have evoked a realistic issue. The collapse of the shepherds' world and Calidore's departure show the imbalance between the epic world and the pastoral world. Both Calidore and the narrator apparently stand on the side of the authoritative secular world of feats and adventures. Back to the Proem of Book 6, the goodness of the innocent past is affirmed, while its inaccessibility is also implied.

Amongst them all growes not a fayrer flowre,  
Then is the bloosme of comely courtesie,  
.....  
Of which though present age doe plenteous seeme,  
Yet being matcht with plaine Antiquitie,  
Ye will them all but fayned showes esteeme,

Which carry colours faire, that feeble eies misdeeme. (Proem 4.1-2, 6-9)

Spenser claims that the ideal “bloosme of comely courtesie” lies in the “plaine Antiquitie,” and that of the “present age” cannot be compared with it. The idealized pastoral world depicted in Book 6 is a mirror image of the ideal “Antiquitie.” At the same time, the poet manifests his bewilderment that he is not able to find such an ideal in antiquity, but instead, has found it now in the Queen:

But where shall I in all Antiquity  
 So faire a patterne finde, where may be seene  
 The goodly praise of Princely curtesie,  
 As in your selfe, O soueraine Lady Queene. (Proem 6.1-4)

Calidore’s failure in the pastoral world thus becomes an ironic manifestation of the poet’s inability to attain his ideal of antiquity. Calidore’s return from his retreat is at the same time a positive affirmation that the Elizabethan court is a place where such an ideal is attained. The price of Calidore’s retreating into the idealized past of innocence is the collapse of this ideal world. As a chivalric knight, instead of entering Eden and enjoying the life of ease, Calidore should have stood outside the pastoral world to protect it from the invasion by the brigands. Starting with wonder and ending in a catastrophe, Calidore’s misfortunes in the shepherds’ world show his limitation as well as that of the poet. Such limitation is the product of Calidore’s status as a titular knight, his mission for the court, and also his, as well as Spenser’s, age.

Simultaneously, Calidore’s experiences further reinforce the knights’ incertitude and instability when witnessing wondrous visions. Although Calidore’s lingering in the pastoral world ultimately functions as a part of his quest, it is also clear that the incertitude when facing wondrous visions is an inherent characteristic shared by the knights. Throughout the various

crises brought about by their visions, the knights experience falls or deviations that lead them to their final achievements.

\* This paper is an expanded and revised version of the paper read at the 55th Annual Meeting of the Society of English Literature and Linguistics of Nagoya University, in April 2016. The responsibility for the final formulation, and any errors that it may concern, are entirely mine.

### Works Cited

- DeNeef, A. Leigh. "Rethinking the Spenserian Gaze." *Approaches to Teaching Spenser's Faerie Queene*. Eds, David Miller, and Alexander Dunlop. New York: MLA, 1984. 162-71. Print.
- Fogarty, Anne. "The Colonisation of Language: Narrative Strategy in *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI." *Edmund Spenser*. Ed. Andrew Hadfield. London: Longman, 1996. 196-210. Print.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possession: The Wonder of the New World*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991. Print.
- Hamilton, A. C. *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.
- Krier, Theresa M. *Gazing On Secret Sights: Spenser, Classical Imitation, and the Decorums of Vision*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990. Print.
- Mullaney, Steven. *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988. Print.
- Ovid. *Ovid's Metamorphosis: Englished, Mythologized, and Represented in Figures by George Sandys*. Ed. Karl K. Hulley. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1970. Print.
- Patterson, Lee W. " 'Rapt with Pleasaunce': Vision and Narration in the Epic." *ELH*48.3 (1981) : 455-75. *Jstor*. Web. 21 July 2016.
- Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A. C. Hamilton. London: Longman, 2001. Print.
- Tonkin, Humphrey. *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book Six of The Faerie Queene*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1972. Print.

## Synopsis

Approaching the Shepherds' World:  
Witnessing and Wondering in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*  
Lu Chen

In Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596), the chivalric knights are often fascinated by wondrous visions that cause them to lose themselves. Their amazement frequently leads to either unexpected downfalls or digressions from their heroic journeys, resulting in misfortunes. In Book 6, Sir Calidore is amazed at the beauty of the shepherdess Pastorella and intends to put aside his heroic life to live in the pastoral world.

This paper examines how Sir Calidore views and wonders at what he sees in Book 6. I argue that Calidore's behavior positions the pastoral world as a cultural other, while the world is in essence an Eden beyond his reach. Referring to Stephen Greenblatt's argument about the wonder of the New World, I explore the relation between Calidore's wondering and the problem of occupation. In contrast to Greenblatt's process of wondering and claiming possession, Calidore's wondering stops before possessiveness. The procedure of witnessing and wondering not only provides a tool for the knights to encounter and perceive the world, but also let us obtain a better understanding of the relationship between the pastoral and the secular worlds in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*.

This paper's main contents are divided into two parts. The first part examines in detail Calidore's seeing and wondering, referencing Fogarty's discussion of "anatomising scrutiny." The second part examines and interprets the problem of possession that derives from such seeing and wondering. I primarily focus on Calidore's attitude and approach towards the pastoral world.

Calidore's failure in the pastoral world is an ironic reflection of the poet's inability to reach the ideal of antiquity, according to the hints in the Proem of Book 6. Calidore's return from his retreat is also a positive affirmation

of the Elizabethan court as a place where such an ideal is attained. Simultaneously, Calidore's experience further proves the knights' incertitude and instability when witnessing wondrous visions. In the crises resulting from their visions, the knights experience the pitfalls and digressions necessary to complete their final achievements.