

Spenser, Wolfram, and the Reformation of Despair

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At the spiritual turning point of a famous medieval romance, a rustic knight who has been questing for holiness but who has also committed numerous sins out of inexperience and insufficient knowledge encounters a figure named Trevrizent, who has a friend named Taurian. This knight then wrestles intensely with despair. Readers familiar with Spenser's romance epic will no doubt be struck by the similarities between this passage—found in Book 9 of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, the most famous Arthurian narrative in the German tradition—and canto ix, Book I of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. In that canto, Spenser's would-be hero, the Redcrosse Knight, encounters a figure named Trevisan whose friend Terwin has succumbed to the hermit Despair's temptations; at Redcrosse's request, Trevisan then leads Redcrosse to Despair's cave, where Redcrosse will suffer his own confrontation with Despair.

To date, no consensus has emerged concerning the derivation of Spenser's names Trevisan and Terwin, the only two characters in Book I's "Legend of Holiness" whose names are not obviously labels.¹ This essay proposes that Wolfram's *Parzival* offers a strong analogue that may also point to a possible origin for the names of Spenser's Trevisan and Terwin. Further, and most significantly, the comparison between Wolfram's poem and Spenser's gives the more important of those two figures, the fearful knight Trevisan, a complex role to play as Spenser probes Protestant theological treatments of despair.

Previous explanations for Spenser's names are either etymological or historical-allegorical. Joel Jay Belson suggests that "The name Trevisan may be a coinage from Greek *τρεω*," "to flee because of fear," and certainly Trevisan is repeatedly associated with fearfulness.² In a different etymological approach, K. K. Ruthven has proposed a link to Latin *tre-visi*—"I have seen three (times)";³ while Trevisan repeatedly looks backwards towards the horror he has fled, it is not clear whether Trevisan sees Despair thrice. The historical-allegorical explanation for the names of Trevisan and Terwin associates these figures with two French towns, Tréves and Théroüanne. John O'Connor argues that "both cities were examples of religious defeat brought on by failure of the will, a form of religious

despair.”⁴ Although this historical context may generally align with Terwin’s fate (with the proviso that his suicide is the result of unrequited love, not religious desperation), it does not work straightforwardly for Trevisan, who *does* escape Despair, though barely. While Trevisan is certainly and insistently characterized as fearful, in the moment of his naming Spenser does not invoke the ideas of fear, sight, or ignoble surrender, but instead, and perhaps surprisingly, alludes both to grace and guidance.⁵ Read against Wolfram’s despair episode, however, in which Trevrizent is clearly linked with grace and guidance, these allusions suggest that Trevisan may play a role similar to Trevrizent’s, albeit one reshaped by Spenser’s awareness of the dangerous paradoxes intrinsic to Protestant theologians’ treatments of despair as potentially either health-giving or eternally damning.

A brief overview of *Parzival* is warranted, given its relative invisibility in Spenser scholarship.⁶ Written early in the thirteenth century, Wolfram’s *Parzival* was adapted from Chrétien’s *Perceval* (ca. 1190).⁷ At 24,810 lines it is by far the longest of the three most accomplished adaptations of Chrétien’s romances. It has consistently been praised for, among other aspects, its “depiction of the main hero’s spiritual crisis and the manner of its resolution.”⁸ Chrétien’s *Perceval* is a folkloric innocent: the mistakes he makes in his quest are those of simple ignorance. Wolfram intensifies these mistakes into sins against family and humanity, setting up a correspondingly more intense struggle with despair.⁹ After Parzival is barred from the Grail castle for failing to ask the crucial question of compassion—“What ails you, father?”—he blames God for his failures. He demands “Waz is got?”—what is God?—and then repudiates, shockingly and with deep anguish, the omnipotent ruler:

kunde got mit kreften leben,
ich was im dienstes undertân,
sît ich genâden mich versan:
nû wil ich im dienest widersagen.
hât er haz, den wil ich tragen (332.4–8).

[If God with honest power did rule,
In service I would never waver,
Since I thought to win his favor.
His service now, I do foreswear it.
If he feels hatred, I will bear it.]¹⁰

Parzival undertakes to find the Grail castle again in order to make up for his earlier failing. But without God his actions are not redemptive: he cannot locate the goal of his spiritual quest. Instead he wanders for over four years, sunk in an angry, prideful despair.

In Book 9, on Good Friday, Parzival comes across a knight undergoing the

pilgrimage of penance, who directs him to a hermit living in a cave in the woods, with a neighboring cave serving as his chapel. This hermit introduces himself as Trevrizent, the knight's uncle; the name is Wolfram's innovation, and is not found in Chrétien.¹¹ Where Chrétien devotes only 180 lines to Perceval's conversation with an unnamed hermit, Wolfram's Trevrizent reproves, instructs, and consoles Parzival for 1380; it is the turning point of the poem, its most famous episode and its "spiritual centerpiece."¹² Parzival learns that he had come across the cave four and a half years earlier, at the beginning of his wandering in despair. In this visit, he took a spear from a cave that belonged to Trevrizent's good friend Taurian, a knight of the Grail (this name too is an innovation by Wolfram, who modeled the Grail knights on the Knights Templar with their red cross emblem). During Parzival's ensuing conversations with Trevrizent, he learns for the first time that he has committed two great sins prior to his third, which was the silence at the Grail castle. The first two were causing his mother to die of grief and the killing of his kinsman Ither, the knight who was challenging Arthur's court. The latter sin likens Parzival to Cain, a figure through whom medieval theologians linked over-reliance on the law that kills with both pride (in the refusal to acknowledge one's insufficiency) and despair (of God's forgiveness).¹³ Since Parzival's knighting is directly linked to this murder, his entry into chivalry is marked by serious sin.¹⁴ Trevrizent also outlines in excruciating detail the sufferings of Anfortas, the Grail king, sufferings the rustic Parzival failed to relieve, since only the question of compassion could have restored the Fisher King to health.

After making Parzival keenly aware of his earlier sins, Trevrizent leads Parzival along the path of acknowledgment, repentance, and reconciliation with God, evoking the rhythms of sacramental confession.¹⁵ Into this narrative of conviction and repentance, Wolfram also weaves a process of self-discovery: Trevrizent tells Parzival of his dual lineages in both the Grail and Arthurian families. With Trevrizent's help, instruction, and guidance, Parzival humbles himself and repents. In the last books, through divine assistance Parzival is prevented from repeating his earlier sin of killing a kinsman (this time his half-brother, Feirefiz). He returns to Munsalvæsche, the Grail castle, asks the question of compassion, heals Anfortas, and becomes the Grail king.

Wolfram's tale was one of the most popular works of the High Middle Ages. Sixteen complete manuscripts and sixty-eight fragments survive, dating from the thirteenth to the end of the fifteenth centuries.¹⁶ By some estimates there were several hundred manuscripts in circulation during the waning of the Middle Ages.¹⁷ McFarland cites additional evidence of its popularity: "Wolfram's contemporaries Gottfried von Strassburg and Wirnt von Grafenberg and many later poets refer to *Parzival*;" in the didactic *Wartburgkrieg* (c. 1250) a Christian layman named Wolfram appears, clearly derived from the narrator-figure in *Parzival*; "two major narrative texts, *Der jüngere Titurel* and *Lohengrin*, are directly based upon *Parzival*;

[and] the text was extended by Claus Wisse and Philipp Colin (the *Rappoltsteiner Parzival*) in the fourteenth century, and adapted by Ulrich F  ttrer in his *Buch der Abenteuer* in the fifteenth.”¹⁸ In 1477 the work was printed in Strasbourg by Johan Mentelin.¹⁹ This print and manuscript history renders *Parzival* “by far the best-transmitted German courtly romance;” it is today considered one of the three or four greatest German literary works prior to the eighteenth century.²⁰ Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* has been studied in light of French and English Arthurian traditions; Andrew King, for instance, has argued that like the knight Perceval, Redcrosse Knight represents romance tradition’s “Fair Unknown” figure.²¹ We have, however, found no scholarship that compares the *Faerie Queene* with the Germanic Arthurian tradition. Yet reading Spenser’s Trevisan in the context of Wolfram’s despair episode is instructive, throwing into relief Spenser’s probing exploration of the often troublingly close relationship between despair and grace.

There are a number of striking similarities between Wolfram’s and Spenser’s episodes: the names of two linked figures; hermits in caves; the knight who struggles with despair over sins committed out of inexperience, rusticity, and insufficient wisdom. The comparison also yields some differences. The hermit in Wolfram’s cave is Trevrizent himself; in Spenser’s poem the cave-dwelling hermit is the devastating Despair.²² While Wolfram’s Trevrizent is a benevolent, knowledgeable spiritual guide, Spenser’s Trevisan is a terrified knight who has himself only narrowly escaped Despair’s temptations to self-destruction. Yet Spenser’s Trevisan may not be totally devoid of the function of spiritual guidance, for Spenser associates this character not only with abject fear but also, seemingly paradoxically, with guidance and grace.

When we first meet him, Trevisan could not be further from Wolfram’s kindly spiritual guide: he flees Despair in terror, without his helmet (which conventionally, as in 1 Thess. 5:8, is taken to represent hope of salvation). Yet Trevisan has not succumbed to despair, though he comes dangerously close. His first words are a panicked cry: “For Gods deare love, Sir knight, do me not stay” (ix.25.1).²³ The four heavy stresses at the opening and conclusion of the line suggest both his terror—“do me not stay”—and what has saved him—for his invocation of “Gods dear love” glances toward the antidote for despair. In stanza 26 Trevisan both describes the horror he has witnessed and correctly adduces what has allowed him to escape it:

Then shall I you recount a ruefull cace
 (Said he) the which with this unlucky eye
 I late beheld, and had not greater grace
 Me reft from it, had bene partaker of the place (6-9).

Trevisan is right that “greater grace” must have saved him, though Trevisan, despite this “greater grace,” remains terribly afraid, a point to which we will

return. Later, Una will echo his phrase as she insists that “Where justice growes, there growes eke greater grace” (ix.53.6). Trevisan reads the situation accurately again in stanza 28, as he asks for divine protection from Despair: “(God from him me blesse)” (28.3). Despite his obvious terror, Trevisan has some degree of spiritual insight that would seem to mitigate against reading him simply or only as a failed Christian knight.

Most striking in comparison with Wolfram’s poem are the words Spenser invokes as he names this as-yet-nameless knight. He is named not at the moment that he is seen fleeing with fear, nor as he recounts his near-capitulation, but in the context of another mention of “grace.” When Redcrosse asks Trevisan to lead him to the Cave of Despair, Trevisan says that he will do so in order “to doe you grace” (32.6). Hamilton argues that in Trevisan’s line “grace” simply means “favour,” and that the word will come to its full religious significance only after Redcrosse has defeated Despair. But that religious significance has already been invoked by Trevisan’s earlier words—“greater grace.” Further, the only figure in the canto who clearly uses “grace” to mean primarily “favor” is Despair himself, in 39.4–5: “Is not great grace to helpe him over past, / Or free his feet, that in the myre sticke fast?” (here, “great grace” is distinct from and inferior to Trevisan’s, and certainly to Una’s, “greater grace”). In the exchange between Redcrosse and Trevisan in stanza 32, “grace” could be read in its full religious sense, for it is evoked just as religious connotations begin to take precedence over, or at least emerge strongly alongside, chivalric ones; Trevisan is a transitional figure in this regard, as he moves between the love despair of his friend Terwin and the soon-to-be-evoked religious despair of Redcrosse. Further, the repetition of the word “grace” twice in the space of three lines lends it considerable weight. Redcrosse insists that he will not rest “Till I that treachours art have heard and tried; / And you Sir Knight, whose name mote I request, / Of grace do me unto his cabin guide” (32.2–4). This is the moment at which Trevisan gives his name, in response to a request for guidance and grace: “I that hight *Trevisan* (quoth he) will ride / Against my liking backe, to doe you grace” (32.5–6). He names himself as he agrees to guide Redcrosse into despair.

Trevisan’s self-naming in connection with grace and guidance parallels the function of Trevrizent’s character insofar as Trevrizent leads Parzival further into despair over his sins before bringing him out of it. The context of Trevisan’s naming also suggests that Spenser is using Trevisan’s guidance of Redcrosse toward despair to probe a Christian paradox that was greatly intensified by Reformation theologians. For Augustine, the law produces fear and dejection, and then grace offers hope. But, as Susan Snyder notes, “the transition may be perilous.”²⁴ While despair as a narrative stage—a period of despair over one’s abilities to fulfill the law—was, theoretically, different from a despair stemming from a (final, damning) loss of hope for salvation, from a psychological perspective the two could be

dangerously intertwined. Medieval and Tudor Catholic thinkers expound on this sense of despair as both spiritually necessary and potentially dangerous. John Fisher's popular treatise on the penitential psalms, for instance, discusses deep sorrow over one's sins as an initial stage of conversion and yet also acknowledges the dangers that this salutary self-loathing could slide into a damning despair: "How many hath dyspayred for fere of his indygnacyon & punysshement, whiche they deserved to have, and so in conclusyon slyppe downe in to the depe pytte of hell."²⁵ To equip readers against such slippage, other writers, such as John Cassian and Isidore of Seville, advise readers on ways to distinguish a salutary despair over one's own abilities to fulfill the law from the catastrophic despair that the loss of hope could bring on.²⁶

Reformation theologians' insistence on the human subject's utter depravity and on the inadequacies of confession and penance intensified despair's centrality both to salvation stories and narratives of condemnation, making despair "at once more necessary"—to eliminate reliance on works and/or on traditional penitential systems, so that, despairing over one's inability to earn salvation, one leans utterly on the gracious gift of faith—"and more terrible,"²⁷ since a prolonged or recurrent despair might also, in signifying a lack of saving faith, indicate impending damnation. In his 1531 *Commentary on Galatians*, for instance, Luther presents a complicated vision. At times, he insists that true believers do not feel despair: "where Christ is truly seen, there must be full and perfect joy in the Lord and peace of heart, where the heart declares: Although I am a sinner according to the Law, judged by the righteousness of the Law, nevertheless I do not despair, I do not die, because Christ lives who is my righteousness and my eternal and heavenly life."²⁸ Several paragraphs later, however, Luther acknowledges that true believers may struggle temporarily with despair as they recognize their utter inability to fulfill the law. In language suggestive of Spenser's episode, Luther writes that "In affliction and in the conflict of conscience it is the devil's habit to frighten us with the law and to set against us the consciousness of sin, our wicked past, the wrath and judgment of God, hell, and eternal death, so that thus he may drive us into despair, subject us to himself, and pluck us from Christ."²⁹ In *De Servo Arbitrio*, Luther argues explicitly that despair over the incontestability of divine election is "salutary" and "near . . . to grace,"³⁰ and in his commentary on Psalm 22, Luther even suggests that Christ himself despaired on the cross.³¹ Yet in the *Commentary on Galatians*, Luther also warns that the despair that functions as a spiritual narrative stage, the despair the law could and indeed should induce, could become "despair and eternal death" unless the "afflicted conscience . . . take hold of the promise of grace offered in Christ, that is, this righteousness of faith, this passive or Christian righteousness."³²

Calvin's *Institutes* manifests similar complexities. In the 1560 edition, Calvin expands on Luther's sense that despairing over one's sinful failings is a crucial

step in coming to self-knowledge:

let us divide the knowledge that man ought to have of himself. First, he should consider for what purpose he was created and endowed with no mean gifts. By this knowledge he should arouse himself to meditation upon divine worship and the future life. Secondly, he should weigh his own abilities – or rather, lack of abilities. When he perceives this lack, he should lie prostrate in extreme confusion, so to speak, reduced to nought.³³

This narrative stage could become a permanent detour “if we look to ourselves only, and ponder what condition we deserve, [for] no trace of good hope will remain.”³⁴ Calvin’s infamous rigor notwithstanding, in Books 2 and 3 of the *Institutes* he repeatedly struggles to fix the exact relationship between faith and residual doubt, such that one begins to realize that the problem of what Calvin calls “the conflict in the heart of the believer” is never perfectly resolvable. On the one hand, the elect should never sink into despair, sure evidence of damnation. On the other, as Calvin acknowledges in his title to Book 3, chapter 4, “Even right faith is always surrounded by error and unbelief”:

Surely, while we teach that faith ought to be certain and assured, we cannot imagine any certainty that is not tinged with doubt, or any assurance that is not assailed by some anxiety ... we say that believers are in perpetual conflict with their own unbelief. Far, indeed, are we from putting their consciences in any peaceful repose, undisturbed by any tumult at all. Yet, once again, we deny that, in whatever way they are afflicted, they fall away and depart from the certain assurance received from God’s mercy.³⁵

The conflict between the faith that remedies despair and the necessary imperfection of that faith in this life is here resolved theologically through Calvin’s insistence on the so-called doctrine of assurance. But there is plenty of evidence from the period to show that attempts to resolve the problem of recurrent or unremitting despair through the insistence that believers should feel assurance did not readily soothe troubled souls. John Foxe the martyrologist seems to have had a reputation as a comforter of anxious consciences, a sort of early modern agony aunt.³⁶ In Foxe’s extant papers survives a letter from an anonymous writer who begs that Christ might preserve him “from desperation” since he is “wonderfully appawled to se no frewt to follow the herynge gods word ... but rather wexhethe worse & worse.”³⁷ For this writer, despair has not been confined to a narrative stage in the life of an assured believer but threatens instead to become his life’s *telos*, its very end.

Following Calvin’s lead, English Protestant catechetical writers attempt to resolve the problem of distinguishing salutary from damnable despair not through a qualitative distinction between the two forms of despair but through a temporal

one: the first is but a stage along the path to glory, the latter a permanently entrapping slough of despond. For Thomas Becon, for instance, the “law,” through making us seem “vyle and nought worth in our sight ... eyther bringeth us to utter desperacion, or els leadeth us (as it were by the hande) to Christe, the only true pacifier of the conscience.”³⁸ The “eyther” signals a temporal distinction, not a qualitative one. The two possible resolutions to despair differ in that despair either does or does not direct the conscience towards Christ; despair either is or is not confined to a discrete stage in the life of the believer. Similarly, for Alexander Nowell the distinction between salutary despair in one’s own efforts, the result of failure to fulfill the “law,” and permanent desperation lies primarily in duration: “Ma[ster]: Doth then the law set all men in this most remediesse estate? Sch[olar]: The unbeleving and the ungodly the law doth both set and leave in such case as I have spoken, ... as they are not hable to fulfill the least jote of the lawe.”³⁹ The difference between the godly and the ungodly is not whether the law “sets” them in despair but whether it “leaves” them there.

Yet these catechetical writers acknowledge that even attempts to separate salutary from damnable despair through temporal distinctions may not work particularly well since believers continue to struggle, as Calvin acknowledges, with the necessary imperfections of their faith. Becon labors to maintain temporal distinctions as he works to answer the question “What is desperacion?”:

It is when in temptacion, and such trying of us (wheither it be by adversitie, or any other thing) we fall downe distrust, and cast away all hope of the mercie and goodnesse of God: then (I say) when of no side appeareth any hope, or succor, and when we be, as seemeth to us, utterly forgotten and cast away of God. Of which temptacion we may see a manifest example [Job 7]. To speake properly desperacion is the utter and finall dispayre and distrust of helpe.⁴⁰

There is a subjective dimension to Becon’s answer as well as a temporal one: desperation occurs when it “seemeth to us” that we are cast away, not necessarily when this is actually the case (as the Job reference would seem to imply). The psychological perspective of the individual struggler forms the context for the first portion of the answer. Speaking “properly” gives the theologically correct answer that also formulates a hard distinction in time: strictly speaking, desperation is “finall.” And yet it may appear to us to be so even when it is not.

The resolution of despair into an ultimately salutary moment in the providential narrative of salvation depends, then, not on a qualitative distinction but on the rather difficult process of confining despair to its proper moment in time, its proper place in the narrative of an elect story. Prefacing Spenser’s despair episode, the problems of limited temporal and subjective perspectives are invoked from the beginning of the canto, as Arthur struggles to make sense of his own love-sufferings in the light of his hope in providence’s ability to order

life-narratives.⁴¹ Terwin's love-wounds, inflicted by unrequited love and the occasion on which Despair works his terrible temptation to suicide, may dimly reflect Arthur's own. At the start of the canto, Arthur outlines the difficulty of perceiving providential orderings:

Full hard it is (quoth he) to read aright
The course of heavenly cause, or understand
The secret meaning of th'eternall might,
That rules mens waies, and rules the thoughts of living wight.

For whether he through fatal deepe foresight
Me hither sent, for cause to me unghest,
Or that fresh bleeding wound, which day and night
Whilome doth rancele in my riven brest,
With forced fury following his behest,
Me hether brought by wayes yet never found,
You to have helpt I hold my selfe yet blest (ix.6.6-9, 7.1-7).

Arthur's words foreshadow the complexity of Spenser's despair episode, as he points to the human inability to discern clearly what exactly the narrative structure and its underlying causalities are at any given moment, how or whether providence might be ordering narratives in time. As the unclear referent for "his" (ix.7.5) hints, the precise "behest" Arthur is following remains obscure: is it that of divine agency, a "fresh bleeding wound," or, somehow, both?

The comparison of Wolfram's kindly hermit with Spenser's terrified knight prompts a key question, roughly parallel to Arthur's explicit meditation on the difficulty of discerning "the course of heavenly cause:" to what extent is Trevisan cooperating with divine but imperfectly perceptible ends in guiding Redcrosse to despair? May Trevisan be read as a Protestant revision of Trevrizent, one who guides a sinful knight further into despair *so that* he might lay hold of faith? The answer is a heavily qualified yes, qualified by Spenser's sense of the psychological difficulties produced by the temporal and subjective distinctions writers like Becon and Nowell tried to draw. Spenser's terrified knight, named in the context of guidance and grace, yields a layered representation more complex than even theologians struggling to confine despair to a narrative stage and to separate salutary from damning forms of it allowed. Trevisan may seem to follow catechetical prescriptions for an ultimately salutary despair's temporal dimensions: he first ascertains that he has reached a place of "safetie sure" before he begins to tell his "haplesse history" (ix.26.1, 4). It is from a place of safety that one can narrate an earlier despair, and recognize the "greater grace" (ix.26.8) that enabled escape. Yet Trevisan's despair is not so easily confined. His history remains "haplesse" after all, and he persists in his fear, remarking that he knows not whether he, as compared with his unfortunate friend Terwin, is the "more fearefull, or more

lucky wight" (ix.30.4). Nor is he confident in his ability to confront Despair again; while he is willing to guide Redcrosse to Despair, he states that he will not abide.

The comparison with Wolfram's hermit throws into stark relief the simultaneously fearful and grace-ful dimensions of Spenser's Trevisan. In the light of Protestant discussions of despair, the raw paradoxes of Trevisan's depiction are striking: through Trevisan, Spenser refuses to separate the theologically-correct idea that one must go through despair in order to cease a dangerous reliance on self—something Parzival also must undergo, though with the help of a skilled confessor—and the psychologically-correct portrayal of the fear and devastation that even a theoretically temporary despair could cause, or of the all-too-easy way despair might refuse to confine itself to a narrative stage in the story of salvation. While Trevisan, like Trevrizent, is associated with teaching—Trevisan offers his recent trials as an empirical lesson for Redcrosse about the horrors Despair may lead a man to wreak upon himself—the fear is still real; he will not repeat his experience: "I wote (quoth he) whom tryall late did teach, / That like would not for all this worldes wealth" (ix.31.3-4).⁴² The idea that despair is both health-giving and potentially devastating, a salutary lesson and a test one can fail even after learning has supposedly taken place, undergirds Trevisan's combination of terror and guidance, abject fear and graceful function. Through this figure Spenser introduces his complex vision of despair, holding both senses of despair in prolonged suspension.

The division of Wolfram's spiritual hermit into both the horrible hermit Despair and the terrified but graceful guide Trevisan parallels the double vision of despair—as both horrifying and providential—that Spenser sustains in this episode. Our comparison thus supports the view, articulated by Skulsky and others, that Spenser was brutally honest about how dangerous the spiritually necessary step of despair over one's own efforts and sinfulness could be.⁴³ This is underscored as the conflicted Trevisan, guiding Redcrosse to despair to "do him grace," disappears on their arrival at the treacherous Despair's cave. When Despair takes Trevisan's place as Redcrosse's interlocutor, he tempts the knight in a way that resonates powerfully with mainline Protestant paradigms of despair.⁴⁴ Perversely, despite himself, with his desperation-inducing recounting of Redcrosse's many sins—violations of the "law"—Despair winds up clearing the way for Una's powerful, graceful intervention at the end of the canto. And yet the transition is perilous. Wolfram's Trevrizent first pointed out the severity of Parzival's sins; Despair here does the same, but without Trevrizent's corresponding (and Catholic) ability to bring his knightly charge to reconciliation. In Trevisan's report, in fact, Despair acts precisely as an unholy confessor, probing the deeds and hearts of Trevisan and Terwin not in order to save them but to lead them to desperation. Recounting his tale in an ever-vivid present tense—yet another

indicator that Trevisan cannot neatly confine his encounter with Despair to a superceded past—Trevisan states that Despair “Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly deedes,” and that “His subtile tong, like dropping honny, mealt’th / Into the heart, and searcheth every vaine” (ix.28.9, 31.5–6). At the end of such careful examination there is of course no sacramental reconciliation; Una can only intervene once Redcrosse’s own resources are exhausted.⁴⁵ The contrast of this moment with Anthony Copley’s Catholic revision of the canto, in his *A Fig for Fortune* (London, 1596), is instructive. Copley’s knight escapes his struggle with desperation when his old horse, “Melancholy,” disappears, and a new one called “Good Desire” appears; the exercise of the will is key for Copley in initiating the turn from despair, in beginning the narrative movement towards redemption.⁴⁶

Only in hindsight, at the start of the next canto, does Spenser resolve the paradox of the fearful Trevisan’s guidance of Redcrosse to the hellish Despair into a redemptive narrative; he tells readers that the House of Holiness is “not farre away” (x.3.1) from the Cave of Despair. Only in this retrospective logic is Despair—and not cleanliness—next to holiness. Further, the temporal containment of despair is not particularly neat. Escobedo has recently argued, for instance, that the hermit Contemplation echoes aspects of Despair’s argument (though certainly, as he acknowledges, to different ends), and Beth Quitslund has shown that the penitential torments Redcrosse undergoes in the House of Holiness evoke the intertwining of medical and spiritual discourses in contemporary Protestant treatises on the salving of wounded consciences.⁴⁷ It is not of course necessary to fit these echoes of the Despair episode into a single linear narrative concerning the character “Redcrosse” and his spiritual development (or regression); Monta has argued elsewhere that the “Legend of Holiness” works towards something larger than a particular character’s linear trajectory, as the allegory labors towards a reformed hagiographic paradigm not easily achieved or reassembled from the struggles of Redcrosse to understand the divine “course.”⁴⁸ In the revisiting of despair at key moments later in the poem we can see Spenser’s persistent uneasiness with the temporal circumscription of despair devoutly wished for by contemporary theologians and catechists, an unease first signaled by the fearful Trevisan’s association with guidance and grace.

The comparison of Wolfram’s hermit Trevrizent with Spenser’s Trevisan and hermit Despair reveals Spenser’s unflinching look at Reformation intensifications of familiar paradoxes about despair. The comparison also highlights an important continuity between Spenser’s poem and its medieval chivalric forebears. In Wolfram’s poem, Trevrizent encourages Parzival to humble himself *and* to take up his charge again—the quest for the Grail. Similarly, Una both insists that her knight is “chosen”—by grace—and urges Redcrosse Knight, poised to sink steel into his own breast, to take up knightly arms and pursue his assigned quest: “Is this the battaile, which thou vaunstst to fight / With that fire-mouthed Dragon,

horrible and bright?" (ix.52.8-9). Hope and faith, for both Wolfram and Spenser, are irascible: they are demonstrated through persistent chivalric action, through the willingness to continue the quest.⁴⁹ Although the Despair episode pointedly engages with Reformation debates over the relative soteriological efficacy of faith and works, then, deeds are to this extent redeemed and retained in Spenser's "Legend of Holiness." It is also in Spenser's association of grace with election (Una's admonishment that Redcrosse is "chosen") and chivalric action (her urging that he should "Arise" and take up his quest again) that we may see Spenser's desire both to revise and to salvage pre-Reformation Arthurian material for his own "Legend of Holiness."

This insistence on action is evident even at the poem's closest approximation to revelation. As Escobedo notes, the hermit Contemplation tells Redcrosse of future ease, of "joyous rest and endlesse blis" after "labors long, and sad delay" (x.52.6, 5), in terms that echo and revise those of Despair himself. This vision of "peace," where arms are not needed (x.62.9) and "loose loves ... vanish into nought" prompts Redcrosse's longing:

O let me not (quoth he) then turne againe
 Backe to the world, whose joyes so fruitlesse are,
 But let me heare for aie in peace remaine,
 Or streight way on that last long voiage fare,
 That nothing may my present hope empare (x.63.1-5).

Yet to achieve the New Jerusalem would mean forgoing "deeds of armes" and "Ladies love" (x.62.5, 6); it would mean, in other words, exiting the chivalric fiction of the poem, in which "fierce wars and faithfull loves" moralize the song, and it would mean failing to fight the vaunted "battaile" to which Redcrosse has already committed himself.⁵⁰ Contemplation must remind him of his duties:

That may not be (said he) ne maist thou yitt
 Forgoe that royal maides bequeathed care,
 Who did her cause into thy hand commit,
 Till from her cursed foe thou have her freely quitt (x.63.6-9).

Spenser maintains faith in his chivalric vehicle and in action itself, even at the cost of deferring beatific bliss.

Strikingly, in Redcrosse's culminating battle Spenser incorporates and redeems the initial image into which he condensed his dual vision of despair. Earlier, Trevisan is described in language suggesting both his ultimately graceful function and his deep fearfulness, signaled by the loss of his helmet, the emblem of hope in salvation; by riding without a helmet he has, of course, also rather heavily qualified his ability to fight as a knight ought. In canto xi, when Redcrosse is first

seared with dragon's breath, he "thought his armes to leave, and helmet to unlace" (26.9). Redcrosse thus experiences a twinned temptation to give up action *and* to lose hope of salvation. Again he despairs ("death did he oft desire") but as "It fortun'd" the dragon knocks him into the reinvigorating well of life (28.4, 29.1). Despair is figured here as a recurrent temptation to forego hopeful irascibility in favor of death's ultimate anesthetic, a temptation overcome through the fact that even the dragon's blow (much like the rhetorical blows of Despair) can be recuperated into a providential narrative that in turn enables further action ("It fortun'd"). In this passage, Spenser both subordinates despair to a temporary moment in a tale of ultimate victory and also recuperates an echo of the fearful knight Trevisan for inclusion in that tale. Spenser ultimately narrativizes despair, in other words, but does so with a charitable backward glance at the knight who embodied its more stubbornly paradoxical elements. For Wolfram, Parzival's inability to resolve his despair on his own stems from his placing too much faith in deeds alone; Parzival must be taught that he cannot find the Grail Castle without repenting and relying once again on divine help. For Spenser, there is another, equal peril: too little faith in deeds. The dragon fight's recapitulation of earlier temptations, such as the temptation to remove the hopeful helmet and succumb to a desire for restful death, produces at last a brief moment of perfect cooperation between divine and human action at the culmination of the quest: in the ambiguity of Una's acknowledgment that God and Redcrosse defeated the dragon "by his might" (xi.55.9) is condensed both divine and chivalric agencies. Their actions are, at this moment, perfectly aligned.

A comparison of Spenser's episode with Wolfram's renders Trevisan as more than simply a representation of fear, irresolution, or cowardice, and illuminates the complex imbrication of Trevisan in Spenser's poetics of despair. While the value of the comparison we propose does not depend upon establishing Wolfram's *Parzival* as a source for Spenser's poem, it is not unreasonable to speculate that Spenser may have known of the work or at least of its despair episode, the most famous moment in medieval Germany's most famous Arthurian poem. While there is no evidence that Spenser could read German, he did have some interest in German literature.⁵¹ It is by no means implausible that Spenser may have encountered the names in a medieval recension or adaptation of Wolfram's work, as one anonymous reader of this article noted. Oral transmission is also a possibility. The variants Trevrizent/Trevisan and Taurian/Terwin are similar enough to postulate a borrowing from an oral recounting, and the English forms are precisely what one might expect from an Englishman hearing the German forms rather than reading them.⁵²

From whom could Spenser have heard the story of *Parzival*? Leading sixteenth-century English Protestants had numerous connections with German and Swiss publishing and literary circles, especially but not only during the Marian exile.⁵³

Nor were German speakers scarce in early modern England. Noting that early modern records often confused “Dutch” and “German” immigrants, Raingard Esser has established that German merchants “from Danzig, Cologne, Lübeck, and Duisburg dominated trade and enterprise in England” and that German artisans and craftsmen “were a familiar sight” in early modern England.⁵⁴ Another possible route of transmission is through Dutch exiles living in England, many of them immigrants from polyglot Antwerp.⁵⁵ If we consider linguistic range, Middle High German would not be beyond the reach of a native early modern Dutch speaker, since much of what appears foreign about Middle High German to a speaker of Modern German finds a close approximation in early modern Dutch.

Through both Gabriel Harvey, Spenser’s friend and famous correspondent, and Richard Mulcaster, the Merchant Taylors’ School headmaster, Spenser had numerous connections to the large, multi-lingual Dutch exile community in London.⁵⁶ Several of those exiles in turn had connections to German literary and publishing circles. Abraham Ortelius, for instance, who assembled the first atlas of the world, spent considerable time at the famous Frankfurt book fair, had connections to the book-selling Birckmann family in Cologne as well as to the famous German scholar and map-maker Gerard Mercator, and had a German grandfather; an avid antiquarian, he also sustained friendships with Mulcaster and William Camden.⁵⁷ Emmanuel van Meteren, cousin to Ortelius and a wealthy merchant whose father, a master bookseller, was involved with the printing of Coverdale’s Bible, was Dutch consul from 1583 till his death in 1613; he was also a close friend of Mulcaster’s, who served as godfather to one of van Meteren’s children.⁵⁸ It was likely Mulcaster who recommended the teenage Spenser to another of Antwerp’s most accomplished natives, the poet Jan van der Noot, as a potential translator of Noot’s *Het Theatre oft Tooneel* into its English version, *A Theatre for Worldlings*⁵⁹

There are many historical connections, of course, between Dutch and German poetry; Dutch poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, for instance, consciously imitated Wolfram’s poetry in their attempts to forge a vernacular Dutch poetry.⁶⁰ Given van der Noot’s attempts to further Dutch poetry and his interest in the history of Dutch literature, he may well have known at least some of Wolfram’s works, the most important and renowned of which is the Arthurian *Parzival*.⁶¹ German literature was definitely of interest to the polyglot van der Noot. He worked with the translator Balthasar Froe to translate *Het Theatre oft Tooneel* into German, and his Olympia epics were first published in German as *Das Buch Extasis*; while this work was almost certainly produced by a translator, van der Noot may well have collaborated closely.⁶² Dutch writers had long functioned as a point of contact for Romance and Germanic literary cultures;⁶³ perhaps something similar happened in this case. It seems possible, then, that Wolfram’s famous

romance would not have been unknown in polyglot early modern London, and that the poem—or at least its salient narrative elements—may have reached the ears of the young Edmund Spenser.

Regardless of whether Spenser knew of Wolfram's work, through oral or other forms of transmission, the resemblances between the two despair episodes remain temptingly rich. They include the onomastic similarity of the pairing of the names Trevisant/Trevisan and Taurian/Terwin and the thematic focus on the probing of consciences, despair at earlier knightly failings, and the turning of an intensified despair towards ultimate redemption. The comparison of Spenser's episode with Wolfram's situates the name "Trevisan" firmly in the context of the entire canto's allegory, and it suggests ways of elucidating the fearful Trevisan's act of self-naming in the context of guidance and grace. Finally, and perhaps most broadly, reading Spenser's Trevisan against Wolfram's Trevrizent may illuminate further Spenser's relationship to previous chivalric—and Catholic—fictions. Despite the intense anti-Catholicism in the early cantos of Book I, in the last three cantos Spenser undertakes something of a cultural salvage operation. In the eleventh canto he rewrites the culminating conflict in the St. George legend itself, a legend sterner Protestants found alternately cartoonish and threatening.⁶⁴ In the preceding canto, the House of Holiness reimagines another sort of holy house razed from England's landscape; in its reforming of monasticism for a Protestant allegory we can see an extension of that salvage operation. If canto ix engages with earlier Arthurian material, then Spenser's blend of reform and literary preservation is pushed back a little further in the book, to precisely the point at which Redcrosse's battles become intensely spiritualized. Read against Wolfram's despair episode, Spenser's exhibits predictable changes—the removal of an authentic confessor; the intensification of the belief that one must despair of one's own works before experiencing true grace—as well as an awareness of the perils these changes entail. Like Wolfram, Spenser maintains a commitment to chivalric action as the vehicle of his narrative, but with a keen sense of the problems Protestant theology posed for the narrating of despair.

Notes

The authors would like to thank Thomas Herron and Rolf Bremmer for their comments on an earlier version of this article, Stefan Jurasinski for pursuing its publication, and the journal's two anonymous readers for their helpful suggestions.

- ¹ John O'Connor notes this fact in "Terwin, Trevisan, and Spenser's Historical Allegory," *Studies in Philology* 87 (1990): 328–340.
- ² See Joel Jay Belson, *The Names in the Faerie Queene*, New York, 1964, unpublished Columbia dissertation, s.v. The form $\tau\rho\epsilon\omega$ is a first person singular. Though Spenser is often unorthodox, to say the least, in his onomastic philology, Book I names are generally transparent etymologically. Here, that would not be the case: the sound "v" is nonexistent in classical Greek, and the ending of Trevisan's name—"isan"—is not a proper Greek ending.
- ³ K. K. Ruthven, "Etymology," in the *Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 256.
- ⁴ O'Connor, "Terwin, Trevisan, and Spenser's Historical Allegory." According to O'Connor, Trèves was a Roman Catholic stronghold that almost became a reformed center; Théroouanne was besieged in 1553 by Charles V and later destroyed because it was a center of reformed theology. Russell J. Meyer suggests that Trevisan is supposed to represent the French knights who fled from the Battle of the Spurs, in 1513 at Théroouanne ("From Théroouanne to Terwin?," *Spenser Newsletter* 6 (1975): 18–19). Our argument suggests a more redemptive role for Trevisan than that proposed by either Meyer or O'Connor.
- ⁵ While it is true that the naming of Spenser's characters is often deferred until their significance has been established in other ways, it is also the case that in Book I the timing of naming is almost always significant. Thus, Redcrosse Knight's proper name ("St. George") is not provided until Archimago appears disguised as Redcrosse, the timing critical for Spenser's insistence on dangerous duplication early in the Book, nor is Redcrosse linked to the name St. George until, in the House of Holiness episode and after considerable reform has taken place, Contemplation predicts his future as Saint George. Similarly, we propose that the timing and specific context of Trevisan's naming bear significance for his function within the Despair episode.
- ⁶ Susan Snyder's dissertation, entitled *The Paradox of Despair: Studies of the Despair Theme in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1963), is the only work we have found to discuss both poems, though she does not compare them closely nor hypothesize any connections in the names.
- ⁷ On the dating of Wolfram's poem, see Joachim Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach* (6th ed., Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991), 19–21, and Joachim Henizle, Klaus Klein, and Michael Redeker, *Der Parzival des Wolfram von Eschenbach: Von den mittelalterlichen Handschriften zur modernen Ausgabe* (Marburg: Wolfram-von-Eschenbach Gesellschaft, 1990), 5. For the dating of Cretien, see William W. Kibler, trans., *Chrétien de Troyes: Arthurian Romances* (London: Penguin, 1991), 5.
- ⁸ McFarland, "The Emergence of the German Grail Romance," 54. The others are Hartmann von Aue's *Erec* and *Iwein*.

- ⁹ While Perceval does not see his mother collapse at his departure, the young Parzival looks back, but then continues on his route. Perceval kills the Red Knight who is challenging Arthur's kingdom; Parzival's action is the same, but Wolfram has made the challenging knight Parzival's cousin. The boy is thus guilty of killing a kinsman. Wolfram ups the ante by recasting both these episodes as sins committed unknowingly.
- ¹⁰ 332.7-8; all *Parzival* citations are taken from *Wolfram von Eschenbach: Parzival*, ed. Albert Leitzmann (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1963; 6th edition), 3 vols. Translations are Lisi Oliver's. In Chrétien, the questions Perceval fails to ask are simply questions of information; in Wolfram's poem, Parzival's failure to ask a question of compassion gives his misstep much greater spiritual depth.
- ¹¹ The name and the relationship are both inventions of Wolfram. In Chrétien, the hermit is called a *sainz hom*, *hermite*, or *prodon*, and he is accompanied by a *provoire* ("priest") and a *clerçon* ("choir boy"), both lacking in Wolfram. The cave is also an invention of Wolfram; in Chrétien the hermit worships in a chapel. The problem of the derivation of the name Trevrizent in Wolfram has not been resolved; see, for example, Werner Schröder, *Die Namen im 'Parzival' und im 'Titulel'* (Berlin/ New York: de Gruyter, 1982); Fourquets, "Les Noms Propres du Parzival," in *Melanges de Philologie romane et de Littérature médiévale offerts à Ernest Hæpffner* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949), 254; Wolfgang Kleiber, "Zur Namenforschung in Wolfram's 'Parzival,'" *Der Deutschunterricht*, 14/6 (1962): 80-90, 84. An anonymous reader of this article suggests that the name may be based on "Trebizond," "a name of some particular topicality in the early thirteenth century, when Byzantium fell during the Fourth Crusade."
- ¹² "der geistige Mittelpunkt der Dichtung," Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, 97.
- ¹³ See Wolfgang Mohr's classic article "Parzival's Knightly Guilt," reprinted in *Perceval/Parzival: A Casebook*, eds. Arthur Groos and Norris J. Lacy (New York: Routledge, 2002), 139-154. On the figure of Cain as related to despair, see Susan Snyder: "In Cain are displayed the two consequences of reliance on the law. When he tries to fulfill it he observes the letter only and not the spirit, offering his sacrifice without charity in his heart; hence his works are unacceptable to God. When he breaks it, in the murder of Abel, he sees only that he must be damned and cannot humble himself to ask for mercy. His answer to God is both proud and despairing: '*Maior est iniquitas mea quam ut veniam merear*' (Gen. 4:13). Pride and despair are linked in the refusal to acknowledge insufficiency of self and ask for God's help." Snyder cites Bede, Hrabanus Maurus, and Isidore on this point. Later, Luther develops this reading of Cain, seeing in Cain and Abel "the conflict 'between reason's self-appointed worship and the divinely-appointed worship of faith'" ("The Left Hand of God: Despair in Medieval and Renaissance Tradition," *Studies in the Renaissance*, 12 (1965): 32.
- ¹⁴ McFarland, "The Emergence of the German Grail Romance," 60. The idea of a sinful beginning to chivalric endeavours is another general parallel with the career of Spenser's Redcrosse Knight.
- ¹⁵ See Mohr, "Parzival's Knightly Guilt," 144-149, *passim*.
- ¹⁶ See the homepage for the University of Basle's Parzival Projekt, www.parzival.unibas.ch/index.html, for information on surviving manuscripts and fragments.

- ¹⁷ “Damit erreichte der Parzival eine Verbreitung wie kein anderes mittelalterliches höfisches Epos,” from Joachim Heinzle, Klaus Klein, and Michael Redeker, *Der Parzival des Wolfram von Eschenbach: Von den mittelalterlichen Handschriften zur modernen Ausgabe* (Marburg: Wolfram-von-Eschenbach Gesellschaft, 1990), 15. Those manuscripts survived primarily in Germany and Switzerland.
- ¹⁸ McFarland, “The Emergence of the German Grail Romance,” 65.
- ¹⁹ Though we have not yet been able to place a printed copy of *Parzival* in England, some works from Mentelin’s press are documented in sixteenth-century England. Mentelin’s printing of Vincentius Bellovacensis’s *Speculum Historiale*, parts I and II (1473) was donated by Thomas Rotherham in 1484 as part of the development of Pembroke College’s library. Pre-1500 works from German presses were far from uncommon in Cambridge collections, and over one-third of the known pre-1500 printed book holdings in Pembroke College came from German presses (see *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Pembroke College, Cambridge*, by M.R. James, *With a Hand List of the Printed Books to the Year 1500*, by Ellis H. Minns (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1905).
- ²⁰ McFarland, “The Emergence of the German Grail Romance,” 65, 54.
- ²¹ Andrew King, *The Faerie Queene and Middle English Romance: The Matter of Just Memory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000). On Spenser’s relationship to French and English Arthurian materials, see also Charles Bowie Millican, *Spenser and the Table Round: A Study in the Contemporaneous Background for Spenser’s Use of the Arthurian Legend* (New York: Octagon, 1967). Neither mentions Wolfram.
- ²² Patrick Cullen notes the false-religious guise of the hermit Despair (*Infernal Triad: The Flesh, the World, and the Devil in Spenser and Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 61); this is particularly striking in comparison with Wolfram’s episode.
- ²³ All citations of *The Faerie Queene* are to the Longman edition, ed. A. C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita, and Toshiyuki Suzuki (New York: Longman, 2001).
- ²⁴ Snyder, “The Left Hand,” 22.
- ²⁵ John Fisher, *This treatise concernynge the fruytfull saynges of Davyd in the seven penytenyall psalmes...* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1508); reprinted in *The English Works of John Fisher*, ed. John E.B. Mayor for the EETS (London: Trübner, 1876), 254 .
- ²⁶ Snyder, “The Left Hand,” 21, citing Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum*, and Isidore of Seville, *Differentiarum libri*.
- ²⁷ Snyder, “The Left Hand,” 24. Compare also Donald Beecher, who argues that mainline Reformation Protestants held “a paradoxical conviction, that suffering, even to despair, alone could lead fallen man to the knowledge of the good, yet that such suffering, arising from man’s own fallible nature, could likewise lead to damnation. Critical then to the soteriological views of the age was this management of despair” (“Spenser’s Redcrosse Knight: Despair and the Elizabethan Malady,” *Renaissance and Reformation/ Renaissance et Reforme*, 11/1 (1987): 105).

- ²⁸ *Luther's Works*, vol. 26 (*Lectures on Galatians 1535* (1531), chs. 1–4), eds. Jaroslav Pelikan and Walter A. Hanson (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 9.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.
- ³⁰ *De Servo Arbitrio*, in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, trans. and ed. Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 244.
- ³¹ *Operationes in Psalmos*, in *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, vol. 5, Herman (Weimar: Böhlau, 1892, reprint 1966), 607 (“in desperationem urgeret”).
- ³² *Lectures on Galatians*, 5–6.
- ³³ John Calvin, *Institutes*, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), volume 1, Book 1, chapter 3, 243.
- ³⁴ *Institutes*, volume 2, Book 3, chapter 2.
- ³⁵ *Institutes*, volume 2, Book 3, chapter 17, 562. Our sense is that Calvin struggles with these points more than Snyder or Beecher would allow; his many reformulations and iterations indicate that the concern over the despair that Calvin’s teaching could potentially provoke may be found in the most orthodox of places, in Calvin himself.
- ³⁶ For more on this point, see Susannah Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 18–21.
- ³⁷ British Library Harley MS 416, 120.
- ³⁸ Thomas Becon, *Principles of Christian Religion* (London: John Day, 1550), sig. Bii.
- ³⁹ Alexander Nowell, *A Catechisme, or First Instruction of Christian Religion* (the larger catechism), trans. T. Norton (London: John Day, 1570), sig. Gir.
- ⁴⁰ Becon, *Principles of Christian Religion*, sig. Cii. The reference to Job 7 is in a sidenote to the passage.
- ⁴¹ On the relationship of Terwin’s love–despair to Elizabethan sonnet sequences, see Thomas P. Roche, “The Menace of Despair and Arthur’s Vision, *Faerie Queene* 1.9,” *Spenser Studies* 4 (1984): 71–92.
- ⁴² On Spenser’s frequent poetic challenges to the pedagogical methods dominant in his day—including teaching from exempla (Trevisan offers his experience as exemplum)—see Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (University of Chicago Press, 2007).
- ⁴³ See Skulsky’s article on “Despair” in the *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 213–4.

- ⁴⁴ John N. King comments that “The knight’s experience [with Despair] accords with Calvin’s warning that the elect soul is particularly vulnerable to despair when, upon first becoming aware of the enormity of its sinfulness, it feels unworthy of divine love and powerless to avoid divine punishment” (*Spenser’s Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 213).
- ⁴⁵ Darryl Gless notes that Redcrosse is saved “not by reason and experience, which Arthur has recommended (xiii.45), but by a faith for which Una advances no argument whatever” (*Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 145).
- ⁴⁶ On the significance of this distinction see Paul Voss, “The Catholic Presence in English Renaissance Literature,” *The Ben Jonson Journal* 7 (2000): 1–26. For scholarship on Copley generally, see also Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 133–7; Jeffrey Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from “Utopia” to “The Tempest”* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 85–6; and Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature*, 100–111.
- ⁴⁷ Andrew Escobedo, “Despair and the Proportion of the Self,” *Spenser Studies* 17 (2003), 75–90; Beth Quitslund, “Despair and the Composition of the Self,” *Spenser Studies* 17 (2003), 91–106.
- ⁴⁸ See Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature*, chapter four.
- ⁴⁹ Skulsky argues for Spenser’s construction of an irascible hope; see “Despair.” On Spenser’s use of medical discourse as a way to counter despair actively, see Quitslund, “Despair and the Composition of the Self.”
- ⁵⁰ On the (unresolved) problem of reconciling heaven with courtly responsibilities and fame, see Escobedo, “Despair and the Proportion of the Self”; here, we read that problem as one of reconciling heaven with the chivalric fiction of the poem itself.
- ⁵¹ Spenser owned an English translation of *Till Eulenspiegel*, given to him by Gabriel Harvey (Lee Piepho, “Edmund Spenser and Neo-Latin Literature: An Autograph Manuscript on Petrus Lotichius and His Poetry,” *Studies in Philology* 100/2 (2003): 123). On Spenser and German neo-Latin poets see also Piepho, “The Shepherdes Calendar and Neo-Latin Pastoral: A book newly discovered to have been owned by Spenser,” *Spenser Studies* 16 (2002): 77–103.
- ⁵² The “r” in the consonant cluster “vr” of Trevrizent could well be overlooked in aural reception. In fact, on page 120B of Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cgm 19, the scribe renders the name *Trevesent*; perhaps this variation represents an earlier version of the name, or perhaps the scribe himself simplified the cluster “vr” in his mind’s ear. For variant spellings, see Bernd Schirok, *Wolfram von Eschenbach, “Parzival”: die Bilder der illustrierten Handschriften* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1985). Schirok only deals with the Munich and St. Gall manuscripts; it is possible that similar spellings occur elsewhere. The final “t” could easily have been deleted following the preceding “n” (examples abound both in English and cross-linguistically); and the difference between the final “e” of Trevrizent and the “a” of Trevisan is purely visual, as both represent the unstressed vowel schwa. The connection between Taurian and Terwin is even more obvious. The –ur- and –rw- are graphic equivalents representing lip rounding in the pronunciation of the “r”, in the first instance followed by a glide. The final, unstressed vowels are likely both pronounced as schwa.

- ⁵³ In the early to mid-sixteenth century, English exile communities existed in Basel (where John Foxe and John Bale lived for a time), Strassburg (John Foxe and Edmund Grindal), Wesel (where John Bale published his edition of Anne Askew's *Examinations*), Wittenberg (including William Tyndale and John Rogers, the first Marian martyr), Frankfurt (again, John Foxe and Edmund Grindal), and Cologne (Tyndale). Manuscripts of *Parzival* survive today in several of these areas of Germany and Switzerland (including Cologne and Basel).
- ⁵⁴ Raingard Esser, "Germans in Early Modern Britain," in *Germans in Britain Since 1500*, ed. Panikos Panayi (London: Hambledon Press, 1996), 18, 21.
- ⁵⁵ It is perhaps worth noting that Dutch Arthurian material was markedly more popular in Flanders than in other areas of the Low Countries, though its popularity had waned by the late Middle Ages (Bart Mesamusca, "The Medieval Dutch Arthurian Material," in *The Arthur of the Germans*, eds. W. H. Jackson and S. A. Ranawake (Cardiff: University of Wales Press), 187–230).
- ⁵⁶ On this community see Leonard Forster, *Janus Gruter's English Years: Studies in the Continuity of Dutch Literature in Exile in Elizabethan England* (Leiden/ London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 48–9. The Dutch publisher Henry Byrneman had Cambridge connections; he was Gabriel Harvey's publisher and also published van der Noot's *Het Bosken* (in 1570 or 1571) and, in 1569, his *Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings* (the Dutch version, *Het Theatre oft Tooneel*, was published by John Day in 1568).
- ⁵⁷ Paul Binding, *Imagined Corners: Exploring the World's First Atlas* (London: Review, 2003), 19, 24, 26, 68, 90.
- ⁵⁸ On Emmanuel van Meteren, see Binding, *Imagined Corners*, 24, 28, and 35; Forster, *Janus Gruter's English Years*, 48–9; and J. Franklin Jameson, *Narratives of New Netherland, 1609–1664* (New York: Scribner's, 1909), 4.
- ⁵⁹ "Spenser appears to have translated all twenty-two poems from the French, checking them against an English draft translation from the Dutch" (Jan van Dorsten, "A *Theatre for Worldlings*," in *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 685).
- ⁶⁰ See Frits Pieter van Oostrom: "By lending their love poetry a German flavor, our [late medieval] Dutch poets tried, as it were, to join the ranks of the famous minnesingers, "Singers of Love," who included Wolfram von Eschenbach, Gottfried von Strassburg, and the great Walther von der Vogelweide" (*Court and Culture: Dutch Literature, 1350–1450*, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 81). Wolfram anticipated the compliment, praising the medieval Dutch poet Henric or Heinrich van Veldeke (c. 1145–1200) (Theodoor Weevers, *Poetry of the Netherlands in its European Context, 1170–1930* (London: University of London, Althone Press, 1960), 12–13). On the numerous exchanges between German and Dutch literary cultures see also Reinder J. Meijer, *Literature of the Low Countries: A Short History of Dutch Literature in the Netherlands and Belgium* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes, 1978); based on German translations of medieval Dutch Arthurian material Rita Schlusemann argues for a "closer cooperation between German and Dutch literary history of the Middle Ages" (see "The Late-Medieval Reception of Dutch Arthurian Literature in Heidelberg and Blankenheim," in *King Arthur in the Medieval Low Countries*, eds. Geert H. M. Claassens and David F. Johnson (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 97–111).

⁶¹ Wolfram's work comprises *Parzival*, the thematically-related *Titurel* fragments, seven songs, and the incomplete epic *Willehalm* (Timothy McFarland, "The Emergence of the German Grail Romance: Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*," in *The Arthur of the Germans*, eds. W. H. Jackson and S. A. Ranawake (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 55).

⁶² See *The English Emblem Tradition*, eds. Peter M. Daly et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 5, and *The Olympia Epics of Jan van der Noot*, ed. C. A. Zaalberg (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1956), xii. For further discussion of van der Noot's poetry in German, see Leonard Forster, "Jan van der Noot und die deutsche Renaissancelyrik," in *Literatur und Geistesgeschichte*, ed. Reinhold Grimm and Conrad Wiedemann (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1968), 70-84. Reinder J. Meijer, *Literature of the Low Countries*, suggests that the German version of *Das Buch Extasis* may have been translated from a French original, though it was published three years prior to the Dutch/French edition (85).

⁶³ See Weevers, *Poetry of the Netherlands*, on this point.

⁶⁴ See Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature*, 87-8.