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Comparative Epic Research Project on Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Lönnrot's *Kalevala*
Poetic Self-Construction for the Governance of National Culture

Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala* represent two different kinds of national epics, but both poets make common assumptions about the function of an author to limit the free-play of meaning in a text, especially for the production of nationalist literature. The poet Spenser composes an allegorical national vision for Renaissance England in *The Faerie Queene,* which he published first in 1590 and expanded in the second edition in 1596. In *The Kalevala,* published initially in 1835 but restructured in the 1849 edition, the scholar Lönnrot blends authentic oral folklore verses of the eastern Finnish peasantry with his own Romanticist literary ideas to construct a national document for nascent Finland, which did not attain independence from Russia until 1917 (DuBois 284, 292). Despite these differences, a comparison of these works and closely associated texts reveals that both men actively represent their poetic roles within the epics and more explicitly in texts exterior to the epics. By representing their poetic identities, Spenser and Lönnrot assume the vantage point of authorial center, from which they attempt to govern the interpretations of their epics as visions of national poetic language and national identity by asserting their texts' relationships to historically conceived signifying systems.

Summary of Book I of *The Faerie Queene*

Book I of *The Faerie Queene* is entitled, "The Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse, Or, Of Holinesse," and it functions as an allegory to represent the relationships and conflicts

among the English people, the Roman Catholic Church, the English Church, and the English state power of Queen Elizabeth (McEachern 35; Fitzpatrick 6-7). Beginning in *medias res*, the inexperienced, "Gentle Knight" and the Lady Una wander through the wilderness of Faerie Land in search of the dragon that has terrorized the kingdom of Una's father (I.i): "A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,/ Ycladd in mightie armes and siluer shielde,/ wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,/…Yet armes till that time did he neuer wield" (I.i.1). Spenser's explanatory *Letter to Raleigh*, appended to the 1590 edition, states that the Lady Una requires the knight to be clad this way, in "the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul v. Ephes.," which includes the "belt of truth," "breastplate of righteousness," "shield of faith," "helmet of salvation," and the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Spenser 717; Ephesians 6:10-17). The knight experiences a spiritual downfall when an enchantress, Duessa, seduces him and captures him with the help of a giant (I.ii-vii).

The future King Arthur helps Una rescue the knight from the giant's dungeon and they bring him to the house of Holiness where he undergoes a process of spiritual renewal and restoration (I.viii-x). In the process of his rehabilitation, the allegorical figure, Contemplation, an elderly seer devoted to contemplating God and heaven, bestows upon the knight a new identity as the premier English knight, St. George (I.x): "thou…/Shalt be a Saint and thine owne nations frend/ And Patrone: thou Saint *George* shalt called bee, *Saint George* of mery England, the signe of victoree" (I.x.61). He reveals the George is a changeling and that he descends from Saxon kings despite his rustic upbringing in Faerie Land (I.x.65-66). With the spiritual support of Una, George becomes able to defeat the dragon after three days of battle and he thus liberates her father's kingdom (I.xi-xii). Each of these events and figures functions in Spenser's allegory of the development of the English nation.

Spenser's Paratextual Self-Representation

The title of Spenser's *Letter to Raleigh,* appended to the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene,* locates the author as the source of the proper interpretation of the allegorical text: "A Letter of the Author[']s expounding his *whole intention in the course of this worke: which* for that it giveth great light to the Reader, for the better understanding is hereunto annexed" (Spenser 714). The editors note that the printer actually may have inscribed this title, but nonetheless its language merely repeats the terms that Spenser employs himself (Hamilton 714). It is slightly laughable to suggest that such a short letter could contain his "whole intention," but the title nevertheless posits Spenser as the governing center. As such, he opens the letter by expressing his concern that readers may misconstrue his book, "being a continued Allegory, or darke conceit," and thus he endeavors to "discouer unto you [Sir Walter Raleigh] the general intention and meaning" (714). Spenser clearly wants to control the interpretation of the allegory, even though such a form can be ambiguous and be open to multiple interpretations. Writing allegory is the task of poets, and he links himself to authoritative poets when he states, "I have followed all the antique Poets historicall," for he mentions Homer and Virgil and also the more recent Ariosto and Tasso (715). He proceeds to exegete certain parts of the allegory, such as figures who stand for Queen Elizabeth, and to narrate the dramatic background antecedent to the *medias res* openings of each of the three books in the 1590 version of the epic (716-718). Spenser assumes that, as a poet, he is the authority on the general meaning of the allegory and its relationship to previous literary models, and thus he attempts to control this reader's interpretation of *The Faerie Queene* through his self-presentation.

Early in the *Letter*, Spenser declares a didactic task for the epic: "The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle

discipline: Which for that I conceiued shoulde be most plausible and pleasing being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part men delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profite of the ensample" (Spenser 714-715). He thus endeavors to limit the function of the work as a guide especially for Elizabethan courtiers, for he intends to educate only someone who already is a "gentleman or noble person." He explains how King Arthur, Aeneas, Odysseus and others serve as virtuous poetic models, which combined with the ethical philosophy of Aristotle, should edify the reader (715). This self-presentation in no way discloses the entirety of his motives, but it merely expresses what he is willing to share, perhaps in order to accomplish those hidden purposes. In this particular epistolary self-construction, Spenser represents his poetic role as that of an educator in order to govern the interpretation of the allegorical epic for the benefit of the specifically gentle or noble reader.

Summary of *The Kalevala*

The Kalevala develops a heroic history of the pre-Christian Kalevala-region, supposedly located somewhere in or around Finland. Similar to the biblical Genesis, it opens as an elegant cosmogony, in which the powerful poet Väinämöinen is born to the beautiful Spirit of the Sky and participates in the creation of the world out of a watery wasteland (Poem 1-2). Väinämöinen, his friend, Ilmarinen, the eternal smith, and the licentious Lemminkäinen are the three main magical heroes of the Kalevala-region. Väinämöinen, who sings songs of magic power and the origin of the world to the accompaniment of the kantele, a zither-like harp, receives by the heroic epithet, "Vaka vanha Väinämöinen,' or "steadfast old," and "tietäjä iän-ikuinen," or "seer/knower eternal." His singing about the origins of the world brings him much fame: "Steadfast old Väinämöinen/ lives his days/ on those clearings of Väinämöinen's district,/ on the heaths of Kaleva's District./ He keeps singing his songs,/ keeps singing, goes on

practicing his art./ Day after day he sang,/ night after night he recited/ recollections of ancient times,/ those profound origin songs which not all children sing, not even men understand/ in this dreadful time,/ in this fleeting final age./ Far away the news is heard,/ the tiding s spread quickly of Väinämöinen's singing,/ of the man's skill" (3:1-18). A young magic singer, Joukahainen, becomes jealous of Väinämöinen's skill, challenges the ancient man to a magic singing match, and loses miserably because he does not know the oldest truths about the origins of the world (3).

Soon after, the three heroes of Kalevala compete to marry the daughter of the powerful Louhi, the magic-singing mistress of Pohjola, or "North Farm" (7-8, 13, 18-19). They each attempt various feats or quests in exchange for the right to marry the maiden of Pohjola. Eventually smith Ilmarinen forges a magic mill, the Sampo, which produces gold, salt, and grain, and he gives it to the mistress of Pohjola, and after performing a few more feats of courage and technical prowess he receives her daughter as wife (10, 19). Amid several episodes, the newly-wed wife soon dies, and eventually the Kalevala heroes determine to go to war against North Farm to reclaim the magic mill (33, 38-39). The three heroes charm the northlanders to sleep and steal the Sampo, but soon after Pohjola's mistress Louhi and her army pursue the Kaleva-landers and engage them in a sea battle (42-43). During the skirmish, Väinämöinen manages to defeat Louhi who had transformed into an eagle: "Steadfast old Väinämöinen,/ eternal sage,/ thought his time was up,/ felt his hour had probably come./ Now he pulled in the steering oar from the sea,/ the oaken splint from the billows;/ with that he dealt the woman a blow,/ struck some claws from the eagle" (43.43-50). In the heat of battle, the magic mill falls into the ocean, and the broken pieces of the Sampo wash up on Finland's shores to bring good luck for the future, as Väinämöinen declares: "From that [the pieces of the Sampo] the moon will get to gleaming

palely,/ the sun of good fortune to shining/ on the great farms of Finland,/ in Finland's lovely districts" (42-43).

The final poem 50 concludes the epic with the birth of the King of Karelia to the virgin Marjatta. Väinämöinen attempts to kill the fatherless infant King, but the child King bursts forth into eloquent and judgmental speech and banishes the powerful magician from Finland. Thomas DuBois demonstrates that Lönnrot's Poem 50 modifies an oral Nativity poem to symbolize the arrival of Christianity, represented by the son of Marjatta, or the Virgin Mary (DuBois 115). Since this moment symbolizes Finland's historical conversion to Christianity, DuBois argues that Lönnrot intends the narrative events to belong to Finland's pre-Christian past (DuBois 115). As the banished Väinämöinen embarks on a boat conjured by his singing, he declares that he will return when Finland needs him again, and he leaves his kantele harp behind to sustain the joy of the Finnish people (50.491-512). Lönnrot's publication of *The Kalevala* may even symbolize this prophesied return of Väinämöinen, because through the epic poem the nearly lost Finnish folklore tradition achieved a potent cultural status in Finland.

Lönnrot's self-presentation: "I regarded myself as a singer of songs as good as even they"

Lönnrot confidently articulates and constructs for himself the role of a folk-poet in the *Literary Journal for General Civic Culture* upon the 1849 publication of *The New Kalevala*, which contains 22,795 lines grouped into 50 poems and supplants the earlier printing as the standard edition. Although he did not grow up among the eastern Finnish communities where oral folk poetry still thrived, Lönnrot made numerous field trips to these back-country villages during and after his university studies, and he wrote down the people's poetic songs, also called runes, and learned to sing many of the songs himself (Salminen 351-354). In the *Literary Journal*, he argues that the flexibility inherent to the folklore tradition confers on him the

authority to arrange the diverse plethora of trochaic-tetrameter verses that he and others had collected from Finnish folk singers: "I cannot regard the order used by one singer as more authentic than another's; on the contrary, I explain both as born of that desire which everyone has to put his knowledge into some sort of order, which then according to the singer's individual way of presentation has created differences" (Lönnrot 354). Through assuming the concept of an "authentic" order of the songs, Lönnrot reveals the reconstructive nature of this project, and he points to the singer as the governor of poetic performance. He proceeds to make the bold claim that because of his many years of experience interacting with the folklore tradition, he possesses the ability to act as a central, uniting perspective for the entire tradition:

> Finally, since not a single one of the singers could vie with me in wealth of songs, I thought that I myself also had the same right as most singers, namely, the right to arrange the songs as they best fitted into one another—or, to speak in the words of a song [cf. Poem 12, lines 167-168], 'I began to practice magic, started to become a sorcerer'—that is, I regarded myself as a singer of songs as good as even they. (354)

Although these statements are not part of the paratext of *The Kalevala*, they reveal how Lönnrot conceived his relationship with the folklore singing tradition and represented it to his readers.

Lönnrot's Paratextual Self-Presentation

Lönnrot also utilizes paratextual material placed in the opening pages of his publication to govern the interpretation of his text, although he presents himself more as a historian-poet than Spenser does in the *Letter to Raleigh*. Lönnrot states his belief in the Preface to the 1935 *Old Kalevala* that an ancient "original tale" had been mediated orally for generations, both losing and receiving new material as time progressed, and therefore his version strives to recover, or rather reconstruct, something from the "original" pre-Christian world of Finland that supposedly

produced the verses he compiles (Pentikäinen 29-30). In the Preface, Lönnrot provides details about how he believes these poems should function in contemporary Finland: "I would hope to get some elucidation from these [poems] of our forebears' life of old and some benefit for the Finnish language and poetic art. I may well be able to add a word or so about each and all of these points, for they were in my mind at least while I was editing these poems" (Lönnrot 370-371). Lönnrot explicitly bestows upon the first edition of *The Kalevala* the function of providing a model for Finnish poetic art, just as Spenser uses his paratext to articulate a didactic function for *The Faerie Queene*.

Lönnrot's whole project on history and aesthetics receives its impetus from Romantic Nationalism, as articulated by the eighteenth century German Romantic folklorist, Johan Gottfried Herder, whose writings were widely read by Finnish nationalists as well as by Lönnrot (Siikala 16). Herder argued that "national characters" or "national souls" are the product of every people group's history and geographical environment, and he taught that folk poetry was both the supreme form of language and the absolute expression of national character, which each nation needed to actualize faithfully in order to survive and contribute to the whole of humanity (Wilson 28-31). Lönnrot's Preface communicates Herder's same reverence for the poems, and thus, as a historian, he implies that the material in the folk poems should help the Finns rediscover their own distinct national soul. Tellingly, the title of the 1835 epic clearly expresses the purpose of illuminating the ancient past of the "*Suomen kansa*," which may be rendered "folk, people, or nation of Finland:" *"Kalevala taikka Vanhoja Karjalan runoja Suomen kansan muinaisista ajoista* (*The Kalevala*, or old poems from Karelia about the ancient times of the Finnish people)" (Pentikäinen 21). Through the self-constructed role of historian, Lönnrot

bestows upon the first edition of *The Kalevala* the function of communicating original folklore material for the rediscovery of the Finnish national soul.

In consideration of his poetic confidence in the 1849 *Literary Journal* article, it is not surprising that Lönnrot opens the Preface of the second edition, *The New Kalevala*, by asserting the ethno-historical content of the poetry: "The present book concerning the activities, life, and ancient condition of our forebears now appears in a much fuller form than what it was in its previous state (1835)" (Lönnrot 374). Although certain poetic passages hint that the epic deals with educating Finland (1.21-28, 10.509-512), it is in the Preface that Lönnrot asserts that the epic communicates the "oldest specific memories" of the Finnish people, including the "activities, life, and ancient condition of our forebears" (Lonnrot 374). He bases the structure of the epic on his own interpretation of the oral tradition, for he states that he orders them according to the "internal claims of the material" (374), as if he had objective access to their one true meaning. Applying a literal historical interpretation to the poems' content, he conceives that the verses collected in eastern Finland and the bordering region of Karelia originated in an actual conflict between a southern tribe, Kalevala, and a northern tribe, Pohjola:

> Thus is it highly credible that there lived at North Farm [Pohjola] some Finnish tribal group to which earlier a tax was paid from Kaleva's District [inhabited by a southern Finnish tribe ancestral to the modern Finns] until Väinämöinen, Ilmarinen, and Lemminkäinen [the three main epic heroes] put a stop to this subjection to taxation. The central thread or unity of the Kalevala-type songs lies in just this point, namely, they tell how Kaleva's District gradually achieved a prosperity equal to that of North Farm and finally attained victory over it. (379)

His self-presentation as a historian in the Preface urges the reader to identify the poems as evidence that the ancient Finnish people possessed the courage and determination to defend their interests. He has the confidence to make such speculative claims likely because he believes his level of experience with the poetic tradition qualifies him as a historian, and as he gained exposure to the oral tradition, the more he believed in a historical rather than a mythological basis for the poems (Salminen 354; Siikala, *Mythic* 39-40). Lönnrot's journals of his fieldtrips also display a close attention to applying the standards of nineteenth century ethnographical research to his observations of the environment and customs of the isolated communities he visited (Siikala, "Elias" 13). In the construction of the Finnish national character, such a portrayal of heroism in the epic would be desirable for nationalists, since Finland had been the colonial possession of Sweden and Russia for hundreds of years.

The philosophy of Georg Hegel influenced Lönnrot's self-construction in the Preface of *The New Kalevala* as a historian who could portray such a heroic history of Finland. One of Lönnrot's classmates at the Turku Academy, Johan Vilhelm Snellman, who was a Hegelian scholar who had studied in Germany, became the leader of the Finnish nationalist movement (Branch 30-31). According to Snellman, in order for nascent Finland to have a political future, it needed to have a heroic *Volksgeist*, or the "spirit of the people" that Hegel posits as a social force that unites and gives a distinct character to an otherwise disorganized mass of "Pöbel," or people (Apo 6, Branch 30-31, De Seade 370-372). Fellow Finnish Hegelian scholar, J.J. Tengström, determined that *The Old Kalevala* had not "portrayed adequately the essence of the national spirit that should form the basis of the new national identity" (Branch 31). On the other hand, the German Romanticist mythologer, Jacob Grimm, enthusiastically evaluated *The Old Kalevala* to be an authentic, pure, and ancient epic (Pentikäinen 22-23).

Finally, despite years of skepticism, Snellman concluded forcefully that *The Old Kalevala* was a true epic that provided solid evidence for the historicity of the "heroic age of the Finnish tribe," whose "warlike heroic deeds [were able to] elevate the spirit of the people as required for the birth of the poem" (Apo 6, Karkama 295). Snellman states with nationalistic pride, " 'The fact that the Finns have a national epic, a 'third' true epic on the earth, alongside the *Iliad* and the *Niebelungenlied*, gives reason to assume knowledge not possessed by all peoples' " (Pentikäinen 24). Satu Apo and Michael Branch, scholars of Finnish folklore, argue that the next edition of *The Kalevala* clearly displays Snellman's Hegelianism, because Lönnrot radically redevelops the dramatic and cultural material of the epic and gives heroic conflict a central role in the structure, as explicitly stated in the Preface (Apo 6; Branch 30-21; Lönnrot 379).

For example, Apo states how the people of Kaleva's District clearly win the war in the 1849 edition: "In the epic, the enemy group, the people of Pohjola ("the Northland"), were defeated at least four times under Väinämöinen's leadership: through the stealing of the Sampo [the magic mill that spontaneously produced salt, grain, and gold], through the curing of illnesses sent from Pohjola, by killing the bear summoned by Pohjola, and by freeing the sun and moon imprisoned by the mistress of Pohjola" (Apo 6). Arguing for the historicity of the triumph of the Finnish heroes Väinämöinen, Ilmarinen, and Lemminkäinen over North Farm was clearly desirable as justification for the Finnish national movement. In the latter half of the epic, Lönnrot idealizes the land of Kalevala by carefully reconstructing its beliefs, marriage ceremonies, hunting practices and other customs to produce the image of "an ancient society conscious of its identity and living in a well-ordered way according to a coherent and refined system of beliefs" (Branch 32). As historian-poet, he fulfills the wildest dreams of the Hegelian

nationalists, who saw the "strengthening sense of national identity as leading of necessity to the creation of a nation-state" and "believed that a national culture was meaningless without a conscious national spirit and that the basis of a national spirit was the national language and a literature in that language" (Branch 30-31). Without Lönnrot's discussion in the Preface of *The New Kalevala*, his intended relationship between the text and the national history of Finland would be unclear. Nevertheless, Lönnrot constructs himself as a historian in order to assert confidence in the folk-poetry tradition as a pillar of Finnish identity.

Spenser's poetic self-representation in the opening verses of the epic text

Spenser's and Lönnrot's self-representations are not limited solely to paratextual material, but they become more complex through their creations of poetic personae that also attempt to govern the texts. Similarly, the poetic selves that Lönnrot and Spenser represent in the opening verses of their epics differ from the more academically voiced selves presented in the paratexts. Spenser produces the plurality of self by supplementing his sweeping interpretation offered in the *Letter to Raleigh* with a poetic persona who appears throughout the poetic text of *The Faerie Queene* in the prefatory stanzas, which editors refer to as "proems," of each of the six books (Hamilton 30). The editors note that employing these kinds of proems did not have a pattern in either classical or Italian epic (Hamilton 30). Short "arguments," or summaries, head each canto and further multiply the authorial voices.

In addition, the traditional, but mystical invocation to the Muse in the proem of Book 1 contrasts the rational discussion in the *Letter to Raleigh* refering to poetic precedents that Spenser imitates, and thus the paratext and the prefatory poetic text develop a dual self-representation. Spenser explains in the *Letter to Raleigh* that Faery land is an element of his allegory (Spenser 716), whereas the proem of Book II ruminates that his "antique history" may

be judged a "forgery," but as a mystical poet he has access to hidden knowledge about "that happy land of Faery" through the muse invoked in Book I (I.P.1; II.P.1). More likely, however, is that the mystical narrator is an allegoric figure representing Spenser enacting his poetic function, which Patrick Cheney maintains is "the fiction of the New Poet's career" that "Spenser constructs… through fundamental strategies of self-representation" (4). Spenser first presents the idea of himself being "the new Poete" in the title of the epistle heading his 1579 collection of twelve pastoral eclogues, *The Shepheardes Calendar*. Cheney tracks down textual evidence that Spenser fashions his authorial role through interacting with a variety of literary systems (Cheney 4). Through the representation, of a broader poetic career, argued for by Cheney, Spenser creates an allegorical poet in the proem of Book I whose relationship with the reader stands for Spenser's intended relationship with the reader.

Patrick Cheney addresses the question of why the order of poetic genres in Spenser's literary career both resembles and differs from the "wheel" pattern of Virgil's career, which consists of pastoral, georgic, and finally epic poetry. The persona of the proem of Book I alludes to Virgil and the contemporary conception of his poetic career:

> "Lo I the man, whose Muse whylome did maske,
> As time her taught, in lowly Shephards weeds,
> Am now enforst a farre vnfitter taske,
> For trumpets sterne to chaune mine Oaten reeds:
> And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds" (I.P.1)

These opening lines imitate the introductory verses printed in Renaissance versions of the *Aeneid*, although their source is likely a pseudo-Virgil: "[*Ille ego*,] I am he who once tuned my song on a slender reed, then, leaving the woodland, constrained the neighboring fields to serve

the husbandmen, however grasping – a work welcome to farmers: but now of Mars' bristling" (Hamilton 29). Both openings refer to the idea of the Virgilian "wheel" pattern, the *rota Virgilii*, but the pseudo-Virgil represents the transition from pastoral to georgic to epic whereas Spenser's persona skips from pastoral directly to epic. The pastoral work that the proem alludes to is Spenser's *Shepheardes Calendar* (1579), which emulates the pastoral form of Virgil's *Eclogues*. After the printing of the first three books of his epic in 1590, Spenser publishes several works in the love lyric genre, returns to the epic form to add three more books to *The Faerie Queene* in 1596, and finally ends his career with contemplative poetry in *Fowre Hymnes* (Cheney 5). Because Spenser's pattern differs from Virgil's, the "commonplace view" is to see Spenser as primarily imitating the Virgilian wheel and giving up in the end, but Cheney decides to look to other poetic career models in other time periods as well, including those of Ovid, Augustine, and Petrarch (5-6). This method of looking at the use of poetic genres from multiple career patterns spaced throughout time is diachronic, according to Cheney, because it studies the relationships between the text and evolving literary systems across centuries of time (5). The identity of the persona of the proem of Book I thus emerges in relation to various signifying systems.

Cheney proceeds to argue that Spenser ingeniously combines the pastoral and epic genres of Virgil, the love lyric genre from Ovid, and the divine poem or hymn genre from Augustine to produce a coherent Renaissance literary career that synthesizes the classical system and the Protestant Christianity (6). More than the others, the Church father Augustine "influences Spenser to reinvent the entire Virgilian Wheel" (23). Augustine's theologically Christian revision of Plato's ladder of love was influential for the poets Dante, Chaucer, and Petrarch, and it "traces a linear, spiritual pattern of ascent from earth to heaven," for he addresses God in his *Confessions*: "We ascend thy ladder which is in our heart, and we sing a canticle of degrees; we

glow inwardly with thy fire – with thy good fire – and we go forward because we go up to the peace of Jerusalem," that is, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem from Revelation 21 (Cheney 57-58; Singleton 105-105; *Confessions* XIII.ix: 304; *Symposium* 210). Spenser's Protestant theology requires him to focus his poetic career on the glory of God as his *telos*, or highest end, whereas the predominantly political *telos* of Virgil's Wheel focuses on the earthly realm and lacks knowledge of salvation (Cheney 6). Spenser's Protestant ideology, however, differs from Platonism, because the Protestant sees the kingdom of God as actualized through the ordinary relationships between men and women in their social environments as they continually worship God (Cheney 6; Wall 127). While Ovid's public career halted because of Augustus' disapproval of his seductive lyrics, Spenser's career experiences a similar interruption from the insertion of lyrical love poetry between the first and second editions of *The Faerie Queene*, but the purpose of Spenser's lyric poetry is to celebrate chaste, wedded *eros*, which gained new value in Protestant ideology (5-7, 56-57). Virgilian pastoral and epic, in their focus on earthly life, therefore partially satisfy the requirements of the Protestant ideology to integrate "personal identity, national politics, wedded love, and Christian theology," but Spenser must harness them for the *telos* of the glory of God (6-7). To employ epic and pastoral for spiritual ends, he subordinates them to a larger poetic career that includes love lyric and contemplative poetry, or hymns, which as a genre "illustrate the poet's ascent" in Augustinian terms from earth to the heavenly kingdom of God (Cheney 6, 38). Therefore, by alluding to his careeric progression from pastoral to epic mode, the persona of the proem of Book I is an allegorical representation of Spenser's New Poet enacting the Christian *telos*.

In contrast to the three-stepped Virgilian Wheel, the New Poet fashions a Christianized four-step poetic career, which progresses through "pastoral, epic, love lyric, and hymn," and it

"represents the poet engaged in a complex providential process fundamental to the salvation, not merely of himself, but also of his readers" (7). Describing the four stages, Cheney delineates how each poetic endeavor progresses towards the salvation of the reader: "In pastoral, the poet relates the self to nature; in epic, he relates the self to the commonwealth; in love lyric, he relates the self to the family; and in hymn, he relates the self to heaven" (7). Cheney calls this four-stepped process an Orphic career because, in the *Georgics*, Virgil uses simile to compare Orpheus, the supreme and most ancient mythological poet, to the singing nightingale, and the New Poet Spenser identifies himself with this same bird species in the pastoral commencement of his career, *The Shepheardes Calendar* (*Georgics* IV.509-515; Cheney 13). Cheney argues that the bird representing the Orphic poet transforms from a nightingale into a dove in the epic and love lyric phases, and finally into a hawk in the hymn stage, because the image of the far-seeing, soaring hawk represents the poet's ascent to heaven to achieve transcendent vision (13-14, 200). This final ascent to heaven achieves the Christian *telos* of the New Poet's career.

According to Cheney's method, the *telos*, or end, of *The Faerie Queene* is political because it is in Virgilian mode of epic, but this political functioning contributes to the broader *telos* of Spenser's Christianized vatic poetic career, represented through the persona of the proem of Book I. The early Church fathers had interpreted Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* as a prophecy of the birth of Christ, and established for Virgil the unique role as vatic, or prophetic, poet, a role that Spenser seeks to reinvent as compatible with Reformation Christianity (Cheney 6, 23). By imitating the Renaissance opening of the *Aeneid*, the narrative persona of Book I portrays himself as a vatic poet, in other words, a prophet-poet who can receive divine inspiration about the identity of the Protestant English nation. As a Protestant, Spenser already believes he knows the pathway to the salvation of his English reader because Scripture contains it, and this vatic

poetic role in the proem is an allegory for Spenser's relation as a poet to the English nation. Another vatic allegorical figure in Book I, the elderly prophet, Contemplation, who will be discussed later in this essay, also allegorizes Spenser's relation to the nation's salvation.

Lönnrot's Poetic Self-Representation in the text

Lönnrot commences the epic with verses of his own composition that represent the voice of a folk-singer:

"It is my desire,/ it is my wish/
to set out to sing,/ to begin to recite,/
to let a song of our clan glide on,/ to sing a family lay./
The words are melting in my mouth,/ utterances dropping out,/
coming to my tongue,/ being scattered about on my teeth" (1.1-10)

Identifying this narrator, translator Francis Peabody Magoun comments that "Lönnrot is also the artless composer of Poem 1, lines 1-110, and Poem 50, lines 513-620; both these passages are pure flights of Lönnrot's fancy, and, despite a semblance of autobiography, bear no relation to the author's life" (Magoun xv). The composed verses imply that Lönnrot is framing the epic within a reconstruction of a traditional performance by a folk-singer during an intimate communal celebration, but at the same time they are mediated from the perspective of the first person, "I" (1.1-110). Thus, this persona is in reality not identical to the scholarly self that has already been presented elsewhere, but nevertheless this narrator is a folk-poet similar to what Lönnrot represents himself as being when he states, as mentioned above, "I regarded myself as a singer of songs as good as even they" (Salminen 354). In addition, Lönnrot further multiplies the authorial voices by heading each of the fifty poems with a short prose summary. This plurality

of self allows Lönnrot to function both as an historian and as a folk-poet in his governance of the text.

In addition, whereas Spenser speaks of *The Faerie Queene's* purpose to fashion a gentleman, *The Kalevala's* singing persona emphasizes the didactic value of the verses to communicate the "fine" and "best things/ for those dear ones to hear,/ for those desiring to know them/ among the rising younger generation,/ among the people [*kansa*, lit. "nation," "folk"] which is growing up" (1.23-28). Thomas A. DuBois, whose study contrasts the final product of *The Kalevala* with the originally recorded versions of folk poetry, uncovers the governing function of Lönnrot's narrative persona in the concluding Poem 50: "Lönnrot's inscribed narrator effectively assumes the guiding and evaluating role played in performance by Arhippa [one of the many folk-singers who imparted his oral poetry to Lönnrot] and other traditional singers" (105). DuBois' analysis of the narrator of Poem 50 also applies to the narrator of Poem 1, since together these passages frame the whole epic as if it were a night-long performance (1.99-102). Emphasizing how Lönnrot governs the text through the narrator, DuBois argues, "The foreshadowing and intimating voice sensible here exists in the absence of a living performer—it is, perhaps, the voice of Lönnrot's imagined poet of yore, echoing through the ages. In reality, of course, it is a textually constructed voice, inscribed and controlled by Lönnrot's editorial choices" (105). Thus, a major part of Lönnrot's historical construction is the portrayal of folk poetry as a developed institution of the ancient world of Finland that cradled the national spirit. Therefore, Lönnrot multiplies his voices of poetic self-representation, to include the role of the folk-poet in addition to his role as history scholar, in order to govern the meaning of the epic.

Helgerson's Approach: Identifying the Politics derived from Form as Enabling System

From the position of authorial center, set forward through various modes of poetic self-representation, Spenser and Lönnrot construct relationships between their epics and various historically conceived signifying systems in order to produce meanings that inform the development of national poetic language and identity. In *Forms of Nationhood*, Richard Helgerson bases his analysis of foundational texts from Renaissance England on the mutual interdependence of form and text for the production of meaning: "Form and text are the *langue* and *parole,* the enabling system and the concrete realization, of a single interdependent whole. Without texts, forms are unknowable; without forms, texts are unknowable" (6). Even though signifying systems, "enabling" systems, are unstable and continually constructed, it is still possible to perceive the signifying relationships that Lönnrot and Spenser attempt to construct as authorial centers. Cheney compares Helgerson's approach with his own method, and states that Helgerson's method is synchronic because it studies signifying systems at a particular period, whereas his own analysis of Spenser's poetic career as Orphic is diachronic, which means that he studies signifying systems across several periods of time (Cheney 5).

By investigating the various tensions of form, or *langue*, Helgerson demonstrates how Spenser balances between the dialectic of two competing signifying systems, the ancient and the medieval (6-7, 21-23). Without a doubt, "ancient" and "medieval" are "floating signifiers," constantly contingent upon who is using them and when, but it is still possible to theorize about the meanings for these terms that the Elizabethans context may have conceived within their historical (23-24). Helgerson explains his methodology: "…I assume that meaning and aesthetic affinities are historically established and historically maintained. They arise from the quite specific relations in which particular texts and forms are enmeshed at some particular time and

place… Like chivalric romance, every form I discuss depended for its meaning and its effect on its difference from some openly or latently competing form" (Helgerson, *Forms* 7). He argues that *The Faerie Queene* engages in signifying relations with at least two competing binaries: chivalric romance versus epic and rime versus quantitative verse (7, 27, 39-41). Susanne Wofford delineates how certain parts of the text, such as invocations, prophecies, and similes, allude to the epic mode, while other aspects, such as the absence of definite endings, invoke chivalric romance (Wofford 112-116). Chivalric romance and rime reside on the medieval side of the continuum, while epic form and quantitative verse belong on the ancient side. According to Helgerson, these forms comprise signifying systems that would have provoked specific meanings for the contemporary audience, and the relationships of affinity and difference that *The Faerie Queene* bears with these systems would have produced certain political meanings relevant to the construction of national identity (7-9).

According to Helgerson's method, Spenser's conception of the signifying system of the middle ages, in other words, the "Gothic," as opposed to the antique, has a key role in the epic: "When eighteenth-century critics called *The Faerie Queene* 'Gothic,' they referred to its departures from classical epic design and decorum, to its multiple plotting and its fabulous knight-errantry" (Helgerson, "Tasso," 222). Using the methodology of studying how a chivalric romance "takes its meaning from an historically located system of differences," Helgerson argues that the controversial nature of chivalric texts, such as Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, enables *The Faerie Queene* to generate literary and political meaning (222). Spenser specifically cites as his model, Tasso, as well as another writer of chivalric romance, Ariosto, in the *Letter to Raleigh* (715). On one hand, the early English humanists condemned the autonomy of the knight errant as threatening to the unifying forces of classicism and monarchy, yet in the Elizabethan

court “the language of chivalry became the primary language,” and chivalric display became a means for dealing with conflicting interests (Helgerson 227). Although Helgerson locates *The Faerie Queene* as balancing between the conflicting systems of classical and Gothic, he argues that the text exemplifies the Gothic side more firmly than the other (230). He notes that the absence of the monarchic authority, the Faerie Queene herself, would produce ambivalence about royal authority and seems to question the significance of bloodlines (232). On the other hand, Helgerson argues that many episodes demonstrate that Spenser connects bloodlines with virtue, necessary for rulers, and opposes the sixteenth-century humanists who believed virtue did not depend on lineage, and the effect would be an ambivalent affirmation of both royal and aristocratic authority (232).

For example, towards the end of Book 1, the prophet Contemplation informs the Redcrosse Knight of his previously unknown blood connection to the “English race” (I.x.60) and royal lineage: “thou springst from ancient race/ of *Saxon* kinges, that haue with mightie hand/ and many battailes fought” attained “their royal throne in Britains land” (I.x.65). According to the myth of bloodline-based essentialism, the young knight is predisposed to live virtuously and fight victoriously, and so is Queen Elizabeth as well as anyone of “noble” birth. Thus, when Spenser states that the end of the book is “to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline,” he likely does not mean to fashion any person to become a gentleman, but instead to educate someone who already has a noble lineage (714). Overall, as authorial center, Spenser constructs a tense relationship between his epic and the conceived medieval signifying systems, which could have undermined Elizabeth’s authority.

Since the ceaseless wandering of the knight is an element of chivalric romance, John Guillory even argues deconstructively for a gradual, conscious breakdown of meaning and

authority in the epic by the fact that there is no real sense of completion, not even in the final Book VI (26-27, 44-47). For example the joyful victory feast at the end of Book I fails to achieve full dramatic closure, in contrast to the wedding of the Lamb of God and his Bride the New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation, which completes the canon of scripture, because the triumphant knight cannot remain in the kingdom he has liberated: "Yet swimming in that sea of blissfull ioy,/ he nought forgott, how he whilome had sworne,/ in case he could that monstrous beast destroy,/ Vnto his Faerie Queene backe to retourne:/ the which he shortly did, and *Vna* left to mourne" (I.xii.41; Guillory 27; Revelation 21). Unlike the eternal union of Lamb and the Bride of Revelation 21:10, Redcrosse must part from his beloved Una for service to the royal authority. On the other hand, this example of the "endless" quality of chivalric romance may actually serve the Christian *telos* of Spenser's career, according to Cheney's model, because according to Augustine, the human soul cannot experience peace in this world until reaching the bosom of God in the New Jerusalem (Cheney 57; Wofford 114). Therefore, neither the institution of marriage, which is left unfulfilled for Redcrosse, nor dedication to the state, which keeps Redcrosse ceaselessly wandering, can satisfy the *telos* of the human soul. On the other hand, St. Paul in Romans 13:1-7 and St. Peter require the believer to demonstrate honor to God by submitting to governing authorities, which would refer to the Roman emperor and governor in the original biblical context and be interpreted to uphold Queen Elizabeth's authority: "Submit yourselves *for the Lord's sake* to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right" (1 Peter 2:13-14, NIV, italics for emphasis). Therefore, bringing glory to God ("for the Lord's sake") is the final *telos* of Spenser's poetic career, according to

Cheney, and thus godly service to authorities is a subordinated, but necessary, means of achieving the glory of God.

Spenser balances the unsettling political implications of chivalric romance by forging strong links between his text and classical tradition, which contemporaries would have conceived as an affirmation of royal authority. In his discussion of the differences between the cultural milieux of the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Helgerson expands upon Peter Burke's cultural analysis of early modern Europe: "one might argue that if modern nationalism…has characteristically based itself on the recovery (or the invention) of a 'national' folk and on the reduction in the depth of class divisions…, early modern national self-representation went the other way" (Helgerson, *Forms* 10-11). *The Kalevala* exemplifies such an attempt to construct the original Finnish "folk," as expressed by Lönnrot in the Preface, because he uses his text to interact with modern Finnish National Romanticism, which promoted the idea that the survival of a nation depended on the faithful preservation of its organic national character in cultural and political institutions (Wilson 28-29). On the other hand, Spenser faces a very different environment, in which early-modern national self-representation

> based its claim to cultural legitimacy on removing itself from popular culture, on aligning itself with standards of order and civility that transcended national boundaries but enforced boundaries of class. Having the kingdom of one's own language, as Spenser aspired to do, meant being less like the people and more like the aristocratic cultures of Greco-Roman antiquity and modern Italy, France, and Spain. (Helgerson 11)

Placing less emphasis on expressing a national character for the English people, Spenser looks to the literatures of other countries, as he states in the *Letter to Raleigh*, in order to bolster the legitimacy of his poetic national representation (24).

Since it was necessary to dissociate from English popular culture, Spenser relies heavily on the epic form derived from classical antiquity, by employing

> frequent and significant use of the epic simile; imitations of the descent to the underworld; reference to the gods and other mythological figures as causes or explanations of action; scenes of prophecy, especially following Virgil, dynastic prophecy in the form of epic catalogue; epic realism without recourse to magic as a principal way out of dangerous plot crises; epic invocations; and ecphrastic descriptions of armour and places. (Wofford 112-113)

For example, an epic simile embellishing a scene of combat as early as I.i.23 signifies the knight's impending victory over the monster, Foule Errour (Hamilton 37). In contrast to Lönnrot, who links his epic to his own construction of Finnish history for the promotion of national culture, Spenser constructs relationships with classical antiquity that provide support behind his endeavor to elevate the national culture of England. Although Helgerson actually argues that *The Faerie Queene* "in the balance [between the Gothic and the classical] comes down more firmly on the Gothic side," a purely chivalric romance would not have benefited the cause of boosting national confidence for England ("Tasso" 230). According to Helgerson, the main causes for the necessity of sixteenth-century national self-representation to borrow from antiquity were the Renaissance and the Reformation, which encouraged "cultural breaks" with one's own present nation (*Forms* 22). Spenser's heavy reliance on classical epic form thus exemplifies Helgerson's point that "…sixteenth-century national self-articulation began with a sense of national barbarism, with a recognition of the self as the despised other, and then moved to repair that damaged self-image with the aid of forms taken from a past that was now understood as…different from the present" (22). Spenser thus likely believes in the inferiority of

English culture in comparison to classical models, and therefore he relies on such well-respected epic forms, which allow him to employ the chivalric elements and present his myth on the origins of the English nation as on par with classical epic.

Spenser's most significant constructed relationship to classical antiquity is his self-presentation as a Virgilian vatic, or prophetic, poet through the persona of the proem of Book 1. John Guillory argues that Spenser's association with Virgil affirms the authority of Queen Elizabeth and implies that the epic deals with the sacred origin of the English nation and: "With the first words of *The Faerie Queene,* Spenser places himself within the Virgilian tradition, or at least attempts to impose upon his poetic career a Virgilian structure. Whatever Virgil's *Aeneid* may actually say about the origins of the Roman nation, his epic is usually perceived as a sanctification of Roman origins, hence an affirmation of an authority (Augustus) in the present" (Guillory 26). Guillory's statement demonstrates that, regardless of the political meaning of the *Aeneid* in its original context, since this epic belongs to the conceived signifying system of antiquity, its only relevance is the "perception" of it that supplies the enabling system with which *The Faerie Queene* may interact through affiliation and difference.

Since the hefty amount of chivalric forms in the text imply aristocratic autonomy and would undermine the Queen's absolutist authority ("Tasso" 230), it is incumbent upon Spenser to allude to Virgil and classical form in order to establish the royal power of Elizabeth, as this affirmation is the political implication produced by affiliating with the signifying system of antiquity. With Queen Elizabeth as the defining figure of England, since "The monarch was unquestionably the single most powerful unifying force in the English state," it would undermine his poem's ability to represent the nation if he more than moderately called her authority into question (Helgerson, *Forms* 9).. Therefore, the epic's interaction with the signifying systems of

classical antiquity counteracts the Gothic elements in order to achieve the kind of national self-representation demanded by the Renaissance.

Spenser's Governance of the Cultural System

Spenser's emulation of antiquity involves much more than imitation of forms, according to Helgerson, and includes the employment of poetry for acquiring dominion over the whole of English language and culture (3, 25, 29-30). Helgerson takes as a starting point Spenser's statement concerning English versification in a 1580 letter to a less famous poet, Gabriel Harvey: "For why a God's name may not we, as else the Greeks, have the kingdom of our own language and measure out accents by the sound, reserving the quantity to the verse?" (25). According to *The Schoolmaster*, written in 1570 by the queen's tutor, Roger Ascham, Virgil and Horace "corrected" the Latin language, which supposedly had been "as rude and barbarous as English," and "many other claimed that Homer had similarly reformed Greek" (Helgerson 29). Therefore, to truly imitate the grandeur of classical civilization, Spenser must take up the unbelievably ambitious task on behalf of the English speaking people of "having the kingdom of their own language," meaning, "To govern the very linguistic system, and perhaps more generally the whole cultural system, by which their own identity and their own consciousness were constituted" (3). Therefore, the supposedly marginalized medieval elements of form in *The Faerie Queene* do not detract from its authority, but rather represent an early-modern nationalistic assertion of English identity, and, interestingly, in the *Letter to Raleigh,* Spenser explains, "I chose the historye of king Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person" (715), before even mentioning Homer and Virgil. Locating a virtuous model in this British folklore hero seems to signify an Anglo-centric precedence over classical models.

In discussing the medieval-ancient binary of rime versus quantitative verse based on syllable length, Helgerson argues that Spenser's choice not to imitate classical quantitative meter demonstrates his effective and independent ability to govern the English language himself (39). More like Chaucer and less like Homer, Spenser chooses to use riming and meter based on syllable stress rather than the classical quantitative meter based on syllable length. Willy Maley acclaims "Spenser's greatest gift to poetry" to be the "Spenserian stanza," which consists a "rhyme scheme of ababbcbcbC" with eight iambic pentameter lines augmented by the ninth, iambic hexameter line, hailed "the great alexandrine" (Maley 171). Maley also argues that Spenser's vocabulary and grammar in *The Faerie Queene* is "a conscious turning back to an established archive with Chaucer as its centre that simultaneously conjures up the speech of the Old English in Ireland," which is where Spenser lived most of the time while composing *The Faerie Queene* (168). As early as Book I Canto i, the poet alludes to Chaucer, and by extension, Virgil as well, through a traditional epic catalogue of various trees (I.i.8-9, Hamilton 33). Some of Spenser's contemporaries believed that the Old English, whose ancestors had settled in Ireland generations before, spoke a more authentic Chaucerian English and had preserved more English customs than their cousins across the Irish Sea had, and thus they could boast of being "more English than the English themselves" (167). Spenser's attempt to reinstitute the more authentic forms of Chaucerian English demonstrates emulation not of classical forms but of the whole process of linguistic governance that his contemporaries had conceived of as the classical poets' method for governing their civilizations. Additionally, as Cheney argues, Spenser constructs a Protestant Christian poetic career through recombining Christian Augustinian and classical Virgilian and Ovidian models, and such a novel creation is another powerful manifestation of "having the kingdom of our own language." Through the deft interaction of the Spenserian

stanza with these signifying systems, Spenser attains a measure of perceived authority over the identity of the English nation.

Lönnrot's Governance: Finnic over the Classical

Like Spenser, classical models of epic poetry stimulated Lönnrot's idea of creating a long epic poem, yet he takes on the similar task of governing the linguistic and cultural system of Finland by relying not on classical, but rather on Finnish cultural resources. According to Helgerson's methodology of analyzing how a text produces meaning through "the specific relations in which particular texts and forms are enmeshed as some particular time and place," *The Kalevala* produces its meaning through interacting with the literary forms it either resembles or directly imitates, or from which it diverges (Helgerson, *Forms* 7). *The Kalevala* mostly diverges from classical epic, much more so than even *The Faerie Queene*, but it is striking how Lönnrot exhibits precisely the same impulse as Spenser to, "as else the Greeks, have the kingdom of our own language" (25). A speaker of Finnish and Swedish who was educated in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Russian and could read English (Pentikäinen 68, Siikala 16, "Elias," 16), Lönnrot expresses an awareness that his work will be compared with classical epics, but he derives his material directly from Finnish folklore. Eminent scholar of comparative religion and folklore, Juha Y. Pentikäinen, provides evidence that by 1833, Lönnrot had settled on a plan to arrange the available inscribed Finnish poems into a larger publication comparable to a classical epic, for he writes to a friend about his ambitions: "I'll not cease collecting runes [sung poems] until I get a collection of them which equals half of Homer" (Pentikäinen 20). Lönnrot also knew of Wolf's thesis, which states that the Homeric epics originated in the oral poems of Greek rhapsody singers (Kirkinen 9-10, Voigt 257). Therefore, by collecting Finnish folklore in

emulation of the process that may have led to the Homeric epic, Lönnrot clearly shares Spenser's drive "to have the kingdom" of his own language, just as the Greeks supposedly did.

In addition, at this time, he had been translating Latin poetry and the *Odyssey* into Finnish, and thus classical models were fresh in his mind, yet Lönnrot mainly focuses on the length of his work and simply the presence of mythological figures as the primary similarities between his work and classical literature (Pentikäinen 21). In the year before the publication of *The Old Kalevala*, Lönnrot writes to his fellow Finnish cultural enthusiast, "I have nearly completed a great *opus* or *epos*, as one could call it, which will contain all that others and I myself are able to collect about ancient Finnish mythological figures…The book will be the same length as Virgil's *Opera Omnia* or Ovid's *Metamorphosis*" (Pentikäinen 21). Later in his career, however, Lönnrot argued that classical poetry and the ancient *Kalevala*-verse share quantitative meter as the basis of their forms, yet he preserves the Finnish trochaic-tetrameter form rather than forces Finnish poetry to fit classical hexameter (Anttila 344). On the other hand, there are a few features of classical epic in *The Kalevala*, such as the descent to the underworld (Poem 16) and battle (43), yet Unlike Spenser, who borrows formal devices from antiquity and associates himself with Virgil (Wofford 112-113), Lönnrot mainly compares the length and not the content of his work to such classical models.

Lönnrot's Preface to *The Old Kalevala* concentrates on deriving a sense of Finnish identity from the past of Finland itself: "I would hope to get some elucidation from these [poems] of our forebears' life of old and some benefit for the Finnish language and poetic art" (Lönnrot 370). This statement shows that he had modified his original view of the poems as mythical, and instead he came to them, according to Finnish folklore specialist, Anna-Leena Siikala, as "describing, in essence, the earliest history of Finland" (*Mythic* 39-40). In addition, in

the Preface, Lönnrot claims to be imitating the efforts of the Greeks who produced the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the Icelanders who compiled the *Poetic* or *Elder Edda* to collect songs and tales about "memorable forebears of ours" (Lönnrot 366). It is not their parallels to classical content, but merely the existence of such ancient songs and tales that draws Lönnrot to this endeavor. The compiler argues, at this time in his career, that these poems are of moderately high quality, being "…not by any means on par with those of the Greeks and Romans, but it is quite all right if they at least show that our forebears were not unenlightened in their intellectual efforts—and the songs at lease show that" (373). Thus, as authorial center, he even encourages Finns to develop their sense historical identity as rooted in intelligent creativity.

By emphasizing the "intellectual efforts" of the Finnish ancestors, Lönnrot may be replacing the demeaning portrayal by the Roman historian Tacitus in *Germania* of the "*Fenni*," who were sometimes assumed by later generations to be the ancient Finns: "Nothing can compare with the fierceness or wildness of the Fenni, and nothing so loathsome as their filthiness and poverty. Without weapons, without horses, without permanent dwellings, they lead a nomadic life; their food consists of herbs, and their only clothing is the hides of animals, and the bare ground is their bed" (Holmio 30). In contrast to such a description, Lönnrot ennobles the "solitary lives" of "our forbears," whose poems reveal that "plans of courtship, warfare, and catching fish and forest game were the most memorable activities" (Lönnrot 373). He explains their form as culturally isolated and pure: "In these poems one meets the Finnish language and Finnish poetics in perhaps a purer form than in any other book" (373). Some of the typical forms of Finnish poetics that Lönnrot imitates in his own composed lines of lines (1.1-110, 50.513-620) are trochaic four-footed meter, parallelism, and alliteration (DuBois 315). For example, the scholar-poet concludes the epic with these lines, which encourage further poetic endeavors:

Vaan kuitenki, kaikitenki	But be that as it may,
Luan hiihin laulajoille,	I blazed a [ski] trail for singers,
Luan hiihin, latvan taitoin,	blazed a trail, broke off tree tops,
Oksat karsin, tien osoitin;	broke branches, showed the way.
Siitäpä nyt tie menevi,	Thence the way goes now,
Ura uusi urkenevi	a new course stretches out
Laajemmille laulajoille	for more versatile singers,
Runsahammille runoille	for ampler songs
Nuorisossa nousevassa,	in the rising generation,
Kansassa kasuavassa.	among the people ["nation"] growing up. (50.611-620)

As a self-presented authorial center in the Preface and elsewhere, Lönnrot unmistakably relates his epic to the forms, or the signifying system, of the Finnish oral folk poetry in order to communicate an authoritative version of Finnish cultural history, and he even encourages the next generation to emulate him in the development of the Finnish poetic tradition. In addition, Lönnrot qualifies the purity of the Finnish language in his book with the word "perhaps" because he actually edits the diverse dialects of the poems so that people in other parts of Finland could understand them and thus participate in his vision of national history (Pentikäinen 15). In a 1929 letter to a fellow folklore scholar, he defends his desire to unite the various Finnish dialects in order to preserve their cultural history, so that, "Finns in other areas beside Savo and Karelia might be able to read and understand their forefathers' wise poems in their simple artful language…If the Finnish dialects have grown more similar during the last centuries, then one should not prevent them from their struggle toward a brotherly union" (Lönnrot, Trans. DuBois 30). It was clearly important to Lönnrot that later generations of Finns could feel connected to

their nation's cultural heritage. His personification of the Finnish dialects as struggling "toward a more brotherly union" reflects the Hegelian nationalistic principle, which was gaining influence in Finland, of the activity of the *Volksgeist*, or the "spirit of the people," that expresses itself in a progression toward cultural and political unity (Branch 30-31, De Seade 371). Instead of manifesting the evolution of the Finnish *Volksgeist*, however, Lönnrot's admission of the necessity to edit the language reveals that national identity is not exactly a natural phenomenon, but rather the product of ideology and human constructive effort. Through presenting himself as authorial center in the Preface of *The Old Kalevala*, Lönnrot attempts to govern the national identity and language of Finland by constructing a relationship between his epic and the history of the people of Finland.

Spenser's Orphic Career: Vatic Virtue, Salvation, and National Identity

The Fourth Commendatory Verse, cryptically signed, R.S., and appended to the 1590 edition, proclaims Spenser to be Britain's Orpheus: "Fayre *Thamis* streame, that from *Ludds* stately towne,/ Runst paying tribute to the Ocean seas,- Let all thy Nymphes and Syrens of renowne/ Be silent, whyle this Bryttane *Orpheus* playes" (Hamilton 723). Judith Owens interprets these verses as nationalistic, because "…as Britain's Orpheus, Spenser helps to translate classical authority and status to his nation," but Cheney interprets the Orphic role as one of transmitting spiritual insight (Cheney 7-8, Owens 79). Nevertheless, according to this Orphic model, *The Faerie Queene* imitates Virgilian epic, and Cheney explains how the poet "understands epic as a genre in which the mature poet enacts vatic virtue for the benefit of the commonwealth" (Cheney 111). Vatic virtue is the ability of a poet to experience a vision, in which he acquires "wisdom about eternity," after which he subsequently "returns to the world and communicates his discovery to his readers" (107). In the allegory of Spenser's career,

writing the pastoral *Shepheardes Calendar* functions as the New Poet's heavenly vision in his poetic career, after which he returns to earth to write the epic: "After acquiring vatic authority through his pastoral vision, the maturing poet returns to the historical world to communicate the significance of his vision to the commonwealth. The epic poet uses his prophetic art inspired by God and the theology of his church to order the political art of the nation and empire" (117). Cheney explains that the communication of this spiritual insight benefits the secular world: "Through a vision of heaven, the individual is led, not to dejected withdrawal from the world, but to responsible service to it" (108).

In Book 1, entitled, "The Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse, Or, Of Holinesse," the Knight benefits from a vatic episode, in which the "aged holy man" named Contemplation, who often has visions of heaven, leads the Knight to "the highest Mount" (I.x.46-65). Redcrosse becomes able to provide "responsible service" to the secular world after Contemplation gives him a vision of heaven and bestows upon him his new identity, his destiny to become Saint George, the premier knight and patron of England (I.x.46-65). By teaching the "theology of the church" (Cheney 117), Contemplation allegorically represents the relationship between Spenser and the English nation, which the Knight of the Redcrosse personifies. Claire McEachern argues that in this allegory, Saint George is a "synechdochic model for *all* Englishmen," while Una is the true church, and thus the developing relationship between them communicates that "The English nation is founded in its possession of a true single church, identical only to itself" (McEachern 65, 82). Una's name means one, single, or alone in Latin, and she is repeatedly characterized a being unique and self-identical McEachern 79-81), which would distingusih her from the fair-seeming but foul-bodied enchantress Duessa: "Another enemy of Redcrosse, and thus the enemy of Truth, is Duessa whose apparent beauty masks a degenerate interior. Her

name signals her doubleness, and thus her deceitfulness, and she is aligned with the seductive and duplicitous nature of Catholicism" (Fitzpatick 7). Redcrosse's suffering and enslavement due to Duessa symbolizes the spiritual oppression of the Catholic church, as understood by Protestants. On the other hand, Una's rescuing of Redcrosse represents the security that the English people are supposed to have when united to the Protestant English church, which does not practice the deceptive tactics of the Roman Church.

Redcrosse needs the spiritual restoration in order to complete his "great adventure" of avenging Una's royal parents, whose kingdom is held captive by an "infernall" dragon (I.i.3-5). Book I begins in medias res, with the "Gentle Knight," George, and the Lady Una wandering through the wilderness in search of the terrorizing dragon. After several episodes that distract him from his mission and separate him from Una, the Knight experiences a spiritual downfall when an enchantress, Duessa, seduces him and captures him with the help of a giant (I.ii-vii). The future King Arthur helps Una rescue the knight from the giant's dungeon and they bring the broken man to the house of Holiness where he undergoes a process of spiritual renewal and restoration (I.viii-x).

In the process of his rehabilitation, the elderly holy man Contemplation leads him up the mountain where he gives the knight his new identity. Spenser develops this lofty setting through similes alluding to biblical summits, such as Mount Sinai and the Mount of Olives, but he also associates this location of prophecy with the Muses and the mythological poetry of antiquity: "Or like that pleasaunt Mount, that is for ay/ Through famous Poets verse each where renownd,/ On which the thrise three learned Ladies play/ Their heauenly notes, and make full many a louely lay" (I.x.54). Through this juxtaposition of biblical and classical mountains, Spenser perhaps sanctifies his own Virgilian poetic function. Contemplation proceeds to show the knight a vision

of the heavenly "new Hierusalem that God has built," the New Jerusalem, of which St. John similarly receives a vision from atop a mountain in Revelation 21 (I.x.55-57). Contemplation alludes to the Reformation doctrines of election and atonement when he explains that this is the dwelling place of God's "chosen people purg'd from sinful guilt,/ With pretious blood, which cruelly was spilt/ On cursed tree, of vnspotted lam,/ That for the sinnes of al the world was kilt" (I.x.57). He also alludes to the Reformation doctrines of the universal Sainthood of the believers and adoption: "Now are they Saints all in that Citty sam,/ More dear vnto their God, then younglings to their dam" (I.x.57). The knight enjoys the brilliant sight, and he and Contemplation agree that even though great is the glory of Cleopolis, the center of power of Queen Gloriana, to whom the knight owes allegiance, the glory of the heavenly city is far greater.

Next, Contemplation reveals to the knight that he is actually an English man and prophesies for him victory, which includes both earthly and heavenly glory: "And thou faire ymp, sprong out from English race,/ How euer now accompted Elfins sonne,/ Well worthy does thy seruice for her grace,/ To aide a virgin desolate foredonne./ But when though famous victory had wonne,/ And high emongst all knights has hong they shield,/…Then seek this path, that I to thee presage,/ Which after all to heauen shall thee send" (I.x.60-61). Contemplation intends that this heavenly vision would inspire Red Crosse to great deeds, even though the knight wishes he could remain basking in this heavenly peace (I.x.63). The allegory of this episode reflects Cheney's delineation of the vatic poet who receives a vision from heaven and communicates it to the reader for the benefit of the secular world (Cheney 108). This episode allegorizes the relationship of the vatic poet to the reader, with the prophetic Contemplation representing Spenser himself and the knight representing the English reader. According to Cheney's theory,

Spenser already had been prophesying his four-stepped Orphic career, which ends in divine contemplation, ever since *The Shepheardes Calendar*, so therefore this episode could be in early indication of Spenser's spiritual aims (23). Concerning the fourth step of the career of the New Poet, Cheney states, "The poet uses the power of divine sight to soar aloft; he exercises heavenly contemplation to return to the divine origin of art. Consequently, he can use hawking imagery to define the hymn as a careeric genre in which the New Poet reveals his heavenly contemplation to be the final phase in his Orphic career" (200-201). Somewhat indirectly, however, as a poet constructing his career, Spenser functions as the authorial center of this episode to define the Protestant English national identity.

Contemplation, speaking for Spenser, makes further statements that develop the English national identity. He prophesies to the knight, "For thou emongst those Saints [in Hierusalem], whom thou doest see,/ Shalt be a Saint and thine owne nations frend/ And Patrone: thou Saint George shalt called bee,/ Saint George of mery England, the signe of victoree" (I.x.61). McEachern also notes that Contemplation also give George a "strangely humble definition of English identity," the knight was raised by a ploughman who have him the name Georgos, which means farmer (McEachern 64; I.x.65-66). McEachern concludes that, in contrast to the treacherous and dissembling enemies the knight encounters in Faerieland, Redcrosse is "most like himself," that is, "Untutored, unsophisticated, but with his heart in the right place, [and] Redcrosse's true self is crude, local, authentic" (64-65). Thus, as representing the uniform "Englishman," Redcrosse does not emulate foreign models, but rather represents the pure English identity. This prophetic episode completes the process of spiritual restoration of the Knight, and with the continued spiritual support of Una, George becomes able to defeat the dragon after three days of battle and liberates the kingdom (I.xi). Through the portrayal of Saint

George's spiritual transformation, which represents the relationship between the English people, particularly the politically powerful male courtiers, and the church and ultimately with God, Spenser enacts Christianized vatic virtue on behalf of the salvation of the evolving English nation. This idea of the vatic poet is accessible through an analysis, such as Cheney's, of the signifying systems that Spenser used to fashion the career of the New Poet.

Lönnrot, National Romanticism, and non-textual forms

The Kalevala simultaneously constructs, represents, and interacts with the signifying system of the Finnish folk poetry tradition. In contrast to Spenser's milieu of the Renaissance, which discouraged affiliation with one's own "barbarous" culture and pushed Spenser to rely on classical models for national self-representation (Helgerson 22), Romantic Nationalism in nineteenth-century Finland encouraged Lönnrot to govern the Finnish language and culture through relating his epic to the non-textual forms of the Finnish oral tradition, which had attained an unprecedented aesthetic status. However, as a conceived signifying system, the idea of a unified rune singing tradition is actually the construction of Lönnrot and other scholars whose National Romanticist ideology conferred an elevated status to Finnish trochaic poetry. *The Kalevala* produces its meaning as a national document as an accurate representation of historical Finnish life through interacting with the folk poetry, or rune singing, tradition, which became a signifying system constructed by National Romanticist ideology. The kingdom of Sweden had ruled Finland for over six hundred years, but Finland became an autonomous state in 1809 under Czar Alexander I when Sweden ceded the territory to Russia (Kirkinen 7). Intellectual elites instigated an increased interest into Finnish culture following the political transformation of becoming an autonomous, though strictly managed, state under the Russian empire (7). Following the Enlightenment trend of seeking knowledge about people seen as "primitive" and

the ancient history of Europe, scholars in Finland began speculating about the oral folk-poetry traditions extant in the Finnish language (7).

The resultant trend of uniting folklore research with Romantic Nationalism, as articulated by the 18th Century German Romantic folklorist Johan Gottfried Herder, encouraged a deep reverence for Finnish folk poetry (Wilson 28-31). One of the leading Romantics at the Academy of Turku, Finland, A.J. Sjögren, imported the ideas of 18th Century German Romanticist, Johann Gottfried Herder, concerning the supposed need of people to create a national culture (Branch 19). Herder argued that the distinct physical environments and histories of certain groups of people produced distinct "national characters", or "national souls:" "Each nation, then, was by nature and history a distinct organic entity with its own unique culture" (Wilson 28). He taught that the survival of a nation, as well as its contribution to the formation of a utopian worldwide humanity, depends on how well it actualizes, in Herder's words, the "standard of its own perfection, which can in no way be compared with that of others" (28). Thus, under this kind of philosophy, there is no need for Finnish culture to emulate the forms of classical culture. Rather, the Finnish academy accepted Herder's teaching that the folk poetry of every nation represents the superlative form of language and expresses the inmost souls of their nations (Wilson 28-30).

In accordance with the National Romantic Movement of Europe, the academics in Finland began to consider developing a national culture for Finland based on the oral poetry of heroic legends (Kirkinen 7-8). In 1817, Carl Axel Gottlund became the first to propose the idea of creating an epic of classical grandeur based on the Finnish oral tradition (Kirkinen 7, Pentikäinen 15). Another Romantic enthusiast, J.J. Tengström, encouraged the analysis of folk poetry in order to elucidate what he believed to be "the Finnish national character" by studying "ancient thought and lifestyle" (Pentikäinen 18). Herder's idea that "Imagination and

temperament, the realm of the soul, are poetry's ground and soil" thus motivated the endeavor to uncover the qualities of the Finnish soul by analyzing the poetry (Herder 4-9). By the 1820s, "three national cultural imperatives" had emerged: "the collection, study, and publication of Finnish traditional poetry; the writing of national history; and the creation of a literature that was Finnish in spirit and eventually in language" (Branch 20).

Future compiler of T*he Kalevala,* Elias Lönnrot, entered the National Romantic environment in 1822 at the University of Turku, where folk poetry captured his curiosity, and he published his master's thesis in 1827 on poetry concerning the heroic figure Väinämöinen (Kirkinen 8). In the years immediately following, Lönnrot made several expeditions to eastern Finland and the regions lying across the border in Russian Karelia where he transcribed recitations of oral poetry performed in Karelian-Finnish dialects by villagers, and though he published some of the material he collected in small editions, he adopted a more ambitious plan to produce an epic (Kirkinen 9). Supportive of such cultural ambitions, others joined Lönnrot to found the Finnish Literary Society in 1831 to organize the collection of folk poetry and selected Lönnrot to receive support for his expeditions the same year (Branch 22).

Romanticist Construction of the Folk Singers

Whenever he encountered people who could sing Finnish epic and lyric longs, he brought his National Romantic perspective, including the ideas of Herder, and this all led to the construction of the folk poet. DuBois argues that Lönnrot on his expeditions brought to the countryside "the mind and education of a Romantic intellectual" (262). In 1834, Lönnrot met Arhippa Perttunen who shared with him over four thousand lines, more runes than any singer recited for Lönnrot, and he became the "prototype of the rune singer" (Pentikäinen 103). The

ideology of Herder idealized the expression of all folk poetry, which took the form of rune singing in Finland.

> "*The Kalevala* canonized the concept of a golden age of Finnish rune singing. It was believed that this golden age had existed a generation or two before Lönnrot's journeys to collect folklore…the Romantic idea of a golden age of ancient runes, now irrevocably past, is clearly attributable to the Kalevala process. It was believed that the ancient epic had once been alive, then decayed, and now existed only here and there, preserved by the best singers" (Pentikäinen 101).

Pentikäinen argues that almost anyone could be consider a rune singer if they could recite "epical runes in the trochaic Kalevala meter," regardless of the quantity or the quality of the verses. Some people, like Juhana Kainulainen, did not think of themselves as a rune singers before meeting Lönnrot. Rune singing was not a formal occupation, but certain people could remember runes better than others could, and if they met a song collector like Lönnrot, they automatically became folk poets. According to DuBois, Lönnrot erases the original singers in favor of a construction of the folk singer, through the technique of *diaeresis*, which separates the text from the original context of Lönnrot's interaction with the rune singer (100-101). In the edited version of *The Kalevala*, the actual singer, such as Arhippa, fades away and is replaced by the magic singers themselves, such as Väinämöinen: "The singing situations of nineteenth-century peasant life are thus replaced with an imagined pre-conquest Finnish past, in which the poets of magical skill perform songs for the entire Finnish people" (101). Through comparative study of the originally recorded folk poems and the poems of The Kalevala, Thomas A. DuBois demonstrates that Lönnrot drastically changes the poems in order to adapt them to his own Romantic and academic concept of epic literature (DuBois 284, 292). For example, Lönnrot

inserts lyric poetry into the dialogue and monologue of the epic folk poetry, whereas in the folk tradition the lyric and epic poetry were two distinct genres (DuBois 232-235). With "lyric stasis," he inserts extended pieces of lyric poetry into the character's dialogue in the epic poems to produce "poignant images of hesitation, lingering or contemplation for the propelling the epic's plot" (273). Thus, he alters them into the kind of Romantic poetry that reflects the aesthetic values of his elite audience: "Yet the lyric lines and images which the author adds take on a signification of their own, transforming Lönnrot's epic, coincidentally or consciously, into the kind of literary poetry most valued by the elite audience of the day" (262-263, 273).

Self-Identification as Folk Poet as necessary

Since Lönnrot's final product is totally different from the poetic tradition of the Karelian peasants, it would be impossible to know which aspects of the epic originate in the "forebears' life of old" and which ones are from Lönnrot's Romantic ideology (Lönnrot 370). Maybe the ancient Finns were not proto-Romantic nature worshipers, as Lönnrot seems to portray them (DuBois 264).

For example, one passage that affectionately portrays nature is the singing hero Väinämöinen's first action when surfacing and landing on shore after being born in the sea to his Air Spirit mother: "With his knees he struggled up from the ground,/ with his arms he turned himself over./ He got up to look at the moon,/ to admire the sun,/ to observe the Great Bear,/ to scan the stars" (1.335-340). These verses communicate a deep wonderment and the aesthetic appeal of nature, as does a mythical cosmogonical passage in Poem 2 that diverges but complementarily illustrates the creation account in Genesis 1:

> When the oak had been brought down, the dreadful tree felled,
> the sun got free to shine, the moon to gleam palely,

the clouds to race along, the rainbow to arch over
the tip of the misty headland, the end of the foggy island.
Then the wilderness began to get beautiful, woods to grow as one would desire,
with foliage on the trees, grass on the ground; the birds began to sing in a tree,
thrushes to rejoice, the cuckoo to call on high.
Berrystalks grew on the ground, lovely flowers in the field;
all sorts of herbs grew, many kinds were brought forth.
Barley alone has not sprung up, the precious crop not grown.
Then old Väinämöinen walks about, reflects
on the shore of the blue sea, on the coasts of the mighty water he reflects. (2.217-241)

Although these beautiful passages suggest that the Finnish people, in cultural essentialist terms, have historically had a deep appreciation for nature, DuBois argues that a mystical treatment of nature could simply be a manifestation of Lönnrot's own literary Romanticism, which would preclude any definite knowledge on how the Finnish folk historically perceived nature (262, 271-273).

On the other hand, Siikala draws evidence for animism from the entire body of collected Finnish folklore: "Of all the spirits and powers of nature, those of the water were appealed to the most frequently by the *tietäjä* ["knower," such as the character Väinämöinen]. He might appeal to the water-*väki* [people], to *Vellamo*, the mistress of watter…" (Siikala 215). *The Kalevala* text contains many references to nature spirits, such as *Vellamo*, a female water deity (5, 42, 44, 48) and the Spirit of Nature, *Luonnatar* (1, 2, 9, 2632-41), and the Air Spirit, *Ilmatar*, who is Väinämöinen's mother (1, 47). Thus, *The Kalevala* may preserve some of the actual mystical attitudes of ancient Finns towards nature, although DuBois identifies that Lönnrot would have

interpreted such invocations through his Romantic mindset: "For Romantic Lönnrot, the plethora of Finnish tutelary spirits and deities residing in the forest, water, and air constituted a primitive identification of divinity in the landscape, a process through which nature became invested with qualities of the Supreme Being" (264).

Because *The Kalevala* represents aspects of the contrasting codes of Finnish peasant life and the National Romanticism of the elite, it is nearly impossible to determine the origin of the material in *The Kalevala* that could potentially "benefit the Finnish language and literature" and shed light on actual Finnish history (370, 374). Lönnrot does not seem to recognize that the act of drastically editing the text seriously undermines the attempt to present the "activities, life, and ancient condition of our forebears" (374). However, if he ingratiates himself into the role of the folk poet, he can attain the perceived authority to present this ethno-historical material, since he himself would be someone who can articulate the Finnish national character or soul, according the ideology of Herder (Wilson 28-30). Lönnrot's self-identification with the Karelian poets thus resolves some of the contradiction between his own Romantic poetics and the endeavor to reveal the "activities, life, and ancient condition of our forebears" (Lonnrot 374). Though Lönnrot uses somewhat deceptive tactics by more modern standards, John B. Alphonso-Karkala argues that, rather than disparage Lönnrot for causing confusion between the "*art of composition* with the *act of collection*" (14), it is more profitable to recognize Lönnrot's poetic vision:

> "If Lönnrot changed, modified, and added to the folklore material at his disposal in order to compose he epic (as he is accused of by some folklorists and champions of 'fakelore'), that only shows how dominant was Lönnrot's poetic vision that compelled him to dare do what other ordinary folklorists dare not do, that is, to transcend from being an ordinary recorder of folksongs to become a composer of an epic" (Alphonso-Karkala 25).

The Kalevala is certainly more of a work of art rather than an ethnological text, but according to Lönnrot's ideology, the Finnish spirit imbues his own artistic productions since he too is a Finn.

Spenser's interaction with non-textual forms-courtliness

Helgerson's study focuses on textual forms that function as enabling systems for Renaissance texts like *The Faerie Queene* to accrue meaning, yet both Spenser's and Lönnrot's epics also interact with non-textual forms through affiliation and difference. Helgerson mentions that when Spenser began writing, English poetry as an institution was fragile, and thus "poetry was obliged to draw its authority from other better established and more prestigious institutions and activities: from the court, from the law, and from the literatures of other countries" (24). By analyzing the non-textual form of courtly conduct with Helgerson's methodology, it becomes clear that Spenser attempts to govern the meaning of his text by relating it to this code of conduct as a signifying system when he states in the *Letter to Raleigh* that the purpose of the work is "to fashion a gentleman," that is, a courtier (714).

Daniel Javitch, in *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England*, uncovers how the form of allegory, employed by Spenser, gains its aesthetic appeal and didactic rhetorical authority from its similarities to the ideals of Renaissance courtly conduct (6, 56-59, 100-101). He argues that various forms of Renaissance poetry closely resembled the codes of comportment upheld by the politically powerful Elizabethan courtiers, and consequently English poetry, which authorities had previously esteemed lowly, attained a high rhetorical status (6). The historical evidence for the non-textual system of courtly conduct actually resides in two important Renaissance texts, Baldesar Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528) and George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), both of which Javitch analyzes in his study. Only under certain conditions could a poet pursue the didactic task of fashioning social superiors in virtuous

discipline, as stated in the *Letter to Raleigh*, especially since the fictitious nature of the poetic art seems much more akin to deceit than to virtue and the rhetorical status of poetry was low (Javitch 136).

Spenser's employment of the form of *Allegoria,* which conceals but intimates truth, could have been subject to sharp critique, which he anticipates and defends against in the *Letter to Raleigh,* yet the artistically motivated dissimulation of such poetic forms gained aesthetic value because such dissimulation was an ideal in the Elizabethan court (66-69, 100-101). The purpose of such dissimulation in both poetry and courtly conduct certainly was not to deceive, but rather to delight the audience or reader through achieving the aesthetic ideals of *sprezzatura* [nonchalance], *grazia,* and *mediocratia,* as defined by Castiglione in *Book of the Courtier*, which had become influential for governing courtly behavior (Javitch 55-59). *Sprezzatura* is an aesthetic of the concealment of artifice and effort as a means of achieving grace in art, even though the whole enterprise is artificial (Javitch 55). In The Book of the Courtier, Count Ludovico, a speaker in the fictional discussion conducted by Italian nobility about the ideal courtier, states that since, "we may call that true art which does not seem to be art," grace in courtly conduct is acquired through "a certain *sprezzatura* [nonchalance], so as to conceal all art and make whatever is done seem to be without effort" (Castiglione 32). The ideal courtier must conceal art, the effort behind the presentation, in order to impress the audience, because "facility in such things causes the greatest wonder" (32). To conceal the attention given to self-presentation, and because the courtier must not appear to be flaunting his talent either, he will try to mitigate his own skill by presenting himself as average, to demonstrate his *mediocratia* (Javitch 55-56). Spenser employs such mediocratia in the first stanza of the proem of Book I by downplaying his skill when he state, "Lo I the man…Am now enforst a farre vnfitter taske," and

thus he implies that he is neither to fit to have compose his previous pastoral work nor qualified to undertake this epic. Javitch theorizes that poets like Spenser eventually mastered the employment of the courtly art of *sprezzatura* in poetry, and that when they observed that courtiers could never exemplify these rigorous moral and aesthetic standards, the poets took over the role of fulfilling those high standards through their verbal art (138). Therefore, since courtiers and poets operated upon the same principles, but the poet was more capable of fulfilling them, it would be reasonable to make the conclusion that "the courtier must turn to the poet to learn proper courtesy" (139).

Javitch states that Puttenham, who directly applies Castiglione's standards of courtly conduct to poetry in his *Arte of English Poesie,* "knew that a courtier delighted and appeared to best advantage by disguising himself in a manner that disclosed less than what was really there, more than was apparent. It was an extension of this knowledge that made him assert that the poet's chief skill was to delight with metaphor, leaving his audience to discover the larger meaning of his suggestions" (Javitch 66). Thus, the metaphor, as employed in allegory, has an aesthetic purpose, but it also has a didactic purpose. Javitch quotes Puttenham concerning dissembling figures of speech: "They are classed under the general 'courtly figure, *Allegoria,* which is when we speake one thing and thinke another, and that our wordes and our meanings meete not' (p. 186). Before he defines the specific tropes that are 'souldiers to the figure *Allegoria* and fight under the banner of dissimulation,' he argues that all men, not only poets, can hardly thrive in the deceitful world of the court without a command of *Allegoria*" (Javitch 59). Thus, the process of interpreting an allegory could be a didactic exercise for courtiers, and the lesson learned would be for how to know when to trust someone, especially in regards to the Catholic Church, or foreign spies during the tense diplomatic moments of wartime.

Therefore, the allegory of *The Faerie Queene* can help education courtiers by training their powers of discerning the inner characters of the people they encounter in the dissembling environment of the court. Book I details the spiritual downfall, due to failing to counteract deception, and the restoration of the Redcrosse Knight. Spenser borrows the story of St. George and the dragon from *The Golden Legend*, which mythologizes Roman Catholic saints, and Spenser recasts St. George as the national hero of Protestant Britain (Kleinberg 251-257). He creates a political allegory containing the characters of the legend of St. George and the dragon as well as figures from Arthurian folklore. Claire McEachern discusses the technique, *prosopopoeia*, or personification, in relation to *The Faerie Queene*: "My thesis, in brief, is that the prosopopoetic gesture cultivates the intimate affect constitutive of corporate feeling. By prosopopoeia I mean in part the anthropomorphic imagination of political process in terms of human agency" (McEachern 12). Thus, through the prosopopoeia in Spenser's epic, the characters allegorically represent the English nation and its political and religious institutions interacting with one another. The identification of the reader with the thoughts of the characters in *The Faerie Queene* can produce a corporate sense of national identity, according to McEachern (14). By seeing themselves as being represented in the allegory, the courtiers could practice uncovering the deceit of political or religious figures by analyzing Duessa's seduction of Redcrosse in the allegory. In addition, the courtiers, identifying themselve with George, would rejoice in the defeat of the dragon, whose red and black scales perhaps reference the colors of the Philip II's Spanish Armada which was defeated in 1588 (I.xi; Hamilton 139). Spenser's attempt to instruct the courtiers, the powerful advisers to the monarch, about their English identity and need to be able to detect deceit, is ultimately to seek to guide the nation.

Challenge to Author-Function by Barthes and Foucault, and a Rebuttal

A possible flaw in this essay is the "intentional fallacy," which is an over-emphasis on the moment of artistic production by the author, because the reader potentially plays a more significant role than the author according to some theories. Though many generations in Finland have accepted Lönnrot's self-representation of poetic authority, his many assertions about *The Kalevala* text lend themselves to analysis employing the critiques of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault that de-center the author. In his 1968 essay, "The death of the author," Roland Barthes uncovers precisely the same assumptions that underlie Lönnrot's assertions and which also appear in Spenser's poetic self-representation. Barthes identifies a ubiquitous impulse in the West to locate the ultimate meaning of a text in the author: "The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the author 'confiding' in us" (Barthes 313). In the Preface, Lönnrot clearly seeks to satisfy this desire for an authorial explanation of *The Kalevala*, and although he is working with a body of poetry orally composed over hundreds of years, he assumes the role of "Author" as defined by Barthes: "The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book…The Author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child" (314-315). Lönnrot procures this role by first arguing that the cause of structure in the poems derives from the "singer's individual way of presentation," so each singer is thus the origin of his or her song (Salminen 354). By drawing the parallel between the folk singers and himself, "as a singer of songs are good as even they," he posits himself as the origin, or the guiding center, of this particular written form of performance, which he entitles, *The Kalevala*, after the folkloric heroes'

homeland, "Kaleva's District" (Lönnrot 368; Salminen 354). Lönnrot's discussion of how he structures the text thus reveals confidence in his authorial ability to "nourish" *The Kalevala* by editing, concatenating, and interpreting the poems in order to communicate the historical identity of the Finnish people.

Under scrutiny, Lönnrot's project of converting an oral form into a written text is vulnerable to Barthes' radical thesis, which critiques the privilege traditionally conferred upon an author by arguing that the ultimate meaning of a text is unknowable because "writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin" (Barthes 313). He backs his anti-humanistic claim with the inherent instability of written words, because writing, "cut off from any voice, borne by a pure gesture of inscription (and not of expression), traces a field without origin – or which, at least, has no other origin than language itself, language which ceaselessly calls into question all origins" (315). His main assumption, derived from Jacques Derrida, is that words, rather than acting as stable signifiers for signified meanings, can only substitute for other words, thus deferring meaning infinitely (Rivkin 341). The compiled and edited text of *The Kalevala*, by drawing from Finnish folklore and Romanticism (DuBois 284, 292), literally exemplifies Barthes' views that "The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture," and that the Author's "only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any of them" (Barthes 315). Such criticisms pose a difficult challenge to Lönnrot's self-presentation as the center of his epic, and they are valuable for exposing the assumption, which he shares with Spenser, of deriving the meaning of the text from the author. Although he does not primarily "mix *writings*," Lönnrot mixes oral utterances and he explains in the Preface that he wants to organize them into a longer poem that would recreate what he calls the "original tale" about the exploits of the heroic magic singer

Väinämöinen and other heroes (Pentikäinen 29-30). Though he is not the author, he is the first to organize the poems in epic form, but Barthes' argument implies that no act of writing could possibly access the basis of the tale, because its only origin is in language, in the oral poems themselves, and not in the actual events that may have given rise to the tradition.

In addition, any form of language is merely a quotation of a series of quotations from various cultural centers that extend into antiquity indefinitely (Barthes 315). Therefore, it seems impossible to determine when Finnish culture, as a mixture of its antecedents such as the protean oral tradition, which is perhaps a universal human phenomenon, became specifically Finnish in character and form. According to Barthes' methodology, "Finnish" becomes a slipping signifier that depends on who is using the word, and there would be theoretically no possibility for definite knowledge about the Finnish past or character based on poetry. Furthermore, even with access to Lönnrot's statements in the paratext, Barthes skeptical approach makes it seem impossible to ascertain anything about Lönnrot's intended meaning for *The Kalevala*.

The English Renaissance paratext, Spenser's *Letter to Raleigh*, which imposes limits upon the reader's interpretation of *The Faerie Queene*, demonstrates the impulse Barthes identifies as the traditional search for the "explanation" from the author (Barthes 313). What if more is at play in the text than Spenser is aware? An allegorical text could potentially hold meaning that even the author could not work out himself. In addition, although Spenser seeks to establish his authority by basing his text on the classical models, Barthes' argument suggests that Spenser's discourse on virtue relies on nothing more than the unstable field of language itself, in the texts of Homer, Aristotle, and Virgil, and not on any actual model of the essence of virtue (Spenser 715). According to the most deconstructive theories, "virtue" would be a hollow signifier just like any other word, and the critique of the idea of the author suggests that none of

Spenser's statements could ossify a definite meaning for the book. Barthes' critical position also challenges the efforts of a writer like Spenser to define Englishness through mixing quotations from Chaucer, a quintessential English poet (Barthes 315). According to Barthes, if any form of language is merely a quotation of a series of quotations that extend into antiquity indefinitely, then not even Chaucer can be said to be essentially English, since it is impossible to determine when English culture, as a mixture of its antecedents, actually became English. Chaucer imitates Virgil at times (I.i.8-9, Hamilton 33), and Virgil imitates Theocritus and Homer. Even Homer, or the group of poets constructed into the idea of Homer, according to Friedrich August Wolf's thesis, were imitating and quoting someone before them, and thus no essential Greek could exist either (Voigt 257). There would be no end to the search for what Spenser must have meant to say.

While Barthes' reasoning arrives at the conclusion that "the reader has as much authority over what a text means as does the author" (Birns 38), Michel Foucault in his essay, "What is an author?," develops Barthes' argument by locating the construction of the "author-function" in the mind of the reader who encounters a text:

> Critics doubtless try to give this intelligible being [the author] a realistic status, by discerning, in the individual, a 'deep' motive, a 'creative' power, or a 'design,' the milieu in which writing originates. Nevertheless, the aspects of an individual which we designate as making him an author are only a projection, in more or less psychologizing terms, of the operations that we force texts to undergo. (Foucault 287)

Although he implies that the author is no more than a figment of the reader's thought, he qualifies this development of Barthes' original thesis by identifying the agency of the writer as partially responsible for the construction of the author: "The text always contains a certain

number of signs referring to the author" (288). A reader may therefore find evidence for an author's self-construction in any first person pronoun or declarative statement in a text and its paratext, the appended materials that are published alongside the narrative. Thus, it is appropriate for Nicholas Birns to emphasize that, contrary to common misunderstanding, "Foucault believes in authors and authorship. He just thinks that the idea of an author is not necessarily bound to a discrete, individual psyche and that the effects of what an author does cannot be limited to his or her immediate acts of writing. Foucault, in other words, asks us to be sceptical about just the sort of discussion we are conducting about 'Foucault'" (Birns 63). In the same way, this essay comparing Spenser and Lönnrot must demonstrate a rigorous skepticism concerning the authorship of these poets, and yet the task of this paper is to analyze texts that exemplify the contributions these "authors" make to their own "author-constructions." In both the texts and paratexts of their epics, Spenser and Lönnrot appear set themselves up as having the poetic roles necessary for governing their cultures, and they construct models for their cultures based on a variety of contemporary and historical cultural traditions.

Although Barthes expresses suspicion about a text forging connections with such "innumerable centres of culture" (315), for the process of criticism he recommends that, "In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be *disentangled*, nothing *deciphered*; the structure can be followed, 'run' (like the thread of a stocking) at every point and at every level, but there is nothing beneath" (316). He states there is nothing beneath because it seems impossible to uncover fully the author's intent and the origin of the meanings of particular words and literary structures. Nevertheless, although Barthes' approach appears pessimistic, it cannot completely discount the possibility of conjecturing the text's ostensible structure as well as the *langue* or

signifying system of forms, such as genre and poetic devices that enable the *parole*, or text, to produce apparent meaning.

Rebuttal: Barthes and the reader-author

According to Barthes' argument, such attempts by Spenser and Lönnrot to govern interpretation, in order to reveal national origins and perhaps achieve national salvation, are vain pursuits, since, despite whatever an author may say about the work, writers can only define words in relation to other words. In the pursuit of the Finnish or English essence, it seems impossible to find the ultimate origin of the particular usage of a word, or even any artistic or literary device, and it also seems impossible for the reader to apprehend the meanings originally intended by Spenser and Lönnrot. As texts that quote many centers of culture, *The Faerie Queene* and *The Kalevala* seem to undermine the credibility of the ultimate origins of their own meanings, due to Barthes' point that texts defer their meaning infinitely when they borrow the language of words previously said or written. Barthes' linguistic agnosticism even precludes the possibility of the reader knowing the historical signifying systems that an author intends to use, but if these epics have "no other origin than language itself" (Barthes 315), why not at least try to discover the particular origins in language upon which the authors state they are building? Barthes tries to move this kind of focus away from the author and the quoted sources: "The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin [the author] but in its destination [reader]" (316). According to Barthes' critical method, therefore, Spenser and Lönnrot do not govern the meanings of their epics, but rather the reader does, yet the analysis of paratextual material in this essay has demonstrated a possible challenge to Barthes. The unification of the paratext and the epic text in the "destination" of reader's mind invariably produces a published text that is

different from the poetic text by itself, and Spenser and Lönnrot obviously read both the texts and the paratexts and likely revised and edited both before publication. Therefore, Spenser and Lönnrot are themselves readers of their texts during the whole process of constructing them, so Barthes' method does not ultimately discount the unique perspective of the authors expressed in the paratexts. The mind of the author is simultaneously that of an author and of a reader, so the minds of Spenser and Lönnrot are themselves destinations where the unity of the text and paratext is possible. Therefore, the reader of these epic texts and their paratexts not only has access to the "writing" of the author but also to the author's expression of their own "reading" of the text.

Since the reader and the author are both readers of the same text-paratext unity, it would be unwise to deny the theoretical possibility that a reader could consciously derive an interpretation from the text that matches the author's own interpretation, and thus come to an understanding of the signifying systems with which the author intends to interact. Although it is highly unlikely that a reader's conceptualization of the meaning of a text will correspond exactly to the author's intended meaning, it is equally unlikely that the reader will apprehend absolutely nothing of the author's intended meaning. Even in allegory, which plays with multiple meanings for a single word or even a whole situation, the literal level of meaning is essential to all secondary levels of meaning, but the literal level of meaning is not contingent upon the meaning of the secondary levels of meaning. Therefore, in any text and even in allegory, all it takes for the reader to interpret correctly the intended literal meaning of the words is to share the language of the author. It is necessary that a reader will understand at least part of the full intention of the writer, because a person who cannot understand the literal meaning of the words cannot actually be a reader, since the definition of "to read" is to apprehend the meanings of words. When

Barthes states, "We shall never know" the author's intent (313), he ironically accomplishes the *death of the reader*. There could be no such thing as reading at all, but only the spontaneous creation of meaning in the mind of someone seeing a page with ink marks that themselves have no order other than what the beholder constructs. On the other hand, would it not be more likely that the cause of the orderliness that is constructible from a text has at least some of its origin in the orderly mind of the writer and not only in the mind of the beholder?

Barthes would insist that an authorial intention does not equal the meaning of the text, since he locates the mind of the reader as the only place where a text can have unity. Nevertheless, both the reader and the author are readers in whose minds the text's unity may exist, and the theoretical possibility always exists that these two entities could produce the same interpretation, so perhaps Barthes should not be so quick to declare, "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (316). If the reader and the reader-author both share knowledge of the same systems of signification, then it is a theoretical possibility that the reader will also understand at least part of the secondary intended meanings of a text, such as in an allegory. Much of the meaning of Spenser's allegory becomes evident through an understanding of biblical imagery, classical literature, and medieval romance. The reader and author seem to co-exist naturally in the case of *The Kalevala*, because Lönnrot, whose paratext portrays him as a poet and a mediator of folklore, would certainly support a reader's effort to discern in the text the features of Finnish culture, which he might not have understood perfectly clearly himself in his role as a mere mediator. If the reading-author and the reader co-exist, it becomes possible to discern the systems of signification from which Spenser and Lönnrot claim to be borrowing material in order to produce meaning. This essay demonstrates the evidence for Spenser's creation of meaning through interaction with the medieval-classical binary (Helgerson), the

fiction of the vatic Virgilian poet (Cheney), and the codes of courtly conduct (Javitch). In the case of the Finnish poet-historian, this essay reveals Lönnrot's creation of meaning through interaction with the eastern-Finnish rune-singing tradition (Pentikäinen; Siikala), National Romanticism (Wilson), and Hegelianism (Apo; Branch).

Conclusion

If one would tentatively submit to Lönnrot's governance of the text as an ethnological history, three of the most significant elements of the Finnish national identity would be an intimate and mystical relationship to nature, the possession of the cultural memory of magic singing, and the determinism to defend the nation's interests. On the other hand, it always will be questionable how much of this Finnish identity originates solely in the minds of Lönnrot and his academic peers or in actual history. Either way, Lönnrot's Romantic vision of nature continues to thrive, because the cultural essentialist definition of Finnish national identity has long portrayed the Finns as having a unique relationship to nature. For example, in The *Face of Finland*, a 1983 photographic tour book of Finland, Antti Tuuri describes the watery topography of the land, praises to the preservation of the folklore tradition, and proceeds to state: "The Finns have always been considered a unique and peculiar people, respected in particular for their knowledge of the basic elements of nature, of earth and water, of winds and storms" (5). With its emphasis on nature, *The Kalevala* interpreted as an ethnological text certainly has contributed to this kind of Romantic cultural essentialist discourse. Tuuri also asserts that despite the advent of industrialization and modernity in the twentieth-century, "…there still abides in the Finnish people an instinctive bond with nature and its great Finnish elements, with the forest and the density of the earth, with the buoyancy of water. And life continues to be centered on the Finnish landscape" (6). Through its numerous delicate nature scenes and invocations to nature

spirits, *The Kalevala*, as a document intended to describe the Finnish past, clearly preserves something of the Finnish cultural element of mystical interaction with the natural scenery of the rocky archipelago and Nordic boreal forests broken up by literally hundreds of thousands of lakes. Despite this evidence, it is clear that *The Kalevala* is a construction based on National Romantic ideology and does not necessarily prove the existence of on actual Finnish *Volksgeist* expressing itself in folklore. Instead, signifying systems shared by Lönnrot and his readers have enabled *The Kalevala* to sustain its national epic status, and in order to activate interactions with these systems, such as the Finnish folklore traditions and National Romanticism, Lönnrot decided to construct himself as a historian-poet through various means of self-presentation.

Likewise, Spenser constructs his own literary career of heavenward progression and through his self-presentation reveals his aspiration to govern the English language through interacting with a variety of systems of signification, such as Renaissance codes of courtly conduct and forms from classical antiquity and the middle ages. Spenser's allegory clearly reveals the continued religious, political, and diplomatic tension associated with the English national identity during the Protestant Reformation. In the characterizations of St. George and Una, Spenser constructs the main features of the identity of the island-dwelling English people as idiosyncratic simplicity, honest transparency, and Protestant Christian virtuousness. The abundant evidence contained in the poetic self-presentations in the texts and paratexts of both *The Kalevala* and *The Faerie Queene* reveal that some knowledge is possible concerning the intentions of the poets to interact with those signifying systems in order to produce representations of Finnish and English national identity and national poetic language.

Since they are constructions, we may be suspicious of how these epics impose identities onto the people of England and Finland. On the other hand, if these epics are strictly poems, it is

irrelevant whether the constructions of national identity by Spenser and Lönnrot actually correspond to reality, for as Sir Philip Sidney states, "Now, for the poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth…He citeth not authorities of other histories…in truth, no laboring to tell you what is or is not, but what should or should not be" (Sidney 968). Spenser as a poet declares what he and many others in power believe the English identity *ought to be*, but Lönnrot, as a historian and a poet, differs from Spenser by declaring *what is* the Finnish identity. Accordingly, the opinions about the relationship between *The Kalevala* and the Finnish national identity have been diverse and even contentious. Thus, nationalism has a tendency to appropriate verbal art, whether oral and literary, and assert that the art contains truths about the actual identity of a people group, and perhaps constructions of identity do bear some intuitive connection to reality.

Perhaps there are "lines" that separate and define people's identities, but Helgerson proposes that "if we cross the established lines often enough, and if we imagine others that intersect them at various odd angles, there is a chance we can create a freer, more permeable world, a world of dotted instead of solid lines" (Helgerson, *Forms* 18). In the national texts of England and Finland, it is thus possible to see how identities have formed as a continual process that never stagnates, and it is important to be aware of the history of this process for each of us to become able govern our own identities as free agents. Helgerson states, "In writing England, the younger Elizabethans also wrote us. To study that writing is to expose one root of our own identity" (Helgerson 18). In the same way, Lönnrot wrote the identity of us modern Finns, whom he represents in the closing words of *The Kalevala* as *Nuorisossa nousevassa,/ Kansassa kasuavassa* ("in the rising generation, among the people ["nation"] growing up") (50.619-620). Helgerson suggests that to study the national literature of the Elizabethans opens up "the possibility of another project like theirs, another attempt in another world to remake our

individual and collective selves by once again having the kingdom of our own language" (Helgerson 18). Similarly, to study *The Kalevala* can open the possibility for us modern Finns to have the kingdom of our own language too, rather than bowing to everything Lönnrot says about us and our history, and the same freedom to rule one's culture is the inalienable right of every speaker of English as well any language.

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