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Such quarrels, though, are not major. Diehl's Index remains a handy, encyclopedic reference to emblematic topoi.

Patricia Demers
The University of Alberta


David R. Shore's *Spenser and the Poetics of Pastoral: A Study of the World of Colin Clout* has the distinction of being far better than the pat abstract that introduces the text. Were Shore to have written the work described by the abstract, he might be accused of repeating the work that has already been done on Spenser's pastoral poetry. Fortunately, his work is not a rehashing of familiar approaches.

Shore begins conventionally enough by defining pastoral and considering its conventions in light of *The Shepheardes Calender*. Having examined Spenser within the tradition, how he both conforms and diverges from it, Shore reconsiders the structure and unity of the poem. He argues that Spenser's point of departure from the convention concerns how he uses the poetic form he chooses, especially debate or dialogue. In contrast to earlier uses of the debate in pastoral poetry, there is no winner or loser in the debate, no side that has greater validity. Shore goes on to argue that the two sides represent equally valid truths in the moral eclogues, for example, in the debate between youth and age represented by Cuddie and Thenot in "February." He sees this balance of arguments as "leaving open no possibility of a movement toward resolution" (17).

The irresolution resulting from a balanced argument is central to Shore's reading of Spenser, not just in *The Shepheardes Calender*, but in *Colin Clouts Comes Home Againe*, and, most significantly, in *The Faerie Queene*. Shore traces the lack of resolution and the balancing of two opposed points of view in these works in order to come to what marks his important contribution to Spenser studies. For Shore, Book VI provides completion, if not resolution, to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. In the "Book of Courtesy," Shore argues that the *Faerie Queene* is "torn by the conflicting demands of chivalric quest, devoted to the ongoing struggle, and of poetic vision, devoted to the timeless ideal" (159). In other words, he says Spenser perceives poetry and heroic action as mutually incompatible, but that both represent equally important values. Since both are exclusive, one must make a choice between the two.
Such a position would be counter to Sidney’s argument in the Defense of Poetry and all that that implies—for example, a rejection of Aristotelian theory. Such a reading could lead to a reassessment of the poetic values of other Renaissance writers, a reconsideration of Renaissance poetic theory, beginning perhaps with Sidney.

Shore, argues, then, that through pastoral, Spenser rediscovers the only viable domain of poetry, to serve love and beauty, the intention he would say in Epithalamion, Prothalamion, and the Foure Hymnes. In another sense, however, Shore suggests that Spenser takes from the poet the responsibility for moral and heroic action and places it where it really belongs, on the reader. This, if nothing else, is an important adjustment, and, therefore, a worthwhile contribution to the field.

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Rowland Wymer, Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama, St. Martin’s Press, 1986.

Rowland Wymer’s study is proof of what a dedicated but overly zealous scholar can accomplish: lengthen what should be a solid article into a short, repetitious book. Wymer’s contention that the sources for Renaissance doctrine on suicide and despair derive equally from traditional Christianity and from Roman Stoicism is indeed a feasible, though somewhat obvious, one. In fact, Wymer is at his best when he examines suicide and despair in one play; his discussion of Hamlet as bringing to life varying Renaissance views of suicide is compelling reading. However, when Wymer turns, for example, to “Lucrece Figures . . . who killed themselves to preserve their chastity” (96), his argument assumes the dimensions of a commonplace book. He lists plays at the rate of nearly one per paragraph, highlights the suicide scene, and concludes that each woman is a martyr because she chose suicide to defend her Stoical honor.

In perhaps the strongest chapter in the book, Wymer sees suicide as a form of repentance, or expiation, or defense of honor. Although Wymer again turns to snippets from obscure plays such as Heywood’s The English Traveller and Fletcher’s Bonduca to construct his case, his strongest proof comes with a thoroughgoing analysis of Othello’s death scene. Othello, Wymer argues, is a Faustus figure convinced of his own damnation; however, his suicide comes not out of despair, but from his Stoic stance as a Christian soldier. Wymer reinforces his argument by comparing the external naval battle of Turk versus Christian to Othello’s inner turmoil of heathen versus