



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2008 Volume I: Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare

Queen Elizabeth's Influence on Disguise in Shakespeare's Plays and Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*

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Overview

When Elizabeth I gained the throne in 1558, women began to receive a voice in literature. England had not before had such a dynamic and intelligent female regent. Elizabeth was celebrated in poetry and was herself an accomplished poet. As a woman with a man's job, Elizabeth had to adopt various personas to appease her advisors and subjects. She invoked her father's strength when she needed to overcome her femininity. She played the role of eligible maiden in negotiations to marry when she desperately wanted to maintain her freedom. Elizabeth's ability to transform herself as necessary is what makes her a model for strong women who use disguise as a means to an end. She was also omnipresent in English Renaissance arts. Katharine Eggert, in *Showing like a Queen*, states that "sooner or later, in either overt or subtextual form, writers in all literary venues must get around to taking a position vis-à-vis the woman monarch"¹.

Spenser, a devoted follower of the "cult of Elizabeth," blatantly models his Faerie Queen, Gloriana, after her as well as Britomart, his female knight. Britomart must hide her femininity as a means of survival. Disguise was necessary to protect her vulnerability. Shakespeare was less explicit, yet his plays are bursting with three dimensional women, both heroic and tyrannical. Eggert states that Shakespeare "either invents or transforms dramatic genres to accommodate and reshape topical issues uniquely associated with a feminine monarchy"². Elizabeth's influence is obvious in the gender bending Rosalind and Viola in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. Both women initially dress as males for protection and then as a means to influence events around them. Katharina's eventual negotiation of male society through diplomacy and subtle manipulation in *The Taming of the Shrew* demonstrates Shakespeare's admiration of a woman who could hold her own when surrounded by egotistical men. She wears no physical disguise but maintains the image of a dutiful and subservient wife while negotiating power with her husband. Even Lady Macbeth is initially a strong queen. By becoming "unsexed" she assumes the role of acting regent in the Macbeth household. She is highly ambitious and manipulates her husband, cleaning up his messes when he begins to fall apart, before succumbing to her own guilt. While these selections are written by men, the inclusion of compelling female lead characters, both royal and common, shows Elizabeth's influence on her subjects. Elizabeth's own works, juxtaposed against these works of Shakespeare and Spenser, add depth to the characters and help to bridge the gap between Queen Elizabeth as an historical figure and Elizabeth the strong, yet human, woman.

Rationale

I chose this unit topic as a way to expose my students to several of Shakespeare's plays and an epic poem with strong female heroines and villains. Vibrant female authors and characters are missing in a high school British Literature survey class until the mid to late eighteenth century, and my students do not find "The Wife's Lament" to be particularly compelling literature. Consequently, my young ladies, who make up three quarters of my students, are bored. We are required to teach *Macbeth*, and while most of the kids enjoy the play, few of my girls relate to Lady Macbeth. However, thanks to some great film versions of Shakespeare's comedies, I need not be limited to Lady Macbeth. Instead my girls can enjoy Rosalind and Celia from Kenneth Branagh's *As You Like It* and Viola and Olivia from Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night*. The cross dressing women are a very timely reference to Elizabeth's wearing the metaphorical "pants" in the country. Her famous wit and sexual flirtatiousness are also obvious in the forward female characters, especially Olivia. Both boys and girls will love *The Taming of the Shrew*, as both Katharina and Petruchio are hilarious in Franco Zeffirelli's version. Also, thanks to the modern remakes of *Twelfth Night* into *She's the Man* and *The Taming of the Shrew* into *Ten Things I Hate About You*, my students already have a rudimentary understanding of the plays and are able to focus on characterization instead of plot. These three films can open new discussions about Shakespeare's women beyond Lady Macbeth's ruthlessness and eventual frailty and madness. Double entendre and situational humor are engaging and enlightening for my students, hence it limits their interest in *Macbeth* that only the porter gets anything particularly funny to say. The comedies thus make an important supplement. By comparing *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* to Elizabeth's "On Monsieur's Departure," students will be able to see the comedic uses of disguises and then compare them to the everyday masks we wear to protect ourselves from being hurt. Students will also be able to compare and contrast the Elizabethan article "An Homily on the State of Matrimony" with Kate's speech at the end of *The Taming of the Shrew* and notice the irony and sarcasm within each but also the sincerity.

As You Like It

Rosalind is one of Shakespeare's most beloved heroines. She is far more intelligent than anyone else in *As You Like It*, and she has a spunky nature that enchants those who meet her. Harold Bloom states that Rosalind is "first in poise of all Shakespearian characters," and that she "is also his most triumphant, both in her own fate and in what she brings about for others"³. Rosalind dresses and acts like a man who then proceeds to act like a woman. This dual layer of disguise allows her to experience Orlando's love without any of the risk of a male/female courtship. She guides Orlando in the ways in which she would like to be wooed so that he will make no missteps when she comes to him as herself. Like Rosalind, Elizabeth adopted a male image as a means of protection. In order to intimidate visitors to her Privy Chamber, Elizabeth would stage "herself before the imposing image of her father that dominated Holbein's great wall painting of the Tudor dynasty"⁴. This "disguise" helped to protect her against those who would claim she was an ineffective leader because she was a woman. She also negated her perceived inferiority by "employing rhetorical strategies of identification with her father"⁵. Elizabeth stated that though she was a woman, she had courage as great as her father ever had. By defeminizing herself Elizabeth adopted her father's presence and "strove to make the greatness of her personage appear proportional to the greatness of her state"⁶. Another female character who protects herself by adopting a male persona is Viola. Shakespeare used disguises in many of his plays, but the one that best pairs with *As You Like It* is *Twelfth Night*.

Twelfth Night

Viola is torn in many different directions in this play. She wears different masks depending on her task. She must woo Olivia as Cesario while loving Orsino; she must dodge Olivia's advances without offending her; she must act as a servant when she is not one. Viola wears the male disguise for most of the play but exchanges her "masks" as the need arises. Harold Bloom states that "there is an air of improvisation throughout *Twelfth Night*, and Viola's disguise is part of that atmosphere." Bloom continues, her "personality is both receptive and defensive"⁷. She accepts Orsino's advances towards Olivia and falls in love with him as if they had been directed to her. She rejects Olivia's advances yet maintains a friendly rapport. It seems as if Shakespeare enjoys "keeping her an enigma, with much held always in reserve"⁸. Viola is very much like Elizabeth being pulled in two directions regarding the marriage negotiations to François, the Duke of Anjou. She knew her duty to her people was to marry, but she fiercely craved her freedom. In 1581, during a charade, Elizabeth exchanged kisses and rings with Anjou and proclaimed to her court that they were pledged. That night Elizabeth was sleepless and ill over what she had done while carried away "in the midst of amorous discourse"⁹. She ended her betrothal the next day, claiming that she would sacrifice her personal happiness in marriage for "the welfare of her subjects"¹⁰. Elizabeth is wearing a disguise in this anecdote, whether it is one of actually loving Anjou and being willing to give up her lover for her people or one of a woman who desires to remain single. Her poem, "On Monsieur's Departure" is also ambiguous. In it Elizabeth claims to grieve deeply and wish to die over the loss of Anjou's love. It appears she is wearing her disguise to protect herself from the pain of unrequited love. Perhaps she is also putting on a brave face for her subjects, so they will not know she is hurting. The poem may be her mask for her people, leading them to think that she had earnestly tried to marry. Some saw through her disguises. Upon Anjou's death, Elizabeth exclaimed, "I am a widow woman who has lost her husband." The French ambassador responded that "she was 'a princess who knows how to transform herself as suits her best'."¹¹ Elizabeth's admissions in her poem prove that she, like Viola, juggled many masks. This poem will work well as a companion to *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* because the heroines also wear disguises to negotiate the world. Rosalind and Viola's stakes are not as high as Elizabeth's, but the disguises are a necessary means to their matrimonial ends. We too wear masks to navigate society. Students will benefit from reflecting upon the situations in which they wear disguises.

The Taming of the Shrew

Upon first reading, Kate's speech at the end of Act V seems a perfect parallel to "An Homily on the State of Matrimony," which is one of the homilies which make up the 35th article of the 39 Articles passed under Elizabeth in 1563 as a means to unite the Catholic Church and Protestants¹². Although it was not written by Elizabeth, she was the supreme ruler of England at the time of the Articles and acutely aware of actions of the church. Elizabeth was not married and had already turned down a marriage proposal from her brother-in-law, Philip II of Spain. She also is reported to have told an envoy that she would rather be a single beggar woman than a married queen¹³. In addition, she had a very close personal relationship with the married Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. When his wife mysteriously died in 1560, a great scandal arose regarding his relationship with the queen¹⁴. Regardless of the veracity of the scandal, Elizabeth was hardly the model of a wife depicted as ideal in the homily. There are several references to the homily in relation to *The Taming of the Shrew* on the internet, but I have not found one that notes the ironic tone in Kate's speech as juxtaposed with the homily. Since *The Taming of the Shrew* was written in 1593, Shakespeare would have been well aware of "An Homily on the State of Matrimony," and, as Elizabeth's negotiations for marriage had been long ended, he must have seen the irony between the ruler's situation and that preached from the pulpit. *The Taming of the Shrew*, especially Kate's speech at the end, seems to be Shakespeare's nod to this fact. Kate is a reformed woman; she is a model wife. She is not, however, the model wife from the homily. She is

manipulating her husband to get what she wants and is berating her peers for not doing the same. Harold Bloom states in *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* that "one would have to be very literal minded indeed not to hear the delicious irony that is Kate's undersong, centered on the great line 'I am asham'd that women are so simple'." He continues that Kate "is advising women how to rule absolutely, while feigning obedience,"¹⁵. In essence, she is instructing them how to use disguises to reach their goals.

Kate's speech also has many references to the husband as regent. It seems to describe a figure awfully similar to Elizabeth. Kate says in Act V, scene 2:

- Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
- Thy head, thy sovereign-one that cares for thee,
- And for thy maintenance commits his body
- To painful labor both by sea and land,
- To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,
- Whilst thou li'st warm at home, secure and safe. (V.ii.146-50)

This sounds like a direct reference to Elizabeth herself. She is the husband that toiled at sea against the Spanish Armada while her "wife," England, slept safely at home. Later Kate remarks that a disobedient wife is like a "foul contending rebel / And graceless traitor" (V.ii.159-60). This seems disproportionately strong language of a political bent with which to compare a headstrong wife. In addition, Kate likens disharmony in marriage to wives offering "war where they should kneel for peace" (V.ii.162). This sounds like a jab at Elizabeth's having turned down Philip II of Spain's marriage proposal, a proposal which would have ensured a harmonious relationship between England and Spain. Finally, Kate asks why a woman would "seek for rule, supremacy, and sway / When they are bound to serve love and obey" (V.ii.163-164). Elizabeth was bound to serve England but she was an excellent queen and a popular ruler. After creating such women as Rosalind and Viola, who seem destined to have marriages of equality thanks to their bright natures, it is unlikely that Shakespeare honestly meant to suggest that any woman would prefer to be subservient in a relationship over one where she could rule, or at least one where she could rule over herself. I believe that Shakespeare is talking about Elizabeth in this speech. Elizabeth chose the "disguise" of husband instead of wife. She is the lord and supreme ruler. Had she chosen the role of wife she would have been rebelling against her better judgment and therefore become a traitor to herself. Elizabeth ends up fulfilling the role idealized in the homily, only it is that of husband to England with her subjects as the wife.

The Faerie Queene

Spenser was not only inspired by Elizabeth to place strong women in his writings, he wrote to and for Elizabeth and used her likeness profusely. Gloriana, the regent of Faerie Land, is an obvious tribute to Elizabeth. She is a fair and just ruler and is loved; this character represents Elizabeth as decision maker and leader. She is also chaste but marries late. Gloriana, in fact, marries Arthur, from whom Elizabeth claimed to have been descended¹⁶. The name became synonymous with Elizabeth and is even the title of an opera of her life. Britomart, on the other hand, represents the warrior Elizabeth. She is the personification of chastity. Like some of Shakespeare's heroines, she is disguised as man for much of her appearance in *The Faerie Queene* and, like Elizabeth, defeats other men in battle. In order to battle, Britomart must be disguised or she would not be allowed to demonstrate her skill. The male knights would be alienated and emasculated if they saw the woman who had defeated them. She loses only once, and it is to Artegall, the man she will eventually marry. When he unveils her by cracking open her helmet so her hair can pour forth, the real Britomart emerges, fragile and cautious in her new relationship with Artegall.

The Faerie Queene is far too large and difficult for my students, but Cantos i-iii of Book III (Britomart's introduction and history) and iv and vi of Book IV (the tournament and her "unmanning") will give them a taste of the text and have such a compelling plot that they will keep the kids' attention. Since Britomart is a warrior figure, Elizabeth's "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury" matches her bearing, a perfect example of the queen as commander in chief. She has the body of a woman but the heart of king, as does Britomart. Spenser makes the "female knight, Britomart, his chief personification of chastity," and she is "clearly labeled as a type for Elizabeth by her name (martial Britoness)...and by maidenliness and chastity that she shares with the queen"¹⁷. Spenser meant for his readers to recognize their queen. We even learn "that she wears her hair long in the manner of a marriageable virgin, a style similar to the one that Elizabeth maintained as an aged queen according to the *Rainbow Portrait*."¹⁸ The contradictory situation of a chaste female knight on an errand to meet a man is one with which my students will have fun. Britomart is a clear representation of Elizabeth when she was testing her powers as queen and seeking a husband while maintaining her identity.

Objectives

In order to meet all of my district standards and utilize all six components of Bloom's Taxonomy, my unit will encompass many activities that will allow my students to activate various levels of knowledge. Students will be able to demonstrate basic knowledge of Shakespearian and Spenserian plot by answering recall questions on plot. Students will be able to demonstrate comprehension by participating in a Socratic Seminar about several movie versions of Shakespeare's plays along with selected scenes from the text and a reading passage from Spenser. Students will be able to apply their knowledge of Elizabethan language by creating a body biography incorporating quotes and illustrations from the text. Students will be able to analyze an historic text by Elizabeth I and compare and contrast it to a given section of a Shakespearean play or canto of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. To incorporate the synthesis level of Bloom's Taxonomy, students will be able to write a short character analysis on a given female character. In order to achieve the highest level of Bloom's Taxonomy, evaluation, students will be able to defend their thesis within the character analysis by presenting their paper to the class.

Strategies

Prior to reading any Shakespeare or Spenser the class and I will have a brief introductory discussion about what we know about Elizabeth I and 16th century England. Students will also read the introduction to Elizabethan literature in their textbooks. We will then watch Shekhar Kapur's movie *Elizabeth* to give the students historical context and background knowledge of the time. Students will also be asked to read the introduction to Alison Weir's biography, *The Life of Elizabeth I*. This excerpt will be copied for them and gives a brief history of Elizabeth's reign and an excellent description of life at the time. Students will also begin a KWL (what do you know, what do you want to know, what did you learn) chart for the unit.

Before we begin this unit, my students will have read *Macbeth* and we will have analyzed its language and themes closely. Students will be well familiar with Shakespearian language and will be ready to view several

plays. We will do *Macbeth* first to prime students to obtain the most information and enjoyment from the movies. While Lady Macbeth will be a topic of discussion in the initial *Macbeth* unit, looking at her as a strong female and a foil to Elizabeth will be saved for this unit. Lady Macbeth will serve as the anti-Elizabeth, and the historical context behind her history with James I will be examined. Why might Shakespeare have made her so fragile at the end? What might he have been saying to James I in this play? How might Shakespeare be addressing James' complicated relationship with Elizabeth, considering that she chose him to succeed her but also killed his mother? Once students have seen or read all of the plays in this unit they will be asked to go back and reflect on Lady Macbeth and her role within the unit. While she is certainly a strong character, she is not the most flattering female regent.

The students and I will engage in a Socratic Seminar discussion of *Macbeth*. When beginning a Socratic Seminar, I provide the students with an initial discussion question and then sit back and let the students lead the class. When the comments start to peter out I will introduce another question to keep the conversations going. Students are provided with a rubric beforehand (see Classroom Activities) and know that they must make three substantial comments in order to receive full credit for the assignment. When first implementing Socratic Seminar at the beginning of the year, I provide the students with the discussion questions beforehand so they can have their comments ready for class. Slowly they are weaned and by this unit must know the text well enough to maintain the discussion without knowing the questions in advance. Students know that "I agree" and "That's a good point" do not count as one of the three comments. The easiest way to monitor the discussion is to have a class roster and make tick marks as each student adds to the conversation. Like the students, I have to be trained and remind myself that this is a student-led classroom activity and not a lecture or platform for my beliefs on the text. I will ask various questions from the play such as: How would you describe the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth? What is the "power dynamic" within this relationship, and who, ultimately, do you believe has the upper hand? How does the relationship change over the course of the play? If the main theme of *Macbeth* is ambition, whose ambition is the driving force of the play? What types of disguises does Lady Macbeth wear? What are her motives for these disguises? After this discussion we will move on to the witches. Students will be asked the following: Are the three Wierd Sisters on someone's side? What might the witches represent? In what ways do they affect the outcome of the play? What is their role on a thematic level? Another theme we will explore is what it means to be a man and how gender is manipulated in this play. Students will expound upon the following prompts: The theme of "What is a real man?" is repeated throughout the play. Discuss this theme and cite examples from the play. Is the question limited to male characters? Another important theme in *Macbeth* is the relationship between gender and power, particularly Shakespeare's exploration of the values that make up the idea of masculinity. What are these values, and how do various characters embody them? How does Shakespeare subvert his characters' perception of gender roles? Once students have demonstrated the ability to maintain the discussions on these questions we will be ready to move on to Shakespeare's comedies.

Next students will view Kenneth Branagh's *As You Like It* and Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night*. Students will be provided with character names and descriptions and a brief plot summary so that they can follow along and keep track of the characters. Upon the completion of both movies, students will be given copies of scenes depicting Rosalind/Ganymede and Viola/Cesario. They will use these scenes and their knowledge from the films to complete a Venn diagram on the four characters. Students will need to list individual traits of each of the four characters and the note the similarities between Rosalind and Viola, Rosalind and Ganymede, Ganymede and Cesario, and Viola and Cesario. In the center students will mark the similarities of all four characters. After this introductory activity, students will participate in a Socratic Seminar concerning the two plays. Questions to be asked include: Disguises are central to the plot of *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*; how is this thematically important? How is love depicted in the plays? What points does Shakespeare seem to be

making about romance? Discuss the role of mistaken identity in *Twelfth Night*. What do these mix-ups signify? What kinds of love are the marriages at the end of the plays based on? Explain whether each marriage will flourish or fail and why. In Viola's soliloquy in Act 2, scene 2, lines 17-41 she claims that her problems can be blamed on women's weakness. What are women's weaknesses (to Viola)? Both Viola and Rosalind's "problems" could be resolved by their shedding of their disguises. Why do they take so long to do this? *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* are romantic comedies, and love is the primary focus. Why do you think each of the characters falls in love? Was it because of the situation, because of personality, or because of appearance? Support your argument with evidence from the play. Gender ambiguity in Shakespeare is a prominent topic of discussion. Why do Viola and Rosalind disguise themselves as boys? What does their behavior suggest about gender? Do the plays suggest that concepts of gender are static or fluid? How are women thought of and treated in these plays? Are women treated differently today? How so? Transformation is a common theme in these plays; based on the texts and films, which characters do you believe experienced the greatest transformation and why? Which characters could be models of Elizabeth? What might Shakespeare be saying about Elizabeth by having female heroes drive his plot?

After our Socratic Seminar students will be given "On Monsieur's Departure" by Elizabeth I. We will read the Wikipedia description of the poem 19 as well as one found at www.cs.rice.edu and discuss its history as a class. Students will then make connections between the plays and the poem. Questions they will consider are: How does the poem change notions of disguise in the plays? How does it compare to the disguises we use in real life? Is the poem realistic? How does it relate to modern life? What can we learn about Elizabeth from this poem? Is she being honest in the poem or telling her people what they want to hear? If she loved someone so much why did she never marry? Could the poem be written about someone other than Anjou? Could the poem be written about England? When our discussion is finished students will share times they have worn a "disguise" or hidden their true selves to protect themselves or their feelings.

The students will next watch Franco Zeffirelli's film version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. While this version does not include the induction which frames the play, it is perfect for our purposes as it emphasizes the relationship between Petruchio and Kate. Zeffirelli clearly recognized Kate's ability to disguise her "shrewishness" with subservient behavior. In the wedding scene Kate appears a patient and dutiful fiancé, but she is only biding her time until she can deny Petruchio at the altar. Her disguise is imperfect though, and he sees through it. After reciting her monologue in Act V, Kate leads Petruchio out of the reception, demonstrating who she thought should lead whom all along. Students will have a movie viewing questionnaire to complete as they watch the film. This will ensure that all follow along so they can answer the simple plot or character questions. When the film is over we will read selected scenes that deal with marriage and the relationship of a man and a woman, paying particular attention to Act V and Kate's final speech. After viewing the film and reading selected scenes, the class will discuss the following questions: What is the message of Kate's final monologue? Do you think she is sincere? Has she been tamed or is she only acting? Disguise plays a crucial role in *The Taming of the Shrew*. What can we infer about Shakespeare's take on the effects of disguise? Can clothes really make the man? How are the disguises in this play different from those in the other plays? How are the characters' motives different? What techniques does Petruchio employ to "tame" Katherine? Why do they work? Is Petruchio's manipulation of Kate plausible? Who is the shrew? Explain your answer. What social issues does Shakespeare raise in this play? Are they still valid today?

After our discussion of the film and selected scenes of the text, students will be given a copy of "An Homily on the State of Matrimony." As the selection is a bit long we will "jigsaw" the text. The class will be broken up into groups, and each group will be responsible for annotating a different section of the piece. After 10-15 minutes a representative from each group will present the results to the class. Thus, all students read part of the

homily but become familiar with the piece as a whole. I will fill in any gaps if necessary. Then, as a class, we will answer the following questions: How does "An Homily on the State of Matrimony" relate to the play? How does Kate's speech in Act V maintain a dialogue with it? What do we learn about women in Elizabeth's time from this text? What does this say about Elizabeth's never marrying? Does it apply to her marriage to England? Why could this homily be seen as ironic? Do these notions of marriage still hold true today? Which do you agree with, and with which do you disagree? Is this homily culturally or religiously specific? How could it be updated for modern relationships? I do not intend to bring up any of the speculation mentioned in my rationale unless my students jump to that conclusion in our discussion. The discussion questions included are meant to discourage reading or viewing this play on a literal level alone. I hope that they question whether or not Kate's speech is sincere. I also hope that they see the irony behind Elizabeth's situation and that described in "An Homily on the state of Matrimony."

After discussing these questions as a class, students will create their own homily about the state of a high school relationship. Their piece need only be a page long but should include all of the necessary ingredients of a healthy relationship. Students should ask themselves: What are the roles of the men and the women? Who should be in charge of what aspects of the relationships or should everything be split down the middle? How does religion factor into a modern relationship, if at all? Students will then share their homilies with each other, and, if they feel comfortable, we can "age" the pages in an oven and place them around the room.

For our final Elizabethan text students will be given cantos i-iii of Book III (Britomart's introduction and history) and iv and vi of Book IV (the tournament and her "unmanning") of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Because this text is more difficult than Shakespeare we (I) will read aloud. Students will follow along in their text to get a feel for the spellings and to have access to the footnotes. After Book 3 we will have a class discussion about Britomart as an Elizabeth figure. How would you describe Britomart? What is significant about the tapestry of Venus and Adonis? Why would Spenser include that story? How can Malecasta be characterized? Describe her castle and her Castle Joyous. What do Malecasta's six attendants represent? How do those six characters/actions contrast with the kind of love that Britomart represents? Why would Malecasta get into bed with Britomart? If Britomart is the knight of chastity, how can she be in love with Artegall? How can someone be chaste if they feel sexual attraction to another? Is Britomart enchanted or in love at first sight? How is Britomart's disguise similar to Rosalind and Viola's? How is it different? Who is the virgin on the throne? Why did Spenser add this information? Who wins the tournament? Who wins the next time Britomart and Artegall meet? What is significant about Artegall being the one to reveal Britomart as a woman? Why would Spenser have them each win and lose against each other? What does that say about their relationship? Is their meeting through battle significant? Why or why not? After searching for Artegall for so long, why doesn't she accept his advances instantly? Why do they part?

After reading our excerpts of *The Faerie Queen* students will read Elizabeth's Speech to the Troops at Tilbury. If time allows I will show the brief clip from Shekhar Kapur's movie *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* that corresponds with this text. Students will identify similarities between Elizabeth and Britomart in this speech. Elizabeth refers to herself as a "weak and feeble woman" with the "heart and stomach" of an English king²¹. She also states that if anyone dares to invade her borders, she will "take up arms" and be "general, judge, and rewarder of every one of [her troops'] virtues on the field."²² Students will be asked: Why does Elizabeth insist upon appearing as a warrior in this speech/film clip? What physical similarities do you see between the two? Why would Elizabeth undermine herself by referring to her weakness?

After all of our readings and viewings, students will complete a body biography of their chosen female character. If supplies and space allow it, students will create life sized cut outs of a body and will place quotes

from the play in various area of the body. Otherwise they will place their quotes in a body cut from 11 X 17 inch paper. Quotes related to characters' thoughts will go in the head, lines related to the character's emotions will go in the chest, and lines related to a character's actions will go in the limbs. This activity will force students to actually read the play-or book, in the case of *The Faerie Queene*. Too often students can get away with reading the Cliff's Notes or Sparknotes on a Shakespearian play or other piece of literature. When students are forced to match up a quote to its context within the scene, they are more likely to read the selection, or at least it becomes obvious when they have not read it. This activity will help students prepare for a character analysis paper on the female character of their choice. I do not wish to read 90 papers on Portia, so I have included an extensive list of interesting female characters from either Shakespeare or Spenser. All are not necessarily "strong" women, but all are interesting and will make for a varied crop of research papers.

As an activity that culminates our reading, viewing, and discussing, my students will complete a research paper on a compelling female character in Elizabethan literature. The list of acceptable female characters is included in the Appendix. A character analysis paper written through an "Elizabethan lens" will demonstrate what my students have learned and will help them to incorporate historical context into all of their analysis. They may either focus on the theme of disguise as a means to an end or just look at the character development of a strong female. Papers will be three to five pages in length and will require both textual and critical support.

Students will also present their papers to the rest of the class so others can be exposed to many different Shakespearian or Spenserian characters. Students will use their body biographies as a visual aide, having colored the side without the quotes to look like their female character. They will give a brief synopsis of the play they read, why they chose the character they did, and why she did what she did in the play. They will explain her personality traits, her motivations for her actions, and the resolutions to her conflicts. Hopefully, other students will be inspired to read several of Shakespeare's plays or other sections of *The Faerie Queene* after hearing of interesting stories.

Classroom Activities

Character Choices for Paper

Beatrice

Belphoebe-FQ

Cleopatra

Cordelia

Desdemona

Duessa-FQ

Emilia

Florimell-FQ

Gertrude

Goneril

Helena

Hermia

Hermione

Hero

Imogen

Jessica

Julia

Mercilla-FQ

Miranda

Ophelia

Paulina

Portia

Regan

Silvia

Una-FQ

Rubric for Socratic Seminar

You must have three thoughtful things to say in order to receive full credit. "I agree" does not count unless it is followed by a valid reason which demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter.

100 Holy Cow! You should be teaching this class.

90Wow! You had two really great things to say.

80Good. I'm glad you brought up your one comment.

70You spoke up, but maybe you should have paid better attention to the text.

60When did you learn to sleep with your eyes open?

Resources

Implementing District Standards

The following standards apply to a twelfth grade British Literature course and are found on the Georgia Department of Education website²³.

ELABLRC1 The student reads a minimum of 25 grade-level appropriate books or book equivalents per year from a variety of subject disciplines. The student reads both informational and fictional texts in a variety of genres and modes of discourse.

ELABLRC2 The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning in all subject areas. The student identifies messages and themes from books in all subject areas, responds to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse, relates messages and themes from one subject area to those in another area, evaluates the merits of texts in every subject discipline, examines the author's purpose in writing, and recognizes the features of disciplinary texts.

ELABLRC4 The student establishes a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas. The student explores life experiences related to subject area content, discusses in both writing and speaking how certain words and concepts relate to multiple subjects, and determines strategies for finding content and contextual meaning for unfamiliar words or concepts.

ELABLRL1 The student demonstrates comprehension by identifying in a variety of texts representative of different genres (e.g., poetry, prose, and drama) and using this evidence as the basis for interpretation.

ELABLRL2 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of theme in a work of British and/or Commonwealth literature and provides evidence from the work to support understanding.

ELABLRL3 The student deepens understanding of literary works by relating them to their contemporary context or historical background, as well as to works from other time periods.

ELABLRL4 The student employs a variety of writing genres to demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of significant ideas in selected literary works. The student composes essays, narratives, poems, or technical documents.

ELABLRL5 The student understands and acquires new vocabulary and uses it correctly in reading and writing. The student uses knowledge of mythology, the Bible, and other works often alluded to in British and Commonwealth literature to understand the meanings of new words.

Annotated Bibliography

Bloom, Harold. "Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human" New York: Riverhead Books, 1998.

Each of Shakespeare's plays receives an essay about how its characters affect our life.

Eggert, Katherine. "Showing Like a Queen: Female Authority and Literary Experiment in

Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton" Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

This book contains many theories regarding strong women, but not limited to Elizabeth I, in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton's works.

King, John N. "Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen" Renaissance Quarterly 43.1 Spring '90 p. 37.

This article examines Elizabeth's ability to manipulate her image in the public's eye.

Montrose, Louis "The Subject of Elizabeth" Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

This book contains much information regarding Elizabeth's appearance to her subjects in art, literature, and mythology.

Weir, Alison. "The Life of Elizabeth I" New York: Ballantine, 1998.

This is a wonderful biography of Elizabeth I chronicling her reign as well as speculation about her personal life.

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Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*. New York: Signet, 1986.

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Shakespeare, William. *The Taming of the Shrew*. New York: Signet, 1966.

Shakespeare, William. *Twelfth Night*. New York: Signet, 1965.

Spenser, Edmund, and A.C. Hamilton, ed. *The Faerie Queene*. Harlow, England: Longman, 2001.

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11. Weir, Alison. The Life of Elizabeth I. New York: Ballantine, 1998. p. 350
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