



Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England

Richard Mallette

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Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England is a wide-ranging exploration of the relationships among literature, religion, and politics in Renaissance England. Richard Mallette demonstrates how one of the great masterpieces of English literature, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, reproduces, criticizes, parodies, and transforms the discourses of England during that remarkable political and literary era.

According to Mallette, *The Faerie Queene* not only represents Reformation values but also challenges, questions, and frequently undermines Protestant assumptions. Building upon recent scholarship, particularly new historicism, Protestant poetics, feminism, and gender theory, this ambitious study traces *The Faerie Queene*'s linkage of religion to political and social realms. Mallette's study expands traditional theological conceptions of Renaissance England, showing how the poem incorporates and transmutes religious discourses and thereby tests, appraises, and questions their avowals and assurances. The book's focus on religious discourses leads Mallette to examine how such matters as marriage, gender, the body, revenge, sexuality, and foreign policy were represented—in both traditional and subversive ways—in Spenser's influential masterpiece.

A bold and finely argued contribution to our understanding of Spenser, Reformation thought, and Renaissance literature and society, Mallette's study will add to the ongoing reassessment of England during this important period.

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