The Gyant's Giant Meaning:

An Application of Monster Theory to

Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*

by

Brittany Turney

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Cora Fox, Chair
Christine Holbo
Taylor Corse

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ABSTRACT

This paper utilizes insights from emerging monster theory, particularly the idea that monsters are cultural representations, to examine the representation of the Gyant and the figure Talus in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. The thesis posits that contrary to most critical readings, the episode concerning the Gyant focuses on a portion of the 16th century English Cultural Body-the peasants, rather than the Irish or another cultural subgroup. The thesis also argues that through the application of monster theory, the complicated political sympathies of the author towards the English lower class emerge, and the English third estate gains a voice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

In Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, monsters appear in prevalence, and in many cases it is obvious that they represent more than just a foil to the protagonist. With an application of Jeffrey Cohen's monster theory, a reading of monsters as cultural representations, the depictions of the monsters become clearer, and the reader can gain additional understanding of the monsters' place as characters, as symbols, and as representatives of a larger group of people or of a larger issue. In this paper I will limit my focus to the figure of the Gyant, who appears in Book V of the *Faerie Queene*, as well as the metal man Talus and his actions in regards to the Gyant. In this scene Artegall, the knight protagonist, encounters the Gyant as he is giving a speech to a group of people, and the two enter into a discussion regarding egalitarianism and whether the current social hierarchy is fair and efficient. This scene is rife with arguments relating to social hierarchy and the political state of England, and this provides a platform for discussion as to the author's sympathies and affiliations. With this analysis the Gyant can be read as a sympathetic character who is acting as a voice for the poor and downtrodden of England, instead of the ignorant trouble maker the narrator paints him to be. This is vital because it supports the argument that in creating such a monster with layers of meanings, Spenser let his own judgments and opinions blend into the arguments. Additional support for this comes from the hero's interaction with, and treatment of the Gyant, for as a disciple of justice, Artegall is in the perfect position to judge the Gyant, providing a parallel in which Spencer can judge the words of those the crown and ruling powers desire to silence. As an allegory it is expected that Spenser's own beliefs exist in the pages, but since it is written for the specific audience of Queen Elizabeth, then the extrapolation of Spenser's own beliefs, and what he is writing for

Queen Elizabeth, becomes complicated. An in-depth analysis of the Gyant, Artegall, and Talus, with the aid of monster theory, allows Spenser's voice to be heard amidst all of the political diction, and shows just how a man may carefully advocate for a discussion of social equality from within a system of authority.

Our everyday understanding of monsters is that they are fictional characters often created to represent something that is feared in some way. They elicit negative emotional responses and as such have power to color their actions and their words with that negativity as well. In some instances however, their representations seem designed to elicit pity or sympathy rather than just fear. They are degraded and subjected, and may provoke more positive responses from readers. Some monsters, in fact, are even admirable, and contain strengths and qualities that are enviable from a mortal perspective. So monster figures come in many guises, but they are all represented to bring out varying levels of emotional response in their audiences. This is especially true in the case of the representation of the Gyant and Talus. Monsters such as these require more than a cursory reading, and to help with that, the monster theorists have come up with some explanations as to how and why they make such excellent figures of representation. Many theorists also provide means of deciphering the social and cultural implications of monstrous depictions.

Cohen is the leading voice in monster studies. His work spans from the medieval times to the current day, concentrating on the monsters in literary texts and placing them in history. For example, Cohen links the scene in *Beowulf*'s beorh, the burial place among the dragon's treasure, with the medieval individual's observation of such burial places, illustrating poignantly the impact that such a sight would have on the psyche of

the individual (*Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity* 19). Cohen does similar work in many time periods and subject areas, and it is particularly important in opening up analysis of works that have been repeatedly analyzed throughout the years. Jeffrey Cohen's Book *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, exists as the foundation for much of the extant work on monster theory. Cohen's "Seven Theses" describe a general outline for understanding monsters as they exist in literary terms. Cohen posits that the existence of a monster in a text indicates a society on the verge of one or more monumental shifts. These shifts can take multiple forms, from managing the separation of cultures within a society, describing forbidden practices that will become normalized, or simply describing an author's reaction to the current state of society (*Monster Theory* 3). In this context monsters exist as an attempt to convey a desire for change in societal structure, or cultural change.

Monster theorists and critics drawing on monster theory have created taxonomies of monsters to understand their purposes and cultural significances. In Carolin Bynum's "Metamorphosis and Identity", for instance, she articulates different forms of monsters based on how they seem to have changed from human forms. The different types of monstrous changes are either hybridized or metamorphic (Bynum 20). Simply stated a hybrid is defined as a monster that reveals difference through a juxtaposition of seemingly non congruent parts, and a metamorphic monster reveals the transition through the categories of human and non-human. In both of these changes the issue of loss of self plays a major role. The anxiety surrounding the self, is crucial to understanding the anxiety about change. Bynum argues that the hybrid has typically been seen either as losing part of the self in order to make room for a duality, or

exposing a deeper self in tandem with what is exposed (Bynum 21). Metamorphosis on the other hand is generally viewed as a major loss of self with only vestiges remaining, or alternately viewed as transcending the self (Bynum 26). She argues that "thus we learn a good deal about any cultural moment by asking what conception of change…tends to dominate its various discourses" (Bynum 21). Bynum also delves into the connection between hybridity and the world of difference. She writes that hybridity reveals the world of difference, while metamorphosis instead reveals a world of stories or journeys under way or in motion. She also compares them by stating that metamorphosis breaks down categories by breaching them, contrasting with the way that hybridity "forces contradictory or incompatible categories to coexist and serve as commentary each on the other" (Bynum 31).

Another way of reading monsters is to situate them directly as non-human representations that always have something to say about the human. For example, Dracula, in many stories, serves as a vehicle for some of society's sexual desires. Some of these sexual desires are less socially acceptable than others, so monsters such as Dracula are able to more comfortably embody them than an identifiable, and thus problematic human (Eason 8). Other cultural situations that monsters could help represent are issues such as gender relations, social anxieties, and issues with "otherness". "Others" would be understood as individuals who are ostracized in some way because of appearance, capabilities, or race. Discussion of these issues takes place through the medium of monsters and can be seen in the depiction of vampires, werewolves, hybrids of any kind, aliens, and other creatures of creation or design (Eason 9). Jeffrey Cohen takes this concept further by stating that monsters not only embody

individual concerns or controversies, but also whole cultures and the subjects that plague them (*Monster Theory* 5).

Cassandra Eason is another scholar who works in this field and who provides a fresh view of monsters through this emerging theory. She has a book on the subject entitled, *Fabulous Creatures, Mythical Monsters, and Animal Power Symbols*. Instead of monsters as representations of societal fears and anxieties, this work looks at monsters in terms of a representation of the strengths and qualities that humans desire to possess or emulate. This book goes through many aspects of monsters that are overlooked because of their "monstrosity" and shows how some monsters are looked up to or even revered in many ways. This idea that the monsters emulate desirable traits or strengths goes back to the idea that monsters, in some way, show the true self or show a version of the self that is either pushed down or pushed aside because of social expectations (Eason 7). Eason sums up her theory by stating that "Magical creatures represent, in a pure and undiluted form, strengths and qualities that humans desire in their own lives" (Eason 8). This matches up with some of the ideas that Cohen presents in his thesis, since his understanding of them and his interpretation of their use in culture and literature, does not always present them in ways in which they would be feared.

In Cohen's explanation of his thesis, he begins by expounding on his assertion that the monster's body is a cultural body. The monster's body sometimes literally incorporates widespread fears, desire, anxieties, and fantasies. He states that "the monstrous body is pure culture" (Cohen 4). Here the monster only exists as a figure to be read and applied to a social situation; it is a method of revealing or of warning. Cohen states that,

> Like a letter on the page, the monster signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement, always inhabits the gap between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which it is received, to be born again. These epistemological spaces between the monster's bones are Derrida's familiar chasm of *difference:* a genetic uncertainty principle, the essence of the monster's vitality, the reason it always rises from the dissection table as its secrets are about to be revealed and vanishes into the night (Cohen 4).

The idea that a monster is a cultural representation is crucial to understanding the part that a monster plays in a text and in relation to the other characters**.** When properly applied monster theory allows for a deeper and more intricate understanding of certain scenes in which monsters interact with other characters and provides a wider scope of analysis of the dialogue between them. Even when no dialogue occurs, the physical interaction can show aspects of the culture either through the monster's actions towards the character, or the character's response to the monster.

Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is an excellent example of how a better understanding of a work can be achieved when read through the lens of monster theory. The theories are applicable to many of the poem's monsters, but I will focus on one particular episode in which the hero knight confronts a giant. This portion of the text, located in Book V of the work concerns the politics of egalitarianism, its supporters, and the "justice" of the crown. The character of the Gyant, has traditionally been read as an egalitarian figure in most scholarly analysis, and while this is correct, he is so much

more than that. Through the lens of monster theory, the Gyant can be read as a cultural body.

Now in terms of cultural representation other scholars have spent time looking at the crowd that gathers around the Gyant, rather than the Gyant himself. Richard Chamberlain, author of *Radical Spenser: Pastoral, Politics and the New Aestheticism*, concludes that they represent the mobs that Spenser encountered in Ireland (Chamberlain 96). He takes from Spenser's history with Ireland as a secretary to the Lord Deputy of Ireland, as well as Spenser's own work on the country, *A View of the State of Ireland*, and argues that due to Spenser's preoccupation with the country and its people, that here Spenser is taking another opportunity to bring attention to the issues concerning Ireland (Chamberlain 97). Chamberlain is not the only scholar to take this view. Willy Maley, author of *Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture, and Identity*, writes of the difficulty in discussing the poem, and this scene in particular without making a direct reference to Ireland (Maley 103). He believes that the crowd, and the Gyant's discussion with Artegall is intended to bring up questions regarding the state of Ireland and England's relationship with it (Maley 107). Andrew Hadfield in his work, *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience*, discusses the confusion that comes with understanding this scene in conjunction with Spenser's work on Ireland. Hadfield writes that *The Faerie Queene* is undoubtedly an allegorical work, representing various political and historical events, but that it must be read within a cultural context where there are uncertainties in relation to its status and political validity (*Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience* 114). Here Hadfield does not discuss the scene with the Gyant or crowd in particular, which adds weight to the argument that the Irish struggle cannot be

comfortably applied to the situation. Susanne Wofford as well, writes that this scene and scenes like it could possibly be the result of Spenser's hyperbolic ambition in terms of allegory, and that attempts to assign historical representations such as Ireland to landscape would not be firmly grounded (Wofford 122).

These are the popular theories among scholars, but they only deal with the crowd as a cultural representation and do not include the Gyant in the reference except in terms of his arguments with Artegall, which are read to be the words of the crowd through the mouth of the Gyant (Chamberlain 95). When the monster is taken into account as a cultural representation then the representations of the crowd shift as well.

Here the Gyant should be read as an English cultural representation. When the Gyant is viewed in this fashion, his argument with Artegall, his possession of scales, his death, and the people's anger at his death, all take on new meaning. In particular, an analysis of the plight of the English lower classes at this time, which will be detailed more later in the paper, shows how the arguments of the Gyant fits with the riots and rebellions taking place in England rather than Ireland. The poor in England, due to agricultural and political changes, had become poorer at this time (Geremek 165). Many who had farms to support themselves, then had to work on the farms of the gentry and hire themselves out as laborers (Geremek 91). They had no connection to the ruling powers since they were so removed from the higher echelons of the social structure that the riots and rebellions of the time are seen as the lower class struggling to find a voice and make their plight known (Sharp 5). In this scene the Gyant is not only able to give a voice to these silenced people, but he is able to represent the same culture that they represent. He is not merely a mouthpiece, but another representation, and one with the

power to command the attention of Artegall. Spenser creates this monster to give additional power to the voice of the beleaguered. In this light, the Gyant reveals Spenser's sympathies to the plight of the English downtrodden, as well an enlightened view of his adherence to the social structures already in place. An analysis of the text supports this and is beneficial in understanding not only how the Gyant and his crowd fit into Elizabethan England representations, but how Spenser balanced his personal sympathies with his political allegiances.

In Book V of Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene, the knight Artegall and his squire Talus, come across the figure of the Gyant. The depiction of the Gyant is that he is a monster. Calling this figure "Gyant" takes it outside of the realm of characters that the reader can immediately associate with, like the knights and other human or elf figures. As a giant, this figure is comparable to other giants in literature, going back to the Cyclops in the *Odyssey*, or folk tales about the giants of the North. The text describes the Gyant through further depiction, but right from the beginning the author is telling the reader that this figure is to be treated as something "other". He is a monster. As a monster, with the application of Cohen's theory on monsters, the Gyant takes on multiple meanings and opens up a greater understanding of this episode.

Cohen posits that monsters are often "cultural bodies" (Cohen 4). But within a country like England there exist many different cultures during this time based on race, age, location, upbringing, and most importantly social class. The social structure in Elizabethan England created substantial rifts between the classes and effectively segregated them into separate cultures. So while Cohen states that monsters represent cultural bodies, it is not the culture of the entire country that is being represented, rather

the smaller cultures that make up the country. In this particular scene the monster, the Gyant, can be read as representing the English Cultural Body as it pertains to the lower classes; the peasants, laborers and others who do not belong to the middle or upper classes.

The text does not go into great detail in the description of the Gyant. This is because the Gyant, as a cultural representation, represents a great many people and as such cannot be tied down to a specific appearance, or have specific markings that might identify it with an exact group or class of people. It is the English lower classes as a whole, rather than just the servants, or the wage workers, or the beggars, or peasants. The Gyant, as a giant, is expected to be giant in stature, but is not ascribed any particular strength or power. This is because the English people under the crown, excluding the elite, are populous in number, but do not have any social standing or political power. In terms of categorization, Bynum's definitions of hybrid and metamorphic creatures prove useful. The Gyant would be a metamorphic creature rather than a hybrid creature in part due to his lack of multiple monster parts and representations. In addition to this he is a unified creature in form, but his monstrous size denotes a growth from normal stature to what he is now. Bynum states that metamorphosis shows transition, and the Gyant, through the evidence of his large stature and dialogue, is attempting to grow into something larger than a mere human or elf (Bynum 31). As an allegory, this metamorphic giant represents the cultural importance of changing ideas about the poor and authoritative responses to the poor.

In the story at this point the Gyant is speaking to a crowd of people and Artegall and Talus stop to listen to the speech, and then weigh in on the issues presented. The

bulk of the episode takes place in the form of the back and forth argument between the Gyant and Artegall, each rebutting the others statements and then adding their own affirmations to the mix. But first the knight and thus the reader must be introduced to the scene and the situation, and this episode in particular possesses a pivotal opening scene.

Artegall and Talus are journeying towards the sea and come across a crowd of people gathering by the cliffs. The fact that this many people are gathered in one place intrigues the knight and so they change course to inquire as to "what thing so many nations met, did there desire" (V ii 29). The image that Artegall comes upon as he approaches the throng, is of a giant standing upon a rock with a pair of balances in his hand. These scales of justice signify instantly that he will be either an aid to Artegall in deciding and dispensing justice, or a type of foil to our knight. Scales represent balance and equality. They are a physical symbol of justice and are an indicator to the reader or viewer that justice is in some way being served. It can also be used to emphasize a miscarriage of justice, by providing a literal reminder of justice in its true form of justice and its ideal, instead of whatever atrocity is occurring. Scales and their depictions date back to the ancient Egypt and the images of the Goddess Maat. Later the Hellenic gods Themis and Dike were painted as goddesses of justice and adopted the scales as well. Ancient Rome adopted the image of the scale wielding Dike and called their female goddess of justice Iustitia. The iconography of this Iustitia, or Lady Justice morphed and changed through the ages, but always carries the scales of justice to signify the balance of law, order and custom. (Curtis). So when the Gyant is seen wielding the scales it is an instant indicator that he is participating in this history in some way. What Artegall has to decide at this point is whether they Gyant is a true proponent of the crown's idea of

justice, or whether the Gyant is serving to propel another idea of justice in defiance of the queen and the laws set forth at this time. Earlier in the text the figure Adicia was supposed to represent justice and instead became a leading figure of injustice in the eyes of the characters and the narrator. In this light, it is understandable that the Gyant is not immediately identified as a true agent of justice, despite his symbolic accessories.

In this opening scene it is important for Artegall to identify whether the Gyant will be a threat to his mission or not. The Gyant, as the representation of a cultural body, presents the words and actions of a large group of English people towards the crown. As an emissary of the crown of justice, Artegall represents an emissary of the crown of England and is in the unique position of gaining insight into how the people are feeling, and how they might view the crown. Here Artegall, the crown representative, has a responsibility to deal with the situation in some fashion and it seems that he will not shirk this duty. This is not just a giant that he is dealing with, but the Gyant, the representative of the English third estate, and a voice for the large masses of people that are under the rule of the crown. These first impressions are momentous when viewed through monster theory, as in this scene it is not merely Artegall meeting the Gyant, but the English representative of the Crown meeting and talking with part of the English Cultural Body.

In addition to the symbolic meaning, as a fictional character it is interesting that Artegall himself is the one to face this Gyant. Artegall's backstory adds weight to his importance as a figure of justice. William Nelson, in his essay *The Legend of Justice: The Idol and the Crocodile*, explains that the setting of Artegall's story is immediately following an age of happiness, where virtue was said to flourish before wickedness and

vice took root and began to spread (Neslon 114). In his childhood, Astreaea, goddess of justice, trained him on earth, but when that wickeness began to spread she had to return to the heavens. She did leave him her iron groom Talus as a squire, and the golden sword Chrysaor as legacy. Because of this Artegall is Astreaea's heir, and his moral qualities as administrator of justice are meant to be legendary (Nelson 115). Nelson explains that, "His task is to imitate- not to restore- the natural justice of the age of Saturn" (Nelson 115). He is the administrator of justice, but was still trained by, and answers to his mentor, a higher judge and dispenser of justice.

This is one explanation for the intent and actions of Artegall, but there is another story that might be more insightful as to his purpose in this particular episode. Artegall's name, is full of meanings. Like Arthur he fathers a line of British kings, and his name "Art-egall" denotes his role as the knight of equity. But most importantly, his name is connected with that of an ancient king by the name of Arthgallo, whose story is recorded by Georffrey of Monmouth. Monmouth writes that Arthgallo made it his mission to take the nobles down, and raise up the peasants those in lower positions in life. He took wealth and property away from the wealthy, dispensing it among the poor and stockpiling a good deal for himself. The barons did not abide this and had him deposed, setting his brother Elidur in his place. (Nelson 115). This could have been the end of the story and then Spenser's Artegall would be more of a problematic figure, but Elidur managed to restore Arthgallo to the throne for a much different reign than before. Arthgallo amended his former ruling practices to align himself with the goals of the nobles and began to abase the lower classes and grant liberties to the gentility, "to allow every man to hold his own and to do right justice" (Nelson 116). Nelson makes the

comment that this kind of justice may disturb modern readers, but that it is fundamental to the teaching and understanding of the Legend of Artegall (Nelson 116).

Now the egalitarian Gyant, whom Artegall encounters in this episode, would have been an advocate of the first reign of Arthgallo. But Artegall remains firmly in the field of the second reign and does not want a return to the egalitarian ways of the past, which for him would be the first reign of Arthgallo. This is the crux of the discussion between them and the narrator presents no qualms to subtly weighing in on the issues as well, to further complicate the sympathies of the reader during Artegall's argument with the Gyant. So stepping into this scene the characters are already rife with layered meanings and representations. But with the symbolic explanations in place it is easier to understand and apply Cohen's monster theory to the episode and make a little bit more sense of it all.

The descriptions of the characters and the circumstances throughout this episode stem from the narrator, who employs narrative techniques to elicit sympathy for the characters he has chosen to be "right", and other techniques to show who he has chosen to be "wrong" in certain situations. It can be seen early on that the narrator implements negative diction to show distaste for the Gyant, and this negativity shines through as the description of the Gyant continues, moving on to depict the actual speech of the Gyant saying, "He boasted in his surquedrie,/ that all the world he would weigh equallie,/ if ought he had the same to couterpoys./ for want whereof he weighted vanity,/ and fild his ballaunce full of idle toys;/ yet was admired much of fooles, women and boys." (V ii 30). So judgments are being made here on both the method of weighing and the types of people the giant is attracting. It is the narrator's decision to call the items being balanced

"idle toys" and also the author's choice of diction to say the admiring crowd is full of "fooles, women and boys". The reader is now already predisposed to side with anyone who is against the "boasting" Gyant, and so when Artegall eventually steps in, he has supporters prepped and prepared to agree with his arguments. The narrator then relates that the Gyant;

> Sayd that he would all the earth vptake,
> And all the sea, deuided each from either:
> So would he of the fire one ballaunce make,
> And one of th'ayre, without or wind, or wether:
> Then would he ballaunce heauen and hell together,
> And all that did within them all contain;
> Of all whose weight, he would not misse a fether.
> And looke what surplus did of each remain,
> He would to his owne part restore the same againe." (V ii 31).

The words of the Gyant quickly reveal that this figure is spouting an egalitarian speech, which as we will see is an affront to Artegall's conviction that mutability is inescapable. The claim to balance all elements, and especially the balancing of heaven and hell, supports the narrator's claim that the giant is boasting **by claiming the power of a God**, and backs the insinuation that the Gyant thinks himself not only above or "bigger" than everyone, but also everything. Nelson comments that ""the two great adversaries whom Arthur and Artegall encounter of the Legend of Justice are, like Pollente, rebels, giants, and foes of God. They are rebels in that, like many of the evil characters in the book, they have taken over or are trying to take over the position that rightfully belongs to another" (Nelson 34). The Gyant's claimed position of judgment and power boarders on the sacrilegious, and Artegall now must step in at some point to refute the Gyant, if he hadn't been planning on doing so beforehand.

The Gyant is allowed one more stanza before the narrator records the reactions of the people and Artegalls rebuttal. The Gyant states,

> "For why, he sayd they all vnequall were,
> And had encroched vppon others share,
> Like as the sea (which plaine he shewed there)
> Had worne the earth, so did the fire the aire,
> So all the rest did others parts empaire.
> And so were realmes and nations run awry.
> All which he vndertooke for to repaire,
> In sort as they were formed aunciently;
> And all things would reduce vnto equality." (V ii 32)

If there had been any doubt as to the Gyant's egalitarian agenda, this speech serves to crush those doubts and firmly plant the Gyant's notions of equality. Here he is saying the elements, the sea and earth and such, exist in a state of inequality at the moment. The sea wears away the earth and thus has more than its share. The Gyant explains that here is an example of injustice, where the sea takes advantage of the shore and reduces it by taking bits away. But Artegall disagrees. Earlier in the work he ruled that in the transfer of land from Bracidas' island to that of his brother Amidas was just and good since it was altered by nature. In that same vein he also ruled that Bracidas could keep the treasure the waters transfered from Amidas to him. The Gyant apparently does not see it the same way as Artegall however as he compares the sea and earth relationship to the realms and nations, which as he sees them, stand in need of repair, and more specifically a reparation to how they were formed anciently.

The Gyant possesses a penchant for comparing the sad state, as he sees it, of the world at present with the glory of the past. The is further illustrated later on as the Gyant bemoans the state of the world saying;

> Seest not, how badly all things present bee,

And each estate quite out of order goth?
The sea it selfe doest thou not plainely see
Encroch uppont the land there under thee;
And th' earth it selfe how daily its increast,
By all that dying to it turned be?
And from the most, that some were given to the least? (V II. 37)

Again the Gyant states that he wants a restoration of all things to their ancient state, which he maintains was a state of equality. This Golden Age, an age before Mutability, in his mind existed without rich and poor, high classes and low classes, there existed no kings and queens, nor subjects and serfs. The Gyant seems to be echoing the words of Spenser in the proem to the book, which are a lament regarding universal change. The only change that the Gyant is advocating is a change back to what he sees as a time of equality. If he were to be proposing a new form of social structure, then he would be participating in the possibility of a total upheaval and continuous future changes (Evans 198). But the Gyant is not a proponent of this, instead only desiring a return to a golden age, one that Nelson believes the he does not fully understand. Nelson states, "The giant is wrong on two counts, in his understanding of the nature of the golden age and in his efforts to return to it. It is true, of course, that the world is degenerate…But the harmony of the golden age was not one which gave equal weight to heaven and hell, fire and air, king and peasant" (Nelson 117). When these words are looked at with the knowledge that the Gyant is representing a cultural body of people, then it brings up some interesting points. This means that the lower classes, the poor of England are not advocating for a new and unproven order, they are declaring that the older system was more beneficial to them and is seen by them as a more equal state of living. Artegall disagrees with the Gyant as well and now has an opportunity to add his

voice to the discussion. So when Artegall disagrees, it is a chance for the crown, or an agent of the crown like Spenser, to explain why they are opposed to such an idea. Before Artegall speaks however, the narrator takes a moment to inform the reader of the reactions of the crowd saying:

> Therefore, the vulgar did about him flocke,
> And cluster thicke vnto his leasing vaine,
> Like foolish flies about an hony crocke
> In hope by him great benefite to gaine,
> And vcontrolled freedome to obtaine.
> All which when Artgegall did see, and heare,
> How he mis-led the simple people traine,
> In sdeignfull wize he drew vnto him neare,
> And thus vnto him spake, without regard or feare.

This description of the mob of people that have assembled to hear the Gyant, almost tells more about the narrator than about the people that are being depicted. This narrator starts out by calling the crowd "vulgar". This shows his view of the type of people that would be drawn to the Gyant's speech. The word "vulgur" denotes a base or unintelligent individual, or it could mean low-born or common. Either way, the narrator clearly sees these people as a lower class of people and tries to pass that judgment on to the reader. At this point it is getting harder to separate the views and opinions of the narrator from that of Artegall. Aspects of Artegall's character are present in the narrator and thus the narrator cannot be trusted to be unbiased. Nevertheless, the narrator is one of three people that we hear from in this episode, and thus his account must be accepted as one of the only ways of having third party access to the argument.

The narrator goes on to compare the crowd to a swarm of flies, milling about a honey pot. In comparing the crowd to flies, the narrator connects them to one of the smallest and most insignificant of creatures; creatures that are considered

annoyances or pests in most situations. A swarm of flies lacks intelligence and individual thought, and is drawn to sweetness by instinct, having almost no control over themselves. Flies are also connected with images of the devil, death and decay. They proliferate scenes of carnage and disease, and signify that something is rotten or bad.

Not only is the crowd described as a swarm of flies, but they are "foolish flies". So in that vein, even somewhat intelligent flies are seen as better than this group of people. After this degrading description, the narrator goes on to say that the people are only drawn to the words of the Gyant, because of the benefit they hope to gain from his plan of action. They desire "vncontrolled freedome", which would be seen as an agent of chaos to Artegall, as well as the narrator at this point. When Artegall hears all this, he sees the moment to step in and attempt to refute the words of the Gyant, and gain control of the situation that he deems to be ideologically dangerous.

This is one of the first times that Artegall takes control of the situation himself instead of reviewing things from the sideline. Previously he seemed to be deciding the justice of the cases he came upon after the fact. He was able to sift through the evidence and see the results of the arguments and battles. But due to the social and ongoing nature of this case, Spenser is forcing Artegall to voice his opinions and his philosophies surrounding justice and how it presents itself in the world. It is the social nature of this case that causes Artegall to step forward, and that is telling as to the import of social power at times like these (Evans 198). Artegall's choice to step in brings gravity to the Gyant's words, and shows just how dangerous they might be to not only this crowd, but to the people that his words might be spread to. Artegall's duty at this point is to prevent the social structure from changing as the Gyant desires. Evans explains this more fully

when he says, “Spenser’s conception reflects the passionate desire of his period to retain the structure of the social hierarchy while allowing for the enormous changes which were going on in the membership of its various levels. The task of justice is to maintain the hierarchy against the forms of egalitarianism, on the side, and the unbridled exploitation of private power on the other” (Evans 198). So Artegall must tread carefully at this point in order to keep order, and not cause an excitation.

Artegall starts his speech by addressing some of the points the Gyant brought up. He begins;

> Thou that presum’st to weigh the world anew,
> And all things to an equall to restore,
> In stead of right me seemes great wrong dost shew,
> And far aboue they forces pitch to sore.
> For ere thou limit what is lesse or more
> In every thing, thou aughtest first to know,
> What was the poyse of euery part of yore:
> And looke then how much it doth ouerflow,
> Or faile thereof, so much is more then iust to trow. (V ii 34)

So this first stanza is a statement establishing Artegall’s position in opposition to the Gyant. Artegall also reveals what avenue he is going to take when dealing with the Gyant, and also the people around him. Artegall approaches the situation by utilizing eloquence in his addresses to the Gyant. This was the standard and proper tool in dealing with rebellious individuals during Spenser’s time and Artegall seems to be following in the footsteps of his contemporaries in England (Nelson 35). This is Artegall’s initial attempt at using eloquence to subdue the Gyant, rather than rushing in and creating a martyr out of the Gyant in front of his adoring crowd. That is not to say that violence is not an option at this point since, “It appears to have been the standard, indeed inevitable, view that if eloquence could not subdue a mob of rioters, the force of the

sword must do it" (Nelson 36). And while the time for violence is looming, Artegall still attempts to sway the Gyant and his people with his continuing addresses. He advocates against change saying that the Maker created all things and balanced it all out, and that it was all created in perfect harmony. He goes on to state;

> Such heauenly iustice doth among them raine,
> That euery one doe know their certaine bound,
> In which they doe these many yeares remaine,
> And mongst them al no change hath yet beene found.
> But if thou now shouldst weigh them new in pound,
> We are not sure they would so long remaine:
> All change is perillous, and all chaunce vnsound.
> Therefore leaue off to weigh them all againe,
> Till we may be assur'd they shall their course retaine. (V. ii. 36)

Artegall is saying that there is no need to weigh everything again in the Gyant's scales since God created everything in harmony and balance already. He states that the way things are is the way that God intended, thus if things were to be upset, then it would be an upset to God's order. Now that Artegall and the Gyant are getting into the meatier issues, it is easier to see the representations of the characters more that the characters themselves. The Gyant, or rather, the people of England in this case, want to reallocate the wealth, property, and power in a more equal manner, while Artegall, as the crown representative, desires the current system to remain in place. A change to the system could mean trouble for the crown and all who serve or rely on it.

What is interesting at this juncture is that the Gyant is saying that he wants to return to an ancient order when a more balanced society held sway, but what Artegall is stating is that hierarchical society in place is what God created and intended. This is a type of impasse that the two cannot seem to overcome throughout the rest of their

argument, and neither is able to persuade the other. And so Spenser gets to the heart of the issue surrounding the conflict between the lower classes and the ruling powers. The lower classes desire a return to a feudal society, one that they believe possesses a better distribution of wealth and work. But those that hold positions of power and wealth adamantly adhere to the belief that their higher ranking is due to the blessing of God, and should not be tampered with.

Even though the argument between the lower and upper classes in England, and that of the characters in Fairy Land have reached a point where neither side is willing to budge, Artegall continues trying to satiate the Gyant by citing a higher source such as God for the way things are. However, the Gyant retaliates against that with his next verse saying;

> Thou foolishe Elfe (said then the Gyant wroth)
> Seest not, how badly all things present bee,
> And each estate quite out of order goth?
> The sea it selfe doest thou not plainely see
> Encroch vppon the land there vnder thee;
> And th'earch it selfe how daily its increast,
> By all that dying to it turned be?
> Were it not good that wrong were then surceast,
> And from that most, that some were giuen to the least? (V. ii. 37)

The Gyant goes on to reiterate his intention to level the mountains into the plains, and in the same manner subdue those that are tyrants over stewardships, curb the power of the Lords, and draw the wealth from the rich to siphon to the poor.

Artegall immediately combats the Gyant's words by arguing that the waves of the sea take from the land all the time, and it does not make the earth any less since the tide just takes the land somewhere else. He states that it is the same way with the earth

and the mountains. That which flourishes now, fades away into the dust of the earth. He goes on to say that the hills and small mounds don't envy the mountains with greater height. In this way he compares the earth to the social structure by going on to say that God made the kings and subject in the same manner, with God giving and God taking away, but all accepting their allocations. Artegall finishes his speech by challenging the Gyant to weigh his words saying;

> For take thy ballaunce, if thou be so wise,
> And weigh the winde, that vnder heauen doth blow;
> Or weigh the light, that in the East doth rise;
> Or weigh the thought, that form mans mind doth flow.
> But if the weight of these thou canst not show,
> Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall.
> For how canst thou those greater secrets know,
> That doest not know the least thing of them all?
> Ill can he rule the great, that cannot reach the small. (V. ii. 43)

The Gyant recognizes the challenge, and the fact that Artegall does not think him capable of it and the next few stanzas attempts to weigh the words "right" and "wrong" together. This will not work according to Artegall's mentor Astraea, who taught him to weigh both right and wrong in equal balance (I. viii. 2). And indeed the words fly out of the balance and the Gyant is not able to weight them per Artegall's instructions. Artegall takes this opportunity to tell the Gyant, who is attempting to weigh down the "wrongs" in order to balance the "rights", how the system works. Artegall says;

> But set the truth and set the right aside,
> For they with wrong or falshood will not fare;
> And put two wrongs together to be tride,
> Or else two falses, of each equall share;
> And then together doe them both compare.
> For truth is one, and right is euer one. (V. ii. 48).

With these words it is apparent that Artegall is now calling the shots. He is taking control of the scales of the Gyant, scales he is well versed in using as a student of Astraea, and using them to conclude his argument with the Gyant. The Gyant is ignorant in the intricacies of the scales and has been bested because of his lack of education in this instrument. Just so are the lower class Englishmen and women who attempt to stand up to the crown and its supporters. The education of the higher classes allows them to politically outmaneuver those who would attempt to upset their rule. The elite control the instruments, the means of measuring justice, and do not instruct the lower classes in the methods of changing those rules and instruments, or at least utilizing them to their best advantage.

This is the end of the argument between the Gyant and Artegall. The narrator declares Artegall the winner and immediately lends his support to Artegall through the description of the Gyants next actions. The Gyant is cited as getting angry and thrusting the right away from him. The narrator states "For it was not the right, which he did seeke" (V. ii. 49.2). This is obviously the opinion of the narrator and probably Artegall as well, since the Gyant does not state his reasons for thrusting away the right. The right in this case may have been the "right" of Artegall, or the "right" of the ruling class when speaking in terms of English social hierarchy. In any case the narrator's determination that Artegall won the argument ends Artegall's personal involvement in the situation, apart from his instructions to Talus. Artegall's defeat of the Gyant is limited to the power of his words, and the strength of his control over Talus. He does not get physically embroiled with the Gyant, choosing to battle with words rather than brawn, and no physical injury has come to either party at this point. The fact that Artegall's

whole purpose is seemingly to defeat the Gyant's argument, not the Gyant himself, shows where Spenser believes the danger and power to lie. Artegall has already slain the "real" issue, and thrust down the notions of egalitarianism, and a return to a system of supposed equality. Once that discussion is over for the characters, and more importantly for the readers, then Artegall no longer has interest in dealing further with the Gyant.

That all changes with Talus enters in the action again. It is Talus who approaches the Gyant and "shouldered him from off the higher ground,/ And down the rock him throwing, in the sea him dround" (V. ii. 49.8-9). It did not seem as if Artegall was going to slay the Gyant, so it is somewhat of a surprise that Talus then steps in to kill the already defeated Gyant. The death and destruction of the Gyant's body is described as;

> Like a ship, whom cruell tempest driues
> Vpon a rocke with horrible dismay
> Her shattered ribs in thousand peeces riues,
> And spoyling all her geares and goodly ray
> Does make her selfe misfortunes piteous pray,
> So downe the cliffe the wretched Gyant tumbled;
> His battred balances in peeces lay,
> His timbered bones all broken rudely rumbled,
> So was the high aspyring with huge ruine humbled. (V. ii. 50)

When looking at this episode through the lens of monster theory, it makes the description of the Gyant's death that much more important. It is the narrator that describes the destruction of the Gyant and his attention to the physical details of the Gyant's demise, when he ignored the physicality of the Gyant while alive, shows that this is not ordinary death. When the bones of the Gyant shatter on the rocks into a thousand pieces and the timbered bones are broken and scattered, it signifies the breaking and scattering of the English people if they attempt to rise up, and fail. They will not only be defeated, but they will then be crushed so that they cannot rise again.

The scene continues when the people who had gathered around the Gyant and who were supportive of his words and his argument see that their spokesman and their representative has been killed by Talus, they begin to murmur and oppose this treatment. They recognize all that they have lost with the death of the Gyant and gather together to raise up arms. The narrator calls these people a "lawless multitude" in "warlike wise" and out for revenge. Artegall responds by calling Talus to action, who disperses the group;

> But when at them he with his flaile gan lay,
> He like a swarm of flyes them ouerthrew;
> Ne any of them durst come in his way,
> But here and there before his presence flew,
> And hid themselves in holes and bushes from his vew (V. ii. 53.5-9).

The crowd of people are thus subdued by Talus and the conflict is finally over. The victory goes to Talus and Artegall, as is right in the eyes of the narrator, but enough was said before the crushing defeat that Artegall did not come out politically unscathed. The Gyant challenged the policies that Artegall was charged to uphold and not only was the crowd allowed to hear the argument, but the reader as well. Spenser is allowing the reader to hear this not for the purposes of Fairy Land's policies, but of England's policies. With the Gyant as the cultural body of the third estate, that third estate is commanding space in Spenser's pages to bring light to the issues.

In order to better understand the import of these issues it is necessary to gain some perspective relating to English society at this time, as well as Edmund Spenser's particular relationship with it. Only once this is accomplished can an apt analysis of the Gyant's role occur.

A series of riots and rebellions served as a historical prelude to Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. These riots and general periods of disquiet, are of particular importance to the events that unfold in the second canto of Book V. In the time leading up to the writing of the Faerie Queene, there existed a substantial growth in poverty in England and the surrounding areas. In Bronislaw Geremek's work, *Poverty: A History*, he explains that traditionally the dissolution of the English monasteries in 1535 and 1539 is seen as the instigating factor in the growth of poverty, as well as the deterioration of living conditions, particularly among the poor in England. With the dissolution of monasteries came also the fall in alms distributions, which were in place to help supplement the meager wages of the financially less fortunate. In this new system where church property was secularized, only the elite and king were able to profit (Geremek 165). This dissolution created an atmosphere where the poor became increasingly poor, and the rich became exponentially rich. The money that had existed to provide a buffer for those who had fallen on hard times, were destitute, or for those who just needed an occasional leg up, was then allocated to other sources and those in need were left to fend for themselves however they were able. This not only increased the poverty of the area, but created a much larger gap in between the social classes by increasing the extreme poverty and the extreme wealth (Geremek 165).

This dissolution of the monasteries was not the only reason for the poverty and class clashes however. The ebb and flow of agriculture, always a key point in the economy, played a particular role in the dearth of money amongst the peasants as well. The inflation in the sixteenth century arose from internal structural contradictions. The agriculture of the area was shifting to the landed gentry due to increased prices of

agricultural products which the peasant farmers could not afford to keep up with. This added to the demise of peasant agriculture and plays a role in the stagnating economy (Geremek 89). The stagnation of agriculture did not just affect the agricultural section of the economy. When so many of the population acquires their living from this sector, and there is a lack of money and work, then this will leak into other sections of the economy and into the everyday lives of the populous.

The harvest during the fifteenth and sixteenth century was not only a source of work, but part of the structure the country of England was built on. W. G. Hoskins in his work, *Harvest Fluctuation and English Economic History, 1480-1619,* elaborates on the importance of agriculture to the English people and the English infrastructure. He compares the agriculture of the country to its heartbeat and writes that the health and well-being of the entire country depended on the output from the economic source. He writes that other parts of the economy are important as well and compares them to the other organs that are vital to health, but emphasizes that the rhythm of the heart (agriculture) governs all of the rest of the organs, or the body politic. The other body parts such as the liver representing the textile industry could be detrimental to England and cause unease and misery if they should fail. But a failure of the heart, a failure of agriculture, could bring the country to the point of breakdown (Hoskins 17). With this emphasis on the vital nature of the harvest in every facet of English economy, it is no wonder that it had such far reaching effects into the social structure as well.

In the social realm, the contrasts between the rich and the poor in the countryside sharpened. Land was taken from the peasants and given to the gentry, townsfolk and rich farmers. This distribution of formerly peasant land continued at increasing rates even

though the new owners of the land were not able to reap adequate profits because of the new market conditions. With rising taxes, the small farmers had to supplement their income by hiring themselves out as laborers and they saw their wages fall in real value due to inflation (Geremek 90). The real wages of a family often fell below the daily minimum that was required to feed them, and thus living standards fell and hunger rose (Geremek 91).

This time of economic expansion, and also an age of falling living standards, was a turning point in long-term economic trends. "The sudden price increases of the previous century gave way to a certain stability, but, although the fluctuations diminished, the price of agricultural products remained very high in relation to the laborers' wages" (Geremek 90). And so the poor and the peasants paid the price for the modernization of the social system. Most of the time this price was paid by those who had been banished from the farms and were now attempting to make a living in the cloth factories or as artisans or laborers. It is this social class that felt the effects of the inflation most, and with few avenues left to them, some of those that suffered from this new system attempted to lash out against the system by means of riots and insurrection.

In his book *In Contempt of all Authority*, Buchanan Sharp explores the riots in the West of England during this time of economic change, and reveals some of the reasons for them, and some of the tactics the crown had for dealing with them. Sharp agrees that the harvest was an integral part of the social situation at this time and explains that during the Elizabethan period there were four bad harvests in succession and that led to devastating consequences (Sharp 13). Some of those consequences were food riots. The majority of food riots actually were led by cloth workers, and took place

in the centers of the cloth industry. Those in this industry were not as destitute as the peasants and had the means and the time to foment rebellion, they could better afford the risk that an uprising presents (Geremek 91). This means that despite the agricultural beginnings of the troubles, the upset expanded to the artisans, the skilled men who worked in nonagricultural occupations. (Sharp 13). This shows the distance that poverty and dissatisfaction can go within the populous when a society is so closely linked to the harvests.

To show just how much the population was in turmoil about their wages, a look at the riots and the uprisings will suffice. Sharpe explains that,

> The food riot was a significant indicator of social tension in preindustrial England, and certainly it was one of the most common forms of popular protest. For example, George Rude discovered 184 separate outbreaks in the period between 1735 and 1800. While riots were not as numerous as in the eighteenth century, there were between 1586 and 1631 at least forty, as well as two attempted insurrections and a considerable number of other riots and insurrections planned or rumored, all of which related in some way to the state of the food market (Sharpe 10).

With so much of the populous in a state of unrest, those that were in charge were required to come up with ways of dealing with and quieting the riots and potential riots.

The best measure of the significance of riots, like the food riots, and attempted insurrections and of the social problems which underlay them is to be found in the response of the government. Because of a lack of adequate means for policing the lower

classes, or suppressing rebellions and outbreaks when they occurred, fear of the riot, and of riot's accompanying potential for overturning the established social order, is a constant theme in Tudor and Stuart political pronouncements. The Tudor and Stuart governments thus had to rely on threats of dire consequences and severe punishments to deal with the rising unrest. Some of the measures were in the form of legislative acts designed to deal with the consequences of food shortages, as well as deal with the problems associated with poverty and lack of supplies. (Sharp 3-4). The Statute of Artificers (1563), the Poor Law, the Vagrancy Statute, and the Enclosure Act of 1598, as well as the less well-known Statute on Cottages (1589), can all be viewed as parts of an attempt to deal with social problems resulting from the existence of a riotous and potentially dangerous population (Sharpe 5). These attempts to alleviate and subdue the population fell flat, judging by the continued and increasing riots.

Spenser was not oblivious to the social unrest of the time. As a part of the English ruling power in Ireland, he was closely involved with putting down many of the riots and uprisings there. In particular, the Desmond Rebellion played a large part in Spenser's career and personal experience of riots. This particular revolt had broken out in part because the FitzGerald earls of Desmond had felt that their power and authority were threatened by the spread of Tudor rule and the attempt to make the ancient Irish lordships conform to English law, tenancy, and social expectation:

> Once the Act of the Irish parliament, passed on 18 June 1541, had declared that Henry VIII was king rather than lord of Ireland and could command the unconditional obedience of his Irish subjects, Irish lords

had to surrender their titles and have them regranted under new terms and conditions by the English Crown (*Edmund Spenser: A Life* 153).

Some of the lords resented this change in status and saw it as a part of sinister campaign against them by the English crown.

A revolt soon developed into a serious and well supported rebellion that went beyond the last desperate actions of a dying dynasty. In 1580 the situation looked like the Tudor regime's worst nightmare: the combination of local hostility with an international Catholic crusade, led by an impassioned zealot (*Edmund Spenser: A Life* 145). Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton (1536-93) was the Lord Deputy of Ireland at this time, and he appointed Spenser as one of his secretaries. Spenser soon became Grey's chief secretary, and was trusted with responsibilities more than his other secretaries. In Andrew Hadfield's *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, he notes that, "We will probably never know whether this was a great opportunity for the newly married poet in need of gainful employment or an effective banishment as a result of offending too many people in his early work" (*Edmund Spenser: A Life* 155). As an Englishman, living in a society plagued by bad harvests and the resulting unrest and riots, Spenser would have not only a thorough knowledge of the social and economic situations, but an understanding of how they are supposed to be dealt with in terms of the crown and the ruling powers.

With a knowledge of the social setting in which Spenser lived and wrote and his personal involvement in such settings, scenes of justice and crowds take on a deeper and more important meaning. When Artgeall deals with not only the Gyant, but with the crowd that the Gyant is talking to, the import of Artegall's words and actions is amplified. From the records and histories, it is known that when an ambassador of the

crown comes upon a potential riot, or an individual who is attempting to instigate such riots, then there is a set plan to deal with such individuals. It only makes sense that this type of policy would take effect in similar situations in Faery Land, as well as Britain.

T. K. Dunseath recognizes this as well and writes in his book *Spenser's Allegory of Justice in Book Five of the Faerie Queene* about Artegall's position as official agent of justice in Faery Land. Here he is Glorianna's instrument and as such he should know his legal duties, and responsibilities in cases of unlawful assembly, 'routs,' or riot. In Tudor policy the highest ranking officer on the scene was required by statute to address the group threatening the peace. Regardless of whatever preliminary remarks the Queen's officer made, he always read the standard proclamation for such disturbances. And if the order did not acquire compliance within an hour, the Queen's officer was authorized to use all necessary force, even employing his own men and deputizing citizens when needed (Dunseath 111). What makes the episode in Book V interesting is that Artegall does not attempt to address the group first, and does not make any standard remarks or threats to them in order to control the situation. Instead he addresses and directs his comments to the Gyant.

The narrator makes many comments describing the crowd and hints at the danger they pose. According to Elizabethan law, it was the charge of the first arriving agent to attempt to be peaceable in his dealings with the upset civilians. But it was also understood that it was imperative to disperse the crowd before those who were rebelling had a chance to influence the surrounding civilians (Dunseath 110). Artegall diverges from this plan of action when he instead addresses the Gyant and spends his time in discussion with him, rather than his initial duty of halting the momentum of the crowd

and then dispersing them. Questions are raised when Artegall does not follow the formulaic path set for an officer of the Queen, and the possible reasons for Artegall's circumvention are varied.

This may be a suggestion as to the imperfection of Ategall in his role as dispenser of justice. Dunseath states that "Instead of taking a positive step himself in an effort to lessen the possibility of violence, Artegall sends Talus to inquire the 'cause of their array,' and irrelevant question, because unlawful assembly, not their motivation is the issue. When the crowd attacks Talus, he scatters them relentlessly" (Dunseath 112). While I believe that the motivation for the assembly is in fact part of the issue, I agree that when Artegall uses Talus to scatter the crowds instead of dealing personally with the issue in a more effective manner, it is an exhibition of internal discords in relation to the crowds and how these situations should be dealt with. This is the first time that Artegall has confronted the mob and he gives vain reasons for not fulfilling his responsibilities, such as not wanting to sully his noble hands with the work. These excuses further reveal the possible sympathies the Artegall may be harboring towards the crowds taken in with the egalitarian words of the Gyant. Which means that the sympathies of Spenser himself could be represented here, when Artegall does not initiate violence with either the Gyant or the crowd.

When Artegall deals directly with the Gyant at first, he is showing that for him, the priority lies with the speech the Gyant is giving, instead of the expectations of his role. Artegall's concern is with the argument, not with the crowd and that is not in conjunction with how an emissary of the Queen should approach the situation, based on the rules of behavior in Spenser's life. Artegall is forced to deal with the people when

the Gyant is slain, and even then he does not deal with them directly, instead passing over the responsibility to Talus.

Dunseath explains the situation by stating that "When the giant falls, the people he has mislead naturally are disappointed at the 'certaine losse of so great expectations' (51.5) and then arm themselves to confront Artegall…Artegall, who had all the answers for the giant on the tip of his tongue, now knows not 'what to doo,' a dilemma of his own making which reflects his pride. Symbolically, his pride produces a stasis, in which the proper working of justice has come to a standstill. Artegall is 'loth' to soil his 'noble hands' on the common people, thereby forgetting that justice is to be given impartially both to the high and the low. It is even more ironic that he should take such a stand, considering the fact that he had previously lectured the giant on the point that 'Te hils doe not the lowly dales distaine (41.3)" (Dunseath 109-110). Here Dunseath captures the strange words and actions of Artegall in this situation, and associates it with the pride of Artegall. Instead of pride, the reasoning might be that Artegall is hesitant to injure the peasants and the impoverished that are clinging to the hope that the Gyant was spewing. The crowd is obviously not made up of the well-to-do, and are clearly searching for a means to a better life. This plight echoes the plight of those in Spenser's time who suffered from the economic downturn and the lack of work and food.

It could also be that this is a valid excuse for those of higher class to not want to demean themselves by dealing directly with peasants, even if it is to kill or injure them. This type of view of the poor and peasants was not uncommon and was used to keep the lower classes in positions of subjugation. In Stephen Greenblatt's work "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and the Representation of Rebellion", he writes about the

victory columns that were constructed after wars or rebellions from the spoils of the conflicts. Since these columns are created by the victorious ruling group, the representation and participation of the lower classes typically goes unacknowledged. In a column created after the Peasant Revolt in 1525, there is a figure of a peasant, but he is being stabbed in the back while in a defeated position (Greenblatt 45). There are many details about this column that explain the attitude towards those of lower classes, particularly those in the lowest classes. Greenblatt explains that the artist, Durer, could not dignify the peasant by representing him as a worthy opponent, and could not include the image of the nobleman for fear of tarnishing the noble person by a base encounter. Instead, Durer depicts a peasant entirely without honor being stabbed by the victor's sword, without an actual representation of the victor. Even the victor's sword is left "untainted" since it is not encountering a base adversary, merely overtaking him from behind (Greenblatt 46).

The peasants depicted in Durer's work exemplify the struggle that the English peasants encountered when dealing with the ruling classes. The attitude of the higher estates towards those of a lower standing, cemented the communication barriers between the social classes and did not allow for political discussions between them. Spenser, in this scene, is opening up dialogue between classes and providing a space in which both sides symbolically have an equal chance to voice their issues. This is of course, Spenser's interpretation of the third estate's grievances, but what is important is that Spenser is creating a precedence. To keep the readership from scaring off he even has characters like Talus there to take the danger out of the situation by re-establishing the existing social situation. But he is still able to subtly suggest that there is a need for

dialogue between the classes, and that there exist citizens who live a pitiable state of live and who are not content to remain in subjugation.

The second thesis put forth by Cohen on monster theory states that the monster always escapes in some way, to return in some form. He writes, "Monster theory must therefore concern itself with strings of cultural moments, connected by a logic that always threatens to shift; invigorated by change and escape, by the impossibility of achieving the desired fall or death, the stopping of its gigantic subject, monstrous interpretation is as much process as epiphany, a work that must content itself with fragments" (Cohen 4). The Gyant does not escape death, but the emergence of Talus at the time of his death illustrates the point that Cohen expounds upon in his work.

Talus is a monster in his own right, as an automaton, a metal man. He is the machine that dispenses justice, taking orders and seeing his missions through without any moral questioning or notions of mercy. He represents the body of the crown, not the people working for the queen, but authority and soulless power of the state as a whole. His body of metal juxtaposed to the flesh of the Gyant shows just how cold and inhuman he is. This supports the supposition that he represents the state. The cold power of the state and the unyielding structures that define the ruling system are personified in his physical body, and his actions only augment that interpretation. He unquestioningly follows orders, presents no moral objections to any of his duties, elicits no questions as to his motives, and never questions the authority of his taskmaster. Although he is shaped like a man, the man is missing and in its place is a machine that blindly executes its orders. This exemplifies the machine of the state, the red tape and paperwork of ruling a country. Talus exists to put down monsters such as the Gyant, just as agents of

the crown exist to put down insurrections and protect the policies that rule the land. Talus makes sure that the Gyant no longer has any power or authority by killing him, then proves that he represents true power and authority by dispensing the mob.

Monsters such as Talus and the Gyant are a common occurrence in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and Spenser utilizes them for many different means and purposes. But this scene, with the application of monster theory shows that Spenser let some of his own thoughts and opinions leak through in the forms of his monsters. Artegall showed hesitation to disperse the crowd and instead dealt with the Gyant and his speeches first. This shows that Spenser was interested in what the English body had to say and the reasons for their unrest. Artegall does not let the Gyant escape unscathed however, and the crowd was eventually dealt with. Talus emerges as the dispenser of punishments, and shows the transition of power from the Gyant, or rather the lower class English, to Talus, the crown's authority. Whatever Spenser's sympathies, he was loyal to the Queen and to the statutes that he had to uphold. Scenes such as this proliferate the *Faerie Queene* and when the monsters are looked at as cultural representations, rather than physical abnormalities, then insight can be gained into Spenser's life and the life of the people he was surrounded by, and responsible for.

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