



Fairy in the Faerie Queene: Renaissance Elf-Fashioning and Elizabethan Myth-Making

Matthew Woodcock

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Why and how did Edmund Spenser employ fairy mythology in "The Faerie Queene"? In this book, Matthew Woodcock reasserts the importance of fairy mythology in this famous poem by demonstrating how Spenser places fairy at the very centre of his mythopoeic project. Woodcock argues that despite the continued invitations in the poem to deconstruct Gloriana, Spenser's identification of Queen Elizabeth I with the fairy queen figure is far more ambiguous than has previously been recognized. The poet is engaged both in constructing a mythological persona for the queen and in drawing attention to his own role as laureate and myth-maker. Spenser's "elf-fashioning" is therefore a vital part of his authorial self-fashioning. The book is an extended examination of the poem which locates Spenser's work within the context of early modern conceptions and representations of fairy and discusses the representation of Elizabeth as the fairy queen in relation to the vast range of studies on Elizabethan myth-making.

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