

English 300: Merlin
Week X: Questions for Discussion

1. The first stanza of FQ III, 3 acknowledges two forms of love. What is the difference between them? In what way(s) or to whom is the difference significant?
2. Why should Britomart be searching for a “paramour” who is described as “unknown”?
3. The word “end” shows up frequently in FQ III, 3. What does it describe? Why might it be important?
4. The subject of FQ III is chastity. How is this adumbrated in Canto 3 or how is it made problematic?
5. Spenser invokes Clio, the muse of history, rather than Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, in this canto. Does that mean that we are supposed to read Canto 3 as a straightforward account of England’s past? Is this canto at all like an historical chronicle? What kinds of writing that you have examined this semester does it most resemble?
6. In Canto 2 of FQ III, we are told that Britomart fell in love with Artegall when she saw him in a mirror, which also happens to be a mirror that can reveal treachery that threatens the state. Why that conjunction? Why does she fall in love through a mirror?
7. Why do Glauce and Merlin use the word “read” so often?
8. It has been argued that each of Britomart’s clashes in FQ III imply the crossing of a sexual threshold. Is that true in Canto 3?
9. Why does Merlin laugh in stanza 19?
10. Why does Britomart blush when she is “descryed” stanza 20?
11. What does Spenser mean when he says in stanza 50 “the end is not” immediately after Merlin’s prophecies? What is Merlin doing in that stanza?
12. Why is Artegall in the realm of “faerye”? FQ III, 3 gives one an answer, but it is not an answer that really explains anything. What does the realm of “faerye” conjure up in the poem? What is it good for?