

Example of christian love essay

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



In “ Faerie Queen” by Edmund Spenser one might find the whole anthology of 16-17th centuries’ struggle between Catholic Church and English Protestantism. The literary work is full of allegories, moral messages and variety of judgments and modes of how to live one’s life.

Except for explanation of how English Protestant, loyal servant of Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth II was supposed to live his life, Spenser had emphasized the ideal love for such individual. In the love story of Redcrosse Knight and Una, Spenser showed stereotypical perception of gender roles in the family and ideal Christian love and married life, which, in the end, were the same issues for a good and faithful Protestant. In the present essay, Spenser’s stereotypes of male and female roles are analyzed in the framework of the ideal Christian love and its educative meaning.

First of all, it should be outlined what Spenser meant by Christian love and marriage. Unlike the previous epoch of Romanism and novels about brave knights and ladies of the heart, Spenser’s interpretation of the topic was entirely different than in romantic novel. His type of love has nothing to do with romantic feelings or strong sensual attraction. Although, the Redcrosse Knight – George was mentioned to be physically excited by magician’s dream, his wisdom and holiness were stronger than sensual desire to the woman he loved (Spencer, 47).

Particular feature of this relationship is that it is based on mutual respects and loyalty rather than romantic attachment. Christian love for Spenser is not about feelings expression or for the love itself, it is about fulfillment of all-binding duties of Christian holiness and following the right path in life.

Although an individual might take the wrong road, his partner should be support and guidance for the individual to return to the right, true path of Christianity (Fukuda, 777). In this case, particular feature is that only man has the right to make mistakes and be forgiven while woman is expected to be chaste in all possible aspects of life. Subsequently, the ideal of Christian love (or I would rather say marriage) is in the way partners supplement each other.

The idea of partners' supplementation in love is a corner stone of Spencer's perception of love. In this context, just as everything in the Christian life, each individual has an ideal example to follow. In case of Spencer's interpretation, this ideal was True Faith embodied in the love of George and Una (Fukuda, 778). The True Faith in God envisioned following his laws and those laws had emphasized the ideal mode of behavior for men and women, in other words, Spencer's gender stereotypes depict religious ideal of male/female roles in social and family lives. In this context, his heroes George, as an embodiment of Holiness, and Una, as an embodiment of Truth, could not have different roles than Protestantism was proclaiming. In other words, Spencer used Christian gender stereotypes in order to contrast them to the fallen values of the Catholic Church.

As an embodiment of the ideal Christian love, relationship between George and Una were initially aiming at marriage. All their activities were showing partners' struggle in the married life to survive against all odds and to keep the holy Christian bond between them indestructible. In this context, male and female stereotypes contribute to the moral message of the author.

Spencer teaches his audience how to live in Protestant honor and which values to protect. Subsequently, keeping in mind the fact that the book aimed at comparison between right Protestant belief and Catholic Church, one would understand that Una and George were doomed to be stereotypical. Those stereotypes made them comprehensible for the ordinary people, who were supposed to gain certain guidance and moral lesson from the story. In order to see those lessons, examples of stereotypes and their moral messages should be outlined.

First of all, George and Una are described in a classic manner of manhood and female timidity. George “ full jolly knight and faire” and Una “ much whiterthen snow; but the same did hide under a vele” fit each other in his bravery and her submission to his strength (Fukuda, 779). The main moral of this depiction is that true Christians should follow the old traditions of their forefathers and that Protestantism was not denying those traditions, order of family structure and obligations’ division. According to traditions and Christian faith, man had the right for doubt and stepping aside of his path, and it was woman’s duty to return him to that path, since as a carrier of the original sin, she was the reason for his doubts. In order to prove this idea, Spencer had shown that George’s doubts and change of the initial path were conditioned by his lack of trust in Una, which seemed to be justified already by her female nature. He did not challenge the opponent or find out whether it was a dream; it was easier for him to belief in her impurity than to fight for dignity. In this context, his holiness is depicted as blindness to the reality and also male stubbornness. On the other hand, Una, as an embodiment of

female wisdom and faithfulness, did not reject her man; she followed him even on his false path of doubts and misbelieves:

" Yet she, most faithfull Ladie, all this while

Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd

In wildernesse and wastfull deserts strayd"

Through the depiction of Una's generosity and faithfulness and George's doubts and weakness of faith, Spencer was also showing the contribution of female strength in development of True Faith. In this context, he meant the faithfulness and love of Queen Elisabeth to her nation and her sacrifices for the rule of True Faith of Protestantism in England. This hint was not the most vivid one, but from a symbolic perspective, George might be also interpreted as English nation, which was tempted by Catholic Duessa and saved by Protestant Una-Elizabeth. In any case, male and female stereotypes were used in order to make moral and symbolic messages more acceptable for the target audience. This was particularly contrasting with a relatively liberal atmosphere in the court of Elizabeth II (Fukuda, 780).

In the reinforcement of Christian love, the application of stereotypes was essential to emphasize that the true faith in life and harmony in everyday family life were impossible without two partners supplementing each other and following the appropriate, Christian pattern of behavior. In this context, Spencer refers rather to material aspect of human love, in sense that love is about duty and responsibility rather than body sensation and lust for another person. Christian love also lacks spirituality in its essence. For spirituality is

meant sensual, romantic connection between two people and love as we mean it today, as joy of touching another person without any religious prejudices and limitations. In other words, Spencer's perception of Christian love between Una and George is rather a fulfillment of Christian duties of moral behavior and purity of matrimonial bounds, than love as a spontaneous and all-consumptive fire burning inside of both partners.

Overall, it can be concluded that on the example of Una and George, Spencer had shown the ideal of Christian love in contrast to the fleshly desires of the fallen ones and vulgarity of Catholic Church, embodied in the last days of the Roman Empire. In order to make his example of ideal, Christian love more comprehensible to audience, Spencer had to use male and female stereotypes in depiction of his characters.

Although those symbols might be interpreted in various ways, the main aim was to show that Protestantism corresponded to the core values of Christianity and marriage as a cornerstone of society. In Spencer's perception, love and marriage were the same.

Works Cited

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