If Words be the Food of Love, Speak On: A Theory of Consumptive Language and Its Application to Edmund Spenser’s The Faerie Queene

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Abstract

My undergraduate thesis explores the implications of consumption related rhetoric, references to eating, stomach, and digestion etc., within the context of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. I begin by developing my own theory and explain the basis by showing the connection between consumptive rhetoric and sexual attraction as defined by psychoanalytic theory. With this foundation, I link consumptive rhetoric and its sexual implications to linguistic writings about speech acts. Essentially, I argue that instances of consumptive rhetoric are speech acts that commit a sexual action with all the implications carried by an action, not a word alone. Within the context of Early Modern society, this has significant repercussions for gender roles and communication. Women in Early Modern society were expected to live within prescribed standards of sexuality, but women in the Renaissance, like women of all ages, experienced attraction and engaged in sexual activity outside of prescribed norms. The dichotomy between societal expectations and the reality of female sexual activity created a tension seen in consumptive speech acts. Via this rhetoric, women and the men they were attracted to, and who were attracted to them, were able to express their sexuality without directly violating social codes. Therein, women of the Renaissance gained a modicum of linguistic control that empowered them to assume typically assigned male power. As men engaged in consumptive rhetoric with women, the two sexes became linguistically, if not socially, equal.
Piero Campores argues that food and eating were the greatest desires for the Early Modern person, and concerns about eating and appetite impacted every other aspect of life (96-98). He even goes so far as to call hunger a drug: "The most effective and upsetting drug, bitterest and most ferocious, has always been hunger, creator of unfathomable disturbances of mind and imagination" (125). Similarly, Carole Levin explains that, for the people of the Renaissance, "words, indeed, were thought to have great potential and power" (79). Two other very important concepts in the Renaissance were religion and sexuality. While all four of these components—appetite, language, religion, and sexuality—are still important today, the response of Renaissance people to these elements was often to combine them into an ethical approach to life. Speaking of the Renaissance, Douglas Waters says, "sensuous and erotic imagery [...] was not necessarily considered incongruous with 'true' religion" (73). Taken together—Campores' argument about the central role of appetite, Levin's statements on linguistic power, and Waters' connection of eroticism and religion—these ideas encapsulate a uniquely Early Modern experience. Food, words, sex, and religion were all intertwined. The most obvious example of this fact is the Mass or Communion in which the eating of the Host, representative of Christ or Logos the Word, is connected with an eerily sexual experience, but the texts of the Renaissance also include these four elements—appetite, language, sexuality, and religion—in more subtle ways.

Edmund Spenser, one of the greatest poets of the Renaissance, explored these four concepts in his writing. His epic poem, *The Faerie Queene*, was designed to outline an ethical code of living that focused on twelve virtues. The first book about Redcrosse Knight, the patron saint of England, is labeled as the virtue of Holiness, and criticism of
this book has tended to focus on the religious elements of the text. ASP Woodhouse states, "The intellectual scheme is quite precise. Book I moves on the religious level and has reference to the order of grace, while the remaining books move on the natural level only" (59). Though a focus on religion is the traditional approach to the first book of The Faerie Queene, contemporary criticism has begun to branch out into gender studies, psychoanalysis, and linguistic criticism.

While much of this new criticism has examined the presence of the four elements of appetite, language, sexuality, and religion in Renaissance texts, it tends to focus on only one aspect or two at most. For example, traditional approaches like Woodhouse's emphasize the religious elements of the texts. Scholars like Stephen Greenblatt have examined language and identity, and others like Katharine Craik of Oxford connect literal and sexual appetite. By focusing on language, appetite, and sexuality, however, it is possible to construct a new paradigm designed to examine the nonreligious elements of many Early Modern texts and Spenser's first book of The Faerie Queene in particular. The value of this approach lies in its ability to explore nonreligious impacts from formerly religiously connected passages. It also facilitates a greater analysis of the dominant themes from the Early Modern period in a more unified fashion, allowing for an examination of the link between the text and society in a way that sheds light on gender roles and the construction of individual identity.

In order to facilitate such an analysis, a new theoretical framework must be developed that more closely integrates two separate dominant critical fields: linguistics and psychoanalysis. More specifically, I have developed a theory and method for analyzing Early Modern texts and the Faerie Queene in particular. The rhetoric of
appetite, or consumptive language, is my framework for this analysis. The premise of my theory is that references to appetite and eating within a text are often contextually more complex than their literal meaning would imply. To analyze these instances, the insights of linguistics in regards to speech acts, symbolic interpretation or semiology, and sociolinguistic interaction must be combined with psychoanalysis. The result of this critical synthesis is a theory that enables the connection between consumptive rhetoric and sexual attraction and then explains that these consumption related speech acts commit a sexual action with all the implications carried by an action, not a word alone. This theory allows for an examination of the sexual appetites that the rhetoric of appetite simultaneously masks and reveals; finally, consumptive language theory allows conclusions about the sexual climate and gender roles of a society because a text draws upon the tensions, hypocrisies, and hopes of the time period that gave birth to it.

Edmund Spenser's seminal masterpiece *The Faerie Queene*, in the first book, depicts both a relationship between Redcrosse and Una where analysis of the conversation on a semantic level is possible with the consumptive language theory and uses a number of symbols—commonly seen in characters like Orgoglio who represent sexuality—where the semiological aspect of consumptive language theory is helpful. Applying this theory to *The Faerie Queene* results in striking implications about the intensely sexual relationship between Redcrosse and Una and societal implications about gender roles in Renaissance culture, as well as the dichotomy between practice and standards in relation to sexual activity.

In order to fully articulate this position and appreciate the implications of both consumptive language theory and Spenser's work, it is essential to first explain
consumptive language theory and detail how it can be applied to a text. Next, the theory will be applied to various aspects of The Faerie Queene, and finally the implications in terms of gender roles and communication will be explored.

1. Consumptive Language Theory

The kernel of consumptive language theory is contained within the philosophical and linguistic writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein, specifically in one line: “To find meaning, study usd’ (qtd. in Hallet 17). Essentially, this means that there is more to the meaning of a word, or beyond that a symbol, than the strict dictionary definition or the literal interpretation. Contextual, situational, and even the psychological state of both the hearer and the speaker influence the meaning of an utterance. But that much is obvious; how does this confluence of language, emotion, and context foster a unique interpretation?

Consumptive language theory is an amalgam of linguistics and psychoanalysis that allows the exploration of language, appetite, and sexuality, three supremely important Renaissance concepts, within a text. Theories can be broad or specifically focused on a certain genre; consumptive language theory focuses on analyzing the rhetoric of appetite through the semantics of a text, via the conversations of the characters in their references to food, eating, tongue, stomach, and other references to desire for or satiation of the physical appetite associated with hunger or thirst, and the semiology of the text, through the symbols, read as textual signs, manifested in characters themselves. To accomplish this analysis requires a new approach that extends beyond linguistic and psychoanalytic approaches.
As far as linguistics is concerned, speech acts are identified and categorized, and while some research has been done on the connection between intention and meaning, the emotional implications of speech acts have been left undercovered. However, the possibility of identifying appetite-related rhetoric as speech acts is an important facet of consumptive language theory. Without this aspect, the immediacy of acting while speaking is lost. However, a text contains more than words. Symbols and metaphors are also intrinsic elements of any text, and semiology verifies that textual metaphors, even symbolic characters, can be dissected in much the same way as a speech act. Both speech acts and textual symbols are constructed and acted out in a social context; therefore, meaning is dependent upon external factors and the implications of speech acts and symbols within a text extend to the culture and society that produced the text. These three linguistic components, when combined, offer a language-based approach for identifying the rhetoric, including symbols, of appetite and placing that rhetoric within a social context. Further, the justification for drawing wide societal implications from textual speech acts stems from this linguistic approach.

Linguistics alone, though, fails to connect appetite-related speech acts and similar rhetorical devices to sexuality. In order to make this connection and explain why characters or people would engage in masking behavior, psychoanalysis and relational frame theory must be included. The relationship between appetite-related language and sexuality is explained by using the writings of people like Freud and Jung and filtering their arguments on sexuality through the idea that masking occurs out of personal vulnerability or societal pressure.
Consumptive language theory combines all of these elements into a unique approach. Specific textual situations, like the rhetoric of appetite, can be defined as either speech acts or related symbols or metaphors. These acts and symbols are contextually connected to both the incidents in the text and the society that produced the text, meaning that the text is a lens for examining society. Further, these specific textual situations involving the rhetoric of appetite can be connected to sexuality when the speakers or symbols act to mask sexuality out of fear of rejection or societal expectations. This too has broader implications for the contextual society outside of the text, specifically the Early Modern society.

In order to fully articulate consumptive language theory, it is important to examine the contributing linguistic and psychoanalytic theories. In so doing, we will first outline the relevant theory and then use Sir Phillip Sidney's 71st sonnet from the *Astrophil and Stella* sequence to see the utility of consumptive language theory in going beyond linguistics or psychoanalysis alone. After this more detailed explication of consumptive language theory, we will look at a methodology for application of the theory and then apply it to *The Faerie Queene*.

1.1 The Role of Speech Acts in the Development of Consumptive Language Theory

Interest in and writing about speech acts is certainly not new. In fact, the 1960s and 1970s saw the greatest amount of interest in them. J. L. Austin's groundbreaking 1961 essay "Performative Utterances" argues that certain types of words fall into a performative category. In other words, when a speaker says something like "I promise," he or she actually acts and promises something. Speech acts depend on what speakers of a language inherently know; speaking and acting are often the same thing. From this type
of mindset derives expressions like "my word is my bond" and "verbal contract." D.S. Shwayder, a linguist who wrote about speech acts after Austin, explains it as a unity of speech and expression: "When an expression is employed with a certain use, it actually contributes to the sense of a language act" (131). After Austin came a whole host of linguists, mostly French, who wrote about the grammatical categories, rules, and types of speech or illocutionary acts. Paul Ricoeur's definition of the speech act looks at its three main parts: the actual expression, the action done by uttering (or writing) the expression, and the effect of the expression and helps clarify Austin's definition:

The performatives are only particular cases of a general feature exhibited by every class of speech act, whether they be commands, wishes, questions, warnings, or assertions. All of them, besides saying something (the locutionary act), do something in the saying (the illocutionary act), and yield effects by saying (the perlocutionary act) [ . . . ] what can be expressed in psychological terms such as believing, wanting, or desiring is invested with a semantic existence thanks to the correlation between these grammatical devices and the illocutionary act (14).

Ricoeur here not only defines the type of speech act we are interested in—which perform something in the speaking or writing of them—but also connects speech acts to psychological states.

This early connection between speech acts and emotional states is mostly overlooked by linguists, but it is important to note that there is a direct relationship between the psychology of the speaker and the actual speech he or she engages in. Merleau-Ponty, primarily a French philosopher but also a linguist, also highlights this
latent connection: "The spoken word has meaning; it marks a qualitative change in the world, which includes the speaker's body and things. The spoken word itself acts" (qtd. in Froman 69). The action of the spoken, or written, word is the core of what a speech act is. Gilbert Ryle connects that action back to Wittgenstein and concludes that meaning is found beyond the dictionary:

The famous saying: 'Don't ask for the meaning; ask for the use', might have been and I hope was a piece of advice to philosophers, and not to lexicographers or translators. It advised philosophers, I hope, when wrestling with some *aphoria*, to switch their attention from dictionary-items to their utilisations in the actual sayings of things; from their general promises when on the shelf to their particular performances when at work (114).

Basically then, speech acts are expressions that perform an action in the utterance of them and derive their meaning from the actions performed.

More specifically, speech acts can be grammatically identified within a sentence. J.R. Searle writes about the easier part of speech to label as a speech act, active verbs:

'Some of the English verbs and verb phrases associated with illocutionary acts are: state, assert, describe, remark, comment, command, order, request, criticize, apologize, censure, approve, welcome, promise, express approval, and express regret' (115). While these verbs are the easiest to identify, in terms of consumptive language, we are interested in verbs relating to eating, consuming, or digesting, but we are also interested in nouns like stomach, tongue, and food when used in relation to other characters. These grammatical features of the language-verbs, verb phrases, nouns, and noun phrases primarily quickly become performative in nature, meaning that the use of these words is
an action in and of itself. The significance and meaning of the action will be addressed in more detail later, but the key point is that the locutionary act (the actual statement) quickly turns into a perlocutionary act (the effects of the statement-action).

All of this boils down to a simple fact: the act of communication depends upon the speech act. Searle goes on to explain how speech acts bridge the communication barrier; he argues,

I think it is essential to any specimen of linguistic communication that it involve a linguistic act. It is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol or word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol or word or sentence, which is the unit of linguistic communication, but rather it is the *production* of the token in the performance of the speech act that constitutes the basic unit of linguistic communication (115).

It is here that we begin to see the importance of speech acts. They are not merely linguistic curiosities for scholars to ponder over and identify, but they are integral to communication. By exploring speech acts and the way they fit into discourse, it is possible to discern intentions and desires. Consequently, the rhetoric of appetite, like all utterances, is actually a communication of desire or intention. However, to determine what that desire or intention really is requires greater scrutiny. Outlining how speech acts are dissected to find meaning helps identify the need for the greater meaning realized through consumptive language theory.

Communication is only the end product of a series of constructed speech acts; by taking the discourse apart, it is possible to look at how speech acts construct meaning. Jean Calloud followed Austin and explains how discourse is a product of construction:
The surface effect of the discourse (which seems to be the properly human feature and the ultimate expression of our 'linguistic performance') is the manifestation of a process of construction. This process can be analyzed and deconstructed (39). Essentially, the 'linguistic performance' Calloud alludes to is a speech act, an expression that is an action in the very utterance of it. Since speech acts are expressions that act in the process of illocution, meaning is more significant for them than for non-performative expressions. Speech acts have immediate impact, so the meaning of them has more immediate impact as well.

Discovering the meaning of a speech act is far more difficult than identifying one, and in terms of the rhetoric of appetite, both identifying and analyzing meaning are more difficult. However, before we can explore consumptive language in particular, we must look at how meaning is associated with the prototypical speech act. Jean Calloud argues that speech acts combine to create discourse, but he also asserts that discourse creates meaning, which means that speech acts create meaning by implication. For Calloud, this meaning comes in clusters: 'There are 'clusters of meaning', which can be accounted for only when the discourse as a whole is taken into consideration' (5). While this is not particularly enlightening about the type or process of discovering meaning, it is instructive in terms of answering the question of where meaning comes from. If meaning comes from discourse and discourse comes from speech acts, then to find meaning, one must look at the speech act.

Three points are central to analyzing how speech acts generate meaning: first, the meaning of a specific speech is not immutable and the same speech act can have multiple meanings; second, meaning depends upon context; third, meaning is affected by the
speaker, intentionally or not. Each of these conclusions must be examined to fully understand how speech acts derive meaning.

The first point ties to the inherent flexibility and ambiguity of language. J. M. Searle writes about indirect speech acts, which are speech acts that are performative but mean one thing even though they look like they mean another. Indeed, the same speech act can have both the obvious and concealed meaning because a sentence that contains the illocutionary force indicators for one kind of illocutionary act can be uttered to perform, *in addition*, another type of illocutionary act. There are also cases in which a speaker may utter a sentence and mean what he says and also mean another illocution with a different propositional content (Searle 161).

Within this quotation lie two important conclusions: speech acts can have multiple meanings at the same time and also change meaning over time. In other words, the meaning of speech acts is flexible.

The second point emphasizes that the meaning of a speech act depends upon the context in which it is uttered. Saying the same thing in different settings imbues the words with shades of meaning in which "the context of utterance affects not only the forces with which the proposition is expressed, but also the proposition itself. It may be that the semantical rules determine the proposition expressed by a sentence or clause only relative to some feature of the situation in which the sentence is used" (Stalnaker 178). It is this variability that the rhetoric of appetite capitalizes on. Speech acts about eating mean one thing at McDonald's and quite another thing when used in reference to or when in conversation with a person to whom the speaker is attracted.
The dependence of meaning on context helps explain how a single speech act can have both multiple and changeable meanings, but the third point introduces another explanation for this variability: the impact of the speaker. Intentionally or not, a speaker influences the meaning of the speech act. Part of the reason why this is true is because ‘the speech-act [...] is the renewed act by which the locuter takes possession of the language, appropriates it’ (Barthes 165). Once the language and the speaker are united, the meaning is influenced by the mental state, attitudes, and beliefs of the speaker. This does not have to be an intentional process. Consumptive language draws on this linguistic category by pointing out that speech acts relating to consumption are imbued with meaning because the attraction of the speaker colors the meaning of the utterance. While the speaker has some intention when making the utterance, the meaning of the speech-act can transcend that intention because “the code,” or words and syntax used to make the expression, “is anonymous and not intended” (Ricoeur 3). Hence, meaning is attached by the speaker but not always at a conscious level.

The problem with speech act theory is that it can identify speech acts and recognize that a multiplicity of meanings can and do exist, but only consumptive language theory can explain what that meaning is when considering the rhetoric of appetite. The last three lines of Sir Phillip Sidney’s 71st sonnet in the Astrophil and Stella sequence exemplify the limitations of speech act theory alone: “So while thy beauty draws the heart to love, / As fast thy virtue bends that love to good: / ‘But ah,’ Desire still cries, ‘give me some food.’” The speech act, “give me some food,” commits an action (command) in the locution, and the linguists discussed already would likely agree that the speaker Desire is speaking about something other than literal food. However, recognizing that
the meaning changes and evolves does not identify the meaning. Consumptive language theory uses the work of speech act linguists to identify the speech act and recognize that a variety of meanings exist. However, it goes the next step and connects this rhetoric of appetite (note the reference to food) to sexual attraction. The sonnet is part of a love sequence and the speaker in the poem is communicating with a "beauty" who "draws the heart to love;" obviously, there is more going on than the speaker expressing the desire for breakfast. Consumptive language theory takes this speech act and uses the context of the poem to direct attention to sexual attraction, a meaning that speech act theory alone cannot explain. There are other implications from analyzing the rhetoric of appetite in the sonnet, but we must explore the other contributing linguistic and psychoanalytic elements to derive these.

1.2 The Role of Semiology in Constructing Consumptive Language Theory

Semiology is usually applied only to actual symbols in the text. These symbols can be drawings or representations. The methodology of semiology can be applied to symbols in a text that take the form of characters that represent some larger metaphorical concept through both their literal description and actions. Isabel MacCaffrey argues that "to conceive of metaphor as an allegorical language is helpful because it includes both the idea of separateness between word and referent and the notion of the referent's inaccessibility without the word" (31). Allegory, a common literary device used by Spenser and other Early Modern writers, is using a symbol or sign to represent a larger idea or concept. As such, the relationship between allegory or metaphor and semiology is clear: the interpretation of literal symbols and signs follows the same patterns as the interpretation of metaphorical symbols, like characters, present in allegory.
Similar to the way that speech acts have multiple meanings, signs and symbols are flexible features of discourse. Roland Barthes says, "a sign's meaning is only its translation into another sign, which defines meaning not as a final signified but as another signifying level" (160). Since these relationships link to the meaning of the sign, meaning can change. As David Silverman states, "the meaning of signs cannot be fixed. It is always possible to extend the signifying chain" (78). This change does not mean that we cannot examine meaning; rather, the meaning of symbols or signs can be found by looking at the "value" of the sign and how signs relate to one another: "The network of these semiotic interrelations can be the object of a structural investigation" (Patte in Calloud x). This is where semiology fits into consumptive language theory. By looking at the signs and symbols in the rhetoric of appetite, it is possible to discern the meaning in those signs in a process similar to the way speech acts are examined for meaning.

There are two levels of interpretation for signs or symbols, the literal level and the metaphorical level. Ricouer clarifies how these two levels of meaning fit together, especially for the interpreter: "For the one who participates in the symbolic signification there are really not two significations, one literal and the other symbolic, but rather a single movement, which transfers from one level to the other and which assimilates him to the second signification by means of, or through, the literal one" (55). Simply, the literal meaning leads to the symbolic one; they are inextricably intertwined with one another. In regards to consumptive language, this means that the literal meaning of the symbols connected to eating and consumption lead directly to the metaphorical conclusions about sexuality and gender. These symbols are largely characters relating to appetite that possess an overarching metaphorical meaning. In Sidney's sonnet, Desire
becomes a character with a proper, capitalized name. This character is a sign, a symbol with attached value that represents something else, like in an allegory. This character or sign has meaning external to the literal actions taken or words spoken. Semiology, like speech act theory, can identify the sign and recognize that layers of meaning exist, but semiology cannot specifically connect that meaning to sexuality and then make inferences about the society producing the text, as consumptive language theory can. Consumptive language theory identifies Desire as a symbol representing sexual attraction and then uses the character as a metaphor for sexuality expressed through appetite-related rhetoric. This sign, as well as the speech act discussed in the previous section, imply societal conclusions that neither speech act theory nor semiology seek to explain.

1.3 The Role of Sociolinguistic Interaction in Developing Consumptive Language Theory

The fascination with language is concomitant with human development. However, it has only been fairly recently that people have begun to examine how language use is affected by context and socially constructed roles. John Thompson, editor of *Language and Symbolic Power*, identifies the lack of social context in early linguists like J. L. Austin:

> Hence the efficacy of the performative utterance presupposes a set of social relations, an institution, by virtue of which a particular individual, who is authorized to speak and recognized as such by others, is able to speak in a ways that others will regard as acceptable in the circumstances [.....] But never does Austin examine in detail the nature of these conventions; never does he consider carefully what it might mean to treat these conventions as social phenomena, implicated in sets of social
relations, imbued with power and authority, embroiled in conflict and struggle [...] the authority which utterances have is an authority bestowed on language by factors external to it (8,9).

The gap left between speech act and social context is being filled by sociolinguistic theorists.

One of the foremost researchers in this area is Deborah Tannen. Essentially, discourse analysis, or sociolinguistic language theory, focuses on examining the connections between language and social context. Tannen defines interactional sociolinguistics:

Fundamental principles of interactional sociolinguistics include the convictions that (1) roles are not given but are created in interaction; (2) context is not given but is constituted by talk and action; (3) nothing that occurs in interaction is the sole doing of one party but rather is a 'joint production,' the result of the interaction of individuals' ways of speaking; [. . .] (4) linguistic features (such as interruption, volume of talk, indirectness, and so on) can never be aligned on a one-to-one basis with interactional intentions or meanings, in the sense that a word can be assigned a meaning (1).

This means that conversations and discourse have meanings beyond the literal definitions of the words. The context, including setting, social roles, and the mental state of the speakers, heavily impacts the meaning of the conversation. To study this, people like John Gumperez record conversations and then play them back and deconstruct them.
Since no recorded conversations are available from the Renaissance, conversations in texts are legitimate replacements.

Tannen justifies her analysis of *Scenes from a Marriage* by explaining that "artificial dialog may represent an internalized model or schema for the production of conversation" (Tannen 139). Even though this dialog is idealized, it is a "different level of psychological reality" and that provides insight into the psychological dimensions of both the characters and the society that produced the text (Tannen 139). The expression of hostility in the text does not occur directly but through deference, silence, irony, impersonality, or sarcasm.

Similarly, consumptive language theory states that the expression of sexual attraction is cloaked. These nondirect expressions derive from language referring to appetite, eating, and consumption that often disguise physical attraction. Understanding that this masking occurs does not provide insight into the implications of this masking; sociolinguistics shows that the link to societal roles and expectations is important. Consumptive language theory goes the next step and explains that the social context of the utterances is important because it not only lends insight into the use of disguising language but also reflects on the type of cultural attitudes that propel individuals, both in real life and in text, towards dishonesty at worst or masking language at best. The harmony between speech act theory and sociolinguistic theory is clear because when speech act theory looks at what words do, it must look at context and setting, which includes social relationships. As such, this final linguistic aspect adds meaning by placing the characters or situations in a social and societal context that helps explain why the characters would use appetite rhetoric to conceal sexual attraction in the first place.
In Sidney's sonnet, Stella is connected with purity, perfection, and virtue. This elevation of Stella places her in a higher social status than the speaker; hence, sociolinguistics would claim that the discourse is not equal between the two but it does not do anything to explain what this difference means in relation to sexual attraction. Consumptive language theory connects the context in terms of status (real or perceived) to the speech act in the last line 'give me some food' and the sign of the character Desire to conclude that direct sexual expression must be masked for propriety's sake. However, that attraction exists and must be expressed, so the rhetoric of appetite provides a safe forum. Taken alone, speech act theory, semiology, and sociolinguistics provide parts of the previous conclusions but only consumptive language theory connects these parts and provides a final conclusion.

With speech acts equating words, spoken or written, with actions and clarifying that meaning depends on intention and setting, semiology providing similar insights for symbols or metaphors like characters in the text, and sociolinguistic theory emphasizing social context, it becomes evident that the meaning of events and words, especially those related to appetite, in a text is multilayered. However, consumptive language theory seeks to defend the position that these meanings carry sexual overtones when related to appetite and consumption and that these meanings connect to the societal context. To understand this final aspect, psychoanalytic theory must be included.

1.4 The Role of General Psychoanalysis in Developing Consumptive Language Theory

Today, we say that the realm of the connection between emotional condition and linguistic expression is psychology, and when we apply psychology to a text, especially when we speak of sexual or longing emotions, we call it psychoanalysis. Though Freud
was the most famous to explore this connection between internal state and external actions, many earlier thinkers have also written about this relationship. St. Augustine says, 'the word is nothing other than thought expressed [...] the word that issues forth is a sign of the word concealed within, which better deserves the name, for that which passes out is the word of the flesh and is said because of that which is within' (qtd. in Fremantle 96). Essentially, this means that the spoken word derives from the emotions of the speaker. This connection is manifested in two ways: first, a direct expression of emotions, or second, a masking of emotions in language that requires systematic examination to determine the emotional root of the linguistic articulation.

This masking is similar to the flexibility of meaning for speech acts. Sandy Petrey makes this connection in her book *Speech Acts and Literary Theory*:

In speech-act theory as in psychoanalysis, what we say we know is not the result of observation but the process of fabrication. The two fields are equally conscious that what matters in language is not whether it's accurate but whether it's felicitous. If, like *fun, happy*, and its synonyms regularly crop up in the most solemn Austinian expositions, it's because he shares the psychoanalytic insight that one of the things we do with words is make a life we can get through. The sexual sense of *performance* is therefore not without connection to Austin's predilection for talking about it (103).

Petrey's relation of speech acts and psychoanalysis is important; however, this connection has never been fully articulated by a speech-act linguist. Hence, the need for consumptive language theory to bring the insights of psychoanalysis to study of speech acts and signs is obvious. While the foundation for consumptive language theory is in
linguistics that allows the identification of speech acts and symbols and relates these acts and symbols to social contexts for meaning, the exploration of the inherent sexuality within the rhetoric of appetite is possible only with the incorporation of psychoanalytic theory. Since psychoanalytic theory is both vast and complicated, it is important to review two of the most important figures, Freud and Jung.

Sigmund Freud, known as the father of psychoanalysis, proposed the structural model of the psyche. In other words, "the 'id', a term applied to the instinctual drives that spring from the constitutional needs of the body; the ego as having developed out of the id to be an agency which regulates and opposes the drives; and the 'superego', as representative of parental and social influences upon the drives" (Wright 11). The importance of this model is that it identifies a conflict between desire and expression, a conflict that partially explains the use of speech acts or symbols to act or express sexual attraction in an indirect, even convoluted manner. Consumptive language theory uses Freud to argue that the rhetoric of appetite is a manifestation of repression, a function that 'serves to keep guilt-laden wishes out of conscious experience' (Wright 12). These speech acts and symbols in the text are merely parapraxes, or Freudian slips, expressions of sexuality that slip out unconsciously from the minds of the characters and author.

Freud argues that true desires are most clearly expressed in dreams, and he compares dreams to the creative expressions of an author. "He relates art to the dream" and thereby the methods he uses to interpret dreams are partially relevant in the interpretation of literature (Wright 26). This connection means that "dreams and art are not merely linked because they fulfill wishes, but because both have to make use of strategies in order to overcome the resistance of consciousness: 'work' is done by the dreamer and the
artist to transform their primitive desires into culturally acceptable meanings" (Wright 28). If Freud is correct, than a text is like a dream and the incidents in the text can be interpreted like the incidents in a dream. However, the most recurrent criticism of Freud in terms of literary applicability is that a text is much more carefully and consciously constructed than a dream. So while there are certainly parallels to Freud's concepts of repression, censorship, condensation, and displacement, there is not a direct correlation.

In spite of Freud's failings as a literary critic, his work is applicable for the construction of consumptive language theory. Linguistics has already limited our analysis of a text to specific types of speech acts and symbols that are placed within a more significant social context. These specific linguistic utterances fit more closely within Freud's views, specifically repression and displacement. Freud states that repression of physical urges, particularly sexual urges, results in slips or unintentional expressions. Consumptive language theory states that these unintentional expressions are speech acts and symbols within a text that can be linked to the rhetoric of appetite. Hence, Freud's writings provide an explanation for the presence of the speech acts and symbols that linguistics identifies and begins the process of finding meaning. With Freud's writing, consumptive language theory is imbued with a deeper explanation of and argument for the connection between language and unsanctioned or at least unintentional sexuality.

While Freud focuses more on linguistic utterances, Carl Jung focuses on symbols. In this regard, Freud is more useful in consumptive language theory for interpreting speech acts while Jung's utility is linked to the textual metaphors and signs identified by
semiology. Jung views the author as channeling greater cultural themes, or archetypes and the application of Jung to literature is through a process called amplification:

the material is subjected to a comparison with analogous symbolic structures from myths, legends and fairy tales. This has given rise to a certain type of criticism which relies on what might be termed ‘vulgar' Jungian symbolism in order to trace a sequence of archetypal figures in individual works. The aim of these interpretive efforts, psychological and literary, is the establishment of harmony in the psyche, unity in the work (Wright 70).

The study of symbols, then, in terms of consumptive language theory is a unity of semiology, which emphasizes the linguistic aspects, and Jungian psychoanalysis, which focuses on the connection between textual metaphors and larger cultural themes. The point of diversion, in terms of consumptive language theory and Jung, is the aim or purpose of interpretation. While consumptive language theory seeks to uncover the meaning of the symbols in terms of the sexuality hidden in the text and society as a whole, Jung seeks, and often artificially forces, unity.

The need to incorporate psychology is related to the sexual emphasis within psychoanalytic theory, but it also stems from the difference in focus between linguistic philosophy and psychology. Both speech act linguists and discourse linguists agree that the individuals involved in communication matter in the construction of meaning. For Austin and his successors, however, the mental state of the sender is of secondary concern at best. Tannen and her fellows study how social roles and constructs affect the speakers and therefore the meaning of the utterances involved, but only psychology
allows us to examine the emotional states of both the sender and the receiver. These emotional states directly impact the way people speak and what words they choose. Often the emotional state of the speaker affects the speaker so significantly that the speaker is not even aware of the effect. Tannen points out that mental states affect both actions and mental dispositions: "I have granted above that mental states often indeed dispose a person to act in one way or another; they are apt to mold one's acts. But again, these acts themselves may be mental acts; mental states may mold one's mental 'behavior'" (147). Two important conclusions derive from this analysis: first, physical and emotional actions are inextricably intertwined; second, actions, whether they be physical or linguistic, stem from the emotional condition of the speaker.

Unpredictable reactions often relate to an unusual mental state. This is certainly not a unique conclusion, and everyone from literary analysis to psychology has explored this relationship. From this research have emerged some important theories. Psychoanalysis asserts that a text is the manifestation of the psychological state of the writer; additionally, the interactions in the text reflect both the psychological state of the writer and, to some extent, the society that produces both author and text.

People mask their emotions in disguising language or actions. Especially when dealing with potentially uncomfortable emotions, like sexual attraction or anger, a person engages in masking activities to confuse others, and sometimes, the individual even cloaks his or her own emotions so well that he or she tricks him/herself. Ricoeur argues that this phenomenon is examined in texts by trying to determine what the mask is hiding:
In psychoanalysis symbolic activity is a boundary phenomenon linked to the boundary between impulses and their delegated or affective representatives. This is the boundary between primary repression—which affects the first witnesses of our impulses—and secondary repression, which is repression properly speaking—that repression which occurs after the fact and which only allows derivative offshoots, indefinite substitute signs, or signs of signs to appear. This position of the psychoanalytic sign on the boundary between a conflict of impulses and an interplay of signifiers means that psychoanalysis must develop a mixed language, which connect the vocabulary of the dynamics or energetics—we might even speak of hydraulics—of impulses with that of a textual exegesis (58).

Ricoeur is really just saying that people repress unpleasant or unfamiliar emotions, reactions, desires, etc. but that repression is manifested by signs or symbols. Studying these signs and symbols in a text allows the examiner to see through the symbol to what it is disguising.

This masking behavior transcends the text and manifests itself in the human psyche as well. Merleau-Ponty wrote a great deal about the relationship between desire, language, and the human mind. He concludes that masking behavior is common, especially in regard to sexual desire. The state where these masking symbols most often occur is the dream state and "for the dreamer, [...] this or that genital excitation or sexual drive is without more ado this image of a wall being climbed or cliff-face being scaled, which are seen as the obvious content. Sexuality becomes diffused in images which derive from it only certain typical relationships" (qtd. in Froman 53). Obviously drawing
on the foundation laid by Freud, Merleau-Ponty argues that the events in dreams are symbols for the actual emotional state of the dreamer. Often, these dreams disguise sexual feelings. Sexuality is one of the most complicated facets of human nature, and it is also an area where behavior is heavily influenced by social constructions. Language and communication are centrally linked to sexual expression.

Interest in specific characters translates into questions about why they would mask their emotions in disguising rhetoric. The answer to this question relates to both fear of vulnerability and also to social constructs and gender roles. Nelson Foote explains the fear of vulnerability:

One who entrusts himself fully to another may find his credulity and kindness exploited. His love may be rejected or betrayed. To expose oneself to another is to run the risk of getting hurt. It may take only foolhardiness, among specialists in human development, to talk about love, but it does take courage to love in a society like our own. Many dare not try; they fear involvement. In short, fear rather than hate appears to be the original rival of love in the ambivalent situation that one encounters daily (320).

Fear of rejection explains why people, including characters in a text, disguise their physical attraction with masking language.

Linguistics concentrates on the words or symbols and essentially ignores the people the characters represent, but psychoanalysis tends to do the opposite. Consumptive language theory joins these two approaches. Howard Pollio points out that 'the important difference between a philosophical and a psychological analysis of symbols is that for a philosophical analysis we are interested mainly in symbols and symbol
systems, while for a psychological analysis, we are interested primarily in people and only secondarily in symbols and symbol systems' (4). Since consumptive language theory focuses on sexuality between characters, or people, the personal component of psychology must be included. For example, the earlier discussion of Sidney's sonnet included inferences about sexual attraction between Astrophil and Stella that speech act theory and semiology could not begin to explain. The basis for those arguments about attraction that exceeds the bounds of acceptable expression includes elements from psychoanalysis. Essentially, neither linguistics nor psychoanalysis alone can articulate the conclusions that consumptive language theory can.

1.5 A Methodology for Application of Consumptive Language Theory

To apply consumptive language theory to a text, especially one as representative of its society and culture as Spenser's The Faerie Queene, requires a specific methodology. First, the speech acts and symbols must be identified and explained. Next, the context of the situation must be described in order to demonstrate the social setting. Then the relationship between the speakers or the symbol and its meaning must be examined to show latent or suppressed sexuality. Finally, this masked sexuality must be unmasked and explained in order to draw wider textual and societal implications. If this methodology cannot be carried out, then the specific utterance does not meet the conditions for consumptive language theory to be applicable. However, within The Faerie Queene, numerous utterances meet the criteria for speech acts and characters meet the criteria for metaphorical symbols. As such, it is an especially pertinent source to apply consumptive language theory in order to draw implications concerning Early Modern culture as a whole.
2. Consumptive Language Theory and *The Faerie Queene*

For literature is an illocutionary act even if its illocutionary force is vastly different from that of ordinary language [ . . . ] Literature is defined by the conventions organizing the community that recognizes it as literature. The text too does things through and with those to whom it speaks' (Petrey 55). If literature is indeed an illocutionary act, then there are specific meanings, perlocutionary acts, that emerge as a result of it. More importantly, a text provides two important areas to analyze: first, the characters and situations in the literature; second, the society and environment that produces the text to begin with. Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is one of the most important texts of the Renaissance. Looking at the consumptive language in the text leads us to examining an important concept: sexuality. Sexuality relates to gender roles, lust, attraction, motherhood, and the list goes on.

Many critics have explored sexuality in *The Faerie Queene*, especially in the later books, but the criticism of book I tends to focus on the religious elements. The relationship between Redcrosse and Una is usually explored without sexual connotations. Due to the need to explore the connection between language, appetite, and sexuality via consumptive language theory in a relationship usually seen through a religious lens, the first book is an excellent starting point. Specifically, the consumptive language in the first book of the *Faerie Queene* centers around, but is not exclusive to, the characters of Redcrosse and Una. Three major categories impacted by consumptive language in the text are bestial, extreme expressions of lust; socially acceptable, balanced expressions of sexual attraction; and concepts of propagation as a result of sexual interaction. Examining the relationship among these three subjects through consumptive language
theory proves that "one of Spenser's most fundamental ideas [is] that great forces such as human sexuality are only good or evil according to us" (Rose 137). While this idea is not unique to Spenser, he is one of the strongest defenders of this position and his method of defense, via the rhetoric of appetite, is unique. We will look first at lust through the words of the text and then as represented in characters. Next, we will explore the relationship between Redcrosse and Una. Finally, we will apply consumptive language theory to motherhood as seen through the characters of Error and Charissa.

The first major area of analysis is the realm of bestial lust as expressed using the rhetoric of appetite. Our first introduction to the specific rhetoric of appetite in connection with extreme and unacceptable lust is in canto three. Una, while searching for Redcrosse, stays at the home of Abessa and her mother Corceca. These two characters, and in fact this entire incident, is usually read as a critique of Catholicism because the mother is preoccupied with saying ritual prayers while the daughter's sexual interaction with the bad knight Kirkrapine is seen as a representation of the whore of Babylon referred to in Revelation and typically applied by the Protestant church to the Catholic church. However, the lustful relationship between Abessa and Kirkrapine, labeled in the eighteenth stanza as "whoredome," is proven because Kirkrapine "fed her fat with feast of offerings, / and plenty" (III.18.5-7). To examine this incident, and specifically the language of the passage, within the lens of consumptive language theory, it is important to follow the outlined methodology: is there a speech act present? Can it be explained within a social context in which sexuality fits? Lastly, is this explanation an isolated incident, or does it have larger implications for the societal context that produced the textual speech act?
Consumptive language theory applied to this passage identifies 'fed' and 'feast' as the key words in this passage because these direct references to appetite and consumption illustrate the connection between sexual appetite and literal hunger. The speech act invoked by Kirkrapine's feeding of Abessa has significant implications. The social context, partly explained above, is further important since the relationship between the sender (Kirkrapine) and the receiver (Abessa) is sexual in nature. Consequently, this act of linguistic satiation mirrors sexual satiation as well. The fact that the rhetoric of appetite is used to express the sexual nature of their relationship connects to the culture of the Early Modern society that Spenser is writing in, which we will discuss in detail later, and provokes the question of why lust is cloaked in masking language. The larger, psychological context of this incident is relevant given that the relationship is labeled as 'whoredom' by Spenser, insinuating an obviously negative attitude towards sex here. The discomfort of speaking explicitly about this relationship is ameliorated by using acceptable words related to literal hunger and appetite to represent sex. The psychological aspect of consumptive language theory allows this understanding of masking language deriving from societal and individual unwillingness to specifically address contentious issues.

The same situation exists in canto six when the text is describing the pagan knight Sansloy's sexual desire for Una. At first Sansloy tries to convince Una to accept his sexual attentions and acquiesce, but when she refuses, he becomes aggressive, like "when a greedie Wolfe through hunger fell/ A seely Lambe farre from the flocke does take,/ Of whom he meanes his bloudie feast to maké" (VI.10.3-5). Literally this stanza is talking about Sansloy raping Una and it is commonly used to refer to the corruption of the
innocent by Catholicism. Yet, the use of a beast metaphor to speak about this violent act of consumption allows the same kind of psychological distancing to minimize discomfort while conveying the point that sexual appetite and desire for food differ very little from one another. Again, sexuality is shown as extreme and distasteful to the point of it being socially unacceptable to speak of lust without the aid of appetite-related metaphors. These conclusions provide unique insight into this incident usually viewed as only expressing a condemnation of Catholicism's influence on Protestant England.

Up to this point, our analysis of consumptive language theory in the text has focused on the psychological purpose of skirting around the unacceptable expression of sexuality and has been relegated to characters and events not involving the hero of Book One, Redcrosse. However, Redcrosse falls prey to lust in a series of events, ranging from erotic dreams of Una to actual intercourse with Duessa, the false Una. Redcrosse's dream of Una is usually interpreted theologically as being an expression of his"speculative thirst (high lust) for knowledge of God's veiled, if not forbidden, truth' (Waters 28). While this is certainly one way of reading this event, consumptive language theory suggests a different interpretation. This erotic dream is a manifestation of Redcrosse's sexual attraction to Una as a woman, but Redcrosse feels guilty both about this attraction and the dream, precipitating the repression of his sexual desires. Benjamin Lockerd, in his book *The Sacred Marriage: Psychic Integration in the Faerie Queene*, argues that the false Una, Duessa, appears in the text as a"projection of Redcrosse's own feminine and, at the same time, a projection of the knight's unconscious sexual desire'(88). Lockerd's conclusion is even more appropriate when considered within the context of consumptive
language theory. Redcrosse's sexuality and desire cannot be uttered blatantly, but his lust emerges nonetheless, displaced and masked, but present.

Eventually, Redcrosse engages in an act of sexual intercourse with Duessa, but Spenser never specifically says that. We are left to interpret this meaning from the rhetoric of appetite and consumption used. In the seventh canto Redcrosse lies by a stream whose "waters waxed dull and slow,/ And all that drunke thereof, did faint and feeble grow" (VII.5.8,9). Redcrosse "dunke of the streame''and his manly forces gan to fail'e (VII.6.3,4). While the poem gets no more specific than to say that he 'pourd out in loosness on the grassy ground,' the language of consumption, i.e. the act of drinking from the stream, metaphorically represents the sexual act. The stream "manifests an effeminate slackness, or sensuality'and the drinking of the water in the text is a speech act whose perlocutionary element is intercourse (Nohrnberg 263). Why not just say that? Well, the weakness of the hero indicates that anyone can give in to lust. This is an uncomfortable assertion of weakness that neither the characters nor the readers wish to confront without the comforting cushion of metaphor. This broader societal context further legitimizes the analysis of this incident from within the lens of consumptive language theory.

Beyond these specific instances of extreme lust embedded in the rhetoric of appetite are three characters—Orgoglio, Gluttony, and the Dragon—that can be read as signs in much the same way speech acts can be studied to determine meaning. The giant Orgoglio steps onto the scene during the incident described in the last paragraph. This timing is not coincidental; scholar Mark Rose says, "the key to the giant's import is the moment of his appearance. His bellowing approach is heard in the same stanza that describes Redcrosse and Duessa sprawled in 'looseness' on the ground, and indeed his
arrival is part of the climax of their erotic encounter" (91). The argument for reading Orgoglio as a sign of lust is furthered by the appetite-related rhetoric used in the text itself. Comparing Orgoglio to Jove, the ninth stanza of the eighth canto speaks of "deadly food" (XIII.9.3). Just as food can be deadly, lust can be destructive. In fact, Orgoglio imprisons Redcrosse and engages in "dalliance" with Duessa (VIII.5.5). Consumptive language theory when applied to this incident means that Orgoglio is merely lust in another form, a symbol for talking about an uncomfortable subject. Both he and Redcrosse suffer for their unbalanced sexual desire, though. Redcrosse is imprisoned and weakened and Orgoglio is slain by Arthur. Upon Orgoglio's death, he collapses into an "empty bladder" (VIII.24.9). This is significant because the stomach was at times called a bladder in the Renaissance; hence, Orgoglio becomes a stomach, the organ of consumption itself.

Before the action with Orgoglio, Redcrosse and Duessa are entertained at Lucifera's castle by a parade of the seven deadly sins. Gluttony is one of those sins and looking at the portrayal of him within the paradigm of consumptive language theory provides insight into the message against uncontrolled lust being made in Book One. Patrick Cullen explores "gluttony, avarice, vainglory or the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life," which is "really another way of saying the same thing," and consequently highlights the relationship between physical consumption in the extreme, or gluttony, and sexual gratification in the extreme, or lust (xxxii). "Gluttony" is described as a "deformed creature, on a filthie swyne./ His belly was vp-blowne with luxury,/ And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne,/ And like a Crane his necke was long and fyne,/ With which he swallowed vp excessive feast,/ For want whereof poore people oft did
pyne:/ And all the way, most like a brutish beast,/ He spued vp his gorgé'(III.21.1,2-9).

Consumptive language theory focuses our attention on the recurrent appetite-related
words like“swallowed,”“feast,”“spewed,”and“gorge.” All of these words connect this sign for
Gluttony to the other incidents of consumption.

These references to consumption, in turn, link to sexuality. Sexuality, at least in
the extreme form, is undesirable because gluttony is“unfit for any worldly thing,/ [ . . . ]
Full of diseases”and similarly lust is unfit and disease-ridden (III.23.1,6). This
conclusion is reinforced later in this same canto when Gluttony presides over a feast held
by Lucifera wherein lust is given license. The sign of Gluttony is used as another
example of the rhetoric of appetite to address the concept of unrestrained sexuality and
the negative connotation it has in the text, as is clear from this analysis of the character,
or sign, of Gluttony through consumptive language theory.

Another character who represents lust is the Dragon. At the end of the first book,
Redcrosse, by now healed morally and physically, fights and defeats the Dragon. The
rhetoric of appetite in this conflict reinforces the conclusions we have already discerned
as a result of applying consumptive language theory. The Dragon, like Gluttony, is
‘swole’but the Dragon is filled with‘wrath, poyson, and with bloudy gore’(XI.8.9). This
similarity sets the foundation for the application of consumptive language theory. The
continuing description solidifies it. The Dragon has‘deepe deouruing iawes/ Wide gaped,
like the grisely mouth of hell’and‘in either iaw/ Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged
were,/ In which yet trickling bloud and gobbets raw/ Of late devoured bodies did appeare’
(XI.12.7,8 and XI.13.1-4). The battle with the Dragon is usually read as St. George’s
battle with Satan, but it is also the healed Redcrosse’s battle with his own‘concupiscence;”
as Cullen claims (33). This battle with uncontrolled lust must be won if the hero Redcrosse is to be redeemed in the eyes of the audience. Redcrosse does win this battle and the way he kills the Dragon is especially important in light of consumptive language theory. The appetite-related rhetoric is used as a mask for sexuality, lust in this case, so when Redcrosse “taking advantage of his open iaw/ Ran through his mouth with so importune might./ That deepe emperst his darksome hollow maw,” he kills the Dragon literally and defeats his own lustful desires at the same time (XI.53.6-8). The speech act in this passage occurs when Redcrosse runs his sword through the Dragon’s mouth. In the text, the utterance of the attack is actually the attack. The meaning of this act is clear with consumptive language theory; Redcrosse has defeated his own psychological discomfort with uncontrolled lust.

Up to this point we have focused our analysis on excerpts from the text that link to the negative aspects of sexuality; however, there is another message that can be ascertained by applying consumptive language theory. Balanced sexual attraction is both appropriate and beneficial, but it too is masked in the rhetoric of appetite. Lust was disguised out of discomfort, but why would acceptable types of sexuality be masked? There are two reasons: first, in Early Modern society, as in all of recorded human history, there was not a consensus that sexuality was acceptable, especially not for women; and second, the individual characters involved experience discomfort because of the psychological fear of rejection. These motivations are explained by applying consumptive language theory to the appetite-related speech acts and symbols in the text.

Una has the greatest reason to fear rejection; after all, she was rejected by Redcrosse at the beginning of the text. As a result, she is more careful in the expression
of her attraction. After experiencing capture by Sansloy, living with the satyrs, and escaping with the help of Satyrane, Una is left emotionally drained. More vulnerable than ever, she "fed her wound" and continues searching for Redcrosse to have her "fervent desires slaked," as the first line says (VII.28.6). What exactly does this mean? Well, this is a speech act; we have Una performing an action with her words. A hunger is being assuaged on surface, and it is not a literal hunger for food, but at the same time, her desire for Redcrosse is growing. This appetite-related rhetoric means that Una reaffirms her sexual attraction to Redcrosse, which is currently a wound given the knights earlier desertion of her. Una's masking language as expressed by the narrator helps her to minimize her vulnerability and hide her fear of rejection. Yet, this sexuality is positive as both the near-divinity of Una's role and the marriage of Redcrosse and Una at the end of the first book proves.

Consumptive language theory, when applied to Redcrosse in relation to Una, similarly reveals a positive hidden sexual attraction revealed through consumptive language theory. Canto eight speaks of the "long endured famine" that "needed more relief" in relation to Redcrosse (VIII.43.9). This passage is speaking of Redcrosse's reaction to being reunited with the real Una. A famine, or lack of food, means that his sexual attraction has been suffering because of their separation and his misplaced distrust of her. He needs to purify his desire for her because "without her, he is powerless and disgraced. He needs faith in her and towards her [...] the true and lively faith which endures despite appearances and is known by what it achieves" (Williams 6). The connection between Una and faith is further evidence that this is a good type of sexual attraction, but he, like Una, cloaks that desire to protect himself.
Due to his distrust of Una, sexual misconduct with Duessa, and imprisonment in Orgoglio's dungeon, Redcrosse must experience a period of spiritual restoration. The tenth canto of the first book is the description of this process. Historically, the obvious religious elements of this canto have been explored and discussed. I certainly do not deny the longstanding tradition explaining how this is a lesson in learning Christian love, but looking at how Redcrosse acquires this Christian concept of love through the lens of consumptive language theory suggests that love appropriately contains desire and sexuality, an idea often rejected in Renaissance society by fundamentalist religious figures. Mark Rose writes, 'Spenser is not, in the popular sense, a Puritan, preaching the eradication of sexual desire, but he does insist upon the futility of mere lust. Redcrosse had to learn how to incorporate his physical desires into a greater passion; he must learn how, in the fullest Christian sense, to love' (86). To learn the right kind of passion, Redcrosse must begin by fasting and denying himself the kind of lust he previously indulged in. He 'rend(s) his flesh, and his owne synews eat' (X.28.3). This seems like a strange use of the rhetoric of appetite, but it still connects to desire and sexuality.

Now, Redcrosse is consuming his own corrupted flesh and attraction to make room for the pure form of love he is learning in the house of holiness. The same fear remains, though, which is why the issue of desire and sexual purification continues to be spoken of in metaphors. This understanding of the relationship between the psychological state of Redcrosse, love, and sexuality emerges only when examining this incident with consumptive language theory.

Finally, Redcrosse and Una are united, for a while at least, in marriage at the end of Book One. A feast is held to celebrate their unity, which includes spiritual, emotional,
and sexual unity. This feast, an act of consumption, illustrates that appropriate desire is to be celebrated, but sexuality remains a sensitive subject best discussed in metaphors and signs. Anthea Hume claims this is "typical Spenserian fashion" when "the happiness of the occasion is both earthly and spiritual. Song, mirth, and feasting provide a firm basis to the enjoyment" (106). The appetites are conflated in celebration just as they are conflated in the unbalanced expression of lust. However, the union is a symbol that connects sexuality, appetite, and holiness, the virtue in this first book: "The union of masculine and feminine is, in Spenser as in alchemy, essential to the transmutation of devilish into divine. Another indication that Spenser's concept of spiritual regeneration is not simply the rejection of the flesh [ibid]' (Lockerd 110). Through consumptive language theory, this symbol is understood linguistically within the text and society at large as an argument for the acceptance of sexuality, even though that argument is masked out of fear of reprisal or rejection. Yet, it is the presence of this argument that is most important within the text as a reflection of changing societal views of sexuality.

Consumptive language theory helps us to understand the significance and difference between the extreme and balanced types of attraction as depicted in Book One. Similarly, consumptive language theory helps us to understand the relationship between sexuality, appetite, and motherhood in both a perverted and healthy example. Error is the first monster that Redcrosse and Una confront. Error is an "ugly monster plaine,/ halfe like a serpent horribly dis plaide,/ But th'other half did woman's shape retain'd" (l.14.6-8). Cullen connects this monster to both femininity and the original sin:

The hybrid monster, part woman, part serpent, is the 'child' of Eve and the devil. The monster in the dark forest is the monster in the darkness of our
own nature. She embodies the two fundamental sins which occasioned the Fall and were passed on to all men, and which were suggested in the structure of the opening two stanzas: the pride of the serpent and the intemperance of the woman (25,26).

This quotation suggests that the woman is solely responsible for sin, so this female monster is the representation of the abomination of the correct female role. Redcrosse thinks he must defeat Error to defend 'appropriate' concepts of gender roles. More importantly, Redcrosse goes against Una's advice to leave the monster alone and introduces disunity into their relationship.

Additionally, the monster's composition challenges the conjoining of man and woman. Lockerd argues that this undermines the romantic relationship between the hero and heroine of the story; 'Error's uniting of feminine and demonic thus mocks the goal of the romantic quest of knight and lady for union' (82). This challenge to the relationship between Redcrosse and Una is important, but as of yet nothing overtly sexual is present in the text.

The next stanza introduces the appetite-related rhetoric and provokes an analysis of perverted sexuality and motherhood. Error's bred/ A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,/ Sucking vpon her poisonous dugs, eacheone/ Of sundry shapes, yet all ill favoured:/ Soone as that vncoth light vpon them shone,/ Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all were gone' (I.15.4-9). Simply, this means that Error gives birth to children, they feed upon her, and then she consumes them. This cycle of consumption has multiple interpretations. Douglas Waters takes a more traditional approach and insists on a theological rather than a sexual meaning: "Although physical lust may very well be
involved in the episode (the monster's 'harmless' serpent-brood being perhaps correctly interpreted by one critic as fleshly lust) the degree to which the monster Error signifies false religious doctrine to that degree her basic appeal to the Redcrosse knight is through symbolic lusts, not fleshly' (23). Maybe, but even if the traditional theological interpretation of this event is accepted, that does not exclude the lust perspective.

Applying consumptive language theory to this event inevitably leads to sexual conclusions. The cycle of consumption, the perverted femininity of the monster, and the speech act in which Error breeds her children all point toward sexual implications. Motherhood comes from sexual activity, and just as lust is condemned, motherhood deriving from a purely lustful, selfish relationship is perverted. This symbol represents the larger societal view that 'female violence within the household was contrarily a subversion' (Barthes 132). Now that the context for the symbol is evident as larger than the text alone, the relevance of consumptive language theory is further apparent.

During the battle, Redcrosse smites Error and she 'spewd out of her filthy maw/ A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,/ Full of great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw' (I.20.1-3). The next sonnet compares her vomit to 'when old father Nilus gins to swell/ With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale,/ His fattie waues do fertile slime outwell,/ And ouerflow each plaine and lowly dale:/ But when his later spring gins to auale,/ Huge heapes of mudd he leaues, wherein there breed/ Then thousand kindes of creatures' (I.21.1-7). There is a great deal of appetite-related language in these two passages. First, the act of vomiting is related to eating. It is the opposite, a perversion of the natural process, further indicating that sexual lust is a perverted type of desire.
Furthermore, the comparison to the flooding of the Nile is appropriate because this event is associated with the sexual act. The result of this fertilization is the breeding of creatures, much like the creatures that Error breeds and then devours. Mark Rose points out that these two stanzas also link back to the original situation when the storm came and forced Una and Redcrosse into the forest. According to Rose, all of these events link to sexuality: “In its sexuality the Nile simile harks back to the storm that originally drove the knight and lady into the forest. There the heavenly father made love to the earth by releasing a flood of rain into her lap’ (11). All of this reinforces the legitimacy of using consumptive language theory to analyze this event, but what does this mean? First, lustful sexuality is a perversion. Second, distortion of gender roles is a result of lust. And third, using the rhetoric of appetite to talk about the perversion of Error derives from the psychological discomfort with both sexuality in general and lust in particular, especially when expressed by women.

Finally, Redcrosse succeeds in slaying Error, and the actions of her young further reinforce the conclusions articulated at the end of the last paragraph. The rhetoric becomes even more heavily appetite related, which only strengthens the validity of consumptive language theory. Error ‘poured forth out of her hellish sinke/ Her fruitfull cursed spawne of serpents small’ (I.22.5,6). In response, Redcrosse beheads Error and

Her scattred brood, soone as their Parent deare
They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare,
Gathered themselves about her body round,
Weening their wonted entrance to haue found
At her wide mouth: but being there withstood
They flock'd all about her bleeding wound,
And sucked vp their dying mother's blood,
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good (1.25.1-9).

The consumption of the mother by the offspring further testifies to the perverted type of motherhood depicted here, but this all links back to the warning against lust. The problem with lust is that it is selfish; the attitude of the children to benefit from their mother's hurt by sucking her blood symbolizes the selfishness of lust. It is interested only in devouring the other person and self-gratification. This type of sexuality leads only to disaster.

Redcrosse watches as the young 'hauing all satisfide their blody thurst, / Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst, / And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end / Of such as drunk her lifé'(1.26.4-7). The death of both the mother and the young points out that lust, even though motivated by selfish desire, ends up hurting the very people acting to satisfy themselves. By looking at this account through consumptive language theory, it becomes clear that lust is an unacceptable kind of sexuality that results in a perverted type of motherhood, which society admits but is unwilling to confront directly.

A positive example of motherhood also exists in the first book. This example foils that of Error and shows the benefits of balanced sexual desire. Charissa lives in the house of holiness and participates in the healing of Redcrosse. She, unlike some of her sisters, is married and when we encounter her in the text, she has just given birth. She is described as

a woman in her freshest age,
Of wondrous beauty, and of bountie rare,
With goodly grace and comely personage,
That was on earth not easie to compare;
Full of great loue, but Cupids wanton snare
As hell she hated, chast in worke and will;
Her necke and breasts were euer open bare,
That ay thereof her babes might sucke their fill;
[...] A multitude of babes about her hong,
Playing their sports, that ioyd her to behold,
Whome still she fed, whiles they were weake and young,
But thrust them forth still, as they wexed old (X.30.1-8 and X.31.1-4).

The description of Charissa is filled with the appetite-related rhetoric too, and there are speech acts relating to her feeding the babes. In contrast to Error, Charissa does not consume her children, and the children grow and eventually stop relying on Charissa for food.

Meeting the Early Modern ideal of womanhood, Charissa is beautiful, happy, and content. This type of motherhood derives from balanced sexual attraction, not lust. This has implications for gender roles, which we will discuss later, but Lockerd states that the women in the house of holiness are "object(s) of worship" because they carry the "symbol of feminine potency, a golden chalice" which "according to Jung [is] a kind of spiritualized womb" that creates "the effect of redirecting sexual energy inward toward the spiritual" (107). For Spenser, this is the ideal sexuality. To understand the relationship between eating and appetite and sexuality requires the use of consumptive language theory so as to
pierce through the masking words and read the signs and speech acts as arguments for or against expressions of sexuality.

Looking at the first book of *The Faerie Queene* within the framework of consumptive language theory leads to new insights about the types of sexuality and gender roles Spenser found acceptable. The interaction between linguistic speech acts, semiotics, psychoanalytic explanations for masking, consumption, and sexuality is complex, but wading through the complexity teaches us a great deal about both the characters in Spenser's text and the Early Modern society. So far, we have briefly explored some of the implications for the text itself, but the next section will examine the wider societal implications of consumptive language theory when applied to the *Faerie Queene*.

3. Societal Implications

Many textual implications for the characters of Redcrosse and Una and the situations they encounter or are involved with have already been discussed, but one of the key components of consumptive language theory is its applicability beyond the text to the larger society. Hence, it is now essential to examine how Spenser's use of the rhetoric of appetite reflects on the broad concept of sexuality in two specific areas within Early Modern society: gender roles prescribing acceptable behavior and female linguistic options for communication.

These two specific areas are important given the conflict over them during the Early Modern period. For a long time, it was accepted to speak of the Renaissance as a period of rebellion, but Douglas Bush points out,
It is self-evident that the Renaissance, even in its narrower meaning of a classical revival, was a heterogeneous movement which contained many mutually antagonistic impulses [. . .] If we are more accustomed to think of the Renaissance in terms of emancipation and revelation and are more familiar with the rebels than with the conservatives, it is partly because all the world loves a rebel and partly, as I have said, because the historians have stressed what appealed to them (181).

The importance of this observation emerges when keeping in mind that literary criticism usually attempts to draw specific conclusions from texts and apply them to the society as a whole that produced the text.

However, just as Early Modern society was polarized between rebels and conservatives, as Bush says, literary works share a similar internal inconsistency. This means that attempts to identify Spenser as pro-feminist, as Pamela Joseph Benson does in her book *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman*, are overeager. While a persuasive argument concerning Spenser's view of gender roles is possible, statements that gloss over the conflict inherent in controversial positions are not useful in terms of explaining how a text reflects or deviates from societal expectations. Since consumptive language theory depends upon conflict or tension to explain why masking speech acts or symbols are used, specifically in sexual contexts, it is a clear choice for examining how the textual conflict relates to societal struggle.

Many scholars have fallen into the trap of oversimplification and confined their analysis of overarching themes, like gender, within specific, often religious fields. For example, Robin Headlam in the 1980s claims that 'the appeal of Book I lies in the fact that
spiritual trials are presented through the vehicle of romance—in this case a story of love, jealousy, betrayal and eventual reunion [...] his view of man seems to be one of tolerant compassion rather than contempt for human iniquity” (34). The tendency to simplify the story into a recognizable romance, like those common in Medieval writings, leads easily to the obvious explication of the "view of man" as invoked by the dominant philosophical movement of the time, humanism. However, this analysis, while worthwhile from a philosophical stance, tells us nothing about how society as a whole was dealing with the conflict between Medieval and humanist views of individuality and, by implication, gender. While some scholars have elucidated the presence of the feminine and the masculine, like Lockerd who says that Spenser is "insisting subtly on the need for the two [Redcrosse and Una] to work together and on the potential femininity in Redcroseee and masculinity in Una," few have explored the changing definitions of femininity and masculinity within the text and Early Modern society as a product of linguistic acts (81). Given this lack and the unique approach of consumptive language theory, gender roles and prescribed behavior is an important area to explore in relation to the rhetoric of consumption within the text.

Additionally, language and rhetoric in general is pivotal in most critiques of the Early Modern period. The most well-known writer in this area is of course Stephen Greenblatt, who connects self-fashioning and language for the Renaissance man, though not always the Renaissance woman. Other linguists have explored the dialectical differences and the connection of those to class, for instance, but again, the amount of research in terms of examining linguistic interactions, specifically those involving the rhetoric of appetite within a societal context is insufficient. One such critic has made this
connection: Pierre Bourdieu portrays everyday linguistic exchanges as situated encounters between agents endowed with socially structured resources and competencies, in such a way that every linguistic interaction, however personal and insignificant it may seem, bears the traces of the social structure that it both expresses and helps to reproduce' (2). The obvious connection between the linguistic components of consumptive language theory and the importance of social structure, and the need for additional analysis in this area makes communication a second key area to examine in regards to the rhetoric of consumption.

3.1 Gender Roles and Acceptable Behavior

Women in Early Modern society were expected to live within prescribed standards of sexuality, but women in the Renaissance, like women of all ages, experienced attraction and engaged in sexual activity outside of prescribed norms. The dichotomy between societal expectations and the reality of female sexual activity created a tension seen in consumptive speech acts. This tension is important because it explains the masking use of the rhetoric of appetite to speak of sexual attraction and sexuality, and in so doing, this allows for a slight redefinition of gender roles and acceptable behavior. A great deal of the criticism on gender roles in the Faerie Queene propagate gender stereotypes of the time. The ideal role for the woman is one of virtue and chastity; obviously these qualities link to religious expectations. Therefore, it is with ease and confidence that many scholars simply categorize women like Una as good and creatures like Error as bad: "Thus we find godly, virtuous women exemplifying good order, and evil temptresses and murderous women representing the disorderly world of vice in which Satan attempts to rule' (Walker 124). The religious element is pivotal for the construction
of the dominant views of the acceptable female role. This role is purported and defended with iconic characters like Una in older analyses of the text, like that of S.T. Coleridge in the early 19th century:

You should note the quintessential character of Christian chivalry in all his characters, but more especially in his women. The Greeks, except, perhaps, in Homer, seem to have had no way of making their women interesting, but by unsexing them, as in the instances of the tragic Medea, Electra, etx. Contrast such characters with Spenser's Una, who exhibits no prominent feature, has no particularization, but produces the same feeling that a statue does, when contemplated at a distance (145).

The problem with this classical interpretation of gender roles as derived from the text is that there is no room for conflict. Indeed the women are static, like beautiful but lifeless statues, and immutability is simply not reflective of the changeable nature of real life.

It is true that the feminine is of great importance in the Faerie Queene, especially when considering the character of Una from the first book. Benson states that 'the feminine is an essential principle in the grand scheme of the Faerie Queene; it represents an alternate order' (253). However, this conclusion, and ones like it, are oversimplifications that gloss over things like the rhetoric of appetite we have already seen from Una and in appetite symbols she encounters in the text. The reality of this tension is not obvious; it is hidden, just as the very speech acts and symbols hide the underlying struggle with sexuality and gender roles. The reason for this tension, as consumptive language theory explains, lies in fear or vulnerability and reprisal. To
understand why that fear exists, we must examine the social context for sexuality and acceptable behavior in Early Modern society.

The approach to sexuality in the Renaissance was neither consistent nor unified. In fact, not only were the standards different for men and women, but they were different for social class as well, among other things. Historians identify, not always intentionally, this internal conflict. For instance,

Many historians have viewed traditional popular culture in Europe as unrestrained, celebrating at least male sexuality with bawdy stories, obscene songs, and after the development of the printing press, a range of pornographic literature. They see the 16th and 17th centuries as a period when state and church officials attempted with some success to impose their ideas on the rest of the population and repress this freer sexual expression (Wiesner 48).

Yet, within this revelry and open sexuality that allows the male gender role to be unfettered is the assumption that this same flexibility is not available for women. Where men could engage in their erotic behavior unpunished, 'women were charged with unseemly behavior for flirting or physically demonstrative conduct' (Wiesner 52). This creates a tension not only between general concepts of male and female roles, but also between actual relationships between men and women. Even if the appropriate role for men sanction overt sexuality, which excuses Redcrosse for sleeping with Duessa, this presents a conundrum for the women to whom these men are attracted. These women must balance their 'honoř which is 'a sexual matter' with their attraction to these men (Wiesner 34). The consequence of this conundrum is societal tension that is manifested
in the rhetoric of appetite prevalent in the relationship between and circumstances concerning the relationship between the archetypal male, Redcrosse, and the archetypal female, Una.

The conflict has another layer, though. While general attitudes may make it appear as if sexual license is easily linked to gender, the reality is that men are expected to possess a good sexual reputation too and women actually do engage in the sexuality commonly prescribed to the male gender role. Indeed, “sexual reputation was a matter of great concern to both men and women,” partly because of the consequences for violating sexual mores (Laurence 69). Sexual transgressions resulted in very real penalties for both genders, though more seriously and more often for women: “Urban magistrates sentenced adulterers, fornicators, and whoremongers to the stocks, to whipping or even to prison or a house of correction. Women might, in addition, have their hair cut off” (Laurence 27). This societal attitude clearly blurs the simple assumption that acceptable male behavior includes sexual activity while female behavior does not. Rather, “reputation was a gendered concept in Early Modern England [. . . ] Reputation demonstrates that appropriate behavior in Early Modern villages was defined by gender. Because of its importance, villagers paid close attention to the sexual and social relations of their neighbors” (Amussen 104). Once gender is more closely involved, the definition of roles and acceptable behavior becomes more of a social factor, which further complicates matters and increases tension and conflict.

An example of women stepping outside of their roles is the prevalence of bridal pregnancy. Reports from the time confirm that “in Clayworth, Nottinghamshire, 13% of brides married between 1650 and 1750 were pregnant when they married, in Clayton,
Devon, roughly half were over the period 1538-1799. Nationally, about a fifth of brides in the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries, and perhaps a third in the 18\textsuperscript{th}, were pregnant on their wedding day' (Sharpe 43). A pregnant bride means only one thing: premarital sex. This action is clearly against accepted behaviors; however, if men can be sexual beings than they often need women who by necessity become sexual beings as well. The transition to sexual activity, though, is difficult because while sexual activity happened, it was not accepted, sometimes not even within marriage for purposes other than procreation:“The whole topic of sexual pleasure in marriage (or outside it) is debated with varying degrees of obliquity and varying degrees of austerity; the analogy most often made is that of the pleasures of food and drink’ (MaClean 105). In other words, there is a great deal of disagreement on the issue which introduces conflict into the definition of gender roles and description of acceptable behavior. For that reason, sexuality in both the action and expression was misunderstood and often suppressed:

Even if standards of sexual morality would not have satisfied Puritan preachers, most people observed a rough and ready code in such matters. Bridal pregnancy was common, but promiscuity probably was not. Illegitimacy rates were low, although they were higher in England than in some Catholic states of the period. Organized prostitution was rare, at least outside the capital, and homosexuality was little heard of before the late 17\textsuperscript{th} century. As discussion of contraception suggests, this was a society many of whose members were strangely innocent in sexual matters. Sexuality was little discussed other than in very general terms, and most people were probably happy enough to accept contemporary
definitions of what proper standards of sexual conduct were, even if they occasionally transgressed those standards (Sharpe 48,49).

If the roles were questioned and acceptable behavior was subverted, it was not discussed, at least not directly.

It was discussed and expressed through masking language like the rhetoric of appetite and only consumptive language theory allows for textual analysis to uncover and attempt to explain societal conflict. The application of consumptive language theory to the *Faerie Queene* certainly validates the conclusion that "the total of Spenser's examples, on balance, makes him something like a spokesman for a kind of high norm of naturalness in erotic relations" (Nohrberg 638). This is clearly a stance that is present, but not unanimously accepted, in society at large. Spenser goes so far as to define "the feminine and its role in positive terms. He establishes chastity as the basis of its power and women's capacity for procreation as its most material manifestation" (Benson 251). The easiest conclusion is that Spenser is emphasizing that gender roles for women can include acceptable sexual behavior but are still strictly defined and dependent on virtues like chastity. However, the more important conclusions consider Spenser's use of language to construct his story. The *Faerie Queene* and the relationship between and circumstances surrounding Redcrosse and Una are replete with speech acts and symbols related to appetite. This links to the larger social context and means that there are explanations for this masking behavior, explanations that incorporate the fear of reprisal in court or loss of reputation that is associated with expressing sexuality or attraction.

The rhetoric of appetite is a language of attraction that allows women to express sexuality and men to respond in kind. The subterfuge, not always intentional, is
necessitated by the societal conflict on sexuality, gender, and acceptable behavior. The revolutionary aspect of the rhetoric of appetite is the use of speech acts that challenge and begin the reconstruction of gender. Rosalind Morris states that this linguistic application of speech acts is called performativity: "the theory of performativity defines gender as the effect of discourse, and sex as the effect of gender" (Morris 567). Hence, the rhetoric of appetite via speech acts and symbols in a text provokes slow but steady changes through repetition. Morris explains that "Austin's notion of the performative as the act of enunciation that brings into being the object it names" means that repeated speech acts actually effect cultural change (572). Hence, the rhetoric of appetite, by providing an option for sexual expression, corrodes broader gender roles and slowly creates a new definition: 

Performatives are thus both generative and dissimulating. Their effect, if not their purpose, is to compel certain kinds of behavior by hiding the fact that there is no essential, natural sex to which gender can refer as its starting point. Sex identity is said to be materialized by the gender system in the imitation or reiteration of ideal corporeal styles (Morris 573). While this transformation is evident in regards to the use of the rhetoric of appetite only through careful examination of the text with consumptive language theory, the conflict in gender and behavior was obvious to others as well.

The resolution of this conflict took one of two approaches: accept changing attitudes and seek a middle ground or reject the conflict and reaffirm old stereotypes. Some in the Early Modern period, like Spenser, did accept change while advocating restraint: "Gabriel Frend's late 16th century almanac taught moderation for both men and
women in work, food, drink, sleep, and sex' (Laurence 65). This removed the impetus to engage in masking language, like the rhetoric of appetite, and confront the fears and tensions that precipitated the masking in the first place. However, the other reaction as Castiglione of the Italian Renaissance describes, results only in more conflict: 'I wonder than quoth the Lorde Gasper smyling, since you give women both letters, and stayedness, and nobleness of courage, and temperance, ye will nothave them also to beare rule in cities, and to make lawes, and to leade armies, and men to stand spinning in the kitchen' (Castiglione 195). Clearly the continuing questions about gender and behavior prove that hidden types of language, like the rhetoric of appetite, are still necessary, but the evolution of gender roles for Redcrosse and Una as a result of expressing their sexual attraction through the indirect but still powerful means of speech acts and symbols proves that society wrestles with its internal conflicts through linguistic, and psychoanalytic, means. Consumptive language theory facilitates an understanding of this conflict and further points out that there is an integral bond between text and society. For the Early Modern period, it is the rhetoric of appetite that forges a new path toward differing gender roles and acceptable behaviors. The danger of oversimplifying the positions in the text, at least as far as gender and sexuality is concerned, is mitigated when using the lens of consumptive language theory.

3.2 Changes in Communication

Via this rhetoric of appetite, women and the men they are attracted to, and who are attracted to them, are able to express their sexuality without directly violating social codes. Therein, women of the Renaissance gained a modicum of linguistic control that empowered them to assume typically assigned male power. As men engaged in
consumptive rhetoric with women, the two sexes became linguistically, if not socially, equal. As already examined, gender roles for women and men were at best confused during the Early Modern period, but one thing that the society of the time was not confused about was the fact that silence or only private expressions that had nothing to do with sexuality were the most acceptable forms of communication for women. Quite simply, "chaste women are not to be produced as articulate before a public male audience" (Jardine 5). This obviously presents difficulties for the woman if she is attracted to the man, as she is not to communicate this to him directly. However, the rhetoric of appetite is a hidden way to express sexuality and consumptive language theory explains how to circumvent the societal conflict in which there is the "clearly expressed position that there is something intrinsically indecorous about a woman who (whether with the encouragement of her family or not) transgresses the social code which requires her to observe a modest silence and passivity in public" (Jardine 4). While the societal conflict exists that limits the range of women's linguistic power, the more subversive option of the rhetoric of appetite, as used in the Faerie Queene, by Redcrosse and Una proves that women can assume some of the linguistic authority of men.

It is not only in the sexual realm that this conflict over language exists. Humanism, the guiding philosophy of the Early Modern period, lauds the accomplishments of man, while forgetting that humanity is composed of another gender as well: "Humanist educators [...] fail to distinguish gender-specific orbits for their linguistic and rhetorical skills" (Jardine 18). In spite of this failing, women find alternatives for the expression of sexuality in particular through the rhetoric of appetite and only consumptive language theory can connect this societal movement to the actions
in the text. This is important because it allows women to simultaneously appear to fit into their gender role, a problematic position already discussed, which accruing greater amounts of linguistic power. The assumption that women will be hidden or at least not direct in their communication is explained by Lisa Jardine: “Here is women’s defining ‘knowledge’: private, domestic, and sexual, requiring to be hidden from public view in the interests of decorum and modesty. Made public [...] it is ‘impudent,’ unchaste’ (Jardine 8).

As women increased their communicative efforts, they were able to create a new language for themselves and for the men who chose to participate in it.

It is undeniable that for the typical Early Modern figure, “we need to acknowledge that experience was expressed through language” (Mendelson and Crawford 12). The experiences of sexual attraction and sexuality require a new form of expression when the most obvious avenues are forbidden. From this conflict emerges masking language that results in speech acts and symbols related to consumption. Most importantly, this communication is a performance, not just of new gender roles or sexuality, but of the human experience: “From beginning to end, the human condition is shaped by the conventions activated and manifested by performative speech. To contemplate the human condition is to confront language in action, and there’s paltry purpose in pretending that we can most efficaciously apprehend language and action by separating each from the other” (Petrey 19). Since performative speech is central to consumptive language theory, the use of this theory to explore alternative forms of communication like the rhetoric of appetite through speech acts and symbols is particularly pertinent.

Societal conflict and evolving concepts of gender and language, shaped by the somewhat subversive language of sexual attraction, calls into question, for the
Renaissance community, the acceptability of older forms of discourse. Indeed, it is argued that the unique language of Spenser in the *Faerie Queene*, including the rhetoric of appetite connected to the characters of Una and Redcrosse has developed from demand produced by conflict:

The discourse of 17th century science arises in part from the *discourse of gender conflict* in the encounter between the masculine natural philosopher and feminized 'Nature.' One of the essential features of the early novel is its vivid and varied representation of new forms of courtship and marital dialogue between men and women extending in prose a rich and constant motif evolving from Chaucerian verse-narrative into Spenser's, and thence into the drama of the Renaissance and Restoration (Erikson 86).

The role of Spenser in changing communication styles for women is not immediately obvious, but the development of alternative styles of communication for women, as consumptive language theory identifies and explains, did often originate in texts that played out societal conflicts. From this forum, a new type of linguistic power could be generated and safely assumed by women seeking to avoid the reprisals for challenging accepted norms while increasing their power. Further, men caught up in the societal conflict, especially men attracted to the women that could not appropriately express their own desires, could also participate in this new linguistic option and participate on a level playing field with the women. This social, if not legal or political equality is played out in texts like the *Faerie Queene* where couples like Redcrosse and Una avail themselves
of an alternate language, like the rhetoric of appetite, and opens the door for increased lines of communication for women in particular.

The Early Modern Period is at once a paragon of Western civilization and an example of societal immaturity. The confusion over issues like sexuality, language, and appetite filtered into many aspects of life during the time, but especially into the literature. Through the seminal texts of the period, it is possible to draw conclusions not only about what the characters think, say, or do, but also what the society that produced the text thinks, says, or does. While many have examined language, sexuality, and appetite individually within texts like the Faerie Queene, the confluence of these ideas is rarely explored. Hence, the development of consumptive language theory is a necessary framework for the analysis of specific types of rhetoric, like the rhetoric of appetite, included in prominent Renaissance texts. Consumptive language theory, with components from linguistics and psychoanalysis provides a unique approach that allows the dual examination of speech acts and symbols within a textual and a societal context while explaining the role of fear in generating these masking linguistic devices. Most importantly, though, the theory connects textual and societal implications through an exploration of conflict. When applied to Redcrosse and Una and the situations they encounter in the Faerie Queene, consumptive language theory identifies the reasons for the indirect language of sexual attraction between the two. It also reveals the controversial approach to sexuality that is embedded within both the text and Early Modern culture. The implications for this analysis are many, but two of the most important areas are shifting gender roles and standards of behavior and increasing lines of communication that enhance women's linguistic power.
However, this assessment is only the beginning. Not only are there other characters, like Guyon in the second book and Artegaill in the fifth book, who experience sexual temptation and indulge in consumptive rhetoric, but there are also other symbols like the garden of Adonis that invite the application of the theory. These two characters especially are archetypal of gender paradigms, and applying the theoretical arguments developed would provide rich ground for arguments relating to gender roles and linguistics. From that point, an examination of relationships in Shakespeare's plays, specifically between Beatrice and Benedick in Much Ado About Nothing would be logical. This would allow a similar analysis of Shakespeare's presentation of female linguistic power, but it further opens up the possibility to draw parallels between Spenser and Shakespeare in terms of character development and the social statements embedded in their writing. This is only a brief explanation of further research that can derive from this starting point.

The Early Modern period is rich with conflict, subversion, and reconciliation, especially in regards to the concepts of appetite, sexuality, language, and religion. While volumes of literary analysis of this historical period exist, consumptive language theory is an exciting new methodology for examining masterpieces like Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene in an effort to learn more, both about his time and our own.
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