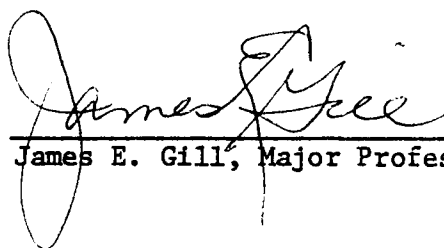
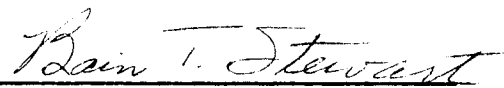
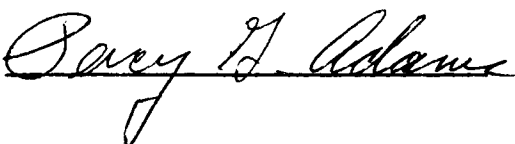


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Patricia A. Howard entitled "The Comedies of Thomas Porter, Restoration Playwright." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.


James E. Gill, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

THE COMEDIES OF THOMAS PORTER,
RESTORATION PLAYWRIGHT

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Patricia A. Howard

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ABSTRACT

Although Thomas Porter is almost unknown today as a playwright, he enjoyed some popularity during the Restoration, particularly for his tragedy, The Villain, and his comedy, The Carnival. The present study is concerned with the three Porter comedies, The Carnival, A Witty Combat; or the Female Victor, and The French Conjuror.

The three comedies present the opportunity to study Porter's dramatic techniques as well as to assess his growth as an artist. Each of these comedies represents a different tradition in the theater. The Carnival is primarily a Spanish romance, which blends the love and honor theme with Shakespearean romance and with the comedy of manners. A Witty Combat, in contrast, follows the pattern of the Jacobean city comedy and satirizes rising middle class aspirations. The French Conjuror, on the other hand, returns to the Spanish romance for its characters and setting, but the play develops a cynical tone that was not evident in The Carnival.

The three comedies reveal a great range of dramatic and comic effects. While not a wit comedy writer to a great degree, Porter succeeds in handling some situations in a witty way, but by the time he writes The French Conjuror, he turns to farce more often than not to resolve most situations.

These works reveal some range in contemporary tastes in Restoration comedy and are indicative of the kind of drama emanating from a lesser dramatist of the period. The plays tend to follow the general

pattern of drama of the period in that the last play reveals the cynicism regarding marriage, religion, and other social institutions that was prevalent in many other plays written during the same time. While each of Porter's plays has some merit, The Carnival is the only work which blends characterization and plot to the point of a polished, completely satisfying drama.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Porter, a relatively unknown dramatist of the Restoration stage, has been noted by James Sutherland as having attracted less critical attention than he deserves.¹ Porter is credited with having written four plays: The Villain, The Carnival, A Witty Combat; or The Female Victor, and The French Conjuror. The Villain, as the only tragedy in the group of plays and one of the few early examples of Restoration tragedy in the age, has received much more attention by critics than the other Porter plays. For this reason the present study will be devoted to the remaining plays, of which The Carnival and The French Conjuror are classified as comedies, and A Witty Combat is referred to as a "trage-comedy" on its title page.

There is no modern collected edition of Porter's plays, and he has attracted only brief notice in some of the histories of the drama, such as those of Nicoll and Harbage. Nicoll says, for instance, that The Carnival, a Spanish comedy of intrigue, is written in blank verse, very irregular but not harsh. He comments on A Witty Combat saying that the hypocritical parson and Mr. King are well drawn figures.²

Harbage mentions Porter's sole tragedy, The Villain, as an example of a play of the period which uses plausible small talk that is

¹English Literature of the Late Seventeenth Century, Oxford History of English Literature, Vol. 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 560.

²Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Restoration Drama 1660-1700 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), p. 220.

unrelated to the action or individual traits of the characters and is inserted simply as part of the background.³ He briefly mentions the other plays in less than one paragraph.

Hume finds Porter's first comedy, The Carnival, a departure from the love and honor dilemma in The Adventures of Five Hours in its use of light, humorous scenes with Sancho and Lorenzo. He singles out the play as foreshadowing a major trend later in the decade toward a lighter form of romance.⁴ Commenting on The French Conjuror, Porter's last play, he says that the play is rather simplistic and that Porter is indifferent to the bawdy character of the work. It "quite lacks the genius and charm of The Carnival."⁵

Perhaps the most thorough treatment of one of Porter's comedies appears in Loftis' book on the Spanish play. He emphasizes the Spanish connection of Giles and Endymion Porter which may have influenced young Thomas in writing The Carnival. Loftis finds this play superior to others by Porter, a judgment which supports his theory that the source of the play is probably Spanish. He feels the play is successful because of its relationship to the comedia, a cape-and-sword play of heroic dimensions that is concerned with love and honor. He also adds that Porter's treatment of the gracioso in the character of Sancho no more lives up to the tradition of the stock

³Alfred Harbage, Cavalier Drama (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), pp. 84-85.

⁴Robert Hume, The Development of the English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 257.

⁵Ibid., pp. 241-242.

comic servant who ironically parodies his master than do other Spanish plays of the period.⁶

The only work which treats all four plays to any extent is that of Montague Summers.⁷ Besides giving plot summaries, he comments on The Villain as "very ably written and interesting throughout. Had Porter given us two or three more pieces of the same excellence his name would indeed stand high among English dramatists."⁸ Of The Carnival Summers says that the comical characters, Don Lorenzo, Don Antonio, Sancho, and the duenna Quintagona, are well drawn, but they have little or no connection with the plot. A Witty Combat is said to contain some witty and very realistic writing until Old Carleton enters, after which there are "mere snatches of scenes." Finally, Summers praises The French Conjurer as a "capital" comedy. The well-written dialogue is "always easy and often witty, the episodes happily designed in a manner which does much credit to the talent and technical skill of the author."⁹

Although the attention given to Porter's comedies by critics has been minute indeed, there is little agreement among them about these plays. Although most think The Carnival is the best of the comedies, Summers dismisses it abruptly. These critical comments seem to indicate that there is a certain merit in each of the plays which bears further study.

⁶John Loftis, The Spanish Plays of Neoclassical England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 87.

⁷Montague Summers, The Playhouse of Pepys (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935), pp. 230-239.

⁸Ibid., pp. 233-234.

⁹Ibid., p. 238.

More is known of the Porter family in general than of Thomas Porter in particular. Thomas was born in 1636 and was the fourth son of Endymion Porter, who served as groom of the bedchamber to Prince Charles and continued in that duty after Charles became king. Endymion was also a patron of the arts and once used his influence with King Charles I to keep Davenant's play, The Wits, from excessive expurgations by the master of the revels.¹⁰ Endymion Porter remained Davenant's patron throughout his lifetime, and in return for various kindnesses, Davenant produced Thomas's first play, The Villain.¹¹

Thomas apparently distinguished himself as a rake very early in his career. On February 24, 1655, he abducted Anne Blount, daughter of Mountjoy Blount, earl of Newport. The marriage contract was declared void, but there was a valid marriage later and a son was born. Later Porter killed a soldier, Thomas Salkeld, in Coventry Garden probably in a duel. After being tried for murder, he was sentenced to be burned in the hand in March 1655.¹² He fought another duel on July 28, 1667, in which his friend, Sir Henry Bellaïs was killed. The quarrel, according to Pepys, arose in "the ridiculous fashion that I was first told it, which is a strange thing between two so good friends,"¹³ and Porter was forced to leave the country. Anne

¹⁰"Endymion Porter," DNB, (1917).

¹¹Arthur H. Nethercot, Sir William D'Avenant, Poet Laureate and Playwright-Manager (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 27.

¹²"Thomas Porter," DNB (1917).

¹³William Van Lennep, ed., The London Stage 1660-1800, Part 1: 1660-1700 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1965), p. 10.

Blount must have died before 1680, for in that year he married Roberta Anne Colepeper, daughter of Sir Thomas Colepeper. He died in 1680.

Porter is credited with writing four plays although the last two are identified as his only by the initials "T.P." on the title page. His first play, The Villain, appears to be his most popular and has a rather impressive stage history. The play is noted for its villain Malignii, who is a counterpart of Shakespeare's Iago. Downes says that the part of Iago was "incomparably played by Mr. Sandford." The play was included in the repertory of the Duke's Theatre for a considerable number of years. Its stage history begins with a performance on Saturday, October 18, 1662, at Lincoln's Inn Fields and continues for nine performances, one of which was at court. Downes comments that "It succeeded ten days with a full house, to the last."¹⁴ At least six other performances are recorded during the seventeenth century. It was reprinted in 1694 and may have been revived in 1699.¹⁵ Performances continue into the eighteenth century until 1711, after which there is no further mention of it.¹⁶

That the reputation of the author lies primarily with The Villain is confirmed by the fact that the known stage history of the remaining

¹⁴John Downes, Roscius Anglicanus (1708; rpt. London: The Fortune Press, 1928), p. 23.

¹⁵Van Lennep, pp. 36, 56, 57, 59, 60, 120, 121, 191, 251, 361, 428, 504.

¹⁶Emmett L. Avery, The London Stage 1660-1800, Part 2: 1700-1729, pp. 28, 38, 70, 222, 236, 240.

plays, The Carnival, A Witty Combat, and The French Conjurer, is slight. The Carnival was published in 1664. It may be the same play as one Pepys refers to on March 7, 1664, given at the King's Theatre. Published with no actors' names and no prologue or epilogue, it was announced in The Intelligencer on May 2, 1664.¹⁷ Although according to its title page A Witty Combat, Porter's second play, was presented before "persons of quality" during Whitsun week in 1663, there is no evidence to suggest that it was produced in one of the public theaters.¹⁸ A copy of the play located in The Ohio State University Library indicates that it was actually presented before an audience, since it names a cast including James Noke as Old Carleton; Price as J. Carleton; Medbourne as King; and Underhill as the parson.¹⁹ The French Conjurer may have been presented by The Duke's Company in June 1677 in the Dorset Garden Theatre, although there is no certainty of the date of production. Being licensed for printing on August 2, 1677, it may have first been acted not later than July 1677. Once thought to be a Lenten play because some of the cast are young actors, there is now reason to believe that references in the Epilogue to performing French comedians pinpoint June 1677 as its production date. Also, The Women's Play referred to in the Prologue may suggest a production for the actresses' annual benefit.²⁰

¹⁷Van Lennep, p. 76.

¹⁸Nicoll, p. 425.

¹⁹Van Lennep, p. 55.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 257-258.

The sketchy stage history of the three plays throws little light on Porter's lesser known works. Langbaine, the seventeenth century critic, praises The Villain and The Carnival as plays "receiv'd with Candor, by all Judges of Wit" and then adds, "What this Author may have writ besides, I know not: and am sorry I can give no better Account of One, whose Writings I love and admire."²¹

The obscurity of the plays, apart from their little known stage history, may also be attributed to the fact that the works are accessible today only in libraries with rare book collections or on microfilm. Whatever literary merit these plays may have is to be found only in these early printed editions. No regularized texts are available. In the study of these plays microfilmed copies have been used, and where lines of plays are quoted, they are typed exactly as printed in the text. Thus "earnes," an obvious printing error, is used rather than "yearns," and punctuation has not been made consistent or modernized.

Despite the fact that Porter's reputation as a playwright is based largely on one play, The Villain, this tragedy will not be studied primarily because it has been treated extensively by Eric Rothstein in Restoration Tragedy and by others. Instead, the other plays by Porter, which have been virtually ignored by modern scholarship, will be examined. A Witty Combat, which according to its title page is designated a tragi-comedy, appears to be a comedy by today's standards and together with The Carnival and The French Conjuror

²¹Gerard Langbaine, An Account of the English Dramatick Poets (Oxford: L.L., 1691) rpt. with a preface for the Garland Edition by Arthur Freeman (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1973), p. 407.

provides a basis to analyze common elements in the three plays.

Chapter II deals with The Carnival, a Spanish romance with a high heroic plot and a lower realistic plot. A Witty Combat, primarily a disguise play dealing with contemporary deceit and hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie, will be examined in Chapter III. The more cynical and farcical French Conjuror also based on a Spanish plot has a main plot carrying out a successful illicit seduction while the couple in the subplot marry. This play is the subject of Chapter IV. The conclusion examines similar themes and techniques in the plays in order to assess Porter's development as an artist.

CHAPTER II

THE CARNIVAL

The Carnival takes place in a world in which the values of love and honor are in conflict. The main action of the play revolves around Ferdinando's falling in love with Elvira when he has already pledged his love to Beatrice. His fickleness reflects a willful neglect of the code of honor followed by persons of his class and threatens his place in that society.

Much of the clash between love and honor takes place within Ferdinando himself, causing an internal struggle between duty and physical desire. He becomes an exile in order to escape the responsibility of his acts, but Beatrice finds him and in obtaining her forgiveness, he corrects the aberration, bringing back the natural order of society.

The entire play takes place during Carnival preceding Lent, a time which lends greater significance to schism between the spiritual world and the world of the flesh. The world view of Ferdinando and other members of his social class is represented by an orderly world with Platonic and chivalric ideas based upon virtuous conduct. The world view opposing this idea is the Epicurean that believes the end of man is pleasure. Will and physical appetite lead man to that end. Lorenzo as the epicure of the arts maintains this view, but since he is a minor character in the play, he does not challenge or present a serious threat to the characters in the main plot.

The Carnival was printed in 1664 in the early years of the Restoration before a clear trend in the drama was evident. Allardyce Nicoll believes there were four schools of comedy at the beginning of the Restoration: (1) the Jonsonian school of humours or satire, (2) the school of manners, (3) Shakespeare's comedy of romance, and (4) the Spanish intrigue play.¹ In examining The Carnival one finds that there are really three separate traditions which interweave in the play. The first is the Spanish romance noted for its intrigue and numerous turns of plot. The second is the romantic comedy of Shakespeare, and the third is the beginning of the comedy of manners which is carried out more fully in such plays as Dryden's The Wild Gallant and Etherege's The Comical Revenge written about the same time. There is evidence of the three types in The Carnival, but they blend so well that this play cannot be characterized as being predominantly one or another. As a result, The Carnival does not seem to be like any other play of the early Restoration period.

Since Sir Samuel Tuke's play, The Adventures of Five Hours, is the first early Restoration play adapted from the Spanish romance, it provides a means for comparing the Spanish elements in Porter's play. Tuke acted on the suggestion of King Charles II that the play, Los Empeños de seis horas, be translated into English. The play was attributed to Calderon, but later Antonio Coello was found to be its author.² The Carnival, on the other hand, does not have a known

¹Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama 1660-1900, I, 4th Ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 194.

²John Loftis, The Spanish Plays of Neoclassical England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 76.

Spanish source.³ Loftis suggests that there probably was such a source for the play; the plot and character design, however, do not show Spanish influence to a point that justifies that statement.

There are some definite characteristics distinguishable in the Spanish plays. Personal honor motivates the various twists and turns of the plot. The Spanish play is more solemn than its English counterpart, and plot takes precedence over character development. The characters tend to be one-dimensional, typed characters. Honor, which is both personal and allied with family loyalty, motivates the Spaniard's actions. He is ready to shed blood over any slight to his dignity or that of the feminine members of the family. He follows a strict code of honor in his dealings with the women in his social class, and the head of the family must give permission before any kind of courtship can begin.⁴

The Adventures of Five Hours concerns two sets of lovers, Porcia and Octavio and Camilla and Antonio, who are thwarted by Porcia's brother, Don Henrique. Don Henrique picks Porcia's husband for her, and unknown to him, he is the same person with whom Camilla has fallen in love. When Antonio's servant desires to see Porcia, his master's intended wife, the girls decide to change places. Thus begin a number of scenes in which mistaken identities provide many twists and turns to the plot. This intrigue play depends upon adroit manipulations of plot and pays little attention to character development.

³Ibid., p. 84.

⁴Ibid., p. 70.

The character of Don Henrique is established early in the play as being representative of the hot-headed Spaniard who is ready for a blood sacrifice, including the blood of his sister, if the honor of the family is threatened. In this play, however, we see a devious side to Henrique because he singles out Octavio for revenge, mistakenly thinking he is Camilla's suitor, rather than his sister's. The happiness and security of Porcia precariously hang in the balance, for she fears what her brother will do when he finds out she loves Octavio.

The Spanish code of conduct is critically emphasized in Adventures. Don Henrique, Porcia's brother, zealously guards the virtue of his sister. His friend Carlos chides him in a speech which delineates the type of care given to the women of a family, when he says,

I find your Travels, Cosin, have not cur'd you
Of that innate Severity to Women;
Urg'd justly as a National Reproach
To all of us abroad; the rest o'th'world
Lament that tender Sex amongst us here,
Born onely to be honorable Prisoners;
The greater Quality, the closer kept;
Which Cruelty is reveng'd upon our selves,
Whils't by immuring those, whom most we love,
We sing, and sigh onely to Iron Grates.⁵

The women in upper class families are not given the freedom of choice to marry whom they want. Marriages are contracted by parents or older brothers acting as guardians who are scrupulously careful that their unmarried maidens are virgins with spotless characters. In

⁵Sir Samuel Tuke, The Adventures of Five Hours (London, 1663; rpt. London, n.d.), p. 12.

order to keep their honor intact, the maidens are obliged to be virtually imprisoned in the home before they are married.

The Spanish code provides the background for Carnival as well. Alvaredo has not visited Elvira as often as he would like because her brother has been on business in Barcelona and has not yet given his permission for Alvaredo's attentions to his sister. Alvaredo submits to the conventional formalities of the society, so that Elvira's honor will be upheld.

Don Alvaredo also guards his sister Beatrice by having a duenna to care for her and his younger sister Miranda. When Beatrice disappears from a party, Alvaredo is quick to blame the duenna Quintagona for her laxness; however, he is not so impassioned as Henrique nor is he anxious for vengeance until he is sure what has happened. In a conversation with Felices, who knows nothing of Beatrice's whereabouts, Alvaredo says,

Though I am a Spaniard, yet I would not
Place the fault of one ill man
Upon the whole family.
If I do find he has done me wrong,
You, and all the world shall hear much more:
Nay, in his blood I'll sign my deep revenge.⁶

Felices says that if he has sinned against the "Sacred Rule/ of honourable friendship,/ I'm his enemy." Alvaredo answers him, "To shew you I'll be just,/ Even to that Sacred Rule you/ lately mention'd, I will not tax him, till I find all certain" (Act IV, pp. 42-43). Thus, because Ferdinando is his friend, Alvaredo maintains a reasonable attitude toward the abduction of his sister. He will not act

⁶Thomas Porter, The Carnival (London: Henry Herringman, 1664), Act IV, p. 42. All further references to this work appear in the text.

in haste to avenge himself on Ferdinando until he is certain of his guilt.

The situation is reversed in Adventures. The Spanish code requires vengeance for personal wrongs, and Henrique is so angry and jealous of Octavio's designs on Camilla, whom he fancies, that he is determined to carry out Spanish justice. Don Carlos, his close friend, perceives him as a man prone to act before he thinks. He suggests that Henrique ask assistance of the law in getting his sister back. Henrique answers, "A fine Proposal! / Why, Cosin, can you think/ That I'll submit a Personal Injury/ To th'tame Decision of the Formal Law? . . . Honour obliges me to take Revenge."⁷ He thunders "revenge" at every point in the play, making his sister fearful until the last act. Octavio tells him his causes for hate have been removed because he (Octavio) loves Porcia, not Camilla. Henrique answers that he will "consult my Honour."⁸ He has used the code of honor to further his own selfish desires.

Although the code of honor in both plays is concerned with protecting the spotless reputations of the unmarried sisters, in The Carnival honor is bound up in pride and also used to save face. When Elvira learns that Ferdinando has apparently eloped with Beatrice, she feels it an affront to her honor, and she must receive a penitent Ferdinando who asks forgiveness before she can release him from his vow of love. Ferdinando's vow is sacred to her honor, and she must

⁷Tuke, p. 62.

⁸Ibid., p. 130.

be the one to release him from his promise and to restore him to his former integrity.

Elvira alludes several times to her honor. She tells Ferdinando she will do whatever her honor will permit. In Act I Antonio wants her to go to Lorenzo's house with the other maskers. She says she is afraid it will be scandalous, and he answers: "No, No, pish, scandalous; 'tis people of meaner/ Quality ought to fear scandal; we are above/ Those things" (Act II, p. 28). She appears to be more concerned over her honor than is her brother, a fact which runs counter to the usual treatment of sisters in Spanish plays.

Beatrice also has a great deal of pride. She follows Ferdinando to Salamanca, so that she can avenge herself on him. She takes the disguise of her brother Alonzo, and Ferdinando remarks, "How strong is Nature, when by h'dden means/ It works revenge for unknown injuries! . . . Those Eyes have murdered me already./ Oh my Beatrice, I do deserve this punishment!" (Act IV, p. 53)

She draws her sword and tries to get him to duel with her, but Ferdinando says he cannot fight her because she looks too much like Beatrice. Finally, she offers to kill herself, saying, "See what thou hast done:/ A woman that did love thee, will die for thee." Ferdinando is ashamed of himself and pushes away the sword. Then Beatrice tells him he is false and a dissembler. But Ferdinando is ready to admit his crime and asks for forgiveness before he kills himself. Beatrice is now convinced that he does regret what he has done. She again offers to kill herself, and since each lover has

come to the brink of sacrificing self for the other, forgiveness is attainable.

Ferdinando explains,

O' my fair Beatrice,
Did you but know
How hard my honesty has been Attack't,
You would some reason have to pity
If not quite forgive my youthful fault;
For when I found that I had err'd,
I know my self unfit for you, And was resolv'd
Never to do another Right.

Beatrice answers,

You could not, Sir, whilst that you did me wrong:
But let this be your penance, Tell me true,
It was not then aversion made you leave me,
But that your love had been divided. (Act IV, p. 54)

She is now completely mollified because Ferdinando did not discard her but has loved two women at the same time. Beatrice has not lost Ferdinando's love, and she was not cast away like an old love; her honor and pride have not been insulted.

Other aspects of the Spanish romance apparent in Carnival include the Spanish names of the characters and the locale of the play, which takes place in Spain. Romantic love is the focus of the play, and marriages are contracted without the English preoccupation with property settlements. However, as is brought out in the play, one reason for unconcern for property settlements is that the various parties in the main plot are of the same social class. While the head of the family must be consulted about marriages within the family, he is not characterized as a tyrant who chooses the husband for his sister. In fact, Antonio is asked his blessing on the nuptials of Alvaredo and Elvira after the two have already agreed to marriage.

Alvaredo's concern with Ferdinando is based on whether or not there has been an honorable relationship with Beatrice. When he is assured her virtue has not been compromised, he can give his blessing to the match.

The Spanish romance also uses dueling as a means to satisfy wounded honor. There are two duels in Adventures within the course of the play. The first is at night in the garden between Henrique and Antonio, who would be very surprised to know they were fighting one another since Antonio is Henrique's intended brother-in-law. The second duel takes place between Antonio and Octavio but switches to Octavio and Henrique. Antonio fights Octavio because he believes Octavio has taken his wife away from him, but when Henrique enters the duel, Antonio must defend Octavio, whom he has taken a prior vow to defend. The question of which vow of honor takes precedence makes the duel ludicrous. It is made even stranger by the fact that the woman Antonio is fighting for is really Camilla and not Porcia, who loves Octavio. This last duel is particularly comical because honor is a serious, sacred vow, and Antonio's honor must be upheld by two conflicting modes of behavior. He is faced with the question of whether his word to uphold the honor of his wife takes precedence over his previous vow to his friend.

A duel in Carnival is threatened but does not take place. It is the climax of the scene between Ferdinando and Beatrice in which Ferdinando must be brought to his knees in order to be forgiven for duplicity and lack of honor. Beatrice disguised as her brother challenges Ferdinando to a duel in order to avenge her honor. He

does not, however, accept the challenge and cannot bring himself to fight. The duel is represented as an improper resolution of the problem of honor just as it is in Adventures and is further rendered comic by the fact that one of the parties is a woman.

Another aspect of the Spanish romance is its strict adherence to the unities of time but not of action. Tuke was able to reduce Coella's story by one hour, thereby shortening the play to The Adventures of Five Hours. Carnival also observes the unity of time, all of the action occurring during one twenty-four hour period. Both plays move locations from one place to another in almost every scene. In Carnival characters are constantly coming on stage and others are going off. Act I, for example, introduces all the characters in the play except Antonio, Lorenzo, and Bartolo, his servant. Since there are several subplots, there are frequent scene changes, the main plot being frequently interrupted by scenes showing events from the other subplots.

Both of these plays follow the general intrigue formula necessary to Spanish romance. The Adventures of Five Hours is a play based on action. Although it has fewer characters than Carnival, the double identities of some augment the number of alternatives in any given scene. Mistaken identities and cleverly conceived coincidences bring characters together and separate them as quickly. New instances occur, bringing on new combinations of characters until the misunderstandings are finally unsnarled. As in Adventures, much of the intrigue in Carnival involves misrepresentation brought about by literal and symbolic disguise, but instead of being used as a

device merely to further the action, disguise has other purposes which will be discussed at greater length in the next section of the chapter.

There are a number of elements of the Spanish romance that are common in the comedy of manners plays of the Restoration. Love and honor, a very important theme in the Spanish romance, is equally important in the English plays of the early Restoration.

For instance, Alvaredo is careful to act within the code of honor in his conduct toward Elvira. He is solicitous of her reputation and, in effect, places her on a pedestal. He is so scrupulous in his behavior towards her that she finds him dull. This attitude seems to motivate her lack of interest in Alvaredo at the beginning of the play. Alvaredo states the problem with Elvira when he tells Ferdinando,

She bad me bring a friend with me,
And he should judge between us of our Case;
Nay she will freely there confess (she says)
That her denial does not spring from hate;
For she has so much Justness in her Nature,
To see that All the actions of my life
Are bent to court the honour of her love:
And yet I fear shee'l never understand
An argument so much to my Advantage
As may confute her of her too much Coldness. (Act I, p. 9)

Ferdinando questions Alvaredo's way of courting Elvira when he says that man should not be a woman's slave. Alvaredo answers him very idealistically:

Peace, heretic, it were a sin to hear thee.
Tw'as force that first made laws to be obey'd
And that's the only privilege that we
Can claim above those beauteous Creatures.
Was the poor lamb created for the use of wrongful, theevish
and of Ravenous Wolves? Or was the Constant turtle only
framed

To be the Quarry of a Tyrant Hawk?
 These have our Plea, and had they industry
 Would frame as Rigid Laws as we; for all were not so
 strong. (Act I, p. 12)

Alvaredo will have nothing to do with the Battle of the Sexes. He views women as the weaker sex to be protected by men just as lambs must be protected from wolves. Alvaredo does not treat Elvira as a flesh-and-blood person, and she looks more kindly upon Ferdinando who treats her more like a woman and less like a statue, although he clearly admires her beauty. Consequently, by the end of the interview Ferdinando has completely compromised his honor, and he must find a solution to this problem for the plot to be resolved.

In addition, the several levels of language and the parallel elements in the main and subplots continue the tradition of English comedy even while blending the Spanish romance elements with the comedy of manners. A variety of language styles are used by the different characters, as well as a differentiation of speech in the main plot and the subplots. For example, in the main plot, the language is both romantic and heroic. In the opening scene between Ferdinando and Beatrice, Ferdinando bids all the blessings of Heaven to fall on Beatrice and calls her his "Soul." Religious imagery is used when Alvaredo expresses his idealized love for Elvira as saintly and pure. This imagery is the basis for the feelings of the lovers so long as they keep their original vows and maintain an ordered view of the universe.

Ferdinando also woos Elvira in language heavy with absolutes that embody heroic ideals of love of seventeenth-century England. Ferdinando promises Elvira,

Nor will I trouble yee with tedious talk
 How much I Love and honour your fair beauty,
 Since where the truth is cleer,
 And in your power by any direct Command
 To put me to the test,
 All circumstance is Needless. (Act I, pp. 15-16)

Ferdinando will carry out Elvira's wishes and is her slave. He appears to be mesmerized by her beauty. When he first meets Elvira, he describes her eyes as those which "can thaw a heart,/ And make an Anchorite knowing in this Art" (Act I, p. 15). Ferdinando carries out the conventional precieux love tradition based on Platonic and chivalric ideals in which women are treated as having a semi-divine status.⁹

Later he wrestles with his conscience, knowing that he has pledged his love to both Beatrice and Elvira. He sees himself as a battleground between passion and reason and uses terms of war to show how one love is supplanted by another:

Yet thou [love] against thy self hast now rebell'd,
 And brought new force where thou a Conqueror wast;
 And thy own Subject by bright Armes expell'd,
 Whom as thy Viceroy in my heart th'hadst
 plac't: Shall I obey thee now? (Act II, p. 23)

He does not completely trust his passion or his reason, for he has already fallen in love a second time. He questions whether this emotion will last even if he does break it off now. However, he continues:

I, but Elvira's fair: I, too too fair,
 That such polluted Sacrifice as I
 Should dare unto her Deity appear, Scorched before
 by Beatrice's Eye. (Act I, p. 24)

⁹Virginia Ogden Birdsall, Wild Civility: The English Comic Spirit on the Restoration Stage (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 33.

The word "polluted" shows his feeling of dishonor caused by not keeping his word to Beatrice. Elvira is a goddess who is too pure to touch, and he dreads how Beatrice will behave when she finds out about his dishonorable behavior.

When Ferdinando and Beatrice are reunited, Ferdinando promises, "But if this heart do ever more rebel,/ Let heaven afflict it with it's [sic] greatest curse (Act IV, p. 54). When he has been forgiven for his dishonorable act by Beatrice, he can look to heaven for punishment if he sins again.

Perhaps, the greatest speech of courtly love comes from Felices who goes to Elvira to ask forgiveness for Ferdinando's indiscretion. He asks Elvira to excuse him with these words:

Do but consider your own Beauty, Madam,
The certain tyes it hath on Affection,
The ever yet unconquered god of Love,
That dips his scorching Arrows in your eyes,
And hardens so their Points,
No Armour, though of strictest honesty,
Is proof against their force:
All these are Arguments to move your mercy
To the forgiveness of a Crime
I now am come to beg a pardon for. (Act V, p. 60)

The imagery in this passage, besides being an example of conventional courtly love, suggests that this love is a kind of myth that is based on infatuation rather than on love sanctioned by God. The allusions are to love and beauty and to Cupid and Venus. Once Elvira says she cannot refuse Alvaredo, Felices says, "And you too much of goodness and of merit/ Not to be honour'd as a Saint" (Act V, p. 61). Now that Elvira has decided to take Alvaredo back, Felices' speech is

again couched in religious imagery, which indicates a return to an ordered life.

Another theme dealt with extensively in the comedy of manners is appearance versus reality. Although both exhibit complete decorum in their behavior, Beatrice and Elvira appear to be opposites. Elvira is a beautiful and probably bored young lady who enjoys the compliments paid to her by various young men. She is concerned with her reputation and her honor more than with love. When she thinks Ferdinando has been disloyal to her, she quickly turns her attentions back to Alvaredo, saying she will love in a fitter place. With a curious but sound logic, she tells him he should not have given up when she first refused him.

Beatrice, on the other hand, is a level-headed, uncomplicated person who is quick to react in situations. She sees through deception, for instance, when Felices takes Ferdinando's place at the party. When Ferdinando suddenly leaves the party, Beatrice quickly decides to disguise herself and follow him with the purpose of avenging herself on him. She does not seem to worry about what others will think when they know she has followed him. She seems to be a "real" person, one who does not artfully disguise her person when she follows Ferdinando. In contrast, Elvira acts in ways which have always appeared to be artfully feminine in Western culture. She has a seductive air and employs female wiles. She joins Alvaredo in bringing Ferdinando to justice so that she can share the revenge, for instance.

Ferdinando allows his emotion to rule his reason when he falls in love with Elvira. His infatuation with her is superficial while his love for Beatrice is a more lasting emotion based on more than surface aspects. Thus, sound and honest feeling finally wins out over insubstantial but artful flirtation.

Misleading appearances are often brought about by using masks and disguises. These devices in the play are particularly appropriate since the setting is carnival, a time of merriment before Lent. Disguises are mainly concerned with protecting one's identity from others. Alvaredo wishes to go to Elvira's before the party when he will have on his masquerade outfit because he wants her to know that he is not grief-stricken at her refusal. When he sees Ferdinando, he covers up his disappointment in being refused by Elvira. He says, "How ill on outward shews we place belief! / My mirth is but my overflow of grief" (Act II, p. 25). Thus, Alvaredo either wears a mask figuratively or literally in order to hide his own feelings from others.

Most disguises do not, however, afford the protection desired. Miranda tells Felices to disguise himself as Ferdinando in order to play a trick on Beatrice. Then she tells Beatrice what Felices is going to do, and thus Felices bears the brunt of the joke. Ferdinando sees through Alvaredo's thin disguise of feigned happiness. Beatrice's disguise is not penetrated until she herself tells Ferdinando who she is, but her disappearance sets off a chain of events that exposes Ferdinando to censure and also brings about the resolution of the play.

Some of the minor figures in the play also disguise themselves at various times. Lorenzo assumes the role of a religious penitent after half of his beard has been removed so that he will not be thought ridiculous by his acquaintances. Antonio says of him, "What a damn'd hypocrite/ Must religion be the Cloak of the Jest/ Was put upon him?" (Act V, p. 67). Sancho assumes the costume of Monsieur Kick-hose during the carnival. Here again, he is recognized and chased by a number of boys. In the same scene Quintagona, disguised as a Hollandts woman on a broom, is told by Sancho to pull off her disguise, for "Your face will serve for one."

The rogues that fall upon Ferdinando also assume different identities. First, they tell Ferdinando that they have been condemned to the Gallies, but later after they have robbed various people, they admit they are gentlemen out for a good time and take their leave. Their activities are pointedly juxtaposed with those of Ferdinando, who has not proved very honorable either.

Although The Carnival involves several plots, Porter succeeds in keeping the play unified around the carnival. The main plot concerning Alvaredo, Elvira, Ferdinando, and Beatrice is unified by the theme of love and honor. The subplot of Felices and Miranda is closely connected with the main plot since both are representative of upper-class people. The two plots come together at several points, especially when Felices helps his brother extricate himself from his troubles with Elvira and when Miranda and Felices converse with Beatrice and Quintagona. Sancho, by becoming Felices' servant, has

a tie with Felices' plot as well as being a low, comic image of Felices. Lorenzo entertains all of the other characters and also provides farcical material for the play. All of these characters come together in Act III when Lorenzo gives a party and in Act V when all are reunited at the finale.

The various plots also suggest different social values in the groups each represents. The main plot deals with love and honor as has been mentioned before and also reveals a romantic world in which passion sometimes overcomes reason and appearance is more appealing than reality. Because Felices has not made any social commitments yet, he is not bound by vows and looks at life more realistically. Similarly, Miranda, because of her age, is set apart from the others and, like Felices, is therefore left to comment on or be entertained by the events of the play. This subplot does not end in marriage because Miranda is considered too young to marry; however, she is able to tease and engage in witty dialogues with Felices. She obviously is interested in growing up and learning the love game, hence the "play-acting" and the "vicarious wooing." For example, she wants Felices to masquerade as Ferdinando to play a joke on Beatrice. She asks Felices, "Can you make love finely?" He answers, "Why d'ye ask? maybe I can; who's to try? I hope since she's too young herself, she set/ One to pimp for me (aside)" (Act II, p. 26).

Later Felices does as Miranda wants and masquerades as Ferdinando. Beatrice quickly discovers he is not Ferdinando because he is too forward, and she accuses him of making love with Quintagona, the girls' duenna. Felices, in turn, blames Beatrice for instigating

this joke on him. At this point Quintagona enters, and a comical scene sprinkled with witty remarks ensues.

Felices asks Quintagona if he has ever made love to her. She answers, "I won't still be used so by a grasshopper/ And a weather-cock: Why should you be jeering me/ Still? I bred you."

Mir. Nay, nor half so well neither; I think I may
speak that without vanity

Fel. Indeed, nurse, that was over-weening:
As handsome as your young mistress.

Quin. Well, well, come charge:
Nay, you're e'en fit for one another.

Mir. Ha, Ha, Ha.!

Fel. I wish we were, nurse. (Act II, p. 30)

Felices and Miranda tease Quintagona and each other a great deal. Miranda is a very high-spirited girl of whom her sister says, "I find, my Lord, you are not acquainted with/ The mad humour of my young sister, she says/ Anything to anybody (Act III, p. 33).

Felices also tends to be a rather wild fellow; in fact, he and Antonio, Elvira's brother, are rakes in the play. Felices finds Antonio playing the fiddle under his mistress's window and says, "What, to play the fidler under a whore's Window! Antonio answers him:

Away fool, 'tis the onely ornament of a melancholly
Lover, one that doats infinitely on all Women,
And cares not a rush for any one in particular:
A whore! Why, hadst thou ever a Mistris thou didst
Not wish to be so? then I have this
Advantage, mine's made one to my hand. (Act II, p. 17)

Their feelings about women waver between wanting a goddess and a woman who "treads on the ground." Felices apparently has not settled on one woman, for as he tells Antonio he will go with him to the house of Juliana since her maid will "serve my turn, or any thing/ That's woman" (Act II, p. 17).

Although he likes to chase women, Felices is honest with himself and makes no pretense about it. When asked what he has been doing, he answers he has been doing almost everything but making love in churches,

For there a man is bound at least
To a serious look, (and that I have)
Turning up the whites of your eyes
Look more precise than a Dutch Puritan,
 or play--with your fingers.
To tell the hour of visitation
When the poor vulgar think
You thereby count your Ave-Maries,
Having forgotten your rosarie.
Out on't! What a damn'd Device
To cloath Dame Venies in Sackcloth! (Act I, p. 5)

He sees the pretense in much human behavior and chooses not to be a hypocrite. He tells Alvaredo that if women are cold, it must be his fault: "Why who should warm the poor wretches/ But we? we who are the sprightly active Animals,/ And they the phlegmatic passive, Sweet,/ Leering or lowring visible Creatures" (Act I, p. 9).

Felices acts as foil for his brother Ferdinando. The rake in the play, Felices is much more honest in his dealings with women than Ferdinando. On the one hand, Ferdinando vows to love two women at the same time; on the other hand, Felices will not vow to love anyone until the end of the play when he acknowledges the fondness he has for Miranda. Even then, he honestly tells Alvaredo he may love Miranda but will not speak of it to her until she is older. Ferdinando dallies with love as much as Felices. He rationalizes his action by saying, "But Man's inconstant nature still must crave/ A Beauty that hee's not acquainted with" (Act III, p. 36).

Felices views life in realistic terms but is less cynical than his counterparts in later Restoration plays. He has another side too. He is able to clear his brother's name with Alvaredo who says of him: "For though you are wild/ I have ever found you/ A gallant and an honest man" (Act V, p. 59). Furthermore, there is the promise of his reform at the end of the play. He says Miranda is too young, but "by the time you are fit for me/ I shall be fit for you; three or four years/ Will strike deep towards gravity" (Act V, p. 68). Felices speaks to Miranda with good-natured, straight-forward directness, a marked contrast to Ferdinando's speech with Elvira.

Another subplot of the play involves Sancho and Quintagona in a "low" variation of the high plot. Their relationship constitutes a contrast with the romantic love in the upper-class. Sancho, like Felices, has made no commitments to life. He is detached from life enough to comment on events and to carry out pranks. His love affair with Quintagona, as might be expected, is anti-heroic. Quintagona offers Sancho 2,000 crowns she has taken from Don Alvaredo if he will marry her and take her away. Sancho says she has spoiled their relationship. She cries, and he tries to comfort her, saying:

This is the first lady ever wept for Sancho,
Have comfort my dearest duckling,
I will be thine by day and night,
And get a whole litter of Sancho's on thee? (Act V, p. 60)

Quintagona tells him she is very tender and he should not be so harsh. He answers, "Yes, as tender as whit-leather,/ Well, come spit in thy hand and leap here,/ Is't a match, speak (Act V, p. 60). The bluntness and comical attitude provide a contrast with the romantic main plot and the jocular subplot with Felices. In this subplot

love and marriage are agreed upon by Sancho's and Quintagona's spitting in the hand. Although crudely put, this marriage proposal differs little in spirit with the marriage proposals of upper-class decorum.

The language also moves downward from the elevated, ornamental language of the main plot to the matter-of-fact, cruder language of the subplots. In the high plot jewels are mentioned several times in connection with a priceless, valued, immaterial possession. Ferdinand begs Elvira in Alvaredo's behalf to "Look with the Eye of Justice on his Merits,/ You'l find so rich a Jewel worth your Care" (Act I, p. 11). Elvira speaks of her virgin's love as her greatest jewel. Then, in the "low" plot jewels are taken from Alvaredo's household by Quintagona who offers them to Sancho as a kind of bribe to carry her away. Here, the idea of the jewel has become literal and as well has become cheapened and denigrated. The "low" plot subverts the value of the jewel to a commodity to be traded or sold to a bidder.

Although a number of characteristics of the comedy of manners are found in The Carnival, the satirical tone is missing. The sharp repartee of the witty couple is not developed to a great extent although the beginnings can be seen in the Felices-Miranda plot. The overall tone of the play is romantic and reminiscent of the earlier romantic comedies.

The romantic comedy in The Carnival is in some respects similar to a Shakespearean romantic comedy, such as As You Like It. First of all, the romantic characters will presumably live happily ever

after following their marriages. There is a sense of the sweetness of young love when it is satirized gently. Finally, most of the comedy presents delightful situations and people rather than degraded and denigrated ones.

This fact is highlighted by Sancho, who is a kind of mirror image of Felices in the lower plot. Naturally, he becomes Felices' servant, for as Sancho says, "Like Master like man" (Act I, p. 13). He comes to the city from the country. He represents an inversion on the usual comic theme, however, since he comes to the city with "A great mind to practice here a little/ Upon these City Gallants; fools I'm sure they/ Are as well as we, only drest better, and/ Keep their gravity more" (Act I, p. 7).

The character of Sancho is closely akin to Shakespeare's fool Touchstone, whose jokes are of a different idiom from what society expects.¹⁰ The following exchange with Pedro and Offorio shows Sancho's pert conversation is not unlike that of Touchstone:

Offor. Why, what are you, friend?

San. One of Gods making, and his own undoing.
(Act I, p. 8)

The flavor of Sancho's remarks is similar to Touchstone's, who says, "The more pity that fools may not speak wisely that wise men do foolishly."¹¹ Sancho says,

Here's your fools face,
And here's your Don's:
Pray which is better, to play the fool well,

¹⁰Northrop Frye, A Natural Perspective (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 92.

¹¹William Shakespeare, Shakespeare, Major Plays, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948), AYLI I.ii.500.

Or to dissemble the wise man,
And be an errant Cockscomb here? (Act I, p. 8)

Touchstone and Sancho both make wise remarks in a context of non-sense.

Sancho, like Touchstone, speaks a kind of circular nonsense that leads nowhere until the logic is suddenly tied together at the end of the speech. The saucy manipulation of words and argument tends to provoke a kind of delightful comedy, rather than sharp, biting satire as in this exchange between Sancho, Pedro, and Offorio:

Ped. What trade art of?
San. A Giber, sweet gentlemen.
Off. Why then about thy business, I say again;
For we are not for thy Turn.
San. The properest men in Sevil.
Off. Nay, that we are not neither;
My friend Pedro is not tall by any means.
San. O Signior I mean it not in that sense.
Ped. How then?
San. Pray, Gentlemen, what's like a horse and is no horse?
Ped. Oh I can answer that, I read it in a Book
T'other day; 'tis a mare, friend.
San. Troth and that's True; but
I thought ye would have answered an ass.
Off. Well, come, suppose I answer so.
San. Why then, Gentlemen, you come much
Nearer my Conceit;
For you two are as like one another
As one ass can be to t'other. Hi, hi, hi!
(Act I, p. 8)

Sancho makes a number of similar pithy comments at various times. Felices tells him to entertain his friends as it was the "only virtue I took you for." Sancho answers, "Sir, and I chose you for the same reason" (Act II, p. 23). At another time Felices enters dragging Sancho by the hair, eliciting the following repartee:

Fel. Oh Rogue! have I caught you?
San. No.
Fel. Sure I have.
San. Why did ye ask the question then? (Act I, p. 13)

Jaques and Lorenzo are also similar type characters. As Jaques is set apart from the other characters in As You Like It by his melancholy, so Lorenzo is separated from others in Carnival by his worship of the arts. He enjoys providing entertainment for his guests, but on the other hand, does not want them to drink too much of his good wine. Sancho notices Bartolo saving the wine; he moves behind him and gives the wine to Felices standing behind the screen. To add to the farce, Sancho cuts off half of Lorenzo's beard. Although everyone else is aware of Lorenzo's loss, he is not. In a later act Sancho alludes to beards until Lorenzo finally notices his is gone. Lorenzo is a character that things happen to. His single-minded mania for Epicurean delights makes him the kind of character who invites trickery and farce.

Another similarity with Shakespearean romantic comedy is the introduction of a green world into the play. Many of the Shakespearean comedies contain this world in which characters move away from the real world into an ideal world and then back into the real world again. Frye calls this a depiction of the triumph of life over the waste land or the death and revival of figures both human and divine.¹² Generally speaking, in the romantic comedies the death and resurrection pattern in comedy is resolved, for example, by marriage, freeing a slave, and the triumph of a young man over an older one. The Carnival follows this pattern by presenting a young

¹²Northrop Frye, "The Argument of Comedy," in Shakespeare, Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Leonard F. Dean (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 81.

man who blocks himself from his true love by allowing his wandering fancy to overcome his settled feelings. He escapes into the green world represented by Salamanca. In this world he does not have to break his vows to either Beatrice or Elvira, for he will never see either of them. However, instead of finding a perfect world free from dishonor, he is beset by rogues claiming to be galley slaves who have run away. Ferdinando says, "This I deserve for my disloyalty:/ There's none of these yet half so bad as I" (Act III, p. 40). Later the rogues tell him they are really gentlemen out for a good time. What Ferdinando thinks is an ideal world can be as deceptive as the real world. However, Ferdinando gains knowledge of himself in this world with the help of Beatrice.

In Shakespeare the comic resolution is often brought about by the heroine disguising herself as a boy. In Carnival Beatrice, dressed as her brother, follows Ferdinando into the green world, and she is able to bring about Ferdinando's resurrection by forgiving him. Thus, in this comedy the hero falls but rises again in the estimates of Beatrice and Alvaredo. The movement from the green world is a symbolic movement from sterility to renewed life and becomes a celebration of life in the comedies.¹³ In The Carnival Ferdinando resumes his former life wiser from his experience. The rebirth of the hero is celebrated at the end of the play through the carnival, which has been the overriding metaphor throughout the play. The major characters are brought together through marriage, and the

¹³Frye, A Natural Perspective, p. 122.

possibility of future marriage between Felices and Miranda is expressed. A spirit of reconciliation ends the play as in the Shakespearean comedies. There has been a temporary departure from normal standards, but Ferdinando's pardon brings a reconciliation with the real world.

The Carnival is a vigorous, joyous play which belatedly exploits the conventions of earlier seventeenth-century drama--of the Spanish play and of witty, romantic comedy. It is Porter's richest and most satisfying comedy.

CHAPTER III

A WITTY COMBAT

A Witty Combat builds on the tradition of the Jacobean city comedy, which is essentially anti-romantic and satirizes citizens, usurers, and gallants, all of whom prey on one another. The setting is the city, which often uses actual street names and places to provide realism. There are usually a number of tricks perpetrated by a satiric persona or trickster-hero on fools. The satiric tone prevails throughout and generally precludes a sentimental treatment of the characters.¹

A number of city comedies were written between 1598 and 1616. Ben Jonson blended the older morality play with the Roman satirical comedy, and the city comedy genre was created through such plays as Jonson's Every Man in His Humour, Bartholomew Fair, Volpone, and The Alchemist. City types such as gulls, braggarts, and the jealous husband were satirized in the comedies.

In most cases inheritances, frauds, and fortune hunting constitute the basic issues of these plays. Middleton, for example, combines exaggerated satire with a didactic lesson in his city comedies. Sir Bounteous, a humours character in A Mad World, My Masters, is a genial host to everyone but his nephew Follywit who will inherit his fortune. Follywit resorts to trickery in order to gain his grandfather's generosity. In the same manner, Witgood in A Trick to

¹Brian Gibbons, Jacobean City Comedy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 24-25.

Catch the Old One deceives his uncle Lucre so that he can recover the estate Lucre has taken from him. Witgood and the courtesan cleverly deceive Lucre and his enemy Hoard while those two engage in tricking each other. Middleton's final city comedy, A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, combines four plot strands, each of which provides a formidable criticism of middle-class moral views of love and material wealth. All of the city comedies have an urban setting, and their primary concern is with a materialistic middle-class society in which the vices of greed and lust are satirized. Abounding in intrigue, these plays are deeply ironic, a fact which adds immeasurably to the comic effect.

Although essentially a city comedy, A Witty Combat is based on the true story of Mary Carleton, who masqueraded as Mary Moders. Coming to London in 1661, she represented herself as an heiress of 80,000 pounds a year, a falsification that was not discovered until after she married in April 1663 John Carleton, a brother of one Mrs. King. Unfortunately, she was found to be married already to John Stedman, a shoemaker.² Not only married to Stedman, she was also discovered to be married illegally to Thomas Day, a surgeon, in Dover. At that time she escaped bigamy charges only because Stedman did not appear as a witness.³ She was again tried for bigamy at the Old Bailey on June 4, 1663, and was acquitted. Needless to say, her escapades created a sensational reaction in London. She even played

²"Mary Carleton," DNB (1917).

³Montague Summers, The Playhouse of Pepys (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935), p. 235.

herself in Porter's play, which was produced by Sir William Davenant in 1663. So successfully did Davenant handle the production that the play was thought by many to be written by Davenant himself under the title of The German Princess.⁴ The mystery is cleared up, however, by Summers who finds that The German Princess was written by John Holden, a close friend of Davenant's, and was never published. His play was mentioned by Pepys as being performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields in April 1664 and seen by him on April 15.⁵

A Witty Combat, although based on the life of Mary Moders, seems to represent artistically the duping of the essentially dishonest middle class. It not only presents a glimpse of city life in London after the Restoration, but moreover allows a comparison with some of the earlier Jacobean city comedies of the first decades of the seventeenth century. It also invites an analysis of those parts in the play which do not appear to be based on the factual account, which brings into question how one can tell a lady or a gentleman from common folk, how far one can go in deceiving others, what happens to those who deceive themselves, and to what extent bourgeoisie elements are satirized in the drama.

First of all, elements of London city life are present in the play. A mixture of lower working class individuals and servants shows circumstances of everyday city life as in the earlier Jacobean

⁴Arthur H. Nethercot, Sir William D'Avenant, Poet Laureate and Playwright-Manager (New York: Russell & Russell), 1967, pp. 378-379.

⁵Summers, p. 153.

city comedies. The first scene takes place in London in Billingsgate at an alehouse called the Rose, for instance. The language used is representative of common folk as the watermen carry on a gossip conversation about their fares on their last trip across the river. This scene serves as an introduction to Mrs. Moders and the parson. Mrs. Moders is characterized as an experienced woman of the world, and the parson is apparently no match for her, according to the watermen's conversation:

- 1 Waterman I, so the Parson told us this morning in the boat, we had a jolly Company of Passengers, but what she should be that is gone with the Parson my Noddle cannot imagine.
- 2 Waterman A notable perrilous witty wench. I warrant her, let her alone for leading her men.
- 1 Waterman She'll lead the Parson besides his Text I'me afraid; how she handled him?
- 2 Waterman Nay, marry he would have handl'd Her, by your leave friend.
- 1 Waterman You say very right, but she was too cunning for him, She was courted by better Men in the Boat, but she was too hard for them all, I wonder the Parson should carry Her away.⁶

This introduction to the parson shows he is not a very dashing, romantic figure. In Scene ii he is thoroughly satirized through his own speech and actions. The parson speaks:

Verily 'tis sincerity of love I bear to strangers,
as we are exhorted even so to do by the most learned
Authors; yea we are all but strangers here, and
therefore assuredly we should love one another, yea,
so the Word is even as one another. (I. ii. pp. 5-6)

He hypocritically uses the Bible in order to rationalize his own conduct, making pompous sermons filled with sententious language.

⁶Thomas Porter, A Witty Combat; or The Female Victor, A Tragedy (London: Tho. Roberts, 1663), Act I, i, p. 2. All further references to this work appear in the text.

Mrs. Moders is not impressed with his behavior and spurns his advances at every turn.

His speech becomes more impassioned and exaggerated:

/A/n understanding woman is a Jewel, yea, yea, a precious Jewel in the Eares, and hearts of Princes and wise men assuredly, in sundry places we do find it so, yea verily; ah, ah, ah, ah, this hand yea this same hand of yours.

Moders. And what of it Sir?

Parson: It melts like Butter 'gainst the Sun believe me, I would come neerer verily, that is unto your Lip, in verity, it would affourd me sweetness in Abundance, truly assuredly it would, I pray, I pray--- (I. ii. pp. 7-8)

Mrs. Moders will stand for no more of his attentions. The parson is told to leave by Mr. King, the owner of the inn, who scolds him for taking such liberties. Satirized unmercifully to the end, the parson departs with these words: "I greet you well; but will conclude with the wise Man, he that takes a Woman for his friend takes a wrong Sow by the Ear yea verily" (I. ii. p. 9).

The Jacobean stock response, satirizing Puritan hypocrisy, is operating in this play. Just as Allwit castigates the Puritans in the christening scene of Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, the pastor's behavior is commented on by the two watermen, Mrs. Moders, the drawer, and Mr. King. Not only do they ridicule him, but his actions are as ridiculous as they think him. His lecherous behavior is contrasted with his sermonizing and his wandering around the point he is trying to make, so that he is portrayed as a very inept, hypocritical fellow.

The main thrust of the satire, however, is focused on Mrs. King, the wife of the innkeeper, and to a lesser extent on her family. She has a number of characteristics of the typical merchant class wife satirized in the city comedies, including great curiosity and inquisitiveness. She also has the ability to assess situations erroneously and never to learn from her mistakes. She is a glib conversationalist and quite positive of her own wit to accomplish what she sets out to do. She does not realize what a simple, transparent person she really is. When she discovers from the maid that Mrs. Moders has jewels and then when she intercepts a letter from Mrs. Moders to friends, she falls into the trap Mrs. Moders has set for her. She plays the typical character in a city comedy--the fool. Not only is she gulled by Mrs. Moders, but she brings the trick down upon herself and her family by her refusal to believe that Mrs. Moders can be anything else but a German princess. She truly wants to believe in Mrs. Moders because she thinks her brother, young John Carleton, totally worthy of marrying such a woman. Throughout the play Young Carleton is referred to as one who has wit and is no fool. Mrs. King emphasizes this fact over and over again, and her comic naivete and gullibility make her one of the most humorous characters in city comedy.

Mrs. Moders' role in the play is somewhat like that of the presenter of the earlier city comedies. What satire there is in the play is commented upon by her. She drops some hints about her social

station early in the play, for Mr. King judges her to be a gentlewoman. He asks her if she is a stranger in town and then says,

And 'tis very likely d'ye see you have a charge about ye. If so please d'ye see to make use of my House, d'ye see you need go no farther, here you may be safe d'ye see, I'll see you are a civil Gentlewoman, and 'tis pity d'ye see you should happen into a place that would abuse you, there are some such in town; d'ye see that will prey upon strangers d'ye see, but you shall find no such thing here believe me. (I.ii.p. 8)

All that Mr. King knows about her is that she has rebuffed a clergyman and has a charge. He thinks she acts as if she might be a gentlewoman, but he is far more cautious than his wife in assuming her social station.

Mrs. Moders quickly sizes up the weaknesses of Mrs. King. She says that she is like Eve in her inquisitiveness, and she shall give her a "tast of the Apple." She lays a trap for her by writing friends letters that she knows Mrs. King will intercept and "pry into, to satisfie her longing." Mrs. Moders comments that she will read them although knowing it "be most inhospitable and base" to do so. She also decides that the more "respect" Mrs. King shows her, "I've seem still a stranger to her meaning." Mrs. Moders is not going to be "a Price for thee and thy designes;/ All bold inquisitors ought thus to be/ Deluded with some shew of certainty" (III.ii.p. 17). Mrs. Moders' scheme works very well as the maid comes back from mailing her letter and addresses her as "your Ladiship."

John Carleton is also duped into believing Mrs. Moders is a gentlewoman. Although he is often cautioned by Mr. King who reminds him, "she may be a person of Quality d'ye see, and she may not d'ye

see, All is not Gold that glitters," he is also encouraged by Mrs. King. Mr. King does not want him to be "ensnar'd," but Mrs. King answers, "Ensnar'd Love! dost thou think that I, who am his natural born Sister, flesh, blood, and bone, would bring him into a snare love!" (III.iii. p. 20) She wants her brother to trust her and let her arrange things between him and Mrs. Moders.

When Mr. King suggests caution, John Carleton says, "I am neither fool nor mad-man, I have my Wits about me." Mrs. King adds that he has "more Wit than twenty of 'em," but she has wit enough to arrange a match between her brother and Mrs. Moders if he will let her. These kinds of comments provide irony to the play since it has been clear for some time what Mrs. Moders is planning to do. From this point on, the interest in the play centers on the duper-duped theme--the intrigues of Mrs. King and her attempts to make a match between Mrs. Moders and her brother John.

Mrs. King almost outdoes herself in absurdity when she tries to convince Mrs. Moders that the John Carleton she met the day before at dinner is a lord. Mrs. Moders says, "Do I dream? a Lord (aside) since yesterday!" (IV.i. p. 25) She becomes stubborn and will not take a ride in the coach with John. Mrs. King tries to convince her of his nobility by alluding to his eccentricities:

Some times he will go in the Street as he went for a wager, with his Collar all unbutton'd, swetting like a Bull, his Cloak hanging behind him, in one hand his Gloves, the other full of Papers, that one would take him for all the World to be some young Clerk, or one that had Relation to the Law, At another time when he has a mind to be privately marry he throwes his Cloak over his Nose, and in he steales, and is as good Company!---

Moders. For a mad Lord.

Mrs. King. Nay he is not mad, in truth he has some
whymseys but they are huge becoming I'll
assure you Madam, if you were acquainted
with 'em; then he has been bravely bred
Madam.

Moders. So a Lord should be. (IV.i. p. 26)

Mrs. Moders, as the presenter in the play, comments at every opportunity on what Mrs. King says so that what is real and what is imagined are clearly distinguished. Her comments on manners carry the possibility of scorn for new aristocrats. She has already told Mrs. King she does not want to be addressed as Madam, "because the word is common, and therefore Landlady I do abhor it" (IV.i. p. 25). Mrs. King tells her brother not to address her by this title, and her brother then uses such addresses as "most accomplished Lady." Mrs. King comments on this address by saying, "I, this sounds well, how can you find in your heart to deny his Lordship?" Mrs. Moders answers her,

My Lord, though young, I do perceive has been train'd up
in Complements, they are indeed the Courtiers prayers.

Yo. Carleton. Then they should prevaile.

Moders. With Fooles, but not with such have under-
standing. (IV.i. p. 25)

Mrs. Moders draws a line between form and substance. When Mrs. King and her brother follow the form of a gentleman's behavior, that is, form without substance, Mrs. Moders is wise enough to know the difference. Mrs. King's final comment again brings back the superficial: "Most accomplish'd, and most singular Lady," "Most gracious Lady, that's another" (IV.i. p. 29).

There have been two commentators in this scene, one being contrasted with the other. Mrs. Moders, an imposter herself, comments on the ridiculous superficiality and gullibility of Mrs. King, who is not clever enough to see herself as Mrs. Moders sees her. Mrs. King is enamoured of the superficial behavior which she thinks is like that of gentlemen and ladies--behavior based on form rather than on substance. Persons of quality, she thinks, act in a certain way and speak in a certain way. If someone acts like a lady or a gentleman, he must also be one to her way of thinking. She views the world to a certain extent as a member of her class except that she becomes an exaggerated caricature because she is totally preoccupied with bettering the status of her family.

A Witty Combat, like other city comedies, shows the interplay between social classes. There are no members of the upper class in the play, but Mrs. Moders fills the role of gentlewoman and Young Carleton that of would-be gentleman. The Kings are representative of the middle class, and nothing would suit Mrs. King better than to see her brother marry a gentlewoman or even a German princess. She shows the optimism of her class in that she thinks nothing is impossible or too good for her family. She tells her husband, "Her Estate will make amends for all, and though he is a false Lord now, her Estate will make him currant; money will buy Honour at any time Chuck" (V.i. p. 34). Young Carleton's marrying above his family's station is seen as social advancement for the entire family. Despite Mrs. King's optimism, Old Mr. Carleton is not taken in as easily as his daughter and is much more wary of circumstances which might prove to

be adverse. He questions his older son very carefully to find out if John has really looked into the background of Mrs. Moders. He is also the first to claim his son's marriage portion of her estate after the wedding and is the first to tell those assembled that she is an imposter. He claims, "She's a strumpet who has had two husbands beside thy self; a paltry Shoemaker is one of them" (V.i. p. 35). When old Mr. Carleton finds out she is married to very common folk, one wonders if he is more outraged by her commonness than by her duplicity.

Mr. John Carleton is spoken of by two gentlemen attending the trial of Mrs. Moders. One says, "A sweet lad, my heart earns for him; a man well bred of a good family, and in a handsome way, thus to be catcht argues a weakness some where; a gross oversight; a pituous shallow conception" (V.i. p. 36). There is reason to feel the gulling of Carleton and his family is deserved.

While the play is structured around the gulling of the Kings and Carletons by Mrs. Moders, there is a thematic parallel established in a partially developed subplot involving the identity of Wat the cellarman. He appears in four scenes which have a thematic parallel to the main plot. First, he is drunk and goes through a number of personality changes common to an inebriated person. He is defensive, surly, abusive, and finally very sentimental. Young Carleton says, "Tis a very honest fellow, did this drink not abase him" (II.iii. p. 14). The drawer cannot understand where he gets the drink since he does not drink in public at all. He finally surmises

the scent of the cellar makes him drunk or he drinks with his shadow. In this scene Wat refuses to believe that he is drunk.

In his next scene Wat is at his job in the cellar, alone and alienated, filling various vessels with wine for a party going on upstairs. The guests drink the wine he pours but never have anything to do with him. He invites himself to have a sip of wine, toasts himself, and is soon proclaiming he is "Prince of the Spiggot" (III.iii. p. 21), a title that is no more pretense than gentlewoman or German princess.

The connection between Wat and Young Carleton becomes clear when Young Carleton becomes Lord John. The cellarman, drawers, and other servants gather at the door with orders not to recognize Carleton as "plain John." Wat in a conversation with the other servants also refuses to admit he drinks. The pretense of being sober is carried on by Wat, although all the servants are aware of it, just as Young Carleton is pretending to be a lord, and all the principals in the scene are aware of it also (IV.i. pp. 22-23).

Wat again appears after Old Carleton and his family arrive at the inn. Mrs. Moders has been questioned by Mrs. Carleton to see if she "knows the languages," a sure way of telling a gentlewoman, but Mrs. Moders becomes tired of the interview and sends them away. In the basement Wat and the drawer are talking. The latter says, "The very stem o'th celler now and then besots thee, Brother does it not?" Wat answers, "That may be, for the Wine fumes and flyes into a mans head most plaguely--but now stand off--let me speak the sense of the Poet to the Auditory:

I'm not the Person that I seem'd to be,
 Although a Cellerman, I am not he. (IV.i. 34)

Wat has a double identity. People think him the cellerman, but he is more than that. When he is drunk, he is a completely different person living another identity. This identity is like that of Mrs. Moders and Young Carleton, who also have two identities--that which they are and that which they want people to think them. These characters are thematically intertwined and complement each other in the play.

Since the plot of the play concerns gulling, one of the major questions presented is the nature of deception. The guller and the gulled both attempt to deceive each other; however, the guller has more wit than the gulled and also a great deal more knowledge of people than the other. Mrs. Moders is presented as a woman who is on her own and must assume a particular identity for her own protection. She first reveals herself when she says:

These People are highly officious, -I have not met the like civility in any place, what e're the reason; if it continue thus, it will be wonderfull: I am a stranger, and I must be so in my Deportment, as the sight of these draws on respect, [pointing to jewels] so a becoming distance in me is necessary; to be too familiar renders a woman light, though she be honest, and to be sower and surley is as bad, and argues want of breeding, to avoid the censure of either, I'll walk between both, and as I find my Company, appear neither too Jocand, nor yet too severe. (II.ii. p. 11)

Since she does not understand the obsequious behavior of Mrs. King, she plans to keep her distance from her mainly for her own protection. Her jewels, of course, are very persuasive, providing her with a ready-made identity and a great protection against the outside

world, which she views as threatening. When Mrs. King's outlandish plan becomes known to her, she decides to play along with her to see what will happen. She apparently delights in the success of her ruse since she says,

Glory depends on Conquest, I have brought
 (After so many Tryals of my Wit,)
 My amorous Lord, and his adverse Allyes
 Upon their knees to supplicate my love;
 This very minute I expect his Lordship
 To hurry me into the Armes of Hymen.
 For that's their drift I know, let their pretense
 Be what it will; and i'll embrace it. (V.i. p. 32)

She exhibits a passion for self-fulfillment, becoming increasingly satisfied with the success of her venture. Her behavior is quasi-heroic, having to do with gloire and grandeur rather than with virtue and duty.⁷

The sympathy in the situation is, for the most part, for Mrs. Moders, probably because she does display more wit than the others. Mrs. King is so socially insensitive that she can only be viewed as a comical figure. She learns very little from the experience and tells her husband, "Oh Chuck, Chuck thou hast defil'd our Nest, and thrown a speck upon our Family." Her husband tries to show her that taking Mrs. Moders for a princess was a bigger mistake than his taking her for a gentlewoman. In answer Mrs. King says, "I wish it from my heart thou had'st been sick a Bed chuck when thou did'st what thou did'st; but 'tis no matter. I hope to see her hang'd" (V.i. p. 36). She never sees the part her own gullible nature has played, nor does she regret her own scheming in the affair. The

⁷On heroic quests of Cornelian gloire in Restoration drama, see Arthur C. Kirsch, Dryden's Heroic Drama (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 50-52.

play follows the known facts in the case by having Mrs. Moders tried for bigamy and acquitted. The outrage of the Carletons over the bigamous situation is not only true to the real facts of Mary Carleton's life but also becomes a form of poetic justice in the play.

Another question involving deception is whether the one who is fooled by another is a greater fool than if he fools himself. Throughout the play Mrs. King has been fooling herself about her capacity for wit. She has been a willing victim of Mrs. Moders and brings much of the blame on herself as a result. Her brother appears foolish because he tends to believe Mrs. King's high regard for his wit. Apparently the real John Carleton tried to convince others of Mrs. Moders' guilt and of his innocence by writing several pamphlets in his behalf,⁸ but in the play, after Mrs. Moders' true identity is discovered, he is not allowed to suffer further disgrace.

The play develops some very memorable comic figures. Mrs. King is particularly funny. Entranced by her brother's courtly mode of address to Mrs. Moders, she repeats these addresses again and again. When talking to Mrs. Moders, she acts like an obsequious servant, and with her family she is an empty-headed housewife. For instance, her talk with John is very repetitious when she says,

We shall feast our friends, John, and cannot in civility
do less than invite her John, being a sojourner in our
house, John, and then thou shalt have thy belly full of
seeing of her John, but no words John.... (III.iii. p. 19)

⁸"Mary Carleton," p. 1004.

Mr. King, who sees very little, repeats "d'ye see" over and over again. The maid uses "forsooth," and the parson "verily" and "assuredly," all quite in vain.

Unfortunately, the play does give the feeling of being unfinished because of its hastily contrived scene changes after Mrs. Moders is exposed by Old Mr. Carleton. Because this is a topical play, however, it was probably written within a short period of time. Its purpose is to entertain rather than to pose a genuine moral question. Had a sharper satirical treatment of duplicity been given, it might have become a more artful moral representation of city comedy. As it is, the play has some satire but is less biting in tone than much of the Jacobean city comedy. The whole play presents a gulling and gullible world, and the devil take the hindmost.

Since this play was written only a few years into Charles II's reign, it appears to be written more for a courtly audience than a middle class one. The stupidity of the family and their inability to tell quality from the superficial would not be likely to find favor with the lower middle class. Had the plot had Mrs. Moders masquerading as a German princess and marrying a peer of the realm, the play might be considered a fairy tale or a satire aimed at the nobility, a more likely plot to please the middle class. As the play has been designed, however, it appears to be a defense for Mrs. Moders' deception and an opportunity to capitalize on an actual happening well known to London inhabitants.

CHAPTER IV

THE FRENCH CONJURER

After a silence of fourteen years, Porter wrote The French Conjuror, his last play, in 1677. This play, like many plays of the later 1670's is cynical comedy, which is nevertheless built on traditional materials. The play is based on two episodes from Mateo Alemán's The Amusing Adventures of Guzman of Alfaráche. Although this book is clearly the source, only the very slightest plot is followed in the play. In fact, the Dorido-Clorinia plot is a romantic tragedy in the source while it becomes romantic comedy in the play. The main plot concerning Claudio and Leonora is loosely based on the merchant of Seville in which the lovers devise several plans to come together under the nose of the lady's old paramour.

An analysis of the play includes a discussion of the theme, plot, characters, and language. Porter completely reworks his material, creating a main plot that is anti-romantic and playing it off against a romantic subplot. Religion is used as a blind for hypocrisy and deceit, which devalue marriage in both the main plot and the subplot. Astrology is also presented as a hypocritical means to practice deceit and leads to conjuring the devil in the final act. The comical nature of the play depends on using these materials farcically in order to bring about the desired ends of the characters. The characterization is representative of stock figures

traditionally used on the English stage; in addition, Avaritio is presented as a humors character. Witty language in the play comes from Sabina, Truro, Claudio, and his friends as they comment on French, English, and Spanish manners, rather than from a witty couple as in many plays of the period.

Unlike Porter's other comedies, this play contains both a prologue and an epilogue. The prologue, spoken by the actors, is addressed to the gallants in the audience, admonishing them not to take away all the pretty ladies that appear in the play. The purpose of plays presented on the stage is "writ/ To breed you Mistresses and teach you Wit." If, however, the gallants do not heed the lesson, they will be cursed in the following manner:

May all the mighty Sums you ever sent
Your Mistresses, be on your Valets spent;
And when at Nine months end the Miss grows sickly,
May none of all the Brats you own be like ye.¹

The tone established by the prologue indicates a play that is bawdy and rather cynical and is a change from the other comedies of Porter.

This play, however, in some respects is like The Carnival. Both plays have a Spanish setting and characters with Spanish names. Both plays mention the gravity and seriousness of the Spanish people; however, The French Conjuror is not concerned with a world revolving around love and honor. Rather, love is treated in both a "high" and a "low" context, and the desire for decorum in Carnival is not as evident in this play. Morals are jaded in this world, and society has become decadent.

¹Thomas Porter, The French Conjuror, A Comedy (London: L. Curtis, 1678), p. 1. All further references to this work appear in the text.

The French Conjuror carries out the Spanish intrigue plot construction in two interwoven plots. Act I initiates a main plot, which is an elaborate attempt made by Claudio to seduce Leonora, who is married to Pedro, a gold-wire merchant. Dorido and Horatio from the subplot appear briefly as friends of Claudio. In the second act the subplot concerning Dorido's and Clorinia's love for one another is introduced, but Truro and Sabina, Claudio's witty servants, and Claudio himself also appear. Claudio as Dorido's friend appears throughout the play as he helps Dorido win Clorinia. The third act shows Truro's jealousy of Monsieur, Claudio's astrologer, and Dorido and Clorinia declare their happiness in following a religious life for the benefit of Avaritio, Clorinia's father. At this point the plots separate. In Act IV the crisis appears for Clorinia because she thinks Dorido is the one who stabbed her. Claudio finally sees the fruition of his intrigue to gain Leonora as a mistress. In Act V all of the characters from both plots assemble at Claudio's house where the lovers, Dorido and Clorinia, are united in marriage after receiving Avaritio's blessing and where Claudio and Leonora continue their affair.

Because of the many characters in the play and the twists and reversals in the subplot, plot development dominates characterization. Intrigue abounds in both plots; however, it is far more complicated in the subplot. In fact, the subplot is more complicated than the main plot in several ways. In the first place, there are various intrigues as several of the characters pursue their desires. First, Clorinia tells her father Avaritio she loves a religious life

since he does not approve of Dorido as a suitor. Then Claudio tells Avaritio that Dorido loves a monastic life and does not wish to marry. Avaritio welcomes this turn of events since he does not want Dorido to woo his daughter. Dorido's friend Horatio also woos Clorinia, but he is repulsed by her. He tells her he was merely testing her, but in reality he plans to get even for the insult. He does this by setting up a meeting with Clorinia and taking Dorido's place unknown to either Clorinia or Dorido. He stabs Clorinia in the hand, plants the dagger on Dorido, and neatly frames him for the act. Clorinia overhears the false Horatio telling her father that she and Dorido do not plan to enter religious orders and that the plan has been a hoax in order to fool him. She then knows it was Horatio who stabbed her. Claudio, in order to help Dorido, suggests stealing a pearl necklace Avaritio has in his possession as collateral for a loan to a Spanish nobleman. Valerio, Clorinia's brother, takes it while Truro, Claudio's servant, poses as the nobleman's intermediary who comes to pay the debt and collect the necklace. But when Avaritio discovers the necklace gone, he immediately blames Dorido and Clorinia. Claudio then devises a new plan, a major part of which is assumed by Monsieur, who will conjure up the devil in order to get Avaritio's necklace back to him.

In addition to these various intrigues, the plot is complicated by the fact that while Avaritio blocks Clorinia and Dorido for one reason, Horatio blocks them for another. Therefore, two separate plot strands, that of the father as blocking agent and the friend as

a rival, are introduced into the same plot. At the same time Claudio acts as the controller of the action by suggesting various intrigues to unite the lovers.

The subplot is further complicated by the arrival of Leonora and Pedro in the fifth act when they come to see Monsieur. Thus, in the last act there are the double deceptions of Pedro and Avaritio by Monsieur, who springs trap doors and raises spirits, thunder and lightning, and the devil. In addition, the final act also includes the announcement of an inheritance gained by Dorido at the death of an uncle. This announcement brings forth the long sought-after blessing of Avaritio. Although Claudio has devised many intrigues in the play, he has been unable to bring about a reconciliation between Avaritio and Clorinia until the announcement of Dorido's newly acquired fortune. This change in fortune renders all his efforts supererogatory.

The busyness of the plot sacrifices characterization in the play. Generally, the characters are representative of stock figures familiar since the early Renaissance. The lovers, the capricious father, and the jealous rival are all type characters, as are the older husband and the young wife, the gallant, the witty servant, and the foreigner and mock astrologer. For this reason the characters are one-dimensional and do not appear as real flesh-and-blood people like the characters in The Carnival. The difference between Clorinia and Leonora, for example, is in the situation rather than the personality. Here, the audience reacts to stereotyped situations created by stereotyped characters.

Claudio is portrayed as the comic trickster, but he is no fool. He is always in command of every situation, and he calls forth some admiration for his outrageous tricking of Avaritio and Pedro. Claudio is a libertine of sorts; at least, he is more like one described by Hume as a polite rake. A young man of wit and breeding, he flouts society's rules but is also a member of accepted society.² His sexual romp with Leonora is not serious, and as long as the affair is not taken seriously, his behavior is acceptable in the eyes of the world.

Avaritio in the subplot and Pedro in the main plot provide a parallel for each other. Both are members of a triangle--Avaritio blocks the romantic couple and Pedro is the cuckolded husband. They are both the stock butts, receiving what ridicule and humiliation there are to be given out. Both are duped by others, and they are both fond of money. Avaritio is, in fact, presented as a humor character who will do anything to obtain money. He will not support his daughter's interest in Dorido until Dorido acquires a fortune at the end of the play. He forces Clorinia to play a part in which she says she must "appear to be willing to live and die in a Nunnery, to humour my father's covetous resolution of Saving a Portion for me" (Act II, p. 9).

Valuing his money more than he does her, Avaritio has little natural feeling for his daughter. When he first finds the necklace gone, he says: "Worse and worse! I am blown up! my heart, my life,

²Robert D. Hume, "The Myth of the Rake in 'Restoration' Comedy," Studies in the Literary Imagination, X (1977), 38.

my blood's all gone!" (Act V, p. 36) He soon decides Dorido has stolen the necklace and that Clorinia has been his accomplice. He tells his daughter, "I can prove 'twas he that stole 'em, and you were his Confederate; and I'll have you both hang'd" (Act V, p. 36). Avaritio is a single-minded, one-dimensional character throughout the play. His avariciousness is emphasized by Claudio in his plan to help Dorido. He knows Avaritio is a miser, "and could we neatly and handsomely be masters of two or three of his Bags, the fright 'twould put him into to loose his money . . . shall bring you into Dorido's very Arms" (Act V, p. 33).

Pedro in the main plot also has his eye on money. Sabina forges a business link between him and herself by telling him that she is the servant to the abbess of the convent of St. Sylvester and that the religious order wants him to sell them gold wire. When Sabina tells him the abbess desires his wife's company, he is somewhat alarmed because he fears she will become so religious that she will return "as some Puritan Ladies have done, who will not admit of carnal converse with their Husbands, because wicked and profane, and pretend a command from the Spirit for it" (Act I, p. 5). He thus sees his wife's religious inclinations as a threat to his marital happiness, but of course he does not know that the abbess is really Claudio and that Sabina is his servant. His fears are thus comically justified when in Act V Leonora "disappears with the devil" when in reality she falls down a trap door and into Claudio's arms. Pedro is terrified that she is gone, lamenting,

If I had but received all her Portion, and she had gone to the Devil then, 'twould ne're ha'vext me: But she's under age, and I have not been married this half year, and I shall be hang'd for bringing her hither. I am accessory to her Murder. Oh my Wife, my Wife!
(Act V, p. 42)

His concern selfishly is for himself rather than for his wife, and although the audience is fully aware of what is going on, the character of the husband is farcically rendered even less admirable than he has hitherto been. Of course, his actions also provide justification for his being cuckolded in the first place.

Both Avaritio and Pedro bear the brunt of trickery in the play. Both characters behave somewhat alike in the final scene because both are terrified of thunder and of the devil. In Act IV Claudio explains how Monsieur will help Avaritio by raising the devil.

Avaritio answers,

Oh hold, hold, dear Sir, hold, hold. Oh, Sir, I have not been at Confession these two years; let me but go to Confession first, and then raise the Devil and welcome. (Act V, p. 37)

Avaritio practices his religion only when he feels like it, but he is superstitious enough to think there might be some truth in the devil. He is also very much afraid of the thunder. He says, "Oh, Sir, if you have any pity for me, don't fright me at this unmerciful rate." Monsieur answers him, "Morbleau, you be de strange man in de whole world: none but de boy, de childe, be frightened at de Tunder: De grave Cavalier, and be fraid!" (Act V, p. 42) Monsieur says nearly the same thing to Pedro when Leonora falls through the trap door: "De grave Gentleman, and cry! For shame, for shame!"

Both men exhibit cowardice in the effectively handled and farcical conjuring scene.

Monsieur is not only a stock comical figure but also a stock foreigner. His character not only provides him an opportunity to comment on foreign customs and manners but gives a focus for laughter in his extravagant costumes, much as Sir Fopling Flutter had done in Man of Mode produced a year earlier. Although Sir Fopling is outside the mainstream of the play's events, he nevertheless creates an extravagant figure of comic proportion just as Monsieur, Claudio's servant, stands out as a character in fantastic dress. Monsieur as a foreigner adds to the comic intention of scenes. He is accustomed to wearing wide breeches that give him ample room to bow. Now his employer wants to dress him in tight Spanish breeches. He provides an opportunity for the others to discuss French, English, and Spanish wearing apparel, food habits, and manners as in the following conversation:

- Hor. The French and English are such Prodigals, that you shall have a French Monsieur, or an English Lord, bestow more in cloathing themselves and footboys, than would completely robe all the Infantry belonging to one of our Spanish Armies.
- Dor. Senior Claudio, if you do not put the change upon his Dress, your whole fortune must go to purchase him Ribbon, Pantaloons, and Perrywigs.
- Claud. Fear not that: I intend that one yard of Cloath shall make him a whole Sute, and one Mode serve him his life.
- Hor. I would gladly know the reason of the mutability of those people: I have seen a French Courtier in twelve several Modes in one day.
- Dor. The reason I'll tell you: They make an advantage by it.
- Claud. An advantage? prethee how?

- Dor. They have gain'd such an influence over the English Fops, that they furnish them with their French Puppy-dogs for Valet de Chambres.
- Claud. And I have heard of an English Captain that threw up his Commission because his Company would not Exercise after the French Discipline. But your opinion of my Monsieur.
- Cor. Gad, mine, is, that one born and educated in the very bowels of the various Modes of France, and one that has lived among the Belly-gods of England, can never make a fit Servant for the gravity and severity of our Spanish Dress and Diet. (Act I, pp. 3-4)

The ornate dress and ostentatious manners of the French are made ridiculous in the play in the figure of Monsieur. The sedateness and gravity of the Spanish culture are juxtaposed to the various refinements of manners by the French, and finally the English desire to imitate French ways is shown in manners and dress. Equally interesting are the various cultural proclivities for food. Monsieur complains that he feeds only on long sleeves, straight breeches, and a great mustache. Truro, Claudio's servant, reminds him that he has already eaten "three parts of a Pilchard, besides a dish of Vegetives?" Monsieur answers:

Damn te Pilchar, a barrel would be noting in my stomach. Oh te Anglitar, te boon Anglitar, me never break mine Fass tare, but wit half dozen Pigeon, Three four Chicken, good strong Beer, and half dozen bottle de Wine. (Act I, pp. 8-9)

Truro answers that his stomach will never make a "fit Souldier for the Low Countries. Thou wilt ne'er be like the brave Castilian, who can carry as much Provision in his Mustaches as serves him a Campagne of six months" (Act I, p. 9). The hearty English appetite is contrasted with the more conservative, lean Spanish soldier's. Monsieur seems to appreciate the best of both the English and the French worlds.

As an astrologer, Monsieur represents a particular science well-received in some quarters and considered pure rot in others. Claudio has brought him into his household so that he can foretell the future. He asks him if he is going to be successful in his venture with Leonora, and Monsieur answers yes. Truro, who does not approve of astrologers, says they are nothing more than "a crowd of wandering Gypsies that pick our pockets with a lye, and we are such silly fools as to believe 'em" (Act III, p. 17). He also believes there is no more truth in studying the stars than "in a pair of Dice thrown upon the Wheel of Fortune." Another time he says,

Look where he sits, like the man in the Moon with his bundle of sticks on his back, peeping into the Heavens as if he were acquainted there; when, in my conscience, he is as great a stranger there as I am. (Act II, p. 11)

Everything that Monsieur does in the play seems to indicate that he is a kind of quack. Sabina asks him if she will meet with success in bringing Leonora and Claudio together. She tells him she is to be at Pedro's at three o'clock and adds, "Oh that fair Wife of his! Claudio shall have her. Good Monsieur dispatch." When Monsieur answers, "Tis about te woman, te fair woman," the following conversation occurs:

Sab. It is, dear Monsieur, a Beauty.
 Mons. She be te married woman, and her Husband have te relation to te Gold trade.
 Sab. He is a Gold-wire-drawer indeed; A blessing on thy prophetic Spirit; this can be nothing but Divine Revelation.---But Monsieur, for a confirmation of your judgement, describe her to me.
 Mons. I will. Hole---tis be a woman of te middle size, inclining---
 Sab. Inclining to tallness.
 Mons. To tallness: And as for her hair, it be---
 Sab. Black.
 Mons. Var black, her visage var---
 Sab. Round.

Mons. Round.

Sab. Oh heavenly, this is fine!

The exchange continues until Monsieur asks her if she wishes him to describe her private marks. At this point Sabina declines. She has put the words in Monsieur's mouth but calls his answers divine prophesy. The comic routine is not novel and is reminiscent of a scene in Dryden's An Evenings Love where Bellamy is asked by Don Alonzo to discuss a point in astrology. The result is similar to that in the exchange between Monsieur and Sabina. In An Evenings Love Don Alonzo, who cannot stop talking long enough for Bellamy to answer, prefaces each remark with "I know what you would say now" and then proceeds to answer his own question.³

Monsieur's artful representation of science is complete when he adds "mumbo-jumbo" to answer the question of whether or not Claudio's enterprise will be successful. He says:

Here be Sol and Luna in Conjunction in te seven house,
var boom; Jupiter and Venus look on te Ascend wit te
good grace. Begar, if he not get her, me will turn
eiter te Physician or Divine, rail against te Star,
and all toes give te credit to deir prediction.
(Act II, pp. 12-13)

In the play Monsieur is not portrayed to the audience as anything but a counterfeit. Astrology is not taken seriously by Porter at all but serves as a subject for comedy. Those who take Monsieur seriously are rather simple-minded people who are frightened by thunder and black magic, for instance.

Curiously enough, the witty language of the play appears mainly in conversations between Sabina, Claudio's servant, and Claudio

³John Dryden, An Evenings Love, in The Works of John Dryden, X, Ed. Maximillian E. Novak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 257.

rather than between Claudio and Leonora. Various comments are made on differences between French, English, and Spanish thought on a variety of subjects. For instance, Sabina talks about the elevated state of mistresses in England:

'Tis the Land of Priviledge for women: the very daughter of a Laundress there, after she bears the honorable title of a Miss, expects, nay commands Attendance and Equipage suitable to a Duchess. (Act I, p. 2)

She continues by saying that Englishmen would court a "Colony of Lapland-Witches" for the sake of variety (Act I, p. 2). She also comments on Claudio running around after a citizen's wife, by saying:

An Intrigue with a Citizens Wife in England, is as common as a Frolick at a Carnival here, and has full as little danger in't. There's no locking up their Wives nor engaging whole families to punish their frailties. If a Gallant be caught, in the fact by a Wives Brother, nay, or a Husband himself, he may as easie come off for Adultery there, as a man may for Murther here. The Gallant gets but out of the way for sanctuary, and the Wife gets her Parents to make up the Breach, at worst, but to pay a new Portion and all is well. The kinde Cit uses his Wife that wrongs him, as he does the man that robs him; he had rather have his stolen goods quietly agen, than to hang the thief and loose them. (Act I, p. 2)

Claudio, in turn, enlightens Sabina about English taste. She asks if the English Dons are lovers of the French? He answers,

Oh so much, that a French clap is more welcome at Court than a dull English Ague. Then their language they do so doat on, that they have Masters out of France to teach French to their Magpies, Parrots, and Starlings. And if their sawce be not Frenchified, their Meat is not fit for Dogs. (Act III, p. 17)

Claudio's language moves toward the witty comparisons which have become the stock in trade of comedy of manners dialogue, as in the plays of Etherege and Wycherley.

The cynical nature of the comedy revolves around its treatment of love and marriage. The subplot concerning Dorido and Clorinia is typically romantic in that it contains the young lovers blocked by the father, the betrayer of love and friendship, the separation of the lovers by a misunderstanding, and their final reunion in marriage at the end of the play. Dorido's and Clorinia's love for one another is typically idealistic, pure, and uncorrupted by outside influences. Dorido is strong and steadfast in his love, and when he has been falsely accused of stabbing Clorinia, Claudio tells Clorinia that "His grief and his distractions for your unkind suspicion have so dejected him, that you'll either never see him more; or so alter'd, that you'll scarce know he was the man that loved you" (Act V, pp. 32-33). Clorinia is forcefully kept from Dorido by her father, who keeps her a virtual prisoner in the house. The two arrange secret meetings stealthily at a barred window overlooking the street.

They are able to carry on a religious intrigue before her father because Clorinia has vowed she will go into a nunnery and that she wants a religious life. Claudio suggests that Dorido claim to be inclined toward a religious life also and tells Avaritio of Dorido's piety. Avaritio welcomes Dorido when he thinks he is no longer interested in marrying Clorinia. She and Dorido carry on a high spirited conversation about their love for each other while Avaritio listens and erroneously thinks they are speaking of their devotion to the church. The ruse does not, however, accentuate the spiritual quality of their love but rather emphasizes the carnal aspects of it.

The main plot containing the love affair between Claudio and Leonora also begins on a religious pretext; however, Leonora does not know that visiting the abbess is a pretext for being seduced by Claudio. When Leonora is brought to Claudio, she is highly indignant and says, "Is this the Monastery, thou wicked Hag--and are you my Lady Abbess--How durst you act so villanous a part under so holy a pretense?" Claudio answers her, "Dear Madam. Look but into the Affairs of the World, and you'll discover the Mask of Religion frequently put upon worse designs than this" (Act IV, p. 28).

Claudio has an altogether worldly view of life and soon convinces Leonora that a sexual affair is no crime. She says, "How can you talk so! Were I convinc'd it were no Crime, yet the blemish it would throw upon my Reputation, will never suffer me to yield." Of course, Claudio assures Leonora that her husband cannot possibly find out about this affair because he (Claudio) will not tell him. He ends with this bit of logic: "'Tis not the doing of a thing, but the knowledge of it after 'tis done, that gives the fatal blow to Reputation" (Act III, p. 28). Since discretion is the better part of valor, Claudio is able to convince Leonora that an affair will not damage her reputation. Leonora, on the other hand, does not seem to be hard to convince, and as long as she feels the affair will be kept secret, she is not concerned with the outcome. In deciding whether or not to take a lover, she apparently is not hindered by moral principles involving religion or marriage. The most important consideration is whether or not one is to be exposed to

the judgment of others. Hence, religion is here merely a blind for another kind of hypocrisy--a more sensual kind.

The romance between Claudio and Leonora is not a love match but rather is based on an infatuation or flirtation. Compared with the romantic subplot, this plot is anti-romantic in that it is a realistic portrayal of frankly mutual sexual desires. The only restraint imposed on this sexual attraction is that it be discreet.

Claudio's attitude toward love between the sexes is essentially cynical and amoral. He tries to persuade Avaritio that Clorinia's secret meetings with Dorido will not hurt her. He says, "Come Senior, you must forgive her; Love is a Passion that can't be resisted. If she have transgressed a little before-hand, she'll make never the worse Nun for't afterward" (Act V, p. 35). Giving way to the temptations of the flesh in no way inhibits the spiritual life, according to Claudio.

Very little is taken seriously in The French Conjuror. The world view seems to be one which sees religion, as well as astrology, as a means to gain one's own ends. In the main plot, religion is the pretext to get Claudio and Leonora together. This task is comparatively easy to accomplish because Pedro sees a trip to the abbess as good for his business, and so he encourages it. In the subplot religion is also used as a pretext by the lovers to outwit the father. In the final act Dorido and Clorinia kneel to say their marriage vows while Avaritio thinks they are praying to keep him safe from the devil.

Religion is represented "externally," as an institution providing a front for various kinds of underhanded activities. Pedro recalls how once he prayed: "I did at a high Festival once, but venture at the trouble of Four Avemaries extraordinary, and it threw me into a Fever of six months after" (Act I, p. 6). As a result, he does not want to overdo the prayers. He also feels religion is rightly the preoccupation of the abbess, "for she understands the knack of it better and besides she has nothing else to do." The religious life is depicted only as another version of secular deceit. Pedro also observes that those "who are so passionately in love with religion, never love anything else. All other duties must be slighted for that" (Act I, p. 5). He is afraid that if Leonora becomes religious, she will not wish to perform her wifely duties, and "if there be such a thing as Divinity in Matrimony (and Faith that's a question, as the world goes now) such a command must come from the Devil" (Act I, p. 5). His words reflect the prevailing disillusionment with marriage during the 1670's and 1680's, in which marriage as a financial arrangement or forced marriages were protested in a number of plays of the time. These words also foreshadow the last act in which Pedro thinks the devil has taken Leonora. When she returns to Pedro, she explains the experience in terms of a double entendre:

When I sunk under the ground, a great two-handed Devil
got me into his Cell, and caught me in his arms and
held me so close, that he had like to have stifl'd me.
(Act V, p. 44)

In the arms of the "devil" she experiences the ecstasy of a carnal love which has transported her beyond the bounds of matrimony. The promise of further meetings is suggested since Leonora has not asked Monsieur the question which was the purpose of the visit. She tells him, "But some other time will do better. I am very well satisfi'd at present" (Act V, p. 45). She has enjoyed the sexual encounter with Claudio and will continue meeting him. Her marriage with Pedro, not unlike a good many other marriages of the time, has achieved a status quo.

Religion and astrology have both played a major part in devaluing the institution of marriage in the play. Marriage is seen as an empty convention to which individuals pay lip service. Even the lovers in the romantic subplot are married during the comical scene of conjuring up the devil. By juxtapositioning the two events the serious, romantic marriage subplot is devalued by a "black magic" spectacle made possible by pretense and deceit. Also, because of the farcical treatment of the whole scene, the audience is forced to look at marriage in comic terms. When Avaritio finally gives his blessing after finding out Dorido has come into a fortune, the terms of romantic comedy have been met through the reconciliation of father and daughter. However, this reconciliation is brought about not by sentiment but rather by money, an anti-romantic motif which has dominated the play from the beginning.

The way in which religion and marriage is viewed in the play also shows the domination of the spirit by the flesh. No longer does one look to an after life as the ultimate happiness but to

happiness on earth. This attitude toward life justifies satisfying physical appetites of various kinds. The sanctity of marriage suffers accordingly, and the devil literally calls the tune.

The basic questions of The French Conjuror are very different from those in either The Carnival or The Witty Combat. From the numerous contemporary comments the play seems to be an attempt at popular drama. Jokes are aimed at French, Spanish, and English customs. Moreover, the language of the play is markedly different from that of the other Porter plays, much of the talk bordering on the bawdy. Jokes are often carried to the lowest level possible, and the resolution of the play involves farce.

The questionable morality and irreverence in the play are characteristic of a number of plays of the period,⁴ but the lack of witty behavior or the role of the gallant as commentator precludes it from being a comedy of manners play. Even so, Claudio represents a libertine point of view, but because his affair is not taken seriously, he is not punished for his behavior. Comic exaggeration through farcical situations helps to keep him from becoming either contemptible or a comic fool or hero.

The cynicism regarding marriage as well as explicit consummated adultery was a common occurrence in plays during the 1670's. That this play is no exception supports the idea that The French Conjuror

⁴For a more complete study of trends in Restoration drama in the 1670's see Maximillian E. Novak, "Margery Pinchwife's 'London Disease': Restoration Comedy and the Libertine Offensive of the 1670's," Studies in the Literary Imagination, X (1977), 1-23.

follows the prevailing trend of comedies of this time. In its reduction of all issues to farce it falls far below the best plays of the 1670's and even below Porter's own best work.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Although today Thomas Porter is unknown as a Restoration playwright, in his day he was well known not only as a swashbuckling rake because of his reputation as a duelist but also because of the popularity of two of his four plays, The Villain and The Carnival.

Judging from the three comedies written by Porter, one finds some diversity in the types of comedy each represents. The Carnival is primarily a Spanish intrigue play filled with romantic love and good-natured fun. Felices as the rake does not strike a discordant note, for there is the promise that he will reform. It is an ambitious play in which the conflict between love and honor is depicted as an inner psychological struggle. The play, built on the gaiety of the carnival season, keeps its light-hearted tone throughout, making it a unified, artistic work.

The tone changes, on the other hand, in A Witty Combat, which follows the pattern of Jacobean city comedy with its duper and duped theme and the satirical treatment of such characters as the parson, Mr. King, and Mrs. King. These characters are rendered more ludicrous by the farcical treatment of situations. The play is considerably slighter than The Carnival although it moves from the Jacobean city comedy type toward the Restoration comedy of manners.

Like A Witty Combat, The French Conjurer also shows a world of trickery and deceit, but in addition it retains some of the Spanish elements of The Carnival. The characters and setting are Spanish

although there is no preoccupation with honor. It is a play filled with intrigue and farcical resolution. Moreover, the tone of the play is more sophisticated and impersonal than that of The Carnival, partly because of the one-dimensional characterization as well as a more cynical attitude toward the world.

The Carnival is a skillful blending of characterization with plot. Because there are several subplots, unity is achieved by drawing together the various plot strands in Act III when Lorenzo gives a party and in Act V when all the characters are reunited. Also, some characters contrast meaningfully with others. Beatrice and Elvira are foils for one another in the main plot, and Ferdinando in the main plot and Felices in the main plot and subplot are foils. Sancho and Quintagona provide a "lower" variation of the high plot which strengthens the heroic nature of the latter plot.

A Witty Combat is developed more by intrigue than by characterization. In fact, the characters of Mrs. Moders, Mr. King, and Mrs. King are established at the outset of the play and do not change as the play develops. Instead, there is a steady progression of farcical scenes, each becoming more ridiculous than the last, all largely dependent on the repetitious and heavy-handed language used by the Kings.

Characterization is sacrificed to plot also in The French Conjuror. Here again are stock figures common to Renaissance drama, such as the witty servant, the cuckolded husband, the romantic lovers, and the mock astrologer. The twists and turns of the plot are highly suggestive of the Spanish intrigue play without the

emphasis on love and honor. Claudio, the main character, pulls the strings as the other characters do his bidding.

Although the individual characterizations as a whole are more fully developed in The Carnival, the main characters in the other two plays seem flesh-and-blood persons. Mrs. Moders is in control of the situation, and like other presenters in the Jacobean city comedies, she understands the weaknesses of those she tricks. Like Mrs. Moders, Claudio is also in control of the situation. Rather than changing roles himself, he makes his servants assume appropriate roles in the play's various intrigues. One always has the feeling that Claudio, no matter what the blocking force is, will come up with a way to maneuver around it.

The discrepancy between appearance and reality is dealt with in various ways in the plays. In The Carnival masks and costumes are used to carry out the carnival theme as well as for the concealing of identity. In addition, Salamanca and the carnival provide a green world into which Ferdinando can escape from his problems with Elvira and Beatrice. However, none of these subterfuges prove adequate. Alvaredo fails to convince Ferdinando or Elvira that he no longer cares for Elvira; Ferdinando's duplicity is exposed by Beatrice; Elvira realizes the love game is over and that Alvaredo is more to her liking than Ferdinando.

Porter goes a step further in A Witty Combat by juxtaposing the imaginary worlds of Mrs. Moders and Mrs. King with the real world. What one is and what one seems to be are literally worlds apart. The manners of the upper class are imitated by Mrs. King and her

brother John Carleton in their scheme for John to marry Mrs. Moders. The ambiguity surrounding appearance and reality is emphasized in the character of Wat, the cellerman, who dreams of importance and prestige while being literally on the bottom social rung at the inn.

Porter uses a great deal of farce in A Witty Combat to show the absurdity of Mrs. King's imagination and aspirations and as a ploy to contrast Wat's identity with that of Mrs. Moders. The exaggerated characterization together with repetitious language makes a number of scenes comical, but the sudden resolution of the plot is a flaw in Porter's control of the play.

The situations become more daring in The French Conjuror. Although there is no pretense in the private love game carried on by Claudio and Leonora in the main plot, it is completely deceitful in its innocent appearance to Pedro. The subplot appears romantic on the surface, but the use of religion and astrology as ploys devalues the concept of romantic love in the subplot as well as in the main plot. Consequently, Pedro is not only deceived but is treated as a fool. In contrast to The French Conjuror, whatever deceit is practiced in the main plot of The Carnival causes no one to be ridiculed or degraded.

Some change in Porter's dramatic technique is evident in the fourteen years between the writing of The Carnival and the writing of The French Conjuror. In The Carnival the farcical elements are relegated to the subplot involving Sancho, Felices, and Lorenzo and contrast with the serious, romantic high plot. For instance, Sancho appears on stage for a short time wearing the fantastic dress of

Monsieur Kick-hose during the carnival, while Monsieur in The French Conjuror also appears in fantastic foreign dress, but the scene is made into a spectacle accompanied by witty remarks concerning French, English, and Spanish dress and is a part of the main plot.

The farcical elements reach their lowest level in bringing about the conclusion of The French Conjuror. In this play's final scene Avaritio is fooled into thinking Clorinia and Dorido are praying for his safety with the devil when they are actually being married, and Pedro thinks he has lost his wife to the devil when she is actually in Claudio's arms. While Porter's skill and dexterity in bringing about double meanings to several situations simultaneously are masterful, the play as a whole suffers from the farcical resolution.

Although Thomas Porter cannot be considered an important playwright, his works do follow the trends of the period. Each of the plays does have some merit, but only The Carnival offers the ambiguity and complexity of a sustained and well-polished work. Had he written more plays, Porter might have perfected his art to a higher level; however, those plays he did write show some degree of stagecraft as well as the ability to experiment with various kinds of plots, characterization, and themes.

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