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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Susan Adkin Leazer entitled "Spenserian Comedy: The Faerie Queene, Books III and IV." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

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SPENSERIAN COMEDY: THE FAERIE QUEENE, BOOKS III AND IV

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

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Susan Adkin Leazer

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ABSTRACT

That Spenser is often a comic poet has been recognized for several decades. One cannot claim, of course, that Spenser is one of the great English comic poets, but it is becoming increasingly clear that comic patterns and devices have a functional importance in his work, particularly in The Faerie Queene, Books III and IV. Most of the publications on this subject, however, have been articles that focus upon specific aspects of Spenserian comedy or upon limited sections of the poem; and the full-length studies do not follow the approach used in this dissertation.

In these books Spenser often employs various types of incongruity to amuse his reader. Occasionally he lightens the effect of a battle or allegorical scene by incorporating unexpected images or rimes, or abrupt shifts in the narrator's tone. In describing some of his sympathetic characters' responses to life and love, he sometimes adds unexpected realistic details that both help to provide comic relief and humanize these individuals. In addition, he occasionally focuses upon the comic disparity between the disguised Britomart and her female identity and employs the disguise motif to create amusing complications.

Though revealing that he recognizes the entertainment value of comedy, Spenser more often utilizes comic devices and themes to instruct his reader. In Books III and IV, he uses traditional comic devices—character commentary, contrast, ironic epithets, unflattering similes, derisive images, and various types of irony—to satirize his sympathetic

characters' violations of the codes of romantic love and chivalry, the societal norms of Fairyland. Within a comedic pattern involving the movement from complication to reconciliation, he mocks the futile efforts of Cymoent to isolate Marinell from love; the errors of the romantic lovers, Scudamore, Britomart, and Artegal; and the discourteous behavior of Timias. With the notable exception of Timias, these individuals are eventually reconciled with Fairyland's norms.

Although Spenser occasionally mocks his sympathetic characters' pretentions about life and love, he consistently ridicules Malecasta, Radigund, Braggadocchio, Malbecco, and Paridell because they never learn or fail to acknowledge the courteous behavior that Spenser teaches. Consequently, they cannot be functioning members of Fairyland's society and are rejected in various ways. In addition to employing traditional comic devices to ridicule these characters, Spenser utilizes a distinctive technique as a part of his satiric treatment of each of them: in the Malecasta story, dramatic irony that is inherent in the disguised heroine motif; in the Radigund tale, the comic disparity between the proud Amazon and the love-lorn lady; in the misadventures of Braggadocchio and Malbecco, the parody quest; and in the Paridell story, the ludicrous quarrels associated with the Morality Vice.

Spenser states in his prefatory letter that his basic concern is to instruct his reader "in vertuous and gentle discipline." With this aim in mind, it is not surprising that the variety of comic talents he demonstrates in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene should contribute to persuading his reader to reject discourteous behavior.

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CHAPTER I

SPENSER AS A COMIC POET

In the prefatory letter to The Faerie Queene, Spenser outlines the general plan and purpose of his poem. Using a "continued Allegory, or darke conceit,"[1] he has chosen to relate the story of Arthur because his readers will be able to profit from examples of the prince's virtuous deeds. Spenser also wishes to "make a pleasing analysis of all" (I, 169); thus, he has selected twelve other knights to exemplify the twelve virtues that constitute Magnificence (Arthur). Although the didactic aim "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" (I, 167) is his primary purpose, he desires that his moral lessons be palatable. The allegory, both moral and political, is an important aspect of the poem; but too often critics emphasize Spenser's "darke conceit" to such an extent that they ignore the many techniques that Spenser uses to insure that his readers enjoy his work. This overemphasis upon allegory and interpretation is especially misleading in examining the love stories that Spenser treats in Books III, IV, and part of V, particularly the materials that seem to be adapted from the Orlando Furioso. Until recently most scholars have suggested that Spenser was influenced by the allegorical interpretations that Italian

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[1] The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, C. G. Osgood, F. M. Padelford et al. (1932-1949; rpt. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), I, 167; future references will be cited in the text.

critics hastened to add to their analyses of the Orlando.[2] To suggest at the beginning of this century that not only did the "sage and serious Poet Spencer" appreciate the diverse elements of Ariosto's romance but that he incorporated his own brand of humor and comic vision in Books III, IV, and V would probably have been deemed a critical heresy. Spenser is, of course, Drayton's "grave morrall" poet; however, overemphasis upon these early views of Spenser has prevented many scholars from recognizing the full range of his poetic talents.

I. REVIEW OF PERTINENT CRITICISM CONCERNING SPENSER AS A COMIC POET

Though it is becoming increasingly clear that comic devices and themes are an important part of the Spenserian canon, scholars did not begin to investigate seriously these aspects of Spenser's work until the 1940's. There are at least four reasons that help explain critics' earlier inability to recognize that Spenser is often a comic poet. Charles Bell Burke, whose campaign to persuade Spenserians that many forms of humor can be found in the poet's works began in the 1930's, has left a number of papers that provide a sound basis for anyone desiring to investigate this subject.[3] In his unpublished "The

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[2]C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (1936; rpt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1938), p. 297. Also see Susannah Jane McMurphy, Spenser's Use of Ariosto for Allegory, University of Washington Publications in Lang. and Lit., Vol. 2 (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1924), p. 17.

[3]Burke's MSS have been deposited in the Hoskins Library, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, MS 328. His two published notes,

Relative Humor of Spenser and His Critics," he states that one reason scholars fail to acknowledge Spenser's comic talents is that they lack a sense of humor;[4] thus, Burke asserts that "the humor of Spenser is . . . easily greater than that of his critics."[5] Although Arnold Williams is primarily concerned with Book VI in his study, he offers sounder suggestions that apply to a general discussion of comedy in The Faerie Queene. Not only, in his opinion, has the traditional view of the "sage and serious" Spenser hindered readers' enjoyment of the poet's comic talents, but Spenser's fluid and rapid style, his complicated story line and his moral and political allegories have also obscured his many comic passages.[6]

In addition, Spenser's obvious debt to Ariosto has prevented many critics from recognizing the Englishman's own comic talents. In 1897, R. E. N. Dodge's valuable article introduced scholars to numerous Ariostean borrowings in every book of The Faerie Queene. In addition to his list of parallel passages, Dodge discusses such obvious similarities as those between Bradamante and Britomart. Concluding his study of Ariosto's influence upon Spenser's epic, Dodge stresses that Spenser

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"Humor in Spenser," Notes and Queries, 166 (1934), 113-15; and "The 'Sage and Serious' Spenser," Notes and Queries, 175 (1938), 457-58, reflect his major critical tenets.

[4]Mentioned by Allan H. Gilbert, "Spenserian Comedy," Tennessee Studies in Literature, 2 (1957), 95.

[5]"The Relative Humor," p. 5.

[6]Flower on a Lowly Stalk (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1967), p. 115.

"gets his external facts from Ariosto, but so renders them that the effect is not comic but highly serious."[7] This view of the relationship between Ariosto and Spenser was repeated frequently by early twentieth-century critics,[8] though not all were as extreme as Dodge in emphasizing the differences. Alice Galimberti, for example, who sees Spenser as the English Ariosto, states that he does not equal the Italian's wit and comic abilities: "lo Spenser gli resta inferiore per tutto quello ch'è arguzia e vena comica."[9]

Yet, during the past thirty years, several critics have suggested that Spenser not only appreciated but sometimes emulated Ariosto's humor. Josephine Waters Bennett feels that such comic characters as Archimago, Braggadocchio, the Squire of Dames, Hellenore, and Malbecco are remnants of an earlier draft in which Spenser tried to copy "Ariosto's humorous and scandalous vein."[10] Investigating Spenser's use of Fiametta's lovers (OF 28) in the Squire of Dames tale (3.7.51-61), Allan H. Gilbert has discovered that the episode's "close-packed and varied comedy" cannot be found in the Orlando; therefore in this tale Spenser has "accomplished the ambition . . . to 'overgo' his master."[11] Though

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[7]"Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto," PMLA, 12 (1897), 181.

[8]Even some modern critics echo this idea; see Robert E. Durling, The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), p. 216, n. 19, who feels that, unlike the Furioso, The Faerie Queene lacks irony.

[9]Edmondo Spenser (Turin: Giuseppe Gambino, 1938), p. 99.

[10]The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene" (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 274.

[11]Gilbert, pp. 97-99.

such allegorical interpretations of the Orlando as Toscanella's Bellezza del Furioso (1574) offered ways in which Spenser could have read Ariosto, Paul J. Alpers believes that they do not correctly explain many of his Ariostean borrowings. One incident he analyzes is especially pertinent to this study since it concerns Spenserian comedy. Alpers suggests that Spenser not only incorporates elements from the delightfully bawdy tale of Fiordispina/Bradamante/Ricciardetto (OF 25.26-70) in the Malecasta episode but that he also employs Fiordispina's love complaint in the scene in which Britomart informs Glauce that she loves a stranger (3.2.30-47). Thus, this treatment of his Ariostean source indicates that Spenser did not view Fiordispina merely as a symbol of impudicizia as Toscanella deems her. According to Alpers, both the Malecasta and Britomart/Glauce episodes are comic; although "no one would claim that Spenser was writing in the spirit of Ariosto's episode, . . . he certainly could not have written as he did without a just appreciation of Ariosto's spirit."[12]

The view that, whatever his relationship to Ariosto and the Orlando Furioso, Spenser incorporates his own comic touches into The Faerie Queene has been gaining steady critical support. According to James V. Holleran, there are two valid approaches to this subject: the theoretical and the practical. Though suggesting that Sidney's or Jonson's theories of comedy could explain Spenserian humor, Holleran selects the practical approach in his study because he prefers to

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[12]The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 174, 180-85.

let The Faerie Queene "reveal its own" humor,[13] which is the approach most scholars employ when investigating Spenserian comedy.[14] Others have isolated various types of comic elements, ranging from a discussion of humorous wordplay[15] to the annotated list of over two hundred comic passages that Allan H. Gilbert appends to his "Spenserian Comedy" (1957).

At least five scholars have suggested that Spenser utilizes comic patterns and motifs to structure some of his tales. According to A. C. Hamilton's brief remark, the initial part of Redcrosse's story in Book I constitutes a tragedy; however, it terminates in the traditional happy ending of a comedy with his marriage to Una.[16] Discussing the story of Hellenore and Malbecco, several scholars have labeled it a fabliau.[17] In addition, Paul J. Alpers suggests that the second half of Malbecco's tale constitutes a parody quest.[18] As James V. Holleran has discovered,

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[13]"A View of Comedy in The Faerie Queene," in Essays in Honor of Esmond Linworth Marilla, eds. Thomas Austin Kirby and William John Olive (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1970), p. 102.

[14]See Clyde G. Wade, "The Comedy of The Faerie Queene," Diss. Univ. of Missouri 1967, p. 28, who feels that an investigation of comic theories and method is needed because scholars concur that "except by accident, Spenser writes no comedy at all."

[15]Linwood E. Orange, "'All Bent to Mirth': Spenser's Humorous Wordplay," South Atlantic Quarterly, 71 (1972), 539-47.

[16]The Structure of Allegory in "The Faerie Queene" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 59.

[17]See Robert O. Evans, "Spenserian Humor: Faerie Queene III and IV," Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, 60 (1959), 294; and Williams, p. 115.

[18]The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene," p. 131.

Braggadocchio's journey through Fairyland is also a parody quest.[19] Not only is Spenser able to construct comic tales, but he is also able, according to Arnold Williams, to create situational comedy; though Williams correctly warns that The Faerie Queene is a poem, not a drama.[20]

In addition to recognizing Spenser's ability to construct comic tales, scholars have noted that Spenser sometimes uses comic devices to vary his tone or to provide comic relief in The Faerie Queene. As Judith Clark points out, many Renaissance treatises, such as Wilson's Art of Rhetorique, advocate tonal variety in lengthy works in order to hold the reader's attention. In this tradition Spenser achieves "'sweete diversity'" in his epic by often flippantly apologizing for his excessive use of romance conventions and by occasionally treating comically his evil characters, his battle scenes, the swoon device, the operation of fate, his name coinages, and his sententiae.[21] Though he notes that the poet occasionally utilizes ribald puns, Linwood E. Orange reveals that Spenser employs puns more often "to vary the tone of his work."[22] And Robert O. Evans believes that most of Spenser's humor, though used for comic relief, depends upon his dramatic powers, which

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[19]"Spenser's Braggadochio," in Studies in English Renaissance Literature, ed. Waldo F. McNeir (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 20-39; also see Wade, p. 124.

[20]Flower on a Lowly Stalk, pp. 116, 118.

[21]"His Earnest Unto Game," The Emporia State Research Studies, 15 (1967), 13-24; 26-27.

[22]"'All Bent to Mirth,'" p. 547.

are especially evident in the Malbecco fabliau and the fisherman's rape of Florimell.[23]

Not only does Spenser employ comic touches to vary his tone, but he also employs them for satiric purposes. In an unpublished essay, Charles Bell Burke suggests the didactic nature of some aspects of Spenserian humor when he states that "it is in The Faerie Queene itself that the sage and serious poet pulls out all stops and affords us the full diapason of jest and earnest . . . as he tries to justify the ways of man to God."[24] Though he does not explicitly state that Spenser ridicules Redcross's errors in Book I, Donald Cheney implies such a treatment by noting that Redcrosse "is ludicrously unprepared" to understand the significance of such characters as Duessa and Archimago[25] and by stressing the often ironic disparity that exists between Redcrosse the knight and Redcrosse the rustic. Several critics have noted that Spenser frequently satirizes his pagans' behavior;[26] he intensifies his criticism of such a character as Braggadocchio by employing images associated with the peacock, capon or kestrel.[27] Though the comedy associated with the Squire of Dames or with the Braggadocchio/snowy

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[23]"Spenserian Humor," pp. 299; 293-94.

[24]"The Quality of Humor in Spenser," p. 5.

[25]Spenser's Image of Nature (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), p. 35.

[26]Evans, p. 296.

[27]See James Holleran's "Spenser's Braggadochio," pp. 23, 31, 33; and Madeleine P. Cosman, "Spenser's Ark of Animals: Animal Imagery in the Faery Queene," Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, 3 (1963), 95-96.

Florimell story amuses the reader, Kathleen Williams states that the reader learns from these comic tales; for "laughter is good, but good chiefly as a means to self-knowledge."[28]

This review of pertinent criticism concerning Spenser as a comic poet reveals that he has diverse comedic talents. As this study will indicate, many of these scholars' suggestions provide a foundation for an investigation of the many comic elements in Books III and IV, especially for a discussion of Spenser's use of comedy to delight and to instruct his reader. The comic structure of the stories, however, has not been thoroughly investigated.

II. SPENSER'S MODELS

In his prefatory letter to Raleigh, Spenser mentions that Homer's, Virgil's, Tasso's, and Ariosto's poems inspired him to write his epic. Two of these works, The Odyssey and the Orlando Furioso, have long been recognized as poems that contain comic elements. Though Spenser does not mention La Divina Commedia as a possible source for his poem, Clyde Wade in his dissertation, "The Comedy of The Faerie Queene," suggests that Book I is a comedy modeled upon Dante's work.[29] In his letter to Can Grande della Scala, c. 1318, Dante mentions a common comedic structural pattern which in general can be applied to the epics of Homer and Spenser as well as to many dramatic comedies. Attempting to justify

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[28]Spenser's World of Glass (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966), pp. 101-02.

[29]See Chapter II, "The Legend of Holiness as Divine Comedy," pp. 45-107.

the title of his epic, Dante notes that a "comedy introduces some harsh complication, but brings its matter to a prosperous end, as appears from Terence, in his comedies."[30] Since his poem begins in hell and terminates in heaven, Dante feels justified in calling it a comedy.

Dante's brief definition of a comedy echoes ancient and Renaissance opinions about The Odyssey. Aristotle suggests that, except for the misfortune which befalls Penelope's suitors, The Odyssey, like a comedy, affords its readers a pleasant experience.[31] Speculating upon the origin of the stock comic plot of complication and a happy ending, William Webbe, in 1586, stated that this pattern probably derived from the precedent that Homer established, for some people believe that comic writers "out of hys Odyssea tooke arguments of delight, and pleasant ending after dangerous and troublesome doubt";[32] such a pattern can also be discovered in the Plautine, Terentian, and Italian plays that contributed to the development of English comedies.

In a general sense The Faerie Queene can be considered a comedy in the light of the definition implied in Webbe's and Aristotle's brief remarks. Though many of Spenser's sympathetic characters begin their quests in confusion, if their tales are completed, they experience the

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[30]"From Epistola X," trans. Philip H. Wicksteed, in The Great Critics, eds. James Smith and Edd Parks (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1951), p. 147.

[31]Lane Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy (Oxford: E. Blackwell, 1924), p. 61.

[32]A Discourse of English Poetrie, in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. with an introd. by G. Gregory Smith (1904; rpt. London: Lowe & Brydone, 1950), I, 249.

traditional happy endings that distinguish a comedy; whereas his unsympathetic characters, because of their serious foibles, do not. One should note that while Spenser metes out poetic justice, he permits some individuals like Argante and her twin Ollyphant, who engage in numerous sexual perversions, to escape punishment. It appears that Spenser feels that some forces are too formidable to be eradicated. In the tradition of comic writers, Spenser does ridicule such common human weaknesses as pride, jealousy, and sensuality. Spenser teaches ideal behavior, but he is too much of a realist to be deemed an Utopian.

Spenser's purpose in this poem is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." Frequently, in Books III and IV, Spenser creates situations that hinder or further the characters' journeys to their particular Ithacas, since these situations test their failure or ability to profit from the learning experiences that such instances afford them. Like Odysseus, these individuals, especially the sympathetic ones, often reveal that they are human beings.[33] And just as frequently, the reader finds himself smiling or laughing at Spenser's characters as they respond to the vicissitudes of social relationships.

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[33]Even those critics who ignore Spenserian comedy have commented upon the realistic qualities of his characters. John Hankins, Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 18, feels that Spenser may have intended to develop his characters like morality figures; yet he often "pictures them as human beings in human situations." Artegal, for example, usually represents the abstract idea of Justice. Nevertheless, as Judith Anderson notes, "'Nor Man it Is'," PMLA, 85 (1970), 69, Artegal reacts like a human being during his encounters with Britomart and Radigund.

III. SPENSER'S USE OF COMIC DEVICES

As his letters to Gabriel Harvey and various passages in his works indicate, Spenser was profoundly interested in the literature of his day. Like many of his contemporaries, he apparently wrote a work to explain his views about the nature and function of literature;[34] presumably, if one considers the format of most Renaissance treatises on rhetoric, he could expect to find a discussion of comedy in such a work. Though this treatise, The English Poete, is not extant, Spenser outlines a view of comedy in The Teares of the Muses, c. 1580, as Thalia laments the deplorable state of stage comedies. In this poem Spenser reveals that he recognizes the traditional dual aim of the comic writer: to delight and to instruct, effects which he achieves through his utilization of comic devices in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene.

Throughout Thalia's complaint, Spenser indicates that he recognizes the entertainment value of comedy by employing such phrases as "goodly glee," "joyous gentle dalliaunce," and "vnhurtfull Sport" to emphasize that contemporary comedies lack this quality. In Books III and IV, Spenser reveals that he has not forgotten the necessity of employing delightful comedy; for he frequently amuses his reader with an unexpected rime or image, with abrupt shifts in the narrator's tone, and with unexpected realistic details. He further entertains his reader by utilizing the motif of the heroine in disguise to provide comic

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[34] According to his gloss to the October Eclogue, E. K. plans to publish a recently delivered Spenserian manuscript entitled The English Poete.

situations and to construct comic complications. In such instances the reader need not seek allegorical meanings, if he realizes that they often provide a necessary comic relief in a poem that is full of terrors, ranging from the physical to the psychological.

Though Spenser often uses comic devices merely to entertain his reader, he employs them more frequently to instruct his reader "in vertuous and gentle discipline" as he investigates the theme of "discordia concors" and its relation to the "personal and social concerns" of Books III and IV.[35] In these books Spenser focuses upon relationships between parent and child, between friends, and between lovers. To become functioning members of Fairyland's society, an individual must acknowledge or champion the related codes of courteous behavior and romantic love that govern it. According to the narrator, the main characters of these books are models to be emulated; however, the reader notices that occasionally they violate these codes as they traverse Fairyland or interact with other individuals. On the other hand, unsympathetic characters like Braggadocchio and Malecasta consistently deviate from the golden mean.

Within a comic pattern involving complication and reconciliation or rejection, Spenser frequently utilizes the same comic devices to point out the sympathetic and unsympathetic characters' violations of the code of romantic love. Such traditional comic devices as character commentary, derisive images, unflattering similes, contrast, and

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[35]Thomas P. Roche, The Kindly Flame (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1964), p. 209.

various types of irony prompt Spenser's reader to respond negatively to these characters. Furthermore, such devices chart a character's movement towards or away from being reconciled to the societal norms of Fairyland, the most sustained example being Spenser's use of the parody quest to satirize Braggadocchio and Malbecco. The sympathetic Cymoent, Scudamore, and Britomart profit from their mistakes and presumably become functioning members of Fairyland's society, whereas the unsympathetic Malecasta and Paridell frustrate the restorative power of comedy and are rejected by society in various ways.

In her lament Thalia suggests the degrees of satire that Spenser employs to ridicule his sympathetic and unsympathetic individuals. Commenting upon the unknown Willy,[36] who has either died or ceased to write comedies, Spenser notes that

> he, the man whom Nature selfe had made
> To mock her selfe, and truth to imitate,
> With kindly counter vnder mimick shade.
> Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late.
> (205-10)

Spenser further indicates that Willy ridicules human foibles by "scorning the boldnes of such base-borne men, / Which dare their follies forth so rashlie throwe" (219-20). The first quotation suggests Spenser's attitude towards his sympathetic characters in Books III and IV. The interfering parent, Cymoent, and the romantic lovers, Scudamore, Britomart, and Timias, are frequently recognizable human beings, whom

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[36] Variorum VIII, 317-21; the principal nominations for the role of Willy are Shakespeare, Sidney, Lily, and Richard Tarlton.

Spenser mocks for their occasional excessive behavior. When compared with the word scorn, the term mock seems less emphatic. The second quotation from Thalia's lament succinctly summarizes the attitudes and actions of Spenser's unsympathetic characters: Malecasta, Radigund, Braggadocchio, Malbecco, and Paridell. Because they consistently deviate from the golden mean, they can be considered "base-borne [humans], / Which dare their follies forth so rashlie throwe," since they never develop the moral attributes that characterize a courteous individual. Unlike his occasional comic treatment of his sympathetic characters, Spenser's scorn of the unsympathetic characters' aberrations is constant.

IV. SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY

The following chapters will concentrate upon the various ways that Spenser employs comic elements to entertain and to instruct his reader in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene. Throughout this study, references will be made to comic theorists, to the Orlando Furioso, and to Renaissance dramas; however, only similarities and differences, not possible influence, will be stressed. In addition, several of the characters' stories are introduced in Book II and continue into Book V; these books will be considered only to demonstrate Spenser's full comic treatment of these individuals. The second chapter will concentrate upon Spenser's delightful comedy. To entertain his reader and to temper serious or tense episodes, Spenser inserts unexpected imagery or rime, abruptly shifts the narrator's tone, uses surprising realistic details, and treats comically many aspects of Britomart's disguise. The following

two chapters will investigate Spenser's didactic comedy. Chapter III will focus upon Spenser's comic treatment of his sympathetic characters, those individuals who, with the exception of Timias, profit from their mistakes. Though the basic comic pattern of complication and reconciliation will be discussed in order to indicate these characters' movements towards becoming functioning members of Fairyland's society, more emphasis will be placed upon Spenser's use of various comic devices to chastize their errors. In Chapter IV, Spenser's satire of his unsympathetic individuals will be investigated. Although he employs numerous devices to ridicule these characters, Spenser often utilizes a dominant device or motif to stress his moral lesson: in the Malecasta episode, dramatic irony which is inherent in the disguised heroine motif; in the Radigund tale, the ironic disparity between the love-lorn lady and the proud Amazon; in the Braggadocchio and Malbecco stories, the parody quest; and in the Paridell episode, the ludicrous quarrels of a Morality Vice. It will become apparent that although Spenser recognizes the entertainment value of comedy, he employs comic devices more often to instruct his reader.

CHAPTER II

SPENSER'S DELIGHTFUL COMEDY

In Books III and IV,[1] Spenser most often employs comedy to make his moral lessons more palatable. Yet in these books there are comic passages that do not stress any ethical idea. Especially aware of the need to vary his tone in his epic, Spenser frequently uses comic touches to achieve this diversity.[2] In fact, he usually precedes or follows a serious episode with one that consists of either didactic or delightful comedy. For instance, Britomart's comic adventure at Malecasta's Castle Joyous occurs after the grim appearance of the forester chasing Florimell.[3] This chapter will concentrate only upon the various ways that Spenser achieves delightful comedy: his efforts to lighten the tone; his use of realism; his treatment of Britomart's disguise.

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[1]All references to The Faerie Queene come from The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, C. G. Osgood, F. M. Padelford et al. (1932-1949; rpt. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958). Though this study focuses upon the comedy in Books III and IV, occasionally references will be made to Book V, since some of the characters introduced in the middle books appear in Book V.

[2]Judith Clark, "His Earnest Unto Game," The Emporia State Research Studies, 15 (1967), 14-15.

[3]Continuing this pattern, Spenser follows the episode in which Britomart wounds Marinell with the initial part of Cymoent's comic tale. Spenser incorporates the delightfully comic description of Timias' love pangs immediately after the Squire's terrible fight with the forester and his two brothers. In addition, Malbecco's comic tale precedes Britomart's grave adventure at Busyrane's castle. Book IV, in essence, follows a similar pattern. For example, the book opens with the gently comic scene in which Amoret believes that Britomart is a man; then comes a serious episode that involves the faithless friends Blandamour and Paridell.

I. COMIC TOUCHES TO LIGHTEN THE TONE

Spenser occasionally relaxes the gravity of an episode by incorporating delightfully comic touches. Amid the numerous gory battles and tense scenes of the poem, Spenser occasionally provides minor comic relief by employing an unexpected image or rime or by abruptly shifting the narrator's tone. These additions are not designed to create laughter. When, however, one compares these unexpected additions to the context, the thoughtful reader will probably smile.

Unexpected Imagery and Rime

In Books III and IV, Spenser employs an unexpected image only once as he describes Satyrane's "comic binding of the trembling, grumbling hyaena in Florimell's belt" (3.7.29-36).[4] When Satyrane finally subdues the beast, Spenser records that the victor

> The golden ribband, which that virgin wore
> About her sclender wast, . . . tooke in hand,
> And with it bound the beast, that lowd did rore
> For great despight of that vnwonted band,
> Yet dared not his victour to withstand,
> But trembled like a lambe, fled from the pray,
> And all the way him follwd on the strand,
> As he had long bene learned to obay;
> Yet neuer learned he such seruice, till that day.
> (3.7.36.1-7)

This brief description provides a needed comic respite, for in the previous episode Spenser recounts the hyaena's swift pursuit of the

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[4]Kathleen Williams, Spenser's World of Glass (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966), p. 120.

terrified Florimell, its merciless slaying of Florimell's horse, and its subsequent fight with Satyrane. At this point the sympathetic reader is involved in the tensions of these scenes. By the time he finishes following Satyrane's battle with the hyaena, the reader needs to relax. In order to appreciate the comic incongruity that the simile and image provide, the reader must visualize the once fierce hyaena trotting meekly behind Satyrane.

In a similar situation during Radigund's initial battle with Artegal, Spenser provides needed comic relief by inserting an unexpected rime when Artegal severely wounds the Amazon. To indicate the effect of Artegal's blow, Spenser rhymes "distraught her" with "daughter,"[5] thus relieving the tense mood of this scene. Having recognized Sir Terpin's dangerous situation, Artegal

> left the bloudy slaughter,
> In which he swam, and ranne to his redresse.
> There her assayling fiercely fresh, he
> raught her
> Such an huge stroke, that it of sence
> distraught her:
> And had she not it warded warily,
> It had depriu'd her mother of a daughter.
> (5.41.2-7)

Such a homely statement, appearing where it does and phrased as it is, seems somewhat incongruous simply because the reader probably would not consider that the inhuman Amazon had a mother.

Spenser rarely employs unexpected imagery and rimes to lighten his tone in this manner. These two examples do suggest that Spenser is able

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[5]Allan H. Gilbert, "Spenserian Comedy," Tennessee Studies in Literature, 2 (1957), 103. Gilbert's annotated list provided many suggestions for this study.

to create comic incongruity with these poetic devices and thus relax the gravity of tense scenes.

Abrupt Shifts in the Narrator's Tone

Spenser more often provides minor comic relief in these books by abruptly shifting the narrator's tone during a tense scene. Discussing Spenserian comedy, William Nelson suggests that occasionally Spenser "recognizes the absurdity of chivalric narrative" and ridicules conventions associated with the chivalric romance "by a subtle use of devices common to all burlesque—hyperbole, bathos, and patent illogic."[6] Nelson supports his thesis by citing examples of realistic details and comments by the narrator. Though Nelson's suggestion is valid, one should recognize that Spenser also alleviates the tone of a tense or unrealistic scene when the narrator intrudes with a homely or exaggerated comment.

Sometimes Spenser lightens his tone by directly addressing his reader. As he begins, for example, to describe the birth of Belphoebe and Amoret, Spenser carefully recounts the wondrous nature of their conception which occurred when "the sunbeames bright upon [Chrysogene's] body playd" (3.6.7.5). With this story the poet enters the world of the miraculous, a realm far removed from man. Immediately after he describes the conception of the twins, Spenser notes that one may have difficulty understanding this miraculous event. To the reader's

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[6]"Spenser ludens," in A Theatre for Spenserians, eds. Judith M. Kennedy and James A. Reither (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1973), pp. 85-86.

amusement, however, Spenser ingeniously invites his reader to accept the validity of his tale by suggesting that only an unreasonable person would doubt its truthfulness:

> Miraculous may seeme to him, that reades
> So straunge ensample of conception;
> But reason teacheth that the fruitfull
> seades
> Of all things liuing, through impression
> Of the sunbeames in moyst complexion,
> Doe life conceiue and quickned are by kynd.
> (3.6.8.1-5)

Since the reader presumably does not wish to be considered unintelligent, he smilingly accepts the validity of the tale.

Spenser more frequently employs the narrator's abrupt intrusions to lighten the tone of a tense scene. A brief example of this technique occurs in Book V as Clarinda falls in love with the imprisoned Artegal. When Radigund discovers that she loves Artegal, she sends her "trusty" maid Clarinda to act as matchmaker, but to the reader's amusement her emissary also falls in love with the captive. Spenser depicts Clarinda's predicament by abandoning his objective tone:

> But foolish Mayd: whyles, heedlesse of the
> hooke,
> She thus oft times was beating off and on,
> Through slipperie footing, fell into the
> brooke,
> And there was caught to her confusion.
> (5.5.43.1-4)

In this passage Spenser apparently mixed his metaphor in order to intensify the comedy of Clarinda's predicament. Lines one and two picture her as a fish attempting to escape a hook. Line three, however, likens her to a fisherman who, losing his footing, falls into the brook.

In line four she becomes the hooked fish again. Though she initially desires to hook Artegal for Radigund, Clarinda finally dangles from her figurative line.[7] Spenser needs this comic touch here; for until this point the reader has witnessed the fierce battles between Radigund and Artegal, as well as Artegal's humiliating punishment when Radigund's beauty vanquishes him. Then Radigund tells Clarinda to persuade Artegal to fall in love with his captor without, ironically, informing Artegal of her mistress' desires. Spenser, thus, moves from a tense to a confused atmosphere. With his exaggerated comment upon Clarinda's predicament, Spenser provides a momentary and needed touch of comic relief.

In addition, Spenser's earliest comment about Britomart as a female warrior (3.1.7-8) provides, contrary to Robert M. Durling's opinion, a logical touch of delightful comedy. Though Durling's comments about Ariosto's and Spenser's narrators are perceptive in many instances, they reveal that he has been conditioned by traditional views that Spenser has no comic sense. Believing that Spenser does not employ irony in his poem, he also feels that though Spenser's remarks about Britomart may seem humorous "the effect is jarring."[8] This scene is based upon Bradamante's initial appearance in the Orlando Furiose.[9] In each poem

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[7]This idea comes from Dr. Bain T. Stewart, Department of English, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, August 25, 1976.

[8]The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), p. 216, n. 19.

[9]See R. E. N. Dodge, "Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto," PMLA, 12 (1897), 151-204, for commentary and a list of parallel passages.

the female enters; her identity is unknown; she engages in a furious battle; and she departs or is separated from the other personae. Ariosto's penchant for irony is evident in this episode. Sacripant, who has been pursuing his beloved Angelica, finally encounters the stranded beauty. Just as he determines to effect "soft assault" (attempted seduction) against her, Bradamante bursts upon the scene, and, as Ariosto sardonically states, "the monarch ill the interruption bore."[10]

Sacripant's chagrin increases when he later learns that a woman has defeated him. The longer he thinks about his disgrace, the worse he feels, as Ariosto comically notes:

> After the woeful warrior long had thought
> Upon his cruel case, and still in vain,
> And found a woman his defeat had wrought,
> For thinking but increases the monarch's pain,
> He climbed the other horse.
> (1.71.1-5)

This comment, which stresses the absurdity of pondering past misfortune, appears after Bradamante has departed.

Unlike Bradamante, Britomart does not interrupt a hopefully illicit assignation; for she meets Guyon, the Palmer, and Arthur. After Britomart defeats Guyon, Spenser incorporates a statement that is similar to Ariosto's comment about Sacripant's chagrin. Ariosto employs his comment as a final insult to an unsympathetic character. Spenser,

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[10] Orlando Furioso, trans. William Stewart Rose, eds. Stewart A. Baker and A. Bartlett Giamatti (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1968), 1.59.1; 60.6; future references will be incorporated in the text.

however, uses his statement primarily to lighten his tone. Indirectly addressing Guyon, the poet wryly remarks:

> But weenedst thou what wight thee ouerthrew,
> Much greater griefe and shamefuller regret
> For thy hard fortune then thou wouldst renew,
> That of a single damzell thou wert met
> On equall plaine, and there so hard beset.
> (3.1.8.1-5)

The reader probably does not take seriously Spenser's concern about Guyon's manly pride because, after all, he has been defeated by a magic spear. But simultaneously the reader acknowledges with a smile that Guyon has been stripped of his allegorical meaning of temperance in this episode; thus, he could easily react as Spenser suggests he might. Terminating this light-hearted scene, Spenser, unlike Ariosto, does not reveal Britomart's identity to the sympathetic Guyon.

These examples reveal Spenser's ability to vary his tone with unexpected comic touches. Since Spenser does not develop most of these instances fully, the reader who hurries through these books will miss them. Though not designed to inspire a laugh or even, perhaps, a chuckle, these additions do enable Spenser to provide minor comic relief.

II. SPENSER'S USE OF REALISM

Occasionally Spenser strips his characters of their allegorical meanings. In such instances he often presents his characters reacting to situations as human beings would. Since Spenser normally emphasizes his characters' allegorical meanings, such situations take the reader by surprise, and thus work in a way that is traditionally comic. In

1959, Robert O. Evans investigated the realistically comic elements of the Malbecco fabliau and of the Florimell/fisherman rape scene.[11] Spenser also incorporates realistic details as particular characters respond to the vicissitudes of life or love. Invariably he applies these humanizing elements to his sympathetic characters. Since his poem is an allegory, Spenser tries to make his moral lessons as palatable as he can. Spenser could easily have written a boring, didactic work, but he was sufficiently astute to recognize that his very human reader would probably yawn at his sympathetic characters if they were paragons of virtue. He, therefore, supplies enough realistic details so that his reader can relate to and eventually sympathize with his virtuous characters. By creating sympathetic characters, Spenser makes his moral lessons more acceptable.

Physical Details

Spenser infrequently reminds his reader that his characters have physical needs or physical functions. According to William Nelson, such realistic details in an allegorical poem are illogical and are one method Spenser employs to burlesque the chivalric romance.[12] Yet these delightful touches enable Spenser to flesh out his characters and to

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[11]"Spenserian Humor," Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, 60 (1959), 293-95.

[12]"Spenser ludens," pp. 93-94. Nelson mentions the jest involving Amoret's physiological function, p. 93. Earlier, pp. 89-90, he suggests that Spenser's description of Radigund's and Britomart's "dainty parts," which will be discussed in this study, parodies somewhat the conventions of chivalric battles.

remind his reader of the close relationship that exists between his world and that of Fairyland.

Such realistic details take the reader by surprise. Amoret, for example, seems more one dimensional, less human, than Britomart. Quite unexpectedly, Spenser suggests that Amoret, like his reader, performs one of the basic bodily functions. Just before Lust captures her, Spenser remarks that Amoret "walkt through the wood, for pleasure or for need" (4.7.4.2). With a slight smile, the reader recognizes that Spenser effectively excuses Amoret's leaving the sleeping Britomart. Throughout his poem, Spenser stresses that Fairyland's woods are not suitable for pleasant walks, for they enclose numerous horrors. If Spenser did not supply possible reasons for her departure, the reader would assume that Amoret is rash; such a thought would violate the image of the decorous Amoret that Spenser has consistently presented. As unexpected as it is, the reader can more easily accept an Amoret with a physiological function than he can an Amoret who violates her character.

In a more delightfully comic scene, Spenser suddenly reminds his reader that Britomart is very human. Reaching the climax of Artegal's second battle with Britomart, Spenser records that Artegal is stunned when he discovers that he has been fighting a beautiful female. To describe Britomart's incomparable beauty, Spenser employs two stanzas which essentially consist of Petrarchan images. Yet, in the midst of this description, Spenser reveals that Britomart is not a heavenly being but a sweating red-faced girl. Since Spenser inserts this homely image

at the end of the first stanza and follows with a traditional description, the unwary reader will miss the light comic effect that Spenser aims for. When his brutal stroke reveals her beauty, Artegal sees

> her angels face, vnseene afore,
> Like to the ruddie morne appeard in sight,
> Deawed with siluer drops, through sweating sore,
> But somewhat redder, then beseem'd aright,
> Through toylsome heate and labour of her weary fight.
> And round about the same, her yellow heare,
> Hauing through stirring loosd their wonted band,
> Like to a golden border did appeare,
> Framed in goldsmithes forge with cunning hand.
> (4.6.19.5-9; 20.1-4)

Obviously, several levels of perception exist in this scene. To Artegal, who believes he has been fighting a male knight, the sudden sight of a beautiful feminine face would be as startling as the traditional imagery suggests. The amused reader, who has always known Britomart's identity, would not be as surprised as Artegal is and would recognize that their fierce battle involves "sweating sore."

During Britomart's climactic battle with Radigund, Spenser lightens the tension of the scene when he comments that Nature intended that their bodies have other functions in addition to being recepients of savage blows; the two combattants ignore "their dainty parts, which nature had created/ . . . For other vses, then they them translated" (5.7.29.6,8). The context suggests that Spenser refers to the sexual nature of these two women, since their battle will determine who wins Artegal and whose attitude towards love will prevail. The reader becomes aware of a minor comic incongruity as he ponders this description.

During a profoundly significant allegorical scene, Spenser, somewhat ironically, feels obligated to remind his reader that, like all human beings, these women are sexual creatures. Momentarily lightening the tone of this scene by calling attention to "their dainty parts," Spenser makes his subsequent moral lesson more effective.

Spenser varies his method of employing physical details in Chrysogone's tale; yet his comment about the physical pleasure of sexual love helps to lighten the scene's tone. As he begins Book III, Canto vi, Spenser relates the wondrous conception of Chrysogone's twins, Belphoebe and Amoret. Then Spenser presents the comic tale of Venus' encounter with her rival Diana. Though these goddesses reveal such human traits as jealousy, they inhabit a realm that is greatly separated from the reader's. When, however, he comments upon the twins' birth as the goddesses discover them, Spenser introduces a realistic detail that the reader can relate to. Recapitulating Chrysogone's tale, Spenser notes

> Vnwares she them conceiu'd, vnwares she bore:
> She bore withouten paine, that she conceiued
> Withouten pleasure. (3.6.27.1-3)

As the reader ponders this unexpected comment, he is amused; for he recognizes that though Spenser frequently lauds the spiritual quality of love he occasionally reveals that his feet are firmly planted in reality.

These brief examples suggest that Spenser infrequently ascribes physical functions or desires to his characters. Because these unexpected realistic details surprise the reader, they provide minor comic relief as well as an amusing reminder that Fairyland is not too far from the reader's world.

Realistic Actions and Reactions

At times Spenser provides light comic touches when his characters react as human beings could easily do. For instance, on rare occasions several of his personae do not react as Spenser suggests they will. Thus, an amusing disparity exists between what he expects of his characters and how they feel at a particular moment.

Introducing the story of Agape's triplets and their subsequent battles with Cambell, Spenser elaborates upon the traditional theme that life is so full of pain that individuals long for death. When he comments upon Agape's efforts to prolong the triplets' lives, the narrator assumes a serious tone and declares:

> Therefore this Fay I hold but fond and vaine,
> The which on seeking for her children three
> Long life, thereby did more prolong their paine.
> (4.3.2.1-3)

The unsuspecting reader expects that Priamond and Diamond will welcome death. However, the poet has a surprise for his reader. Spenser's next line, which indicates that the triplets lead happy lives, and the subsequent tale serve to refute the narrator's pompous statements that open this canto. The battles between Agape's sons and Campbell constitute a serious tale, but Spenser effectively lightens the tone of it when his characters disprove his exaggerated comments about man's longing for death. To the reader's amusement, even Diamond's headless torso refuses to acknowledge defeat. The spectators at the tournament

> Were much amaz'd the headlesse tronke to see
> Stand vp so long, and weapon vaine to weld,
> Vnweeting of the Fates diuine decree
> For lifes succession in those brethren three.
> (4.3.21.2-5)

The reader, therefore, does not take seriously the exaggerated comments that open this canto: "O Why doe wretched men so much desire, / To draw their dayes vnto the vtmost date" (4.3.1.1-2).

In Books III and IV, Spenser presents the numerous ways that one can conduct a love relationship. According to the poet's moral scheme, a virtuous knight performs honorable deeds as he conducts his quest for his beloved. Though some individuals are not actively engaged in love affairs, they, if genteel, are concerned about an honorable reputation. In one amusing episode, however, Spenser again reveals that occasionally a disparity exists between what he expects of his characters and how they feel at a particular moment. Before he encounters Belphoebe, Timias successfully defeats the forester and his two brothers (3.5.13-26); yet his victory is not an easy one, for he is seriously wounded. Since he has acquitted himself like a knight, Spenser remarks that "the Squire lives with renowne" (3.5.25.9). Ironically, however, Timias feels differently from the poet. In a realistic fashion he is more concerned about his wound than about his reputation: "he liues, but takes small ioy of his renowne; / For of that cruell wound he bled so sore" (3.5.26.1-2).

Somewhat to the reader's surprise, Arthur, who symbolizes Magnificence, reveals that he has human feelings on at least two occasions. Perhaps the comedy of the situations increases when one realizes that both instances picture Arthur falling victim to the sight of a beautiful face. After he fails to help Florimell, principally because of her own fears, Arthur stops for the night. Musing about the

fleeing girl, he eventually begins to think about his beloved Faerie Queene. His emotions increase to such an extent that he cannot sleep, and he passes the time uttering a traditional complaint about the horrors associated with Night. To the reader's amusement, Arthur is merely a tired disgruntled man as he commences his journey the following morning:

> He vp arose, as halfe in great disdaine,
> And clombe vnto his steed. So forth he went,
> With heauie looke and lumpish pace, that plaine
> In him bewraid great grudge and maltalent:
> His steed eke seem'd t'apply his steps to his intent.
> (3.4.61.5-9)

Just as the horse's gait parallels Arthur's state of mind, so does Spenser's ponderous verse.[13]

Arthur next falls prey to a beautiful lady as he resolves the conflicts between Poeana and Placidas. When he initially sees the lovely girl, Arthur is greatly attracted to her, a situation which may remind the reader of Artegal's reaction to Radigund. Unlike Artegal, Arthur recovers immediately; therefore, one cannot seek a moral lesson in this instance. Near the end of Arthur's sojourn at Poeana's, Spenser incorporates a minor comic touch. Arthur has been protecting Amoret and Aemylia since he discovered them beside Lust's cave. Though Aemylia is united with Amyas after Poeana accepts Placida's love, Arthur still needs to be concerned about Amoret. Spenser suggests, however, that

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[13]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (1957; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1968), pp. 259-60. Though he does not mention this passage, Frye cites sufficient examples to support his claim that "the most remarkably sustained mastery of verbal epsis in English, perhaps, is exhibited in The Faerie Queene."

his exemplary knight is more concerned about his emotional welfare than he is about Amoret's well being. Thinking "of his old loue," the Faerie Queene, he determines "to pursue his former quest" (4.9.17.4-5). Again this constitutes an amusing, not moral, comment upon Arthur's behavior, especially since it seems a logical reaction, for in the previous stanza Arthur has effected the marriage of Poeana and Placidas.

As has been indicated, Spenser usually limits his delightfully comic touches to an unexpected image or reaction. Yet he fully develops his comic treatment of Britomart's love pangs; such an attitude helps to make Britomart one of the most human and sympathetic characters in The Faerie Queene. Though her initial confusion about love explains some of her later foolish conduct, Britomart, in the early cantos of Book III, is merely a charming young girl in love.

Spenser's first full-length portrait of Britomart concentrates upon her very human reactions to first love. The mature reader can appreciate the comedy in this episode; for, like Glauce, he may be tempted to ask Britomart, "why make ye such a Monster of your minde?" (3.2.40.2). Quite naturally and comically, Britomart's love pangs affect hers and eventually Glauce's total concern. For example, Spenser reports that during a church service Britomart and Glauce offer their prayers "with great devotion, and little zele" (3.2.48.5) because Britomart can think only about Artegal; and Glauce, ironically, chants superstitious verses to rid her charge of those "fond fancies." Glauce's actions at church culminate in her enchanting, yet foolish, efforts to apply folk cures to Britomart. The comedy of the following passage increases if one

takes the time to visualize it. Taking three hairs from Britomart's head, Glauce tells her charge:

> Come daughter come, come; spit vpon my face,
> Spit thrise vpon me . . . .
> That sayd, she round about she from her turnd,
> She turned her contrarie to the Sunne,
> Thrise she her turnd contrary, and returnd,
> All contrary, for she the right did shunne,
> And euer what she did, was streight vndonne.
> (3.2.50.7-8; 51.1-4)

As Pauline Parker has demonstrated, these scenes reveal charming characters who resemble Shakespeare's Imogen and Miranda; more importantly, Mother Parker advises that the reader should enjoy the romantic atmosphere at the beginning of Book III and should not seek allegorical meanings.[14]

Such a comment is applicable to the scene in which Britomart asks Redcrosse about Artegal (3.2.4-16). Perhaps what strikes the reader initially is that Britomart lies to her companion about her rearing and about the "foule dishonour and reproachfull spight" that Artegal has committed against her. But Charles E. Mounts correctly points out that although she willfully lies Britomart does not intend any harm; in fact, all she wishes is to learn everything she can about her destined mate. Thus, her behavior reveals a natural tendency or, as Mounts somewhat chauvinistically states, "a certain feminine capriciousness" that humanizes her.[15] Spenser handles this scene with a delightfully light

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[14]The Allegory of the "Faerie Queene" (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 163.

[15]"Virtuous Duplicity in The Faerie Queene," Modern Language Quarterly, 7 (1946), 48.

touch. When Redcrosse does not answer her questions as fully as she wishes, Britomart demands more information in order "to feed her humour with his pleasing stile" (3.2.12.2). By the time she and Redcrosse part, Britomart, quite naturally and to the reader's amusement, has worked herself up to such an emotional state that only her subsequent fight with Marinell can abate it. These two scenes, which occur early in Book III, emphasize Britomart's charm and establish Spenser's comic treatment of her throughout her quest.

According to Paul J. Alpers, maturity and sophistication on the part of the reader are required for appreciating the comedy of Britomart's love pangs.[16] Such a statement can be applied to other episodes in which Britomart figures. After hearing about Amoret's imprisonment, she boldly informs Scudamore that they can rescue her. Yet, somewhat comically, as soon as she discovers the nature of the flames surrounding Busyrane's castle, she momentarily loses her courage and is "dismayd, / Ne in that sownd wist, how her selfe to beare" (3.11.22.1-2). In the early part of her tale, Spenser implies that Britomart has led a sheltered life. Her quest, therefore, introduces her to many strange sights and situations. Once she enters Busyrane's castle, she is naturally overwhelmed by the diverse trappings she sees. Her natural curiosity aroused, Britomart "ne could satisfie / Her greedy eyes with gazing a long space" (53.3-4). Though she profits from her diverse experiences, her main concern is to effect her union with Artegal.

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[16] The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), p. 183.

Having witnessed her love pangs, her efforts to elicit information from Redcrosse, and her subsequent emotionally charged lament, the reader, perhaps, is not surprised that Britomart decides to be coy when she finally learns Artegal's identity. In an amusing and natural manner, she reacts as some women do; "with womanish art" she attempts "to hide her wound, that none might it perceiue" (4.6.40.7-8). It appears that Spenser frequently treats her comically because he consistently reminds the reader that Britomart is a young girl who is maturing during her quest.

These delightfully comic touches enable Spenser to create sympathetic characters with whom the reader can identify. According to John Hankins, such instances reveal that Spenser's "interest in personality [occasionally] supplants his interest in allegorical portrayals."[17] These light touches also help the reader accept Spenser's frequent use of didactic comedy, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters, to chastize his virtuous characters. If the reader is aware of Spenser's consistently genial attitude towards his sympathetic characters like Belphoebe, Artegal, and Britomart, he readily notices the unflattering images or absurd situations that Spenser sometimes creates to stress their foolish, yet often very human, behavior.

III. BRITOMART: A HEROINE IN DISGUISE

One of the most delightful aspects of Britomart's character is that she is a heroine in disguise. Though one must acknowledge that

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[17] Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 18.

Spenser models her after Ariosto's charming Bradamante, he also recognizes that Spenser utilizes many motifs associated with the English dramatic female page.[18] Like many of the English dramatists, Spenser apologizes for her disguise, indicates that her quest is tiresome, and utilizes verbal irony, especially in the Malecasta episode.[19] Like Bradamante, Britomart is a female warrior in disguise, not a female page like Shakespeare's Rosalind or Viola.[20] Unlike her dramatic sisters, Britomart is not an agent in a Twelfth Night situation, the Viola/Duke/Olivia triangle, which is another characteristic of the female page.[21] Like the Italians, who popularized this charming female, and his English contemporaries, Spenser creates several comic situations that evolve from Britomart's masculine appearance, and he also uses her disguise to complicate his plot.[22]

One trait, which critics have largely overlooked and that many disguised heroines have in common, is that they are aided by a confidant(e)

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[18]Apparently Spenser derived the name of his character Sansfoy from Bryan Sans Foy in Clyomon and Clamydes, one of the earliest extant plays that employs the disguised heroine motif; see Betty J. Littleton, "Introduction," Clyomon and Clamydes: A Critical Edition (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), p. 63.

[19]Victor O. Freeburg, Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1915), p. 40. Freeburg's work is still an useful study for anyone investigating the female page motif.

[20]At times a Shakespearean play will be cited. Such references are intended only to illustrate a technique or motif that Spenser employs.

[21]Freeburg, p. 40.

[22]B. E. C. Davis, Edmund Spenser (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1933), p. 89, notes that Spenser utilizes the two Florimells and the disguised Britomart to complicate his plot.

in many ways. For instance, two of Shakespeare's delightful heroines plan their disguises as they talk with their confidantes. In The Two Gentleman of Verona, Julia advises Lucetta to obtain male attire for her so that she can avoid encounters with amorous men as she searches for Proteus (II.7.40). Portia informs Nerissa that she will transform them into swaggering gay blades, though she will "prove the prettier fellow of the two."[23] These females seem much more confidant than Britomart, who must rely upon Glauce to plan her disguise.[24]

Perhaps Spenser derived the idea of Britomart's confidante, Glauce, from Ariosto, whose enchantress Melissa occasionally aids Bradamante. Though Glauce resorts to folk rituals in order to cure Britomart's love pangs, she certainly does not possess any magical gifts; Glauce is as human as are most of the female pages' helpers. When Britomart and Glauce return from their visit to Merlin, Britomart does not know how to pursue her quest to rescue Artegal. Because Britomart is tall, Glauce, after much thought, suggests that her charge don Angelica's armor while she will become her squire. Spenser interjects a tongue-in-cheek comment suggesting that Glauce's plan is foolish. He records

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[23]The Merchant of Venice, ed. George Lyman Kittredge (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1945), III.5.60-78.

[24]In several plays the disguised heroine dons male attire only when her confidante suggests the idea. See, for example, Robert Greene's Dorothea in The Scottish Historie of James the Fourth. In addition, Imogen in Cymbeline dons male attire upon Pisanio's advice. These females, like Britomart, seem more naïve than such heroines as Julia, Rosalind, and Viola, who are Anglacized versions of the delightful, yet somewhat bawdy, Lelia of Gl' Ingannati, the prototype of the female page.

that Glauce "in her foolhardy wit / conceiu'd a bold deuise" (3.3.52.1-2). Obviously, this comment cannot be taken seriously, since it is clear that Angelica's armor, plus the thorough martial training that Glauce institutes, is an apt disguise for Britomart. Equipped as she is, Britomart is more protected from possible sexual assaults than are fair Florimell and Amoret.

One trait associated with the disguised heroine is her apology for her disguise. Spenser's mentor, Ariosto, does not apologize for Bradamante's disguise, because, perhaps, he continued Boiardo's Orlando which originally introduced Bradamante. Though Britomart never verbalizes such a defense, Spenser somewhat flippantly performs this function. As he opens Book III, Canto iv, which immediately follows his discussion of Glauce's "foolhardy plan," Spenser offers his apology for her disguise. His use of an exclamation point and a series of rhetorical questions suggests that he is teasing the reader somewhat. Stanza one consists of five questions which, in essence, ask if the ancient martial women whom poets celebrate are dead or merely sleeping. Continuing his image of sleep, Spenser exclaims that he desires such women to awake, for he is jealous of reading about their exploits:

> For all too long I burne with enuy sore,
> To heare the warlike feates, which Homere spake
> Of bold Penthesilee, which made a lake
> Of Greekish bloud so oft in Troian plaine;
> But when I read, how stout Debora strake
> Proud Sisera, and how Camill' hath slaine
> The huge Orsilochus, I swell with great disdaine.
> (3.4.2.3-9)

The avowedly envious and disdainful poet has a surprise for his reader. According to the poet, these valiant women cannot "with noble Britomart

compare" (3.4.3.2). This line effectively caps the gentle joke that Spenser has indulged in throughout these stanzas, for he has finally answered the question that opens Canto iv: "Where is the Antique glory now become, / That whilome wont in women to appeare" (3.4.1.1-2). Thus, Spenser light-heartedly establishes a historical precedent for Britomart.

Like most writers who utilize the disguised heroine motif, Spenser employs the theme of mistaken identity to create comic situations. In such instances the comedy often depends upon the reader or viewer knowing that the man is actually a woman.[25] If one compares this poem to the Orlando Furioso, he will notice that Spenser utilizes the complications that can result from disguise more than Ariosto does. In romance literature that features the disguised heroine, situations often arise in which a woman will fall in love with an apparent man. For example, Ariosto concludes the comic tale originally introduced by Boiardo that involves Fiordispina's passionate attraction to Bradamante (OF 25.28-46). In an especially fine comic resolution of this complication, Ariosto unites Fiordispina with Ricciardetto, Bradamante's twin, who convinces the grateful girl that a nymph has granted her wish that Bradamante's sex be changed (25.57-70). Many of Shakespeare's

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[25] On at least two occasions, Spenser does not reveal Britomart's identity immediately. He achieves minor comic suspense when Britomart makes her first appearance (3.1.4-14), an episode closely modeled upon Bradamante's first entrance. In addition, Spenser keeps his reader in suspense about her identity during the initial part of the Malbecco episode. Like the inhabitants of the castle, the reader thoroughly enjoys the startling transformation that takes place. He especially appreciates the exquisite figure that Spenser employs to describe the revelation of her floor-length hair; her golden locks "with carelesse modestee" (3.9.22.6) fall to the floor.

female pages are the object of a woman's affections: Phebe becomes enamoured of Rosalind/Ganymede; the posturing Olivia falls in love with Viola/Cesario. In addition, verbal irony occurs frequently as the disguised heroine converses with various characters. Like her literary sisters, Britomart becomes involved in several comic situations when Malecasta and Amoret believe that she is a man and when Scudamore and Artegal seek vengeance against the apparently male knight who, they believe, has dishonored them.

Britomart's first major test occurs at Malecasta's Castle Joyous. In this episode, Spenser occasionally ridicules Britomart's naïveté and frequently satirizes Malecasta's behavior, topics which will be discussed in chapters dealing with Spenser's didactic comedy. Yet this scene also contains comic elements and motifs associated with the disguised heroine. Arriving at Castle Joyous, Britomart encounters six knights who are attempting to convince Redcrosse to forsake his lady in order to serve Malecasta. When she learns the particulars of the situation, Britomart delivers a speech about the proper way to love, which in its context, may remind the reader of Portia's "quality of mercy" speech, since it summarizes one of the important themes of the poem. Unlike Portia's thoughts, however, Britomart's words do not affect her audience. As this scene continues, Spenser utilizes verbal irony, a technique often associated with the disguised heroine, when Britomart talks with Malecasta's crew. After one of Malecasta's champions announces that Britomart, provided that she does not love anyone, must serve his lady, the female warrior ironically replies:

> Loue haue I sure, . . . but Lady none;
> Yet will I not fro mine owne loue remoue,
> Ne to your Lady will I seruice done.
> (3.1.28.2-4)[26]

In most disguise situations that contain verbal irony, the listeners ignore its nuances; only the reader or viewer can appreciate its comedy, since they often know the identity of the speaker.

Once inside Castle Joyous, Britomart falls prey to a courtship that is as persistent as that which Olivia, for example, launches against Viola. Like an Oliva or a Fiordispina, Malecasta becomes attracted to her guest simply because she is "all ignoraunt of her contrary sex" (3.1.47.2). Since the reader is constantly aware of Britomart's identity, he knows that Malecasta's subsequent attempts at courtship are futile. Britomart, ironically, does not try to prevent her hostess's advances. Though Spenser suggests that Britomart does not approve of Malecasta's actions, the reader finds himself smiling at Britomart's sympathy for the lustful lady. Ironically believing that she has experienced the same love pangs as Malecasta, Britomart pities her. Since Britomart has just begun her quest and is still immature, the reader probably does not take seriously Spenser's statement

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[26] In Twelfth Night, the disguised Viola echoes a similar thought when Olivia reveals that she loves "Cesario":

> By innocence I swear, and by my youth,
> I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth,
> And that no woman has; nor never none
> Shall mistress be of it, save I alone.

See Twelfth Night, ed. George Lyman Kittredge (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1941), III.1.169-72.

that she "could iudge what paines do louing harts perplexe" (3.1.54.5).

Because Britomart does not reveal her identity, Malecasta's passion for her guest increases. Irony characterizes this scene, especially since Malecasta believes that her guest is being stubborn; thus, she determines to seduce her sleeping guest. Malecasta's careful determination that Britomart is asleep before she slips into her bed comically prolongs the expected denouement of this episode. According to Paul J. Alpers, the reader has always known that Britomart never faces any real danger since Malecasta, "the loathed leachour," is a woman.[27]

The scene in which Britomart travels with Amoret (4.1.4-16) contrasts with the Malecasta episode because of the nature of the two girls. As in the latter tale, this scene's comedy evolves when Amoret believes that her companion is a man. In both situations neither Britomart nor Amoret faces dishonor simply because they are women.

Apparently Britomart is not too sure of herself, since she does not, until circumstances force her, inform Amoret of her identity. Thus, the timorous Amoret is presented with an amusing dilemma. She does not wish to break her marriage vows; yet, at the same time, she recognizes that her rescuer deserves her fidelity. Though Amoret realizes that she owes "her loue, her seruice and her vtmost wealth" to Britomart, she refuses to compromise her honor: "die had she leuer with enchanters knife, / Then to be false in loue, profest a virgine wife" (4.1.6.4, 8-9). Britomart further confuses Amoret by discussing

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[27] The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene," pp. 378-79.

first love and then lust. Continuing this scene, Spenser mentions that Britomart consciously determines to remain unknown; "through fine abusion," she decides "to hide her fained sex . . . / and [to] maske her wounded mind" (4.1.7.2-4). With trepidation, one might speculate that Britomart has chosen to remain anonymous because she is still assessing the confusing, yet occasionally attractive, sights she witnessed at Busyrane's castle before she encountered Amoret's jailer. Furthermore, as the poet notes, she is astonished that Glauce and Scudamore have departed (3.12.39); thus, this additional perplexity may have prevented her from correcting Amoret's initial thought that she is a man.

Unlike the Malecasta episode whose outcome can be anticipated, Spenser's resolution of this scene leaves the reader in suspense. Though he initially creates a tense situation, Spenser reveals his ability as a comic writer as he concludes this episode. Coming upon a castle, Britomart and Amoret encounter a situation that resembles Britomart's initial adventure at Malecasta's. Outside the abode, they learn that custom demands that a knight have or win a lady. One hapless "younker" determines to joust for Amoret's favor. As he describes Britomart's reaction, Spenser indirectly employs verbal irony as he notes that she "sayd, her loue to lose she was full loth" (4.1.10.8). Then the apparently male Britomart offers an amusing proposition; her challenger must accept both Amoret and her into his care. In order to salvage his honor after she defeats him, Britomart, according to Kathleen Williams, utilizes "her double identity with

ingenious humor" by claiming "the rights of both woman and knight" to ensure that he will be lodged.[28] Having effectively used comic touches to resolve Amoret's dilemma, Spenser finally pictures the two girls spending an enjoyable, yet sleepless, night discussing their respective knights.

Both of their respective lovers, Artegal and Scudamore, believe for awhile that Britomart is masculine; and Spenser takes advantage of the comic complications that such a mistake affords. First, he establishes reasonable grounds for their vows of vengeance against the "male" Britomart. Then, perhaps as an economy measure, he unites Artegal and Scudamore with their common vow of vengeance so that both are present during Artegal's climactic battle with Britomart. Throughout these scenes Spenser stresses Britomart's femininity so that the reader can appreciate the comic futility of Artegal's and Scudamore's ire.

Spenser initiates his comedy by supplying possible reasons for Artegal's and Scudamore's anger towards and subsequent vows of vengeance against Britomart. During the tournament for Florimell's girdle, Britomart soundly defeats the "Savage Knight," who is Artegal in disguise. Artegal naturally desires to avenge himself. Since the reader is aware that Artegal and Britomart are destined to marry, thanks to Merlin's prophesy, he probably anticipates the resolution of this complication. Like Artegal, Scudamore believes that Britomart has dishonored him. Meeting Ate and her hellish crew, Scudamore readily

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[28] Spenser's World of Glass, p. 92.

accepts Ate's statements that Britomart has seduced his wife. Ironically, in this situation the reader is linked with Ate, Duessa, Paridell, and Blandamour, who ridicule Scudamore's beliefs in Ate's lies. Yet the reader's amusement is not tinged with their scorn.

Scudamore encounters Artegal after Britomart has defeated the latter during the tournament for Florimell's girdle. Both reveal their common enmity towards Britomart. Dramatic irony surfaces as Artegal muses about the dishonor Britomart has inflicted upon him:

> But thereat greatly grudged Arthegall,
> And much repynd, that both of victors meede,
> And eke of honour she did him forestall.
> Yet mote he not withstand, what was decreede;
> But inly thought of that despightfull deede
> Fit time t'awaite auenged for to bee.
> (4.5.9.1-6)

Perhaps the reader's amusement increases when he remembers Britomart's earlier remarks to Redcrosse about the "foule dishonour" that Artegal inflicted upon her.

Once Spenser unites his two knights, he moves rapidly towards his comic denouement. When Britomart propitiously arrives upon the scene, Scudamore challenges her but is quickly defeated. Then Artegal enters the battle spurred on by the dual purpose of seeking vengeance for both himself and Scudamore. Such a motive increases the delightful comedy when Artegal initially falls victim to her sword but ultimately to her charms and prostrates himself at her feet. At this point Britomart does not know the identity of her second victim. Scudamore helps to maintain the charm of this scene when, relieved that Britomart is a female, he teases Artegal about falling in love:

> Certes Sir Arthegall,
> I ioy to see you lout so low on ground,
> And now become to liue a Ladies thrall,
> That whylome in your minde wont to despise them all.
> (4.6.28.7-8)

Terminating this scene, Spenser incorporates gentle comic touches when the overjoyed, yet very human, Britomart decides to be coy until Glauce sagely informs Artegal and reminds Britomart of their destiny.

This discussion of Britomart as a disguised heroine emphasizes Spenser's familiarity with and use of techniques associated with the female page. It also indicates that Spenser employs her disguise to provide situational comedy. Finally, this section suggests that Britomart's disguise is an integral part of her delightful character. As she journeys through Fairyland, Britomart becomes involved in amusing situations because she is a heroine in disguise. These instances plus Spenser's comic treatment of her frequent human reactions make her the most sympathetic character in these books.

Spenser's use of delightful comedy occurs throughout Books III and IV. As one assesses Spenser's use of this type of comedy, he should note that invariably it is the result of incongruity. Unexpected images or shifts in the narrator's tone may initially appear unnecessary. As this chapter has demonstrated, however, such additions help Spenser vary his tone and provide realistic details. Furthermore, the disguised heroine motif is closely associated with the theme of appearance versus reality. Developing the disparity between the superficially male Britomart and the delightful young Britomart, Spenser frequently amuses his reader with many comic situations. In general, then, his

utilization of delightful comedy often enables Spenser to adopt a light-hearted attitude, a posture which is needed, since Fairyland is frequently a dark and forbidding place, replete with physical and psychological horrors.

CHAPTER III

SPENSER'S COMEDY OF RECONCILIATION

As indicated in Chapter II of this study, Spenser occasionally employs comic devices simply to entertain his reader. More frequently in Books III and IV, Spenser obeys the classical and Renaissance critical dictum that a comic writer ridicules common human foibles. Aristotle provides the basis for this idea when he distinguishes between tragic and comic characters. Advising that a dramatist portrays "men in action, and these men must be either of a higher or lower type (for moral character mainly answers to these divisions, goodness and badness being the distinguishing marks of moral differences)," Aristotle notes that "the same distinction marks off Tragedy from Comedy; for Comedy aims at representing men as worse, Tragedy as better than in actual life."[1] Early in his Apology, Sir Philip Sidney echoes Aristotle's view by suggesting that a comedy portrays "the common errors of our life, which the dramatist representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful

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[1] Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, trans. S. H. Butcher, with an introd. by John Gasser, 4th ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1951), pp. 11, 13. Aristotle's Poetics did not significantly influence English criticism until the seventeenth century; see Aristotle's "Poetics" and English Literature, ed. with an introd. by Elder Olson (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965), p. ix. Yet in several works Marvin T. Herrick notes Aristotle's importance during the Renaissance; see especially his Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century, Illinois Studies in Lang. and Lit., Vol. 34, No. 1-2 (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1950), p. 37; see also his The Poetics of Aristotle in England, Cornell Studies in English, Vol. 17 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1930), Ch. I, "The Middle Ages and the Renaissance."

sort that may be; so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one."[2] In Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene, some of Spenser's sympathetic characters become, temporarily, "characters of a lower type"[3] when they deviate from the golden mean, the standard of conduct that constitutes Fairyland's norms.

In these books Spenser focuses upon the social necessity of forming relationships.[4] Successful relationships like the destined marriage between Britomart and Artegal and the eventual friendship between Britomart and Scudamore contribute to the social good.[5] On the other hand, an unsympathetic character like Paridell contributes to social discord by destroying the marriage of Hellenore, by disrupting the tournament for Florimell's girdle, and by attempting to overthrow Mercilla in Book V.

Fairyland's society is governed by the code of romantic love.[6] As their respective stories indicate, young lovers such as Scudamore,

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[2]The Apologie for Poetrie, in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. with an introd. by G. Gregory Smith (1904; rpt. London: Lowe & Brydone, 1950), I, 184.

[3]Butcher, p. 21.

[4]The following ideas are based upon "Appendix I," in The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, C. G. Osgood, F. M. Padelford et al. (1932-1949; rpt. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), IV, 281-300. All references to The Faerie Queene are to this edition and will be incorporated in the text.

[5]Clyde G. Wade, "The Comedy of The Faerie Queene," Diss. Univ. of Missouri 1967, p. 269, suggests this idea when he notes that the comedies of Spenser and Shakespeare reveal that man achieves happiness when he is able "to reconcile discord and to achieve concord."

[6]Quoting Spenser's poetry, particularly the Amoretti, E. C. Pettett provides a useful discussion of romantic love tenets; see his Shakespeare

Britomart, and Timias experience various romance sentiments, ranging from joy to despair. Spenser often ridicules such behavior when it becomes excessive, for in such instances these characters do not subscribe to the romantic and chivalric tenet that love inspires one to seek honor. The occasionally satiric representation of these characters is quite mild, of course, when compared with the ridicule and rejection of the unsympathetic Radigund and Braggadocchio, whose refusals to practice "vertuous and gentle discipline" will be discussed in Chapter IV of this study.

An examination of the stories of Cymoent, Scudamore, Britomart, and Timias suggests that they reflect the general movement of Elizabethan comedies from complication and confusion to reconciliation, a pattern recognized by William Webbe in 1586. Discussing the stock comic plot of "turmoyle" and a happy ending, Webbe suggests that this structure probably evolved from the precedent that Homer established; "some holde" that comic writers "out of hys Odyssea tooke arguments of delight, and pleasant ending after dangerous and troublesome doubtes."[7] Such a structural pattern is to be found also, of course, in the Plautine, Terentian, and Italian plays, the commedia dell' arte and the commedia erudita, that strongly influenced the development of English comedy in

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and the Romance Tradition, with an introd. by H. S. Bennett (London: Staples Press, 1949), pp. 13-22.

[7]A Discourse of English Poetrie, in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. with an introd. by G. Gregory Smith (1904; rpt. London: Lowe & Brydone, 1950), I, 249.

the sixteenth century.[8] In his comic tales Spenser focuses upon the characters' movement from temporarily excessive behavior towards reconciliation with the societal norms of Fairyland. With the notable exception of Timias, these individuals do profit from their mistakes, and even his story concludes with the traditional happy ending of a comedy.

This chapter will focus upon the comic tales of the interfering parent, Cymoent; the romantic lovers, Scudamore, Britomart, and Artegal; and the ideal lovers, Belphoebe and Timias. Throughout Books III and IV, the some times incongruous behavior of these characters is emphasized by such traditional comic devices as character commentary, unflattering similes, understatement, dramatic irony, and contrast. Through these devices Spenser suggests the characters' deviations from the golden mean, gently ridicules their unreasonable or erroneous pretentions, and prompts the reader to respond negatively to them when they fail to practice "vertuous and gentle discipline." And since these individuals are sympathetic characters, Spenser's use of comic devices also suggests the changes that occur in their personalities and values. By pointing out antisocial behavior in a comic manner, Spenser emulates the traditional dual aim of comic writers: to delight and to instruct.

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[8]See Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1964), passim; and Marvin T. Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance (Urbana: The Univ. of Illinois Press, 1960), p. 222, who states that the "close relationship between popular and learned Italian comedy makes it extremely difficult to determine whether or not it was the commedia dell' arte or the commedia erudita or both that influenced" a particular French or English drama.

I. CYMOENT: AN INTERFERING PARENT

According to Northrop Frye, the theme of parental interference in youthful affairs is an essential part of "the formula transmitted [to Renaissance comedy] by the New Comedy pattern of Plautus and Terence."[9] Shakespeare, for example, employs this theme in at least three of his comedies. In The Two Gentleman of Verona, Sylvia refuses to obey her father's command that she marry Sir Thurio because she loves Valentine. A Midsummer Night's Dream opens with this theme, as Egeus tries to persuade Duke Theseus to support his wish that his daughter Hermia marry Demetrius instead of Lysander, whom she loves. Shylock's problems increase in The Merchant of Venice when his daughter Jessica ignores his warning to avoid Christians. The theme of parental interference also helped many romantic poets complicate their narrative plots. Towards the end of the Orlando Furioso, for example, Bradamante's parents, despite her protests, betroth her to Leo. Determined to marry Ruggiero, Bradamante refuses to obey her parents and eventually pleads her case successfully before Charlemagne, who agrees to her request that her husband should win her in a joust.[10] Though Spenser borrows much from Ariosto for his story of Britomart, he avoids the theme of parental interference as he traces her efforts to be united with Artegal. In

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[9] A Natural Perspective (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1965), p. 72.

[10] Ludovico Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, trans. William Stewart Rose, eds. Stewart A. Baker and A. Bartlett Giamatti (Indianapolis: The Bobs-Merrill Co., 1968), 44-45. All references to the Furioso are from this edition.

the story of Cymoent's relationship with her son Marinell, however, Spenser employs this theme for comic purposes. Cymoent's tale may represent the ultimate degree to which this theme could be developed, since she tries to prevent Marinell from falling in love with anyone.

Cymoent's error results from her efforts to tamper with Marinell's fate. Initially, however, Spenser pictures her as a mother whose only fear is that her son's martial skills might endanger him (3.4.24). Such maternal interest seems natural; yet she carries her concern too far when she asks Proteus to reveal Marinell's destiny and then attempts to prevent it. Interpreting Proteus's warning that a woman will harm Marinell to mean that he should avoid love, Cymoent successfully protects him until Britomart wounds him during their encounter on his treasure-laden shore (3.4.12-17). Since Spenser states that an individual cannot "auoyd his fate" and that it is only natural to fall in love (3.4.27, 26), the ridiculousness of her behavior becomes apparent immediately: her efforts to protect Marinell are futile. To ridicule her foolish behavior before she admits her error and effects the union between Marinell and Florimell, Spenser relies upon such devices as wry comments, contrast, dramatic irony and understatement.

The narrator's comments effectively introduce Cymoent's tale by indicating that Cymoent's attitude towards love is foolish and by suggesting that she has misinterpreted Proteus' prophecy. These comments obviously condition the reader's judgement of Cymoent's subsequent actions. In his initial statement the narrator indicates that her desire to protect Marinell from love constitutes an irrational

attitude. Since Proteus warned that an unknown virgin would harm or kill her son, Cymoent

> gaue him warning euery day,
> The loue of women not to entertaine;
> A lesson too too hard for liuing clay,
> From loue in course of nature to refraine.
> (3.4.26.1-4)

The narrator's wry comment in lines three and four indicates that Cymoent tries to upset the natural scheme of things when she warns Marinell to avoid love. As Spenser demonstrates throughout Books III and IV, especially in the story of Artegal and Britomart, proper love between man and woman is a natural and beneficial part of life.

In addition to suggesting that Cymoent's attitude is unreasonable, the narrator also implies that she has misinterpreted Proteus' prophecy. As her story progresses, it becomes apparent that Cymoent frequently considers only one side of an issue, as she does in this instance. According to Spenser's initial comment, the sea god does not explicitly state that Marinell will be harmed by feminine love. As the following passage indicates, Proteus' admonition can be interpreted in several ways. Proteus only advises Cymoent

> from womankind to keepe him well:
> For of a woman he should haue much ill,
> A virgin strange and stout him should dismay, or kill.
> (3.4.25.7-9)

Because Cymoent has apparently been conditioned by traditional views that essentially a woman can harm a man only through love, she considers only one possible interpretation of the prophecy. Since the reader knows that Britomart has earlier wounded Marinell (3.4.12-27), he

appreciates the gentle irony that characterizes the following passage:

> His mother bad him womens loue to hate,
> For she of womans force did feare no harme;
> So weening to haue arm'd him, she did quite disarme.
> (3.4.27.7-9)

This passage suggests that Fairyland's inhabitants must be prepared for any contingency, even a female warrior. More significantly, the narrator's initial comments focus upon Cymoent's excessive concern for her son's welfare, her myopia concerning the prophecy, and Spenser's mocking attitude towards her.

In the second part of Cymoent's comic tale, Spenser emphasizes her exaggerated response to Marinell's wound in several ways: by thwarting the reader's expectations, by using dramatic irony, and by contrasting Liagore's behavior with Cymoent's. Recognizing that Cymoent is overly concerned about Marinell's welfare, the reader expects her to aid her son when she learns about his wound; instead, she faints. When she finally recovers and rushes to her son, she still makes no effort to determine the extent of his injuries; again she faints, three times, and laments.[11] The reader obviously expects her to react differently. Because Spenser has stressed her excessive love for Marinell, her swoons and lament appear comically inappropriate.

Unwitting irony and dramatic irony characterize portions of her lament, for the reader is aware of incongruities in her statements. As

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[11]Allan H. Gilbert, "Spenserian Comedy," Tennessee Studies in Literature, 2 (1957), 104. Gilbert's brief annotation suggests the comic effect of this scene.

she addresses Marinell, whom she apparently believes to be dead, she utters an ironic question:

> O is this
> Th'immortall name, with which thee yet vnborne
> Thy Gransire Nereus promist to adorne?
> (3.4.36.3-5)

Several characters suggest that the determined bachelor's name is already famous in Fairyland. For instance, fair Florimell's dwarf, while informing Arthur about his lady's hasty flight from court, summarizes Marinell's history (3.5.3-11). In addition, since Marinell is the son of the mortal Dumarin, he can in one sense achieve an immortal name only if he has progeny. Cymoent has attempted to prevent that occurrence by warning him to shun women.

The objective reader, looking with amused detachment upon Cymoent's emotional turmoil, can appreciate the incongruous logic that characterizes her continued lament for Marinell's supposed death. After persistently insisting that Proteus' prophecy cautioned against feminine love, she views his wound and confidently declares: "Not this the worke of womans hand ywis, / That so deepe wound through these deare members driue" (3.5.37.3-4). Again she reveals that she has been conditioned by traditional views concerning masculine and feminine roles. According to her comment, only men can be stout warriors. Thus, dramatic irony characterizes this statement, since Britomart is responsible for Marinell's wound.

Spenser places Cymoent's exaggerated and somewhat illogical complaint in its proper perspective when Liagore, who has accompanied

the grieving mother, checks Marinell's pulse and determines that he lives (3.4.41). Such a realistic action emphasizes the comic incongruity of Cymoent's failure to determine whether her son lives and the inappropriateness of her lengthy, ill-timed complaint. In this episode Spenser has stressed the disparity between Cymoent's exaggerated behavior and the reader's expectations.

Cymoent's story becomes more complicated when Marinell falls in love with the imprisoned Florimell. Essentially, dramatic irony characterizes this portion of her story, since the reader knows that Marinell is merely suffering from love pangs and not from a festering wound as Cymoent believes. Recognizing with Spenser the absurdity of attempting "from loue in course of nature to refraine" (3.4.26.4), the reader continues to be amused by Cymoent's persistent efforts to hinder Marinell's normal development.

The scene in which Cymoent believes Marinell is declining physically reminds the reader of Belphoebe's ironically futile efforts to cure Timias' physical wound. Like Belphoebe, Cymoent is unaware that her patient is in love. After his failure to release Florimell from Proteus' dungeon during the marriage of the Thames to the Medway, Marinell in typical romance fashion suffers from love melancholia. Initially he is similar to Timias, for he does not inform his mother that he is in love. Like Belphoebe, Cymoent judges the situation by its appearance, believing that Marinell is still immune to the power of love. Again like Belphoebe, Cymoent employs every resource she knows to cure her son. Obviously, her subsequent attack upon Tryphon, whom she earlier consults

about Marinell's wound is absurd. As Marinell continues to decline, Cymoent

> Therefore to Tryphon . . . againe doth hast,
> And him doth chyde as false and fraudulent,
> That fayld the trust, which she in him had plast,
> To cure her sonne. (4.12.23.1-4)

The comedy of the situation increases, for Tryphon is unable to determine the reason for Marinell's decline; only the reader and Marinell are cognizant of the actual circumstances of the situation.

As Spenser reaches the climax of Cymoent's tale, he employs understatement in two instances in order to remind the reader about her irrational stance against love and in order to cap his ridiculing of her behavior. Not content with Tryphon's failure and unable to elicit any information from Marinell, Cymoent seeks advice from Apollo. If the reader remembers that Liagore, who earlier determines that Marinell lives, learned her healing arts from Apollo (3.4.41.2-3), he may anticipate that this god will reveal the actual cause of Marinell's decline. In this instance the reader's expectations are not thwarted, for Spenser records that Cymoent

> rested not so satisfide,
> But leauing watry gods, as booting nought,
> Vnto the shinie heauen in haste she hide,
> And thence Apollo King of Leaches brought.
> Apollo came; who soone as he had sought
> Through his disease, did by and by out find,
> That he did languish of some inward thought,
> The which afflicted his engrieued mind;
> Which loue he red to be, that leads each
> liuing kind. (4.12.25)

There is an obvious difference between this stanza and the five that precede it, which focus upon the emotional Cymoent. In the latter

stanzas Spenser portrays Cymoent's grief and confusion about Marinell's decline, her railings against Tryphon, and her vascillation between "faire speches" and "threatnings sterne" (4.12.24.9) in her relationship with Marinell. The Apollo stanza contrasts markedly with the others, for it is understated: the god arrives and renders his diagnosis. Furthermore, the narrator offers the moral in a somewhat offhand manner; he merely mentions that "loue . . . leads each liuing kind." Yet this reminder that love is a natural part of life comprises a significant part of Spenser's moral scheme. Clearly then Cymoent's efforts to protect Marinell from the normal pangs of love are amusingly irrational.

To cap Cymoent's comic tale, Spenser again employs understatement as this scene progresses from her efforts to interpret Proteus' prophecy in order to insure Marinell's safety to Marinell's announcement that he loves Florimell. Since the reader is aware that Marinell loves Florimell, he can only smile at Cymoent's second misinterpretation of the prophecy. Now recognizing that the warning cautions against mortal love, Cymoent optimistically concludes that he must love one of the nymphs attended the wedding of the Thames to the Medway; "for sure she weend it was some one of those, / Which he had lately seene, that for his loue he chose" (4.12.26.8-9). But the reader recognizes that life is not as clearly defined as Cymoent believes it is. Though her deduction that Marinell loves a nymph seems to be a logical one, Kathleen Williams, referring to the narrator's comments upon Proteus' prophecy (3.4.28), notes that "life is full of 'double sences,' ambiguities by which the purpose of life is worked out through us and, sometimes, despite

us."[12] According to Spenser's moral scheme, Cymoent is in a precarious position; for she is too confident that her view is valid. Obviously a disparity exists between Cymoent's beliefs and the reader's knowledge. Spenser wastes no words in ridiculing her erroneous idea that Marinell loves a nymph. Responding to his mother's generous offer that she will secure his beloved, Marinell bluntly informs his mother that he loves Florimell. Understatement characterizes Spenser's succinct report, "so he her told" (4.12.27.7). Spenser really does not need to say more because he has carefully established Cymoent's generally overly emotional response to anything that affects her son's welfare; thus, Spenser's use of understatement effectively caps Cymoent's futile efforts to govern her son's life.

At this point in her story, Cymoent could change or evolve into an unsympathetic character like Radigund, who allows her pride to destroy her. As Cymoent modifies her views about love, however, the reader's attitude changes from one of ridicule to one of gentle amusement. Essentially the comedy evolves from Cymoent's radical behavioral change. For the reader, who has witnessed Cymoent's persistent efforts to isolate Marinell from love, her abrupt change in attitude may be surprising.

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[12] Spenser's World of Glass (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966), pp. 80-81. Williams quotes the following passage:

> So ticle be the termes of mortall state
> And full of subtile sophismes, which doe play
> With double sences, and with false debate,
> T'approue the vnknowen purpose of eternall fate.

Cymoent's modification of her views about love represents one of the most complete and most rapid reversals recorded in these books. In four stanzas she evolves from an overconfident dominating mother into a humble petitioner (4.12.26-29). Cymoent has obviously modified her behavior, for Spenser only briefly mentions that she succumbs to her emotions when Marinell declares his love for Florimell. Previously he devotes several stanzas to her exaggerated responses. To the reader's amusement, she then categorically rejects the prophecy that has so long governed her attitude toward Marinell by deciding:

> It was no time to scan the prophecie
> Whether old Proteus true or false had sayd,
> That his decay should happen by a mayd.
> It's late in death of daunger to aduise,
> Or loue forbid him, that is life denayd.
> (4.12.28.3-7)

Further indications of her change occur when she acknowledges that it would be futile to complain to Proteus, since he has imprisoned Florimell, and when she humbly asks Neptune to effect Florimell's release.

Neptune's smiling response to Cymoent's request parallels the reader's reaction to her. After she humbles herself (4.12.29.5), Neptune grants her request by "softly smyling" (4.12.30.1). The reader is also prompted to respond to Cymoent in a similar manner, since he recognizes how profoundly she has changed. The charm of this scene increases when Neptune gives her a warrant, complete with "the Sea-gods seale autentica11" (4.12.32.2), to deliver to Proteus. Such a device obviously indicates that Cymoent now recognizes the rightness of love

in the natural scheme of things, for she hastens to deliver this legal document in order to secure Florimell for Marinell.

As her story terminates, Cymoent once more can be labeled an interfering parent, since she takes full credit for obtaining Florimell for her son. She is no longer obstructing the course of true love, however, because she is "right ioyous" that Florimell will wed her son. Her penchant for interfering in Marinell's life can now be considered a positive trait. In a reversal of her earlier attempts at governing Marinell's life, Cymoent now is enabling him to develop normally. Spenser's comic treatment of Cymoent has focused upon the disparity between her belief that she can isolate Marinell from love and the reader's persistent awareness that her attempts are futile. When she accepts Florimell as Marinell's future wife, she becomes reconciled to Spenser's theme that married love is a beneficial and a necessary part of life.

II. ROMANTIC LOVERS

According to E. C. Pettet, Shakespeare frequently uses "the theme of faithful love subjected to some grievous and abnormal strain." Furthermore, as he traces in his comedies the love stories of such characters as Silvia and Valentine or Rosalind and Orlando, Shakespeare utilizes numerous romance conventions: love at first sight, separations, reunions, and usually marriage between the young lovers.[13] In the tales

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[13] Shakespeare and the Romance Tradition, pp. 24, 78.

of Scudamore and Britomart and Artegal, Spenser does not follow completely the conventional romance pattern as outlined by Pettet. Scudamore, for example, is already married to Amoret when the reader first encounters him in Book III, though, of course, his account of his earlier adventures at the Temple of Venus (4.10) reflect many romance conventions. In addition, the destined marriage between Britomart and Artegal does not take place in the books that Spenser completed. Yet Scudamore's and Britomart's stories often exemplify the theme of strained love. Scudamore foolishly believes Ate's lies that the supposedly male Britomart has seduced Amoret. Britomart occasionally becomes impatient when her quest for Artegal is not progressing as rapidly as she desires. Like Scudamore, she behaves foolishly when she becomes jealous of Radigund. Even Artegal, the symbol of Justice, thwarts the course of true love when he succumbs to Radigund's beauty. In such instances Spenser chastizes these characters' unwarranted behavior because they do not uphold the romantic and chivalric codes that the reader expects them to champion.

In general Spenser's treatment of Scudamore, Britomart, Artegal, and Timias, whose story will be discussed in the third section of this chapter, exemplifies Sidney's conception of "delightful comedy." To clarify his significant point that comedies should comprise both laughter and delight, Sidney cites, as an example, Ovid's feminine-garbed Hercules. According to Sidney, such a situation representing "so strange a power in love, procureth delight . . . [while] the

scornefulnes of the action stirreth laughter."[14] Considering this episode, the reader recognizes an incongruous situation. Hercules' affection for Omphale reveals his humanity, with which the reader can sympathize.[15] Simultaneously, however, the reader is cognizant that a hero like Hercules should not be in such a degrading situation. In a similar manner, Spenser's reader sympathizes with Scudamore's and Britomart's love pangs, with Artegal's human reaction to Radigund's beauty, and with Timias' love for Belphoebe. Yet at the same time the reader realizes that these characters are acting in inappropriate ways. Because he has been primed to view such characters as exemplary figures, he must reconcile his initial perceptions of them with their occasional deviations from the golden mean. Thus, the disparity that exists between the reader's expectations and their occasional errors is given comic treatment.[16]

In order to ridicule such violations of Fairyland's social code, Spenser utilizes such traditional comic devices as character commentary, the disguised heroine motif, and unflattering similes. In his treatment of Scudamore, Britomart, and Timias, Spenser frequently relies also upon a structure of contrasts. As a particular scene develops, the

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[14] The Apologie for Poetrie, p. 200.

[15] M. C. Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), p. 32.

[16] Donald Cheney's discussion of Redcrosse's dual identity in Book I suggested the general approach for this discussion of the romantic lovers; see his Spenser's Image of Nature (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), Chapter I, "Plowman and Knight: The Hero's Dual Identity," pp. 18-74.

reader becomes aware that one individual's behavior is being juxtaposed with another's, as in the initial meeting between Scudamore and Britomart before Busyrane's castle. At other times Spenser's use of contrast is not so obvious. For instance, he will introduce a scene by applying a positive epithet to the character. As the scene progresses, the reader is cognizant that a disparity exists between the positive epithet and the character's foolish behavior. Spenser especially utilizes this type of contrast as he ridicules Scudamore's jealousy of Britomart and Britomart's jealousy of Radigund.

Spenser employs these comic devices to guide his reader's responses to Scudamore, Britomart, and Artegal. In tracing Scudamore's tale, Spenser focuses upon this knight's development as a romantic lover. His comic treatment of Britomart stresses her maturation as well as the aspects that make her a sympathetic character, an individual whom the reader finds charming. Artegal's misadventure in Radegone essentially consists of situational comedy, for his justified punishment places him in a humiliating position.

Scudamore

In the 1590 version of his poem, Spenser reunited Amoret and Scudamore at the end of Book III; however, in his revision of Book III, published in 1596, Spenser does not effect their reunion and subjects them to further trials. According to the revised version, it seems that before Scudamore can be reunited with his wife he must recognize that he erred during his courtship. Throughout Scudamore's story, Spenser

employs such comic devices as character commentary, contrasts, the disguised heroine motif, with its obvious dramatic irony, and unflattering similes to ridicule Scudamore's misconceptions about love. Frequently Spenser reminds his reader that an ironic disparity exists between the knightly Scudamore and the love-lorn Scudamore. Yet, by the time that Scudamore relates his courtship adventures to Britomart and her companions (4.10), the knight admits that he erred; thus, in the tradition of many comic characters, he learns something new about himself.[17]

Spenser utilizes contrast to focus upon Scudamore's incongruous behavior during his initial meeting with Britomart (3.11.7-27) by juxtaposing Scudamore's discourtesy with Britomart's chivalry. Spenser constructs this scene so that an unchivalric attitude of Scudamore is immediately put in its proper perspective with a chivalric attitude of Britomart. For instance, when Scudamore becomes impatient, Britomart promptly reminds him that a knight must learn patience. This structural pattern continues in general until the end of the scene. Such a design is significant because it is the primary method by which the reader slowly becomes aware that Spenser utilizes Britomart's attitudes and actions to prompt his negative response to Scudamore.

Spenser prepares the reader for the incongruity of Scudamore's behavior with his first description of his forlorn knight. The term knight usually summons images of an individual who is armed and prepared

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[17]See Frye, pp. 78ff., for a discussion of this tradition and Shakespeare's relationship to it.

to combat his foes. When he first appears in the poem, Scudamore is the antithesis of this traditional image of a knight, for he is unarmed, has removed his armor, has "rudely throwne" away his shield upon which Cupid is painted, and is groveling on the ground (3.11.7-8). According to B. E. C. Davis, Scudamore "forfeits his manhood by forswearing arms."[18] Furthermore, Scudamore forfeits his role as a romantic lover when he abandons his shield, which proclaims that he is Cupid's man. It is ironic then that Britomart, who the reader knows is a female, is the agent who attempts to remind Scudamore of the verities—such as patience, courage, and loyalty—that one would expect a male knight to champion. Essentially the comedy in this scene evolves from the reader's growing comparison of Britomart with Scudamore. When Scudamore contemplates abandoning his vigil for Amoret, Britomart reminds him that he must learn patience. For example, after hearing his three-stanza love complaint (3.11.9-11), she courteously calls him a "gentle knight" before remarking that his "griefe / Well seemes t'exceede the powre of patience" (3.11.14.1-2). In its context the epithet "gentle" seems ironic, since it appears after Scudamore's impassioned lament and immediately before her reminder that one needs patience to withstand the vicissitudes of life.

Spenser's most significant use of ironic contrast to criticize Scudamore's behavior occurs when the knight decides to die after Britomart momentarily hesitates to challenge the flames that surround

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[18] Edmund Spenser (Cambridge: The Univ. Press, 1933), p. 119.

Busyrane's castle. Scudamore's pronouncement constitutes an absurdly melodramatic gesture. When Britomart chides him for his apparent cowardice, she places his despairing statement in its proper perspective by indicating that it is an exaggerated response:

> for shamefull thing
> It were t'abandon noble cheuisaunce,
> For shew of perill, without venturing
> Rather let try extremitie of chaunce,
> Then enterprised prayse for dread to disauaunce.
> (3.11.24.5-9)

In this episode Spenser implies that Scudamore's melodramatic gesture is effeminate. Yet it is the feminine Britomart who not only helps him rearm (3.11.20), thus providing him with superficial evidence of his manhood, but who also exemplifies the chivalric behavior traditionally associated with male knights.

By the time that Scudamore encounters the "goodly crew" of Paridell, Blandamour, Ate, and Duessa, he is emotionally wrought so that he easily believes Ate's lies that the supposedly male Britomart has seduced Amoret. Obvious dramatic irony operates in this scene, since the reader is aware that Britomart is a woman. In this instance Scudamore is made to appear absurd because he too readily believes Ate's lies. Though he defends Amoret's honor when Ate generalizes about Amoret's supposed love for Britomart, he immediately believes Ate when she states that many individuals can support her claim. As he did in his courtship of Amoret when he accepted the opinion of "men of worth" that women enjoy a bold lover (4.10.53), he readily believes Ate's hearsay. Since the reader knows that Ate is lying, he scorns Scudamore's faith in her testimony.

According to Charles W. Lemmi, Scudamore's subsequent jealousy of Britomart indicates that he is very human; yet his acceptance of Ate's scandalous lies does "little honor to humanity."[19]

In the episode at the House of Care, Spenser again utilizes ironic contrast to ridicule Scudamore's jealousy by employing the epithet "Sir Scudamore" to emphasize the disparity between the knight and the lover and by focusing upon Scudamore's futile attempts to fall asleep. After he fails to elicit any response from Care and his helpers about their work, Scudamore decides to rest. This scene's comedy develops when Spenser parenthetically notes that, like a knight, Scudamore decides to sleep on the floor:

> in his armour layd him downe to rest:
> To rest he layd him downe vpon the flore,
> (Whylome for ventrous Knights the bedding best)
> And thought his wearie limbs to haue redrest.
> (4.5.39.2-5)

An obvious disparity characterizes this passage: Scudamore thinks that he can rest; however, the reader recognizes that the turmoil he suffers prevents his doing so. In this instance Scudamore is not one of Spenser's "ventrous Knights" embarked upon a chivalric quest. Since all his thoughts are inner directed, he has embarked upon a psychological quest in which he denies the virtues associated with love and loyalty.

As this scene progresses, the reader can only smile at Scudamore's persistent, yet absurd efforts to fall asleep. Spenser again establishes the contrast between the knightly Scudamore and the depressed Scudamore

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[19] Variorum IV, 329.

by repeating the epithet "sir" as the unhappy man fails to sleep. As in the earlier passage, the comedy is produced by the disparity between Scudamore's expectations and the reader's awareness that this knight is too emotionally wrought to benefit from the healing effects of sleep. Spenser records that "there lay Sir Scudamore long while expecting, / When gentle sleep his heauie eyes would close." Yet he does not deserve to profit from "gentle sleep," since he obviously cannot relax: "oft in wrath he thence vprose; / And oft in wrath he layd him downe again" (4.5.40.1-2; 5-6). At this point Scudamore is in danger of evolving into a youthful Malbecco. Spenser suggests that this transformation is imminent as he terminates this knight's soujourn at the House of Care by sketching the dehumanizing effects that jealousy can have upon an individual. When Scudamore arises the next morning, he is a tired, disgruntled man. Inserting an unflattering simile, Spenser ridicules his jealousy by indicating that it has destroyed his humanity. Scudamore prepares to leave the House of Care, feeling "like a heauie lumpe of lead" (4.5.45.6). This simile emphasizes the ridiculousness of Scudamore's total insensitivity.

Scudamore's reconciliation with societal norms comprises two phases. First his doubts about Amoret's fidelity are resolved when Artegal reveals Britomart's sexual identity during their final fight (4.6.20-24). More significant is Scudamore's admission that he has erred; thus, he is similar to many comic characters who learn something new about themselves at the end of a poem or play.[20] In this portion of his story, the

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[20]Frye, p. 78.

reader is amused as Scudamore ruefully admits to Britomart and Arthur his errors in courtship at the Temple of Venus (4.10). In addition the reader is amused by the young man's natural confusion about how to court a woman. Yet because the abstraction Womanhood objects to Scudamore's bold courtship of Amoret, the reader agrees with Scudamore that he erred in his adventure at the Temple of Venus.

Beginning his story, Scudamore suggests that his audience may also learn from his experience: "then hearke ye gentle knights and Ladies free, / My hard mishap, that ye may learne to shone" (4.10.3.6-7). Since Britomart is apparently the only female present, Spenser may be including his reader when he uses the plural word ladies. As Scudamore ruefully admits to his audience, he initially believed during his courtship of Amoret that women enjoy a bold lover.[21] Recounting his reaction to hearing about Amoret, he notes, "I boldly thought (so young mens thoughts are bold) / That this same braue emprize for me did rest" (4.10.4.6-7). Although he states that Venus's approval of his behavior encouraged his action, it is significant that both Amoret, who has been reared to be the perfect wife, and Womanhood, who guards Amoret, protest his bold approach. Womanhood's dismay suggests that women in general dislike the attitude that Scudamore symbolizes. Though Spenser indicates that Scudamore is too bold during his courtship, the mature reader probably only smiles at his confusion about how to woo Amoret, since he

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[21]This discussion of Scudamore's courtship is based upon A. K. Hieatt, Chaucer[,] Spenser[,] Milton (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 103-13; Hieatt, however, does not recognize that Scudamore's story embodies comic themes and devices.

probably has experienced similar feelings. On one hand he relates that he believed that he would be commiting sacrilege if he removed Amoret from the Temple; yet, on the other hand, he felt that it would be foolish not to win her. His decision to act was finally based upon what he had heard others say about the art of courtship:

> shaking off all doubt and shamefast feare,
> Which Ladies loue I heard had neuer wonne
> Mongst men of worth, I to her stepped neare,
> And by the lilly hand her labour'd vp to reare.
> (4.10.53.6-9)

It is obvious that Scudamore's story concerns the comic incongruity that develops when an individual bases his conduct upon traditional values which, according to Spenser, violate the code of romantic love. Spenser indicates that Scudamore's behavior is anti-romantic because it is characterized by rashness instead of humility. Impetuosity is not a characteristic of a temperate knight; therefore, Scudamore is an easy victim of his emotions as his conduct before Busyrane's castle and his jealousy of Britomart indicate. Yet there is a marked difference between the emotional, distraught knight at Busyrane's castle and the knight who recites the trials of his courtship. His comments about his hardships and his statement about his initial boldness, given in retrospect, imply that Scudamore has erred. In the traditional comic sense, Scudamore reveals that he has learned something about himself.

Britomart and Artegal

The story of Britomart's efforts to be united with Artegal constitutes one of the most delightfully comic stories in The Faerie

Queene. Because they are engaged in individual quests for honor, they are often parted. During these separations Britomart frequently and Artegal occasionally deviate from the golden mean and behave in amusingly foolish ways.

To ridicule these violations of Fairyland's social code, Spenser relies upon traditional comic devices, for as Britomart's search for Artegal progresses and when Artegal falls prey to Radigund's beauty, it becomes apparent that disparities exist between the reader's expectations and their foolish behavior. Spenser employs such devices as dramatic irony, character commentary, contrast, and an unflattering simile to ridicule Britomart's immature behavior as well as to chart her development as a complete human being. Throughout his story Artegal most often is presented as the allegorical representation of Justice, but during his misadventure in Radegone, he clearly violates the reader's expectations. Artegal's misadventure with Radigund results in his comical humiliation when she forces him to don feminine attire.

Since Britomart is maturing during her quest, she occasionally makes mistakes simply because she is a young girl in love. Spenser does not permit such instances to pass without gently and subtly chastizing her foolish behavior. One such instance follows the trite lament that precedes her fight with Marinell. In order to appreciate the comedy of this scene, one needs to recall Britomart's mental state as she reaches Marinell's treasure-laden shore. After her misadventure at Malecasta's Castle Joyous, she and Redcrosse travel together for a brief time. Once she learns that her companion knows Artegal, Britomart asks him for

information about her beloved. When they part, Britomart is emotionally wrought. Ironically, the immature girl feels that she will find relief by continuing to muse about Artegal. Quite naturally, and comically, she becomes even more upset:

> With such selfe-pleasing thoughts her wound she fed,
> And thought so to beguile her grieuous smart,
> But so her smart was much more grieuous bredd,
> And the deepe wound more deepe engord her hart,
> That nought but death her dolour mote depart.
> (3.4.6.1-9)

Comparing this passage with Scudamore's desire to die before Busyrane's castle (3.11.19), the reader probably does not take Britomart's despair as seriously as he does Scudamore's, since he recognizes that, unlike Scudamore, Britomart is only beginning her quest for Artegal. But Britomart's human belief that thinking about Artegal will help her disappoints her expectations.

Still upset when she and Glauce arrive at Marinell's coast, Britomart utters a lengthy complaint about the difficulty of her quest. Spenser employs this lament and Glauce's comment upon it to ridicule gently his heroine's impatience. J. S. Weld believes that her lament can be interpreted as a plea for divine guidance.[22] Yet the images that appear in it suggest another, more plausible meaning. According to Rosemary Freeman, Britomart's complaint "creates little emotional effect because it depends too obviously upon well-worn analogies," those involving a ship being tossed about by a tempestous sea.[23] Britomart's

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[22]"The Complaint of Britomart: "Wordplay and Symbolism," PMLA, 66 (1951), 548-51.

[23]"The Faerie Queene" (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1970), pp. 194-95.

reaction is clearly excessive, since her "selfe-pleasing thoughts" result in a trite lament. Glauce further suggests that her behavior is foolish by reminding the reader as well as Britomart of Merlin's prophecy that insures her eventual reunion with Artegal:

> old Glauce gan with sharpe repriefe,
> Her to restraine, and giue her good reliefe
> Through hope of those, which Merlin had her told.
> (3.4.11.4-6)

Glauce's "sharpe repriefe" effectively places Britomart's lament in its proper perspective. Britomart's nurse represents common sense in this instance. Her reminder that Britomart will ultimately be united with Artegal reveals that beneath Britomart's doughty armored appearance there often exists an impatient young girl. Thus, when her behavior occasionally becomes excessive, Spenser chastizes this fault with satiric touches. By adopting a generally comic attitude towards her, Spenser creates his most sympathetic character in these books, a character with whom the reader can easily identify.

Like Scudamore, Britomart falls victim to jealousy during her long separation from Artegal (5.6). In general Spenser ridicules her jealousy of Radigund by employing the same devices that he employs to chastize Scudamore's absurd jealousy of Britomart. Since the reader knows that Artegal has not broken his vows to Britomart, he recognizes the foolishness of her subsequent jealous fears. As he does in the House of Care episode, Spenser employs ironic contrast by reminding the reader that Britomart is noble, then focusing upon her jealousy, and finally capping the scene with the squalling babe simile.

Introducing Britomart in this scene (5.6), her initial appearance in Book V, Spenser calls her "the noble Britomart." The term noble refers to her ancestry and to her future ascension to the throne. At the same time it also suggests her virtuous character. The following scene, however, in which she suspects Artegal's fidelity, divests her of her exemplary nature. As this episode reveals, she has not learned to be patient.[24] In this instance the reader may remember her soothing words to the despairing Scudamore and her advice that he should be patient. In that episode Britomart is the champion of virtuous behavior, but this scene presents a very immature girl who has forgotten that though Merlin reveals that she will marry Artegal he also suggests that her quest will not be an easy one.

As he opens this scene, Spenser employs dramatic irony to prepare his reader to scorn Britomart's behavior with his reminder that Artegal has not been unfaithful. Though usually exemplifying Spenser's theme that love inspires one to seek honor, she contemplates beginning a new quest in which she ironically envisions that she will discover Artegal among "errant knights" or "amongst loose ladies" (5.6.6.6,8). Though Radigund can be classified as a wanton lady, the reader knows that Artegal is her prisoner, not her lover, as Britomart apparently suspects.

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[24]Numerous critics have commented upon Britomart's maturation. For example, Harry Berger, Jr., "The Discarding of Malbecco," Studies in Philology, 66 (1969), 140, n. 3, feels that she learns when she should or should not resort to arms. Maurice Evans, Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1970), p. 166, suggests that Britomart matures sexually during her quest.

While recognizing how absurd her fears are, the reader also appreciates the delicate humor with which Spenser renders this scene, especially as he describes Britomart's futile method of attempting to make their separation seem shorter than it actually is:

> And then, her griefe with errour to beguyle,
> She fayn'd to count the time againe anew,
> As if before she had not counted trew.
> For houres but dayes; for weeks that passed were,
> She told but moneths, to make them seeme more few:
> Yet when she reckned them, still drawing neare,
> Each hour did seeme a moneth, and euery moneth a yeare.
> (5.6.5.3-9)

In effect Britomart only increases her unhappy state of mind.

The comedy of this scene increases when Britomart exhibits faulty reasoning by refusing to allow Talus to give her a full report about Artegal. Permitting him to report only that Artegal has been captured by a woman, she concludes that Artegal is unfaithful. When Talus arrives, the rash Britomart does not wait for him to enter the room before demanding news about Artegal:

> Euen in the dore him meeting, she begun;
> And where is he thy Lord, and how far hence?
> Declare at once; and hath he lost or wun?
> (5.6.9.1-3)

This passage suggests the comic Shakespearian scene in which Juliet awaits news about her marriage to Romeo. When her breathless Nurse arrives, the eager Juliet addresses her in a manner reminiscent of Britomart's: "O God, she comes! O honey nurse, what news? / Hast thou met with him?"[25] Like Britomart, Juliet really does not give her Nurse

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[25] The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, ed. George Lyman Kittredge (Boston, Ginn and Co., 1940), II.5.18-19.

the opportunity to answer her queries. Finally, though, the Nurse is able to report that Juliet will wed Romeo that afternoon in Friar Laurence's cell. Britomart, however, never affords Talus the opportunity to discuss Artegal's plight. In fact he is able to report only that a "tyrannesse" has captured Artegal. Believing that her worst fears have been realized, Britomart foolishly demands that the "bad newes-man" cease talking. Instead of representing the allegorical personification of Chastity, Britomart becomes a very immature girl, who condemns Artegal without any evidence. Permitting her emotions to guide her, Britomart informs Talus:

> badly doest thou hide
> Thy maisters shame, in harlots bondage tide.
> The rest my selfe too readily can spell.
> (5.6.11.4-6)

The final line of this quotation essentially summarizes her problem; the "noble Britomart" is too eager to believe the worse; thus, she continues to wallow in her emotions. Clearly, she is not practising "vertuous and gentle discipline"; so the reader cannot fully sympathize with her.

Based upon Bradamante's jealousy of Marfisa (OF 32.10-49), this episode constitutes one of Spenser's more obvious Ariostean borrowings. Like Britomart, Bradamante becomes distraught at being separated from Ruggiero. After she learns from a Gascon knight that Marfisa, an Indian queen, loves Ruggiero, Bradamante loses control of herself and, unlike Britomart, melodramatically determines to commit suicide. Eventually, however, both girls recover sufficiently so that they can avenge the emotional wrong that they have suffered.

Ariosto has long been noted for the irony that pervades his Orlando Furioso. One of his more humorous touches occurs when he makes his final comment about Bradamante's lament. Immediately after learning that Marfisa has imprisoned Ruggiero, the enraged girl returns to her chamber and

> Turned on her face, her body on the bed,
> Armed as she is, the grieving damsel throws,
> And that the sad lament by sorrow bred,
> May be unheard of by any, bites the clothes.
> (32.36.1-4)

As her complaint intensifies, Bradamante decides to commit suicide. Ariosto brilliantly demonstrates how absurd her behavior is when he notes,

> Resolved to die, 'twas so the damsel cried;
> And starting from her bed, by passion warmed,
> To her left breast her naked sword applied;
> Then recollected she was wholly armed.
> (44.1-4)

Twelve stanzas have elapsed since Ariosto informs his audience that Bradamante jumps onto her bed in full armor. His reader, then, is probably more jolted than is Bradamante, as he immediately recognizes the hilarious incongruity that exists in this passage.

Spenser's final comment upon his "noble Britomart" is not so obviously comic as is Ariosto's. In fact, if one does not grasp the significance of the epithet "noble Britomart" at the beginning of her tale, he may miss the subtle comedy of this scene. Furthermore, he will probably be irritated or confused, as so many Spenserian critics have been, by the squalling babe figure that constitutes Spenser's final comment upon her behavior. Yet a careful review of this episode

reveals that the ironic discripancy that exists between the epithet "noble Britomart" and her subsequent behavior effectively leads to this final image. Like her Italian predecessor, Britomart retires to her chamber and again laments her unhappy state, though she is not fully armed. Like Ariosto, Spenser prepares his reader for the climax of his comic scene. Spenser effectively leads into the squalling babe simile in the stanza that precedes it. Worn out from her exertions,

> A while she walkt, and chauft; a while she threw
> Her selfe uppon her bed, and did lament:
> Yet did she not lament with loude alew,
> As women wont, but with deepe sighes, and singulfs few.
> (5.6.13.6-9)

Instead of releasing her emotions with womanly shrieks, Britomart in this instance suffers internally. Eventually, however, she does give vent to her emotions, but in that instance Spenser pictures her indulging in a temper tantrum.[26]

In order to emphasize the absurdity of her later behavior, Spenser fully develops his squalling babe figure:

> Like as a wayward childe, whose sounder sleepe
> Is broken with some fearfull dreames affright,
> With froward will doth set him selfe to weepe;
> Ne can be stild for all his nurses might,
> But kicks, and squals, and shriekes for fell despight:
> Now scratching her, and her loose locks misusing;
> Now seeking darkenesse, and now the light;
> Then crauing sucke, and then the sucke refusing.
> Such was this Ladies fit, in her loues fond accusing.
> (5.6.14)

Spenser's epic simile effectively captures the torments that a jealous individual suffers, but the babe simile stresses Britomart's immaturity.

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[26]Graham Hough, A Preface to "The Faerie Queene" (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1962), p. 114.

Furthermore, in the final line of this stanza, he emphatically states that her suspicion is absurd. Finally, his use of the term lady reminds one of the genteel behavior that chivalric individuals practise; ironically, Britomart's irrational behavior is, of course, neither genteel nor gentle. In this instance Britomart suggests the Hercules whom Sir Philip Sidney describes in his Apology as he discusses the "delightful teaching" of comedy. Britomart's love for Artegal makes her a sympathetic character; yet the reader's sympathy for her is modified, since he recognizes that her unwarranted jealousy makes her an absurd figure. Since he is describing his "noble Britomart," who knows that she is destined to marry Artegal, Spenser is making ridiculous her foolishly immature behavior.

Just as Britomart's doubts about Artegal's fidelity momentarily hinder the course of true love, Artegal's succumbing to Radigund's beauty also upsets the natural balance of Fairyland's values and places Artegal in a comic situation that involves his humiliating, but justified punishment. Essentially the comedy of this episode involves Artegal's unexpected behavior as far as the reader is concerned. Before encountering Radigund, Artegal meets Sir Terpin, who informs him about Radigund's perverse behavior. Learning about her disgraceful treatment of her male prisoners, Artegal vows, "I will not rest, till I her might doe trie, / And venge the shame, that she to Knights doth show" (5.4.34.3-4). This is the type of comment that one expects from Spenser's symbol of Justice. Yet, as Judith Anderson notes, Artegal "falls into a human context, a

human condition" when he succumbs to Radigund's beauty.[27] Her use of the verb fall suggests that Artegal clearly deviates from what the reader expects of him. Thus, the disparity between Artegal's allegorical identification and his unexpected human frailty accounts for much of the comedy in this episode.

Artegal deserves his punishment because he makes a serious mistake when he fails to destroy Radigund. Like many of Spenser's sympathetic characters, he erroneously believes that beauty is a virtue in itself. When, therefore, he falls victim to Radigund's charms, he loses his allegorical meaning and becomes a comically humanized individual whose error results from his failure to mete out justice. Artegal does intend to destroy Radigund when he gains the advantage during their second battle; however, when he loosens her helmet and views her beauty,

> his cruell minded hart
> Empierced was with pittifull regard,
> That his sharpe sword he threw from him apart,
> Cursing his hand that had that visage mard:
> Ne hand so cruell, nor no hart so hard,
> But ruth of beautie will it mollifie.
> (6.6.13.1-6)

Though the final two lines of this passage contain a truism, they do not really apply to Artegal's circumstance. He has ample evidence of her true nature. First there are Sir Terpin's comments about her perverse nature. More significantly, Artegal receives first hand evidence of her unfeminine behavior during their final struggle: she rages, she

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[27]"'Nor Man it Is,'" PMLA, 85 (1970), 69. Anderson further notes that Artegal also reacts similarly during his encounters with Britomart.

boasts, she is spiteful (5.5.7-10). As with Malecasta, Duessa, and snowy Florimell, Radigund's beauty belies her inner nature. But like so many of Spenser's male characters, Artegal falls victim to her appearance and forgets her actual behavior. Spenser attempts to modify Artegal's subsequent humiliation by paradoxically noting that "so was he ouercome, not ouercome, / But to her yeelded of his owne accord." Yet immediately he indicates that Artegal has consciously erred: "yet was he iustly damned by the doome / Of his owne mouth" (5.5.17.1-4).

As many critics have noted, Artegal's degrading punishment is similar to the womanly-garbed Hercules' humiliating situation; however, they do not recognize that essentially Artegal's punishment is comical. When Radigund clothes him in feminine attire and makes him spin cloth, she obviously strips him of his manhood. Since he has lost the external sign of masculinity, his arms, by which he metes out justice, Artegal is unable to control his situation. His predicament is similar to Hercules' humiliation. Discussing comedy in his Apology for Poetry, Sidney suggests how one should ultimately respond to Artegal, though, of course, he does not mention Spenser's poem. Sidney believes that Omphale's punishment of Hercules exemplifies the proper traits of comedy: delight and laughter. Hercules' affection for Omphale makes him a delightful figure; yet Hercules in feminine attire is an absurd figure.[28] Though Artegal does not love Radigund, Sidney's comments apply to him. Because of his erroneous yet human appreciation of

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[28]In his dissertation, "The Comedy of The Faerie Queene," p. 116, Wade notes the Hercules' parallel and its satiric purpose.

Radigund's beauty, Artegal is a somewhat delightful figure. But Artegal in female attire is an absurd figure.

Britomart obviously assumes the allegorical trappings of justice which Artegal has forfeited when she finally defeats Radigund and restores masculine rule to Radegone. Though her actions and comments guide the reader's response to Artegal, Paul Alpers suggests that Spenser does not relate this scene very effectively, since Britomart's actions do not correspond with her inner thoughts. For instance, she reproaches Artegal when she desires to comfort him. Alpers further suggests that Spenser stretches the reader's sense of credibility when Britomart is 'reuiu'd' after Artegal sheds his womanly garb and when Artegal does not reveal that Radigund has shamed him. Alpers' interesting comments do not consider, however, the lightness of tone with which Britomart is frequently treated, though elsewhere he claims that she is a fine comic character in most of Book III.[29]

Britomart feels rightly that Artegal has betrayed her. In this episode it is principally her human nature, not her allegorical meaning, that is most apparent. Though she desires to pity him, she has to reconcile the image of Artegal in the magic mirror with the reality of Artegal in feminine attire. In general, Britomart has tended to idealize her destined mate. According to T. K. Dunseath, she is especially "led by the vision of his natural beauty."[30] Like Artegal,

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[29]The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 302-3; Chapter 11.

[30]Spenser's Allegory of Justice in Book Five (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968), p. 166.

she apparently thinks that natural beauty is always a sign of a virtuous soul. Thus, when she encounters the reality of a human Artegal, she is momentarily angry. To the reader's amusement, she half-heartedly chides him by demanding, "what May-game hath misfortune made of you? / Where is that dreadfull manly looke?" (5.7.40.2-3). Reviewing Artegal's history, the reader probably agrees with Britomart's assessment of his degrading situation; for Artegal's conscious acceptance of Radigund's punishment has made him "a travesty of a man."[31] Somewhat paradoxically the reader also recognizes that Artegal needs to reveal his humanity in order to learn that justice must be tempered with the appropriate sort of mercy and not be governed by the pity that characterizes his reaction to Radigund's beauty.

The comic story of Artegal and Britomart terminates on a happy note, for after her brief teasing remark, Britomart restores his masculine attire. Yet she is not merely interested in being reunited with her destined mate, since she also restores masculine rule to Radegone. Thus, since her action represents "true iustice," Britomart can enjoy her reconciliation with Artegal in a setting that reflects a normal societal pattern. In general the portions of the story of Britomart and Artegal discussed in this section have focused upon the incongruity that occasionally develops between the reader's expectations and their unwarranted behavior. Britomart is frequently ridiculed because she overreacts to her love pangs; Artegal is scorned for his erroneous pity

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[31]Elizabeth Bieman, "Britomart in Book V of The Faerie Queene," University of Toronto Quarterly, 37 (1970), 172.

for Radigund. Since he consistently presents these characters as exemplary figures, the reader has to be aware that frequently Spenser utilizes comic devices to point out Britomart's and Artegal's occasional deviations from the norms of Fairyland.

The stories of the romantic lovers, Scudamore, Britomart, and, to some extent, Artegal reflect basic patterns of Elizabethan comedy. Because of errors in judgement, they occasionally and unnecessarily complicate their lives. To ridicule their deviations from the golden mean, Spenser employs such traditional comic devices as character commentary, contrast, and unflattering similes. Perhaps his favorite comic device is the use of irony, especially dramatic irony. In order to prompt his reader's response to these individuals' errors, Spenser provides sufficient information to indicate that they have erred, as he does, for example when he traces Scudamore's jealousy of Britomart. Because he employs dramatic irony to such an extent, the reader is always cognizant of how he should respond to their very human, but foolish errors of jealousy, unwarranted pity, or impatience. Yet, after periods of confusion, which are initiated by their errors, they are reconciled with Fairyland's norms.

III. IDEAL LOVERS

On the allegorical level, Timias' relationship with Belphoebe symbolizes man's commitment to the ideal. In order to understand Spenser's ultimately wry criticism of this type of commitment, one needs to consider especially the comic structure of this story. Though

Spenser employs such romantic conventions as love at first sight, the disdainful lady, and melancholia, which characterize the lovers discussed in the second section of this study, it becomes apparent that, unlike Scudamore or Britomart, Timias does not become reconciled with the societal norms of Fairyland. Once Timias falls in love with Belphoebe, he does not undertake the honorable deeds that characterize the romantic lover. According to Kathleen Williams, "Belphoebe's pursuit of honour, though successful for herself, does not result in honour for those more ordinary people" whom she encounters.[32] In this tale Spenser focuses upon Timias' movement away from Fairyland's societal norms. But simultaneously he constructs the story of the relationship between Belphoebe and Timias so that it contains the traditional happy ending of a comedy. Since Spenser consistently reminds his reader that Timias is a squire, an ironic disparity exists between the reader's expectations and Timias' behavior, a disparity which ultimately modifies the reader's appreciation of the happy reconciliation between Timias and Belphoebe.

At the beginning of their relationship, gentle irony characterizes the scene in which Belphoebe tries to cure the wound that Timias received during his battle with the lustful forester (3.5.17-26). The narrator describes Belphoebe's ministrations as "foolish" and "vnfruitfull paine" (3.5.42.1). Such terms are appropriate to this comic situation, since the more she tends his wound, the more Timias' love for her increases. As Paul J. Alpers notes, this result constitutes the

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[32] Spenser's World of Glass, p. 102.

essential "irony of the episode."[33] The narrator's final comment about Belphoebe's care, "madnesse to saue a part, and lose the whole" (3.5.43.3), also contributes to the irony of this scene, for the reader is aware that Belphoebe's allegorical meaning of cloistered Chastity prevents the fulfillment of Timias' desires.

As this gently comic scene progresses, Belphoebe becomes confused when Timias begins to decline physically as his love for his nurse increases. Being aware of the true reason for Timias' decline, the reader smiles at Belphoebe's perplexity. Since she represents cloistered Chastity, Belphoebe obviously is unaware of her patient's very human feelings for her. Though she becomes confused when Timias begins to decline, she persists in her ministrations; she "no paines did spare / To do him ease, or do him remedy" (3.5.50.1-2). These lines, of course, are ironic. By utilizing every resource to cure Timias' physical wound, Belphoebe only succeeds in intensifying his emotional suffering. Though this is a gently ironic scene, it also pinpoints one of Timias' dominant characteristics: his excessively emotional response to Belphoebe. Comparing him to Scudamore, who is first presented lying despairingly upon the ground, the reader is aware of a profound difference between the two. As his story progresses, Scudamore literally and figuratively raises himself from the ground by becoming reconciled to chivalric tenets, whereas Timias' story charts a reverse movement.

It is pathetically ironic that Timias' one example of chivalric behavior during his relationship with Belphoebe, his rescue of Amoret,

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[33] The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene," p. 32.

results in his further decline and movement away from Fairyland's norms. While pursuing Lust, who employs Amoret as a shield, Timias accidentally wounds her. After killing the abomination Lust and seeking Timias, Belphoebe discovers the squire kissing away Amoret's tears and tending her wounds.[34] Belphoebe's angry reaction to this sight results from a mere "sodaine glauncing eye" (4.7.36.1). Though textual evidence does not support her apparent conclusion that she has witnessed a passionate scene, Belphoebe's perspective dominates this scene. One would expect a knight or squire to succor fair ladies, as Timias does; yet his physical contact, his kissing her, modifies the chivalric nature of his act. Belphoebe obviously does not probe the reality of this situation, since she hastily departs.

From the moment she departs, Timias declines both physically and morally and succumbs to an excessive melancholia, thus completing his movement away from the "gentle discipline" that Spenser teaches. First he forsakes Amoret and Aemylia, whom Arthur later discovers in desperate straits; thus, he clearly violates the chivalric and romantic code, since he is not championing Spenser's theme that love inspires one to seek honor.[35] Next he unmans himself by destroying his arms, by musing

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[34]Janet Spens, Spenser's Faerie Queene (New York: Russell & Russell, 1934), p. 34, n. 1, feels that Spenser should effect a recognition scene between the twins, Amoret and Belphoebe; but Spenser obviously cannot employ this set of twins in the traditional romance manner, since they represent diametrically opposed ways of life.

[35]As E. C. Pettet notes, p. 18, the lover reveals that he is worthy "of his Lady's regard by undertaking . . . hazardous quests and missions on behalf of distressed ladies, the weak and the oppressed."

about "his hard mishap," and by wasting "his wretched daies in wofull plight" (4.7.39.7-8). The most obvious example of his unchivalrous behavior occurs when he fails to recognize his lord, Prince Arthur, when they later meet. Though one cannot laugh at Timias as he might at Cymoent, for example, the reader is aware of the incongruity of Timias' behavior and his exaggerated response to Belphoebe's rebuff. Commenting upon Timias' behavior, Allan H. Gilbert suggests that "the Squire lapses into a slothful sentimentality that simulates light love."[36]

Spenser concludes his wry criticism of Timias by contrasting his happy reunion with reminders that Timias is a squire. He is reunited with Belphoebe in one of the most romantic and unrealistic reconciliations in these books. Through the aid of a love-lorn dove, Belphoebe eventually encounters the desperate Timias, and her essentially compassionate nature prompts her reconciliation with him (4.8.17). Yet Spenser provides sufficient clues to indicate that Timias has not learned "vertuous and gentle discipline." The reader may desire to participate in Timias' happiness, but he is also cognizant that Spenser has supplied sufficient hints that damper his enthusiasm. For example, terminating his description of Timias' suffering, Spenser mentions Timias' vocation by addressing him as "this gentle Squire" (4.8.1.2). Obviously this epithet is ironic, since Timias' despair is profound and since it causes him to deny chivalric tenets. After he has been reunited with Belphoebe, the squire enjoys his happiness "all mindlesse

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[36]"Belphoebe's Misdeeming of Timias," PMLA, 62 (1947), 633.

of his owne deare Lord" (4.8.18.4). Literally this line signifies that Timias is not thinking about Prince Arthur. Figuratively, however, it suggests an important truth. Timias' excessive response to Belphoebe results in his total sacrifice to her; thus he abandons his quest for honor. Further support for this conclusion occurs when Spenser resumes the story of Amoret and Aemylia, whom Timias earlier deserts, immediately after he mentions that the squire has forgotten Arthur. When Arthur discovers them, Aemylia is starving and Amoret is dying of her wounds (4.8.19). Thus, the story of Timias' relationship does not actually terminate with the traditional happy ending of a romance; it concludes with Spenser's reminder of Timias' initial discourteous act after Belphoebe's rebuff.

Spenser's wry criticism of Timias' behavior is subtle; for clearly he, like Belphoebe, is a sympathetic character. But the reader cannot deny that Spenser contrasts the effects of Timias' love for Belphoebe with his consistent reminders that he is a squire. This ironic tale focuses, therefore, upon Timias' failure to be reconciled to the romantic and chivalric norms of Fairyland. In general Spenser's treatment of Timias seems similar to Ariosto's portrayal of Orlando's passion for Angelica. According to Rudolph Gottfried, Orlando's passion, which evolves into insanity, exemplifies pathetic irony, since the reader's desire to sympathize with Orlando is modified by his awareness that his obsession makes him an absurd figure.[37] In assessing Timias'

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[37]"Introduction," Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso": Selections from the Translation of Sir John Harington (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1963), p. 17. Gottfried's explanation of pathetic irony suggests that it is similar to Sidney's view of delightful comedy.

relationship with Belphoebe, Spenser's reader experiences similar feelings.[38]

The stories discussed in this chapter reveal that Spenser utilizes traditional comic characters: the interfering parent and young lovers. Furthermore, these stories can be considered comedies in the traditional sense of the word, since they reflect a basic comedic pattern: complication, confusion, and reconciliation. Within this framework or structure, Spenser employs various comic devices—unflattering similes, character commentary, contrast, dramatic irony, irony—to point out incongruous behavior, to guide the reader's response to the characters, and to ridicule their errors. Invariably Spenser satirizes a character's deviation from the golden mean, the societal norms that govern Fairyland. According to Spenser, a chaste individual must be moderate.[39] Yet, as the respective stories of Cymoent, Britomart, Artegal, and Timias indicate, these individuals must learn to be temperate by purging themselves of misconceptions about love and social relationships. With the notable exception of Timias, these individuals are eventually reconciled to the societal norms of Fairyland. By ridiculing the occasional errors that these characters make, Spenser delights and, more significantly, instructs his reader.

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[38]Timias is reunited with Arthur in Book VI; however, he is not completely devoted to his Prince, for he is still suffering from love melancholy (6.5.24).

[39]William Fenn DeMoss, Variorum III, 320.

CHAPTER IV

SPENSER'S COMEDY OF FRUSTRATION

Unlike the basically sympathetic characters discussed in Chapter III, the unsympathetic individuals involved in Spenser's comedy of frustration—Malecasta, Radigund, Braggadocchio, Malbecco, and Paridell—never learn or never acknowledged the "vertuous and gentle discipline" that Spenser teaches. In Aristotle's words, they are "characters of a lower type,"[1] and as such they are held up to consistent, stinging ridicule. They remain static characters, always to be viewed as allegorical representations of their respective vices. Because they do not evidence any spiritual growth as Spenser traces their stories, these characters frustrate the healing or reconciling power of comedy. The stories of the unsympathetic characters do not contain any elements of romantic comedies that characterize the tales of Britomart and Scudamore; instead they seem to anticipate the satiric comedies developed by Marston and Jonson. According to Oscar J. Campbell, "two kinds of denouement had become conventional in the comical satires of Jonson and

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[1] Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts, trans. S. H. Butcher, with an introd. essay by John Gasser, 4th ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1951), p. 21. Discussing the comedies of the unknown Willy in his Teares of the Muses, c. 1580, Spenser echoes Aristotle's view, noting that the comic dramatist scorns "the boldnes of such base-borne men, / Which dare their follies forth so rashlie throwe": The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, C. G. Osgood, F. M. Padelford et al. (1932-1949; rpt. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), The Minor Poems, II, 6, 219-20. All references are to this edition and will be incorporated in the text.

Marston. The characters chosen as butts of ridicule were either purged and reformed, or scornfully ejected from the comedy."[2] Since these individuals cannot or will not conform to Fairyland's norms, society rejects them.

In contrast to the surprise which is sometimes provoked by the satiric representation of sympathetic characters deviating from the mean, Spenser usually prepares his reader to respond negatively to his unsympathetic individuals as soon as they appear in the poem. Britomart, for instance, criticizes Malecasta's discourtesy before entering Castle Joyous. As he discusses Radigund with Sir Terpin, Artegal vows to avenge Terpin's humiliation. Artegal, of course, fails to keep his promise; however, the reader has been primed to scorn Radigund. When Braggadocchio makes his first appearance in Book II,[3] the narrator bluntly labels the coward a "losell." Conversing with Sir Satyrane and the Squire of Dames, Paridell not only justifiably condemns Malbecco's unnatural marriage to Hellenore, but he also reveals much about his own disloyal nature.

Having prompted his reader to respond negatively to these individuals, Spenser utilizes such traditional comic devices as dramatic irony which is inherent in the disguised heroine motif, ironic epithets, unflattering similes, derisive animal images, contrast, parody quests,

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[2] Shakespeare's Satire (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963), p. 117.

[3] To understand fully Spenser's ridicule of Braggadocchio, one needs to consider his entire story, which commences in Book II and terminates in Book V.

icons of deceit, and ludicrous quarrels to further his satiric treatment of his unsympathetic characters. As this chapter will indicate, Spenser employs these comic devices to emphasize that Malecasta, Radigund, Braggadocchio, Malbecco, and Paridell cannot become functioning members of Fairyland's society.

I. UNSYMPATHETIC WOMEN

Spenser's satiric treatment of the lustful Malecasta and the proud Radigund stresses their unfeminine behavior. It is significant that Britomart, who represents Spenser's mean in these books, subsequently rejects Malecasta and destroys Radigund.

Malecasta

Spenser employs dramatic irony to construct the comic situation that develops at Castle Joyous by employing a popular comic motif: a woman's courtship of a disguised woman. The reader is cognizant that throughout this situation Spenser is ridiculing Malecasta's excessive lust. In this episode, Britomart performs two functions: not only is she an innocent agent of deception, but she is also the touchstone by which the reader judges Malecasta.

Britomart is responsible for the comic situation that develops at Castle Joyous, simply because she does not reveal that she is a woman. After indicating that she raises only her face-guard, Spenser comments upon her beauty and martial powers:

> She was full of amiable grace,
> And manly terrour mixd therewithall,
> That as the one stird vp affections bace,
> So th' other did mens rash affections apall,
> And hold them back, that would in errour fall.
> (3.1.46.1-5)

This is a just assessment of Britomart's effect upon men, as Spenser indicates in line four. Yet since Britomart will inspire Malecasta's lust, not a man's, this passage seems comically incongruous in its context; for Spenser places it shortly after she has raised only her face-guard and immediately before Malecasta becomes attracted to her.

Obvious dramatic irony characterizes the ensuing courtship scene, since the reader is aware of Britomart's identity. Though Britomart's martial skills enable her to avoid male seduction attempts, in this instance she has only revealed that she is a warrior, not that she is a woman. The lustful Malecasta, who views what she believes is a man, naturally determines to seduce her guest:

> Whom when the Lady saw so faire a wight,
> All ignoraunt of her contrary sex,
> (For she he weend a fresh and lusty knight)
> She greatly gan enamoured to wex,
> And with vaine thoughts her falsed fancy vex.
> (3.1.47.1-5)

An obvious irony characterizes the final line of this passage. Because she is trying to seduce a woman, Malecasta is indulging in "vain thoughts." Her eventual impassioned courtship is absurd; yet simultaneously it indicates the depth of her perverse nature.

In addition to being an innocent agent of deception because of her disguise, Britomart also deludes herself about Malecasta's nature. Before entering the castle, she informs Malecasta's crew that "ne to

your Lady will I seruice done" (3.1.28.4). Yet after making peace with them, she agrees to their request that she "enter in, and reape the dew reward" (3.1.30.8) of becoming their mistress' servant. Britomart seems unsure about how to conduct herself in this situation.

Britomart, however, has ample visual evidence of the lustful nature that characterizes Malecasta's court. For example, when she and Redcrosse initially view the sensual conduct of Malecasta's guests, they react in a similar manner:

> Which when those knights beheld, with scornefull eye,
> They sdeigned such lasciuious disport
> And loath'd the loose demeanure of that wanton sort.
> (3.1.40.7-9)

Furthermore, Malecasta makes her intentions quite clear during the initial phase of her courtship:

> Still did she roue at her with crafty glaunce
> Of her false eyes, that at her hart did ayme,
> And told her meaning in her countenaunce;
> But Britomart dissembled it with ignoraunce.
> (3.1.50.6-9)

Spenser's use of the word dissembled suggests that his heroine is quite aware of Malecasta's desires.

In this scene, the reader witnesses the comic disparity between Spenser's "brave Mayd," who delivers a speech advising against "maistry" in love, and a very young girl whose conduct encourages Malecasta's efforts to master her. Thus, when Britomart ignores Malecasta's overtures, she apparently is trying to be a model guest in a situation that does not warrant such courtesy. Though Spenser finally records that she does not appreciate Malecasta's courtship, Britomart does not

inform her hostess of her feelings. Superficially remaining a courteous guest,

> she would not in discourteise wise,
> Scorne the faire offer of good will profest,
> Or rudely sdeigne a gentle harts request;
> But with faire countenaunce, as beseemed best,
> Her entertaynd; nath'lesse she inly deemed
> Her loue too light, to wooe a wandring guest.
> (3.1.45.1-7)

Obviously, in this instance, most of Spenser's comments cannot be taken seriously, since Malecasta symbolizes lust and since she has been anything but gentle in her courtship of her guest. Perhaps the reader expects this champion of chastity to respond to Malecasta somewhat as Shakespeare's Rosalind does to Phebe's impending avowals of love when Rosalind attempts to thwart Phebe's foolish desires by bluntly declaring,

> I pray you do not fall in love with me,
> For I am falser than vows made in wine.
> Besides, I like you not.[4]

Because Britomart misinterprets the type of love that Malecasta represents and because she is too courteous, this scene moves to its logical comic denouement: Malecasta's attempted seduction of the sleeping Britomart. As the Lady of Delight begins her hopeful journey, Spenser incorporates an obvious satirical touch when he clothes her in a scarlet cloak. Because she is innocent and believes she has no cares,[5] Britomart can sleep soundly. Ironically, however, the reader,

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[4] As You Like It, ed. George Lyman Kittredge (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1939), III.5.72-74.

[5] Paul J. Alpers, The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 378-79.

who at this point is wiser than Britomart, recognizes that she is not safe from the lustful Malecasta. Spenser delays the expected comic ending of this story by devoting one and a half stanzas to Malecasta's careful determination that her victim is asleep. To the reader's amusement, however, Britomart wakes up just when Malecasta feels most secure. From this point the story descends to farce as Spenser describes Britomart in her smock, looking like an avenging angel, Malecasta lying on the floor in a faint, and her confused six champions plus Redcrosse rushing in "halfe armed and halfe vnarmed" (3.4.63.3). But these fast-moving farcical moments are brief, for as soon as Malecasta recovers from her swoon, Gardante avenges the insult to his mistress by wounding Britomart; but Britomart, aided by Redcrosse, quickly routs the six champions.

As this tale ends, it appears that Spenser has temporarily stripped Britomart and Redcrosse of their respective allegorical meanings of Chastity and Holiness; instead he presents two outraged and somewhat confused young people who hastily depart Castle Joyous. Their departure, however, indicates that they have rejected the type of incontinent life that Malecasta symbolizes. Since they leave hastily, Malecasta is not punished or destroyed; thus she is able to snare other unwary knights. Despite their failure to punish the Lady of Delight, Britomart and Redcrosse do reject her in the traditional comic sense.

Radigund

Like Malecasta, Radigund represents a behavioral extreme. Her self-destructive attitude began with her courtship of Bellodant. After

wooing "him by all the waise she could" (5.4.30.4), Radigund seeks vengeance against all knights when Bellodant rejects her advances. Not only did she upset the natural order when she courted him, but she also, according to Jane Aptekar, violated "the theologically and legally orthodox view that women must be subservient to men."[6] In some ways Radigund could be compared to Britomart and Belphoebe, who both exhibit masculine strength; however, Kathleen Williams notes that she is radically different from them as "the perverse exaggeration of a psychological function is close to yet very different from the same function in its healthy state."[7] The perverse nature of Spenser's Amazon has been noted also by K. W. Gransden, who calls Radigund "a parodic perversion of . . . Britomart,"[8] and by Paul J. Alpers, who describes Radigund's behavior as "the perversion of a woman's natural endowment."[9]

Spenser's satiric depiction of Radigund's extreme behavior involves the themes of delusion and deception, for her pride prevents her from admitting that her dominance over men is unnatural. In addition, her "trusty" maid, Clarinda, deceives her mistress when she also falls in

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[6] Icons of Justice (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969), p. 99. Britomart, of course, also violates this view; however, her restoration of masculine rule in Radegone symbolizes her ultimate acceptance of it.

[7] Spenser's World of Glass (Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1966), p. 170.

[8] "Allegory and Personality in Spenser's Heroes," Essays in Criticism, 20 (1970), 308.

[9] The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene," p. 128.

love with the imprisoned Artegal. Since Radigund deserves to be deceived, Clarinda functions as a minor figure of poetic justice in this episode. It is Britomart, however, who is responsible for restoring the natural order in Radegone. Spenser satirizes Radigund's unfeminine behavior by focusing upon the disparity within her nature between the love-lorn lady and the proud Amazon. He further ridicules her perverse behavior by comparing her to a bear and to predatory birds. The comic pattern of Radigund's tale is broken, of course, at the end when she is beheaded by Britomart. Even though Britomart's action results in the restoration of social order, comedies traditionally do not portray deaths.

Throughout the story of his Amazon, Spenser focuses upon her dual nature. As Maurice Evans notes, Spenser "flippantly" indicates her unnatural behavior as she and Artegal prepare for their final battle. While describing Artegal's attire "'as best was seeming for a knight,'" Spenser notes that Radigund's was "'as best it likt her selfe to dight'" (5.5.1.8-9).[10] What Radigund likes is distinctly feminine garb: ribbons trailing from an embroidered silk camis and a bejeweled belt. Like some women, Radigund enjoys making a grand entrance. Accompanied by maidens playing music, the Amazon moves to the battle field "with stately port and proud magnificence" (5.5.4.2). Such a situation is comically incongruous, since the reader knows that her feminine attire clothes a woman who has repressed her natural attributes.

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[10] Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1970), p. 203.

Spenser further satirizes her irrational and perverse nature by utilizing animal images to describe her actions and emotions. After, for example, Radigund recovers from one of Artegal's blows, she counterattacks "like a greedie Beare" (5.5.9.7). Occasionally Spenser likens her to a predatory bird. In introducing their initial battle, he portrays Artegal as an eagle rescuing prey from Radigund, a goshawk:

> Like to an Eagle in his kingly pride,
> Soaring through his wide Empire of the aire,
> To weather his brode sailes, by chaunce hath spide,
> A Goshauke, which hath seized for her share
> Vppon some fowle, that should her feast prepare;
> With dreadfull force he flies at her byliue,
> That with his souce, which none enduren dare,
> Her from the quarrey he away doth driue,
> And from her griping pounce the greedy prey doth riue.
> (5.4.42)

Spenser echoes the latter image during their second fight the next day. When Radigund gains the advantage after her beauty stuns Artegal, Spenser parallels her unchivalrous continuance of the joust to a "foolish Kyte" attacking a wounded falcon (5.5.15). These derisive images further stress Radigund's perverse behavior.

Radigund's tale contains two comic complications: first she falls in love with her captive; then Clarinda does. Again Spenser emphasizes Radigund's failure to acknowledge that it is natural for women to be courted by men. Desiring to control the situation, the proud Radigund tells Clarinda to "win [Artegal] any way, / Without discouerie of [her] thoughts pretence" (5.5.33.6-7). The reader can only laugh at Radigund in this instance, since he recognizes that she has assigned Clarinda an absurdly impossible task and has introduced a comic complication into

her life because she is too proud to admit to Artegal that she loves him.

Spenser employs dramatic irony and contrast to satirize Radigund's further efforts to win Artegal. Since the reader knows that "trusty" Clarinda is deceiving her mistress by attempting to win Artegal for herself, he is aware that Radigund's efforts are futile. Simultaneously he also recognizes how comically appropriate Clarinda's deception is. Because she is a victim of unrequited love, Radigund humiliates and emasculates her male prisoners by forcing them to don feminine attire and to spin cloth. But in this instance the situation is reversed: the "trusty" Clarinda humiliates her trusting mistress.

Spenser continues to ridicule Radigund's behavior by contrasting her early natural feelings about Artegal with her subsequent determination to dominate her captive. When she first falls in love with Artegal, Radigund seems similar to Britomart in her initial love pangs. In the traditional romance manner, both girls blush and suffer internally. Yet, unlike Britomart, Radigund is not prepared to relinquish her dominance over Artegal. As her story progresses, she becomes increasingly irrational when she fails to win Artegal's affections. Romantic writers frequently picture love as a battle between two individuals. Towards the end of her story, Radigund mouths such traditional phrases when she asks Clarinda about the success of her matchmaking. Talking with the disloyal maid, who hints that Artegal is refusing her mistress' offer of love, Radigund vows to continue her campaign to win him, declaring

thenceforth not like a louer,
But like a rebell stout I will him vse.
For I resolue this siege not to giue ouer,
Till I the conquest of my will recouer.
(5.5.51.2-5)

Unlike the typical romance lover who employs military images figuratively to describe love, Radigund literally believes that love involves a battle of wills. These lines emphasize the ironic disparity between the blushing feminine Radigund who falls in love with Artegal (5.5.29-34) and the unsympathetic Amazon who determines to wage war against Artegal.

During Britomart's subsequent battle with Radigund, Spenser satirizes his Amazon by comparing her to his champion of Chastity. The battle between these females is necessarily brutal, since on the allegorical level it symbolizes a contest between two types of love: the masterful relationship that Radigund advocates and the just relationship that Britomart champions. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, Radigund's story ceases to be a comedy when Britomart beheads her; yet Spenser does lighten the grisly nature of the decapitation scene by focusing upon Britomart's very human response to her rival.

Britomart's behavior contrasts markedly with Radigund's attitudes during their joust. Though Spenser remarks that Britomart has trouble sleeping the night before their encounter because she is still jealous of Radigund (5.7.26.3-5), she is much more rational than her opponent. Somewhat comically Radigund proposes that if she defeats her female opponent, Britomart must don the feminine attire that her male prisoners wear. Quite naturally Britomart does not waste words discussing such

an outlandish proposal; she merely "sternly frown[s] / For high disdaine of such indignity" (5.7.28.5-6) and signals that their joust should commence. Furthermore, Radigund is proud, spiteful, and irrational during this climactic fight. Thinking that she has gained the advantage, the Amazon taunts her opponent:

> At last proud Radigund with fell despight,
> Hauing by chance espide aduantage neare,
> Let driue at her with all her dreadfull might,
> And thus vpbrayding said; This token beare
> Vnto the man, whom thou doest loue so deare;
> And tell him for his sake thy life thou gauest.
> (6.7.32.1-6)

Though Britomart would be willing to die for Artegal, Radigund's scorn and subsequent brutal thrust spur her to kill the Amazon.

At this point, of course, Radigund's story ceases to be comic; however, Spenser lessens the tension of this scene by listing Britomart's motives for destroying her rival; she is angry because of Artegal's plight, because of Radigund's taunt, and even because of her painful wound. Unlike the Amazon, who would probably rant and rave, she avenges her wrongs immediately. Wasting no time,

> the wrothfull Britonesse
> Stayd not, till she came to her selfe againe,
> But in reuenge both of her loues distresse,
> And her late vile reproch, though vaunted vaine,
> And also of her wound, which sore did paine,
> She with one stroke both head and helmet cleft.
> (5.7.34.1-6)

This emphasis upon Britomart's human response to Radigund does not detract from the allegorical significance of this episode, for although the reader is slightly amused by Britomart's motives for revenge, he is always aware of the opposing views of love which Britomart and Radigund represent.

In his satiric treatment of Radigund, Spenser focuses upon her unfeminine behavior. Because she was disappointed in love, Radigund attempts to master all the men she subsequently encounters by humiliating them. Though she falls in love with Artegal, she cannot overcome her pride because of her obsessively vengeful nature. Since Spenser suggests that Radigund has retained some feminine traits when he initially pictures her emotional attraction to Artegal, the reader must scorn her, having recognized that at that moment Radigund could have changed her attitudes.

II. SPENSER'S USE OF THE PARODY QUEST

Like the unsympathetic characters discussed in the preceding section, Braggadocchio and Malbecco are so dominated by their respective vices that they are either ostracized or destroyed because they never acknowledge the "vertuous and gentle discipline" that constitutes the societal norm of Fairyland. In a general sense they can be labeled static characters, since their essential natures never change. Sketching their respective journeys through Fairyland, Spenser satirizes their discourteous behavior by utilizing such comic devices as unflattering similes and ironic epithets. Quite often he relies upon animal imagery to ridicule their unchivalrous behavior.

These parody quests also achieve point and meaning through their structures. In a brief remark, Paul J. Alpers suggests that Malbecco's journey parodies those of Spenser's sympathetic characters.[11] In a more

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[11] The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene," p. 131.

detailed study of Braggadocchio's parody quest, James V. Holleran advises that though the coward acquires all the external trappings of a knight—arms, a horse, and a lady—he never develops the moral attributes that characterize a genuine knight.[12]

These parody quests can also be examined according to their structures. Discussing the pattern of the sympathetic characters' quests, John Hankins notes that Spenser invariably structures them in the following manner: his ideal characters represent various types of virtues, undergo tests that reveal their respective virtues, inhabit a "place of perfection," and experience a final test. For instance, the chaste Britomart is tested at Malecasta's and Busyrane's castles, is perfected at the Temple of Isis, and undergoes her final test during her fight with Radigund.[13] Braggadocchio's and Malbecco's quests can be investigated similarly. During their initial tests, they reveal their respective vices. Instead of inhabiting a "place of perfection," they encounter a place of imperfection: Braggadocchio during the tournament for Florimell's girdle; Malbecco during his misadventure at the Satyrs' bower. Then they experience a final test which leads to their destruction or ostracism.

Since he is not concerned with identifying a pattern of comedy in The Faerie Queene, Hankins does not suggest that after they are perfected

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[12]"Spenser's Braggadochio," in Studies in Renaissance Literature, ed. Waldo F. McNeir (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 20-39.

[13]Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 44.

the sympathetic characters are reconciled to the societal norms of Fairyland. But Scudamore's and Britomart's respective quests do reveal this comic pattern. The parody quests of Braggadocchio and Malbecco chart a reverse movement. Because they frustrate the reconciling power of comedy, Spenser's coward and cuckold cannot become functioning members of Fairyland's society.

Braggadocchio

Throughout his quest the vain Braggadocchio reveals that he is a coward and a thief.[14] The mock knight's parody quest involves three phases. In his encounters with Trompart, Belphoebe, Malbecco, and the hellish crew lead by Paridell, which parody various aspects of the virtuous characters' quests, he reveals his characteristic vices of cowardice and vanity. During the tournament for Florimell's girdle, Braggadocchio perfects his vice of cowardice. Depicting Braggadocchio's final test, which occurs during the celebration of fair Florimell's nuptials, Spenser focuses upon the mock hero's thievery, vanity, and pusillanimity. Though Braggadocchio has a brief moment of triumph at this celebration, Artegal soon ostracizes him because of his discourteous and unchivalric behavior. Within the framework of the three part parody quest, Spenser occasionally ridicules the coward by employing positive epithets or similes which contrast with his behavior or attitudes. More

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[14]John L. Lievsay suggests that the character of the braggart as developed by Theophastrus, Aesop, Plautus, and Terence influenced Spenser's depiction of Braggadocchio; see "Braggadocchio: Spenser's Legacy to the Character-Writers," Modern Language Quarterly, 2 (1941), 475-85.

often Spenser satirizes Braggadocchio by using avian imagery: the peacock, the kestrel, the capon.[15]

Almost as soon as he introduces Braggadocchio in Book II, Spenser likens him to a peacock. Like this bird, the mock knight frequently "vaunts" himself. Discussing Spenser's use of avian imagery, Thomas P. Harrison notes that the poet employs Bartholomew Anglicus' encyclopedia "only occasionally."[16] Yet Bartholomew's description of the peacock may have been in Spenser's mind when he created Braggadocchio. After rendering a brief physical description of the bird, Bartholomew notes that the peacock

> wondereth of the fairness of his feathers, and areareth them up as [if] it were a circle about his head . . . . And as one saith, he hath the voice of a fiend, head of a serpent, pace of a thief. For he hath an terrible voice.[17]

Since this treatise was well known not only in England but also on the Continent,[18] the educated Elizabethan probably would have associated

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[15]At least two critics have commented upon Spenser's use of avian imagery to satirize Braggadocchio. Throughout his discussion of the braggart's parody quest, Holleran refers to the peacock, capon, and kestrel images; see especially pp. 23, 31, 33. In many instances, Holleran does not grasp the full significance of an avian image, especially Spenser's consistent use of the peacock and its relation to the bestiaries. Madeleine P. Cosman, "Spenser's Ark of Animals: Animal Imagery in the Faery Queene," Studies in English Literature, 3 (1963), 95-96, merely lists the important avian images and quotes the "fearful hen" passage and suggests that they effectively ridicule Braggadocchio.

[16]They Tell of Birds (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1965), p. 65.

[17]Medieval Lore from Bartholomew Anglicus, trans. Robert Steel, with a preface by William Morris (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966), p. 132.

[18]Charles E. Raven, English Naturalists from Neckam to Ray (Cambridge: The Univ. Press, 1947), p. 13.

Braggadocchio with these traits. The braggart, for example, begins his career by stealing Guyon's horse and spear. He has a "terrible voice," which enables him to frighten some of his victims. The external signs of knighthood—the horse, the arms, his lady—that Braggadocchio obtains are analogous to the peacock's tail feathers.

During his initial appearance in the poem, which constitutes his first test, the mock hero exemplifies many of the peacock's traits. After stealing Guyon's horse and spear, Braggadocchio prepares for his first adventure when he sights Trompart. As Braggadocchio begins to attack Trompart, Spenser introduces the peacock simile. Approaching Trompart "auaunting in great brauery, / As Peacock, that his painted plumes doth prancke" (2.3.6.3-4), the mock knight succeeds in frightening the unsuspecting man. But Braggadocchio's bold approach is, of course, absurdly comic, since Trompart poses no threat to him; he is merely "sitting idly on a sunny banck" (2.3.6.2).

As this comic scene progresses, Spenser introduces Braggadocchio's thunderous voice, which seems analogous to the peacock's fiendish cry. "With a big thundring voyce" (2.3.7.3), he continues to frighten Trompart. According to W. B. C. Watkins, Spenser may be burlesquing "his own heroic vein" in this instance, for Braggadocchio and Trompart are merely "loud-mouthed" in the ensuing discussion.[19] Instead of witnessing an honorable joust between two knights, the reader views a shouting match. Assuming a belligerent tone, Braggadocchio humiliates Trompart:

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[19] Shakespeare & Spenser (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1950), p. 296.

> Vile caytiue, vassall of dread and despayre,
> Unworthie of the commune breathed ayre,
> Why liuest, thou, dead dog, a lenger day,
> And doest not unto death thy selfe prepayre?
> (2.3.7.4-7)

Though the reader is not fooled by this champion of "dread and despayre," the startled Trompart quickly swears allegiance to the mock knight, hoping to preserve his life: "Hold, O deare lord, hold your dead-doing hand! / Then loud he cryde, I am your humble thrall" (2.3.8.1-2). Braggadocchio caps his threats of death and wrath with an offer of mercy for the fearful Trompart, saying, "I giue thee life." But unlike Spenser's honorable knights, Braggadocchio humiliates Trompart further by demanding: "kisse my stirrup; that thy homage bee" (2.3.8.5-6). Such an order emphasizes the mock knight's discourteous behavior, since the true knight metes out punishments that suit a villain's crimes. Trompart obviously has done nothing to merit Braggadocchio's bombastic threats. Though he soon reveals that he recognizes the coward's base nature and becomes his willing partner, Trompart is only an innocent victim of the mock knight's bravado in this instance.

Describing his second test, his encounter with Belphoebe, Spenser again ridicules Braggadocchio's cowardice, vanity, and dishonor. When he and Trompart hear Belphoebe approaching, the coward takes refuge beneath a bush. Once Trompart convinces the huntress that his liege lord is not the wounded beast that she seeks, Braggadocchio makes his appearance. In order to ridicule his cowardice, Spenser likens his appearance to a fearful but vain female bird. Recognizing that she is safe, the "fearfull fowle"

> Peepes forth, and soone renews her natiue pride;
> She gins her feathers fowle disfigured
> Prowdly to prune, and sett on euery side;
> So shakes off shame, ne thinks how erst she did her hide.
> (2.3.36.6-9)

Spenser's image of the fearful hen is an appropriate satiric touch, since Braggadocchio's failure to stand his ground strips him of his masculinity. Yet when he sees the lovely Belphoebe, the coward begins "to vaunt" himself as if he were a peacock preening himself before a prospective mate. Immediately, however, Spenser again satirizes his behavior by focusing upon his cowardice. Seeing that the beautiful huntress is armed, Braggadocchio "soone into other fitts . . . was transmewed" (2.3.37.4).

This scene reaches its comic climax after Belphoebe delivers her speech on honor. Before she speaks, Braggadocchio expresses his desire to participate in the secular pleasures that he believes characterize a court. After indicating that his desire is a foolish one, Belphoebe defines a true knight:

> But who his limbs with labours, and his mind
> Behaues with cares, cannot so easy mis.
> Abroad in armes, at home in studious kind
> Who seekes with painful toile, shall honor find.
> (2.3.40.6-9)

This discourse, obviously, has no positive effect upon the mock knight. Inspired rather by her beauty and the melody of her voice, he tries to embrace Belphoebe. Just as he earlier begins his career by purloining Guyon's spear and horse, he figuratively tries to steal Belphoebe's honor when he attempts to seduce her.

Belphoebe is the only virtuous character whom Braggadocchio encounters during his initial tests. In describing the coward's further tests in Book III, Spenser continues to emphasize the peacock's traits of a fiendish voice and a vain nature. In addition, Braggadocchio becomes involved in a series of comic adventures that stress, literally or figuratively, the theft image that Spenser associates with him. Not only does Spenser stress these traits as he depicts Braggadocchio's third test in which he wins false Florimell from the witch's son, but he also ridicules him by comparing him to a capon. Coming upon the witch's son, who is dallying with snowy Florimell, the "proud Braggadocchio" triumphs over the churl as he earlier vanquishes Trompart. Pointing his "bloudie speare" at his unsuspecting victim, Braggadocchio declares, "villein . . . this Ladie is my deare, / Dy, if thou it gainesay: I will away her beare" (3.8.12.5-9). In effect, the mock hero merely wins his lady by stealing her from the witch's son. Poetic justice is served, however, for the "proud man himself" loses his lady almost as soon as he wins her. Commenting upon Braggadocchio's reaction to the sight of Sir Ferrau's furious approach, Spenser notes that it "did nigh affray/ That Capons courage" (3.8.15.5-6). According to Spenser's moral scheme, Braggadocchio is a capon, since he denies the chivalric virtues that determine an individual's manhood. But, like a castrated rooster, he can still strut and crow. Before assaulting Sir Ferrau verbally, the coward adopts a grim mien in order to comfort snowy Florimell. Then, assuming a pseudo-heroic stance, Braggadocchio ironically accuses Sir Ferrau of the same action that he has previously

committed against the churl, "saying, Thou foolish knight! that weenst with words / To steal away that I with blowes have wonne" (3.8.7.1-2). Though he apparently accepts his opponent's challenge, the mock hero turns his horse and quits the field. Spenser's final wry comment upon this episode stresses Braggadocchio's ignoble action:

> But Braggadocchio with his bloudie launce
> Once hauing turnd, no more returnd his face,
> But left his loue to losse, and fled himselfe apace.
> (3.8.18.7-9)

Occasionally during their quests many of Spenser's virtuous characters encounter individuals who advise or help them. For example, Glauce aids Britomart; Britomart helps Amoret and Scudamore; Arthur succors numerous individuals during his journey through Fairyland. As their meeting with Malbecco indicates, Braggadocchio and Trompart parody various functions of the advisor. During this episode, which constitutes Braggadocchio's fourth test, Spenser again satirizes Braggadocchio's vanity, thievery, and cowardice. Spenser intensifies his ridicule of the coward by comparing him to a predatory bird and to one of Charlemagne's peers.

Almost as soon as he begins this episode, Spenser introduces the predatory bird image. Initially the blinded Malbecco believes that he has encountered Paridell and Hellenore; but, as Spenser notes, "it was scornefull Braggadocchio, / That with his seruant Trompart houered there" (3.10.23.1-2). The verb hovered may remind the reader of the kestrel image that Spenser employs when he describes the coward's theft of Guyon's horse and spear (2.3.4). In a sense Braggadocchio has been

a predator throughout his initial tests. In this instance Spenser's choice of the verb hovered indicates that the mock knight and his crony are waiting for their next victim to appear.

Though the reader is always aware of the coward's base nature, the fearful Malbecco is easily fooled by Braggadocchio's pseudo-heroic mien. As the cuckold approaches him, for example, "the Boaster at him sternely bent his brows, / As if he could haue kild him with his look" (3.10.24. 1-2). To the desperate Malbecco and even to most of the celebrants of Florimell's nuptials in Book V, Braggadocchio is an impressive figure who easily convinces many characters that he is a knight. Spenser, however, prompts the reader to scorn Braggadocchio when the mock knight promises to rescue Hellenore and to kill Paridell. Before introducing Braggadocchio's vow, Spenser compares his pseudo-hero to one of Charlemagne's twelve peers[20] with the simile "bigge looking like a doughtie Doucepere" (3.10.31.1). Though he appears to be a knight, Braggadocchio is, of course, very similar to snowy Florimell. Having no moral fiber, he is as much a simulacrum as she is.

As this episode ends, Spenser again employs theft imagery to ridicule Braggadocchio. After vowing to aid Malbecco, Braggadocchio sallies forth; but Spenser modifies this apparently chivalric act with his satiric reminder that the coward is riding a stolen horse:

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[20]R. E. Neil Dodge, "Glossary" to The Complete Poetical Works of Spenser (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1908), p. 829.

> forth the Boaster marching, braue begonne
> His stolen steed to thunder furiously,
> As if he heauen and hell would ouerronne,
> And all the world confound with cruelty.
> (3.10.33.5-8)

Spenser reiterates the image of theft immediately by noting that these predators only agree to help the cuckold in order to steal the treasure that he has brought with him. Obviously not concerned about Hellenore's plight, Braggadocchio and Trompart "sought nought, but that present pray, / To weete the treasure" (3.10.34.4-5).[21] This comic trio stays together until the noise of the Satyrs' bagpipes routs the mock knight and his crony but stuns Malbecco. Not surprisingly, Trompart and Braggadocchio flee in order to avoid a confrontation with the Satyrs and to steal Malbecco's treasure, which Trompart has earlier convinced the cuckold to bury.

During his fifth test Braggadocchio encounters the unsympathetic Paridell and Blandamour plus the sympathetic Cambell and Triamond (4.4). Though the hellish crew controls this situation, it is significant that both sets of characters eventually scorn the mock knight. In three of his earlier tests, Braggadocchio defeats such characters as Trompart, the churl, and Malbecco by lying and by assuming a pseudo-heroic mien. These tactics, however, do not work in this instance. As this scene begins, Braggadocchio tries to cow Blandamour with words by falsely claiming that he has previously won snowy Florimell, whom Blandamour

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[21] In his discussion of the parody quest, Holleran notes that in "this scene, Braggadochio has raised his station considerably," p. 34. Though Malbecco is more craven than the braggart, Spenser consistently stresses that Braggadocchio is a thief.

has obtained by defeating Sir Ferrau. When he answers the coward, Blandamour scornfully challenges him to physical combat. Braggadocchio, however, refuses on that grounds that his challenger's terms insult his dignity: the winner will receive snowy Florimell; the loser, Ate. The amused reader realizes that either of these women would be a fit companion for the coward, since each is as base as he is. Correctly interpreting his refusal of Blandamour's challenge as a sign of cowardice, the other characters openly scorn Braggadocchio, thus foreshadowing his eventual ostracism during the celebration of fair Florimell's nuptials in Book V:

> At which his vaine excuse they all gan smile,
> As scorning his unmanly cowardize:
> And Florimell him fowly gan reuile,
> That for her sake refus'd to enterprize
> The battell, offred in so knightly wize:
> And Ate eke provokt him priuily.
> (4.4.11.1-6)

Somewhat unexpectedly, the mock hero, who begins his career desiring to make a positive impression upon people, apparently is not bothered by their ridicule; for he remains in their company.

Braggadocchio perfects his vices during the contest for Florimell's girdle. As the tournament begins, the vain Braggadocchio joins neither of the factions because he wishes to appear better than the others:

> But boastful Braggadocchio rather chose,
> For glorie vaine, their fellowship to lose,
> That men on him the more might gaze alone.
> The rest them selues in troupes else dispose.
> (4.4.14.4-7)

Like a true knight, Braggadocchio seeks glory and the praise of his fellow man. Yet Spenser ridicules the coward's desires: his hopes are

indeed vain because he fails to acknowledge that a chivalrous gentleman needs the friendship of others. He finally reveals his true nature when he is forced to enter the tournament. Pretending to be "doubtful or dismayed" (4.4.20.4), the coward merely stands on the field. The truly noble Triamond's reaction to this example of discourteous behavior foreshadows Braggadocchio's eventual ostracism. Triamond angrily grabs the coward's spear, which is an important external sign of a knight. The knightly accoutrements—horse arms, and a lady—that Braggadocchio acquires enhance his vanity much as the peacock's plumage has traditionally symbolized its high opinion of itself.

Although Braggadocchio eventually regains his lady Florimell, the method he employs to win her increases his absurd position. When the daily winners of the tournament, Britomart, Artegal, and Triamond, refuse to claim snowy Florimell for various reasons, Satyrane is adjudged the winner. The tournament eventually becomes a farcical verbal free-for-all as first Blandamour, then Paridell, and finally other knights demand snowy Florimell. Taking advantage of the confusion, Braggadocchio falsely claims that he had earlier won Florimell before the tournament began. He eventually obtains the lady, but he does not win her. To emphasize the coward's impotence and discourtesy, Spenser constructs the scene so that snowy Florimell actually selects her champion. Only when "to Braggadochio selfe alone / She [comes] of her accord" (4.9.26. 8-9) does the coward regain his lady. Josephine Bennett feels that

snowy Florimell's choice of Braggadocchio is a "foolish one,"[22] which implies that she believes the simulacrum should have selected another champion. Yet false Florimell's choice is just; for, as William Nelson notes, their reunion symbolizes "emptiness mating with emptiness."[23] Such a denouement parodies the heroic efforts of such a sympathetic character as Britomart who is prepared to die in order to rescue her destined mate. When snowy Florimell's choice arouses a desire for vengeance in the other participants, Braggadocchio stealthily departs with his prize. It is quite appropriate that the mock hero "secretly from thence that night her bore away" (4.5.27.9), for a thief generally operates more often and more successfully at night.

Braggadocchio's final test occurs during the jousts that celebrate Marinell's wedding to fair Florimell. In this episode the coward's career ends when Artegal ostracizes him. Like many comic characters, Braggadocchio cannot be a functioning member of society because he refuses to contribute to the social good. Describing his mock hero's final appearance in the poem, Spenser again likens him to a thief and compares him to a proud bird. Just as he begins his quest by stealing Guyon's spear and horse, so he terminates it by purloining the honor due to Artegal. Somewhat to the reader's surprise but to his increasing amusement, Braggadocchio becomes more aggressive as this scene progresses.

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[22]The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene" (New York: Burt Franklin, 1960), p. 181.

[23]The Poetry of Edmund Spenser (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963), p. 242.

During this episode he achieves the knightly distinction of being called a hero.

Braggadocchio's moment of triumph occurs when he falsely takes credit for rescuing Marinell. When Artegal, who is accompanioned by snowy Florimell and Braggadocchio, determines to avenge Marinell's shame, he borrows the coward's shield, since he desires to remain anonymous. Though Artegal returns the coward's shield, Braggadocchio is not sufficiently courteous to permit Artegal his justified victory:

> Then for that strange knight they loud did call,
> To whom that day they should the girlond yield:
> Who came not forth: but for Sir Artegall
> Came Braggadocchio, and did shew his shield.
> (5.3.14.5-8)

Braggadocchio's triumphant moment is short-lived, for Spenser satirically modifies its glory by mentioning that his mock knight is a coward:

> Then the trompets shrill
> Don Braggadochios name resounded thrise:
> So courage lent a cloke to cowardice.
> (5.3.15.3-9)

Braggadocchio further reveals his baseness when fair Florimell offers her congratulations. "With proud disdaine [he] did scornefull answere make" (5.3.16.2) and brings forth snowy Florimell. This discourteous act prompts Artegal's ire, which eventually leads to the coward's ostracism.

Although critics have commented upon Braggadocchio's discourtesy to fair Florimell, many neglect to consider his subsequent behavior. It is somewhat comic that the coward reacts to snowy Florimell's disappearance the same way he earlier does to Belphoebe's flight and

to Archimago's departure in Book II. Apparently he is confused by any situation that he cannot control with verbal threats or by fleeing. After snowy Florimell disappears,

> Braggadochio selfe with dreriment
> So daunted was in his despeyring mood,
> That like a lifelesse corse immoueable he stood.
> (5.3.26.7-9)

It is comically appropriate that his lady constitutes the initial knightly trapping that he loses, for Braggadocchio's relationship with snowy Florimell parodies Spenser's theme that love inspires one to seek honor.

Braggadocchio forfeits his horse when Guyon joins the festivities. In this scene Spenser ridicules the mock knight's lack of moderation. Somewhat to the reader's surprise, Braggadocchio does not flee when Guyon claims that Brigadore belongs to him. When Guyon proves that the coward has stolen his horse, Braggadocchio rejects Artegal's just decree that he should "fare on foot, till he a horse [has] gayned" (5.3.35.6). Though he has purloined the spear and horse of Guyon, the symbol of Moderation, Braggadocchio has never been temperate. Learning of his punishment results in his complete loss of control:

> But the proud boaster gan his doome vpbrayd,
> And him reuil'd, and rated, and disdayned,
> That iudgement so vniust against him had ordayned.
> (5.3.35.7-9)

Such an irrational denial of his culpability increases his absurd position. Throughout his career Braggadocchio desires to be noticed. In this episode he realizes his dream, but he reveals that he is an individual who exhibits all the traits that diametrically oppose

knightly virtues. According to Spenser, such an individual cannot be a member of a court.[24] Since he has been deprived of an easy means of escape when Brigadore is returned to Guyon, Braggadocchio is easily divested of the final external symbols of a knight. After being shaved and losing his weapons, Braggadocchio is ostracized; thus, social order is restored in the traditional comic manner.

The characters' reaction to this incident suggests how one should ultimately view Braggadocchio. Spenser reports that while the celebrants ponder the coward's uncivil behavior,

> Ladies can laugh at Ladies, Knights at Knights,
> To thinke with how great vaunt of brauerie
> He them abused, through his subtill slights,
> And what a glorious shew he made in all their sights.
> (5.3.39.6-9)

Spenser's choice of the preposition <u>at</u> seems significant. If his line read, ladies can laugh <u>with</u> ladies, knights <u>with</u> knights, Spenser would intimate that Braggadocchio is primarily a buffoon. But his selection of the term <u>at</u> signifies that these characters realize that the mock hero has made fools of them. Therefore, when they readily accept Braggadocchio's claim that he has rescued Marinell merely because he carries the shield that Artegal has used, they prove the coward's earlier belief that one need only look like a knight in order to be considered one.[25] Artegal suggests that the celebrants have judged the situation based solely upon its appearance, since he angrily

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[24]Spenser makes a similar point in <u>Prosopopoia</u> as he traces the rise and fall of the Ape at court.

[25]See 2.3.5.

demands that the mock knight should reveal the wounds and perspiration that would reveal the actual combatant (5.3.21-22).

Before demanding that the coward should prove that he has rescued Marinell, Artegal prefaces his remarks with statements that summarize Braggadocchio's career and that also echo the avian imagery that opens his tale:

> Thou losell base,
> That hast with borrowed plumes they selfe endewed,
> And others worth with leasings doest deface,
> When they are all restor'd, thou shalt rest in disgrace.
> (5.3.20.6-9)

The first line of this passage reminds the reader that Spenser employs the term losell when he introduces Braggadocchio (2.3.4.1). The second line, of course, echoes the avian imagery that Spenser employs throughout his parody quest to ridicule the mock knight. Like the vain peacock which glories in its beautiful plumage, Braggadocchio takes pride in the knightly accoutrements that he acquires. Since he purloins his horse, spear, and lady, and since he figuratively steals the honor due to Artegal, Braggadocchio is a sham knight, a knight clothed in "borrowed plumes." It cannot be denied, however, that the coward is an impressive figure. Not only does he dupe such unsympathetic characters as the churl and Malbecco, but he also fools many of the sympathetic characters who celebrate fair Florimell's nuptials. Unlike these individuals, Spenser's reader scorns Braggadocchio, since he is always aware that the mock hero refuses to practice the "vertuous and gentle discipline" that characterizes a true knight.

Malbecco

As his parody quest reveals, Malbecco destroys himself because he is jealous and materialistic.[26] Before he begins his journey, the cuckold at his castle reveals many of his vices during the ill-fated dinner scene and during the abduction scene. Like Scudamore, Malbecco embarks upon a quest, hoping to be reunited with his wife, Hellenore. During this journey he experiences only two tests: his meeting with Braggadocchio and his second encounter with Paridell. Malbecco's misadventure at the Satyrs' bower constitutes his place of imperfection, since his actions and attitudes indicate that he cannot conquer his jealousy. His final test occurs when he discovers that Trompart and Braggadocchio have stolen his buried treasure. Having failed to be reunited with Hellenore and with his gold, Malbecco evolves into the allegorical personification of Jealousy. In order to ridicule the cuckold's jealousy and materialism, Spenser uses such traditional comic devices as character commentary, ironic epithets, and the disguise motif. Spenser especially stresses Malbecco's spiritual impotence by emphasizing his blindness and goatish nature.

The reader is initially prompted to scorn Malbecco as he witnesses the Squire of Dames, Satyrane, and Paridell discussing the May/January marriage of Hellenore and Malbecco. The Squire of Dames introduces a

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[26] Clyde G. Wade, "The Comedy of The Faerie Queene," Diss. Univ. of Missouri 1967, p. 179, points out that Malbecco "is covetous, half-blind physically, and totally blind spiritually."

stereotyped cuckold;[27] yet his comments aptly describe Malbecco. The Squire presents an impotent "cancred carle," whose primary interests are hoarding his "mucky pelfe" and suspecting his wife's loyalty. Though he deems Malbecco mad, Satyrane finds the Squire's description amusing and suggests that "gentle courtesyes" on Malbecco's part could improve his relationship with Hellenore. Paridell, however, brashly informs Satyrane that if Malbecco offered "such seruice," although the fetters "were of gold," he would be in a more foolish position than his present one. Though their opinions about this May/January marriage differ, these knights unanimously condemn it. Despite Spenser's effusive apology for writing about the shameless Hellenore, the reader recognizes, through the knights' comments, that the emphasis will be upon Malbecco; more importantly, the reader has been primed to ridicule the "crabbed carle."

When these knights attempt to gain entrance into Malbecco's castle, Satyrane describes the cuckold with the epithet, "good man" (3.9.10.2), that assumes ironic connotations as this scene progresses. Though Satyrane employs the phrase "good man" only as a polite form of address, Malbecco obviously does not merit such courtesy, since he violates the rules of hospitality by refusing entrance to Satyrane and Paridell. When Britomart joins this duo, the epithet "good man" assumes a more significant meaning. Although a storm is raging, Malbecco, who pretends that he is a porter, still refuses to allow them to enter. Ironically,

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[27]Harry Berger, Jr., "The Discarding of Malbecco," Studies in Philology, 66 (1969), 137, suggests that these three knights "display the pseudo-sophistication of older attitudes associated with the various genres they embody: chivalry, courtly love and the fabliau."

this "good man" finally forces these knights to threaten to commit an unchivalrous act. Only when they vow to set fire to his palace does Malbecco allow them to enter his domain.

Though Paridell is not a sympathetic character, he does function as an agent of poetic justice as this episode develops. Describing the ill-fated dinner scene, Spenser focuses upon Malbecco's literal and spiritual myopia. It is comically appropriate that the overly jealous cuckold does not witness Paridell's subtle courtship of Hellenore because he has sight in only one eye. Instead Malbecco keeps a jealous eye upon the innocent Satyrane and Britomart. While Paridell courts the willing Hellenore, their host

> sate looking still askaunce,
> Gainst Britomart, and euer closely eyde
> Sir Satyrane, that glaunces might not glyde:
> But his blind eye, that syded Paridell,
> All his demeasnure from his sight did hyde.
> (3.9.27.3-7)

It is obvious that Malbecco again is violating the rules of hospitality, for not only is he an unwilling host, but he is also a suspicious one as well.

At the comic climax of this episode, which occurs the following evening when Hellenore and Paridell plan their elopement, Spenser utilizes understatement to ridicule Malbecco's initial confusion about whether to save his wife or his treasure. In order to distract the cuckold, Hellenore has set his gold afire. But when Paridell attempts to rape her, she calls for her husband's help. Though he moves towards her, Malbecco immediately remembers that his treasure is being destroyed and becomes confused:

> The wretched man hearing her call for ayd,
> And readie seeing him with her to fly,
> In his disquiet mind was much dismayd:
> But when againe he backward cast his eye,
> And saw the wicked fire so furiously
> Consume his hart, and scorch his Idoles face,
> He was therewith distressed diuersly,
> Ne wist he how to turne, nor to what place;
> Was neuer wretched man in such a wofull cace.
> (3.10.14)

Obviously, Spenser's apparent sympathy for Malbecco cannot be taken seriously,[28] for the confused man should protect Hellenore. Spenser's restrained, understated expression of sympathy in the last line of this passage underscores the profound moral issue of this passage; the truly courteous gentleman would not hesitate if he had to choose between his lady or his wealth.[29]

Spenser further satirizes Malbecco with a bitter comment after the cuckold chooses to save his gold rather than his wife. For a brief moment Malbecco suggests that he recognizes that Hellenore is more important than his treasure. When she again calls for aid, he rushes towards her, since "his loue money ouercame." But almost immediately, remembering that his gold is being destroyed, he dashes back to the burning castle; for "money did loue disclame" (3.10.15.2,4).[30] Shrewd

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[28]Though he does not cite any passages to support his statement, Clyde Wade, pp. 176-77, notes that though "various people have voiced sympathy for Hellenore or for Malbecco[,] . . . one looks in vain to discover any sympathy for them on Spenser's part."

[29]Nelson, p. 227.

[30]This scene reminds Janet Spens of Shylock's anguish over his ducats and his daughter; see Spenser's "Faerie Queene" (New York: Russell & Russell, 1934), p. 127.

enough to realize finally that he can save only one of his treasures, Malbecco makes the wrong choice according to the poet. Spenser scathingly reports that the cuckold selects that "which was the dearest to his dounghill minde, / the ioy of misers blinde" (3.10.15.8-9). By utilizing the phrase "misers blinde," Spenser effectively ridicules Malbecco's spiritual myopia.

Spenser continues to satirize Malbecco's moral dilemma by focusing upon his confusion and by comparing him to a pilgrim. After Hellenore's abduction, Malbecco determines to rescue her; however, he cannot decide the appropriate course of action to take. Appearing to epitomize confusion, "he gan deuise how her he reskew mought; / Ten thousand wayes he cast in his confused thought" (3.10.18.8-9). Finally Malbecco decides to disguise himself "like a pilgrim pore, / To search her forth" (3.10.19.1-2). This simile suggests several ironic meanings which emphasize the cuckold's ludicrous position. Though his love for Hellenore supposedly motivates his quest, that poor pilgrim secretly takes much of his gold with him. In addition, the term pilgrim suggests in its broadest sense a religious individual who embarks upon an inner directed quest, hoping to achieve spiritual enlightenment. As his interview with Hellenore at the Satyrs' bower indicates, Malbecco never acknowledges that a marriage is essentially a spiritual union. Furthermore, Malbecco's inhospitality, his avarice, and especially, according to Alistair Fowler, his imprisonment of Hellenore, make him "the enemy of every generous and erotic force" in Book III, an idea that Spenser

introduces when Satyrane and Britomart, "the natural and theological champions of chaste love," storm Malbecco's castle with Paridell.[31]

The first stage of Malbecco's parody quest involves only two tests when he encounters Braggadocchio and later when Paridell joins them briefly. Describing Malbecco's initial test, Spenser stresses the cuckold's literal and figurative blindness. A minor comic moment occurs when the blinded Malbecco believes that he has sighted Hellenore and Paridell. Seeing a gaily dressed figure and an armed knight at a distance, he feels that his quest is terminating. Unlike Scudamore, for example, who vows to avenge Britomart's supposed seduction of Amoret, Malbecco hesitates about approaching the pair. Eventually the cuckold overcomes his fear, but it is not love for Hellenore that prompts his move; instead it is "loues extremity / That is the father of fowle gealosy" (3.10.32.4-5). Such a feeling reminds the reader of Malbecco's spiritual myopia, since a courteous gentleman should be inspired by love, not by jealousy. Ironically the cuckold's action is put in its proper perspective when Spenser reveals that Malbecco has mistaken "the scornefull Braggadocchio" and Trompart for Paridell and Hellenore.

Dramatic irony and mocking epithets characterize the encounter between Malbecco and Braggadocchio. Since the reader is cognizant of the mock knight's true nature, he anticipates that Braggadocchio will treat his latest victim as he earlier dealt with Trompart and the churl. In this instance the reader's expectations are not thwarted, for the

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[31]"Six Knights at Castle Joyous," Studies in Philology, 56 (1959), 596.

mock knight, who assumes a heroic stance, humiliates Malbecco. While they converse, Braggadocchio, as well as Malbecco, utters ironic epithets that aptly described the cuckold.

When he initially views Malbecco, Braggadocchio declares that the pilgrim is not his peer:

> Said he, Thou man of nought, what doest thou here,
> Vnfitly furnisht with thy bag and booke,
> Where I expected one with shield and spere,
> To proue some deedes of armes vpon an equall pere.
> (3.10.24.6-9)

With his use of the phrase "man of nought," Braggadocchio obviously parodies chivalrous language, but simultaneously he suggests Malbecco's physical and spiritual impotence. To the reader's amusement, the cowardly Malbecco immediately apologizes to the mock knight, an apology which is unwarranted since he has not committed any offense against Braggadocchio. His absurd situation increases when Malbecco states that he is "a silly Pilgrim driuen to distresse / That seekes a Lady" (3.10.25.6-7). Though Malbecco is referring to his disguise and his quest, the reader is aware that the cuckold is indeed a foolish pilgrim, since he never practices "vertuous and gentle discipline." When Braggadocchio refuses Malbecco's offer of payment for his services, the mock knight ironically summarizes Spenser's attitude towards the materialistic man, saying

> Thou clod of vilest clay,
> I pardon yield, and with thy rudenesse beare;
> But weete henceforth, that all that golden pray,
> And all that else the vaine world vaunten may,
> I loath as doung, ne deeme my dewe reward.
> (3.10.31.2-6)

The epithet, "clod of vilest clay," and the final line of this passage are reminiscent of Spenser's earlier comment about Malbecco's decision to save his burning gold, "which was the dearest to his dounghill minde" (3.10.15.8). Although he haughtily scorns Malbecco's offer, Braggadocchio is insincere, for he later helps Trompart steal the cuckold's buried treasure.

When Paridell joins this comic trio, Spenser ridicules Malbecco's craven attitude towards his wife's abductor. Once more the cuckold reveals that he is more concerned about himself than he is about Hellenore. Instead of immediately demanding information about his wife as an honorable man would, Malbecco faints: "soone as the oldman saw Sir Paridell, / He fainted and was almost dead with feare" (3.10.37.6-7). When he recovers from his fright, the cuckold "louted low, and greeted Paridell goodly well" (3.10.37.9). Though Spenser teaches that a courteous man should be humble, Malbecco's meekness towards Paridell is clearly excessive. Eventually the cuckold asks Paridell about Hellenore; yet his initial abasement before the man who has abducted his wife detracts from that positive action.

Though Braggadocchio and Trompart are not sympathetic characters, they do function as agents of poetic justice in this episode, for they steal the treasure which the reader feels Malbecco deserves to lose. As this scene progresses, the cuckold becomes a comic dupe. The reader, of course, is not surprised at this development, since Spenser has established that the mock knight and his crony are predators. Spenser develops the comedy of this scene by contrasting the optimistic

Malbecco's faith in Braggadocchio's promise of help with the wily Trompart's deliberate deception of Malbecco. Like one of Spenser's virtuous knights, Braggadocchio refuses Malbecco's offer of payment for his services, saying "I tread in dust thee and thy money both" (3.10. 29.7). But recognizing his master's essentially greedy nature, Trompart seeks an opportune moment to steal Malbecco's gold. His subsequent treatment of the cuckold suggests that Trompart recognizes the importance Malbecco places upon his treasure. Knowing that Malbecco is not only avaricious but cowardly, Trompart tries to persuade the cuckold to remain with his treasure while he and Braggadocchio rescue Hellenore by informing the unsuspecting man that the woods are full of beasts and robbers. When the fearful Malbecco rejects this suggestion, the crafty Trompart advises him to bury his gold, audaciously promising the cuckold that he and Braggadocchio will blindfold themselves so that they will not know where the gold is buried. Obviously Trompart and his crony do not keep their word, since Spenser notes that they steal the treasure as soon as they desert Malbecco when the party is frightened by the noise of the Satyrs' bagpipes.

Malbecco perfects his vice of jealousy during his meeting with Hellenore at the Satyrs' bower. In order to ridicule his cuckold, Spenser stresses Malbecco's discourteous attitude towards marriage and emphasizes his spiritual myopia by comparing his blinded horned goat with the Satyrs' keen sighted goats. To the reader's amusement, not only does Hellenore reject her husband, but the goats deny his relationship with them, even though he is wearing figurative horns.

Spenser's most obvious satiric image pictures Malbecco as a horned goat, a traditional symbol for the cuckold. But the educated Elizabethan, who was reared upon bestiaries, would also probably contrast him with the omniscient goat that frequently appeared in such works. According to Pliny, some species of goats have keen eyesight, since "they have the power of seeing by night as well as by day."[32] A twelfth-century bestiarist offers a Christian allegory about the goat's omniscient powers. "Because the sharpness of a goat's eyes is very acute, and they see everything and know men from afar," the anonymous writer of this work suggests that "this symbolizes Our Lord, who is the Lord God of all knowing."[33] Malbecco, obviously, cannot be labeled an anti-Christ figure. Yet his having sight in only one eye, his jealousy, and his materialism foster his spiritual myopia. During his misadventure at the Satyrs' bower, his place of imperfection, Malbecco reveals that he cannot acknowledge the proper way to love.

During his initial encounter with the traditionally keen sighted goats, Malbecco convinces them that he is a member of their herd. It is comically appropriate, however, that he deceives the goats after witnessing Hellenore's "ioyous play" with the Satyrs. Since he stresses Malbecco's "bitter thoughts" at this sight and his craven failure to challenge the Satyrs, Spenser seems to be more interested in ridiculing

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[32]The Natural History of Pliny, trans. with notes by John Bostock and H. T. Riley (London: Henry G. Boyn, 1885), II, 341.

[33]The Book of Beasts, trans. T. H. White (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954), p. 41.

the cuckold's spiritual impotence than Hellenore's adultery. According to the following ironic passage, Malbecco has literally been transformed into a horned goat.[34] Crawling from beneath a bush,

> Vpon his hands and feete he crept full light,
> And like a Gote emongst the Gotes did rush,
> That through the helpe of his faire hornes on hight,
> And misty dampe of misconceiuing night,
> And eke through likenesse of his gotish beard,
> So home he marcht emongst the horned heard,
> That none of all the Satyres him espyde or heard.
> (3.10.47.2-9)

Since he has literally become a horned goat, Malbecco easily deceives the normally perceptive goats.

In the traditional comic manner Hellenore, as well as the herd of goats, eventually rejects Malbecco. Before these scenes occur, Malbecco again reveals his basically selfish nature, since he never admits that he is primarily responsible for Hellenore's subsequent adultery. After the Satyr tires of its "ioyous play" and retires for the night, Malbecco summons sufficient courage to approach Hellenore. During their discussion his initial condemnations of her behavior modify his offer to forgive Hellenore if she will return with him. A profound irony characterizes the following lines as Malbecco echoes Spenser's views on marriage:

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[34] Variorum III, 286-87; early critics such as Jortin and Wharton object to Spenser's "meanness" in this passage, thus failing to recognize how effectively Spenser has satirized Malbecco in this instance. In his dissertation, Wade feels that Spenser's satire of the cuckold is similar to Jonson's treatment of Corvino in Volpone; see p. 189.

gan he her perswade, to leaue that lewd
And loathsome life, of God and man abhord,
And home returne, where all should be renewd
With perfect peace, and bandes of fresh accord,
And she receiu'd againe to bed and bord.
(3.10.41.1-5)

The word renewed suggests that Malbecco believes that his marriage has always been peaceful, characterized by "bandes of fresh accord." But the reader remembers the comments by the Squire of Dames who reveals that Malbecco is only interested in counting his gold and suspecting Hellenore's loyalty. Not surprisingly, Spenser records Hellenore's rejection of her husband by employing understatement. Recognizing the futility of his plan, Hellenore bluntly "it all refused at one word" (3.10.41.9).

Quite appropriately Malbecco's final humiliation occurs when he rejoins the herd of goats in order to protect himself from the Satyrs. Although it is dawn, the goats now recognize the cuckold's true nature and reject him also. After failing to persuade Hellenore to return with him, Malbecco

then turnd to the heard,
Who butted him with hornes on euery syde,
And trode downe in the durt, where his hore beard
Was fowly dight, and he of death afeard.
(3.10.54.2-5)

In this scene the goats serve two functions. Since these animals are traditionally viewed as being lecherous, their actions remind the reader of the "ioyous play" of Hellenore and the Satyr and its effect upon the cuckold. Tracing the steps that lead to Malbecco's transformation into the gruesome abstraction Jealousy reveals that he moves away from reality

because of a series of rejections or losses. Though Hellenore is not an exemplary figure, her rebuff suggests that Malbecco has been rejected by the rational world. Then he is ostracized by the irrational community of the lower animals when the goats butt him.

After his humiliation by the goats, Malbecco attempts to find solace in the world of the inanimate, for he ironically believes that his buried gold is safely hidden. Unlike the unsuspecting man, the reader is not surprised when the cuckold discovers that his gold has been stolen earlier, since Spenser clearly indicates (3.10.34) that Braggadocchio and Trompart are only interested in obtaining his treasure, despite their promises to help him. In a general sense, these characters have figuratively cuckolded Malbecco because his relationship with his money constitutes a more important union for him than does his sanctified marriage to Hellenore. Having discovered that his treasure is gone, Malbecco "became quite mad" (3.10.54.5); thus, he ultimately loses all contact with reality and becomes the abstraction Jealousy.

As Spenser terminates this fabliau about the spiritual destruction of a man, he emphasizes again the visual imagery with which he opens this tale. His description of Malbecco's transformation into that deformed creature Jealousy is not a pleasant one. But the reader is cognizant that, like Milton's Satan, Malbecco creates his own hell when he succumbs to his jealousy. Quite appropriately the ever vigilant Malbecco evolves into a being whose "one eye / Still ope he keepes for that occasion" (3.10.58.6-7); he "is woxen so deform'd, that he has quight / Forgot he was a man, and Gealosie is hight" (3.10.60.8-9).

Spenser's graphic picture of Malbecco's transformation into the allegorical representation of Jealousy reveals the destructive potential that such an emotion has. Because he cannot perceive the proper way to treat his wife and because he chooses to save his treasure, Malbecco never experiences any spiritual growth during his pilgrimage. Though W. B. C. Watkins suggests that Malbecco ultimately "becomes a pitiable but disgusting figure,"[35] Spenser has stressed the cuckold's irrational behavior too much for the reader to pity him. Malbecco's inhospitality, his misadventure at the Satyrs' bower, and his final search for his treasure indicate that he is primarily responsible for his own destruction. Rather than pitying him, the reader scorns him.

Throughout the parody quests of Braggadocchio and Malbecco, Spenser consistently satirizes their unchivalrous behavior. To emphasize their discourtesy, Spenser compares Malbecco and Braggadocchio to various animals. Because he is vain, the coward is likened to a peacock. In addition, Braggadocchio's vanity and cowardice lead to his figurative and literal thefts as well as to his moral destruction, points which Spenser emphasizes through his kestrel and capon images. Describing Malbecco's spiritual blindness, Spenser relies upon two meanings associated with goats. Though the cuckold is the traditional horned goat, his blindness and lack of spiritual growth suggest in a negative way the naturalistic and allegorical interpretations associated with the keen sighted goats. During their parody quests these individuals

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[35] Shakespeare & Spenser, p. 122.

become allegorical representations of their respective vices. Because they cannot or will not learn "vertuous and gentle discipline," they cannot be members of Fairyland's society, and in the traditional comic manner society rejects them.

III. PARIDELL

Though he journeys through Fairyland, Paridell does not embark upon a structured quest as do Braggadocchio and Malbecco. In his first appearance in the poem, Paridell promises Satyrane that he will join the search for fair Florimell (3.8.50), but he immediately abandons this quest as soon as he enters Malbecco's castle. As several critics have noted, the Paridell/Hellenore episode parodies the Paris/Helen story.[36] All of the characters discussed in this chapter become allegorical representations of their respective vices; however, unlike the other characters, Paridell frequently seems similar to a Morality Vice, since like this character type, he becomes involved in several ludicrous quarrels. In order to ridicule further Paridell's various treasons, Spenser relies upon such traditional comic devices as character commentary, unflattering imagery and similes, ironic epithets, and other forms of irony. Since he is presumably executed when his treason against Mercilla is discovered in Book V, Paridell's story ceases to be comic; yet his death does affect the restoration of social order.

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[36]See, for example, Nelson, pp. 130-31; Arnold Williams, Flower on a Lowly Stalk (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1967), p. 115; Angus Fletcher, The Prophetic Moment (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 98.

During his conversation with Satyrane and the Squire of Dames before entering Malbecco's castle, Paridell makes several comments about Malbecco's marriage with Hellenore that ironically reveal much about his true nature. Responding to Satyrane's suggestion that courteous behavior might improve Malbecco's relationship with Hellenore, Paridell declares:

> Then is he not more mad, . . .
> That hath himselfe into such seruice sold,
> In doleful thraldome all his dayes to dwell?
> For sure a foole I doe him firmly hold,
> That loues his fetters, though they were of gold.
> (3.9.8.1-5)

Obviously, with this speech Paridell reveals that he diametrically opposes Spenser's views upon "gentle discipline." Furthermore, Paridell's journey through Fairyland reveals that he is not bound by any loyalties, since he is interested only in furthering his personal desires.[37]

Though the reader recognizes that Paridell is an unsympathetic character, he does operate as a minor figure of poetic justice when he seduces Hellenore; for the reader is aware that Malbecco's vices of jealousy and materialism make him a more ridiculous figure than Paridell in this instance. At the comic climax of this scene, Spenser creates what Rosamund Tuve calls an "insidiously flippant scene" when he employs Eucharistic imagery to comment upon Paridell's success as a lover.[38]

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[37]Thomas P. Roche, The Kindly Flame (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 63-66, suggests that Spenser especially reveals this trait of Paridell as he and Britomart present two versions of the Troy history. Unlike Britomart, Paridell distorts the history, interpreting it according to his self-serving aims.

[38]Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 221.

Realizing that he has captured Hellenore's affections, Paridell pretends to spill his wine in order to indicate how profoundly she has affected him:

> Now Bacchus fruit out of the siluer plate
> He on the table dasht, as ouerthrowne,
> Or of the fruitfull liquor ouerflowne,
> And by the dauncing bubbles did diuine,
> Or therein write to let his loue be showne;
> Which well she red out of the learned line,
> A sacrament prophane in mistery of wine.
> (3.9.30.2-9)

This Eucharistic imagery underscores Paridell's intentions to destroy the sanctified union between Malbecco and Hellenore. Such an image effectively foreshadows his ultimate treason against Mercilla.

Describing his continued efforts to seduce Hellenore, Spenser further satirizes Paridell by calling his relationship with her "ioyous treason." Ironically, of course, Paridell and Hellenore are enjoying themselves; however, they are being disloyal to Malbecco. To an Elizabethan, the word treason would summon images of Satan, the first traitor. Instead of specifically comparing Paridell to a snake, the traditional image of Satan, Spenser employs icons of deceit, guile, and craftiness, which his contemporary reader would have immediately associated with Satan.[39] Like the fallen angel, Paridell reveals he is evil by deceiving Malbecco and Hellenore, by setting out figurative nets to ensnare Hellenore, by gulling his friend Blandamour, and by finally revolting against Mercilla's rule.

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[39]Jane Aptekar's discussion of icons of guile in Book V has been especially helpful in this approach to Paridell; see Chps. 7-8, pp. 108-39.

Composing his sketch of Paridell's final attack upon Hellenore's will, Spenser may have thought of Du Bartas' description of Satan's assault upon Eden. Du Bartas pictures the serpent planning a campaign against a fort in his "L'imposture":

> Le Dragon pour forcer l'humaine forteresse,
> Imite d'un grand chef la guerriere finesse,
> Qui plustost qu'attaquer le fort jà menassé,
> Remarque son assiette, et sonde son fossé,
> De l'aune de son oeil mesure sa muraille,
> Recognoist tous ses flancs, met son camp en bataille,
> Et les approches faits, ardant, but vers la part
> Moins forte par nature, et moins forte par art.
> . . . . . .
> Il braque ses canons, tire, donne l'assault
> En l'endroit qu'il remarque un evident defaut,
> S'attaquant à la femme indiscrette.[40]

Spenser also likens Paridell's final assault upon Hellenore to an attack against a fort. Commenting upon Paridell's courtship technique, Spenser wryly notes that

> No fort so sensible, no wals so strong,
> But that continuall battery will rive,
> Or daily siege, through dispurvayaunce long
> And lack of reskews, will to parley drive:
> And peece, that unto parley eare will giue,
> Will shortly yield it selfe, and will be made
> The vassall of the victors will byliue:
> That stratageme had oftentimes assayd
> This crafty paramoure, and now it plaine displayd.
> (3.10.10)

Clearly Paridell is an accomplished lover, although Hellenore represents no real test of his prowess.

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[40]The Works of Guillaume De Salluste Sieur Du Bartas, ed. with an introd. by Urban T. Holmes, Jr., John C. Lyons, and Robert W. Linker (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1940), III, 34, 249-56; 259-61.

In addition to being linked with Satan, Paridell often seems similar to a Morality Vice. Like this character type, he is a tempter, and he becomes involved in several "ludicrous quarrels."[41] According to John Weld, these quarrels symbolize various types of social dissension.[42] Paridell's quarrelsome nature culminates in his treason against Mercilla.

Describing Paridell's initial appearance in the poem and his persistent campaign to win Hellenore, Spenser explicitly links him to the vice Lechery that he describes during Red Cross's visit to the House of Pride (1.4.24-26). For instance, Spenser describes the vice Lechery as carrying "in his hand a burning hart" (1.4.25.3). In his first appearance in the poem, Paridell immediately reveals his kinship with this vice because he has a "burning hart . . . on his brest" (3.8.45.4). Attempting to win Hellenore's affections, Paridell exemplifies many of Lechery's traits. Like the vice described in Book I, Paridell conducts a subtle courtship of Hellenore; he entertains his lady with songs and poems; he makes love to any woman that he encounters.

As he pictures Paridell's courtship tactics, Spenser comments upon the ironic disparity between the tempter's feigned nature and his actual nature. Like a Morality Vice, Paridell cleverly tempts his intended victim:

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[41]David M. Bevington, From "Mankind" to Marlowe (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), p. 188.

[42]Meaning in Comedy (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1975), p. 66.

> He did her seruice dewtifull, and sewd
> At hand with humble pride and pleasing guile,
> So closely yet, that none but she it vewd,
> Who well perceiued all, and all indewd.
> Thus finely did he his false nets dispred,
> With which he many weake harts had subdewd
> Of yore, and many ylike misled.
> (3.10.9.2-8)

Concluding his comic episode, Spenser structures it so that it resembles a morality play. While Malbecco's treasure burns, the tempter Paridell carries off his intended yet willing victim, Hellenore.

When he first appears in Book IV, Paridell has joined Blandamour, Duessa, and Ate, whom Spenser satirically labels a "goodly crew" (4.1.38.1). In one sense this epithet is ironic, since these characters symbolize evil, particularly social dissension. Yet, on the other hand, they are a "goodly crew" simply because their respective vices make them suitable companions. Throughout Book IV, Paridell seems similar to a Morality Vice, for he becomes involved in several ridiculous quarrels. Inspired by Ate, the "mother of debate," Paridell is responsible for the comic confusion that finally characterizes the tournament for Florimell's girdle. To ridicule Paridell further, Spenser pictures him becoming ensnared in the confusion which he originally creates; for, as Spenser records in Canto ix, Paridell's initial desire to win snowy Florimell precipates his quarrel with his supposed companions, Blandamour, Druon, and Claribell.

Paridell's abduction of Hellenore destroys Malbecco's small world. His participation in the tournament for Florimell's girdle moves him into a larger social arena. When snowy Florimell is awarded the girdle,

she is also offered to each of the daily winners, Britomart, Artegal, and Triamond, who refuse her for various reasons. After Satyrane is determined Florimell's champion, Blandamour claims her. At this point Ate prompts Paridell to claim Florimell also. This instance is one of several in which Paridell's relationship with Blandamour parodies the virtuous characters' friendships. Just as he disregards the rules of hospitality at Malbecco's castle, so he ignores the tenets of friendship by voicing his desire for Florimell.

Once Paridell claims Florimell, the other participants demand her. Comic confusion reigns, especially when Braggadocchio steps forward and asserts that Florimell is rightfully his lady. At this point many of the combatants become irrational:

> Thereat exceeding wroth was Satyrane;
> And wroth with Satyran was Blandamour;
> And wroth with Blandamour was Eriuan;
> And at them both Sir Paridell did loure.
> So all together stird up strifull stoure,
> And readie were new battell to darraine.
> (4.5.24.1-6)

Though the participants apparently believe that the simulacrum is fair Florimell, the reader knows what constitutes snowy Florimell's true nature. Thus, these knights' irrational attitude towards what they believe is true beauty only enhances their absurd situation. Spenser stresses their ludicrous behavior when he notes that

> Each one profest to be her paramoure,
> And vow'd with speare and shield it to maintaine;
> Ne iudges powre, ne reasons rule, mote them restraine.
> (4.5.24.7-9)

The comic climax of this scene occurs when Satyrane suggests that Florimell should choose her champion. Though he hopes to prevent

additional strife, he unwittingly precipitates further quarrels; for quite naturally snowy Florimell selects Braggadocchio as her knight.

Because his personal desires have been thwarted, Paridell becomes involved in a further ludicrous altercation. He and several knights determine to find the cowardly Braggadocchio, who leaves with his lady after the other claimants question his right to her. Unable to discover the mock knight, Paridell begins to fight with his companions. The ensuing quarrel seems similar to the comic debates that many Morality Vices engage in. Paridell's companions appear to represent minor vices: the "sterne [bachelor] Druon, and lewd Claribell, / Love-lavish Blandamour" (4.9.20.8-9). As these knights become quarrelsome, Spenser intensifies his satiric treatment of this scene. Initially, Paridell supports his supposed friend Blandamour. But eventually they become so irrational that they seem to be fighting just for the sake of fighting:

> Then gan they change their sides, and new parts take;
> For Paridell did take to Druons side,
> For old despight, which now forth newly brake
> Gainst Blandamour, whom alwaies he enuide;
> And Blandamour to Claribell relide:
> So all afresh gan former fight renew.
> (4.9.26.1-6)

Paridell's treasons against his host Malbecco and against his friend Blandamour culminate in his joining Duessa's plot to overthrow Mercilla in Book V. The ensuing scene is not comic; however, the traditional happy ending of a comedy is achieved when their treason is discovered. When he mentions Mercilla's troubles, Spenser focuses upon the Sultan's threats (5.8). The reader does not learn of Duessa's treason until canto ix. Possibly to increase the horror of the act,

or even more possibly because he forgot to include it, Spenser merely reports Paridell's support of Duessa by commenting that Duessa

> had her counsels false conspyred
> With faithlesse Blandamour and Paridell,
> (Both two her paramours, both by her hyred,
> And both with hope of shadowes vaine inspyred,)
> And with them practiz'd how for to depryue
> Mercilla of her crown. (5.9.41.2-6)

From this point Spenser never specifically names Paridell again. He does suggest that he is punished by noting that "th' actours won the meede meet for their crymes" (5.4.9.42.5); presumably Paridell has been executed.

Until he joins Duessa's conspiracy against Mercilla, Paridell is satirized for his basically selfish nature. But Spenser foreshadows Paridell's ultimate treason against society by employing icons of deceit and by comparing him to a Morality Vice. These images reveal that he has no respect for human beings; thus, it is not surprising that he rebels against the ultimate symbol of social order, Mercilla.

This chapter has focused upon Spenser's satiric treatment of his unsympathetic characters: Malecasta, Radigund, Braggadocchio, Malbecco, and Paridell. Though he utilizes such traditional comic devices as ironic epithets, unflattering similes, animal imagery and contrasts to ridicule their discourteous behavior, Spenser often employs a dominant satiric technique in their respective stories. In the Malecasta episode Spenser creates a comic situation based upon the disguised heroine motif. Spenser ridicules Braggadocchio and Malbecco by employing the parody quest. Paridell's irrational behavior is evidenced most clearly

during the numerous ludicrous quarrels he initiates. Unlike many of Spenser's sympathetic characters, these individuals frustrate the healing power of comedy. Because these unsympathetic characters cannot or will not contribute to the social good, society rejects them in various ways.

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