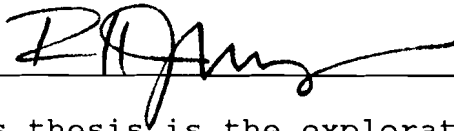


AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Ivan Pančić for the Master of Arts
in English presented on May 8, 1998

Title: "The Common Labyrinth of Love": The Nature and Purpose
of Sexual Desire in Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes
Calender*

Abstract approved: _____



The focus of this thesis is the exploration of the nature and purpose of sexual desire in Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*. The primary assumption is that sexual desire is the driving force in the lives of Spenser's shepherds and in the pastoral itself. The exploration focuses on the unifying effect sexuality has on an individual and on society. Erotic desire is seen as a prism through which Spenser's shepherds view the socio-political and religious constructs.

The study also focuses on the relationship between erotic desire and poetry and tries to demonstrate that love is not an impediment to poetry, but the driving force behind it. This idea is explored in the life of Colin Clout, the most prominent shepherd in the *Calender*, who manages to turn his initially distractive and painful temporal experience with unrequited love into transcendent,

desire-inspired poetry. Finally, the thesis explores the inter-textuality between the pastoral *Calender* and Spenser's epic work, *The Faerie Queene*, and offers an interpretation that suggests a sense of closure for both works.

"THE COMMON LABYRINTH OF LOVE":

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF SEXUAL DESIRE IN EDMUND SPENSER'S *THE
SHEPHEARDES CALENDER*

A Thesis

Presented to

The Division of English
EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

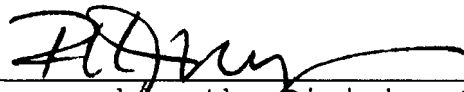
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

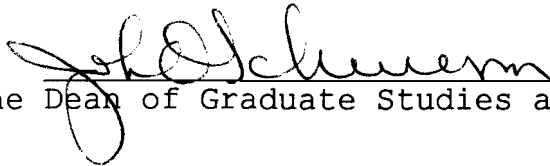
Ivan Pančić

May 1998

Thesis
1998
P



Approved by the Division Chair



Approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to Russ Meyer, my thesis director, for allowing me to work at my own pace and respecting my ideas. Without his support, guidance, inspiration, and, above all, patience this project would still be an undeveloped idea. I am further grateful to the committee members Richard Keller and Jim Hoy. My thanks also goes to my past teachers, Matt Fike and Sandy Feinstein, who have taught me to think creatively, yet with discipline. Finally, a grateful acknowledgment is due to my friends who have endured my presence during the writing process, and my family, who have endured my absence from home. Aren't you grateful that I'm done?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
<u>Chapter</u>	
I. Introduction to "The Common Labyrinth of Love".....	1
II. From Anxiety to Maturity: The Cycle of Erotic Desire of Colin Clout in <i>Januarye</i> and <i>December</i>	26
III. Premature and Haphazard Sexuality of <i>Februarie</i> and <i>March</i>	49
IV. The Erotic Prism of <i>Aprill</i> , <i>Maye</i> , and <i>Julye</i>	70
V. "Maintenance" of the Poetic State of Affairs: <i>June</i> , <i>October</i> , and <i>November</i>	88
VI. Education in Love and Courtesie: Calidore and Colin in Book VI of <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	110
NOTES	133
WORKS CITED	137

I.

Introduction to "The Common Labyrinth of Love"

The power of human sexuality parallels only the power of God in the Old Testament. If God's plan is inherently if opaquely benevolent, then humankind's plan is random, driven by sexuality.

Sander L. Gilman

Sexuality: An Illustrated History

The focus of this thesis is the exploration of the nature and purpose of sexual desire in Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*.¹ Interestingly enough, this subject has not been explored comprehensively in relation to *SC*, although it seems to be of great importance in the work itself. Analysis of sexuality in Spenser's other works, particularly in *The Faerie Queene*,² has been substantial, and critics seem to agree that Spenser is a master of this subject. Camile Paglia's analysis of Spenser's treatment of sexuality included in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*,³ qualifies Spenser in the following way: "not despite but because of his complexity of erotic response, Spenser is a sexual psychologist of the first rank, surpassed only by Freud and Shakespeare" (641). Almost all of the criticism dealing with sexuality, however, seems to focus mainly on *FQ*. The

omission of *SC* is somewhat surprising, especially given the traditional view that *SC* is the starting point for Spenser's literary career and that the love theme is probably the single most discussed topic in the work. Yet, scholarship seems to have dissociated love from sexuality.

This is not to say that no critic has ever noticed or pointed out sexuality in *SC*; to the contrary, its presence is almost taken for granted, but it is given no importance. Most critics merely touch upon the theme and dismiss it as unimportant; at best, the function of sexual desire, especially unrequited desire, is treated as a disturbance of the pastoral world and a distraction of a higher need—either of writing poetry, societal order, or spiritual tranquility.

In contrast to such views, I would argue that sexuality is one of the important driving and binding forces in the lives of most of the characters in the poem. The theme weaves through most of the eclogues and it is never treated lightly, either by the poet or the protagonists. On the literal level, it provides the characters with a desire for fulfillment and a purpose to lead productive lives. On the metaphorical level, sexual desire is one of the prisms through which the shepherds view and examine nature and individual relationships, as well as the structure of the society they live in (which encompasses both the secular and

religious realms). Rather than a chaos-inducing distraction, it is a force in full accord with nature and, as such, plays a very important role in creating "a calender for every yeare."

Throughout *SC*, the shepherds are fully aware of the cycles nature goes through. The most important force in nature is the procreative one, and I view the shepherds' sexual desire in this way: it is the basic drive to procreate and prolong the re-birth cycle. While this desire is in accord with nature, however, the shepherds are at the same time in discord with nature's timing, i.e., their impatience causes them to become anxious and "forlorn." Faced with this powerful drive, they have to learn to come to terms with it, and this is where they depart from natural order. This anxiety, however is present only in the early eclogues, for it dissipates into calm acceptance later in the poem. When viewed in the chronological order of the *Calender*, sexual desire goes from anxiety to serenity, from being an overpowering emotion to an assimilated fact of life.

Review of Criticism

Most critics either trace historical allusions embedded in *SC* or admire the complicated verse forms appearing in the English language for the first time in this poem. When summing up most of the scholarship of *SC*, A.C. Hamilton concludes:

The critical attention given Spenser's *Shepherd's Calender*, apart from praise of the work as a brilliant poetical exercise, has mainly been to identify certain historical allusions . . . Yet even the probable identification of Rosalind or Dido or Cuddie does not take one very far into the poem[,] which is read then only as a cipher or intellectual puzzle. (30)

Although Hamilton's remark was written in 1956, little has changed. *Special Sessions of "Spenser at Kalamazoo" Commemorating the Four-Hundredth Anniversary of The Shepherd's Calender*, held in 1979, makes no mention of sexuality in the work. The major focus of *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (published in 1990) is still the same: the work is approached as an historical puzzle or as a masterpiece of verse forms. While tracing down historical allusions is a demanding and intellectually intriguing task, it ultimately takes the reader away from the poem and into the surrounding

world, and a focus on the formalities of verse forms, without paying attention to the content, leaves the work empty of desire. The notion of a puzzle is nevertheless an intriguing one and has been one of the driving forces of criticism; without puzzlement, challenge and desire for understanding, criticism would be as exciting and insightful as tax law.

Most critics who mention sexuality in *SC* treat it as either being too obvious or a complicated metaphor and dismiss the sexuality itself as an unimportant force in the work. *The Spenser Encyclopedia* merely touches upon the subject but never uses the terms sex, sexuality, or eroticism. The closest term used is in the description of the *March* eclogue: "Spenser's shepherds take a ruder view of love . . . and mythologize it as a rustic Cupid." Summaries and explanations of seven eclogues—*Februarie, Maye, Julye, September, October, November, December*—contain no reference even to love.

Isabel MacCaffrey treats the theme of love in the poem as a disruption of (micro)cosmic order. She compares Marvell's and Spenser's descriptions of love and comes to the following conclusion:

The interesting feature of all these descriptions of love lies in their stress on the disruption of

macrocosmic harmony . . . Images of tempest, drought, insomnia, and withered grass became appropriate figures for man's fallen state, the seasons' difference that signifies the penalty of Adam. (556)

MacCaffrey's comment applies to the disruption of Colin's "summer," "which he sayth, was consumed with greate heate and excessive drought caused through a Comet or blasinge starre, by which he meaneth love, which passion is comenly compared to such flames and immoderate heate" (*December, Argument*). MacCaffrey also notices that Colin reiterates this argument later in *December*: "A comett stird up that vnkindly heate, / That reigned (as men sayd) in Venus seate" (59-60). Although the *Argument* states that the comet and the blazing star are merely symbols of Colin's inner passions, MacCaffrey reverses the symbolism, without explanation, and makes an argument that Colin's erotic desires are simply spiritual allegories, or "a kind of parody upon the harmonious prelapsarian unity" (556). Thus, a simple recognition of Colin's sexual drive, expressed in a metaphorical way, is, so to speak, taken to a higher level, and thus neglected and denied.

While MacCaffrey suppresses Colin's obvious awareness of his own sexuality, Patrick Cullen plays a joke on it and

then dismisses it as comical. Cullen quotes the following section from *Februarye*:

Now thy selfe hast lost both lopp and topp,
Als my budding braunch thou wouldest cropp:
But were thy yeares greene, as now bene myne,
To other delights they would encline.
Then wouldest thou learne to caroll of Lowe,
And hery with hymnes thy lasses gloue.
Tho wouldest thou pype of *Phyllis* prayse:
But *Phyllis* is myne for many dayes:
I wonne her with a gyrdle of gelt,
Embost buegle about the belt.
Such an one shepheard woulde make full faine:
Such an one would make thee younge againe.

(57-68)

Cullen comments on this passage by saying that "one does not need Freud to understand the sexual (comically so) undercurrent in Cuddie's fear that Thenot would crop off his budding branch and taunt that Thenot himself has lost 'lopp and top'" (35). One might make an argument that Cullen is saying that it is funny how one does not need Freud to understand the sexual undercurrent in this passage, but, if this were the case, the parenthetical expression would be placed right after "Freud," not after "sexual." What seems

to be comical in the comment that Cullen makes is the very idea that he thinks it is funny that Spenser uses sexual allusions that are very transparent (even without help of Freud). For Cullen, sexuality itself seems to be a laughing matter, but it may also signify sexual embarrassment; thus dismissive laughter might be a cover-up not necessarily connected to the text.

While Cullen dismisses sexual desire as comic and MacCaffrey treats it as malignant and violent, Harry Berger Jr. treats it as a disturbance of one's inner equilibrium, as something disturbing the soul of man. Berger writes following about eros as a force influencing Spenser's heroes:

Psychologically, eros is always felt at first as an affliction, a pain-giving force which disturbs equilibrium and fills the soul with violent longing or frustration. It is this eros which . . . distracts Colin Clout in the *Shepherd's Calendar*. If it is hateful and plaintive, it is also a necessary experience, for it drives the soul of a lover or poet out of its childhood--out of its self-enclosed, self-delighting idyll of innocence, a garden state in which . . . it would otherwise degenerate. (29)

Unlike the previously mentioned critics, Berger does recognize the psychological force of eros, but even he categorizes it as a disturbance of an apparent equilibrium, primarily of a person's psyche, and this view goes hand in hand with MacCaffrey's. He differs from MacCaffrey's interpretation, however, in saying that the self-indulgent state of the soul needs erotic disturbance in order to avoid degeneration. It is interesting that Berger considers this disturbance as a positive sign of growing up and considers erotic desire to be a positive step away from the prelapsarian state. In this, his interpretation seems to go directly against MacCaffrey's stand that eros represents an essentially malignant and almost perverted desire to return to the prelapsarian world.

While Berger recognizes the psychological force of eros, he, too, much like the other critics, channels it into something different from a desire for carnal unification with another human being. He acknowledges various erotic allusions in *March*, but he regards them as a simple surface pointing to more complex psychological issues:

The *March* view of "youth's initiations into the rites of love and manhood," as one commentator phrased it, also features the cliches of homoerotic narcissism, since what the hunter

pursues is not a woman but (presumably his own) desire as a god. Behind the simple surface of the eclogue lies a network of varied allusions to the complex psychology of love. (361)

Again, sexuality in its pure, physical form is being set aside, and it is interpreted into "something more": a driving force behind actions of man, actions which are sometimes much different and, physically, have nothing in common with eros in its purest form. This dissociation, I feel, is artificial, and it is my view that the physical and psychological drives are equally important.

The approaches taken by MacCaffrey, Cullen, and Berger have one thing in common: while at least noticing the existence of sexual desire, they try to re-channel it into anything but a desire for actual physical act of love. This is achieved by re-focusing the center of interpretation away from its obvious meaning, i.e., what the interpretations provide us with is the personal view of the critic, which does not necessarily coincide with, or even recognize, the point of view of the poem. The result is the alienation of eros from an individual and superimposition of extraneous ideas onto the innate physical and psychological erotic drive. While psychological drive is at least being recognized, the physical one is largely neglected; if it is

treated at all, it is alluded to in puns, and with a seemingly embarrassed dismissive smile.

While dismissing erotic desire as distracting and destructive, especially as it relates to the shepherds' poetic talents, and Colin's in particular, a link between eroticism and poetry is also established. This link also nicely fits in the context of Renaissance sonnet sequences, where the connection between love and poetry was very strong, almost tangible, as some critics have pointed out. Bruce R. Smith, in *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England*, treats sexual desire as standing in the way of Colin's poetic ability:

As early as "Januarye" we see Colin being deflected from his high calling by the low promptings of sexual passion. The source of these distractions is Rosalind, a girl from the town neighboring the fields in which Colin pursues his poetic labors. It is bad enough that Rosalind keeps Colin from the literary tasks at hand, but she causes him to neglect also his friend Hobbinoll. (94)

In an attempt to show some "sympathy" for "the sufferings of Colin Clout," David R. Shore states:

Renaissance conventions seldom allowed for immediate reciprocation of love. The shepherd as well as the courtier had to prove his worth and sincerity, if not by deeds then at least by suffering. The despair Colin displays in the January eclogue is a *normal enough effect of pastoral love*. (179; emphasis mine)

Even though Shore tries to show some sympathy for Colin, he ultimately condemns the character for his "ultimate lack of success" (180) and for the fact that "Colin himself will never realize the full potential for poetry [that] his love and sufferings have revealed is little cause for regret" (188). Although the last statement is much less condemning than the statements made by other critics, it implies that had Colin not chosen the unattainable goal of Rosalind his poetry might have been even better.

The most immediate link between SC and the traditional forms of love poetry is established by Steven F. Walker. Walker identifies two *topoi* that Spenser used in creating the dynamic connection between poetry and love. He discusses the conflict between the Theocritean assumption that poetry "is a cure for love" (353) and the Petrarchan "*counter-topos of incurable love*" (355). Walker states that

It would not be an oversimplification to say that in Renaissance pastoral the essentially Epicurean world view of Theocritean pastoral, which emphasized sexual autonomy and the avoidance of pain, came into conflict with a Petrarchan and courtly world view, which proposed fidelity, sexual dependence, and inner suffering as a purifying initiation into the mysteries of Love.

(365)

Walker also seems to be the only critic who does not condemn Colin for falling in love when he concludes that "Colin has been defeated as a lover, but his defeat as a poet is only partial" (365). The partial defeat is attributed to the conflicting notions of the purpose of poetry, not to Colin's poetic ability.

Regarding the Petrarchan tradition, I would like to point out one simple difference between the goals of Petrarch and Spenser's Colin. Petrarch's Lora is from the very start an unattainable object--she is married and faithful. Nowhere in *SC* is Rosalind described as being bound to any other man, and Colin believes that she makes herself unavailable out of pride, not because of any prior obligations.⁴ The result in both cases, however, seems to point to the conclusion that poetry is an end in itself,

which is a view I find problematic. Colin's desire for Rosalind, in addition to falling within the Renaissance tradition, is also just one of the pieces in the puzzle of desire in *SC*, and I believe that Spenser consciously chooses never to satisfy this desire and to leave it in the state of *perpetuum mobile*, which is what I hope to demonstrate in this thesis. I do not believe that Colin fails, either as a lover or as a poet; to the contrary, I believe that Colin's love's labor's not lost.

Critical Orientation

My critical approach to *SC* does not necessarily belong to a single school of criticism, and I do not propose a new one either. In a way, this reading stems primarily from the text of the work. The text of *SC* is approached as fiction, and it is looked at in its entirety, i.e., both the Eclogues and E.K.'s glosses are treated as a single entity. I am not going to discuss various possible or probable historical allusions for a simple reason: many have speculated on the subject of Rosalind's and E.K.'s "true" identity, and the situation seems to be as unclear as *SC* states it would be. In addition, the first impact on the reader comes not from the historical context but from the book in one's hands, and, while historical context undoubtedly contributed to the

work's formation (or at least to the author's perceptions), it does not necessarily have an immediate impact on the enjoyment of the work, especially after over four hundred years have passed. Even those who do not know the historical context are still capable of a full and satisfying enjoyment of the poem. In effect, my approach almost hinges on labeling *SC* a self-sufficient artifact, but I would like to dispel this illusion. I do not propose a comprehensive, unified, and final interpretation of the work; I only wish to offer a reading that contributes one more piece to the puzzle, thus enriching the overall mosaic.

Another reason for my approach stems from the nature of my topic; sexual desire has existed throughout the history of humanity, and it seems to have been persistent through whatever historical period; thus, the nature of desire could easily be the first impact the text has on the reader. In addition, the work itself claims to be an instructional exploration of the nature of desire and a "calender for every yeare," thus immediately claiming to be both temporal and transcendental. The temporal part would constitute the immediate perception of sexual desire, something innate in every human being because, without it, humankind would never be willing to perpetuate itself. On the transcendental, or possibly trans-historical, level this immediate experience

is simultaneously an incessant constant, completely independent of the historical context.

The basic premise of this study is that exploration and understanding of sexual desire is one of the important driving and unifying forces of *SC*. The development of this desire closely follows the development of the nature cycle, and the parallel development of the two establishes a direct connection between nature's yearly re-cycle and that of humankind. While erotic desire is portrayed as natural, there is an important discrepancy between the two: nature's cycle is perfectly timed, but the shepherds have to struggle to come to terms with their innate desires and their outward satisfaction. Another discrepancy between nature and human sexuality is that the latter also transcends the purely natural realm and exercises great influence on the shepherds' perceptions. In effect, the presence of sexual desire is more than a mere fact of nature, it weaves through most of the aspects of human life covered in the *Calender*: from purely personal, to socio-political, from its literal, physical meaning to a complex metaphor through which the Shepherds perceive the world.

Nancy Jo Hoffman, in the preface to *Spenser's Pastorals*, states that her work was "about neither pastoral's escapism nor its political wisdom. Rather, four

chapters show how Spenser managed to expand pastoral possibility, in part dismissing the hurly-burly of politics for the *enduring patterns of human life*" (ix; emphasis mine). This idea of enduring patterns of human life, however, is transformed later in the book to the exploration of class consciousness/struggle in the Elizabethan England, thus exploring temporary, societal patterns of a neatly layered society, again, taking the reader outside the text.

The idea itself, though, is very intriguing if explored on a more personal level, or as E.K. states in the Epistle:

Now as touching the generall dryft and purpose of his *Æglogues*, I mind not to say much, him selfe labouring to conceale it. Onely this appeareth, that his unstayed yought had long wandered in the common Labyrinth of Love, in which time to mitigate and allay the heate of his passion, or els to warne (as he sayth) the young shepherds .s. his equals and companions of his unortunate folly, he compiled these xii. *Æglogues*, which for that they be proportioned to the state of the xii. monethes. (168-176)

Thus, *SC* reveals only one of its "general purposes"--the study of love. Coupled with this personal view of love that

starts the poem, the *Epilogue* ends it on a general and transcendental note:

Loe I have made a Calender for every yeare,
That steele in strenght, and time in durance shall
outweare:

And if I marked well the starres revolution,
It shall continue till the worlds dissolution.
To teach the ruder shepheard how to feede his
sheepe. (1-5)

The understanding of Love, the only openly disclosed purpose of the *Calender*, should last as long as the world. What is also implied in this statement is that temporal historical contexts are perishable, and desire is the only constant. It could also be said, however, that the enduring quality is assigned to poetry, not to desire, which seems to be what E.K. is saying in his note to the *December Embleme*: "The meaning wherof is that all thinges perish and come to theyr last end, but workes of learned wits and monumnets of Poetry abide for ever"; what this study hopes to demonstrate, however, is that without desire poetry would not be (or become) as monumental as it is.

Organization

The treatment of desire in *SC* in the following chapters is as follows.

Chapter Two analyzes the two eclogues that frame the *Calender*, *Januarye* and *December*. These two eclogues establish the pattern of development of sexual desire in *SC* and provide the basis for reading the other eclogues. Colin Clout goes from an anxious and insecure youthful lover/poet to a mature one who is able to recognize and control his physical desires and his poetic ability. *Januarye* presents him as an impatient "Shepheardes boye," endowed with both physical desire and poetic talent. The two seem intertwined, and he tries to get one through the other. His physical desire is in accord with the beginning of the new cycle in nature, yet he is in discord with nature because of his impatience. In a way, the desire present in him and the lack of fulfillment of that desire parallel the beginning of the cycle in nature in *Januarye*, when the change is yet invisible to the naked eye, the process hidden under the cover of winter. In *December*, Colin is not anxious; he is calm and able to look back upon his life with serenity, which indicates his understanding of cycles of human life.

The two eclogues also present the dynamics between Colin's poetic ability and his unrequited love. Contrary to

what most critics believe, I argue that love is not an impediment to Colin's talent; rather, it is the driving force behind it. Colin's essentially sexual view of the world is also reflected in the way some shepherds view the world throughout the poem. Finally, the *Calender* never mentions satisfaction of Colin's sexual desire (although *December* seems to imply it), again conforming to the cycle of nature. If the cycle is to continue, desire must persist.

The development of Colin's sexuality in these two eclogues establishes a pattern for reading the rest of the *Calender*. Chapters three to six trace different stages of this development.

Chapter Three analyzes anxious sexuality present in *Februarie* and *March*. The argument between Cuddie and Thenot in *Februarie* is carried out in "lewd" complaints, and their dialogue reflects Cuddie's budding sexual desire and Thenot's "unlustinesse" (*Argument*). Cuddie is impatient, much like Colin in *Januarye*, and in this he parallels the beginning of nature's rejuvenation. The tale of the oak and the brier reflects Thenot's struggle between his passing desire and his apparent envy of Cuddie's virility, but he is almost brutally cut off by Cuddie and never allowed to finish his tale, which signifies the imminent passing of the previous cycle of nature. *March*, marking the beginning of

Spring, is free from suppression of Eros. Willye and Thomalin joyfully recognize and enjoy their desire, much like the nature's revival is becoming visible to the naked eye. Their enjoyment, however, is limited only to recognizing their innate desires, which are never satisfied in the eclogue.

What characterizes these two eclogues are the anxiety and prematurity of the characters. In *Februarie*, Cuddie is almost literally being suppressed by Thenot and is anxious to break off the dialogue aimed at taming his desire. Willye and Thomalin, while recognizing their pubescence, lack experience and their naiveté is obvious in their innocent conversation. Yet the treatment of desire in these two eclogues is somewhat different. While in *Februarie* the desire is apparently a disruptive force, in *March* it is a unifying one, and Willye and Thomalin are anxious to explore their sexuality and are unimpeded by any suppressing factors.

Chapter Four examines how sexual desire influences the shepherds' outlook on the world in *Aprill*, *Maye*, and *Julye*. In *Aprill*, Thenot and Hobbinoll discuss Colin's love for Rosalind, but then Hobbinoll recites one of Colin's lays, which, as E.K. points out, is meant solely to praise Queen Elizabeth. It is interesting that the Virgin Queen is

described in very erotic terms, which implies that human sexuality is one of the important influences on how political structures of the society are perceived. *Maye* and *Julye* deal with discussion of religion, the discussion focusing mainly on the physical enjoyment of earthly life. *Maye's* argument between Palinode and Piers is largely a discussion of sexuality. The positive and negative (or quite simply good and bad) approaches to religion are viewed almost exclusively in terms of erotic desire, which in *Maye* is treated in a positive manner. *Julye* also uses sexual terminology in defining the good shepherd/pastor, with one difference—the terminology used to criticize inappropriate characteristics is that of perverted sexuality. The perversion is defined as something going against the natural order. Thus erotic desire, which in the earlier eclogues was closely connected to and defined by nature, weaves through and defines social and religious constructs.

Chapter Five is a discussion of the connection between love and poetry, skill and emotion, form and content, which weaves through the *June*, *October*, and *November* eclogues. In *June*, Hobbinoll and Colin discuss Colin's unreciprocated love for Rosalind, and the argument seems to go against love. Although he is depressed, Colin does not take Hobbinoll's advice to let go of his feelings. In *October*,

despite his apparent desperation, Colin is recognized as the best poet among the shepherds; thus his commitment to love is implicitly respected. In addition, *October* presents a discussion between Piers and Cuddie about the goal of poetry. Their conclusion is that love is the worthiest topic and that poetic talent itself is insufficient. Immediately following this conclusion, Colin sings in *November*, for the first time since *Januarye*. Thus, the link between poetry and love is reinforced, and Colin's love for Rosalind, in addition to his poetic talent, makes him the best poet among the shepherds. This conclusion, however, can only be reached if Colin is viewed in the context of the entire *Calender*, not by isolated examination of single eclogues. The final effect is that love and poetry are recognized as complementary: without love, poetic ability does not amount to much, and without poetry, love is merely "lowly," as Colin comes to realize. Colin is the only one worthy of transcending the lowly love. He comes to understand the nature of desire and to find a way to "immortalize" himself, not through sexual fulfillment, but through poetry, which completes the circle of the *Calender*. Sexual desire is recognized as a powerful force in nature, however, its physical satisfaction, while procreative and responsible for

starting a new cycle, does not solve the question of the ultimate passing of human life.

Chapter Six addresses this question by examining the almost unexpected appearance of Colin in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*. Calidore's chance encounter with Colin brings together the questions of sexuality, poetry, and the possibility of transcending physical death. Colin's vision is that of pure, naked, and unadulterated desire. This desire, without the accompaniment of poetry, would be as temporal as human life itself. But it is also important to recognize that, without temporal physical desire, Colin would probably never have started writing his poetry. Yet, through understanding the temporal nature of physical love, he manages to recreate desire in poetry and thus transcends the realm of the temporal.

Colin's appearance in Book VI, while at first it may seem inappropriate, is the final validation of the idea Spenser had already developed in *SC*, and thus is appropriately included in *FQ*, which, to a large extent and in greater detail, attempts to answer the question of erotic desire. I do not propose, however, that *SC* should be read as a guide to *FQ*. This episode clarifies only one of the questions dealt with in both works, and I do not suggest that the *Calender* holds the key to the puzzle of *The Faerie*

Quene. Coincidentally, though, since *FQ* was left unfinished (whether by chance or design), this episode, to some extent, also provides a sense of closure for both works.

II.

From Anxiety to Maturity: The Cycle of Erotic Desire of Colin Clout in *Januarye* and *December*

*He proportioneth his life to the foure
seasons of the yeare. (December, Argument)*

The most enduring pattern of Colin Clout's life is the exploration and understanding of his sexual desire. He is faced with it in the opening lines of *Januarye*, and the *Calender* closes with his last farewell to Rosalind, the object of his desire. In much the same way as his sexual desire, Colin's poetry is primarily aimed at Rosalind; thus, the two are closely connected and, at times, impossible to separate.

Like the poem itself, the cycle of erotic desire in the *Calender* begins and ends with Colin Clout. His initiation into eroticism in *Januarye* shows him as an impatient youth, recognizing his desire but unable to control it:

In this fyrst Eglogue Colin cloute a shpepheardes
boy complaineth him of his unfortunate love, being
but newly (as semeth) enamoured of a countrie
lasse called Rosalinde: with which strong

affectation being very sore traveled, he compareth his carefull case to the sadde season of the yeare, to the frostie ground, to the frosen trees, and to his owne winterbeaten flocke.

As a young "shepheardes boy," Colin is probably experiencing sexual desire for the first time. His falling in love with Rosalind is apparently due more to accident rather than control, for he seems to have first encountered her by chance:

A thousand sithes I curse that careful hower,
Wherein I longd the neighbour towne to see:
And eke tenne thousand sithes I blesse the stoure,
Wherein I sawe so fayre a sight, as shee.
Yet all for naught: such sight hath bred my bane.
Ah God, that love should breede both joy and
payne. (49-54)

Colin's love for Rosalind is accidental; his desire was to "see the neighbour towne," not Rosalind. Additionally, his love toward her is, so to speak, love at first sight, and would more accurately be classified as lust than as spiritual or emotional attraction. There is no evidence in *Januarye* that Rosalind had paid any attention to Colin during their first encounter. His love stems primarily from

his own youthful erotic desire; there seems to be no communication between the two, let alone mutual affection.

The second important pattern of Colin's life has to do with the development and exploration of his poetic talent. Chronologically, however, Colin's love for Rosalind comes prior to the revelation of his poetic talent. It is hard to determine whether Colin had possessed this talent before he fell in love with Rosalind. Colin's recapitulation of his life in *December*, for example, does not contain an explanation. Numerous times in the *Calender*, love is treated as an impediment to Colin's poetry, but no chronological pattern is established. While it is possible that Colin was writing poetry before he fell in love with Rosalind, the opposite is equally possible.

Some shepherds in the poem, and most critics of the *Calender*, treat sexual desire as an impediment to the development of Colin's poetic talent, but, if viewed in its entirety, the *Calender* suggests that poetic ability alone does not amount to much without love. By the end of the poem, Colin's erotic desire and his poetic talent are still closely linked, but now he has come full circle. Desire is no longer an impediment but is recognized as the driving force behind his poetry.

Why Start in January?

The perception that love is an impediment to poetry might come from the discrepancy between the timing of Colin's sexual desire and the cycle of nature. Colin's problem in the first eclogue is that his desire, while paralleling the beginning of the year-cycle, is not in concord with the cycle of nature. The beginning of the new calendar year in January does not necessarily signify the beginning of the nature's rejuvenation, which, according to the *Calender*, is usually in March. Any awakening in nature in January, at least in England, is mostly invisible to the human eye; although life juices are starting to flow under the melting surface, nature is still half-frozen.

Human sexuality does not necessarily conform to cycles of nature because it is not dependent on seasonal changes; thus saying that Colin's sexual desire is not in concord with nature might sound incorrect. The *Calender*, however, seems to draw a parallel between human sexuality and the cycle of nature. In the *Argument to December*, E.K. says that Colin "proportioneth his life to the foure seasons of the yeare," i.e., the developments in nature are supposed to stand for the development of human life. Additionally, the *Januarye* eclogue deals mostly with Colin's sexual desire, where Colin again, or rather at first, "compareth his

carefull case to the sadde season of the yeare, to the frostie ground, to the frosen trees, and to his owne winterbeaten flocke." Thus, not only does *Januarye* connect the beginning of the year with Colin's erotic awakening, but *December* reinforces the idea that nature's cycle is viewed as a metaphor of human life.

Additionally, E.K.'s *Generall Argument of the Whole Booke* explains in great detail Spenser's decision to start the year in January as opposed to March:

Now will we speake particularly of all, and first of the first. which he calleth by the first monethes name *Januarye*: wherein to some he may seeme fowly to have faulted, in that he erroneously beggineth with that moneth, which beginneth not the yeare. For it is wel known, and stoutely mainteyned with stronge reasons of the learned, that the yeare beggineth in March. for then the sonne reneweth his finished course, and the seasonable spring refresheth the earth, and the pleasaunce thereof being burried in the sadnesse of the dead winter now worne away, reliveth . . . But saving the leave of such learned heads, we mayntaine a custome of computing the seasons from the moneth *January*, upon a more

speciall cause . . . that is, for the incarnation
of our mighty Saviour and enternall redeemer the
L. Christ. (40-59)

E.K.'s elaborate analysis occupies more than half of the
entire *Argument*, but apparently for no particular purpose.
The discussion is dismissed, almost off-handedly, in the
conclusion:

But our Authour respecting nether the subtiltie of
thone parte, nor the antiquitie of thother,
thinketh it fittest according to the simplicitie
of commen understanding, to begin with Januarie,
wening it perhaps no decorum, that Shepheard
should be seene in matter of so deepe insight, or
canvase a case of so doubtful judgment. (105-10)

The decision to start the year in January, despite
E.K.'s explanation, goes against the shepherds' connection
with nature. If shepherds are people of "commen
understanding" and unable to distinguish "subtleties" of
"deepe insight, or canvase a case of so doubtful judgment,"
then the explanation does not apply to them in the least.
Most simple-minded shepherds would probably think that "the
yeare beginneth in March, for then the sonne reneweth his
finished course, and the seasonable spring refresheth the
earth," i.e., the shepherds are more in touch with nature

than with intricate, almost arbitrary, philosophical and religious discussions that are based on events not directly linked with the unchanging patterns of nature.

Thus, Colin's budding desire in January is not in concord with the cycle of nature because Colin is practically displaced from March, when he would naturally perceive the year to begin. If the seasons of the year are supposed to symbolize Colin's life-cycle, then it would also be natural to begin the *Calender* in March. E.K.'s comment that the beginning of the new year is linked with the birth of Jesus Christ, does not apply to Colin. The Colin of *Januarye* is not concerned with spirituality. He addresses the gods hoping for physical reciprocation of his desire, but he addresses Pan the god of nature, not Jesus; Colin is preoccupied with natural desires, with satisfaction of his desire to procreate, not with the eternal destiny of his soul.

E.K. and Colin's Sexuality

Colin's budding sexuality in *Januarye* is a strong and well-pronounced force with which he is unable to deal. Impatient, he tries to act on it prematurely. By *December*, Colin has matured and is able to examine his life analytically, recalling its progress with understanding and

an ability to control his sexual desire. His recollection also shows how much he has viewed the world through the prism of erotic desire, which is the driving force of his life, and of the *Calender*.

It would also appear that Colin is not necessarily interested in Rosalind but primarily preoccupied with his own desire, which influences his entire outlook on the world. In fact, with the exception of the *Argument*, Rosalind is not mentioned until two thirds into the eclogue, and even then the narrator reporting Colin's cares has to clarify exactly who is the object of his desire.

Before analyzing Colin's outlook on the world, it is important to point out that the poem itself almost forces a sexual reading of *Januarye* by introducing an allusion to the writer who is often labeled as the first pornographer, Pietro Aretino.¹ In the stanza immediately following the description of how he fell in love, Colin says,

It is not *Hobbinol*, wherefore I plaine,
Albee my love he seeke with dayly suit:
His clownish gifts and curtsies I disdaine,
His kiddes, his cracknelles, and his early fruit.
Ah foolish *Hobbinol*, thy gyfts bene vayne:
Colin them gives to *Rosalind* againe. (55-60)

Line fifty-nine is accompanied by E.K.'s note,

In thys place seemeth to be some savour of disorderly love, which the learned call pæderastice: but it is gathered beside his meaning . . . And so is pæderastice much to be præferred before gynerastice, that is the love whiche enflameth men with lust toward woman kind. But let no man thinke, that herein I stand with Lucian or hys develish disciple Unico Aretino, in defence of execrable and horrible sinnes of forbidden and unlawful fleshlinesse. Whose abominale errour is fully confuted of Perionius, and others.

E.K.'s allusion is probably to Aretino's *Regionamenti*, dialogues between two harlots on the topics of sexual practices among nuns, married women, and courtesans. Aretino's work had not been published in England until late 1580s, almost ten years after the publication of the *Calender*, and then only in Italian.² If only the continental edition was available, the book would probably not have wide circulation at the time the *Calender* was published. In light of this, E.K.'s comment, the longest note in *Januarye Glosse*, seems gratuitous. Instead of clarifying a potential misreading, the reference to a pornographic work makes sexuality a viable issue.³

E.K. further invites the topic of sexuality through his redefinition of pederasty as friendship between men. The new definition is unconvincing in light of the more established, pornographic meaning of the word, which E.K. promptly reports as being "disorderly." Additionally, pederasty is defined as the opposite of "gynerastice, that is the love which enflameth men with lust towards womankind." Combined with the allusion to Aretino's pornography, E.K.'s comment can hardly be viewed as anything but a direct introduction of sexuality in *Januarye*.

On the other hand, although it discusses erotic desire in great detail, the *Calender* is not a pornographic text. Desire is important, but the treatment of desire is not Aretinian; rather, physical desire conforms to Colin's perception of the nature-cycle. Although *Januarye* could initially be read in such a way, Colin's desire is not merely for satisfaction of his early-awakened sexual drive.

Colin's Anxious Sexuality in *Januarye*

Allusions to Colin's sexuality start in the woodcut to *Januarye*, where, instead of the "oaten pype" (72), there is a bagpipe, which, according to the editors of *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, "in medieval iconography symbolized male desire and . . . here implies a

connection between eroticism and the poet's creativity" (27). This connection is further emphasized by the narrator of the poem, who describes Colin with the following words: "May seme he lovd, or els some care he tooke: / Well couth he tune his pipe, and frame his stile" (9-10). The introduction of Colin's problem, the concerned look of a lover, is paired with the introduction of his poetic ability. The connection between the two is at first ambiguous because it might seem that his poetic ability is also part of his problem. Colin further reinforces the connection between love and poetry when he addresses the gods with a plea: "Ye Gods of love, that pitie lovers payne, / (If any gods the paine of lovers pitie:) / Looke from above, where you in joyes remaine, / And bowe your eares unto my dolefull dittie" (13-16). Colin's humble attitude toward his poetry and the "Gods of love" seems genuine; he is unsure whether the power of his poetry is strong enough to help him capture the emotions of the object of his love.

Colin's insecurity is further developed through his perception of nature; he assumes that nature reflects his state of mind:

Thou barrein ground, whome winters wrath hath
wasted,

. . .

Art made a myrrhour, to behold my plight:
Whilome thy fresh spring flowrd, and after hasted
Thy sommer prowde with Daffadillies dight.
And now is come thy wynters stormy state,
Thy mantle mard, wherein thou maskedst late.

Such rage as winters, reigneth in my heart,
My life bloud friesing with unkindly cold:
Such stormy stoures do breede my balefull smart,
As if my yeare were wast, and woxen old.
And yet alas, but now my spring begonne,
And yet alas, yt is already donne. (19-30)

Colin's view of nature as frozen and stormy, however, is inaccurate at this particular moment because the narrator of the poem informs us, in the third line of the eclogue, that the reported events were taking place "all in a sunneshine day, as did befall." Furthermore, Colin states that his youth has ended almost before it had begun, i.e., he sees himself as becoming prematurely old. At this point it becomes apparent that the nature Colin describes is more of a re-creation of his state of mind than the actual state of

nature surrounding him. While it is certainly possible for sun to shine on a winter day and nature still to be frozen, the image created by the narrator's reference to sunshine is not of the frozen ground. The image of nature as sunny and bright also frames this eclogue because the last stanza describes Colin's flock as "sonned sheepe" (77).

Colin's view of nature as re-creation of his state of mind becomes more evident when nature is described as having anthropomorphic qualities:

You naked trees, whose shady leaves are lost,
Wherein the byrds were wont to build their bowre:
And now are clothd with mosse and hoary frost,
Instede of bloosmees, wherewith your buds did
 flowre:
I see your teares, that from your boughes doe
 raine,
Whose drops in drery ysicles remaine.

All so my lustfull leafe is drye and sere,
My timely buds with wayling all are wasted:
The blossome, which my braunch of youth did beare,
With breathed sighes is blowne away, and blasted,
And from mine eyes the drizzling teares descend,
As on your boughes the ysicles depend. (31-42)

Colin's view of nature in this passage is essentially erotic: the trees are naked and imagined to be crying for the same reason Colin does, for unrequited love. Additionally, Colin portrays himself in metaphors of nature: his "lustfull leafe," possibly a phallic symbol, is wasted and blown away with his sighing. These interpolating images of human-like nature and nature-like Colin indicate Colin's confusion with his own newly-discovered sexuality. It is almost impossible to distinguish when Colin is referring to nature and when he is referring to himself; his metaphors, instead of elucidating his state of mind, indicate a collage of confused and conflicting feelings.

Colin's confusion is also evident in his impatient, selfish desire for immediate satisfaction of his longing for Rosalind. One indication of his impatience might be the length of the *Januarye* eclogue, the shortest in the *Calender*. The eclogue is violently brought to an end immediately after Colin reports Rosalind's refusal of his advances:

I love thilke lasse, (alas why doe I love?)
And am forlorne, (alas why am I lorne?)
She deignes not my good will, but doth reprove,
And of my rurall musick holdeth scorne.
Shepherds devise she hateth as the snake,

And laughs the songes, that *Colin Clout* doth
make.

Wherefore my pype, albee rude *Pan* thou please,
Yet for thou pleasest not, where most I would:
And thou unlucky Muse, that wontst to ease
My musing mynd, yet canst not, when thou should:
Both pype and Muse, shall sore the while abyе.
So broke his oaten pype, and downe dyd lye.

(61-72)

The intensity with which Colin's reacts to Rosalind's refusal indicates the intensity of his desire and his youthful immaturity. Had his attraction to Rosalind not been strong, Colin would probably not be bothered by her refusal; yet he was immature enough to assume that she fell in love with him at the same "careful hower" he had fallen in love with her. In addition to his immaturity, Colin's pipebreaking can be seen as a complex symbolic action. The act might indicate his disappointment with poetry; yet, in light of the symbolic connection between eroticism and poetry, his action can stand for either a denial or self-satisfaction of his sexuality. If Colin's pipe were permanently broken, he would be unable to use it (if it is the same pipe, of course) in the *November* and *December*

eclogues, where he returns to his singing. The breaking could also be symbolic, i.e., Colin might not have actually broken the pipe. On the other hand, the pipe could be seen as a phallic symbol, in which case the breaking would be only temporary.

Whatever the case, the *Januarye* eclogue contains the seeds of all the themes that are further explored and developed in the rest of the *Calender*. Colin's immaturity and impatience are convenient for introducing a puzzle of topics in a condensed and not fully developed form; the development of these topics is pursued throughout the rest of the *Calender*

Mature *December*

While the Colin of *Januarye* was confused, the Colin of *December* looks back upon his life with calm, analytical poise; he is able to distinguish clearly between the ideas that confused him in his youth, as E.K. makes clear when he describes Colin in *December*:

This *Eglogue* (even as the first beganne) is ended with a complaynte of Colin to God Pan, wherein as weary of his former wayes, he proportioneth his life to the foure seasons of the yeare, comparing hys youthe to the spring time, when he was fresh

and free from loves follye. Nis manhoode to the sommer, which he sayth, was consumed with greate heate and excessive drouth caused throughe a Comet or blasinge starre, which passion is comenly compared to such flames and immoderate heate. His ryper yeares hee resembleth to an unseasonable harveste wherein the fruites fall ere they be ryper. His latter age to winters chyll and frostie season, now drawing neare to his last ende.

(Argument)

While recounting his life, Colin focuses mainly on two topics: poetry and love; structurally, his life could be described as a lifetime of exploration and understanding of erotic desire framed by his commitment to poetry. Colin's view of poetry in *December* has changed; he no longer sees his poetic talent as a means to achieve sexual gratification. To the contrary, *December* indicates that love is not the end of poetry; rather, love is now understood to be the driving force *behind* poetry. This distinction is significant because Colin comes to realize that desire-inspired poetry, unlike physical desire itself, is not temporal but transcendent.

In the beginning of *December*, Colin addresses his song to the god Pan:

I thee beseche (so be thou deigne to heare,
Rude ditties tund to shepherds Oaten reede,
Or if I ever sonet song so cleare,
As it with plesaunce mought thy fancie feede)
Hearken awhile from thy greene cabinet,

The rural song of carefull Colinet. (13-18)

His initial intention appears to be to devote his entire song to Pan; however, the substance of the poem is not abstractly spritual, quite the opposite. Immediately after addressing Pan, Colin starts to recount the effect erotic desire has had throughout his life:

Whilome in youth, when flowrd my joyfull spring,
Like Swallow swift I wandered here and there:
For heate of heedlesse lust me so did sting,
That I of doubted daunger had no feare.
I went the wastefull woodes and forest wyde,
Withouten dreade of Wolves to bene espyed. (19-24)

"Heate of heedlesse lust" in this stanza could signify the life energy Colin had possessed while young; however, keeping in mind that natural imagery is used to symbolize the shepherds' erotic desires throughout the *Calender*, the lust is as likely to be sexual. Later in the eclogue, "hot

lust" is also twice identified as purely sexual in the description of Colin's summer, by Colin and E.K.

Keeping in mind that this is the first recollection of Colin's life in this eclogue, it is possible that, chronologically, love came before poetry. Colin himself suggests this, when he describes his first attempts at poetry:

And for I was in thilke same looser yeares,
(Whether the Muse, so wrought me from my birth,
Or I tomuch beleeved my shepherd peres)
Somedele ybent to song and musicks mirth,
A good olde shpephearde, *Wrenock* was his name,
Made me by arte more cunning in the same. (37-42)

Poetic talent here is identified as possibly being inborn, much like the erotic desire, and it would be safe to say that, at the very least, Colin's initiation into eroticism and poetry coincide in time. Nowhere else in the *Calender* does Colin, or any other poet, identify the timing more accurately.

Colin then describes his summer, which was even more lustful than his Spring:

Tho gan my lovely Spring bid me farewell,
And sommer season sped him to display
(For love then in the Lyons house did dwell)

The ragyng fyre, that kindled at his ray.

A commet stird up that unkindly heate,

That reigned (as men sayd) in Venus seate. (55-60)

The astrological and astronomical terminology is obviously used symbolically, to refer to Colin's sexual desire, not to celestial bodies and zodiacal signs, at least according to E.K., who explains line fifty-seven in the following words: "He imagineth simply that Cupid, which is love, had his abode in the whote signe Leo, which is in middest of somer; a pretie allegory, whereof the meaning is, that love in him wrought an extraordinarie heate of lust." E.K.'s comment and Colin's large-scale symbolism indicate that sexual desire was much more pronounced in Colin's summer than in his pubescent years, "whilome flowrd [his] joyful spring."

Colin's way of life in summer also differs greatly from his spring years. Colin describes himself as joyfully enjoying life as a "young shepherds boy":

I wont to raunge amydde the mazie thickette,

And gather nuttes to make me Christmas game:

And joyed of to chace the trembling Pricket,

Or hunt the hartlesse hare, til she were tame.

What wreaked I of wintrye ages waste,

Tho deemed I, my spring would ever laste. (25-30).

His "sommer" years, however, were not as careless:

Forth was I ledde, not as I wont afore,
When choise I had to choose my wandring waye:
But whether luck and loves unbridled lore
Would leade me forth on Fancies bitte to playe:
The bush my bedde, the bramble was my bowre,
The Woodes can witnesse many a wofull stowre.

(61-66)

Colin's spring and summer adventures have one thing in common: they are essentially random. Colin's exploration of eroticism in spring is innate and innocent; he is too preoccupied with enjoying himself and is neither aware nor concerned with where he goes. What young Colin does not realize, however, is that what appears to him to be the freedom to "choose [his] wandring waye" is actually an innate response to the urge of his body. In his "summer years," Colin is simply more aware of the random nature of his sexuality-driven life.

This is not to say that Colin's life resembled a full-time job of a porno star. Colin's deeper understanding and awareness of his sexuality are also accompanied by his ability to understand more clearly the world around him. It is during his "summer years" that Colin learns the principles that govern nature: "And tryed time yet taught me

greater thinges, / The sodain rying of the raging seas: /
The soothe of byrds by beating of their wings, / The power
of herbs, both which can hurt and ease" (85-88). This
observation also signifies Colin's maturing process; he is
capable of seeing things as they are, independently of his
erotic desires.

Erotic desire, however, remains the predominant force
in Colin's life. During his autumn, sexuality, although not
rampant and "extraordinaire" but rather tame, is still an
object he pursues:

And I, that whilome wont to frame my pype,
Unto the shifting of the shepherds foote:
Silke follies nowe have gathered as too ripe,
And cast hem out, as rotten and unsoote.
The loser Lasse I cast to please nomore,
One if I please, enough is me therefore. (115-120)

In addition to recognizing the presence of erotic desire in
the third stage of his life, Colin also indicates that he
has been exercising his poetic talent concurrently with his
pursuit of love.

His attitude toward the end of his life has matured; he
no longer uses poetry as a means to an end. Rather, he
realizes that his desire-inspired poetry will transcend the
passing desire of his body. It is at this point of

realization that Colin states "Here will I hang my pype upon this tree, / Was never pype of reede did better sounde" (141-142). This statement does not stem from boastfull pride but from a lifetime of inspiration and unwavering dedication to understanding and coming to terms with his innate desire. Colin's last adieu demonstrates this commitment:

Adieu delightes, that lulled me asleepe,
Adieu my deare, whose love I bought so deare:
Adieu my little Lambes and loved sheepe,
Adieu ye Woodes that oft my witsesse were:
Adieu good *Hobbinol*, that was so true,

Tell *Rosalind*, her *Colin* bids her adieu. (151-156)

Rosalind, the object of Colin's desire, is mentioned twice, which indicates that Colin considers love the most important component of his life.

Viewed in the context of the "calender for every yeare," the persistence of erotic desire in Colin's life is also the transcendent characteristic of the poem; erotic desire transcends the boundaries of Colin's body as well as the boundaries of the text and of the temporal historical framework. Desire persists, and its apparently random nature is at the same time an omnipresent and omnipersistent constant, as effortless as the renewal of the cycles of nature.

III.

Premature and Haphazard Sexuality of *Februarie* and *March*

Willye, I wene thou be assott:
For lustie Love still slepeth not.

(*March* 25-27)

Februarie and *March* continue to develop the exploration of sexuality that began with Colin in *Januarye*. As in *Januarye*, sexuality is strongly linked with the cycle of nature, and is again being suppressed in *Februarie*. The discourse between Thenot and Cuddie focuses mainly on the budding sexuality of the young shepherd and the waning sexuality of the older one. *March*, being the beginning of spring as well as the beginning of the natural year, celebrates, for the first time uninhibitedly, the beginnings of pubescent sexuality in Willye and Thomalin.

Februarie and *March* explore the essence of sexual desire—its beginnings, end, and almost permanent lack of satisfaction; the common denominator of all stages is that sexuality is portrayed as premature and haphazard. In *Februarie*, Thenot and Cuddie develop the debate between the anxious sexuality of Cuddie's youth and the waning sexual desire of Thenot's old age. In *March*, Willye and Thomalin celebrate their pubescent sexuality yet at the same time suffer from the lack of fulfillment of that desire. Both

eclogues are in harmony with nature-cycles in that the debate and exploration of sexuality closely follow the year's development.

"Lewdly lewd" *Februarie*

One word frames the discussion in *Februarie*—"lewd." In the beginning of the eclogue, the word is used by Thenot when he replies to Cuddie's seemingly innocuous complaint about the severity of winter: "Ah for pittie, wil rancke Winters rage, / These bitter blasts never ginne tasswage?" (1-2). Cuddie complains that the winter is too severe and that his "ragged rontes al shiver and shake" (5); he is concerned about his flock. Thenot begins his reply with a rebuke, "Lewdly complainest thou laesie ladde," (9). The adverb "lewdly" makes Thenot's reply too strong, indicating that he argues out of context of what Cuddie is initially talking about.¹

Thenot's rebuke reflects more his own fears and frustrations than a reply to a legitimate, almost natural, complaint about the severity of winter. It would be impossible to guess Spenser's intended meaning for "lewdly," but we can say with certainty that it had little to do with the discussion of winter, for there is no evidence that the term itself was used in that context. Thenot may be merely scolding Cuddie for his youth and impatience with the seasons of nature and trying to pass to him some wisdom

based on experience, but even this interpretation is questionable.

The eclogue ends with Cuddie's abrupt interruption of Thenot's tale, where Cuddie uses the same term, in an adjectival form, as Thenot did at the beginning: "but little ease of thy lewd tale I tasted" (245). The *OED* lists the first use of "lewd" as "lascivious" as early as 1430, much earlier than "lewdly." And "lewd" carries even more negative connotations than "lewdly." According to the *OED*, the meanings of "lewd" range from "lay, not clerical" to "low, vulgar, base, ignorant, foolish, ill-bred," and, when applied to persons or their actions, "bad, vile, evil, wicked, unprincipled."

If either of the terms is used to denote "lay, unknowledgeable, or mischievous," Cuddie, the young shepherd, might be guilty of youthful pride and lack of respect for Thenot, the older and more experienced shepherd. If the sexual connotations are considered, however, Cuddie might be responding to Thenot's attempt at suppressing Cuddie's budding sexuality. If so, then Thenot's tale would also reflect his own anxieties about losing his sexual powers and his envy of Cuddie's virility.

The End of the Year or its Beginning?

Before closely examining the substance of the discussion between Cuddie and Thenot, it is important to point out the season of the year in which the debate takes place. E.K.'s apparent clarification of why the *Calender* starts in January does not apply to this eclogue. As in *Januarye*, the debate between Thenot's age and Cuddie's youth also reflects the season of the year in that the shepherds do not treat it as the second month of the year. In fact, Spenser, E.K., and the shepherds treat February as the last month of the year's nature-cycle, not as the second month of Christian calendar. E.K.'s *Argument to Februarie* goes directly against his earlier justification of January as the first month of the year:

It specially conteyneth a discourse of old age, in the persone of Thenot an olde Shepheard, who for his crookedness and unlustinesse, is scorned of Cuddie an unhappy Heardmans boye. The matter very well accordeth with the season of the moneth, the yeare now drouping, and as it were, drawing to his last age. For as in this time of yeare, so then in our bodies there is a dry and withering cold, which congealeth the curdled blood, and frieseth the wetherbeaten flesh, with stormes of Fortune, and hoare frosts of Care.

The statement "the yeare [is] now drouping, and . . . drawing to his last age," reveals that E.K. and the shepherds perceive *Februarie* as the last month in the nature-cycle; thus the earlier announced concerns about Christianity are apparently not important in this eclogue. The debate focuses primarily on physical discomforts of "Thenot an olde Shepheard" and on his "crookedness and unlustinesse." (The primary meaning of "unlustinesse" here does not refer Thenot's lack of sexual desire but the waning of his life, of which winter is a suitable simile.) Winter is furthermore used as a simile for the old age in general, when "in our bodies there is a dry and withering cold, which congealeth the curdled blood and frieseth the wetherbeaten flesh, with stormes of Fortune, and hoare frosts of Care."

While *Februarie* is the end of the year for Thenot, it is only the beginning of Cuddie's life, and the debate between the two, despite E.K.'s comment in the *Argument*, seems to focus more on Thenot's scolding of Cuddie than the other way around. Cuddie's "scolding" of Thenot is more a result of Cuddie's reply to Thenot's rebukes than lack of respect for the older shepherd. It is, after all, Thenot who first initiates the debate by attacking Cuddie, and the entire eclogue is a debate between youth and age. Metaphorically then, *Februarie* is at the same time the beginning of the year for Cuddie and the end of the year for Thenot.

Upon closer examination, one can see Thenot's frustration with the passing of his life in his forceful attempts at suppressing Cuddie, who seems to be more in touch with reality. In an attempt to rebuke Cuddie, Thenot often distorts Cuddie's words. Thenot begins the discussion by scolding Cuddie for not being concerned about his flock ("And ever my flocke was my chiefe care" [23]), implying that Cuddie does not care about his flock. Cuddie's initial complaint about the severity of winter, however, reveals his concern: "My ragged rontes all shiver and shake, / As doen high Towers in an earthquake: / They wont in the wind wagge their wrigle tailes" (5-7).

Thenot's distortions do not stop here. Later in the poem he rebukes Cuddie for his youth by saying, "For Youngth is a bubble blown up with breath, / Whose witt is weaknesse, whose wage is death" (87-8). The expression used here is an allusion to the "wages of sin is death" in St. Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* 6.23. The Bible, however, never says that "the wages of youth is death," and Thenot misappropriates the verse in his frustration to suppress Cuddie. It is possible that "whose" in line eighty-eight refers to "a bubble blown up with breath," which might mean that Cuddie is full of pride, but breath, in Christian theology, primarily stands for life and Holy Spirit, thus implying that Cuddie is full of life and energy, not sin. This second possibility would seem more likely, since Cuddie

is young and eager to live. Additionally, the entire expression "a bubble blown up with breath" is the predicate describing "youngth," and "whose" ultimately refers to youth.

To put it in simple terms, the *Feburarie* eclogue could be described as Thenot's Winter vs. Cuddie's Spring. In the beginning of the eclogue, Thenot scolds Cuddie for his impatience. Immediately after uttering the "lewdly" rebuke, Thenot proceeds to lecture:

Of Winters wracke, for making thee sadde.
Must not the world wend in his commun course
From good to badd, and from badde to worse,
From worse unto that is worst of all,
And then returne to his former fall?
Who will not suffer the stormy time,
Where will he live tyll the lusty prime? (9-16)

Thenot's lecture seems to be based on his experience and, initially at least, he seems to be trying to teach the young shepherd to be patient. The cycle of world's "commun course," according to Thenot, is "from good to badd, and from bad to worse, / From worse unto that is worst of all," but this could only apply to Thenot and not Cuddie. Cuddie is in his "lusty prime" but is caught in the middle of "winter's wracke":

No marveile *Thenot*, if thou can beare
Cherfully the Winters wrathfull cheare:
For Age and Winter accord full nie,
This chill, that cold, this crooked, that wrye.
And as the lowring Wether lookes downe,
So semest thou like good fryday to frowne.
But my flowring youth is foe to frost,
My shippe unwont in stormes to be tost. (25-32)

Cuddie's comment initially sounds disrespectful, but his argument is more truthful than *Thenot's*. Additionally, Cuddie sees winter as a metaphor of old age, which conforms to the view proposed by the *Calender*. It is interesting that Cuddie's description of winter and *Thenot's* old age focuses mainly on physical attributes—*Thenot* is cold and wrye while Cuddie is in his "flowring youth."

In view of nature-cycle, Cuddie's youthful desire is out of sync with winter, which represents the end of the cycle. In terms of sexual desire, Cuddie in *Februarie*, much like Colin in *Januarye*, is displaced and out of sync; his desire is premature. *Thenot's* remark here, while scornful of youth, rings true in the context of the *Calender*: "And when the shining sunne laugheth once, / You deemen, the Spring is come attonce. / Tho gynne you, fond flyes, the cold to scorne, / You thinken to be Lords of the yeare" (37-41).

Thenot's description of nature, if it refers to the weather at the time of the debate, is conspicuously similar

to the opening lines of *Januarye*, "When Winters wastful spight was almost spent, / All in a sunneshine day, as did befall" (2-3). But even if the weather was not sunny during the debate in *Februarie*, the perception of Spring, premature though it may have been, would account for Cuddie's erotic/lover's awakening—Cuddie is, after all, in his prime. From Thenot's point of view, however, Cuddie's awakening is premature, and the debate might also suggest that Thenot considers the waning of his own sexuality premature as well.

The Question of Erotic Desire

In line seventy-six, Cuddie asks Thenot a question about one of the bullocks in the flock: "Weenest of love is not his mynd?" Rather than speculating on anthropomorphic qualities that might be assigned to the animal, Cuddie's question is rhetorical—he assumes that the bullock possesses the desire to procreate. This question is also in the heart of the debate between Cuddie and Thenot about love. Although the term "love" is used by both shepherds, the debate largely focuses on the physical and sexual rather than the emotional and spiritual characteristics of love. Cuddie's reply to Thenot's rebuke is largely an argument based on the rejuvenating powers of sexual desire and a scolding of Thenot's resignation at his old age.

Ah foolish old man, I scorne thy skill,
That wouldest me, my springing youngth to spil
I deeme, thy braine emperished bee
Through rusty elde, that hath rotted thee:
Or sicker thy head veray tottie is,
So on thy corbe shoulder it leanes amisse
Now thy selfe hast lost both lopp and topp,
Als my budding braunch thou wouldest cropp:
But were thy yeares greene, as now bene myne,
To other delights they would encline.
Tho wouldest thou learne to caroll of Love,
And hery with hymnes thy lasses glove.
Theo wouldest thou pype of Phyllis prayse:
But Phyllis is mine fro many dayes:
I wonne her with a gyrdle of gelt,
Embost with buegle about the belt.
Such an one shepeheard woulde make full faine:
Such an one would make thee younge againe. (51-68)

Cuddie's argument in this passage is so obviously erotic that one commentator characterized it by noting that "one does not need Freud to understand the sexual (comically so) undercurrent in Cuddie's fear that Thenot would crop off his budding branch and taunt that Thenot himself has lost 'lopp and top'" (Cullen 35). Extensive use of natural imagery (seriously so) reinforces the link between nature and sexual desire; Cuddie, in his "spring," is vigorous and, in terms

of the nature-cycle, ready to continue the process of rejuvenation. His desire, however, is premature in that it does not coincide with the beginning of the natural year.

Thenot's reply to Cuddie's statement, however envious it may be, is correct in terms of individual erotic desire: "Thou art a fon, of thy love to boste, / All that is lent to love, wyll be lost" (69-70). This statement is possibly based on Thenot's ninety years of experience—"Selfe have I worne out thrise threttie yeares" (17); his life is inevitably coming to an end. Thenot himself has probably possessed erotic desire in his "lusty prime," and his envy of Cuddie's virility may be more a result of his regret at losing the desire rather than a rebuke of the young shepherd. Early in the eclogue, Thenot describes himself as a "gentle" man: "Yet never complained of cold nor heate, / Of Sommers flame, nor of Winters threat: / Ne ever was to Fortune Foeman, / But gently tooke, that ungently came" (19-22). If Thenot were as reconciled with life as he claims to be, he would have no reason to try to suppress Cuddie in any way. His envious and discourteous manner of addressing the young shepherd indicates that Thenot believes the opposite of what he is saying, i.e., he feels that his loss of erotic desire has been premature. This debate thus makes a distinction between erotic desire embodied in individuals and the transcendent desire which persists throughout generations; problems arise when individuals are neither

ready nor willing to face the loss, which makes them envious of the younger generations that are about to embark on their journey through the cycle of nature.

The second part of the eclogue attempts to solve the problem of this generational gap, as it were, through Thenot's recounting of the parable of the Oak and the Brier. According to Thenot, the story was first written by Chaucer, yet it originally comes from Aesop. Thenot first invites Cuddie to listen to the tale by asking "but shall I tel thee a tale of truth?" (91) and then describes it with the following words: "Many meete tales of youth did he make, / And some of love, and some of chevalrie: / But none fitter than this to applie. / Now listen a while, and harken the end" (98-101). Although Thenot claims that the tale is "a tale of truth," he never specifically defines the truth he is trying to demonstrate to Cuddie. E.K.'s note on line 102, the first line of the tale, states that "It is very excellent for pleasaunt descriptions, being altogether a certaine Icon or Hypotyosis of disdainfull younkers." An additional problem with understanding the tale's intended argument is that Cuddie does not "harken the end"; he interrupts Thenot and refuses to listen any longer. Thus, the meaning of the tale is never fully explained and is largely left to conjecture.

Although the tale is conspicuously similar to the debate between Thenot and Cuddie, it provides little new

insight into the problem, and no answers. Simply pointing out the parallels between the Oak and the Brier, and Thenot and Cuddie would result in a catalog-like itemization. Cuddie's abrupt interruption of Thenot, and the conclusion of the eclogue, however, provide more insight into the ongoing debate between youth and age. Cuddie cuts off Thenot's tale in mid sentence with the following words:

Here is a long tale, and little worth.
So longe have I listened to thy speche,
That graffed to the ground is my breche:
My hartblood is welnigh frorne I feele,
And my galage growne fast to my heele:
But little ease of thy lewd tale I tasted.
Hye thee home shepheard, the day is nigh wasted.

(239-246)

Cuddie's comic reply indicates that he is more concerned with his physical discomfort than "harkening the end" of Thenot's tale, which leaves *Februarie* in an impasse. The lack of resolution, however, is natural for two characters who are located at the opposite ends of the nature-cycle. The passing generation is unwilling to come to terms with the temporal nature of its existence, and the new generation is too eager to pursue and explore its newly discovered desire, which renders it impatient. The immediate continuation of erotic desire from generation to generation

indicates its transcendent quality and portrays it as being parallel to the cycles of nature.

The Cupidity of March

The editors of *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser* characterize the *March* eclogue as "a delightful vignette of befuddled pubescence, deftly adjusted to the earliest beginnings of spring" (55). Indeed, this is the first eclogue in which sexual desire is not suppressed, but openly described as enjoyable. E.K.'s *Argument* also supports this view, for he states,

IN this *Æglogue* two shepherds boyes taking
occasion of the season, beginne to make purpose of
love and other plesaunce, which to springtime is
most agreeable . . . But more particuarlye I
thinke, in the person of Thomalin is meant some
secrete freend, who scorned Love and his knights
so long, till at length him selfe was entangled,
and unawares wounded with the dart of some
beautifull regard, which is Cupides arrowe.

In addition to enjoying the Spring, Willye and Thomalin also perceive *March* as the first month of the natural year; thus their pubescent sexuality is in accord with nature. The eclogue opens with the shepherds' realization that the old year has come to an end and that the new one is about to start:

Thomalin, why sitten we soe,
As weren overwent with woe,
The joyous time now nigheth fast,
That shall alegge this bitter blast,
And slake the winters sorrowe.

Sicker Willye, thou warnest well:
For Winter wrath beginnes to quell,
And pleasant spring appeareth.
The grasse now ginnes to be refresht,
The Swallow peepes out of her nest,
And clowdie Welkin cleareth. (1-12)

The *March* opening differs from the previous two eclogues in that it does not introduce a problem; rather, Willye and Thomalin are in concord, and both shepherds are equally fascinated with the prospect of the coming spring. Their curiosity and fascination with natural phenomena are almost childlike, for they pay attention to every detail of nature. Their observation of nature, however, soon turns from innocent admiration to lascivious discussion, and the awakening of nature is seen as a metaphor of their own budding sexuality:

Seest not thilke same Hawthorne stude,
How bragly it beginnes to budde,
And utter his tender head?
Flora now calleth forth eche flower,

And bids make ready *Maias* bowre
That newe is upryst from bedde.
Tho shall we sporten in delight,
And learne with Lettice to wexe light,
That scornefully lookes askaunce,
Tho will we little Love awake,
That now sleepeth in *Lethe* lake,
And pray him leaden our daunce. (13-24)

The budding tender-headed hawthorn stud is clearly a phallic symbol, and the rest of this passage indicates that the shepherds have shifted their focus from nature to the pursuit of carnal pleasures. Flora's calling forth of flowers also contains a double meaning. E.K.'s note to this line identifies Flora as "the Goddess of flowres, but indeede (as saith Tacitus) a famous harlot, which with the abuse of her body having gotten great riches, made the people of Rome her heyre." Thus Flora, the harlot-turned-goddess, describes both nature and the powerful erotic drive to which Willye is apparently more than willing to succumb; Willye's intention to become wanton and learn to "sporten in delight" with Lettice further confirms the erotic symbolism of this passage.

The last four lines of Willye's speech, however, demonstrate that his vision is a product of wishful thinking of an inexperienced young man. First Lettice is described as being suspicious of Willye, implying that she had refused

his earlier advances. Second, Willye assumes that "little Love," later identified as Cupid, is still asleep in "Lethe lake", i.e., he admits that he had almost forgotten (or had never even had) the feel of a sexual experience. E.K.'s explanation of "Lethe lake" clarifies this assumption:

Lethe) is a lake in hell, which the Poetes call
the lake of forgetfulnes. For Lethe signifieth
forgetfulnes. Wherein the soules being dipped, did
forget the cares of their former lyfe. So that by
love sleeping in Lethe lake, he meaneth he was
almost forgotten and out of knowledge, by reason
of winters hardnesse, when al pleasures as it
were, sleepe and weare out of mynde.

Willye's vision is here interrupted by Thomalin, who has apparently experienced the pain of Cupid's arrows: "Willye, I wene thou be assott: / For lustie Love still slepeth not, / But is abroad at his game" (25-27). Before analyzing Thomalin's encounter with Cupid, it is important to point out the role the little love-god has in *March*.

According to *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, Cupid as "the little love-god" would be an appropriate description for the Cupid of *March*, who is described as "the Alexandrian winged infant. .. [who] plies his bow in *SC, March, FQ III vi*, and the 'anacreontics'" (201). The symbolism of Cupid in Spenser's works, however, is far from unified and singular. The currently prevalent opinion among Spenser's critics,

according to the *SpE*, is a simplifying "distinction between two Cupids." This distinction is based on "FQ III iii 1-2 . . . [which] distinguishes between two kinds of love: the flame of filthy lust that burns in brutish hearts, and a 'Most sacred fire ... which men call Love' and which, as a heavenly ally of providence, could appropriately be called a god" (201).

Based on his actions, the Cupid in *March* would most likely fall under the first category of enflaming lust. However, there is no evidence in the eclogue that Thomalin's heart is brutish, and neither is his "lust" described as filthy. To the contrary, the young shepherd is quite unaware of the nature of his pain. Thus, in the context of the *March* eclogue and in the context of the suggested interpretation, Cupid could be characterized as randomly and almost haphazardly enflaming intense erotic desire in young shepherds. Additionally, this definition is applied rather loosely, is in no way exclusive of other possible interpretations, and does not assume its application to other parts of the *Calender* or other works by Spenser.

Thomalin's encounter with Cupid is a unique occurrence in the *Calender*. The young shepherd reports that the two have met almost accidentally:

It was upon a holiday,
When shepherdes grooms han leave to playe,
I cast to goe a shooting.

Long wandring up and downe the land,
With bowe and bolts in either hand,
For birds in bushes tooting:
At length within an Yvie todde
(There shrouded was the little God)
I heard a busie bustling. (61-69)

Thomalin almost stumbles upon Cupid; his movement was not premeditated. Rather, he was wandering aimlessly and playfully on his day off from work. The actions of both Thomalin and Cupid, once they meet, provide an insight into the almost haphazard nature of erotic desire. Thomalin's initial impulse was to try to shoot Cupid, who proved to be elusive, and

. . . sprong forth a naked swayne,
With spotted winges like Peacocks trayne,
And laughing lope to a tree.
His gylden quiver at his backe,
And silver bowe, which was but slacke,
Which lightly he bent at me.
That seeing I, levelde againe,
And shott at him with might and maine,
As thicke, as it had hayled.
So long I shott, that al was spent:
Tho pumie stones I hastly hent,
And threwe: but nought availed:
He was so wimble, and so wight,

From bough to bough he lepped light,
And of the pumies latched.
Therewith I ranne away:
But he, that earst seemd but to playe,
A shaft in earnest snatched,
And hit me running in the heele:
For then I little smart did feele:
But soone it sore encreased.
And now it ranckleth more and more,
And inwardly it festreth sore,
Ne wote I, how to cease it. (79-102)

It is interesting that Thomalin completely loses control over his actions: he not only shoots all of his arrows, but starts throwing pumice at the elusive creature. His uncontrolled reaction to Cupid also closely parallels Willye's quick sidetrack into daydreaming about Lettice; both shepherds end up pursuing erotic desire almost automatically. The examples of these two young shepherds cover both human thoughts and actions, thus indicating that erotic desire is an innate and uncontrollable force of nature.

While the *March* eclogue describes the erotic desires of Willye and Thomalin, their urges, however, are never satisfied; Willye's daydreaming implies that his wishful thinking is going to remain in that realm, and Thomalin is unable to reduce the ever-increasing pain in his heel. On

the other hand, the lack of satisfaction does not render them impotent. The strength of erotic desire in this eclogue creates a prism through which the shepherds view the world around them. In effect, unrequited desire does not necessarily have to be negative, for it does not debilitate the shepherds to the point of not being able to live; rather, it stimulates them to keep going. Unlike Colin in *Januarye*, Willye and Thomalin are not forlorn. Additionally, the two never renounce their erotic desires and we have no reason to believe that Phoebus' stooping face will bring an end to the shepherds' pursuit of Eros.

IV.

The Erotic Prism of *Aprill, Maye, and Julye*

See, where she sits upon the grassie greene,
(O seemely sight)
Yclad in Scarlot like a mayden Queene,
And Ermines white.
Upon her head a Cremosin coronet,
With Damaske roses and Daffadillies set:
Bayleaves betweene,
And Primroses greene
Embellish the sweete Violet. (*Aprill* 55-63)

Colin's *Aprill* description of Elisa, the shepherd queen in the *Calender*, who represents "most gracious soveraigne, Queene Elizabeth" (*Argument*), shows how much he perceives the world through an erotic prism. The red and white used to describe the Queen are traditional Tudor colors. Combined with green, the colors and the flower imagery used form a very strong erotic image that provides an insight into how the shepherds perceive their relationship with and an attitude toward the monarch, whether she is the queen of shepherds or Queen Elizabeth. "Grassy greene" suggests her fruitful nature; scarlet clothes and "cremosin coronet" suggest her passionate, erotically charged nature; and white both underscores her erotic image and makes her an unattainable object in her virginity.

This is not to say that the shepherds view the world in pornographic terms. The strong sexual desire established in the earlier eclogues is natural and directly responsible for

ensuring the continuation of human race. Since Spenser's shepherds view the world in natural terms, sexual desire is an adequate and appropriate prism through which the world can be perceived. Spenser develops this idea in the *Aprill*, *Maye*, and *Julye* eclogues, where he provides insights into the shepherds' perception of secular and religious constructs, the constructs responsible for ensuring the proper functioning and continuation of a society.

The Unattainable Colin and Desirable Virgin of *Aprill*

The *Aprill* eclogue features a discussion between Thenot and Hobbinoll and contains one of the Colin's previously composed songs about Elysa, the shepherd queen. The discussion between the two shepherds focuses largely on Hobbinoll's jealous complaint about Colin's love for Rosalind, which apparently has nothing to do with the intention to "prayse . . . [the] most gracious sovereigne, Queene Elizabeth" (*Argument*). Thematically the dialogue primarily focuses on the nature of Hobbinoll's love for Colin and suggests a possibility that Colin's song, sung by Hobbinoll in the second half of the eclogue, was written *after* he had fallen in love with Rosalind. The personal theme of the dialogue between the two shepherds, combined with the partly erotic song about the Queen, weaves an intricate web that is an example of how intimate personal erotic desire influences individuals' view of the secular authorities.

In the beginning of the eclogue, Thenot is apparently confused by Hobbinoll's forlorn and tearful appearance; his grief seems to be generic—it could be a product of a variety of misfortunes:

TEll me good Hobbinoll, what garres thee greeete?
What? hath some Wolfe thy tender Lambes ytorne?
Or is thy Bagpype broke, that soundes so sweete?
Or art thou of thy loved lasse forlorne?

Or bene thine eyes attempted to the yeare,
Quenching the gasping furrowes thirst with rayne?
Like April shoure, so stremes the trickling teares
Adowne thy cheeke, to quenche thy thirstye payne.

(1-8)

Lines three and four make a distinction between the pain caused by a broken pipe, the inability to sing, and the pain caused by unrequited love, indicating that poetic ability can be impeded by factors other than love. The question also suggests that Hobbinoll is himself a poet, yet we never see him practice his skill or tune his pipe, not even in his pursuit of Colin's love. This might imply that Hobbinoll's love for Colin does not fall under the *Januarye* category of "pederastice"; nevertheless, his pursuit is still highly uncharacteristic of common friendship.

Hobbinoll's reply to Thenot's inquiry sounds as if it is made immediately after the *Januarye* eclogue because he

describes Colin as being in the same situation we had last seen him, and Hobbinoll's love for Colin is still as strong as it was described by Colin:

Nor thys, nor that, so muche doeth make me mourne,
But for the ladde, whome long I lov'd so deare,
Nowe loves a lasse, that all his love doth scorne:
He plong'd in pyne, his tressed locks dooth teare.

Shepheards delights he dooth them all forswear,
Hys pleasaunt Pipe, whych made us merriment,

He wyllfully hath broke, and doth forbear

His wonted songs, wherein he all outwent. (9-16)

Initially, it seems that Hobbinoll blames Colin's repudiation of "shepheards delights" on his love for Rosalind. Thenot seems to accept this perception because he immediately asks

What is he for a Ladde, you so lament?

Ys love such pinching payne to them, that prove?

And hath he skill to make so excellent,

Yet hath so little skill to brydle love? (17-20)

Thenot's assumption that Colin is a skillful poet and an unfortunate lover, however, is hasty because he does not know who Colin is and has never heard him sing. Additionally, the *Aprill* eclogue is free from direct intrusions by the narrator, i.e., the poet does not pass any comments other than what the characters say (unlike *Januarye*, for example, where the

narrator sets the stage for Colin's lament). Thenot bases his judgment solely on Hobbinoll's immediate words; the reader has the benefit of knowing the past events and is able to be more critical. Thenot's perception, from the reader's point of view, is soon proven faulty because Hobbinoll reveals himself as being essentially jealous and unconcerned for Colin's poetic talent. In describing Colin to Thenot, Hobbinoll reveals that his main interest lies in (re)gaining Colin's love: "Whilome on him was all my care and joye, / Forcing with gyfts to winne his wanton heart. / But now from me hys madding mynd is starte" (23-25). The parenthetical "re" signifies a discrepancy between Hobbinoll's and Colin's perceptions of what their relationship is/was like. Up to this point in the *Calender* there is no evidence of Colin's ever reciprocating Hobbinoll's love. To the contrary, in *Januarye* Colin states that he has repeatedly refused Hobbinoll's gifts (he has even passed them on to Rosalind in hope of gaining her favors). There is also no mention that the two had been friends before Colin fell in love with Rosalind, and it is possible that Hobbinoll's perception of their friendship is a product of wishful thinking. Indeed, Colin never really seems to think of Hobbinoll as a close friend. Even in his farewell in *December*, Colin describes Hobbinoll as "so true," not as a friend. The relationship between the two shepherds is thus, at best, ambiguous, and the only fact that can be established without an unsupported speculation is Hobbinoll's unqualified and

unreciprocated desire for Colin's attention. If we are to speculate on the nature of this desire, however, there is more evidence that the "pederastice" between the two is more erotic than E.K. wishes it to be in *Januarye*. Both Colin and Hobbinoll draw parallels between Colin's unrequited love for Rosalind and Hobbinoll's unrequited desire for Colin. In *Januarye*, Colin says of Hobbinoll's gifts, "Ah foolish Hobbinoll, thy gyfts bene vayne: / Colin them gives to Rosalind againe" (59-60); Hobbinoll mirrors these lines with his *Aprill* statement that he was "forcing with gyfts to winne his [Colin's] wanton heart" (24). Furthermore, Hobbinoll concludes this eclogue by saying "Sicker I hold him, for a greater fon, / That loves the thing, he cannot purchase" (158-59), which implies that, regardless of the intensity of the desire, neither of the relationships is attainable.

Colin's song that Hobbinoll sings in the second part of the eclogue contains thematic parallels with his desire for Colin. There is an almost direct correlation between Hobbinoll's love for Colin and Colin's desire to please the queen. Additionally, both are perceived as unattainable. The first three stanza of Colin's lay contain tangibly erotic images. Colin first addresses the "daynty Nymphs, [who] in this blessed Brooke do bathe [their] breast" (36-7) and asks the "Virgins, that on *Parnasse* dwell" (41) to "Helpe him to blaze / Her worthy praise, / Which in her sexe doth all excell" (43-5):

Of fayre *Elisa* be your silver song,
that blessed wight:
The flowre of Virgins, may shee florish long,
In princely plight.
For shee is *Syrinx* daughter without spotte,
Whichpan the shepheards God of her begot:
So sprong her grace
Of heavenly race,
No mortal blemishe may her blotte. (46-51)

Combined with the previously mentioned colorful imagery, the fair *Elisa* here is described as being physically unblemished and charged with eroticism. Mythological symbolism also contributes to the erotic portrayal and unattainability of the queen. She is described as being a daughter of *Syrinx* and *Pan*; E.K.'s note elaborates on the significance of this notion:

Syrinx) is the name of a Nympe of Arcadie, whom when *Pan* being in love pursued, she flying from him, of the Gods was turned into a reede. So that *Pan* catching at the Reedes in stede of the Damosell, and puffing hard (for he was almost out of wind) with hys breath made the Reedes to pype: which he seeing, tooke of them, and in remembraunce of his lost love, mad him a pype thereof. But here by *Pan* and *Syrinx* is not to bee thoughte, that the shephearde simplye meante those Poetical Gods: but rather supposing (as seemeth)

her graces progenie to be divine and immortal (so as the Paynims were wont to judge of all Kinges and Princes, according to Homeres saying.

Θνμός δὴ μέγα ἐστὶ διοτρεφέως βασιλῆως
τιμὴ δ' ἔχ' Διός ἐστι φιλεῖ δεὸς μητίετα Ζεὺς

Could devise no parents in his judgement so worthy for her, as Pan the shepeheardes God, and his best beloved Syrinx. So that by Pan is here meant themost famous and victorious King, her highnesse Father, late of worthy memorye K. Henry the eyght. And by the name, oftymes (as hereafter appeareth) be noted kings and mighty Potentates: And in some place Christ himselfe, who is the verye Pan and god of Shepheardes.

This description is at first puzzling because it seems to contain numerous allusions that form a complex and not too clear picture. Mythologically, Pan's love for Syrinx and her elusiveness suggest the view of the queen that is erotically as enticing and as elusive (Elisa is first described as Syrinx's daughter). Pan's pursuit of Syrinx is apparently purely physical, as was his exhaustion; his piping has a soothing function after he is unable to capture his love, which establishes Elisa as an elusive erotic goal and an inspiration for love poetry. The shepherd queen and the mythology are then directly linked with the present monarch,

Queen Elizabeth, thus turning her into both an erotic and a poetic inspiration.

The puzzle-like complexity of this mythological allusion could at first be interpreted as poetic flattery to the monarch, but we have to keep in mind that the shepherds view their personal, intimate, relationships in much the same way, i.e., their outlook on their private world coincides with their perception of public life. Colin's erotic portrayal of the queen parallels his desire for Rosalind in the same way that it parallels Hobbinoll's desire for Colin. An additional curiosity is that it is possible that Colin wrote this lay after he had fallen in love with Rosalind. The eclogue does not give any specific indications about when Colin had written the lay. E.K. says in the *Argument* that "*Colin sometime made [it] in honor of her Majestie.*" Hobbinoll refers to the lay by saying "Which once he made, as by a spring he laye, / And tuned it unto the Waters fall" (35-36). Neither of these two comments are time-specific and, despite the fact that Hobbinoll claims that Colin has abandoned all "shepherds delights" (a judgment tainted by Hobbinoll's jealousy—Colin might have only rejected Hobbinoll's advances), it is possible that the lay was written sometime between the *Januarye* and *Aprill* eclogues. Thenot's concluding remarks of the eclogue seem to further reinforce this possibility: "And was thilk same song of *Colins* owne making? / Ah foolish boy, that is with love yblent: / Great pittie is, he be in such taking, /

For naught caren, that bene so lewdly bent" (154-57). Thenot's use of the word "lewdly" here might imply that Colin had written the poem while being "bent" on Rosalind. Furthermore, the desire present in the poem also suggests this interpretation. But this possibility, however viable, is bound to stay in the speculative realm, for there is no direct evidence to support either possibility.

What is undisputed is that the shepherds view the Queen as an unattainable erotic symbol. Unlike their individual desires that turn painful when unreciprocated, the unrequited love of the monarch does not have a negative effect. The unattainability of the queen/secular leader is a positive characteristic because the erotic attraction of the subjects functions only as long as the relationship is not consummated, metaphorically speaking. The erotic prism, in the natural world of the shepherds, symbolizes the desire for the perpetuation of society, not their pornographic imagination.

The (Un)Lusty Priesthood of *Maye* and *Julye*

Maye and *Julye* apply an erotic prism to the discussion of religious concerns. The *Maye* eclogue focuses on a general approach to religion, while *Julye* uses more specific, individual examples to define the appropriate approach to the topic. While both discussions are generally considered to stem from the temporary historical context of the time when the

Calender was written, they also carry a more universal, perennial message.

The *Maye* debate between Palinode and Piers attempts to answer the question of compatibility between the strict, almost ascetic, and a more loose approach to religion and bodily pleasure. Palinode opens up the discussion by questioning his and Piers's apparent dissatisfaction with life:

IS not thilke the mery moneth of May,
When love lads masken in fresh aray?
How falles it then, we no merrier bene,
Ylike as others, girt in gawdy greene?
Our bloncket liveryes bene all to sadde,
For thilke same season, when all is ycladd
With pleasaunce: the grownd with grasse, the Wods
With greene leaves, the bushes with bloosming
Buds.

Youghtes folke now flocken in every where,
To gather may buskets and smelling brere:
And home they hasten the postes to dight,
And all the Kirke pillours eare day light,
With Hawthorne buds, and swete Eglantine,
And girlonds of roses and Sopps in wine.
Such merimake holy Saints doth queme,
But we here sytten as drownd in a dreme. (1-16)

Palinode's question points to the discrepancy between the joyous and lively state of nature in May and the sad and unhappy condition of the two shepherds. By describing their state of mind as being "drownd in a dreme," Palinode implies that the two shepherds are consciously depriving themselves of natural pleasures in order to pursue something unrealistic and intangible. Piers's response to Palinode's question is short and decisive: "For Younkens *Palinode* such follies fitte, / But we tway bene men of elder witt" (17-18). Piers renounces all physical pleasure as being sinful and against his spiritual calling as a shepherd/pastor.

After the initial question and answer, the two shepherds are pretty much entrenched in their beliefs and neither of them changes his mind. Palinode continues to develop his argument through analogy with nature, which Piers simply disregards for a "higher" reality based on a promise accepted only by faith. Despite the impasse, however, the arguments developed by the two shepherds are worthy of close examination because both seem equally valid, which might be exactly the point Spenser is trying to make.

Palinode's argument is based on observation of the natural world, individual behavior, and a consideration of natural, bodily urges. After drawing parallels with the natural world, Palinode then continues with the description of his observation of other shepherds' "jouysaunce":

Sicker this morrowe, ne lenger agoe,
I saw a shole of shepheardes outgoe,
With singing, and shouting, and jolly chere:
Before them yode a lusty Tabrere,
That to the many a Horne pype playd,
Whereto they dauncen eche one with his mayd.
To see those folkes make such jouysaunce,
Made my heart after the pype to daunce.

. . .

Ah *Piers*, ben not thy teeth on edge, to thinke,
How great sport they gaynen with little swinck?

. . .

What shoulde shepheardes other things tend,
Then sith their God his good does them send,
Reapen the fruite thereof, that is pleasure,
The while they here live, at ease and leasure?
For when they bene dead, their good is ygoe,

. . .

Good is not good, but if it be spend:
God giveth good, for none other end.

(19-26, 35-36, 63-67, 71-72)

Palinode admits that he is envious of seeing other shepherds apparently enjoy themselves effortlessly, while his pursuit of spiritual fulfillment requires hard work, which often goes unrewarded. Later in the eclogue, he observes that physical enjoyment comes easy because the pursuit of pleasure seems a

natural inclination of the human body. Indeed, he concludes that not pursuing pleasure is hard and unrewarding work precisely because it is unnatural:

Three thinges to beare, bene very burdenous,
But the fourth to forbear, is outragious.
Wemen that of Loves longing once lust,
Hardly forbear, but have it they must:
So when a cholere is inflamed with rage,
Wanting revenge, is hard to asswage:

. . .

How shoulde shepherds live, if not so?
What? should they pynen in payne and woe?
Nay sayd I thereto, by my deare borrow,
If I may rest, I nill live in sorrowe.
Sorrowe ne neede be hastened on:
For he will come without calling anone.
While times endure of tranquillitie,
Usen we freely our felicitie. (132-37, 148-155).

Palinode's basic assumption is that since humans have been blessed with the possibility of "felicitie" they should enjoy it until it lasts and should not deprive themselves of anything.

Piers's takes a diametrically opposed approach without even considering Palinode's argument. He describes himself as not being envious of others' worldly happiness: "Perdie so farre am I from envie, / That their fondnesse I pitie" (37-

38). Throughout the eclogue, Piers continues to distance himself from the worldly lifestyle. He considers the pursuit of bodily pleasures to be "lustihede and wanton merrymet" (42), i.e., a sinful waste of time. In his view, the

. . . shepheard must walke another way,
Sike worldly sovenance he must foresay.
The sonne of his loines why should he regard
To leave enriched with that he hath spard?
Should not thilke God, that gave him that good,
Eke cherish his child, if in his wayes he stood?
For if he mislive in leudnes and lust,
Little bootes all the welth and the trust,
That his father left by inheritance:
All will be soone wasted with misgovernaunce.

(81-90)

Additionally, Piers does not allow for any compromise between the two ways of life. For him, the shepherd/pastor has just two choices to make, only one of which is right:

Shepheard, I list none accordaunce make
With shepheard, that does the right way forsake.
And of the twaine, if choice were to me,
Had lever my foe, then my freend he be.
For what concord han light and darke sam?
Or what peace has the Lion with the Lambe?

(164-169)

Thus, both shepherds persist in their argument: Piers's attitude to sexuality remains unequivocally exclusive, Palinode's somewhat excessive. The debate between the two is never completely resolved, perhaps indicating that religion and human sexuality are incompatible. On the other hand, the fact that neither shepherd is conclusively proven wrong might also be interpreted that the two can be viewed as distinct, not incompatible. Sexuality and spirituality, although never fully reconciled, could be perceived as coexisting antipodes. The fact that the *Calender* offers no set recipe for reconciliation of the two makes the work even more prophetic and transcendent than if the opposite were the case. Stereotypical approach to both topics, even today, makes them almost mutually exclusive (sex is still largely considered a taboo and secondary to spiritual pursuits).

Despite this apparent incompatibility, sexuality and religion are often defined in terms of their antipodal qualities. The *Julye* eclogue offers one example where a proper attitude toward religion is defined through sexual imagery. The *Julye* debate between Thomalin and Morrell is essentially a discussion about the individual shepherd/pastor's spiritual pride and has nothing to do with sexuality or bodily pleasures. The debate between the two goes against E.K.'s argument, where he states that Morrell is "imagined to be" the good shepherd and that this eclogue is designed in his praise. The situation in *Julye* seems to be reversed: Morrell is

portrayed as the proud shepherd whose attempts at spirituality are characterized as improper, and Thomalin is assigned the role of a critic of Morrell's behavior.

Two times during their discussion, Thomalin resorts to using sexual imagery in order to characterize Morrell's behavior as negative. The first time Thomalin labels Morrell as "lewd" for thinking that one is closer to God on a high mountain than in the geographically lower church:

Syker thou speakes lyke a lewde lorell,
of Heaven to demen so:
How be I am but rude borrell,
yet nearer wayes I knowe.
To Kerke the narre, from God more farre,
has bene an old sayd sawe. (93-98)

The second time Thomalin uses sexual terminology is in the example he uses later on in the same sermon he is preaching:

And such I weene the brethren were,
that came from Canaan:
The brethren twelve, that kept yfere
the flockes of mighty Pan.
But nothing such thilk shepheard was,
whom *Ida* hyll dyd beare,
That left his flocke, to fetch a lasse,
whose love he bought to deare:
For he was proude, that ill was payd,
(no such mought shepheard bee)

And with lewde lust was overlayd:
tway things doen ill agree:
But shepheard mought be meeke and mylde,
well eyed, as *Argus* was,
With fleshly follyes undefyled,
and stoute as steede fo brasse. (141-156)

There is little doubt that "lewd" in these passages has a primarily sexual meaning; "lewde lust" is defined in terms of defiled flesh. Thus, the sin of pride, of which Thomalin accuses Morrell is partly defined through negative portrayal of sexuality. Although these two comparisons are not the main points raised by Thomalin, they are good examples of the extent to which erotic desire is imbedded in the shepherds' outlook on the world around them. Whether it is viewed as a productive and joyful force in life or a negative, anti-spiritual force, erotic desire provides a point of reference against which the shepherds calibrate their perception of the surrounding world.

V.

"Maintenance" of the Poetic State of Affairs: *June, October, and November*

Up *Colin* up, ynough thou morned hast.
(*November 206*)

Establishing the erotic desire as a prism through which the shepherds view the world still leaves the *Calender* in the realm of the temporal. Even though erotic desire is the most potent drive in lives of individuals, it nevertheless ceases the moment their lives come to an end. The permanence of erotic desire throughout the ages does not solve the problem of the passing of desire embodied in individuals. The *June, October, and November* eclogues offer a possibility of capturing the temporal nature of erotic desire and, without denying or neglecting its immediate impact, placing it in a transcendent context, thus making the work a "calender for every yeare." These three eclogues discuss, in great detail, the connection between love and poetry and suggest that desire-inspired poetry will persist throughout the ages.

The discussions about love and poetry all point to Colin. In these later eclogues, Colin's attitude towards love and poetry has matured; he is no longer impatiently seeking immediate satisfaction of his desires and is able to perfect his poetic talents. Furthermore, he recognizes that love, although the worthiest topic of poetry, is by no means the only one.

Colin's Dissociation from Pastoral Escapism in June

The *June* eclogue features Colin in person for the first time after his pipebreaking in *Januarye*, apparently still suffering from being in love. E.K. tells us in the argument that "*this Æglogue is wholly vowed to the complayning of Colins ill successe in his love.*" Colin's situation in *June*, however, is different from *Januarye*, for Colin "*having (as seemeth) founde place in her heart, [now] lamenteth to his deare frend Hobbinoll, that he is nowe forsaken unfaithfully*" (Argument). Colin's reaction to Rosalind's apparent betrayal is also much different from his reaction to her refusal in *Januarye*. Instead of being forlorn and breaking his pipe, Colin reacts more maturely—he rejects pastoral escapism and accepts and deals with the pain caused by the betrayal.

The Eclogue opens with Hobbinol's description of pastoral paradise:

LO *Collin*, here the place, whose pleasaunt syte
From other shades hath weand my wandring mynde.
Tell me, what wants me here, to worke delyte?
The simple ayre, the gentle warbling wynde,
So clame, so coole, as no where else I fynde:
The grassye ground with daintye Daysies dight,
The Bramble bush, where Byrds of every kynde
To the waters fall their tunes attemper right.

(1-9)

The rhetorical question in line three implies that Hobbinoll is currently located in a paradise-like place and that he is inviting Colin to join him. This invitation is further extended in stanzas three and four, when Hobbinoll tries to persuade Colin to "Forsake the soyle, that so [him] bewitch" (18) and come to the place with "pierlesse pleasures" (32).

However, the second half of the eclogue implies that Hobbinoll's paradise-like state could be improved even more, and his rhetorical question might be interpreted literally. By aiming the question at Colin, Hobbinoll implies that the pastoral paradise lacks Colin himself.

This is further supported by Hobbinoll's description of Colin's singing before he became forlorn in *Januarye*:

Colin, to heare thy rymes and roundelayes,
Which thou were wont on wastfull hylls to singe,
I more delight, then larke in Sommer dayes:
Whose Echo made the neyghbour groves to ring,
And taught the byrds, which in the lower spring
Did shroude in shady leaves from sonny rayes,
Frame to thy songe their chereful cheriping,
Or hold theyr peace, for shame of thy swete
layes.

I sawe *Calliope* wyth Muses moe,
Soone as thy oeten pype began to sound,
Theyr yvory Luyts and Tamburins forgoe:
And from the fountaine, where they sat around,
Renne after hastely thy silver sound.
But when they came, where thou thy skill didst
showe,
They drewe abacke, as halfe with shame confound,
Shepherd to see, them in theyr art outgoe.

(49-63)

Hobbinoll's recollection places Colin distinctly outside the pastoral bliss. Colin's singing on "wastfull hylls" is reminiscent of the "barren ground" and "naked trees" of *Januarye*; yet Hobbinoll experiences more delight from Colin's poetry than from the "paradise [he] hast found" (10). Combined with the earlier question, this compliment implies that poetry can improve even the seemingly perfect world. Furthermore, the subject of Colin's poetry is his unrequited love for Rosalind, and the compliment implies that "real" love is better than the pastoral vision of love. The love between Colin and Rosalind is mostly one-sided and it is far from Hobbinoll's pastoral bliss, especially if we keep in mind her supposed infidelity.

Colin's reason for writing poetry, however, is to achieve neither pastoral perfection nor eternal glory:

Of Muses *Hobbinoll*, I conne no skill:
For they bene daughters of the hyghest *Jove*,
And holden scorne of homely shepheards quill.
For sith I heard, that *Pan* with *Phoebus* strove,
Which him to much rebuke and Daunger drove:
I never lyst presume to *Parnasse* hyll,
But pyping lowe in shade of lowly grove,
I play to please my selfe, all be it ill.

Nought weigh I, who my song doth prayse or blame,
Ne strive to winne renowne, or passe the rest:

. . .

Enough is me to paint out my unrest,
And poore my piteous plaints out in the same.

(65-72)

Poetry is assigned an almost soothing effect and is not perceived as the means to achieve Rosalind. The "piteous plaints" are apparently Colin's reaction to Rosalind's betrayal with Menalcas. This soothing purpose of poetry signifies Colin's maturity.

Colin's maturity is further evident in his recollection of his youthful desires:

And I, whyslt youth, and course of carelesse
yeeres
Did let me walke withouten lincks of love,
In such delights did joy amongst my peeres:
But ryper age such pleasures doth reprove,
My fancye eke from former follies move
To stayed steps. . .

Tho couth I sing of love, and tune my pype
Unto my plaintive pleas in verses made:
Tho would I seeke for Queene apples unrype,
To give my Rosalind, and in Sommer shade
Dight gaudy Girlonds, was my comen trade,
To crowne her golden locks, but yeeres more rype,
And losse of her, whose love as lyfe I wayd,
Those weary wanton toyes away did wype.

(35-38, 41-48)

He recognizes that he was "carelesse" not only in love, but also in his way of life; he had enjoyed the very pastoral bliss Hobbinoll is inviting him to join, but now, in his "ryper age," he has moved away from his "former follies." Colin's confession and Hobbinoll's invitation thus imply that pastoral paradise is created by a combination of wanton and careless desires and selfish pastoral love poetry; Colin's dissociation from both criticizes such an approach to love and life and makes the readers see him as a more realistic character.

Although Colin's forlorn state of mind is largely due to Rosalind's betrayal, his way of dealing with the situation is where his maturity is most obvious: Colin does not criticize the "gods of love, that pitie lovers payne"

(Januarye 13); he does not break his pype, and he does not criticize love poetry. To the contrary, his respect for love as the subject of poetry increases even more.

By stating that he plays to "please [him]selfe, all be it ill" Colin admits that his poetry is still primarily about love but he also displays humility at his poetic skills. Colin's statement that he is not as good a love poet as Tityrus (Chaucer) shows how highly he thinks of love poetry. Colin's humility, however, is apparently false, for he aspires to the same glory Tityrus has achieved. This desire is exposed through his discussion of his painful anger at Rosalind's betrayal. Colin first glorifies Tityrus as a superb love poet:

The God of shepheards *Tityrus* is dead,
Who taught me homely, as I can, to make.
He whilst he lived, was the soveraigne head
Of shepheards all, that bene with love ytake:
Well couth he wayle his Woes, and slightly slake
The flames, which love within his heart had
bredd,
And tell us mery tales, to keepe us wake,
The while our sheepe about us safely fedde.

Nowe dead he is , and lyeth wrapt in lead,
(O why should death on hym such outrage showe?)
And all hys passing skil with him is fledde,
The fame whereof doth dayly greater growe.

(81-92)

Immediately after establishing Tityrus's supremacy, Colin expresses a desire to be as skillful and a regret that he is not:

But if on me some little drops would flow,
Of that the spring was in his learned hedde,
I soone would learne these woods, to wayle my
 woe,
And teache the trees, their trickling teares to
 shedde.

Then should my plaints, causd of discourtesee,
As messengers of all my painfull plight,
Flye to my love, where ever that shee bee,
And pierce her heart with poynt of worthy wight:
As shee deserves, that wrought so deadly spight.
And thou *Menalcas*, that by trecheree
Didst underfong my lasse, to wexe so light,
Shouldest well be knowne for such thy villanee.

But . . . I am not, as I wish I were. (93-105)

On the surface, Colin suggests that he is not skillful enough to write poetry that would be good enough to "pierce [Rosalind's] heart" and make her suffer for her betrayal; however, simply by mentioning this he is attempting to do the very thing he deems himself unskilled enough to do.

On the other hand, this apparent irony might be inaccurate, particularly if we pay close attention to line ninety-six: "Then should my plaints, causd of discourtesee." This comment indicates that Colin is well aware that, were he to write a punitive poem in order to hurt Rosalind, he would become just as discourteous as she. His admission that he "is not," in addition to displaying false humility, also implies that he is not discourteous.¹

It is also at this point that Colin begins to learn the difference between the temporal physical desire embodied in an individual and the desire-inspired poetry that transcends time. By making a conscious decision not to succumb to the selfish desire for poetic vengeance, Colin displays the maturity needed to needed to write poetry that transcends the life of an individual. In effect, Colin has reached the starting point of following in Tityrus's steps,

his "fame [will] dayly greater growe" when "all hys passing skil with him is fledde."

Colin's painful experience in this eclogue is not a condemnation of love but a realistic attempt at dealing with the pain caused by a discourteous lover. His dissociation from pastoral bliss, combined with his personal experience, his conscious decision not to pursue selfish vengeance, and his unwavering dedication to love as the highest poetic theme enable Colin's poetry, which is based on a temporal experience of love, to be extemporized. Colin's embleme, "*Gia speme spenta*" (hope utterly extinguished), implies that his temporal love for Rosalind has come to the final frustration, but Colin has discovered a way to transcend the immediate and passing desire—through desire-inspired poetry.

"The Perfecte Paterne of a Poete"?

The *October* debate between Pierce and Cuddie raises two existential questions for poetry: why write it and how? The discussion starts when Cuddie "*complayneth of the contempte of Poetrie, and the causes thereof*" (*Argument*). Cuddie, who is described by E.K. as "the perfecte pattern of a Poete," apparently sees no purpose in writing poetry.

Pierce, who is assigned the role of literary historian/critic offers Cuddie various reasons for the existence and writing of poetry. Their debate raises a question whether Cuddie is the perfect poet and offers an answer as to what is the worthiest and the perennial topic of poetry.

The debate opens with a question about the didactic and entertaining functions of poetry, which Cuddie repudiates for selfish reasons:

The dapper ditties, that I wont devise,
To feede youthes fancie, and the flocking fry,
Delighten much: what I the bett for thy?
They han the pleasure, I a sclender prise.
I beate the bush, the byrds to them doe flye:
What good thereof to Cuddie can Arise? (13-18)

Cuddie's complaint is that he derives neither pleasure nor profit from writing poetry, and he is completely unconcerned with the effect his writing has on his readership. To this complaint, Piers suggests that educating the youth is a praiseworthy task: "O what honor is it to restraine / The lust of lawlese youth with good advice" (20-21). But Cuddie is not interested in any temporal praise he might receive, for "Sike prayse is

smoke, that sheddeth in the skye, / Sike words bene wynd,
and wasten soone in vayne" (35-36). Cuddie's disappointment
comes from the realization that poetic glory is as passing
as "youthes fancie," yet he has only himself to blame. It
appears that he has been catering to his audience in order
to gain glory. Thus, the didacticism in his poetry comes
from playing to his audience, not from a genuine desire to
edify his listeners/readers.

Piers's response to Cuddie's desire for recognition
and praise is a suggestion that he write epic poetry and
cater to a different audience:

Abandon then the base and viler clowne,
Lyft up thy selfe out of the lowly dust:
And sing of bloody Mars, or wars, of giusts.
Turne thee to those, that weld the awful crowne,
To doubted Knights, whose woundlesse armour
rusts,

And helmes unbruzed wexen dayly browne. (37-42)

Piers here plays to Cuddie's vainglory and proposes that,
instead of "lawlesse youth" Cuddie sings to "those, that
weld the awful crowne." The assumption behind Piers's
reasoning is that figures holding political power can

bestow higher and longer-lasting praise upon a poet; but the selfish and vainglorious principle remains unchanged.

Cuddie's response to Piers's suggestion, however, reveals another problem he is facing--lack of inspiration or lack of poetic vision. Cuddie proceeds to list a number of reasons that he is unable to write long-lasting and praiseworthy epic poetry. First, he states that there are no fresh topics left for epic poetry because the good epic poets have ceased to exist with the passing of Virgil and of generous patrons:

Indeede the Romish *Tityrus*, I heare,
Through his Mecaenas left his Oaten reede,
Whereon he earst had taught his flocks to feede,
And laboured lands to yield the timely care,
And eft did sing of warres and deadly drede,
So as the Heavens did quake his verse to here.

(55-60)

Second, he states that the times in which he lives are not fit for epic poetry because the epic leaders (who would be able to bestow long-lasting praise upon a poet, and provide him with comfortable allowance) have died out:

But ah *Maecaenas* is yclad in claye,
And great *Augustus* long ygoe is dead:
And all in worthies ligger wrapt in leade,
That matter made for Poets on to play:
For ever, who in derring doe were dreade,
The loftie verse of hem was loved aye. (61-66)

Finally, Cuddie blames the age in which he lives for being unvirtuous and not deserving of "lofty" epic poetry:

But after vertue gan for age to stoupe,
And mighty manhoode brought a bedde of ease:
The vaunting Poets found nought worth a pease,
To put in preace emong the learned troupe.
Tho gan the streames of flowing wittes to cease,
And sonnebright honour pend in shamefull coupe.

And if that any buddes Poesie,
Yet of the old stocke gan to shoote agayne:
Or it mens follies mote be forst to fayne,
And rolle with rest in rymes of rybaudrye:
Or as it sprong, it wither must agayne:
Tom Piper makes us better melodie. (67-78)

By now it becomes obvious that Cuddie is trying to find as many excuses as possible not to write poetry, and the

reasons he gives turn from apparently legitimate complaints to poor rationalizations with one goal in mind—to divert attention from the fact that Cuddie is lazy. Cuddie's laziness in writing poetry also incorporates his unwillingness to directly experience life. His complaints about the inappropriate times for poetic glory reveal his desire for an easy praise as well as his desire for an easy and trouble-free way of life. Cuddie himself admits this at the end of the eclogue, when he states, "But ah my corage cooles ere it be warme, / For thy, content us in thys humble shade: / Where no such troublous tydes han us assayde, / Here we our slender pipes my safely charme" (115-118).

Piers, however, does not treat Cuddie's reasoning as the excuses of a lazy poet, and he is genuinely concerned for the purpose and role that poetry plays in society. After Cuddie announces that the current historical context is unfit for poetry, Piers utters an almost desperate cry:

O pierlesse Poesye, where is then thy place?
If nor in Princes pallace thou doe sitt:
(And yet is Princes pallace the most fitt)
Ne brest of baser birth doth thee embrace.

Then make thee winges of thine aspyring wit,
And, whence thou camst, flye backe to heaven
apace. (79-84)

This question implies that poetry has a transcendent value, independent of the temporal historical context; it is "a divine gift and a heavenly instinct" (*Argument*). It is also at this point that Cuddie and Piers temporarily exchange roles. Up until now, Piers was the one suggesting various purposes of poetry and Cuddie was providing excuses or explanations of why each assumption was erroneous. Now Cuddie offers the name of one poet who might be skillful enough to achieve transcendent poetic glory:

Ah *Percy* it is all to weake and wanne
So high to sore, and make so large a flight:
Her peeced pyneons bene not so in plight,
For *Colin* fittes such famous flight to scanne:
He, were he not with love so ill bedight,
Would mount as high, and sing as soote as Swanne.

(84-90)

Despite Cuddie's recognition of Colin's poetic skills, he assumes that love is an obstacle for Colin's development. By naming Colin as a more skillful poet, Cuddie openly admits that he himself is not "a perfecte paterne of a

Poete." He assumes that poetic skill in and of itself is enough to achieve heavenly glory.

Piers, on the other hand, states that inspiration is as important as the skill:

Ah fon, for love does teach him climbe so hie,
And lyftes him up out of the loathsome myre:
Such immortall mirrhor, as he doth admire,
Would rayse ones mynd above the starry skie.
And cause a caytive corage to aspire,

For lofty love doth loath a lowly eye. (91-96)

This is the first time in the *Calender* that love is not treated as a distraction to a poet. To the contrary, Piers states that love alone provides enough inspiration to transcend the temporal context in which Cuddie is trapped. It is important to point out here that Piers does not talk about heavenly or spiritual love, or love of poetry for that matter, for his response is to Cuddie's statement about Colin's earthly, physical desire for Rosalind, which Colin has successfully incorporated into his poetry.

But Piers also makes an important distinction between lofty and lowly love, one that is probably best defined through Cuddie's obvious misinterpretation of Piers's point about love:

All otherwise the state of Poet stands,
For lordly love is such a Tyranne fell:
That wherehe rules, all power he doth expell.
The vaunted verse a vacant head demaundes,
Ne wont with crabbed care the Muses dwell.
Unwisely weaves, that takes two webbes in hand.

Who ever casts to compasse weightye prise,
And thinks to throwe out thondring words of
threate:

Let powre in lavish cups and thriftie bitts of
meate,

For *Bacchus* fruite is frend to Phoebus wise.
And when with Wine the braine begins to sweate,
The numbers flow as fast as spring doth ryse.

Thou kenst not *Percie* how the ryme should rage.
O if my temples were distaind with wine,
And girt in girlonds of wild Yuie twine,
How I could reare the Muse on stately stage.

(97-112)

Cuddie's idea of the love needed for poetry is "lordly love"—by which he obviously means having a powerful and

wealthy patron who would provide him with "lavish cups and thriftie bitts of meate" and plenty of "Bacchus fruite." Cuddie's primary concern is to have a full stomach, a drunken head, and carefree existence; he does not wish to deal with distractive and potentially painful love; he has no "corage." His love is "lowly" because he is exclusively interested in his own well-being and he wishes to be a good poet without even writing poetry. In comparison with Cuddie's love, Colin's love is "lofty" because he does not seek permanent glory and an easygoing life; Colin's head is not "vacant." To the contrary, Colin seems to be permanently frustrated, yet his dedication to both love and poetry are unwavering. Thus, the eclogue seems to set up Colin as an example of "the perfecte paterne of a poete," not Cuddie.

"La Mort Ny Mord"

Colin's maturity as a poet in the *November* eclogue perhaps best illustrates why he is the only poet in the *Calender* whose poetry is to become transcendent. Colin's embleme, "La mort ny mord" (an allusion to 1 Corinthians 15.55 "O death, where is thy sting!"), is the last embleme that he is given in the *Calender* (he has none in *December*),

and, if viewed in terms of his poetry, it suggests that he has finally succeeded in coming to terms with whatever has been standing in the way of developing and writing his poetry.

Colin readily accepts Thenot's invitation to sing a dirge for the deceased Dido. For the first time in the *Calender*, Colin consciously chooses not to sing about love. His decision is based on the mature assessment of the circumstances, not on the dictates of his heart. *November* shows that Colin has realized that love, although the worthiest topic of poetry, is by no means the only one. His maturity is evident in the dialogue he has with Thenot, who still assumes that Colin is under the poetically debilitating lovespell:

Colin my deare, when shall it please thee sing,
As thou were wont songs of some jouisaunce?
They Muse to long slombereth in sorrowing,
Lulled a sleepe through loves misgovernaunce.
Now somewhat sing, whose endles sovenaunce,
Whether the shepheardes swaines may aye remaine,
Whether thee list thy loved lasse advaunce,
Or honor *Pan* with hymnes of higher vaine. (1-8)

Thenot's invitation divides poetry into lowly and lofty categories, yet Colin's reply disperses this division:

Thenot, now nis the time of merimake.

Nor Pan to herye, nor with love to playe:

Sike myrth in May is meetest for to make,

Or summer shade under the cocked haye.

But nowe sadde Winter welked hath the day,

And Phoebus weary of his yerely taske,

. . .

Thilke sollein season sadder plight doth aske:

And loetheth sike delightes, as thou does prayse.

(9-14, 17-18)

In this passage, Colin is completely at ease with his poetic talent and is able to employ it as the circumstances require. He recognizes that there is a time for singing about love and also the time to sing about death. However, it is only after he has come to terms with his sexuality that he is able to devise poetry free of angst. Thus, the pastoral world is abandoned, love is glorified, and Colin has once again taken up his pipe and produced a poem about immortality. He has come to the understanding of the nature of desire and has found a way to immortalize himself, not through immediate sexual fulfillment, but through poetry.

VI.

Education in Love and Courtesie: Calidore and Colin in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*

Cuddie

For Colin fittes such famous flight to scanne:
He, were he not with love so ill bedight,
Would mount as high, and sing as soote as Swanne

Pires

Ah fon, for love does teach him climbe so hie,
And lyftes him up out of the loathsome myre:
Such immortall mirrhor, as he doth admire,
Would rayse ones mynd above the starry skie.
And cause a caytive corage to aspire,
For lofty love doth loath a lowly eye.

(October 89-95)

Colin's appearance in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*, although puzzling at first, provides an intertextual commentary on both the *Calender* and *TFQ*, as well as a sense of closure for both works. The intertextuality is achieved by juxtaposing Calidore's and Colin's attitudes toward their calling in life and their attitudes to love. In Book VI, the lovestruck Calidore strays from his original quest to capture the Blatant Beast. Spenser seems to be critical of Calidore's decision and his actions; his love for Pastorella is portrayed as a nuisance, a distraction from the task at hand. Calidore, however, not only abandons his quest but is also inattentive to Pastorella, the object of his love. Colin, on the other hand, pursues his "countrey lasse" with

lifelong commitment, and when Calidore, almost blatantly, walks in on him on Mount Acidale Colin is apparently being rewarded for his pursuit.¹ I believe that Spenser uses Colin to comment on Calidore's actions as well as to educate the reader² about the proper attitude to love, one's calling in life, as well as a lesson on courtesie.

Calidore's Problem(s)

Book VI of the *Faerie Queene* is the Legend of Courtesie, and Sir Calidore is supposed to be the emblem of that virtue. Sir Calidore, however, does not start off as a courteous knight--much as the Redcrosse Knight does not start off Book I as a holy knight--but is supposed to capture the Blatant Beast and rid the world of Slander. During this quest, however, Calidore falls in love with Pastorella and decides to abandon his calling in life to pursue her favors. He announces his decision in Canto X of Book VI:

That from henceforth he means no more to sew
His former quest, so full of toile and paine;
Another quest, another game in vew
He hath, the guerdon of his loue to gaine
With whom he myndes for euer to remaine,
And set his rest amongst the rusticke sort,

Rather then hunt still after shadowes vaine
Of courtly fauour, fed with light report
Of euery blaset, and sayling alwaies in the port.

(VI.x.2).

Spenser does not approve of this decision, but he does not put the blame on Calidore. Instead, the poet blames love and offers a somewhat exculpatory comment for Calidore:

Ne certes mote he greatly blamed be,
From so high step to stoupe vnto so low,
For who had tasted once (as oft did he)
The happy peace, which there doth ouerflow,
And prou'd the perfect pleasures, which doe grow
Amongst poore hyndes, in hils, in woods, in dales,
Would neuer more delight in painted show
Of such false blisse, as ther is set for stales,
T'entrap vnwary fooles in their eternal bales.

(VI.x.3)

In this stanza, the narrator puts the blame not on Calidore but on the pastoral vision of love with its "happy peace" and "perfect pleasures." In effect, Calidore has found himself in the "common labyrinth of love" and is apparently lost in the maze. But Calidore's desire is not only for Pastorella but also for his blissful vision of the pastoral

world. Earlier in Book VI, Calidore comments on his vision of pastoral life:

Leading a life so free and fortunate,
From all the tempests of these worldly seas,
Which tesse the rest in dangerous disease;
Where warres, and wreckes, and wicked enmitie
Doe them afflict, which no man can appease,
That certes I your happinesse enuie,
And wish my lot were plast in such felicitie.

(VI.ix.19)

Calidore is envious of the pastoral way of life and in love for Pastorella and he provides a good example for criticism of love as a distraction. Much like Colin in *Januarye*, Calidore is apparently unable to control his urges--both Colin and Calidore succumb to the desire. Furthermore, both have the same reaction toward their pursuit of love: they temporarily give up their calling--Calidore exchanging his armor for a shepherd's clothing and staff, and Colin breaking his pipe and vowing never to sing again (*Januarye*). There is a significant difference between the two, however, for Colin breaks his pipe in frustration after poetry fails to win Rosalind, while Calidore abandons his quest for the Blatant Beast the moment he falls in love with Pastorella.

Another difference between the two is that Colin, despite his lifelong commitment to love, is perceived as the best poet among the shepherds even before he falls in love, but Calidore is never perceived as the best of all knights. Additionally, Calidore's vision of the pastoral world as blissful and perfect hardly conforms to the pastoral world of the *Calender*, which is constantly troubled by debates, painful and unrequited love(s), and even death. Calidore's perception of the pastoral world is based only on a very short encounter in Canto IX of Book VI, and he has had no experience living a pastoral life, i.e., his perception is both inadequate and romanticized.

Although the distraction of love "semeth" to be Calidore's problem, it is merely a cause of the more important problem—that of an abandoned quest. Spenser defines this in the opening stanza of Canto X:

Who now does follow the foule *Blatant Beast*,
Whilest *Calidore* does follow that faire *Mayd*,
Vnmyndfull of his vow and high beheast,
Which by the Faery Queene was on him layd,
That he should neuer leaue, nor be delayd
From chacing him, till he had it attchieued?
But now entrapt of loue, which him betrayd,

He mindeth more, how he may be relieved
With grace from her, whose loue his heart hath
sore engriued.

Calidore's quest, "which by the Faery Queene was on him layd," was to capture the Blatant Beast and rid the world of Slander. The goal that the poet sets for him is achieving courtesie. The two are closely related. Courtesie, as defined by one critic, is "a virtue necessary for society's well-being . . . [courtesie is] equity internalized, the source of behavior that assures human beings can live in harmony and concord" (Meyer 110). Book VI assumes that courtesie can be achieved by capturing the Blatant Beast, a symbol of discord. To better understand Calidore's quest to courtesie, one must also understand the symbolic nature of the Blatant Beast. *The Spenser Encyclopedia* provides a long entry on describing the symbolism and significance of the Blatant Beast:

The Beast is analogous to the 'ravenous wolfe' on which Envy rides (I iv 30). . . Spenser's descriptions of the Beast focus on its mouth, which contains perhaps a hundred, perhaps a thousand, tongues, al of which 'bray' with the cacophonous sound of dogs, cats, bears, tigers, serpents, and reproachful mortals (V xii 41-2, VI

xii 27-33). As a principle of discord, the Beast represents the abuse and perversion of language, the distinctively human gift on which 'civill conversation' and 'gracious speech' rely (VI I 1-2), since ideally 'the tongue by instructing, conferring, disputing, and discoursing, doth gather, assemble, and joyne men together with a certaine naturall bonde' (Guazzo ed 1925, 1:122).

(97)

The Blatant Beast sows discord by Slander, irresponsible, malicious, and damaging use of language, and is the greatest threat of courtesie. Courtesie, however, includes not only the appropriate use of language but also appropriate behavior. Calidore's behavior in abandoning his quest, is thus discourteous and he automatically deprives himself, as well as the rest of the world, of the perfect harmony and concord he strives to achieve. His vision of the pastoral world is that of a harmonious, courteous society, a vision that is inaccurate only because the Blatant Beast is still at large. In other words, if Calidore were to capture the Beast, he would also be an example of courteous behavior and he would probably be able to give up his armor for shepherd's clothing and his sword for a rod without abandoning his quest, and love would not be a distraction.

As it is now, however, he acts prematurely on his erotic desire for Pastorella. Calidore's problem is that he assumes that love, is the recipe for pastoral perfection rather than a responsible, courteous life.

The "Lofty" and "Lowly" Love of Colin and Calidore

While Calidore is currently lost in the "common labyrinth of love," Colin has successfully passed through the intricate web woven by his erotic desires, and is a perfect emblem of how love is used not as a distractive force but as an inspirational drive. I believe that Spenser introduces Colin in this episode because he had already developed the idea that love is the driving force behind his actions. Colin has not only been lost in the maze of love, but has also successfully dealt with his own erotic desire. Thus Colin provides a good example for Calidore, who is apparently determined to pursue love.

Colin is also a character easily identified by the reader. The introduction of Colin in Book VI clearly identifies him as the same Colin from the *Calender*:

That iolly shepheard, which there piped was,
Poore Colin Clout (who knowes not Colin Clout?)
He pypt apace, whilest they him daunst about.
Pype iolly shepheard, pype thou now apace

Vnto thy loue, that made thee low to lout:
Thy loue is present there with thee in place,
Thy loue is there aduaunst to be another Grace.

(VI.x.16)

Colin is referred to as a familiar character, easily recognized by the reader. Unlike Calidore, Spenser never rebukes Colin for being in love or for "pyping" for his love; to the contrary, Colin is joyfully encouraged to continue. It is important to point out that Colin's love, a symbol of pastoral love, is not portrayed as perfectly blissful, but achieved through hard work and suffering—it was "loue that made [Colin] low to lout," a rather humbling experience.

The encouragement Spenser gives to Colin implies no criticism. To the contrary, it appears that the shepherd is finally being commended for his devotion to love, which started while he was a "young shepherds boye." The only possible criticism of love comes from Colin himself in stanza 28:

Sunne of the world, great glory of the sky,
That all the earth doest lighten with thy rayes,
Great *Gloriana*, greatest Maiesty,
Pardon thy shepheard, mongst so many layes,
As he hath sung of these in all his dayes,

To make one minime of thy poore handmayd,
And vnderneath thy feete to place her prayse,
That when thy glory shall be farre displayd
To future age of her this mention may be made.

(VI.x.28)

This self-criticism, however, is not self-condemning. Colin's admission of being distracted by love seems almost perfunctory, much like the false humility expressed in the beginning of the *Calender*, when the young shepherd is described in the parenthetical "(no better do him call)." Colin is here also addressing Gloriana, and at least pro-forma humility is due to the monarch. Additionally, Colin describes his work as a poet as being primarily focused on Gloriana. He addresses her with words, "as he hath sung of thee in all his dayes," implying that, by singing praises of the monarch, he was fulfilling his purpose as a poet. This admission, however, is substantiated neither in *TFQ* nor in the *Calender*, for most of Colin's poetry is devoted solely to love. Thus, Colin's apology is further reinforced as being pro-forma. Additionally, this distraction does not take away from the fact that Colin is recognized as the best of poets, and in this recognition is evidence that he has been dedicated to his calling in life. Calidore, on the

other hand, is neither committed to his calling nor does he show respect to Gloriana—who “layd” the quest upon him.

It is also Calidore who places all the blame on himself, for Colin’s apology is followed by Calidore’s words:

now sure it yrketh mee,
That to thy blisse I made this luckelesse breach,
As now the author of thy bale to be,
Thus to bereaue thy loues deare sight from thee:
But gentle Shepheard pardon thou my shame,
Who rashly sought that, which I mote not see.
Thus did the courteous Knight excuse his blame,
And to recomfort him, all comely meanes did frame.

(VI.x.29)

Calidore immediately takes the blame on himself, and Spenser never implies that Colin is guilty of anything. It was Calidore who “breached” Colin’s “blisse” and “bereaued” him of his “loues deare sight.” Colin’s love is thus justified and looked upon favorably both by Calidore and by the reader.

Although Colin himself is clearly identified in this passage, the object of Colin’s love is not. Spenser gives only a vague pointer to the identity of the woman being accepted as the fourth Grace:

Such were those Goddesses, which ye did see;
But that fourth Mayd, which there amidst them
traced,
Who can aread, what creature mote she bee,
Whether a creature, or a goddesse graced
With heauenly gifts from heuen first enraced?
But what so sure she was, she worthy was,
To be the fourth with those three other placed:
Yet was she certes but a country lasse,
Yet she all other countrey lasses farre did pase.

(VI.x.25)

It seems almost paradoxical that the "mayd" being accepted as one of the Graces is not specifically named. In concealing her identity Spenser might be placing emphasis on Colin's superb poetic skills, complimenting him on being able to raise a mere "country lasse" to the status of a Grace. The identity of the "mayd," in fact, is as poetically unimportant as the identity of the object of Colin's love in *Januarye*. Thus, erotic desire and poetic performance are intertwined and almost inseparable in Colin's life.

The connection between love and poetry in Colin's life could be extrapolated to represent the connection between love and one's calling in life, the very point at which Calidore fails. Despite love's distraction and initial

frustration in *Januarye*, Colin continues to sing; his poetry is even recited by other shepherds in the *Calender*.

Calidore, on the other hand, gives up his armor for the shepherd's weeds without even trying to pursue Pastorella; he never experiences the frustration and pain of love that Colin had had to go through.

Calidore's attitude toward love is selfish; he is too preoccupied with his own desires and pays no attention to the outside world. "Another quest, another game in vew" leads him astray: "one day as he did raunge the fields abroad, / whilest his faire *Pastorella* was elsewhere / he chaunst to come, far from all peoples troad,"—he literally bumps into Colin's vision (VI.x.5). Again, Calidore is lost in his romanticized vision of the pastoral world and love and in his own desires.

Unlike Calidore, Colin is completely devoted to his "country lasse." By juxtaposing these two characters' attitudes towards love, Spenser creates a play between reality and fantasy, between epic and lyric poetry. In the case of Calidore and Colin, however, it is Calidore, the epic character, who is trapped in the illusion, while the vision of Colin, the lyric poet, is strikingly realistic. Calidore's attitude towards and perception of love remain hidden in his head—Spenser gives us no particular details;

Colin's vision is crystal clear and rich with specific and almost tangible details. Additionally, Colin's vision is not isolated because we receive it through Calidore's senses; the poet first introduces the vision not through Colin but through Calidore's experience of the physical effects of the vision

Ironically, Calidore, whose intentions were to "set his rest amongst the rusticke sorte" is dumbfounded by the pastoral vision. During the vision, Calidore is bombarded with sensory information, which is far from hallucinatory—he sees, feels, and hears everything that goes on on Mount Acidale:

It was an hill plaste in an open plaine,
That round about was bordered with a wood
Of matchlesse hight, that seem'd th'earth to
 disdaine,
In which all trees of honour stately stood,
And did all winter as in sommer bud,

. . .

And at the foote thereof, a gentle flud
His siluer waves did softly tumble downe,
Vnmard with ragged mosse or filthy mud,
Ne mote wylde beastes, ne mote the ruder clowne
Thereto approch, ne filth mote therein drowne:

Byt Nymphes and Faeries by the bancks did sit,
In the woods shade, which did the waters crowne,
Keeping all noysome things away from it,
And to the waters fall tuning their accents fit.

And on the top thereof a spacious plaine
Did spred it selfe, to serue to all delight,
Either to daunce, when they to daunce would faine,
Or else to course about their bases light
Ne ought there wanted, which for pleasure might
Desired be, or thence banish bale:
So pleasauntly the hill with equall hight,
Did seeme to ouerlooke the lowly vale;
Therefore it rightly cleeped was mount *Acidale*.

. . .

Vnto this place when as the Elfin Knight
Approcht, him seemed that the merry sound
Of shrill pipe he playing heard no hight,
And many feete fast thumping th'hollow ground,
That through the woods their Eccho did rebound.

(VI.x.6-8, 10)

Calidore's reaction to this quintessential pastoral vision demonstrates how much he is lost within his own labyrinth of desire. Instead of rejoicing because he has discovered

pastoral paradise, "He durst not enter into th'open greene,
/ For dred of them vnwares to be descryde, / For breaking
their daunce, if he were seene" (VI.x.11). Calidore's
reluctance and awe are in stark opposition with Colin's
joyful enjoyment of the vision. Thus, it becomes apparent
that Calidore is completely unacquainted with the pastoral
world outside the realm of his romanticized vision. It is
also ironic that Calidore's "romanticized," or imagined
vision of blissful and perfect pastoral world is nowhere
near the "real" pastoral vision experienced by Colin.
Calidore's imagination is limited to "the guerdon of his
loue to gaine" (VI.x.1), but he attempts to achieve it by
leaving Pastorella "elsewhere"; he is preoccupied with his
own self-absorbing erotic desire, which, in turn, makes him
impotent to derive pleasure from the place where "Ne ought
there wanted, which for pleasure might / Desired be."
Calidore's desire, in effect, could be classified as "lowly
love," obfuscated by narrow-minded, selfish, base, and
limited erotic desire.

In contrast with Calidore's obtuse vision of love,
Colin's vision is that of pure, naked, and unadulterated
desire. The narrator first introduces the dancing maidens
through the eyes of Calidore: "There he did see, that
pleased much his sight, / That euen he him selfe his eyes

enuyide, / And hundred naked maidens lilly white, / all
raunged in a ring, and dauncing in delight" (VI.x.11).
Calidore's reaction to "lilly white" maidens is a selfish
desire for immediate sexual possession—the rest of his body
envies his eyes for *possessing* the naked maidens. The envy
also signals that Calidore's body would want to possess *all*
one hundred maidens. Although this desire is possible in
Calidore's fantasy, it is nevertheless a task impossible to
achieve due to physical and natural limitations, and even
Calidore's body seems to realize this. Yet, this episode
signals that Calidore is immersed in his own erotic desire—
he immediately forgets Pastorella (who is clearly not one of
the dancing maidens).

The narrator further describes the vision of the
dancing maidens:

All they without were raunged in a ring,
And daunced around; but in the midst of them
Three other Ladies did both daunce and sing,
The whilest the rest of them round about did
 hemme,
And like a girlond did in compasse stemme:
And in the middest of those same three, was placed
Another Damzell, as a precious gemme,

Amidst a ring most richly well enchaced,
That with her goodly presence al the rest much
graced. (VI.x.12)

Colin's reaction to the dancing maidens is quite different from Calidore's. Colin does not desire all one hundred and four maidens; his affections are aimed only toward the "country lasse"—the one in the center of the circle. Colin is not physically tempted by the three Graces who are so perfect that even when "Venus, in her selfe doth vaunt, / is borrowed of them" (VI.x.15). Colin's love is not "lowly."

Although Colin is in close proximity to his naked love, his reaction is not immediately physical. His first reaction is not to desire physical union with the "country lasse," "that faire one, / That in the midst was placed parauant, / . . . she to whom that shepherd pypt alone, / That made him pipe so merrily, as neuer none" (VI.x.15). The reaction of the shepherd/poet here conforms to the pattern of "lofty" love described in *October*, where love is identified as the most enduring and most important topic of poetry. The reaction also reestablishes the link between eroticism and poetry. Erotic desire is recognized as the strongest inspiration for poetry (Colin pipes "so merrily, as neuer none.") The juxtaposition of Calidore's and Colin's reactions, however, also makes a clear distinction between

immediate, temporary desire for physical satisfaction and a transcendent, almost permanent ecstasy that can be captured by desire-inspired poetry.

This link is even stronger because Colin is not named until the end of Calidore's vision, and the object of the shepherd's love is never named; until stanza sixteen, the shepherd could be any love poet. In effect, the connection between love and poetry is first generalized and then reinforced with the specific example of Colin, a poet who has devoted his life to singing about love and has successfully managed to turn his erotic drive into an inspiration for his poetry.

Another curiosity about Calidore's vision on Mount Acidale is its length. The vision is exactly twelve stanzas long (six through seventeen), a circle within a circle of twelve cantos in Book VI. The hundred maidens all dance in a circle, which contains an inner circle with the three Graces, and "the country lasse," accompanied by Colin's "pyping," is in the epicenter of the circular dance. The fact that the center of the circle is occupied by a "country lasse" rather than by a god-like nymph, faerie, or grace, might signify that human, earthly, desire is a permanent and perfect cycle. The symbolism of the circle, completion and perfection, also suggests that desire is not a distraction.

Rather, it is the outside world that disrupts the circle and causes it to break and disappear, which is exactly what happens when Calidore decides to walk in on the scene:

Therefore resolving, what it was, to know,
Out of the wood he rose, and toward them did go.

But soone se he appeared to their view,
They vanisht all away out of his sight,
And cleane were gone, which way he neuer knew;
All saue the shepheard, who for fell despight
Of that displeasure, broke his bag-pipe quight.

(VI.x.17-8)

Colin's pypebreaking in this instance, unlike the earlier episode in *Januarye*, is not caused by frustration with love. To the contrary, Colin's frustration comes from Calidore's spying and disruption, two distinctly discourteous acts. Prior to Calidore's appearance, Colin was participating in a vision of perfect accord. The maidens, the graces, and the "country lasse" were dancing and singing in perfect harmony with Colin's music. Even though this vision might be characterized as pastoral escapism, the blame is still placed on Calidore, whose fault is his lack of courtesie. If Calidore had remained on his quest for the Blatant Beast, indeed, even if he had continued in his

pursuit of Pastorella, the concord of Colin's vision would have remained impeccable. Calidore's resolution to know was based primarily on his selfish, lowly, erotic desire, not on a genuine desire for understanding. Calidore also wants a ready-made answer, while Colin's knowledge is based on a lifetime of experience and struggle. Ultimately, the distraction comes, not from love, but from the wrong attitude to love.

The Sense of Closure for Both Works

The episode provides a sense of closure for both *The Shepheardes Calender* and *The Faerie Queene*, especially in terms of educating the reader. If we assume that one of the Spenser's goals with *TFQ* was for his readers to become "fashioned into that 'vertuous and gentle' discipline" (Meyer 32), then Calidore is an example of discourtesie that readers are not to follow. The episode also shows a possibility of what might be if the world were courteous. By disrupting Colin's vision, Spenser demonstrates that the real world has not yet achieved the state of courtesie and concord, especially since the Blatant Beast has not yet been captured. Thus, Spenser only hints at the possibility of a world where love, or desire, would not be considered a distraction but an integral part of one's calling in life.

The episode also provides a sense of closure for *TFQ* in that it completes the education of the reader. The reader goes through the process of education inside out—from "holines" in Book I, where the reader needs to learn self-control and integrity, to "courtesie" in Book VI, where the reader needs to learn how to live in concord with other human beings. Viewed in this light, the six books of *TFQ* form a complete curriculum for the reader. This, however, does not permanently settle the question of whether Spenser would have written six more books of *TFQ* if his life had been long enough, but we can base our inquiries and judgment only on the text we have.

As it applies to the *Calender*, Colin's inclusion in Book VI provides a final validation of the idea Spenser developed in his earlier work. Erotic desire and poetry are not only recognized as being intertwined but also as compatible and concordant. "The country lasse's" deification in Book VI also allows Colin to transcend the realm of the temporary, through his poetry, without taking anything away from the immediate and fleeting erotic desire, for, without it, Colin would not have been as good a poet as he is. Finally, this episode reaffirms the idea that love is the worthiest topic of poetry, or, as E.K. says in the note to Colin's *Embleme* in *December*: "The meaning whereof is that

all thinges perish and come to theyr last end, but workes of learned wits and monuments of Poetry abide for ever."

The *Calender* can also be viewed as a precursor, a preparatory class, to the education of the reader. In the *Epilogue* to the work, Spenser states that the *Calender* is "To teach the ruder shepheard how to feede his sheepe, / And from the falsers fraud his folded flocke to keepe" (5-6). The extensive exploration of erotic desire in the work, the need to come to terms with it, is essential if love is not to be a distraction to one's "Holiness, Temperance, Chastitie, Friendship, Iustice, and Courtesie." The fact that the *Calender* might be viewed as a "preparatory class" for the education of *The Faerie Queene* does not diminish its importance. To the contrary, it is essential. Our perception of sexuality and the constructs placed around it create the "common labyrinth of love." Human beings are the only creatures able at least to attempt controlling their sexuality, and the anxiety arises between the rules and the most natural of human desires—to procreate. Human sexuality, when faced directly, is pure and unadulterated, and worthy to be sung—the only goal worthy of permanent pursuit. The "virtuous" goals in life make sense only when viewed through the prism of Eros, for it is the only constant that will persist, at least until "the worlds dissolution."

Notes

Chapter I

¹ The text of *The Shepheardes Calender* is from William A. Oram et al. eds. *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989).

² The text of *The Faerie Quene* is from A.C. Hamilton ed. *The Faerie Queene*, Longman Annotated English Poets Ser. (London and New York: Longman, 1977).

³ This entry in *The Spenser Encyclopedia* is from Camile Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefretiti to Emily Dickinson* (New Haven, 1990). The *SpE* is also used to provide information on criticism not directly related with sexuality in the *Calender*.

⁴ Furthermore, *June* seems to imply that Rosalind had at one time granted Colin her favors, though this is never explicitly stated in the *Calender*. Colin's lament in this eclogue is about the loss of Rosalind's favors and her falling in love with Menalcas. Thus, she is also portrayed as unfaithful.

Chapter II.

¹ Roger Shattuck, *Forbidden Knowledge: From Prometheus to Pornography*. (New York: St. Martin's, 1996) 286 claims that Aretino is often identified as the first pornographer. In a footnote on Aretino, Shattuck states that Aretino was generally unconcerned with morality. This interpretation of Aretino's work could be disputed because it is also possible to read Aretino's *Regionamenti* as a political satire. E.K.'s note, however, describes Aretino as a "devilish disciple," indicating that he is not concerned with socio-political implications of what he deems a pornographic work.

² All the information about translation and publication of the *Regionamenti* comes from Saad El-Gabalaway, "Aretino's Pornography in the Later English Renaissance." *English Miscellany* 25 (1975-76): 97-119.

³ The *Regionamenti* and the *Calender*, however, have nothing in common, thematically or stylistically. Even a surface comparison between the substance of Aretino's notorious dialogues and the *Calender* is enough to demonstrate the large discrepancy between the two works. Aretino makes no hidden allusions; his remarks on sexual

practices are absolutely straightforward. Spenser, on the other hand, merely "seemeth" to be alluding to "disorderly love." E.K.'s comment also reveals the poems concern with morality, while, at least on the surface, Aretino's work seems to be primarily concerned with the technicalities and material aspects of sex.

Chapter III.

¹ The *OED* lists possible meanings of "lewdly" to be "in unlearned fashion, wickedly, vilely, mischievously, badly, poorly, ill, and lasciviously." All but the last meaning have become obsolete through time. The *OED* also lists Spenser as using the term with the "badly, poorly, ill" meaning in *Viewe of the Present State of Ireland*. Although it would probably be inaccurate to say that "lewdly" in *Februarie* primarily means "lasciviously," the debate between Cuddie and Thenot largely focuses on sexuality, and "lasciviously" is clearly one of the connotations.

Chapter V.

¹ The idea that Colin is an example of Courtesie is developed in the next chapter of this thesis.

Chapter VI.

1 The term "blatantly" in this chapter is used in its present day meaning—offensive and obtrusive—and is not to be confused with the meaning it had in Spenser's time. The *SpE* suggests two possible etymologies for the term: from *blatter*, 'to speak or prate volubly', and through derivation from the Ovidian phrase *livor edax* 'biting tongue'. Both etymologies have to do with careless and harmful use of language, which is the primary characteristic of slander spread by the Blatant Beast. Calidore, however, does not destroy Colin's vision through language, but through his actions, and is not to be confused with the Beast.

2 The phrase "to educate the reader" comes from Russell J. Meyer, *The Faerie Queene: Educating the Reader*. Twayne's Masterwork Studies. Ser. 73 (Boston: Twayne, 1991). Meyer suggests a reading of *TFQ* as a guide to educate young nobles to live a virtuous life.

Works Cited

- Berger, Harry, Jr., "Orpheus, Pan, and the Poetics of Misogyny: Spenser's Critique of Pastoral Love and Art." *ELH*, 50, no. 1 (Spring 1983), 27-60.
- . *Revisionary Play: Studies in Spenserian Dynamic*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1989.
- Gross, Gerard. "Shepherds in Love: An Analysis of the Love Theme in SC." *Spenser and the Middle Ages* (1976). [microfiche]: fiche 1, grids 1-33.
- Davis, Roger, C. "Towards Comprehensive Love in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*." *Spenser and the Middle Ages* (1976). [microfiche]: fiche 2, grids 34-58.
- El-Gabalaway, Saad. "Allusions to Aretino's Pornography." *American Notes and Queries*, 13, 3 (1974-75), 35-36.
- "Aretino's Pornography in the Later English Renaissance." *English Miscellany*, 25 (1975-76), 97-119.
- Hoffman, Nancy Jo. *Spenser's Pastorals: The Shepherd's Calendar and "Colin Clout"*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1977.
- Marx, Stephen Rudolph. *The Pastoral Debate of Youth and Age: Genre and life Cycle in Renaissance Poetry with*

Special Reference to Edmund Spenser's The Shepheardes Calender. Stanford University, 1981. DAI: 42:3611A.

Meyer, Russell, J. *The Faerie Queene: Educating the Reader.*

Twayne's Masterwork Studies. 73. Boston: Twayne, 1991.

Richardson, David A., ed. *Spenser at Kalamazoo*, 1979.

Special Sessions Commemorating the Four-Hundredth Anniversary of The Shepheardes Calender 1579-1979. May 3-5 1979. Cleveland: Cleveland State University. 357 pp. [microfiche]. 79.35-53.

The Spenser Encyclopedia. 2nd. ed. 1992.

Shore, David R. "Colin and Rosalind: Love and Poetry in the Shepheardes Calender," *Studies in Philology*, 73 (1976), 176-188.

Stillman, Robert E. "Spenser's Pastoral of Desire: The Scene of the Poet's Failure." *Spenser at MLA: San Francisco* 27-30 Dec. 1987.

Smith, Bruce R. "The Passionate Shepherd." pp. 94-97 in his *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics.* Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1991.

Walker, Stephen F. "'Poetry is/is not a cure for love': The Conflict of Theocritean and Petrarchan Topoi in the Shepheardes Calender." *Studies in Philology*, 76 (October, 1979), 353-65.

The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser.


Ed. William A. Oram et al. New Haven: Yale University
Press, 1989. 1-213.

I, Ivan Pančić, hereby submit this thesis to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available to use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author.


Signature of Author

05-08-1998
Date

"The Common Labyrinth of Love": The Nature and Purpose of Sexual Desire in Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*
Title of Thesis


Signature of Graduate Office Staff

May 8, 1998
Date Received