

THE ORGANIZATION AND INTEGRATION  
OF BOOKS III, IV, AND V OF THE FAERIE QUEENE

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## PREFACE

In seeking a topic for my thesis, I first considered working with The Faerie Queene because of a paper I had once written comparing Spenser's concept of love with that in Baldassare Castiglione's The Courtier. Dr. Walton suggested that I work with Books III, IV, and V in an attempt to sort out some of the problems concerning Spenser's handling of these books. One of the areas in need of further consideration concerns Spenser's purpose in sustaining stories throughout three books. His reason for adopting this method is the primary problem under consideration in my thesis.

Another part of the problem in reading The Faerie Queene is related to the task of trying to keep the stories straight. There are four major love stories, and the fact that the women in them all represent various aspects of chastity, as Spenser used the word, makes it even more difficult for a reader to remember what has already transpired by the time he returns to each tale. Therefore, Chapter II presents each story as it would have been written had Spenser continued without any break in his narrative, with the locations of each section of the episodes indicated by book, canto, and stanza.

Assuming that one of these love stories must be dominant and, thus, a clue to Spenser's integration of the three books, I counted the lines involved in each story.

Because there is much overlapping of the four stories, some of the lines had to be counted more than once. Therefore, the combined total of 12,033 lines is greater than the number actually involved in the four stories.

Chapter III attempts to show how and why Spenser broke the narrative as he did, and IV demonstrates the importance of integrating all three books for a better understanding of how the virtues work together.

As I encountered the vast amount of research and commentary concerned with The Faerie Queene and found myself agreeing with, first, one author and, then, another of completely opposite views, I remembered an incident that occurred in a short story writing class that I once took. After my story had been read and students had begun to make their comments and interpretations, I found myself thinking, "What a wonderful idea! I wish I had thought of it when I wrote that story." So, perhaps, might Spenser react to these varied interpretations of his work. He wrote nearly thirty-five thousand lines in his incomplete poem; and those who seek to interpret or criticize his work must have written millions of lines. Just as I was fortunate that day in class not to have anyone ask me what my story meant, so Spenser does not have to account to his commentators or explain what he meant.

I do not wish to suggest that this commentary is



without value, but mean that the reader views The Faerie Queene in the frame of reference of his own ideas and beliefs and of the knowledge and education that he has in the given area. Consequently, I am deeply indebted to many writers whose research has contributed to the establishment of my own viewpoints. Among those that I found the most helpful were the editors of the Variorum edition of Spenser's work, Thomas P. Roche, Jr., in The Kindly Flame, Donald Cheney in Spenser's Images of Nature, C. S. Lewis in Spenser's Images of Life, Paul J. Alpers in The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene," and Frederick M. Padelford in "The Allegory of Chastity in The Faerie Queene." Of course the bibliography does not begin to include the list of works which were valuable in shaping my ideas but that could not be included as a part of this paper.

Finally, I must express my gratitude to Dr. Charles E. Walton and Mr. Richard L. Roahen for their help in the preparation of this thesis. Dr. Walton, who must have despaired many times of seeing my thesis finished, gave me invaluable suggestions for my work. Without his encouragement, the task might never have come to completion.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PLAN AND THE POEM

Almost every study of The Faerie Queene begins with an attempt to reconcile what Spenser said in his prefatory letter to Raleigh in the 1590 edition and what he actually produced in his poem. His stated purpose was a depiction of virtues which were ". . . to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." Arthur, before he became king, was chosen as the central character in whom to represent the gentleman perfected in Aristotle's twelve private moral virtues. However, Spenser seems to have used Aristotle's virtues as a point of departure rather than as his code.<sup>1</sup> If Arthur were added to the story to establish unity, most critics think that he fails to do so. Even the inclusion of Gloriana and her court from which the knights' quests were supposed to originate does not bring a real unity to the poem, because Spenser did not adhere to the point in Book IV.

In general form, The Faerie Queene is an epic, but here again a problem arises. It is clear that Spenser had before him more than one model for writing. On the one hand,

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick M. Padelford, "The Allegory of Chastity in The Faerie Queene," SP, XXI (1924), 367.

he sought to imitate the classical examples of Homer and Vergil; on the other, those of Ariosto and Tasso. His blend of these two methods of treatment leads to a lack of continuous style. The third and fourth books not only represent the "romantic epic" style of Ariosto but also draw upon the Orlando Furioso as the source of many plots. These factors have led Bennett to believe that these two books represent Spenser's original work which Gabriel Harvey criticized early in 1580, suggesting that this material would have been written before Spenser had decided upon any classical form.<sup>2</sup> The Faerie Queene also differs from past epics in that Spenser creates a Fairyland rather than makes use of the known world.<sup>3</sup> However, he combines the real world of history and geography of England with his imaginary world.<sup>4</sup> His Fairyland, thus, represents the ideal, just as the achievement of the Tudors represents the ideal of civil life.<sup>5</sup>

The Raleigh Letter, however, creates further confusion regarding the quests of the knights. In naming the patron of each virtue, Spenser lists the Knight of the Redcrosse,

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<sup>2</sup>Josephine Waters Bennett, The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene," pp. 138 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas P. Roche, Jr., The Kindly Flame, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

in whom is expressed holiness; Sir Guyon, in whom is depicted temperance; and Britomartis, a lady knight, in whom is pictured chastity. Later, in discussing the beginning of The Faerie Queene as an historiographer would have handled it, Spenser explains the quest of Book III:

The third day there came in a groome, who complained before the Faery Queene, that a vile enchanter, called Busirane had in hand a most faire lady, called Amoretta, whom he kept in most grievous torment, because she would not yield him the pleasure of her body. Whereupon Sir Scudamour, the lover of that lady, presently tooke on him that adventure. But being unable to performe it by reason of the hard enchauntments, after long sorrow, in the end met with Britomartis, who succored him, and rescued his love.

But by occasion hereof, many other adventures are intermeddled, but rather as accidents then intendments: as the love of Britomart, the overthrow of Marinell, the misery of Florimell, the vertuousness of Belphebe, the lasciviousnes of Hellenora, and many the like.<sup>6</sup>

In effect, then, what Spenser has done is to make two knights the heroes of Book III. Although Britomart is the titular patron of the virtue of chastity, Scudamore is the knight sent by Gloriana upon the quest. The other adventures, or accidents, apparently illustrate the virtue, but are not intended as a part of the instruction of Scudamore on his quest.

The Faerie Queene digresses from the descriptions contained in the Raleigh Letter in many other points, even

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<sup>6</sup>Quoted in R. E. Neil Dodge, The Complete Poetical Works of Spenser, p. 137.



in Books I and II. If the letter were merely intended as a guide to reading, these divergences would not especially matter, for Spenser could easily have changed his details to fit in Book XII when the quests of all the knights are eventually explained. Even Britomart could have been included, possibly as the prospective bride of Artegall. However, it is difficult to see how Spenser could have adapted the legend of Cambell and Triamond to his plot, since they have no quest in Book IV. Extensive rewriting surely would be required for this book, since it is so much different in its contents from the others.

Since the letter was not included when Spenser published his last three books of the poem in the 1596 edition, one can only guess as to the reason for its elimination. Various hypotheses, of course, have been suggested to account for its exclusion. For example, it may have been omitted so as to conserve space in printing; or because Raleigh was no longer in favor with the Queen; or because Spenser realized, now, that it did not accurately describe the book that he was writing.<sup>7</sup>

If one simply disregards the letter and turns to the poem itself, he sees that the structure or organization of every book in The Faerie Queene differs to some extent. He

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<sup>7</sup>Bennett, op. cit., p. 37.

sees, for example, that the form of Book I comes closer to the classical method of handling the epic, or that III tends to be like Ariosto's handling of Orlando Furioso. However, in none of the six books is the material organized in quite the same way. Each book has its own particular kind of unity depending upon what Spenser was trying to accomplish in it. The coherence of any episode develops from the effect that Spenser is trying to make on his reader, that is, on the mood that he is trying to evoke.<sup>8</sup> There are distinct depictions of the character of Venus, for instance, and, in each case, Spenser makes it clear just what she represents. Moreover, a place has good or evil connotations because of Spenser's descriptive words associated with it.

The organization of The Faerie Queene may be compared to the elusive quality of a dream.<sup>9</sup> The Fairyland is a place of shifting settings bounded by the sea and containing huge forests, but there are no cities that one ever sees. The major characters can move from the heart of a forest to a castle to the seashore in the space of a few stanzas. The characters themselves are subject to change in their natures. A knight portrayed as a member of Gloriana's court in one place becomes an opponent of the Knights of

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<sup>8</sup>Paul J. Alpers, The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene,"  
p. 8.

<sup>9</sup>Graham Hough, A Preface to "The Faerie Queene,"  
p. 95.



Maydenhead in another.<sup>10</sup> But the reader scarcely notices until some astute critic brings the shift in emphasis to his attention. Characters move into and out of the narrative at will, and seldom does the reader worry about their disappearance. They will return if Spenser has need of them. In effect, what happens is that Spenser creates a dream-like world, devoid of time and space, and peopled with two-dimensional characters who are subordinate to the moral concepts that they illustrate. Even the virtues and their opposites are not clear-cut cases of what is right or wrong. Spenser has examined them in every aspect that he can imagine.

For the modern reader who likes to have things arranged in a neat and orderly fashion, The Faerie Queene presents special problems. He is likely to become confused or even disheartened because of the variety. Therefore, in the following chapter, the narrative threads of the major stories running through Books III and IV and into Book V are separated.

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<sup>10</sup>J. H. Walter, "The Faerie Queene: Alterations and Structure," MLR, XXXVI (1941), 43.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MAJOR LOVE STORIES

Since Books III, IV, and V encompass four sets of romances in addition to other material which is necessary to the development of the allegory or is part of the device of discussing each virtue, it is difficult to remember what has happened to each girl and the man whom she loves. Untangling the threads of the four plots helps to show not only how these characters relate to one another, but also why Spenser intermingled their stories in the books.

#### Britomart and Artegall

The love story of Britomart and Artegall continues throughout all three books. Since Britomart is the titular hero of Book III and Artegall the champion of Book V, the total number of lines devoted to them is quite extensive, occupying 10,127 lines in all. However, the sections which deal with the love story proper and those incidents which are directly related to Britomart's search for her love encompass a total count of 5,346 lines. Clearly, the story of Britomart and Artegall is the most important of the love stories, both because of the amount of space devoted to them and because of their prominence as major figures.

Britomart, the champion of chastity, is first encountered in III.i.4 as Prince Arthur and Guyon discover her

when she is riding across the plain toward them. Since she prepares herself for battle, Guyon rides to meet her and is quickly overthrown through the magic of the enchanted spear which she carries. In III.i.8, Spenser informs the reader that this knight is Britomart who seeks the lover whose reflection she had seen in Venus's looking glass. By III.i.12, Guyon and Britomart are reconciled.

They travel on together only to be separated in stanza 18 as Prince Arthur, Guyon, and Timias pursue a for-ester who is chasing a beautiful girl. Britomart goes on alone and in stanzas 20-67 faces her first real adventure in Castle Joyeous. Here, she meets the Redcrosse Knight and joins him in battle. Inside the castle, Britomart, exceedingly innocent in the ways of the world, mistakes Malecasta's lascivious overtures for the type of passion that she feels for Artegall. Malecasta gets into Britomart's bed and is met with her sword when the startled girl awakens. At this point, Malecasta discovers that she has been making overtures to a woman and faints. Her knights come to her aid; the Redcrosse Knight rushes in; and Britomart and he fight their way out. Britomart receives a slight wound in the battle.

In canto ii, Britomart explains to the Redcrosse Knight that she has come to Faeryland in search of adventure, and that she has been trained from childhood to be a knight.

Since the knight is satisfied by this falsehood, she goes on to explain that she seeks revenge for the dishonor done her by a knight named Arthegall. Redcrosse Knight defends him, and Britomart continues to criticize so that he will tell her everything he can about Arthegall.

The reason for Britomart's subterfuge is explained in 17-52. In a magic mirror, designed by Merlin for the protection of her father's kingdom, Britomart had gazed at herself and unconsciously thought of her future and the man who would play a part in it. The mirror showed the image of a valiant knight, identified by the inscription on his armor as Arthegall, who had won Achilles' arms. Britomart admired the figure but gave no more conscious thought to him. Cupid, however, had other plans, and Britomart began to suffer the pangs of love although she had no idea of what was wrong. Her old nurse, Glauce, demanding to know the cause of her unhappiness, finally realized that Britomart was in love. When Britomart discovered the nature of her problem she was greatly disturbed, since there seemed to be no way in which to satisfy or control her emotion. Greatly relieved, however, that her charge was not the victim of shameful lust, Glauce provided the answer: Britomart should discover the identity of the man and locate him. Nevertheless, the old nurse turned first to charms and a magic brew in order to suppress the emotion, but, since love is not so



easily eliminated, her work was in vain.

Canto iii continues Britomart's story as she and Glauce consult Merlin in an attempt to determine the name of this knight and learn how Britomart could win his love. Spenser interrupts the narrative at this point to introduce a description of Merlin and his cave (8-13). Merlin, who knows all things, recognizes Britomart and understands her reason for coming. Through stanzas 22-50, he prophesies her future and tells of Arthegall, nephew to a Cornish king, who as a baby was stolen by fairies and taken to Faeryland. He also predicts that Arthegall will take the throne from his cousin, and that his and Britomart's progeny will reign for many years.

After leaving Merlin, the two women devise their plan: Britomart will disguise herself as a knight, and Glauce will become her squire. Donning Saxon armor and equipping herself with spear and shield, Britomart and her newly formed squire set out for Faeryland, bringing canto iii to a close.

Britomart's adventures continue in III.iv.4-18 as she leaves the Redcrosse Knight and continues to seek her lover. When she arrives at the sea coast, she pauses to lament. Shortly thereafter, she sees a knight galloping towards her and prepares for battle. She fights this man, Marinell, and gives him a fearful wound. Britomart leaves Marinell and

ignores the great wealth lying on the shore.

Britomart next appears in III.ix.12, when she is not allowed to join Paridell, Satyrane, and the Squire of Dames in a pigsty. After a fight, the group determines to force their way into the castle of Malbecco. Here, she becomes aware of the jealousy of the old man and sees Paridell flirt with his wife, Hellenore. She leaves with Satyrane on the next morning (III.x.1). In the following two cantos, she faces her greatest challenge in the House of Busyrane. After passing through a wall of flames which impedes entrance into the castle, she rescues Amoret, the bride of Sir Scudamore. After the overthrow of the enchanter, Busyrane, she leads Amoret out, only to discover that Glauce and Scudamore have vanished. Book III, therefore, leaves Britomart no closer to her goal, but infinitely wiser about the evils that exist in the world.

Book IV opens with Britomart and Amoret still in quest of their loves. Amoret fears her companion until she discovers that Britomart is a woman; then, they become fast friends. Britomart is forced to fight with Blandamour, who is traveling with Paridell, Ate, and Duessa. After he is overthrown, the ladies go on. Britomart gains the enmity of Scudamore, who appears shortly thereafter and listens to the lies that Ate and the group tell about her conduct with Amoret.

Near the end of Satyrane's tournament (IV.iv.39), Arthegall appears for the first time. In the disguise of a savage knight, he conquers every man he meets until Britomart appears in stanza 43, overthrows him, and wins the tournament for the Knights of Maydenhead. Britomart refuses to accept the false Florimell in IV.v.21. In stanza 29, she leaves the tournament, not realizing that she has encountered the man whom she has sought for so long.

Artegall meets Britomart for the second time in IV.vi.10. He and Scudamore both want revenge against her. She quickly overthrows Scudamore, then battles fiercely with Arthegall. When he shears away her helmet and discovers her great beauty, he drops his sword and regards her as a goddess. She finally recognizes him as the man whose image she had seen in the mirror. Although she tries to feign anger at first, she soon drops the pose. After a short interval of courtship, Britomart and he pledge their love and agree to marry as soon as they can. Since Arthegall still has a quest to complete, he and Britomart separate, planning to meet again in three months. The canto ends with Britomart's joining Scudamore to search for the lost Amoret.

The thread of the love story does not continue until V.iv.21. Artegall encounters Turpine, a knight who is going to be hanged by a group of women. In seeking to help the man, Artegall fights with Radigund, a fierce, female leader.



In canto v, he defeats her for all practical purposes, but throws away his sword when he is overcome by pity for the exceptionally beautiful woman whom he has injured. Radigund seizes the opportunity to renew the fight even though he is defenceless. He yields to her and is forced to submit to the humiliations of wearing women's attire and spinning cloth.

Talus, his servant, brings word of Artegall's imprisonment to Britomart in canto vi. She has begun to worry about Artegall, because more than three months have passed since they were together. She thinks he must have met some mishap or found a new love. Her initial reaction to Talus's story is that of disbelief, but she finally decides to go to Artegall's rescue (V.vi.18). Two events occur during her journey. First, she is forced to fight when an old knight mistakes her for Artegall (V.vi.19-40). Next, she visits the Temple of Isis, where she has a vision concerning Artegall and the son that she will bear (V.vi.3-23). The remainder of the seventh canto concerns her vanquishing Radigund, freeing Artegall, and ending the reign of the women. The lovers must again part, because he has not fulfilled his quest. Since Britomart never reappears in the portion of the poem that Spenser completed, this love story ends, here.

Florimel and Marinell

The second love story, which encompasses all three books and a total of 2,286 lines, is that of Florimell and Marinell. Florimell is introduced in III.i.20, while being pursued by a lustful forester. Prince Arthur, Sir Guyon, and Timias give chase. In III.iv.12-17, Britomart meets Marinell on the coastline, they fight, and she overthrows him. Marinell, lying on the beach, appears to be dead. Stanzas 19-28 are devoted to the background of Marinell who has been given great quantities of treasure from the sea by his grandfather and has proved himself a valiant knight in his former battles. Because his mother began to fear that his prowess would make him too bold and proud, she went to Proteus, who could prophesy his future. Proteus informed her that a virgin would bring great harm to her son, either wounding or killing him. For this reason Cymoent had warned her son to avoid women's love. In stanzas 29-44, hearing of her son's wound, Cymoent goes to recover the body and blames Proteus for the mistake of his prophecy, since she is convinced that no woman could have done this deed. When she discovers that Marinell is not dead, she takes him home and sends for Tryphon to heal his wound.

Meanwhile, in stanza 46, Florimell continues to run, fearing her new pursuer quite as much as she did the forester, and the night brings her escape from him. Not until

canto v is Florimell's reason for being outside her normal court environment explained. Prince Arthur meets a dwarf who reveals that the girl is Florimell, who loves Marinell. He also explains that, because of the prophecy by Proteus, Marinell has refused to consider love for any woman. Nevertheless, after hearing that he had been slain, Florimell left the court, vowing never to return until she found him, whether dead or alive.

Florimell continues to flee until her horse wears out. Then, she continues on foot until she comes to the cottage of a witch who finally agrees to let her stay. Complications ensue as the witch's lustful son conceives a passion for the girl. Realizing that she must flee once more, Florimell slips out before dawn one morning. When the witch discovers her missing, she creates a beast which she instructs either to bring her back or destroy her. In III.v.25, the horse exhausted, Florimell runs to the sea-coast and jumps into the boat of a fisherman who is asleep there.

The story resumes in III.viii.20-42, as the fisherman awakes and is amazed to discover a beautiful girl in his boat. His amazement is soon replaced by lust, and he throws her down in the bottom of the boat in an attempt to rape her. Her cries for help are heard by Proteus, who nearly kills the fisherman with his staff, drags him through

the waves behind the boat, and throws him onto the shore. In spite of Proteus's attempts to comfort her, Florimell fears him just as she has feared every other man whom she has encountered. Proteus assumes various shapes in his attempt to woo her. When she does not respond, he throws her into a dungeon.

Not until IV.xi.1 does the story of Florimell and Marinell continue. Seven months have passed, and she is still held captive in the dungeon guarded by sea monsters. In stanza 6, Spenser returns to Marinell, who has been healed. He goes with his mother to a banquet in honor of the marriage of the Medway and the Thames. In canto xii, since Marinell is half mortal and cannot eat the food at the banquet, he walks around. During his wandering, he stops on a cliff and overhears the lament of Florimell below. For the first time, he discovers that she is being held prisoner because she refuses to be unfaithful to him. His pity for her condition quickly turns to love, but he can determine no means of effecting her rescue. The banquet having ended, he is forced to leave her there and return home with his mother.

Marinell grieves for his love and languishes until his mother becomes so concerned that she asks Apollo to heal him. Apollo diagnoses the problem as love, but cannot do anything to heal him. Since Cymoent is still concerned



about the prophecy, she is greatly upset, but decides that, if he loves a sea nymph, all may yet be well. Marinell finally reveals his love for Florimell. Because his death seems imminent, Cymoent decides to forget about the prophecy and seeks to bring about Florimell's release by pleading with King Neptune. Neptune orders the release, and Cymoent takes Florimell home to her son. Marinell is rapidly recovering at the end of the fourth book.

The story of Marinell and Florimell is completed in Book V. Artegall is told of the approaching marriage in V.ii.2-3, and in V.iii.1-40 the wedding takes place in Faeryland. In the tournament held as part of the celebration, Marinell is the victor during the first two days but is taken prisoner on the third day. Artegall, wearing Braggadocio's armor, rescues him. When the prizes are awarded, Braggadocio's falseness in claiming to have won the tournament is exposed, the snowy Florimell melts when Florimell stands next to her, and the golden girdle is returned to its rightful owner. Spenser leaves the couple spending "joyous dayes and gladful nights" together (V.iv.40).

#### Amoret and Scudamore

The last two stories concern the twin daughters of Chrysogonee. She had miraculously conceived them by

sunbeams which shone on her body as she lay sleeping in the woods. Later, not understanding what had happened, she fled from the court to escape disgrace. Returning to the same place in the woods, she gave birth to the twins as she slept. Diana and Venus found the babies there, and each took one to raise as her own. Venus took Amoret to the Garden of Adonis, where Psyche trained Pleasure, her own daughter, and Amoret in the ways of love (III.vi.1-54). The entire section concerning Amoret and Scudamore totals 3,375 lines.

The story of Scudamore begins in Book III.xi.7 when Britomart finds him lying on the ground, sighing and sobbing, complaining of the lack of justice in the world, because Amoret is being tortured, and he can do nothing to free her. He explains to Britomart that Amoret is being held by Busyrane through the art of enchantment and black magic, and because she will not yield to Busyrane's desire, he tortures her. Britomart offers her help, and they go to the castle. Scudamore is forced to remain outside while Britomart is able to pass through the wall of fire which surrounds the castle. She first sees Amoret in a masque, in her naked breast a wide wound, embedded with a knife. Her heart has been drawn forth, and she carries it before her in a silver basin. On the next day, Britomart finds Amoret chained to a pillar. Standing before her is the

vile enchanter who casts spells with Amoret's blood. Seeing Britomart, Busyrane turns his knife on her, and she attacks him furiously. However, Amoret prevents her from killing him so that he can be forced to restore her body. Busyrane reads a charm which makes the chains fall away and closes the wounds. The two women then go to meet Scudamore, only to discover that he is missing (III.xii.45).

Book IV supplies more of the details involving Amoret and her husband. Scudamore had won the Shield of Love as well as Amoret after battling twenty knights. On the day of their wedding, Busyrane had entered with the Masque of Love and carried Amoret away. For seven months he had kept her captive.

Amoret travels now with Britomart, seeking Scudamore. In IV.i.17, they encounter a group led by Ate. After Britomart defeats the men, they continue, thereby earning even more hatred. Shortly afterwards, Scudamore meets the same group (IV.i.38). He also defeats the men. Ate, always eager to cause discord, lies to him about his wife's being the lover of the knight with whom she is riding. Not knowing that Britomart is a woman, Scudamore believes her lies. He curses her and considers killing Glauce.

In Satyrane's tournament for Florimell's girdle, Amoret proves her chastity by being the only woman present who can wear the magic belt (IV.v.19). In stanzas 29-30,



she and Britomart leave the tournament still searching for Scudamore, unaware of his rage, for Scudamore is looking for them, too, bent on revenge. He stops at the cottage of the blacksmith, Care (IV.v.31-46). While Scudamore dreams of the disloyal pair, Care uses red hot tongs to pinch his side, tormenting his heart still more. Smarting with the pain of jealousy, Scudamore meets Artegall still dressed as the Savage Knight. Both want revenge against Britomart. She is not long in coming and quickly defeats Scudamore. When Artegall shears away half of her helmet, thus revealing her to be a woman, Scudamore realizes that he has done her a great injustice, but Britomart can only report that Amoret has disappeared.

Canto vii continues with Amoret's story. She has wandered away from Britomart and has been captured by Lust. Amoret awakens from a swoon to discover that she has been thrown into a cave where two other women, AEmylia and an old hag, are also imprisoned. When she learns that her captor catches, rapes, and then devours virgins, Amoret takes the first opportunity to escape from his lair, but Lust closely pursues her. Just as Amoret is being overtaken, a young squire, Timias, comes to her rescue. As he assails Lust, the villain uses Amoret for a shield and laughs when she is wounded. He runs when Belpheobe comes, but she pursues and kills him. Timias tenderly cares for

the injured Amoret until Belpheobe returns, and her jealousy causes both of them to forget about the young woman who is lying there.

In IV.vii.19, Prince Arthur finds Amoret, who is nearly dead and tends to her wounds. They travel together until they come to Scudamore, who is fighting with a group of knights. Presumably, at this point, the two should be rejoined, but Spenser never mentions a reunion. Since the canto is shorter than most of those contained in Book IV, perhaps he had intended to insert the five stanzas that he had written at the end of the 1590 version of Book III, but for some reason neglected to do so.

The story closes with Scudamore's account of how he had originally won Amoret in the Temple of Venus (IV.x.1-58). There, he had fought with twenty knights to gain entrance, had won the Shield of Love which promised that Amoret would be his, and had passed Doubt, Delay, Just Deserts, and Danger. He also passed Love and Hate on the porch and, at last, attained the inner temple, where he discovered the statue of Venus surrounded by damzels who represented various attributes of women. In the lap of Womanhood sat Amoret. Scudamore took Amoret by the hand to lead her forth, even though she begged him to release her. Scudamore then led her from the temple, and, there, the story ends.

Belphoebe and Timias

The love story of Belphoebe is a much different type of tale from the other three. Belphoebe, according to the Proem to Book III, represents Queen Elizabeth. As a tribute to the Virgin Queen, Spenser obviously could not have her fall in love with and marry a common squire, or any other man. Timias had appeared in Books I and II as Prince Arthur's squire. Belphoebe was included in Book II. However, the story of their relationship occurs in III and IV. Only 1,026 lines are devoted to this tale.

Timias enters Belphoebe's woods when he pursues the forester who is chasing Florimell in III.i.18. In III.v. 13-26, he battles the forester and his three brothers. Although victorious, he is severely wounded. Belphoebe finds him and nurses him back to health. Through the remainder of the canto, Timias suffers because he has fallen in love with Belphoebe whom he cannot tell of his love since he is so far beneath her in station. Because of his unrealized love, he fails to improve. Even though she is greatly concerned for him, she never suspects the cause of his illness.

Canto vi.1-28 concerns the twin birth of Amoret and Belphoebe. Diana (Phoebe) took one of the babies with her to raise among her nymphs and named the child Belphoebe after herself.

The story resumes in IV.vii.23-47 as Timias fights with Lust to rescue Amoret. Belphoebe appears and kills the villain, then goes to the cave to release the other prisoners. Upon her return, she discovers Timias tenderly caring for the wounded Amoret. When she sees him kiss Amoret on the forehead, she becomes jealous enough to kill both of them, but controls herself and runs away, instead. When she refuses to listen to his explanations, he finally despairs and goes to live as a hermit in the deepest part of the forest. Timias remakes his garment, ignores the condition of his hair, and lets his beard grow. When Prince Arthur encounters his squire, he does not recognize him; he pities the lonely man who will not speak but spends his time carving the name of Belphoebe on all the trees.

In IV.vii.2-18, the story is completed. Timias tells his plight to a turtledove that stays to comfort him. One day, he takes a heart-shaped ruby which Belphoebe had given to him, and using a ribbon with her colors, ties it around the dove's neck. The bird flies; Timias pursues but cannot catch it. She makes her way to Belphoebe, who tries to get the jewel. The dove, then, flies back to Timias with Belphoebe following. Belphoebe does not recognize the squire who throws himself to the ground, crying and kissing her feet. When she demands to know the cause of his grief,



he confesses to her that her displeasure is to blame. After she restores him to favor, he enjoys a happy life in her grace, forgetting all about his duty to Prince Arthur.

The separation of the four stories demonstrates that the Britomart-Artegall story dominates the three books. Their tale continues throughout the following sections in Book III: i.4-67, ii.4-52, iii.1-62, iv.4-18, ix.12-53, x.i, xi.3-55, xii.1-45. The main events which occur include Britomart's seeing Artégall in the mirror and beginning her search, her experience with Malecasta in Castle Joyeous, her overthrow of Marinell, and her experiences in the castles of Malbecco and Busyrane. Book IV involves these cantos: i.5-19 and 32-37; iv.39-48; v.9, 19-21, 29; vi.2-47. The book concerns Britomart's traveling with Amoret, overcoming Artégall at the tournament, and meeting him in the battle which ends with a declaration of their love. The love story ends in Book V: iv.21-51, v.1-57, vi.2-40, vii.3-45. Book V includes Artégall's overthrow by Radigund, Britomart's dream in the Temple of Isis, and Britomart's overthrow of Radigund.

The Florimell-Marinell story begins in Book III and includes the following cantos: 1.15-18; iv.12-17, 19-44, 46-61; v.1-12; vi.54; vii.1-36; viii.20-42. Throughout the book Florimell runs from various men and Marinell's background is explained. Book IV includes only two cantos: xi.1-53 and xii.1-35. The marriage of the Medway and the Thames leads to

Marinell and Florimell's union. Book V concludes the tale in two episodes: ii.2-3 and iii.1-40, with the announcement of their marriage and the tournament following it.

Amoret and Scudamore's tale occupies three cantos in Book III: vi.1-54, xi.7-55, xii.1-45. The book tells of Amoret's birth, Scudamore's problem in trying to rescue her, and Britomart's rescue of Amoret from Busyrane. Book IV contains the following cantos: i.1-19 and 38-54, v.19 and 29-46, vi.2-47, vii.2-28 and 35-37, viii.19-22, ix.17-41, x.1-58. In this book, Amoret travels with Britomart, seeking Scudamore. He enters the House of Care. Amoret is captured by Lust, and, later, presumably is returned to Scudamore by Prince Arthur. Scudamore tells the complete story of winning Amoret in the Temple of Venus.

The Belphoebe and Timias story encompasses three cantos in Book III: i.18, v.13-55, vi.1-29. Timias meets Belphoebe who saves his life. He falls in love with her, but she does not realize it. Book IV concludes their tale in the following cantos: vii.23-47, viii.2-18. Timias leaves Belphoebe because of her anger, and a turtledove reconciles them.

## CHAPTER III

### THE INTEGRATION OF THE NARRATIVE

Since the story of each representative of chastity is not presented as one continuous narrative, Spenser's method of interweaving them becomes especially important. Lewis calls the technique a "polyphonic narrative."<sup>11</sup> Certainly the primary asset of this method of handling material is that it produces great variety, since it permits the author to place an incident where the artistic need arises rather than where it is necessary to fit the exigencies of the plot.<sup>12</sup>

Before studying the overlapping stories of four varieties of chaste heroines and the men involved with them, one should endeavor to see how the women differ, since Spenser does not intend that they be identical. First, Britomart stands as the perfection of the virtue of chastity, but Spenser has in mind a different concept of chastity than that which the twentieth-century reader is likely to give to the word. Rather than implying a foregoing of love and passion, an escape from the temptations of the flesh, or a Platonic fulfillment, Spenser means married love.<sup>13</sup> Florimell

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<sup>11</sup>C. S. Lewis, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature, p. 133.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>13</sup>Padleford, op. cit., p. 370.



represents the object of passion. She lacks judgment, knowledge of life, and self-assurance.<sup>14</sup> She is constantly sought after by every man except the one that she desires. Amoret represents physical passion; she lacks the spiritual qualities necessary in a chaste marriage.<sup>15</sup> Belpheobe may be considered as the older variety of chastity, that which has no need or desire for sexual love.<sup>16</sup> Noble deeds result from her love.<sup>17</sup> She may be viewed as the perfection of "loving chastity."<sup>18</sup> The narrative of Book III is built around these three women who represent the chastity of marriage and the fourth who represents chastity without sexual interests.

Spenser breaks the narrative into fourteen basic sections to introduce his major characters and show the experiences and training that contribute to their development.

The first set of incidents is built around Britomart. She sees a young woman fleeing in terror from a "griesly forester." At this point, there is no need for her to become acquainted with Florimell or her problems. Spenser seems to have included the chase for three purposes. First, the

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<sup>14</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 375.

<sup>16</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup>William Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser, p. 223.

<sup>18</sup>Loc. cit.

reader senses the contrast between Britomart and the terrified girl. Britomart is courageous, calm, and sure of herself. Second, the presence of Guyon, Prince Arthur, and Timias is eliminated. Guyon has served his purpose. As the hero of Book II, he has helped to introduce a new champion and show that the forces of temperance are no match for the new concept of chastity.<sup>19</sup> Britomart is free to go on alone on her self-appointed quest. Moreover, Spenser has introduced another character whose life will never really affect Britomart but will have an indirect bearing on her.

Britomart's second encounter introduces her to the Redcross Knight. Rather than battling with him, she goes to his rescue in an unequal fight against six knights which represent aspects of courtly love that she must rise above. Holiness has no need to be subdued by chastity; this virtue works with it in the Christian concept.<sup>20</sup> Inside Castle Joyeous everything from the tapestries to the people symbolize love as play.<sup>21</sup> Spenser sustains a mood in this scene which suggests that Britomart stands apart from the game. The people "all but shadows beene." (III.i.45.9).

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<sup>19</sup>Padleford, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 372.

<sup>21</sup>Roche, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

By trying to ignore her surroundings, Britomart places herself in danger and receives a slight wound.

The flashback in cantos ii and iii further suggests to the reader that Britomart cannot be expected to have a complete understanding of the world outside, since she has just left the protective environment of her home. There is within her behavior a delightful blend of the child and the woman as she discovers the first pangs of love.

Britomart enters the domain of Marinell when she reaches the seacoast. He suggests another type of chastity, one which is unnatural and, therefore, must be overthrown. Marinell's celibacy is based on fear and selfishness. The purpose of his self-denial is prudential.<sup>22</sup> Even though Britomart had been wounded, she will not take this course. Spenser provides a logical break in Britomart's tale by turning to the story of Marinell to account for this type of love. An overconcerned parent, trying to protect his child, can make him fear involvement with others, because he may be hurt in the relationship, and thereby thwarts his natural development.

The step from Marinell's background leads directly to the reason for Florimell's being alone and unprotected. In seeking Marinell, she has moved outside her normal court

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<sup>22</sup>C. S. Lewis, Spenser's Images of Life, p. 122.

environment and cannot deal with the situations that she finds there. She cannot even recognize the difference between the forces of good and evil without the customary signposts.

After the brief concern with Florimell, Spenser deftly turns to the story of Timias and Belpheobe, where the situation is reversed. Here, the man follows a course of love that seems to lead nowhere. Timias had, of course, been pursuing the forester who had hoped to rape Florimell. His battle brings him to the attention of Belpheobe, chaste huntress reared by Diana. Certainly, this episode was included as a tribute to the Virgin Queen as Spenser says in both the Raleigh Letter and in the Prologue. It further serves the purpose of showing that, in some situations, celibacy is entirely right and natural.

The narrative is, again, broken by the story of Belpheobe's and Amoret's birth. This account helps to explain the reason for Belpheobe's attitude and provides an introduction to a future character. It also provides Spenser with an opportunity to introduce one of his delightful allegorical and descriptive scenes, the Garden of Adonis.

When Spenser returns to the account of Florimell, he demonstrates the difference between her hysterical action and Belpheobe's self-possession. Because of Florimell's great beauty, every one who encounters her reacts according to his



own nature.<sup>23</sup> Those who are virtuous react with love and good will; those who are evil, with lust. The witch's son illustrates this point. He cannot conceive of love; consequently, Florimell is forced to flee once more.

At the point of her departure, Spenser introduces one of the few episodes not really connected to any of the major characters. Satyrane, who has sought Florimell since her disappearance from court, finds her magic girdle lying on the shore and uses it to bind the beast that has pursued Florimell. He, then, encounters two figures that represent types of perversion from chastity. Argante is the most base of all perversions, involved with incest, sodomy, and rape.<sup>24</sup> The man whom Satyrane saves from this creature is the Squire of Dames. The Squire of Dames is "the contemptible offspring of a social decadence."<sup>25</sup> The woman responsible for his wandering throughout the world began with a morbid curiosity to determine how many ladies' pledges he could obtain in a year's time. Her anger at his success led her to demand further that he find an equal number who refuse to pledge him. Although the world would have to judge her as "chaste,"

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<sup>23</sup>A. S. P. Woodhouse, "Nature and Grace in The Faerie Queene," Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism, p. 363.

<sup>24</sup>Padleford, op. cit., p. 378.

<sup>25</sup>Ernest De Selincourt (ed.), Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, p. xlvii.

she lacks the spirit of the word.<sup>26</sup>

The transition to False Florimell is the next logical development. This snowy replica, inhabited by a wicked spright which knows all the wiles of women, demonstrates the coy, teasing variety of chastity. She appeals to and encourages baseness.<sup>27</sup> Although she passes herself off as being modest, she also passes from the hands of one man to another in rapid succession.

Florimell, in the next episode, moves rapidly from one man to another, but always she is seeking to escape their base passions. Even her rescuer, Proteus, cannot resist the temptation of her beauty, and her refusal to be disloyal to Marinell causes him to throw her into a dungeon.

Returning to Britomart, Spenser pictures two more types of incontinent behavior to be avoided. First, Malbecco is a jealous old man who divides his attention between his beautiful young wife and his wealth. The most important factor here, however, is that Hellenore could have been a good wife if there had not been such a great age difference, surely an intentional commentary on practices of Spenser's own age. Paridell is shown as the courtly lover, an

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<sup>26</sup>Padleford, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

<sup>27</sup>Charles G. Smith, "The Ethical Allegory of the Two Florimels," *SP*, XII (1934), 140.

accomplished seducer, unconcerned with the lives that he ruins or the unhappiness that he leaves behind as long as he can accomplish his own ends.<sup>28</sup> His story of Troy is applicable to his seduction of Hellenore, but its meaning to Britomart lies in the fact that her love will be hard won, a concord emerging from discord.<sup>29</sup>

Total abandonment of all societies' rules governing sexual passion is seen in Ollyphant, the male twin of Argante. He leads Britomart directly to discovering Scudamore and the greatest test of the power of her virtue in the castle of Busyrane. Here, she is separated from the rest of the world and the normal course of life. Spenser shows love in ". . . its heartbreaking glitter, its sterility, its suffocating monotony."<sup>30</sup> Busyrane represents more than mere lust; he is a destructive force that traps and stifles love and turns it into a ritual.<sup>31</sup> Amoret cannot escape from him because she has grown up without spiritual discipline.<sup>32</sup> Her education has failed to provide her with an understanding of

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<sup>28</sup>De Selincourt (ed.), op. cit., p. xlvii.

<sup>29</sup>Roche, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

<sup>30</sup>C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 341.

<sup>31</sup>C. S. Lewis, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature, p. 45.

<sup>32</sup>Leicester Bradner, Edmund Spenser and "The Faerie Queene," p. 83.

the relation of chastity to the natural principle of generation, and she cannot transcend that which is merely physical in her passion for Scudamore.<sup>33</sup> Only the forces of chastity can reunite the lovers.

In Book III, then, Spenser has carefully planned his breaks in the narrative to demonstrate the comparison and contrast between the forces of chastity and unchastity. He contrasts two women seeking the same goal--the love of a man--and the events that occur because of the difference in their natures. He contrasts celibacy, unacceptable in Marinell but proper for Belphoebe. Incontinent behavior, too, can take many forms, and the reader can make a bad-worse-worst judgment. It can encompass the whole range of gross abuses of the Argante and Ollyphant type or of Busyrane and those who are chaste in the usual sense of the word and yet show by their behavior that they lack the spirit of the virtue. In the middle lies the perfect example--the golden mean--Britomart, who is perfect in the virtue but needs the education that makes it a really effective force.

The integration of various episodes of Book IV is more difficult to observe, since the patron knights, Cambell and Triamond, are relatively minor figures and apparently have

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<sup>33</sup>Woodhouse, op. cit., pp. 361-362.



not been sent on any quest. In addition, this book lacks the transitional element which led from one character or episode to the next in Book III. Characters are introduced primarily in groups that either oppose or aid one another, but the company frequently divides and is added to by other characters. The events in the first half of the book either lead up to the tournament or are the result of what happened there.

Aristotle concluded that friendship was much like a virtue. It involved ". . . the affection of kindred, the love between man and wife, and the communion of virtuous minds."<sup>34</sup> Friendship was the ". . . mean between peevishness and flattery."<sup>35</sup> Spenser developed his virtue of friendship by showing the cohesiveness of true friends and the lack of endurance in false friends.<sup>36</sup> The harmony or concord in the former is compared with the discord of the latter.

Friendship develops between Amoret and Britomart only when Britomart reveals that she is a woman in order to establish concord in the castle where a guest must bring his

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<sup>34</sup>John Erskine, "The Virtue of Friendship in The Faerie Queene," Variorum, IV, 289.

<sup>35</sup>B. E. C. Davis, Edmund Spenser, p. 119.

<sup>36</sup>Erskine, op. cit., p. 295.

lady, fight to get one, or remain outside. When the two women later meet the forces of discord led by Ate, Britomart overthrows Blandamour with ease. When Scudamore appears shortly thereafter and also causes their defeat, they even the score by lying to him about the relationship between Amoret and her companion. Scudamore, lacking confidence in himself and in Amoret, and not knowing that Britomart is a woman, is susceptible to their power.

The arrival of the false Florimell provides a further means for discord and dissension. The friendship between Paridell and Blandamour, based only on self-interest, cannot withstand the breach that Ate encourages. When the Squire of Dames tells them that they need to beware of others who seek to win Florimell in Satyrane's tournament, their relationship is temporarily mended by the need for mutual aid.

At this point, Spenser introduces the titular heroes of the book, Cambell and Triamond, who ride with their wives, Cambina and Canacee. Spenser shows the deep degree of friendship which can develop between two men who were formerly enemies. Love for family, another type of friendship, is also shown in the flashback which explains how the souls of the two brothers passed into Triamond. The idea of equality of friends is depicted in the battle between Triamond and Cambell, the fight that led to their becoming

friends.<sup>37</sup> Just as Cambina served as the force to promote their friendship, so she establishes harmony with Ate's company. The forces of concord and discord meet at the tournament, and discord seems to prevail in spite of the high ideal of friendship shown by Cambell and Triamond. The force of discord reaches its climax when the girdle is given to false Florimell and she chooses to go to Braggadocio.<sup>38</sup> Scudamore, in the House of Care, becoming even more bitter and jealous, joins eagerly with Artegall who seeks revenge against Britomart. Concord and friendship are restored when both men discover that Britomart is a woman.

The remainder of Book IV is devoted primarily to the stories of Belphoebe, Amoret, and Florimell. Amoret is carried off by Lust, thus bringing about the inclusion of another minor episode representing friendship. Her imprisonment brings about the conclusion to the Timias-Belphoebe tale and introduces the appearance of Prince Arthur as well.

The reconciliation of Belphoebe and Timias seems to belong in the book of friendship, since their relationship can never amount to any more than the deepest kind of friendship. Belphoebe can encourage nothing more, and Timias finds it acceptable to live in her favor.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>38</sup>Roche, op. cit., p. 167.

The story of Corflambo and his daughter Poeana is included primarily to demonstrate the friendship theme between two men. Spenser makes a direct comment to the reader that the zeal of friends is the best kind of friendship, since that of kindred and women often fails.

Prince Arthur seeks to establish concord between a group quarreling over the false Florimell, an episode that leads into the full account of the way that Scudamore won Amoret in the Temple of Venus. Unfortunately, the reunion of the lovers is not described. In the last two cantos, Florimell and Marinell are brought together through the marriage of the Medway and the Thames. Again, discord gives way to concord.

Throughout Book IV, Spenser has shown the power of friendship over those forces that establish discord. All four of the major stories from Book III have been resolved with the reconciliation of the couples following the initial discord which prevailed in their relationships.

Book IV primarily demonstrates the classical principle of justice, the mean between committing injustice in taking more than an appropriate share and suffering from injustice in receiving less than a proper portion.<sup>39</sup> Justice is

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<sup>39</sup>William Fenn DeMoss, "The Influence of Aristotle's 'Politics' and 'Ethics' on Spenser," *Variorum*, IV, 281.



therefore divided into two parts, distributive and corrective, the latter implying punishment for wrongdoers.<sup>40</sup> In order for the principle to operate effectively, the judge must be, first of all, a just man who does not let his personal life or ambitions interfere with his judgment.

Through the first two cantos, Artegall and his groom, Talus, move from one place to another, serving as judge and executioner wherever the situation warrants their attention. The first major interruption occurs in canto iii when the wedding of Florimell and Marinell takes place. Spenser's reason for including this incident in a book of justice apparently relates to the conclusion of the tournament held in Florimell's honor. False Florimell is finally eliminated when she melts as the real Florimell stands beside her. Braggadocio is exposed as a coward borrowing another man's glory and is further discredited when Guyon proves him to be a horse thief as well. Talus strips him of the symbols of his knighthood and pulls out his beard.

The second digression from the stories of Artegall's meting out of justice brings Britomart back into the narrative. Artegall encounters Turpine, a knight who is about to be hanged by a band of women dressed as warriors. Artegall's involvement leads him into single combat with their leader,

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<sup>40</sup>Alpers, op. cit., p. 193.

Radigund. After a battle in which he forebears killing her because of her great beauty, she takes him prisoner and forces him to dress and work like a woman. Britomart is brought to his rescue, and it is she who metes out punishment and ends the rule of women. Spenser, here, avoids the anger of Queen Elizabeth by suggesting that the rule of women must be a God-given right.

Prince Arthur comes into Artegall's story as a co-administrator of justice and goes off on his own mission to free Belge after he and Artegall have witnessed justice in its ideal form in the court of Queen Mercilla. Here, mercy is combined with justice to become the instrument for maintaining peace. Artegall finally completes his quest to rescue Irena. He is in the process of reforming the nation when he is recalled to Faeryland. On his return trip, he is slandered and reviled by Envie, Detraction, and the Blatant Beast.

In the first section of Book V, Spenser has presented a series of episodes that show Artegall meting out justice in various social and political situations. Even the conclusion to the Florimell-Marinell story is linked to the role that justice plays. Britomart not only loves the Knight of Justice but serves as the instrument of justice in her own right. The last section of the book deals allegorically with topical events in which Arthur and Artegall serve in the roles

of various men who actually helped to establish justice in Spenser's time.<sup>41</sup>

Spenser brings all of the love relationships which were begun in the Book of Chastity or Chaste Love to a technical conclusion in Book IV, the theme of which is friendship. Perhaps, Spenser is suggesting that the greater of the two virtues is friendship, since Plato proposed that friendship always includes love, but that not all love contains friendship.<sup>42</sup> The best marriages, then, should include both the physical passion of lovers and the spiritual communion of friends that Britomart and Artegall seem to have. Throughout the three books this couple has served as the focal point for most readers.

By making his women the center of interest in two of these three books, Spenser emphasizes the changing role of women during the Renaissance period. They were now educated and trained so that they were no longer merely lovers, but also companions and friends.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Edwin A. Greenlaw, "Spenser and British Imperialism," MP, IX (January, 1912), 350.

<sup>42</sup>Erskine, op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>43</sup>De Selincourt (ed.), op. cit., p. xlv.

## CHAPTER IV

### FRIENDSHIP: THE GOLDEN MEAN

The connection between Books III and IV is obvious, since the four major stories are carried through both books. The further relation of these books to the fifth one is most strongly suggested by the facts that Britomart, champion of chastity, loves Artegall, champion of justice, and that she appears in Book V in the role usually occupied by Prince Arthur. Since the two characters meet in Book IV, and this is the place in the narrative in which Britomart's love stops being fantasy and moves into the world of reality, the unity of the three books becomes even stronger. Working on this assumption, one examines the structure of the integration to see that Britomart and Artegall and, consequently, the virtues that they represent are somehow unified through friendship.

Spenser's typical method of developing a character is to show him gradually attaining perfection in a virtue. Since he is already strong in the virtue before he begins his quest, this progress is expected, and it always comes as something of a surprise when he backslides through his own carelessness. This is the picture that the reader learns to expect from Books I and II. Britomart and Artegall differ slightly because each is already perfected in virtue



to a great extent. Both require further education, however, before chaste love and justice can be truly unified.

Padleford presents a picture of the ideal Italian woman of the Renaissance period as shown in the literature of the time. Since many of Spenser's sources are Italian, he must have been familiar with some of these basic concepts:

The ideal woman . . . is keenly aware of life, volitional and constructive, shrewd in interpreting character, tactful and versatile. In her judgment and resource, she has the equipment for protecting herself from evil design, and she has the ruddy and many-sided interests which, quite as much as immediate self-control, safeguard her from her passion.<sup>44</sup>

Although Britomart exhibits some of these qualities as she begins her search for Artegall, she is deficient in others. In her attempts to be tactful with Malecasta, she does not show good judgment and fails to protect herself from these "evil designs." Even though she recognizes that Malecasta has a weak character, she does not realize that the situation can have a direct bearing on her own life. She misjudges Malecasta, simply because she relates the nature of the woman's passion to her own for Artegall. All of the signs reveal to the reader that the Castle Joyeous is a place in which people play at love.<sup>45</sup> Even the terms by which

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<sup>44</sup>Padleford, op. cit., p. 369.

<sup>45</sup>Roche, op. cit., p. 72.

knights may pass the castle sound like sport: they must either forsake their loves and do service to Malecasta or fight against six of her knights. If they fight and win, they are rewarded with Malecasta's love. The words used in describing the scene depicted in the tapestry give the reader the clues he needs to understand what kind of place this is.<sup>46</sup> Venus "entyst" Adonis with "sleights and sweet allurements" to be her paramour and led him into a "secret shade" (III.i.35).<sup>47</sup> While he bathed, "with her two crafty spies / She secretly would search each daintie lim" (III.i.36). Lewis has called this scene one of "lust suspended."<sup>48</sup> So Malecasta looks at Britomart with "crafty glaunce / Of her false eies, that at her hart did ayme . . . But Britomart dissembled it with ignoraunce" (III.i.50). Lacking the experience to judge adequately, she leaves herself open to attack; to the wanton Malecasta, she appears to encourage the attention by not refusing it.

With the innocence and inexperience of a young woman who has left the protective surroundings of her father's court, Britomart makes her first mistake and suffers for it.

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<sup>46</sup>Alpers, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

<sup>47</sup>Throughout this paper, references to *The Faerie Queene* are based on *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, edited by Edwin Greenlaw, et al.

<sup>48</sup>C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, p. 332.

When she faces reality for the first time, her real education begins. Love is now an external force, not just an image once seen in a magic mirror. Not only can she love, but she can also be the object of love.<sup>49</sup> She has encountered unchastity for the first time, received a slight wound, and completed the initial phase of her education.

Britomart must undergo further temptations in the educative process which will make her an acceptable wife for Artégall. She meets the self-centered celibacy of Marinell and overthrows it with ease. She is not tempted at all by the great riches about her. She enters the castle of Malbecco and discovers that for love to endure, the partners must be equal. Hence, an old man, no matter how wealthy he is, is not a suitable husband for a young woman.

Britomart has passed the preparatory stage and faces her final test in the House of Busyrane. She leaves behind her the symbol of her childhood, her old nurse Glauce, and faces the dangers alone.<sup>50</sup> She has undergone a humanizing process as well as received an education. Her single-minded determination to find the object of her quest may be laid aside long enough to enable her to help another person. She has learned kindness and consideration for others, and she

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<sup>49</sup>Roche, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

can offer her strength and purity of character where they are weak. She will not ignore the plight of Scudamore as she did that of Florimell in the opening canto.

Encountering the flame which denies entrance to the castle, Britomart exhibits none of her former rashness. Unlike Scudamore, she proceeds with caution: "Daunger without discretion to attempt, / Inglorious and beastlike is . . ." (III.xi.23). As she enters the first room in the castle, she views a rich tapestry. From the beginning of the description, a sinister mood is evoked which carries throughout the rest of the canto.<sup>51</sup> For example, the gold and silver threads ". . . lurked privily / As faining to be hidd from envious eye" and ". . . shone unwillingly; / Like a discoulourd snake . . ." (III.xi.28). The scene depicts Cupid's power over the gods, kings, knights, and even commoners, without regard for rank. A golden statue of the god himself stands at the upper end of the room, threatening with his arrows. Britomart stares at the scene but can make no meaning of it. Because a sign over the door bids her to be bold, she enters into the next room. The second room is paneled with gold walls on which are depicted further images of monstrous love in a thousand shapes. About the walls are hung the spoils of Cupid's victory in war. To Britomart, the

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<sup>51</sup>Alpers, op. cit., p. 15.



scene again has no meaning, and she marvels that no one appears to inhabit this castle. Finally, she spies another door marked "Be not too bold." She heeds its warning and waits to see what will happen, guarding against any danger which might present itself if she were to sleep. During the night, a trumpet sounds, a dreadful storm occurs, and the iron door flies open. The man who enters acts as a prologue to the masque that follows. His robe identifies him as Ease. The masque begins with music and merriment, followed by an array of characters: Fancy, Desire, Doubt, Danger, Fear, Hope, Dissemblance, Suspect, Grief, Fury, Displeasure, Pleasance, and, finally, Despight and Cruelty leading a woman in whose breast is a wide wound in which a knife is entrenched. She carries her heart in a silver basin. Following her is another group of figures representing Reproach, Repentance, Shame, Strife, Anger, and many others, complete with Death in Infamy. The performance ended, the maskers exit through the door by which they entered. When Britomart tries to follow, she finds that the door is locked and resolves to wait until the next day when the masque reappears. Britomart's education is now complete. She has passed every test that the House of Busyrane has to offer. The outer rooms suggest that love is a game to be played. The inscription "Be bold" means that she should take advantage

of the opportunities to seek out and enjoy love. Cupid is the usual victor in this game, but one may always take his chances. The inscription on the idol suggests that Cupid will resign his position to anyone who can emerge the champion in the game. When she comes to the door marked "Be not too bold," the game is over. With the advent of marriage, there is a greater challenge than in empty and frivolous love affairs. Busyrane, the abuse of marriage, offers only emptiness and pain to a marriage founded on physical passion alone. Stripped of its excitement and glamour, love can become dull and stifling unless there is a greater spiritual communion. Without this quality, the marriage offers all of the pain and unhappiness suggested by the members of the masque and only a tiny amount of hope and pleasure.

In rescuing Amoret from Busyrane, Britomart receives a small wound. Since no marriage is entirely without pain, Britomart's will not be perfect. It will, however, be superior, because she is bringing to it the two necessary attributes, physical passion and spiritual unity. Britomart is now prepared for marriage with Artegall, but she has yet to meet him.

Book IV provides her with the opportunity to meet Artegall at Satyrane's tournament, but they do not even recognize each other, here. The whole aspect of the tournament is confusing and beset by discord. "Things not being what

they seem" is demonstrated by the outcome. Britomart, a woman, wins that part of the contest designated for men; the false Florimell, a creation inhabited by a male spirit, wins the girdle intended for the most beautiful woman.<sup>52</sup> Human judgment cannot be relied upon. Only outside the court atmosphere, in a more personal confrontation, will Britomart and Artegall discover each other. Consequently, the inverse relationship of the couple is worth noting. Love is usually depicted by a male figure; justice, by a woman. Here, the roles are reversed, because the kind of chate love that Spenser pictures belongs typically to a woman, and the severe justice that Artegall demonstrates belongs especially to a man. The fact that the figures of Cupid and Justice are usually blindfolded is also worth considering. Both Britomart and Artegall are disguised at the tournament, she in the armor of a knight and Artegall as a "salvage sans finesse." Neither is what he seems; neither can penetrate the camouflage of the other. Their concealment keeps them from discovering each other, and it hides another important factor, because each is lacking in some way. Artegall is incomplete, without the "finish" that he needs.<sup>53</sup> Britomart is similarly incomplete until she can

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<sup>52</sup>Nelson, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>53</sup>Roche, op. cit., p. 89.

drop her masculine disguise for the role of wife and mother. Only together can they fulfill their proper functions.

Their second meeting results from the forces of discord which must be overcome by those of concord. Artegall's anger towards the knight who defeated him in the tournament may, at first glance, seem uncharitable and unreasonable. However, there is a rough justice in it. The other knights had battled for a considerable time before she had appeared, fresh and vigorous, just as the tournament seemed at an end. More important to the story, however, is his anger upon losing false Florimell. Artegall has disdained women to this point. He has not had enough experience with women to judge wisely. In other words, he must learn to see through the exterior attributes into the character beneath as Britomart had to do. He must learn to judge wisely in his own affairs as well as in those of others.

The battle which occurs when they meet shortly thereafter brings a real contest since the two are evenly matched, and the winner will clearly be the superior knight. Britomart carries her enchanted lance; Artegall, his magic sword, Chrysaor. Although Britomart unhorses him with her spear in the first encounter at arms, he makes use of the sword to force her to fight on the ground. Britomart is no equal here, and, for all practical purposes, she has lost the battle when he shears away the front of her helmet. Only her



great beauty saves her. When Artegall penetrates her disguise, he throws away his sword and worships the beauty he sees before him. When he reveals his face and Britomart recognizes him as the object of her quest, the contest is over. The woman who would not submit to any man now recognizes her ideal under the rough exterior of the savage knight; the man who has avoided women unexpectedly discovers the great beauty of womanhood.<sup>54</sup> Britomart, the proud knight, is humbled; Artegall, the savage knight, is tamed, but the enduring bond between chastity and justice still must be formed.<sup>55</sup> They are brought together in the book of friendship, and it is exactly that quality which will perfect their relationship.

If the adventures of Artegall in Book IV show that he, like Britomart, needs to be educated and humanized in one kind of judgment, Book V will show another form of insight which must be perfected. Artegall serves in a limited capacity of earthly justice.<sup>56</sup> The Proem suggests that his concept of justice will be a classical one.<sup>57</sup> Artegall is

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<sup>54</sup>Clement Notcutt, "The Faerie Queene and Its Critics," Variorum, IV, 301.

<sup>55</sup>Nelson, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>56</sup>Donald Cheney, Spenser's Image of Nature, p. 147.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

a stern judge; Talus, since he is not human, knows no mercy as an executioner.

Only twice is Artegall faced with the temptation to act unjustly, and on both occasions he rises above the provocation. For example, he could escape from Radigund by violating his pledge, but he stays.<sup>58</sup> He could use Talus to serve his private ends when Envy, Detraction, and the Blatant Beast accost him, but he refuses.

Artegall exhibits only one weak moment in his quest, and he pays dearly for it. When he fights with Radigund, he makes more than one mistake. His first is in agreeing to fight with this female virago on her own terms. Since he is going into the battle to establish justice, the terms should have been to that effect. Instead, the agreement that the loser will serve as the winner's vassal is unrealistic so far as justice is concerned. The next mistake that Artegall makes is his dissolving into pity when he sees the injury he has inflicted upon a beautiful woman. Again, he judges by exterior appearances instead of the reality by which he should understand the nature of his opponent. However noble his decision not to kill Radigund may be, it leads to the inability to fulfill his promise to Irena and to his

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<sup>58</sup>Alfred B. Gough, "Spenser's Faerie Queene Book V," Variorum, V, 285.

enslavement.<sup>59</sup> When Britomart comes, she has no such compunction. She fights by the terms of the honor of Maydenhead, slays Radigund without a second thought, and frees Artegall from his humiliating role as a clothmaker. She restores the symbols of his masculinity and his knight-hood. It is she who restores justice, removing the power of women and re-establishing the proper relationship between the sexes.

The similarity of the battles that Artegall fights with Britomart and Radigund is surely intentional. The difference between the two women is that the first is always basically feminine in spite of her attire; the other is an aggressive feminist.<sup>60</sup> The events of the battle are similar. Artegall "defeats" both women, but is overcome by the beauty of each and throws away his sword. Obviously, the difference in the outcome lies in the characters of the two women. Radigund actively seeks power; she glories in the humiliation of her opponent. Britomart is not even aware of the power that she has over Artegall, and neither is he.<sup>61</sup> The power that Britomart exerts over Artegall is shown by her dream in the Temple of Isis. The sleeping law (the crocodile) promotes

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<sup>59</sup>De Selincourt (ed.), op. cit., p. xlix.

<sup>60</sup>C. S. Lewis, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature, p. 105.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

chaos and injustice, and destruction results; therefore, stern force will be required to suppress the resultant turmoil. This force, unchecked, can become destructive just as the crocodile turns on Isis. Therefore, justice must be restrained by mercy to insure that the result will be not just order, but peace.<sup>62</sup> Lewis explains Britomart's dream on three levels. On the naturalistic level it may represent the erotic dream of a girl planning her wedding. The second level may be interpreted as a reassurance of the importance of her marriage to the future of her country. Finally, the dream suggests that as Isis controls Osiris (Justice) to some extent, so Britomart will hold sway over Artegall, tempering the power of justice with mercy.<sup>63</sup>

The ideal of justice tempered by clemency is shown in Mercilla's court. The Christian concept of justice differs from the classical view in that it is not wholly dependent upon the resources of the individual.<sup>64</sup> Human relations become much more complex when justice and mercy are balanced in this manner, but the result is a lasting peace.<sup>65</sup> Artegall continues in the role of classical justice, because decisive

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<sup>62</sup>Nelson, op. cit., p. 270.

<sup>63</sup>C. S. Lewis, Spenser's Images of Life, pp. 98-112.

<sup>64</sup>Cheney, op. cit., p. 163.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 163.



action is still needed, but he will serve a broader purpose in preparing the way for Christian justice to take over when he finishes his job.<sup>66</sup>

Britomart and Artegall have undergone the educative processes which make them strong champions of virtue and enable them to meet each other as equals. Only after they have shown their worthiness is it possible for love and friendship to grow. Aristotle concluded that friendship was nearest to the virtue of justice, and Spenser has continued to build on the relationship of the two virtues in his commentary in the prologue to Book V in which he discusses the communion of souls and the harmony of God which existed once in the universe.<sup>67</sup> Unlike Aristotle, Spenser concluded that friendship is a virtue in its own right, but he does continue to associate it with justice. Love is clearly related to friendship in the affection of kindred, the love between man and wife, and the communion of virtuous minds.<sup>68</sup> Friendship, love, and communion of minds seals the bond between Spenser's virtues of chastity in married love and justice. Britomart is more than a lover to Artegall; she will serve as companion and friend, as well. In addition,

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<sup>66</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>67</sup>Erskine, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

she will serve as Artegall's queen, occupying a seat of authority beside him and adding the quality of mercy to his judgment.<sup>69</sup>

Spenser exemplifies the Christian concept of love in Books III, IV, and V; friendship is expanded to form the ideal relationship between man and woman; and love is the quality typified by mercy which restrains and humanizes justice. Through the characters of Britomart and Artegall Spenser proposes a unity between love and justice. Thus, Books III and V are linked by the unifying virtue of friendship, Book IV.

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<sup>69</sup>Charles W. Lemmi, "Britomart: The Embodiment of True Love," SP, XXXI (1934), 136.

## CHAPTER V

### UNITY IN BOOKS III, IV, AND V

Although Spenser failed to achieve unity in The Faerie Queene through either the inclusion of Prince Arthur or the quests of the knights from Gloriana's court, he has established a different kind of unity through the interrelationship of books. Particularly in Books III, IV, and V is this integration established through uniting the titular heroine of Book III to the patron knight of Book V. Since Britomart and Artegall are brought together in Book IV, the relationship of these characters appears to have been a purposeful technique by Spenser to achieve unity in the three books. The uniting of these two characters establishes the relationship of the three virtues as well. If neither Britomart nor Artegall is complete without the other, then chastity, or married love, and justice must also be incomplete without each other. The qualities of love and friendship are blended to form the perfect relationship between a husband and wife, since neither physical passion nor spiritual unity is sufficient to develop the ideal union that Spenser considers essential. The addition of justice to love and friendship is apparent in Britomart's dream in the Temple of Isis. Just as the ideal type of justice--that which is tempered with mercy--is demonstrated in Mercilla's court, so the power of

Britomart's love will serve to hold in check the harsh concept of justice that Artegall executes. Although stern judgment is necessary at times, the second, more humane type, is preferable in order to assure lasting peace in the nation over which they will reign.

Separating the stories of the four women who represent the virtue of chastity shows that Spenser was primarily concerned with the virtue in regard to marriage but also recognized that, under certain circumstances, the virtue could be appropriate in celibacy. Putting the stories together again demonstrates that the virtue of chastity encompasses a wide variation in chaste behavior. One can have the perfect blend of physical and spiritual involvement as Britomart does or exhibit an incompleteness of unity as the character of Amoret suggests. Furthermore, chastity can take the form of celibacy which results in activity and good deeds. Because Britomart exhibits the great beauty of Florimell, the passion of Amoret, and the spiritual qualities of Belphebe, in addition to wisdom and understanding, she serves as the perfect representative of the virtue of married chastity which Spenser demonstrates in Book III. Therefore, she will serve as a wise, gracious, and merciful queen when she and Artegall marry.

The book of friendship establishes the relationship between love and friendship and friendship and justice.



Without friendship, or the spiritual communion between two people, discord often prevails in love. Even though all of the four love stories began in Book III, they are reconciled in Book IV, as concord is established between men and women. Since injustice frequently emerges from discord, a further relationship is demonstrated between friendship and justice. This union is also developed through the Britomart-Artegall story.

Through the necessary educative and humanizing processes, Britomart and Artégall can become the ideal monarchs. Her love and mercy softens his concept of justice and the result is concord and lasting peace. Therefore, the three books are linked and a unity is established between love and justice through the power of friendship.

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