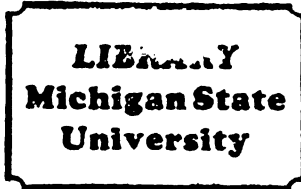This is to certify that the

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THE RELATION OF SPENSER'S FAERIE QUEENE TO
MALORY'S MORTE DARTHUR: AN INTERTEXTUAL APPROACH

presented by

Paul R. Rovang

has been accepted towards fulfillment
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Donzell M. Rosenberg
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THE RELATION OF SPENSER'S FAERIE QUEENE TO MALORY'S
MORTE DARTHUR: AN INTERTEXTUAL APPROACH

By

Paul R. Rovang

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

THE RELATION OF SPENSER'S FAERIE QUEENE TO MALORY'S MORTE DARTHUR: AN INTERTEXTUAL APPROACH

By

Paul R. Rovang

Because of a paucity of ostensibly Malorian borrowings by Spenser, critics in this century have tended to disallow a significant interrelatedness between The Morte Darthur and The Faerie Queene. Moreover, the only focused study on the subject has been Marie Walther's late nineteenth-century German inaugural dissertation, which goes little further than the citing of parallels between the two works.

This study demonstrates the extent of Spenser's use of Malory as a source and explores The Faerie Queene's relation to the larger medieval tradition of chivalric romance narrative, using The Morte Darthur as a touchstone. It accounts for continuities and distinctions between Malory and Spenser in historical, cultural, and political terms.

Chapter I compares the two authors' treatments of the major thematic correspondence of the two works--the chivalric quest--and lays the groundwork for the application of intertextual criticism to be applied throughout the dissertation. Chapter II analyzes structural similarities between the two works and argues that Spenser owed a specific debt to Malory for the structure of his poem. Chapter III examines the socio-political applications of

chivalry in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and explores how they are reflected in the two authors' renderings of the knight as an exemplar of virtue, and of chivalry as an ethical and political code. Chapter IV addresses the two works' treatments of Arthur as a political exemplar and shows how Malory's presentation of Arthur informs Spenser's. Chapter V analyzes a major force behind Spenser's transformation of Malory and the chivalric romance tradition—the sharper Renaissance distinction between history and fiction. Chapter VI explores the effects of the two authors' differing conceptions of history and fiction on their renderings of several themes and elements: the supernatural and the marvelous, humor and irony, and time and eternity.

In memoriam

Edison and Angel Ashouri
Michael and Janice Schelling

They jeoparded their lives unto the death
in the high places of the field.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I first became interested in the relationship between
The Morte Darthur and The Faerie Queene in D. M. Rosenberg's
doctoral seminar in Spenser at Michigan State University.
To my first complete reading of The Faerie Queene I brought
a long-standing interest in medieval Arthurian literature
which had produced a master's thesis on Malory and Gottfried
von Strassburg, written under the direction of Muriel Brown
at North Dakota State University. During the course of the
Spenser seminar, Professor Rosenberg mentioned the
Malory-Spenser connection as a seemingly important one that
had been little explored.

At this point the topic began to germinate in earnest.
In my own reading, I had already noticed a number of
Malorian formulaic phrases adapted by Spenser (see pp. 82-
83 & n.;198-99). Furthermore, there was the chivalric quest
theme and the characters which the two works had in common,
foremostly Arthur, Merlin, and Tristram. The most immediate
problem for me was that many of these elements were also to
be found in other medieval romances. How could one
demonstrate the extent of debt to Malory--if an appreciable
debt even existed? I decided to test the waters with a
seminar paper. In my initial search, I was not encouraged
by the critics. The section on sources in volume one of the
Variorum edition of Spenser contained a mere paragraph on

1

The Morte Darthur, in which F. M. Padelford declared: "On the whole . . . it is clear that in Book One Spenser has drawn less upon the Morte d'Arthur than its prominence would have led one to expect" (399). Other volumes of the Variorum, in their sources sections, addressed the question even more cursorily, if at all.

Discovering the existence of Marie Walther's late nineteenth-century German inaugural dissertation, Malory's Einfluss auf Spenser's Faerie Queene, encouraged me, although it was not readily available for use in my seminar paper. I soon discovered, however, that twentieth-century scholars such as Josephine Waters Bennett had dismissed Walther's study as presenting general romance commonplaces as borrowings from Malory (Bennett Evolution 63 n.). Although, having since obtained the seventy-nine page German study, I do not see this criticism as entirely valid, I knew at the time that I would have to approach the problem from a different angle than had Walther. Merely hunting for borrowings was bound to be redundant and ineffective.

Rosemond Tuve's chapter on romance in Allegorical Imagery proved seminal to the strategy which I eventually developed. Tuve argues that the connection between The Faerie Queene and medieval romance consists of "deeply pervasive effects rather than precise borrowings of items" (335). I chose, experimentally, to apply this proposition to the Malory-Spenser question. Having found some plausible structural and thematic links, I then asked: How did

Spenser, as a Renaissance poet, respond to the chivalric romance themes, material, and structures which he saw in Malory? The problem thus became less one of direct borrowings--although that remained significant in its own right--and more one of reception and reapplication. A further intriguing possibility was the fact that Spenser had been the first English writer since Malory successfully to treat the Arthurian matter. The result of this convergence of findings and questions was a seminar paper entitled "Spenser's Relation to Malory in the Evolution of the Arthurian Chivalric Quest Narrative."

This dissertation has been in a large way an expansion of the seminar paper. The most significant new dimension brought to the dissertation phase has been a theory of intertextuality, which I first became acquainted with through Leland Ryken's <u>Milton and Scriptural Tradition</u>. The groundwork for my particular application of intertextual criticism is laid in the first chapter. Chapter one also traces the major thematic similarity of the two works, the chivalric quest, and attempts to account for and show the applications of Spenser's departures from Malory in rehandling that theme. The second chapter discusses structural relations between the two works and how the two authors' intertextual environments influenced them to modify the structures by which they arranged their chivalric romance material. The point is stressed that Spenser owed a specific debt to Malory for his poem's structure.

Where the first two chapters demonstrate the nature of the relationship between the two works, the third and fourth chapters concentrate on the motivation, purposes, and applications of that relationship. Chapter three explores the socio-political applications of chivalry in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and examines how these applications are reflected in the two authors' treatments of the knight as exemplar of virtue and chivalry as an ethical and political code. Chapter four addresses the two works' treatments of Arthur as a political exemplar and discusses how Malory's particular presentation of Arthur as a just Christian ruler who attains stable empire informs Spenser's presentation of Arthur as an allegory for Elizabeth.

Chapters five and six explore a major force behind Spenser's rehandling of Malory--the clearer Renaissance distinction between history and fiction. Chapter five examines the influence of medieval historiography upon Malory's treatment of his source materials and compares how the evolving Renaissance historiography allowed Spenser to develop his materials with a much freer hand. Chapter six, an appendage of chapter five which I have separated for reasons of manageability, contains additional diverse topics which variously illustrate the history-fiction contrast: the supernatural and the marvelous, humor and irony, and time and eternity. The entire dissertation, but chapters five and six especially, show how medieval themes and literary forms were brought across the transitional period

leading to the Renaissance, and fitted to the needs, tastes, and beliefs of the time.

For quotations from Malory I have chosen to cite Caxton's text in the main, instead of the currently more widely used Winchester version, since Caxton's was the version known to Spenser. At points, however, I quote and cross-reference the Winchester text.

CHAPTER ONE

Thematic Similarities in Malory and Spenser

A. <u>The Faerie Queene</u> and Medieval Chivalric Romance

Literary scholars have made much of <u>The Faerie Queene</u>'s dependence upon Virgil's <u>Aeneid</u> and the romance epics of Ariosto and Tasso. While Spenser's poem is chivalric in content, it is often thought of as a Renaissance version of the classical epic retaining only vestigial links with the chivalric romances of the Middle Ages. Therefore, many have said that although the poem features knights, it is not a chivalric romance; and although it portrays Arthur, it is not an Arthurian romance. L. R. Gaylon's assessment of <u>The Faerie Queene</u> in <u>The Arthurian Encyclopedia</u> is characteristic of this attitude: "<u>The Faerie Queene</u> is a great poem, but not a great Arthurian poem." Josephine Waters Bennett has taken a more provocative and uncompromising stance on the question, calling "any account of the <u>Faerie Queene</u> which brackets it with Malory or implies a major debt to the Arthurian stories . . . simply and purely mistaken" ("Genre" 109).[1]

A thorough examination of <u>The Faerie Queene</u> in comparison with specific medieval chivalric romances, however, reveals it to be vitally within that tradition. Warton[2] in the eighteenth century and Taine in the

nineteenth have already made observations to this effect.

Warton writes:

> Although Spenser formed his Faerie Queene upon the
> fanciful plan of Ariosto . . . yet it must be
> confessed, that the adventures of Spenser's
> knights are a more exact and immediate copy of
> those which we meet with in old romances, or books
> of chivalry, than they are of those of which the
> Orlando Furioso consists. Ariosto's knights
> exhibit surprising instances of their prowess, and
> atchieve many heroic actions; but our author's
> knights are more particularly engaged in revenging
> injuries, and doing justice to the distressed;
> which was the proper business, and ultimate end of
> the antient knight-errantry. And thus though many
> of Spenser's incidents and expedients are to be
> found in Ariosto, such as the blowing of a horn,
> at the sound of which the gates of a castle fly
> open, of the vanishing of an enchanted palace or
> garden, after some knight has destroyed the
> enchanter, and the like, yet these are not more
> peculiarly the property of Ariosto, than they are
> common to all antient romances in general.
> (13-14)

Similarly, Taine, in discussing Spenser's foreign
contemporaries who treated chivalry--Ariosto, Tasso,
Cervantes, and Rabelais--says: "Ils refont une chevalerie,
mais ce n'est point une chevalerie vraie" (329). In this
respect, their insular counterpart stands alone:

> Seul, Spenser la prend au sérieux et
> naturellement. Il est au niveau de tant de
> noblesse, de grandeurs, et de rêves. Il n'est
> point encore assis et enfermé dans cette espece de
> bon sens exact qui va fonder et rétrécir toute la
> civilisation moderne. Il habite de coeur dans le
> poétique et vaporeuse contrée dont chaque jour les
> hommes s'éloignent davantage. Il en aime jusqu'au
> langage: il reprend les vieux mots, les tours du
> moyen âge . . . . Il entre de plain-pied dans les
> plus étranges songes des anciens conteurs, sans
> étonnement, comme un homme qui de lui-meme en
> trouve encore de plus étranges. Châteaux

> enchantés, monstres et géants, duels dans les
> bois, demoiselles errantes, tout renaît sous sa
> main, la fantasie du moyen âge avec la générosité
> du moyen âge . . . (330)

In Taine's view, therefore, the other authors mentioned
treat chivalry, but according to the more skeptical and
satirical temper of their own age. Only Spenser, he holds,
treats chivalry in the spirit of the Middle Ages--of the
"old romances or books of chivalry," as Warton phrases it.

More recently Rosemond Tuve has argued for connections
between The Faerie Queene and the chivalric romances of the
Middle Ages, connections which she describes as "deeply
pervasive effects rather than precise borrowings of items"
(335). In order to reinforce this assertion she invites us

> to think of what an unimaginably different poem we
> should have had if Spenser had written Christian
> history like the Fletchers, du Bartas, Milton; if
> Spenser had kept to secular historical narrative
> like Drayton in his Legends and his two heroic
> poems on Mortimer, or had written of the Irish and
> Belgian conflicts as Daniel did of the Civil Wars;
> or if Spenser had written "classical" historical
> epics like a Petrarch or a Ronsard, or mythicized
> pseudo-classical narratives like a Jean Lemaire de
> Belges; or if he had confined himself to (instead
> of merely using) Italianized, Platonized
> mythological poetry of the kind found in the
> temples of Venus or Isis or the revolt of
> Mutability. (336)

It is primarily "'mediaeval romance,'" Tuve asserts, that
"is responsible for the character the Faerie Queene has as a
narrative" (336). She affirms that while Spenser "finds use
for" the narrative types enumerated above,

it has an extraordinary effect upon their
durability and their absence of preciosity that
they are set in a matrix of the most ordinary kind
of storytelling in Europe for centuries: the
straightforward tale of chivalric romance. (336)

B. Applications of a Theory of Intertextuality

What becomes evident from the critical appraisals just
surveyed is that Spenser worked to a significant degree
within a generic tradition comprising a vast body of texts,
known to us as chivalric romance. Though we do not suppose
that he read all or even most of the texts, it is certain
that he was conversant with the tradition, its themes, and
conventions, and was influenced even by works therein which
he had not actually read. While it is demonstrable that
Spenser drew upon such chivalric texts as Chaucer's Squire's
Tale and Tale of Sir Thopas, Huon of Bordeaux, Bevis of
Hampton, Arthur of Little Britain, Lybeaus Desconus, and, as
I shall argue, The Morte Darthur, he was equally influenced,
via the existing corpus of the tradition, by works which he
had probably not read, such as the Prose Lancelot and
Tristan, and the romances of Chrétien de Troyes.

We only need pause momentarily to realize that without
the works in the latter group, those in the former,
particularly The Morte Darthur, could never have existed as
we know them. A fortiori, the same rule applies for The
Faerie Queene. Furthermore, works such as those mentioned
above had by Spenser's time exerted a vast influence on

England's material culture, its social and political
institutions, and its language. In this sense, Spenser, in
writing chivalric romance, is not just 'borrowing' or 'using
sources', he is, to use terminology originated by Julia
Kristeva, participating in an 'intertextual space.' The
text which he generates is interacting with, shaping, and
being shaped by the entire existing generic tradition. As
Kristeva has said, "'Écrire' serait le 'lire' devenu
production, industrie: l'écriture-lecture, l'écriture
paragrammatique serait l'aspiration vers une agressivité et
une participation totale" (181).

Writing is the productive activity corresponding not
merely to the reading of written texts, as Kristeva asserts,
but also to the 'reading' of the 'text' of culture and
language, of which written texts are one feature. This
concept is what Jacques Derrida is talking about when he
observes that "Around the irreducible point of originality"
of Rousseau's writing "an immense series of structures, of
historical totalities of all orders, are [sic] organized,
enveloped, and blended" (161).[3] The author's text, writes
Kristeva, "est produit dans le mouvement complexe d'une
affirmation et d'une négation simultanées d'un autre texte"
(257). In his work the author is at every moment busy
agreeing and disagreeing with, qualifying and expanding
upon, not just a single text, but the whole complex which
makes up the intertextual space of the genre in which he is
working.

Jonathan Culler defines intertextuality as "an assertion of a work's participation in a discursive space and its relation to the codes which are the potential formalizations of that space" (1382). It is never possible to define the complete intertextual space of any work--a fact which proves obstructive to the critic attempting to apply a theory of intertextuality. We can, however, identify certain constituents of an intertextual space and relate them to a given work. In doing so, we do not stop with the question 'What did the latter borrow from the former?'--although that is often an important preliminary step. We must go beyond this to ask questions like 'How does the latter presuppose, affirm, negate, and extend the former?' Furthermore, we must inquire: 'How do the two works relate to their own cultural-historical settings and what bearing does the cultural-historical setting have on the way in which the later author reads, understands, and incoporporates the earlier work?'

These are the sorts of questions I intend to ask in treating The Morte Darthur as a constituent of The Faerie Queene's intertextual space. I will establish a number of source relationships between the two works in order to demonstrate how consciously vital Spenser considered Malory's work to his own poem. But more often I shall treat The Morte Darthur as a repository of medieval themes and conventions which Spenser assimilated into his Renaissance version of the Arthurian chivalric romance. Realizing that

Malory himself fits his _matière_ to his _sens_, I will at
points compare how the two authors at once presuppose and
reshape earlier conventions. The single great question that
I shall eventually address is how Spenser, in translating
the Arthurian chivalric romance tradition into the
Renaissance, affirms and reasserts, negates and departs from
The Morte Darthur. Implicit in this matter is the
investigation of how changed cultural-historical factors
influenced him to approach Malory in the way that he did.
In expounding this question, I shall be commenting
indirectly and to a lesser degree on the poem's relation to
the entire generic tradition of chivalric romance.

C. The Chivalric Quest Theme in the "Legend of the Knight of
the Red Cross" and the _Tale of Gareth_

The first two chapters of this dissertation will focus
on how the grand theme of both works under examination, the
chivalric quest, also governs both works' structures. We
may most effectively begin to analyze these similarities by
comparing Malory's _Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney_ and
Spenser's "Legend of the Knight of the Red Cross," since
they have more clearly observable elements in common than
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(104). In the Proem to Book I, Spenser promises to "sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds" (1.5). "Fierce warres and faithfull loues"--two predominating elements of chivalric romances--he adds, "shall moralize my song" (9).

At the opening of the first tale featuring the projected theme, we come upon a fledgling knight errant whose aim is that of almost every uninitiated warrior of medieval romance: "To proue his puissance in battell braue" (I.3.7)--in this case, against "a Dragon horrible and stearne" (9). Accompanying him is the comely victim of the dragon's ravages, mounted on a white ass and followed by a dwarf.

What I have just summarized, however, is not the true beginning of the story. In his Letter to Raleigh Spenser explains: "The beginning . . . of my history, if it were to be told by an Historiographer should be the twelfth booke, which is the last" (738). As a creator of romance-epic, therefore, the poet has begun in medias res. We may presume from the above-cited comments that had he completed The Faerie Queene, the twelfth book would have developed the events summarized in the Letter:

> I deuise that the Faery Queene kept her Annual
> feaste xii. dayes, uppon which xii. seuerall
> dayes, the occasions of the xii. seuerall
> aduentures hapned, which being undertaken by xii.
> seuerall knights, are in these xii books seuerally
> handled and discoursed. (738)

Each adventure, then, was to have its origin upon a

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Each adventure, then, was to have its origin upon a

successive day of the feast. The poet would have given a
retrospective narrative of this time of beginnings after all
of the adventures had been fulfilled. He provides a fuller
background sketch for Redcrosse's quest than for any other
of his heroes. In this sketch he relates how an unlikely
looking "clownishe younge man" receives, in fulfilment of a
boon from the Queen of Fairies, a quest on behalf of a lady
of royal blood whose parents were being held captive by a
dragon. After briefly narrating the youth's arming,
knighting, and setting out on the quest, Spenser inducts the
reader into the opening lines of Book I: "where beginneth
the first booke, vz.[--]A gentle knight was pricking on the
playne. &c." (738).

If we turn to Malory's Tale of Gareth, we find
numerous parallel features to this account. As Spenser's
aspiring youth appears at Gloriana's feast, so does the
unproven Gareth at "the hyhe feest of Pentecost" when Arthur
is holding court at Kynkekenadonne (7.1). He too asks a
boon, but it involves three gifts instead of one. The first
gift he asks for corresponds to Spenser's remarks about his
hero's "rusticity" (738); for Gareth requests: "gyue me mete
and drynke suffycyauntly for thys tweluemoneth" (7.1). This
request leads Kay to pronounce him "vylayne borne . . . for
and he had come of gentylmen he wold haue axed of you hors
and armour, but suche as he is, so he asketh."
Disparagingly naming him "Beaumayns" because of his large
hands, Kay consigns him to the kitchen, proclaiming "there

he shal haue fatte broweys euery day, that he shall be as fatte by the tweluemonthes ende as a porke hog" (7.1).

There Gareth remains (cf. "on the floore" in Spenser's Letter to Raleigh) until the following Pentecost, when Arthur's court is again observing the feast, this time at Carlyon. During the occasion, much as in Spenser's scenario, a damsel appears at court seeking a champion to liberate her sister, who "is byseged with a tyraunte so that she may not oute of hir castel" (7.2). This account Spenser has altered to give it more cosmic implications, but the parallels are clear. The oppressor, although not a dragon, is ominous and powerful. When the lady mentions his name, the Red Knight of the Red Lands (later also referred to as Sir Ironsides), Gawain declares him "one of the perilloust knyghtes of the world," who possesses "seuen mennys strengthe."

As we shall see again, one of Spenser's key strategies in applying his chivalric material is transforming its literal features into allegorical ones. In this instance, he replaces an extraordinary human with a mythical creature used in the Book of Revelation to represent Satan. Spenser has envisioned the theological possibilities for his chivalric material: the bondage of Una's parents to the dragon symbolizes Satan's enslavement of humanity through the fall. This arrangement transmutes the protagonist of the Malory's tale into a universal savior figure.

After the lady has described her plight, Gareth, much

to her dismay, chooses to claim his two remaining gifts:
that the king should grant him the adventure, and that he
should be knighted by Lancelot. Arthur willingly grants
both of these requests, but the lady, as in Spenser's
version, does "much gainesaying" (738): "Fy on the," Lynet
reproaches the king, "shalle I haue none but one that is
your kechyn page?" (7.3).

Spenser recounts that the lady, despite her
reservations, supplies the youth with the armor and horse
which her dwarf has led in. Gareth, too, is provided with
armor and horse brought by a dwarf, but no overt connection
is made between the arms and the damsel (7.3). Both authors
use remarkably similar language to describe the striking
transformation which occurs when the youth dons his new
armor. Malory writes: "Soo whanne he as [sic] armed, there
was none but few soo goodley a man as he was" (7.3).
Spenser says of the arms: "which being forthwith put upon
him with dewe furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest
man in al that company" (738).

The improvement wrought by donning the armor also
alters the lady's attitude toward the youth in Spenser, who
mentions that he then became "well liked" by her. In
Malory, though, it is a long time before we witness any such
change in feelings. There, the lady angrily leaves the
court without Gareth, and he must overtake and accompany her
against her wishes. She remains positively disdainful of
him and tries to rid herself of him until well into the

story.

Spenser's description in the <u>Letter to Raleigh</u> actually appears to draw on two or more versions of the Fair Unknown story. For instance, Spenser describes the lady as "riding on a white Asse." No such detail appears in Malory, but <u>Lybeaus Desconus</u> recounts "Milke white was hir destrere" (Lambeth MS. 1. 129). On the other hand, the Middle English verse romance makes no mention of a horse laden with armor led in by a dwarf, as found in Malory and Spenser.

At the beginning of Book I, where Spenser unfolds the action which he has retrospectively projected in his <u>Letter</u>, we find that the story continues to move along the same lines as the <u>Tale of Gareth</u>. Although Spenser has freely rearranged the story to his liking and purposes, it is still a tale of the development and proving of an unknown and undistinguished youth—a bit of a bumpkin—accomplished by means of chivalric adventures—especially feats of arms—on behalf of a lady, culminating in victory over an ultimate foe, release of prisoners, and marriage.

The action of Book I, however, contains not only large parallels to, but also particular correspondences with the action of the <u>Tale of Gareth</u>. As Marie Walther has noted, both Una and Linet warn their knights of the perils they face as they progress in their quests (18). But the spirits in which the two ladies give their warnings are very different. As Redcrosse approaches Error's den, Una cautions, "Be well aware . . . / Least sudden mischief ye

too rash provoke: / . . . . therefore your stroke / Sir
knight with-hold, till further triall made" (i.12.1-6).
After Gareth, on the other hand, has in his first combat
slain three knights and put three more to flight, Linet,
scornful at his early success, jeers: "al this that thou
hast done nys but myshappen the, but thou shalt see a syghte
shal make the torne ageyne, and that lyghtly" (7.5).

Another noteworthy correspondence between the two
knights' quests, observed by Frederick Morgan Padelford, is
that the hero slays a foe and must then face his avenging
brothers (Var. I.394-95). Gareth kills the Black Knight,
and consequently must contend with the Green, Red, and Blue
Knights, each one seeking to avenge his fallen brother
(Malory 7.7-12). Spenser relates this series of encounters
with an imaginative flair and complexity not found in
Malory, but the overall similarity in patterns is visible.
After Redcrosse destroys Sansfoy (ii.19), Sansloy, thinking
he is fighting his brother's murderer, almost kills
Archimago (who has disguised himself as Redcrosse)
[iii.35-39]. Finally, the hero does battle with Sansjoy,
the third brother, who is whisked off to Hades in "a
darksome clowd" just as his opponent is about to place the
fatal blow (v.13).

There is a significant structural parallel between the
two works, directly related to the correspondences in
encounters just noted. Both heroes possess an innate but
undeveloped nobility that is proved through a series of

increasingly difficult challenges. In Malory, the line of development is clear and uninterrupted. Redcrosse, on the other hand, must experience some vicissitudes in order to arrive at a state symbolizing Christian perfection and, as I have already suggested, become a Christ figure. It is through the challenges he must face, however, that he finally does arrive.

Malory marks Gareth's ascendancy in defeating the Red, Green, and Blue Knights by the number of knights which the vanquished lord places in his service. The Green Knight grants Gareth thirty men (7.8); the Red Knight, sixty (7.10); and the Blue Knight, one hundred (7.12). Also, after the first two battles we witness two similar occurrences: Linet chides and mocks Gareth, whereas the defeated knight honors him for his nobility and prowess. Between the battles with the Red and the Blue Knights, however, when Linet has finally seen enough of Gareth's conduct to realize that he is no kitchen knave, she exclaims:

> O Ihesu, merueille haue I . . . what maner a man ye be, for hit may neuer ben otherwyse but that ye be comen of a noble blood, for soo foule ne shamefully dyd neuer woman rule a knyghte as I haue done you, and euer curtoisly ye haue suffred me, and that cam neuer but of gentyl blood. (7.11)

Gareth's prowess and courtesy have thus proved him to his harshest critic. But this is not all. After he has vanquished Persaunt of Inde, the Blue Knight, he passes

another critical test of his nobility. When Persaunt sends his fair young daughter to Gareth's bed to offer him her body, Gareth refuses the enticement on the grounds that it would make him "a shameful knyghte" and cause her father "disworship" (7.12). The girl's father, upon learning from her of this chaste refusal, proclaims him to be "of a noble blood" (7.12). Furthermore, when Gareth explains to Persaunt his intention to face the Red Knight of the Red Lands, Persaunt affirms that this climactic encounter will even further elevate his status to the company of Lancelot, Tristram, and Lameroke: "for and ye may matche the Rede Knyghte, ye shalle be called the fourth of the worlde" (7.13). In short space Gareth defeats the Red Knight, whose liege men all promise to serve Gareth if only he will spare their lord. Afterward, the Red Knight agrees to all of Gareth's requirements that he should make retribution to Lyones, Linet's sister, and submit to Lancelot and Gawain at Arthur's court (7.18). When the Red Knight later recounts Gareth's victory to Arthur's court, the retelling evokes acclamation from the hearers: "Ihesu mercy, said Kynge Arthur and Sire Gawayne, we merueylle moche of what blood he is com, for he is a noble knyght'" (7.18).

This summary adumbrates Gareth's ascendancy, not to the end of the story, but to the completion of his initial quest to free Lyones. Redcrosse's rise may also be traced to the point where he liberates the captive Una's parents. Whereas Malory only implies, Spenser explicitly states the purpose

of his hero's quest. He has set out "to winne him worship" and to place himself in Gloriana's "grace" (I.i.3.4), but he also hopes "to proue his puissance in battell braue / Vpon his foe, and his new force to learne" (7-8)--"his new force" suggesting that of newly received, untried arms. Therefore, as in the story of Gareth, we are to witness the development of an unproven young knight through chivalric encounters and tests of arms. While traditionally chivalric, none of the hero's motives in these lines seems very Christlike. The point is that this flawed youth must become the knight of holiness via a process which he eagerly enters with all the wrong motives.

When Redcrosse succeeds in his first adventure against Error, Una, much quicker to praise than Linet, proclaims him "worthy": "Well worthy be you of that Armorie, / Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day, / And proou'd your strength on a strong enemie" (i.27.5-8). We soon find, however, in tracing Redcrosse's development as a knight, that it is more complex than Gareth's--no straight road to glory. Between each victory which marks an increase in his prowess (suggestive also of an increase in virtue) comes an insidious influence of greater strength which dampens his moral excellence and abates his might. The first of these influences is Archimago, who causes Redcrosse to desert his lady (a fault of which Gareth is blameless); the second, Duessa, who leads him into moral lethargy; and the third, Orgoglio, who completely incapacitates and imprisons him.

It is because of Redcrosse's lapse under Archimago's influence that Spenser writes, "the sleeping spark / Of natiue vertue gan eftsoones reuiue" (ii.19.1-2) when the hero combats Sansfoy. Redcrosse has gone into moral hibernation and in order to conquer must reactivate resources lying dormant deep within. Such an illustration shows effectively how armed encounters draw forth the knight's latent capacities which, in Malory's view, spring from nothing other than noble birth. Spenser, on the allegorical level, transfers Malory's concept of innate noblesse to spiritual regeneration. The true-born Christian warrior will, despite vicissitudes, exemplify in spiritual combat his heavenly lineage. In infusing this spiritual dimension, Spenser is reaching back, consciously or not, to a tradition of Arthurian spiritual allegory epitomized in earlier French grail romances, such as the Queste del Saint Graal (the closest extant version to Malory's unknown source for the Tale of the Sankgreal) and Perlesvaus. According to Eugène Vinaver, Malory had deliberately negated this tradition:

> His [Malory's] attitude may be described without much risk of over-simplification as that of a man to whom the quest of the Grail was primarily an Arthurian adventure and who regarded the intrusion of the Grail upon Arthur's kingdom not as a means of contrasting earthly and divine chivalry and condemning the former, but as an opportunity offered to the knights of the Round Table to achieve still greater glory in this world. (Commentary 1535)[4]

In defeating Sans Foy, Redcrosse, much like Gareth in his ingenuousness—"too simple and too trew" (ii.45.7)—replaces Una with Duessa. In spite of the fact that Duessa is soon to lead the knight to his undoing at the hands of Orgoglio, Spenser once again highlights his genuine underlying nobility, this time accentuated by the prospect of facing Sans Loy:

> The noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought,
>   And is with child of glorious great intent,
>   Can neuer rest, vntill it forth haue brought
>   Th'eternall brood of glorie excellent:
>   Such restlesse passion did all night torment
>   The flaming corage of that Faery knight,
>   Deuizing, how that doughty turnament
>   With greatest honour he atchieuen might
>   (v.1.1-8)

When, after defeating Sans Loy, Redcrosse abandons this "vertuous thought" that is his natural estate, he becomes easy prey for Orgoglio. His doffing of his armor, his drinking from Phoebe's pool, and his lovemaking to Duessa all symbolize his moral dereliction (vii.2-7), leading to his capture by the giant. But at the same time as Redcrosse is languishing in Orgoglio's dungeon, having been "disarm'd, disgrast, and inwardly dismayde" (vii.11.6), Una's remarks to Arthur about her knight's "prowesse" remind us of his true nature (vii.47.6-7).

This episode is reminiscent of one found in Malory's Tale of Lancelot, where the hero, having removed his helmet and lain down to sleep under an apple tree (6.1), is abducted by "foure quenes of grete estate" (6.3)—one of

whom is Morgan le Fay, an obvious counterpart to, if not a prototype for Duessa. Although Spenser does not directly state that Redcrosse is resting beneath a tree, he later insinuates it: "greene boughes decking a gloomy glade, / About the fountaine like a girlond made" (4.4-5). Both accounts stress the heat of the day, the knight's overwhelming weariness, and the inviting shadiness of the location: Malory writes, "the weder was hote about noone and Syre Launcelot had grete lust to slepe" (6.1), and Spenser mentions "the boyling heat" (4.3) and that Redcrosse "wearie sate" (2.6); in Malory, Lionel points out to Lancelot the "fayre shadowe" of the apple tree (6.1), and Spenser describes the shade as "cooling" (3.1) and "ioyous" (4.2). In both versions, this particular locus amoenus becomes a place of malevolent enchantment and abduction. Furthermore, while Duessa seduces Redcrosse on location, the four enchantresses (unsuccessfully) attempt the same with Lancelot after securing him in a castle prison.

Behind both of these accounts lies the ancient Celtic motif of the otherworld fairy abduction. As Lucy Paton points out, the danger of such an occurrence from sleeping under a tree, especially an apple tree, is a commonplace in chivalric romance (52 n. 1). Both authors, however, have adapted this motif to their particular purposes. Malory, whose focus is on chivalry as an exemplary institution, stresses Lancelot's courage and fidelity in scornfully refusing his captors' propositions. Although Morgan can

cast spells, she and her companions are quite human, and
Lancelot is transported "vpon his shelde . . . an horsbak
betwixt two knyghtes" to an identifiable location, "the
Castel Charyot" (6.3). Most of this is quite mundane and
logical; and this is plainly the way Malory prefers it,
since his emphasis is on earthly knighthood and human
knights. In the twelfth-century Bataille Loquifer, which
Paton cites as containing the most primitive extant version
of this episode, Morgan and two other fées fly through the
air to abduct the sleeping Renoart. To render him
defenseless they "change his club and his hauberk into
birds, his helmet into a harper, and his sword into a lad,"
and spirit him off to Avalon "par grant enchantoison" (Paton
49-50).

Spenser alters the motif--which, the evidence
indicates, he must have known through Malory, although it
was common enough in other romances--in order to exploit its
potential spiritual significance. Whereas removing his
helmet and going to sleep under a tree are for Lancelot
purely pragmatic acts which result only incidentally in
danger, for Redcrosse, every action is allegorically
significant. In stopping by the fountain he is pausing, as
indicated in the parallel account of Phoebe, "to rest in
middest of the race" (5.4), which immediately calls to mind
New Testament comparisons of spiritual discipline to running
a race (cf. esp. Heb. 12:1; Gal. 5:7). In disarming he is
removing his spiritual armor, as specified in the Letter to

Raleigh: "the armour of a Christian man" (738; cf. Eph. 6:13). "The ioyous shade," where Redcrosse and Duessa "gan of solace treat" (4.1-2), has become a cover for spiritual compromise (cf. Jn. 3:19; I Jn. 1:5-6). Each action leads steadily and significantly to the hero's spiritual demise, culminating in his hopeless imprisonment by Orgoglio. His condition, "in darksome dungeon, wretched thrall, / Remedilesse" (51.7-8), strikes us as remarkably different from that of Lancelot, who feistily insults his captors: "I wylle none of yow, for ye be fals enchauntresses" (6.3).

The assistance of Arthur, allegorically representing heavenly grace, is required to win Redcrosse's release and to help him realize his inward nobility. After Arthur has slain Orgoglio and freed the captive, Una brings him to the House of Holiness to convalesce. Following this period of restoration and instruction, he is prepared to learn his true identity as St. George and to preview his destiny as England's patron, both unfolded before him by the hermit Contemplation on a high mountain (x.61.6-9). Shortly following, the hermit reveals to Redcrosse his royal ancestry, to which his valorous deeds have attested in the preceding action: "For well I wote, thou springst from ancient race / Of Saxon kings" (x.65.1-2).

Now, and only now, is Redcrosse prepared to fight his ultimate foe and fulfil his quest. Even in victory, though, Spenser hints that it is not the hero's unerring prowess, such as Gareth displays, that conquers the dragon, but a

combination of the hero's strength and God's grace. It

seems accidental when Redcrosse's spear, "glancing from" the

dragon's "scaly neck," glides "Close vnder his left wing,

then broadly displayd" (xi.20.6-7). The sacramental imagery

that follows, the well and the tree of life, symbolize God's

helping presence in the entire combat, and at the conclusion

of the episode it is made explicit, through subtle use of

pronoun reference, that God was forcefully active in the

contest. Of Una it is related: "Then God she praysd, and

thankt her faithfull knight, / That had atchieu'd so great a

conquest by his might" (55.8-9). As A. C. Hamilton notes

here, "his" is deliberately ambiguous and "refers to both

God and the Knight" (154).

In spite of setbacks, then, Redcrosse has, on the

literal level, analogously to Gareth, ascended to a

realization of his true identity as St. George, slayer of

dragons. His actions also strongly suggest, as I have

earlier indicated, those of Christ in conquering Satan and

liberating fallen humanity. He is now openly honored by the

freed lord and his subjects:

> Vnto that doughtie Conquerour they came,
> And him before themselues prostrating low,
> Their Lord and Patrone loud did him proclame,
> And at his feet their laurell boughes did throw.
> (xii.6.1-4)

These celebrants are followed by "comely virgins" with

"timbrels" (6-9) and "fry of children young" (7.1). This

triumphal scene is reminiscent of Gareth and Lyones' wedding

at the end of the <u>Tale of Gareth</u>, where one party after another arrives at Arthur's court to do homage to the groom. Initially come in succession with all of their men the four knights whom Gareth has defeated. After these enter "thyrtty ladyes" who "semed wydowes" with "many fayre gentyllwymmen" (7.36). Kneeling before Arthur and Gareth equally, they recount to the king "how Syr Gareth had deliuerd hem from the Dolorous Toure, and slewe the Broune Knyght withoute Pyte," then proclaiming "therfore we and oure heyres foreuermore wille doo homage vnto Syr Gareth of Orkeney" (7.36).

Both accounts end with weddings, and it is notable that in each case, the nuptials have earlier been postponed until the hero has achieved further exploits. After Gareth has defeated the Red Knight of the Red Lands, Lyones, incredible as it may seem, will "not suffre hym to entre" the castle. She tells him, rather, to go his way and "laboure in worshyp this twelve-monthe" until he is "callyd one of the nombre of the worthy knyghtes." Only then might he "haue holy" her "loue" (7.18). In the case of Redcrosse the deferment is voluntary. He cannot immediately marry Una because he is 'bound' "to returne to that great Faerie Queene, / And her to serue six yeares in warlike wize" (xii.18.6-7). In the context of the previous allegory, this delay suggests Christ's temporary departure from his bride, the Church, after liberating her by defeating Satan through his death and resurrection.

D. The Nature of Spenser's Participation in the Intertextual Space of Chivalric Romance

We can see through the extended comparison of these two accounts that both trace the ascendancy of an unproven but aspiring youngster to the full stature of knighthood; that Spenser relied on Malory's <u>Tale of Gareth</u> and stories like it, such as <u>Lybeaus Desconus</u>, for much of his material; and, moreover, that romances of this type provided the poet with a framework for organizing his material. But Malory's model, as it stood, was unsuitable for the kind of spiritual and moral allegory Spenser was composing. As I shall discuss at length in following chapters, Malory was writing, in the less exact medieval sense of the word, historically, and was concerned with holding portraits of chivalric virtue from the past before his present age for emulation. What we see in Gareth, then, is an edifying presentation of an exemplary quasi-historical character who begins obscurely and rises, against all odds, steadily and unimpeded to the top.

Such a pattern would never do for Spenser, whose object was not to present historical exemplars of virtue in order to challenge his age, but rather to define specific virtues, showing graphically both the requirements for attaining them and the fruits which they yield. Or, to frame Spenser's purpose in the words of his <u>Letter to Raleigh</u>, he sought "to

fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" (737). In order to achieve this goal the poet had to begin with a character lacking in the virtue to be portrayed (in the case of Book I, holiness) and then show step-by-step how that virtue is attained and what are the pitfalls along the way. Spenser saw the marvelous potential of chivalric romance for unfolding such detail; as Michael Leslie notes, "the basic allegory of the poem depends upon the image of the knight on his quest, of an embattled man in progress toward salvation" (102). My interpretation of Book I in the light of the Tale of Gareth negates Bennett's contention that Spenser carefully avoided The Morte Darthur because "it was not a suitable medium for teaching morality to Protestants" ("Genre" 109). Spenser renders Malory suitable not only for this task, but also for teaching the Protestant theological underpinnings for morality.

Models predating Malory's, however, came closest to Spenser's exploitation of romance's potential for allegory of moral and spiritual development. The earliest known romances that involved the growth of a fallible, ignorant, morally flawed aspirant to knighthood through several vicissitudes toward a high degree of virtue are those of Chrétien de Troyes. Chrétien's Yvain, for instance, possesses great martial prowess but must through experience attain the moral enlightenment necessary to use it for the good of others, instead of for mere self-realization and glorification. Perceval, whose tale Chrétien never

completed, provides a similar model. Both of these heroes,
like Redcrosse, through ignorance and inconsideration bring
harm to women dependent on them: Perceval causes his
mother's death by abandoning her to become a knight; Yvain
leaves Laudine defenseless in order to seek adventures;
Redcrosse, duped by Archimago's illusion, deserts Una.

Though Spenser probably never read any of Chrétien's
works themselves, these similarities show that he is
reapplying a construct from Arthurian romances prior to the
Tale of Gareth which more fully suit his didactic purposes.
Lybeaus Desconus was probably his most immediate
inspiration, although its author does not suggest that the
hero's setbacks are due to moral and spiritual failings, as
Chrétien so finely does. In Lybeaus Desconus, however, as
in "The Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse," the hero
falls under the influence of a sorceress (Lambeth MS. 1.
1461-1508). Resultantly, in the former poem the heroine is
left without succour, much as is Una in the latter through
the combined deceptions and enthrallments of Archimago,
Duessa, and Orgoglio.

Spenser therefore brings together multiple strands of
the chivalric romance tradition, which enable him to develop
his own unprecedented style of moral and spiritual allegory.
As Peter Dembowski asserts, an intertextual approach to
textual origins ought not to confine itself "à la généalogie
du texte (son évolution à partir de l'Original), mais mettre
en valeur sa nature" (25). He adds: "Ce qui importe avant

tout, par conséquent, c'est moins que le texte ait telle
Origine, que ce qu'il est devenu: la manière dont il a été
transformé par un processus évolutif" (25).

Before the term 'intertextuality' ever dropped from a
critic's lips Eugène Vinaver brought this very idea, with
refreshing lucidity, to the Dolorous Stroke episode in the
French romances. He attacked the motives behind much of the
source hunting and Ur-text reconstructing conducted by
traditional Arthurian scholars. Of A. C. L. Brown's 1910
article tracing the tale of Balin, in which the Dolorous
Stroke occurs in later romances, back to supposed Celtic
origins, Vinaver says:

> He seems to take it for granted that anything that
> survives must be corrupt, and conversely, that
> whatever is structurally valid in the surviving
> texts must belong to the distant past. Behind
> these assumptions there is the fundamental belief,
> strangley akin to the romantic theory of
> Naturdichtung, that as literature develops, so its
> themes deteriorate. Literary creation is
> conceived as an essentially destructive process.
> (176)

Vinaver militates against such conceptions by showing
how the French romancers progressively combine what
eventually become the arch-motifs of the Dolorous Stroke
episode into a meaningful synthesis. Three of the motifs,
"the sacred lance, . . . the maimed king (or knight) and
. . . the waste land" (176), were already present in
Chrétien's Conte del Graal, but they were not "linked
together in a coherent sequence" (176). Through the

following succession of related versions--the 'First Continuation' of the Conte del Graal, the Queste del Saint Graal, the Estoire del Graal--the three elements gradually become more interrelated. It is not until the Suite du Merlin, though, "that the pattern of four essential themes in one narrative begins to emerge" (177). Vinaver comments:

> Here, then, at long last the Stroke, the Maimed King, the Waste Land and the miraculous healing coalesce to produce a single story. The chronology of our texts shows clearly that this was the work of a writer who had in front of him the material gathered by others and who set himself the task of arranging and elaborating it in a consistent manner; a writer, moreover, who performed his task so successfully that the four motifs which for a long time had existed in various combinations of two or three now seem to be inseparable from one another. (178)

The point which Vinaver strives to make is that literature may, rather than degenerating at the hands of successive authors, attain a fuller integration of its elements, a greater endowment of mimetic, symbolic, and other types of power. The crowning touch wrought by the Suite du Merlin, according to Vinaver, was to make Balin, a knight already dogged by misfortune and a prime candidate for a foil to Galahad, the one to commit the Dolorous Stroke. Malory inherits this consummate artistry in taking the Suite as a source for his "Tale of Balin."

Vinaver's study offers an excellent paradigm for what Spenser is doing with the chivalric romances, of which The Morte Darthur is our object of focus. He eclectically

chooses, recombines, and alters elements from different
sources, often drawing on features common to the genre and
from no single specific work. This _matière_ he tailors, with
considerably more freedom than his medieval predecessors, to
his new _sens_. Like the _Suite_ author, he sees potential in
these existing elements that previous writers had
overlooked, ignored, or had no reason to exploit. The point
in tracing the chivalric elements in _The Faerie Queene_ back
to their sources, or in noting earlier analogues, is that we
cannot fully understand or appreciate what they have become
until we see what they were. This intertextual approach to
sources and earlier parallels amounts, in Dembowski's words,
to "le déplacement d'un point de vue génétique et dogmatique
vers une activité explicative et descriptive plus nuancée"
(20). The later work, in the light of the preceding work or
works, becomes "une oeuvre plus profonde" (20). This is not
to make a progressionist assumption that the later work is
somehow superior to its sources, but to say that it becomes
in the reader's experience more profound as its complex of
richly textured relations to its sources comes into view.

Influences other than literary ones comprised _The
Faerie Queene_'s intertextual space, however. Two great
movements which informed Spenser's recasting of the
chivalric quest narrative were humanism and Protestantism.
The new focus on human dignity fueled by the rediscovery of
classical antiquity, combined with the Christian
understanding of man as the crown of creation, generated an

exuberant confidence in human perfectability. Pico della
Mirandola (c. 1486) declared: "On man when he came into life .
the Father conferred the seeds of all kinds and the germs of
every way of life. Whatever seeds each man cultivates will
grow to maturity and bear in him their own fruit" (128).
Pico insists on these grounds that, contingent on the
faculties he chooses to cultivate, a man may degenerate to a
vegetative or brutish state, or he may become one with God.
Northern humanists such as Erasmus, whom the Tudor humanists
read eagerly, were quick to embrace such ideas. In his 1529
educational treatise, De pueris statim ac liberaliter
instituendis, he advises fathers:

> Nature, in giving you a son, presents you, let me
> say, a rude, unformed creature, which it is your
> part to fashion so that it may become indeed a
> man. If this fashioning be neglected you have but
> an animal still: if it be contrived earnestly and
> wisely, you have, I had almost said, what may
> prove a being not far from a God. (187)

This vision of a malleable human nature resulted in an
educational revolution. Arthur F. Kinney writes: "Man's
total freedom for self-fashioning . . . created a vital need
for humanist teaching; educ-ation, being led out of the best
thought of the ancients, demanded symbiotic in-struction as
the necessary coordinate" (6). One response to this felt
need was "an explosion of grammar schools" (6); another was
Spenser's didactic poem, designed "to fashion a gentleman."

In England, however, this humanist optimism was
generally tempered by Protestant theology, particularly

Calvinism, which taught that man is naturally depraved but can be spiritually regenerated and progress in virtue by God's grace. For Calvin, moral perfection was a state which Christians could pursue but never fully attain in this life. In the Institutes (1536) he exhorts followers of Christ:

> [let us] press forward to the goal . . .
> perpetually exerting our endeavors after
> increasing degrees of amelioration, till we shall
> have arrived at a perfection of goodness, which,
> indeed we seek and pursue as long as we live, and
> shall then attain, when, divested of all corporeal
> infirmity, we shall be admitted by God into
> complete communion with him. (750)

But the propensity toward sin remains in even the most advanced Christians, according to Calvin. Commenting on Romans 7:15 he writes, "The godly . . . are so divided, that with the chief desire of the heart they aspire to God, seek celestial righteousness, hate sin, and yet they are drawn down to the earth by the relics of their flesh" (Commentaries 263).

These central ideas of Renaissance humanism and Reformation theology help to account for some of the changes which Spenser wrought on the Tale of Gareth. Gareth rises not because of any actual moral or spiritual growth, but because of what he already is. Time and again, those who witness his prowess and gentility recognize his noble birth. In Malory it could be no other way. "Harlottys and haynxmen wol helpe us but a lytyll, for they woll hyde them in haste for all their hyghe wordys," proclaims Priamus (234; 5.10).[5]

On the other hand, Torre, who is raised by a cowherd and has no idea that King Pellinore is his real father, can be interested in nothing but chivalry and becoming a knight (3.3). We should not be surprised, then, when Gareth turns out to be Gawain's brother.

Johan Huizinga points out that while the nobility of the late Middle Ages regarded as a truism "that true nobility is based on virtue, and that all men are equal," these notions remained "stereotyped and theoretical" (Waning 53). Chastellain, in his Miroer des Nobles Hommes de France, informs his gentle audience: "Dieu, entre ceux de l'humaine nature, / Souvent vous crée excellens en facture, / Et singuliers en toute grâce exquise" (204). As each estate has its God-given function, he explains to them: "Vos faits, vos moeurs, il [Dieu] veut faire mirer, / Et vos beaux corps des autres préférer, / Par vertu sourdre et maintenir justice" (205). In The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry, translated by Caxton, Ramón Lull recounts a foundation myth of knighthood. When the ancient world began to degenerate, "of each thousand was chosen a man moost loyal, most strong, and of most noble courage, & better enseygned and manerd than al the other" to be made a knight (15). Gareth, therefore, is statically virtuous and not so much in need of development as of opportunities to prove himself. In presenting past examples of noble conduct to his own age, it seems, Malory was not urging his noble audience to change, as much as to be true to their own

natures. An ignoble knight was an anomaly, comparable, we may suppose, to the angels who left their first estate. "What?" exclaims Lancelot when he hears of Perys de Forest Saveage, "is he a theef and a knyght and a rauyssher of of [sic] wymmen? He doth shame vnto the ordre of knyghtehode and contrary vnto his othe" (6.10). Lancelot declares, "hit is pyte that he lyueth," and shortly sees to it that he does not.

The Renaissance revolutions in thought which we have discussed altered the view of human nature from a static to a dynamic one. Redcrosse is not just the unmolded clay of the humanists, but the tainted offspring of Adam, noble because of his heavenly provenance, but always liable to the weaknesses of the flesh. He must become, by a series of fits and starts, the Knight of Holiness. Although moral and spiritual virtue are his birthright and destiny, unlike Gareth's prowess and noblesse they are not innate. Redcrosse's experience and the guiding and regenerating influences that intervene in the story are what push him toward perfection. This process may be seen clearly, for instance, at the House of Holiness, where Redcrosse is nursed and educated by allegorical characters representing various Christian virtues. Gareth has no need of such nurturing since his virtue is inborn and simply needs to be drawn out by the challenges of the quest.

In addition to these philosophical influences, Spenser had some literary precedence for revising chivalric romance

into Protestant allegory. Stephen Bateman's <u>Travayled</u> <u>Pylgrime</u> (1569), based on Olivier de la Marche's <u>Le</u> <u>Chevalier Délibéré</u> (1486), traces "the journey of a knight from error to salvation while praising the Tudors and denouncing Rome" (Prescott 194). John N. King asserts that

> The "Legend of Holiness" functions in the manner of a fictionalized defense of poetry through which Spenser exposes "false" genres and defines "true" ones in order to resuscitate literary forms like comedy and chivalric romance that were then under attack by humanist critics. (184)

Spenser may or may not be voicing his personal sentiments about medieval romance when he makes E. K., commenting on line 120 of "Aprill" in <u>The Shepheardes</u> <u>Calendar</u>, call "the Authors of King Arthure the great and such like" "fine fablers and lowd lyers." But he is certainly speaking for some of the prominent humanists of his time, such as Ascham, More, and Erasmus.[6] Instead of abandoning the romances for classical literature, however, Spenser transformed the controlling theme of chivalric romance, the quest, into the unfolding of an adventure of spiritual and moral growth. The powerful humanist realization of the individual as a bundle of potentiality, infinite in capacity for either virtue or vice, created an insatiable appetite for didactic writings. The concreteness and simplicity of the chivalric romance made it a fitting genre for meeting this demand, and the British nativity of many of its features made it even more so. In addition,

certain of <u>The Morte Darthur</u>'s structural qualities, which I shall discuss in the next chapter, made it a particularly likely choice.

Another major feature of Spenser's contribution to the generic tradition was a freer fictionalizing exploitation of particulars in his stories. His lack of the concern for historical veracity which characterized most of his medieval romance predecessors[7] allowed him more freely to arrange and manipulate details, so as to enhance their allegorical significance. We have already seen this transformation in many of the comparisons drawn in this chapter, such as that of Lancelot's and Redcrosse's abductions. As a final instance, we may observe that Spenser goes beyond any medieval romancer in treating a giant as an explicit symbol of pride. Although earlier romance giants often image pride, and some, such as the Giant of Mont-Saint-Michel in the Alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u>, are hideous beyond belief, they must also conform to a degree of verisimilitude. For this reason, we do not find a medieval romance giant who, like Orgoglio (whose name means pride), suddenly deflates and leaves only "an emptie bladder" (viii.24.9), providing both a humorous and a perfectly expressive allegory of the nature of pride, and a wonderfully clear image of the New Testament usage "puffed up"[8] to describe the state of pride (e.g. I Cor. 4:18,19; 5:2).

CHAPTER TWO

Structural Comparisons of Malory and Spenser

A. The Interrelatedness of Theme and Structure

in Malory and Spenser

Although no other book of The Faerie Queene contains so
substantial a parallel to a complete tale in The Morte
Darthur as does Book I to the Tale of Gareth, each of
Spenser's books possesses a quest structure comparable to
that of many of Malory's tales. Like Redcrosse, each of The
Faerie Queene's major characters exemplifying a specific
virtue undergoes one or more preliminary testings, a
perfecting, and a final testing. John Erskine Hankins
notes:

> In observing the pattern of Spenser's knightly
> quests, we may notice that each temple of Virtue
> is preceded by one or more houses of non-Virtue or
> anti-Virtue. These are not always evil in
> themselves but do provide severe tests of the
> knight in his or her particular virtue. Sometimes
> he wins by his own might, sometimes he is rescued
> by heavenly grace (Arthur). After the most severe
> of these he goes to his place of perfecting, or
> temple of Virtue, for strength and instruction.
> He then goes on to the most severe and fundamental
> test of all, in which victory completes the task
> of perfecting his virtue and fits him to return to
> Cleopolis, Panthea, and Gloriana's court. (44)

The preliminary testings are usually either failures or
limited successes, revealing the need for growth and
perfection. But through the perfecting processes of the

41

quests, the characters finally arrive at a realization of their potentiality, allowing them to fulfill their ultimate goals. Guyon, for instance, must endure the temptations of Phaedria's Isle and Mammon's Cave, and be revived and enlightened at the House of Alma, before he can overthrow Acrasia's Bower of Bliss. Britomart must pass through the promiscuous Castle Joyous and the perversely lascivious House of Busyrane, and be educated at the Temple of Isis, before she can overcome Radigund and liberate Artegall.

In discussing this recurrent pattern, Hankins argues that "the most obvious model for an Arthurian narrative" for Spenser to have built on "is Malory's Morte D'Arthur, in which the knightly quests may be described as circular" (34). Hankins outlines the quest pattern in Malory as follows:

> They [the quests] begin at Arthur's court, proceed
> through various mishaps and struggles to the
> accomplishment of objectives, then end at Arthur's
> court as each knight returns to report on the
> success of his mission. (34)

Although we never see this pattern completed in The Faerie Queene (the knights do not return to Gloriana's court), it is expressed, as discussed in the previous chapter, in the Letter to Raleigh. The Tale of Gareth begins and ends at Arthur's court; Redcrosse, having set out from Gloriana's court, states his intentions to return there before consummating his marriage to Una. Also, much as Malory's knights errant send their conquered opponents back

to Arthur's court, whence they have gone out and where they
will eventually return, so Guyon sends "the captiv'd
Acrasia" back to Gloriana's court (III.i.2). Additionally,
the nascence of Artegall's quest is described in the poem in
terms identical to the beginnings shown in the Letter to
Raleigh:

> Wherefore the Lady, which Irena hight,
>   Did to the Faery Queene her way addresse,
>   To whom complaining her afflicted plight,
>   She her besought of gratious redresse.
>   That soueraine Queene, that mightie Emperesse,
>   Whose glorie is to aide all suppliants pore,
>   And of weake Princes to be Patronesse,
>   Chose Artegall to right her to restore;
> For that to her he seem'd best skild in righteous
> (V.i.4)   [lore.

Like the knights named in the letter, Artegall has issued
from Gloriana's court to succour Irena and will presumably
return there after fulfilling his quest. From this evidence
we may conclude that there is a correlation between the
quest patterns of the extant books and the patterns
projected in the Letter to Raleigh and, furthermore, that in
a completed Faerie Queene, each book would have followed the
same course.

As in Malory's work, then, the chivalric quest theme
governs the general framework of Spenser's individual books.
Spenser's projected pattern of juxtaposed, circular quests
occurring in the same general time frame, I believe, led him
to adopt one other particularly Malorian structural feature.
In both works we have several loosely related books, each
organized around the quest or the history of a single knight

or a related group of knights. Although integrated units in themselves, together with the other books they comprise a roughly defined whole. This configuration has led to an extended controversy on the issue of unity in Malory scholarship. Is The Morte Darthur a collection of separate books, or is it a single work composed of related episodes? We do not have the author's pronouncement on the issue, and, since he has drawn from a range of sources and the connectivity is in many places loose at best, it is difficult to know precisely what was his own view. Stephen Knight probably comes closest to the truth when he says that "it is only if we are happy with over-simplifications that we can speak of it as one book or as eight" (Structure 94).[1]

The Faerie Queene, although bearing a comparable books-within-a-book structure, has not been the focus of the same intensity of controversy surrounding unity, partly because the author makes explicit his own conception.[2] It is clear from his reference in the Letter to Raleigh to "this booke of mine . . . being a continued Allegory" (737) that he considered it a single work. At the same time, however, some critics have found Spenser's unifying scheme weak and unconvincing. J. W. Bennett compares Spenser's episodic work to a

> medieval stained-glass window, with its formal ordering of delicate, beautifully colored pictures arranged to tell a story. Spenser created lovely bits and fitted them together with great skill, but the general structure, the connecting frame of lead and iron, is hardly strong enough to support the weight of the colored glass put into it.

(Evolution 106-07)

Graham Hough applies a similar analogy to illustrate his view that, while The Faerie Queene is made up of largely self-contained units, the total effect of harmony among them--"unity of atmosphere," "all-over pattern" (93)-- creates a "structural principle":

> We can compare The Faerie Queene to a page of medieval illumination, which exhibits a harmonious texture, bright and delicate detail everywhere, many individual miniatures which must be looked at separately--but no very striking general design, and what there is contributes little to the effect of the whole. (94)

The structural mode governing Spenser's poem, as Richard Hurd was the first to assert (56-72), is Gothic, the predominating artistic mode of the Middle Ages. As I shall argue shortly, however, Spenser, likely through the partial inspiration of Malory, applies a modified Gothic structure. In his Social History of Art, Arnold Hauser identifies "juxtaposition" as "the basic form of Gothic art" (10). As Bennett's and Hough's analogies emphasize, this is also the overall form of The Faerie Queene. The portraits of individual knights are placed alongside one another in tales possessing their own organic unity but only loosely linked to the other tales. Yet, taken together, viewed from a distance, each one contributes to an overall pattern--a pattern of the interplay of the different moral virtues, their various qualities and the rigors and glories involved in apprehending them. Hauser writes that in observing a

piece of Gothic art "The viewer is, as it were, led through the stages and stations of a journey, and the picture of reality which it reveals is like a panoramic survey, not a one-sided, unified representation, dominated by a single point of view" (10). The primary emphasis "is not the subjective viewpoint, not the creative, formative will expressed in the mastering of the material, but the thematic material itself, of which both artists and public can never see enough" (11). What Hauser describes is the sort of structural pluralism with an overall effect of thematic unity which Malory appears to be applying in composing books within a book; which is, when examined, quite like what Spenser achieves in his structural organization of The Faerie Queene.

B. Evidences for the Influence of Malory's Structure on Spenser's Poem

There are some good reasons for believing that Spenser did not just utilize a structural mode common to medieval romance, but that he was specifically influenced by Malory's scheme of books within a book. John W. Draper cautiously intimates a connection between the pluralistic structures of the two works; the fact that Spenser "gives each book a separate hero with a separate story," he says, ". . . may go back to the Morte D'Arthur" (320). Derek Brewer, in arguing for the unity of The Morte Darthur, suggests but does not

assert a similar dependence:

> Probably the closest analogy to Malory's form in
> English is found in The Faerie Queene.[3] Spenser
> knew Malory's work,[3] and it is possible that he
> understood Malory's form well enough. The Faerie
> Queene is vastly more subtle and learned than
> Malory, but it enables us to see how a series of
> stories may be linked only loosely together
> without much attempt at organic unity, and yet
> they must be regarded, as the six complete books
> of The Faerie Queene must be regarded, as one
> single work of art. ("hoole book" 62)

There is indeed a remarkable resemblance in patterns.
Malory recounts individually, for example, the tales of
Arthur, Lancelot, Gareth, and Tristram, interlinking all
with the intermittent presence of Arthur.[4] We do not find
the tales of individual knights presented seriatim like this
in earlier works.[5] Malory's great achievement was to sort
these tales out from the vast, interwoven cycles in which
they existed, and to present them in condensed, accessible,
linear narratives. Spenser arranges the tales of Redcrosse,
Guyon, Britomart, Artegall, and others in much the same way.
Although Arthur is purportedly the most important character
in both works, we see comparatively little of him. Spenser
enunciates, "I chose the historye of king Arthure, as most
fitte for the excellency of his person" (Letter 737). Yet
in the poem itself he appears only occasionally, usually to
intervene on behalf of the protagonist, as we have already
seen in Book I. Arthur's comparable presence woven into and
among the separate accounts in other books constitutes a
vital unifying influence in their midst.[6] Arthur is all

along carrying on his own quest for the Queen of Faeries
(I.ix.15), but we catch only glimpses of him as his
movements intersect those of other knights errant.
Presumably, had Spenser written his projected twelve books,
toward the end he would have focused on Arthur's quest in
particular, since Arthur is "the perfection" of all the
other knights and the virtues they represent (Letter 737).

In The Morte Darthur, similarly, Arthur is the
pervasive but often invisible presence that interlinks the
stories and binds together the Round Table fellowship. In
Malory's first two "tales," the Tale of King Arthur and the
Noble Tale of King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius, Arthur
dominates the action, first as a newly crowned young king,
and then as a virile warlord who slays giants and conquers
Rome. After these early sections, however, he recedes from
the main action, only to reappear in the last tale. He does
appear occasionally in the interlying tales, but it is
usually at his court--as at the beginning and end of the
Tale of Gareth--instead of in the field, where the true
deeds of chivalry are accomplished. In other terms, he
becomes a roi faineant. It is he who cements the fellowship
of knights together, but the focus is on the knights
themselves. Rather than remaining a key player, Arthur
becomes a functionary and a figurehead, who provides a
context and a point of identity for the individual knights
on their separate quests. Again at the end, in the Most
Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur, Arthur returns to the

center of the action, although it is now because he is helplessly drawn into Gawain's feud with Lancelot. Structurally, therefore, the presence of Arthur provides a framing and cohesive device for a series of separate tales in which the action centers around his knights.

One argument for the unity of The Morte Darthur has been the presence of the 'explicits' between tales.[7] In the following discussion, I shall begin by referring to the Winchester version of The Morte Darthur, since the unity controversy has centered around it in particular. From there, however, I shall return to Caxton's edition. I select a characteristic explicit from the end of the Tale of King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius: "Here endyth the tale of the noble Kynge Arthure that was emperoure hymself thorow dygnyte of his hondys. And here folowyth aftir many noble talys of Sir Launcelot de Lake" (247).[8] The Tale of Launcelot, which follows, begins with a reference to the end of the preceding tale: "Sone aftir that kynge Arthure was com from Rome into Ingelonde, than all the knightys of the Rounde Table resorted unto the kynge and made many joustys and turnementes" (253). This example shows how, through the use of explicits and opening textual references to preceding tales, the author attempts to create a sense of continuity and cohesiveness between rather loosely related accounts drawn from diverse sources--in this particular case from an English one (the Alliterative Morte Arthure) and a French one (the Prose Lancelot).

Although Spenser interjects no explicits like Malory's at the ends of his books, he consistently ties into the action of the previous book in the first canto of each new book. This is immediately observable of all books following the first, except for Book V. On closer scrutiny, however, we can see the same strategy being used, although not as fully and distinctively, in that book; for the main character, Artegall, is reintroduced in the first canto from Book IV, where he has been the object of Britomart's quest. I take the first canto of Book VI as an example of the sort of interlinking reference Spenser uses. Artegall, "returning . . . / From his late conquest" (VI.i.4.4-5) of the previous book, crosses paths with Calidore, the protagonist of Book VI. They hail each other; Artegall recounts his quest to Calidore. Calidore, in turn, after congratulating his fellow on a successful quest, reveals, "But where ye ended haue, now I begin / To tread an endlesse trace, withouten guyde" (6.1-2), and goes on to describe his current pursuit of the Blatant Beast.

We see in Spenser, then, both an attempt and a strategy analogous to Malory's at making cohesive a series of individual accounts. One key difference is that Malory uses the explicits, in addition to interlinking references at the beginnings of the tales. Spenser has avoided the former more external device and integrates his cohesive references. Brewer, however, notes that the Letter to Raleigh fulfills an external unifying function similar to that of Malory's

explicits:

> . . . each work owes its impression of cohesion to
> some extent to what may be called extra-aesthetic
> comments by the author. Thus our feeling about
> the cohesion of <u>The Faerie Queene</u> derives, to some
> extent, from the Letter to Raleigh, which is
> external to the poem proper, just as our feeling
> about the cohesion of <u>The Morte Darthur</u> derives to
> some extent from the <u>explicits</u>, which might not be
> regarded, by strict standards, as part of the
> artistic form. (62)

This is not to say, of course, that Spenser consciously

meant his <u>Letter to Raleigh</u> to fulfill the function of

Malory's explicits. But we can see both authors striving to

impose unity on what could have easily been disjointed,

isolated narratives. The idea of multiple quests and heroes

presented separately, seen in Malory, calls for this type of

problematic but fruitfully diversifying structure. It is

the structure which Spenser adopts "for the more variety of

the history" (<u>Letter</u> 737), and, as we have just observed, he

develops strategies akin to Malory's for managing it.

C. Structural Peculiarities of Caxton's Edition

One question that will have arisen in the mind of every

reader familiar with the textual history of <u>The Morte</u>

<u>Darthur</u> is how would the reading of Caxton's edition rather

than the Winchester MS. have affected Spenser's conception

of the work's structure? Caxton's was with little doubt the

version with which Spenser was familiar, as "his was the

basis for all versions of Malory in circulation until early

in this century" (Spisak 605). Until very recently the
Winchester MS. was unanimously considered to be Malory's
final and authoritative version, which Caxton meddlesomely
altered before publication. As Vinaver sardonically
commented in his landmark edition incorporating the
Winchester text, "It is only now that the damage due to
Caxton's 'symple connynge' can be partially repaired"
(Introduction xxxv). The more unified nature of Caxton's
edition caused Vinaver to conclude that the printer had
intentionally obscured the true nature of what Malory had
originally compiled as eight separate, distinct books: "When
these volumes fell into Caxton's hands he realized that, as
a matter of practical expediency, he had to make them into a
single 'book of King Arthur'" (xxxviii).

Vinaver's conclusions on Caxton as redactor, however,
are no longer unquestioningly accepted. William Matthews
has argued that Caxton could not have revised the Roman War
episode (The Noble Tale of King Arthur and the Emperor
Lucius) in his edition.[9] Matthews' arguments are several,
but the most substantial is that there is present in the
Caxton version new material from three sources previously
used in the Winchester MS.: the Alliterative Morte Arthure,
the Old French Merlin, and Hardyng's Chronicle. Matthews
concludes that Malory must have revised the episode himself,
because Caxton could hardly "'have been aware of and had
access to'" these sources "'so as to add details from them
to the new version'" (Lumiansky, "Malory's Le Morte Darthur"

890-91). Malory, on the other hand, had already used the sources in the Winchester version.

The Roman War episode represents by far the most drastic alteration between versions of The Morte Darthur. Vinaver complains, again with a dose of sarcasm:

> Puzzled by the archaic character of the Tale, Caxton, 'simple person', reduced it to less than half its size, and while doing so rewrote it from beginning to end, with the result that until now it has not been possible to form an accurate idea either of the content of the story or of its position among Malory's romances. (xxx)

The notion that Malory may have been responsible for this most substantial change has inevitably led other scholars to inquire whether he might not equally have made the other alterations between texts. Charles Moorman proposes

> that Caxton's working copy was actually a version of Winchester revised by Malory, retaining in it those elements he had so carefully added to his sources and differing from it principally in the radical reworking of the Roman War section, but also incidentally in the thousands of changes which resulted in a coherent, unified, and gracefully written book complete with preface, internal divisions, and rubrics. (111-12)

Such arguments must remain inconclusive, especially as long as Matthews' paper remains unpublished. They have, however, led R. M. Lumiansky, no mean authority, to pronounce: "in my view Malory's final intention for his book is most nearly approached from the text in Caxton's edition, not from the Winchester manuscript" (897).[10]

If these scholars are correct, the Winchester MS. is

reduced to the status of a medial draft. This is a disturbing idea, given that the past fifty years of Malory scholarship, including Vinaver's monument, are based on the assumption that the Winchester is Malory's definitive text. In either case, however, Caxton's edition was considered definitive until 1934, when the Winchester MS. was discovered. Furthermore, Lotte Hellinga's careful inspection of the Winchester MS. has failed to detect any compositor's markings as evidence that it was ever prepared for press (128, 133), even though physical evidence[11] demonstrated that the manuscript was in Caxton's workshop between 1480 and 1483, and either in or near it "at least as late as 1489" (134). (Caxton's edition was published in 1485.) All of this leaves very little doubt that Caxton's was the only version familiar to Spenser. He probably would have known it in one of the later printings: Wynkyn de Worde's of 1498 or 1529; William Copland's of 1557; or Thomas East's of 1578 (Crane 32,33,36,41; Esdaile 97; Gaines 11).[12]

The greatest and most obvious difference between the two versions is that Caxton's is divided into twenty-one books instead of the Winchester's eight. Caxton claims to have thus divided the books himself (Prologue 3). He further subdivided the books into 506 chapters.[13] Another related difference here concerning us is that Caxton substituted his own explicits for Malory's originals. Several of the explicits show no appreciable differences:

> W: Thus endith the tale of Balyn and Balan, two
> brethirne that were borne in Northumbirlonde, that
> were two passynge good knyghtes as ever were in
> tho dayes. (92)
>
> C: Thus endeth the tale of Balyn and Balan, two
> bretheren born in Northumberland, good knightes.
> Sequitur III liber. (2.19)

Lumiansky notes four such close correspondences among the

explicits of the two versions (894).

The important question for our discussion of Spenser's

relation to Malory is what kind of overall structure for The

Morte Darthur do Caxton's explicits imply? They range in

descriptiveness from rudimentary to generous. The first,

for example, simply reads: "Explicit liber primus. Incipit

liber secundus" (1.27). The seventh, on the other hand,

gives a fairly detailed summary of the books preceding and

following:

> Thus endeth this tale of Syr Gareth of Orkeney,
> that wedded dame Lyones of the Castel Peryllous.
> And also Syr Gaherys wedded her syster Dame Lynet,
> that was called the Damoysel Saueage. And Syr
> Agrauayne wedded Dame Laurel, a fayr lady, and
> grete and myghty landes with grete rychesse gaf
> with them Kyng Arthur, that ryally they myght lyue
> tyl their lyues ende.
> Here followeth the VIII book, the which is the
> first book of Sir Tristram de Lyones, and who was
> his fader and his moder, and hou he was borne and
> fosteryd, and how he was made knyghte. (7.36)

In every case we notice that Caxton's explicits provide

a distinct bridge between books, imposing a stronger sense

of continuity than the Winchester MS. explicits. This

feature is in keeping with Caxton's stated aims

> to enprynte a book of the noble hystoryes of the
> sayd Kynge Arthur and of certeyn of his knyghtes,
> after a copye unto me delyuerde, whyche copye Syr
> Thomas Malorye dyd take out of certeyn bookes of
> Frensshe and reduced it into Englysshe. (<u>Prologue</u>
> 2)

It seems that Caxton felt he was strengthening the
continuity inherent in Malory's collection of tales.

The real question, then, is whether Spenser could have
discerned a pattern of books within a book in Caxton's more
unified edition. The answer would immediately appear to be
yes, since Caxton calls each of his twenty-one sections
'books' and, as we have seen in his explicits, makes overt
transitions between them. The feature which particularly
qualifies them as probable models for Spenser, however, is
that they tend, at times even more discretely than the
Winchester MS., to treat the adventures of a single knight.
The Winchester MS. is divided into eight books according to
Malory's major sources, each book concluded by an explicit.
The result is commonly that several different knights'
adventures are found in a single book. The "Tale of Balin,"
for instance, which is a complete story in itself, beginning
with Balin's appearance at Arthur's court and ending with
his death, is included in the <u>Tale of King Arthur</u> in the
Winchester MS. In Caxton's edition, on the other hand, it
stands by itself as Book II. Other books that treat the
adventures of single knights, such as the <u>Tale of Sir
Launcelot de Lake</u> and the <u>Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney</u>, are
the same in both versions. Caxton's longest book

corresponds largely to the Winchester manuscript's <u>Book of</u> <u>Sir Tristram de Lyones</u>. But Caxton has broken up the beginning and ending sections in order to treat separately the self-contained story of La Cote Male Tayle and some of Lancelot's adventures. These distinctions make Caxton's edition an even closer parallel than the Winchester MS. to Spenser's structure of books within a book, with each book centering around the adventures of a questing knight.

D. Modifications of Gothic Structure in Malory and Spenser

In addition to the arrangements of books within a book with comparable linking strategies between the juxtaposed accounts, there are some significant parallels between the modifications both authors apply to the usual Gothic structure of previous romances. This in itself provides further argument for the dependence of <u>The Faerie Queene</u>'s structure on Malorian design and, of course, indicates how both authors responded to their intertextual environments.

The French romances which Malory took for the most part as his sources were composed of intricately interwoven accounts of the parallel activities of separate knights. A thread of narrative would be dropped suddenly, and one or more other threads interposed before the earlier thread was resumed. Vinaver explains that Malory, in rehandling his French Vulgate Cycle sources, unraveled these threads into uninterrupted narratives:

> . . . Malory's most successful and historically
> most significant contribution to the technique of
> the prose tale was his attempt to substitute for
> the method of 'interweaving' the modern
> 'progressive' form of exposition. (Introduction
> lxviii)

As an example of this process, Vinaver notes that in
adapting the French Prose Lancelot into his own Tale of
Lancelot Malory "boldly dismisses" an interwoven "digression
equal in length to 500 pages of the present edition" (lxxi).
Thus, Malory produces a linear narrative in which Lancelot
proceeds directly from his captivity by Morgan, which I
discussed in the previous chapter, through a tournament
where he contends on behalf of King Bagdemagus, whose
daughter has helped him to escape Morgan's dungeon, and on
to rescue his companion Sir Lionel, while he is at it
freeing other prisoners, exterminating wicked knights, and
ridding the country of pestilent giants. As Vinaver
comments, "All this forms a consistent account, with 'a
beginning, a middle and an end'" (lxxi).

Nevertheless, Malory did not fully eradicate the
entrelacement from his stories, which has led C. S. Lewis to
proclaim, "To the present day no one enjoys Malory's book
who does not enjoy its ambages, its interweaving" ("Morte"
13). Lewis summarizes:

> Certainly the evidence that he constantly
> simplified is irresistible. Whether he wanted to
> simplify still further and get rid of the
> Polyphonic altogether, or whether he wanted to go
> just as far as he has gone and liked the degree of
> Polyphony which survives under his treatment, we

do not know. If he wanted to get rid of it
altogether, he has undoubtedly failed. (14)

Sandra Ness Ihle argues that in simplifying as much as
he did Malory was moving toward a style of "totality," as
opposed to a style of "partiality." Ihle borrows these
terms, used by Paul Frankl to discuss architecture, to
contrast the effects achieved by Malory and the French
authors.[14] "In a Romanesque cathedral," she explains,
"every part, such as each bay, appears to be total in itself
and added to the rest, upon which it does not depend" (9).
This style we may compare to what Malory accomplishes in
disentangling the interlaced plots of his sources to produce
separate, continuous narratives, and then juxtaposing them
to assemble a loosely arranged series of chivalric tales
perceivable as a complete work. "In a Gothic cathedral," on
the other hand, "every part, again such as each bay, even if
it is actually complete in itself, appears to be only
fragmentary and unable to exist independently of the rest"
(9). The French Vulgate Cycle romances achieved this effect
to a great extent through interwoven narrative. As
Ferdinand Lot has observed:

> Aucune aventure ne forme un tout se suffisant à
> lui-même. D'une part, des épisodes antérieurs,
> laissés provisoirement de côté, y prolongent des
> ramifications; d'autre part des épisodes
> subséquents, proches ou lointains, y sont amorcés.
> (17)

We witness in The Faerie Queene a modification of the
interwoven structure which Spenser inherited most directly

from Ariosto, that is roughly analogous to Malory's
alteration of the same from his French sources. Ariosto's
Orlando Furioso is, like the French romances, a complexly
and intricately interwoven poem--so much so that, as Hough
comments, "the continuity of any one strand is hard to keep
in mind" (26). The action of the complete poem, however,
centers around the struggle of Christian against Saracen,
beginning with the siege of Paris, and the love of Ruggiero
for Bradamant. This thematic unity causes us to perceive
the poem, despite numerous interruptions, as a unified
narrative. Spenser, much as Malory with his French sources,
has picked up some of this interwoven structure, but has
chosen much more consistently than his immediate
predecessor--Ariosto, whom he sought to 'overgo'--to compose
uninterrupted narrative. Moreover, like Malory in
comparison with his sources, he has assembled a collection
of individual narrative accounts rather than an extended
polyphonic narrative that carries the same major themes
throughout the entire work. Hough briefly describes the
varying structures of Spenser's books:

> Book I is complete and almost entirely
> self-contained. It is . . . a whole miniature
> epic in itself . . . . Book II is a complete
> unified quest with a single hero whose adventure
> is brought to a conclusion within the limits of
> the book. But Books III and IV are constructed on
> quite a different plan . . . . These are put
> together on the 'interwoven' plan of Ariosto
> . . . . Book V on the whole . . . is a return to
> the earlier design, in that it has a single hero
> whose adventures we follow fairly consistently.
> With Book VI we return to a medley of romantic
> motifs, again put together mainly on the

'interwoven' principle. (85)

This partial disentangling of Ariosto's interlaced narrative structure allowed Spenser to present concentrated portrayals of his characters and the virtues which they represented. This seems a more suitable approach for a poet interested in didactic allegory, as Spenser was. He could, for instance, even in the internally interwoven Book VI, present Calidore as at once hero and courtesy in action, in order to communicate his vision of courtesy--what it is and how it is practiced--for emulation. At the same time, retaining a certain degree of interweaving helped him to maintain variety and interest, and at points to juxtapose minor characters for purposes of illustrative contrast. To take Book VI once again as an example, Spenser there interjects Turpine as an allegory of discourtesy and a direct foil to Calidore, and the Savage Man as a figure of untutored 'natural' courtesy. Therefore, Spenser shows no signs of distaste for interlacing, such as Lewis hints that Malory may have possessed. It seems very probable, however, that Malory provided Spenser with a model of a chivalric romance employing both types of narrative structure and, furthermore, of loosely linked tales of separate knights and adventures within a single book. He certainly did not receive such a model from Ariosto, and there is no other apparent model among the medieval romances.

From Spenser's complex of structural relations to Ariosto and Malory we may observe that as a literary

tradition, such as chivalric romance, grows, the author's intertextual space expands, widening his options. But at the same time, the newly broadened intertextual space will inevitably influence his contribution to that tradition, dictating that the new work show to a degree the stamp of contemporaneity. Thus, even had he so desired, Spenser could not have written a truly medieval chivalric romance, although he did assimilate features of that generic tradition to create a Renaissance chivalric romance-epic.

Spenser had before him the contemporary model of the Orlando Furioso and the antiquated one of The Morte Darthur. He admired the high style and formal perfection of Ariosto's modern treatment of knighthood, things not found in the medieval romances. As R. E. Neil Dodge has put it, Ariosto "had reduced the wilderness of romance to complete artistic order" (159). Spenser found in Malory, however, certain structural characteristics which better suited his more didactic purposes and, at the same time, allowed him to make his own contribution to contemporary experiments with romance-epic. He could by conflating structural characteristics of both authors, and of Virgil, present a series of miniature epics, finally to be brought together into a kind of 'super epic'. Thus, we see Spenser performing on Ariosto alterations very similar to those Malory had already applied to his French sources. In both cases these structural choices were closely connected to the two authors' didactic and exemplifying purposes, as each

sought in his own way to present chivalry as a model of virtue in action.

CHAPTER THREE

Chivalry in Malory and Spenser

A. Chivalry in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance England

In the first chapter I proposed that not only preexisting literature, but also cultural and intellectual milieu composes a work's intertextual space. For both Malory and Spenser chivalry was a very important part of that milieu, although in significantly different ways. For Malory, chivalry was a living code on which political structures and ethical standards rested. He felt that in his day it was in need of more earnest application but that it was no less pertinent than ever. As Larry Benson has written, "Chivalry in the Morte Darthur is . . . neither nostalgia nor escape. A fifteenth-century knight could hardly escape chivalry, which was not one of a series of possible life-styles but a definition of the noble life itself" (198). A. B. Ferguson has similarly affirmed:

> Caxton, and the author of The Boke of Noblesse,
> Malory, and perhaps Stephen Hawes as well
> undertook to reaffirm chivalry as a living ideal,
> sufficient for the life of those responsible for
> the physical welfare of the community, not to
> reinstate something that had been displaced.
> (Indian Summer xiv)

By Spenser's time this was certainly no longer the case. Chivalry was not considered a viable institution for

guiding the nation-state--a concept in itself foreign to the Middle Ages. But chivalry was still in the living memory of the Elizabethans and held a special romantic attraction for them. This made its trappings useful for propaganda and for adorning and dignifying governmental structures; and the theme of knighthood could still, as it did for Malory's day, provide examples for virtuous conduct.

What allowed the Elizabethans to view chivalry from a romantic perspective was the new historical consciousness brought about by humanist scholarship. The resulting "sense of period," writes Ferguson, enabled Elizabethans "to understand something of the differences that . . . separated the chivalric world of the Middle Ages from their own" (Chivalric Tradition 57). This development in historical perspective "insured that any future revival [of chivalry] would be, in the special historical sense of the term, romantic" (57). It was as such that the Elizabethans rediscovered chivalry. Ferguson observes:

> In Elizabethan England, the learning of humanism
> and the mystique of chivalry were able to achieve
> a kind of symbiotic relationship, and Sidney and
> Spenser and the rest were able to deck out their
> essential humanism on occasion in the deliberately
> chosen costumes of medieval chivalry. (57)

We find this symbiosis epitomized in Sir Philip Sidney, whom Spenser proclaimed "most worthy of all titles to both Learning and Chivalry." This same Sidney who set his Arcadia in the pastoral world of Greek romance, died of fatal wounds because of an insistence on observing an

extreme point of chivalric honor while fighting in Flanders: having met "the Marshall of the Camp lightly armed," recounts Sir Fulke Greville, ". . . the unspotted emulation of his heart . . . made him cast off his Cuisses" (128).

We see it also in the pageantry of the day, where extravagant chivalric games present allegorized state propaganda and show of wealth and dignity. We may take as an example the pageant presented before a French embassage seeking "to promote a marriage between Elizabeth and the Duke of Alençon":

> Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville, the Earl of Arundel, and Lord Windsor, calling themselves the "Four Foster Children of Desire," lay siege to the Fortress of Beauty where Elizabeth resides. They are, of course, unsuccessful: Perfect Beauty (i.e., Elizabeth) is unattainable--no doubt a message to the French. The Foster Children submit gracefully, acknowledging "the blindness of their error," and admitting that "Noble Desire should have desired nothing so much as the flourishing of that Fortress." (Chivalric Tradition 80)

Or, we may take the extraordinarily lavish Field of the Cloth of Gold which, as Benson points out, was intended by Henry VIII and Francis I both "to dazzle their subjects with a chivalric display" and "to establish a rapprochement between the European powers on the basis of chivalry" (191). According to Sir William Segar these sorts of pageants placed Tudor sovereigns rightfully among "the most mighty Monarches of the world," both ancient and contemporary: "neither France, Spaine, Germany, or any other Nation Christian was euer honoured with so many Military triumphes,

as _England_ hath bene, chiefly in the raigne of her Maiestie who now liueth" (190). He particularly refers to the annual Accession Day Tilts as "a custom neuer before vsed not knowen in any Court or Countrey" (190). The ennoblement of the state through pageantry made chivalry indispensible to the Tudor government; but it was a ceremonial and romanticized, rather than a practical and vital chivalry. Its true nature was probably epitomized when Elizabeth herself, on the eve of the Armada, appeared to her troops at Tilbury horsed and armed as a lady knight and dramatically proclaimed, "Rather than any Dishonor shall grow by me, I myself will take up Arms" (E. C. Wilson 89, 199).

The more distant, romanticizing attitude of Elizabethans toward chivalry allowed poets like Spenser to apply its ideals and symbols with a freer hand than their predecessors, like Malory, who sought to portray knighthood realistically yet typologically for literal emulation. Benson makes clear through many examples that as Malory and other late medieval prose romancers recounted for their day tales of past heroes and their noble deeds, contemporary aristocratic audiences fashioned their actions after what they read. Benson comments:

> Malory lived and wrote in the late Middle Ages, when, for the first time in Western civilization, noble gentlemen actually jousted to gain honor and please their ladies, tried to be true lovers, went on quests, and attempted to realize in their own lives the ideals of romance chivalry. (138)

What had occurred by this time was a codification of

chivalric ideals which often resulted in strict imitation.

Models from the past, presented in the form of handbooks of

chivalry and romances, took on a powerful new authority.

This is evidenced in part merely by the proliferation of

chivalric handbooks published in English during the

fifteenth century, among them The Book of the Ordre of

Chyualrie, The Book of Noblesse, and Knyghthode and Bataile.

A number of chivalric biographies, or "histories," were

produced also, whose subjects consciously follow the

patterns of the romances in their daily lives. One of a

number of intriguing examples is the Earl of Warwick's

biography, which, Benson comments, "reads more like a

romance than a true biography, and we might suspect it to be

purely fiction if it were not substantiated by other

records" (187). Benson summarizes Warwick's career, noting

its correlation with those of both romance and contemporary

real-life knights:

> Warwick's early life follows the pattern that we
> know from Malory's romances: he was knighted, and
> then he triumphed in the great tournament given to
> celebrate the marriage of Henry IV to Joan of
> Navarre, where he did such deeds "as redounded to
> his notable fame and perpetual worship" (5). He
> then went off to fight his king's enemies and thus
> earned a higher form of knighthood, reception into
> the Order of the Garter. The pattern of
> tournament-quest-higher form of knighthood is
> characteristic both of Malory's heroes and of
> knights in real life, such as Jacques de Lalaing,
> who in the 1440s jousted before his king, went on
> a quest (the "emprise del braclet"), defended a
> pas (the Fountaine des pleurs), and earned a
> higher form of knighthood. Malory's knights earn
> a place at the Round Table, Warwick the Order of
> the Garter, Jacques the Toison d'or (the
> Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece). (187-88)

We also see evidence of a continuing application of chivalry in chivalric ordinances of the time and in surviving records of their enforcement. A fifteenth-century manuscript folio entitled "How Knyghtis of the bath shulde be made" details the elaborate ceremony and requirements for that order. At the door of the ceremonial chamber, the king's steward was to take an oath of the aspirants before "all the lordis and knyghtis the kyngis mynstrellis and herawdis of armys":

> . . . ye schall love god above all thinge and be stedfaste in the feythe and sustene the chirche and ye schall be trewe un to yowre sovereyne lorde and trewe of yowre worde and promys & sekirtee in that oughte to be kepte. Also ye schall sustene wydowes in ther right at every tyme they wol requere yow and maydenys in ther virginite and helpe hem & socoure hem with yowre good for that for lak of good they be not mysgovernyd. Also ye schall sitte i no plase where that eny iugement schulde be gevyn wrongefully ayens eny body to yowre knowleche. Also ye schall not suffir noo murderis nor extorcioners of the kyngis pepill with in the Contre there ye dwelle but with yowre power ye schall lete doo take them and put them in to the handis of Justice and that they be punysshid as the kyngis lawe woll. (68)

The socio-political function of knighthood is clear from the oath, which is, as we shall see later in this chapter, strikingly close to the one Arthur takes of his knights at the inception of the Order of the Round Table.

Toward the end of their ceremony, aspirants to the Order of the Bath were to be warned by the king's master cook: "Yf ye be untrewe to yowre sovereyne lorde or doo

ayens this hye and worshipfull ordir that ye have takyn myne
office is that y muste smyte of yowre hele be the small of
yowre leggis and herefore I clayme yowre sporis" (69).
Grafton's Chronicle records that in 1463, a Knight of the
Bath named Rauf Grey, who was captured among a group of
insurgents at Bamborough Castle, "was disgraded of the high
order of knighthoode . . . by cuttynge off his guylt
spurres, rentyng his Cote of armes, and breaking his sword
ouer his hed: and finally, . . . his body was shortned, by
the length of his hed" (II.4). Warkworth's Chronicle
significantly recounts that the constable opens his summary
of the charges against Grey by reminding him: "thou hast
take the ordir of Knyghthode of the Batthe, and any soe
taking that ordir ought to kepe his faithe the whiche he
makes" (38). Warkworth also makes clear that the ceremonial
punishment, which Grafton describes in part, was specific,
elaborate, and related to the vows of the order. Grey is
reminded: "The Kyng had ordenned that thou shuldest have
hadd thy sporys striken of by the hard heles, with the hand
of the maister cooke . . . as was promysed at the tyme that
he tooke of thy spurres" (39). All of this was to the end
that Grey should be "disgraded" of his "worshipp, noblesse,
and armes, as of the order of Knyghthode." In the end,
though, he was spared these indignities on the merits of his
grandfather and, instead, unceremoniously beheaded. The
entire incident, however, as preserved in both chronicles,
indicates that the vows of knighthood were still taken very

seriously in the late fifteenth century and that they

entailed specific solemn obligations.

B. Comparison of the Two Authors' Applications of Chivalry

Caxton advised readers of Malory's work to approach it

as a repository of exempla for application to conduct. He

was publishing it

> to the entente that noble men may see and lerne
> the noble actes of chyualrye, the ientyl and
> vertuous dedes that somme knyghtes used in tho
> dayes, by whiche they came to honour, and how they
> that were vycious were punysshed and ofte put to
> shame and rebuke. (2)

Caxton's readers are to "take the good and honest actes in

their remembrance and to follow the same" (2), and they are

promised that doing so will bring them "to good fame and

renommee" (3).

For his part, then, Caxton was offering <u>The Morte</u>

<u>Darthur</u> as a kind of handbook for noble conduct, and the

evidence just surveyed indicates that it would have been

received as such. In the late sixteenth century, chivalry

still held exemplary potential, but not in quite so

literalistic a manner as in Caxton's and Malory's

presentation of it. Ferguson writes:

> Sidney and Spenser, the high priests of the
> neo-chivalric cult, were both concerned with the
> commonwealth, the church, and the timeless moral
> values. What they saw in the chivalric tradition
> was a source of themes, examples, and symbols
> still relevant to their broader purposes, as well

as worthy of reverence in themselves, but no
longer a sufficient guide. (<u>Chivalric Tradition</u>
84)

As noted in the previous chapter, Protestantism and humanism

had metamorphosed the chivalric romance into a repository of

symbols, rather than a series of historical examples for

imitation.

Thus, in a fashion analogous to that of Caxton in his

<u>Prologue</u>, although different in conception, Spenser explains

to Raleigh: "The generall end" of his book "is to fashion a

gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline"

(737).[2] He declares that he is following "all the antique

Poets historicall, first Homere, who in the Persons of

Agamemnon and Vlysses hath ensampled a good governour and a

vertuous man" (737). Therefore, his purpose, he holds, is

fundamentally didactic. His poem is to be a collection of

tales set forth to cultivate moral virtue in his audience.

Although he defends this plan by allusion to Renaissance

theories about the didactic value of epic,[3] for his

characters and their deeds and activities he turns once

again to the chivalric romances.

Much like Malory, Spenser typologizes his knights.

Beverly Kennedy has shown that <u>The Morte Darthur</u> presents a

typology of knighthood based on models extant in the Middle

Ages. Whereas Malory adheres to realistic models, Spenser

categorizes his knights according to specific virtues. In

Malory, for instance, Gawain is the Heroic knight of feudal

chivalry, Lancelot the Worshipful knight of courtly

chivalry, and Galahad the True knight of religious chivalry (Kennedy 6). Spenser, in a roughly analogous manner, presents Redcrosse as Holiness, Guyon as Temperance, and Britomart as Chastity. To borrow Caxton's exhortation, Spenser's readers are meant to "Doo after the good and leue the euyl," and thus attain "to good fame and renommee" (3).

In both works the action presents for the betterment of readers examples of "noble chyvalrye, curtosye, humanyte, frendlynesse, hardynesse, loue, frendshyp, cowardyse, murdre, hate, vertue, and synne" (3). The large difference is that Malory and Caxton portray, from their perspectives, the past deeds of real-life heroes; for Arthur and his knights were popularly believed to have lived and the material found in the romances to be, in the imprecise medieval sense, historically true. Spenser, on the other hand, made no serious pretense of historical veracity[4] but sought to lure his readers into his didactic content with "an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profit of the ensample" (737).

C. The Two Authors' Representations of Chivalry

Both works are comparable in tone, perspective, and emphasis regarding chivalry, in that they are historically retrospective and in that they demonstrate a code and its maintenance (or breach). In these respects Spenser is of

the same spirit as Malory, the serious-minded proponent of
chivalry, however different he is in other respects. This
likeness is evident in the transformation Spenser casts upon
a borrowing from Ariosto. In Canto I of Orlando Furioso,
Angelica, the fearful beauty pursued, like Florimell, by all
knights, escapes as the pagan Ferrau and the Christian
Rinaldo fight over her. When Rinaldo points out that as
they try to kill each other the prize is gaining distance,
they agree to postpone their combat. Since Rinaldo has lost
his horse, he convinces Ferrau to let him ride behind. In a
ridiculous tableau the knights ride off double mounted and
half armed, forgetting about the crusade to pursue their
mutual selfish and lascivious interest. The narrator
flippantly declares:

> Oh gran bontà de' cavallieri antiqui!
> Eran rivali, eran di fé diversi,
> e si sentian degli aspri colpi iniqui
> per tutta la persona anco dolersi;
> e pur per selve oscure e calli obliqui
> insieme van senza sospetto aversi.
> Da quattro sproni il destrier punto arriva
> ove una strada in due si dipartiva.   (I.22)

> O noble chivalry of knights of yore!
> Here were two rivals, of opposed belief,
> Who from the blows exchanged were bruised and
> Aching from head to foot without relief, [sore,
> Yet to each other no resentment bore.
> Through the dark wood and winding paths, as if
> Two friends, they go. Against the charger's sides
> Four spurs are thrust until the road divides.
> (Reynolds I.22)

The entire stanza is steeped in irony--partly contextually,
partly internally generated. Donald Cheney, noting the

double end-rhymes "diversi," "dolersi," and "aversi,"

comments:

> This comic exploitation of the ottava rima (in a
> fashion which an English reader recognizes as
> Byronic) clearly points up the conflict between
> the premises of militant Christianity on the one
> hand and those of nonsectarian eroticism on the
> other; and it does so in a predominantly satirical
> tone. (84)

For Malory to have written thus of chivalry, although
he is at times critical of its practice, would have been
unthinkable. Spenser is writing in a different era, in
which most of the prominent continental authors who treated
chivalry did so satirically or parodically (Tasso being the
notable exception). Having drawn upon Malory and the
medieval English chivalric tradition, however, Spenser is
much closer to The Morte Darthur in his treatment of
knighthood, and, hence, much closer to the true medieval
spirit. Malory presents an earnest portrayal of true
knighthood through quasi-historical knights; analogously,
Spenser offers speaking pictures of specific virtues through
chivalric allegories.

In the first Canto of Book III, where Spenser alludes
to Ariosto, Britomart has unhorsed Guyon with her enchanted
spear. Guyon, infuriated, attempts to resume the battle on
foot, but Arthur dissuades him and "reconcilement was
between them knit," whereat "goodly all agreed, they forth
yfere did ryde" (12.1,9). Here the narrator breaks into an
apostrophe modeled on Ariosto's cited above:

> O goodly usage of those antique times,
>   In which the sword was seruant vnto right;
>   When not for malice and contentious crimes,
>   But all for praise, and proof of manly might,
>   The martiall brood accustomed to fight:
>   Then honour was the meed of victorie,
>   And yet the vanquished had no despight:
>   Let later age that noble vse enuie,
> Vile rancour to auoid, and cruell surquedrie.   (13)

It is true, as Cheney makes apparent, that by means of context and allusion to Ariosto Spenser creates an ironic comment on the conflicting claims of chivalric honor and erotic love (86-88). Spenser's irony is not deeply incisive, however, and the criticism implied is counterbalanced by his honorific vision of chivalry. Britomart and Guyon, we are told, have been "with that golden chaine of concord tyde" (12.9). This is far from Ariosto's cynical depiction of Ferrau and Rinaldo compromising their loyalties, faiths, and obligations to join in chasing a woman.[5] Moreover, Spenser consistently sets forth chivalry as a thing of honor, from which the present age can profit by example, albeit not necessarily by literal emulation.

The pages of Malory are permeated with a comparably idealistic and honorific vision of chivalry, also conspicuously set in the past. In the Tale of Tristram Sir Blamor de Ganis has accused King Angwysshe of "treson" (8.20). Readers are reminded of the pastness of action and setting:

> For the custome was suche in tho days that and ony

man were appealed of ony treason or murther, he
shold fyghte body for body, or els to fynde
another knyght for hym. And alle maner of
murth<u>ers</u> in tho dayes were callid treason. (20)

Tristram rejoices at the opportunity to take up the
gauntlet for King Angwysshe. In one of Malory's classic
battle narratives "euer they fought lyke wood men," and,
finally, "Syre Tristram smote Sir Blamor suche a buffet vpon
the helme that he there felle doune vpon his syde" (22).
The action that follows is a showcase of knightly honor.
Blamor pleads that Tristram, because he has the proper
credentials, should slay him:

> I requyre the, as thou art a noble knyghte and the
> best knyghte that euer I fond, that thou wilt slee
> me oute, for I wold not lyue to be made lord of
> alle the erth. For I haue leuer dye with worship
> than lyve with shame . . . (23)

He adds, "I wille neuer saye the lothe word [i.e.
'surrender']."

Here Tristram is in a dilemma: he must either spare
Blamor and let his accusation stand, or slay him and break
faith with Lancelot, Blamor's cousin. Tristram turns to the
judges, who are also kings, imploring them "for their
worshippes and for Kynge Arthurs and Sir Launcelots sake" to
undertake the matter. He argues:

> hit were shame and pyte that this noble knyght
> that yonder lyeth shold be slayne, for ye here
> wel, shamed wille he not be, and I pray to God
> that he neuer be slayne nor shamed for me. And as
> for the kyng for whome I fyghte fore, I shalle
> requyre hym, as I am his true champyon and true
> knyghte in this felde, that he wille haue mercy

upon this knyghte. (23)

Angwysshe agrees to "be ruled" by Tristram and the judges next confer with Sir Bleobris, Blamor's brother, who advises: "rather than he shold be shamed . . . lete Sir Tristram slee hym oute." The judges contend, "It shalle not be soo . . . for his parte aduersary, bothe the kynge and the champyon, haue pyte of Syre Blamors knyghthode." What precipitates is a gentlemen's agreement grounded in the confraternity of knighthood. Bleobris quickly agrees: "I wille ryght wel as ye wille." In the action that follows, to use Spenser's phrasing, "reconcilement was betweene them knit" and they are "with that golden chaine of concord tyde" (III.i.12.1,9):

> Thenne the kynges called the Kynge of Irland and fond hym goodely and tretabyl. And thenne by alle their aduyses Syre Tristram and Syre Bleoberys toke vp Sire Blamore, and the two bretheren were accorded with Kynge Angwysshe and kyssed and made frendys foreuer. And thenne Sire Blamor and Sir Trystram kyssed togyders, and there they made their othes that they wold neuer none of them two bretheren fyghte with Syre Trystram, and Syre Trystram made the same oth. And for that gentyl bataille alle the blood of Syre Launcelot loued Sire Trystram foreuer. (8.23)

All present honor Tristram for his chivalrous conduct, and "the kynge lete make it knowen thoroute alle the land how and in what manere Syre Trystram had done for hym." Furthermore, Isolde, yet unmarried, makes over him "ioye" such as "there myghte no tongue telle."

The clear import is that the chivalry of old was an

honorable thing, and those who practiced it in verity not only won worship and love for themselves but also stabilized the social and political order. Malory held such pictures of true knighthood before his own troubled times, when Englishmen were taking up arms against one another in the Wars of the Roses, and, as Stephen Knight reminds us, division and disintegration were evident in many sectors:

> The increasing recognition of the power of the individual is a feature of the period in many spheres. Financially, a market economy has developed to the point of capitalist take-off and as a result of personal mobility, both social and geographic, has become a reality that cannot be ignored as it was in previous centuries.[6] The same patterns exist in religion; the Lollard movement had been in essence an individualist struggle for the collective property, both economic and spiritual, of the church, but that quasi-heresy had largely been suppressed. In the fifteenth century those same forces were channelled into the cult of devotio moderna which focuses on the private Christian. In literature and art there is a marked development of concern with the individual in the 'dance of death' motif especially, but also in the development of realism, a mode which bases itself on the validity of the individual sensual response. (Arthurian Literature 146)

In the standards of true chivalry, Malory implied, stood an alternative to this scene. Particularly in the Round Table knights he presented ideals of conduct that held a remedy for his own troubled generation. As Ferguson states, "For Malory, chivalry served as a broad-spectrum ideal, one, moreover, that he held with the intensity of a secular faith" (Chivalric Tradition 30). Its code is most clearly expressed early in The Morte Darthur:

> . . . the kyng stablysshed all his knyghtes and
> gaf them that were of londes not ryche, he gaf
> them londes, and charged hem neuer to doo
> outragyouste nor mordre, and alweyes to flee
> treason. Also by no meane to be cruel, but to
> gyve mercy vnto hym that asketh mercy, vpon payn
> of forfeture of their worship and lordship of Kyng
> Arthur foreuermore, and alweyes to doo ladyes,
> damoysels, and gentylwymmen sucour vpon payne of
> dethe. Also that no man take noo batails in a
> wrongful quarel for noo lawe, ne for noo worldes
> goodes. Vnto this were all the knyghtes sworne of
> the Table Round, both old and young, and euery
> yere were they sworne at the hyghe feest of
> Pentecost. (3.15)

Vinaver comments that this summary "is perhaps the most complete and authentic record of M[alory]'s conception of chivalry" (Commentary 1335). Although Tristram is not yet a member of the Round Table at the time of his duel with Blamor,[7] he still conspicuously practices--or even supersedes--the standards of the code. He not only avoids "outragyouste," "mordre," and "treson," but he goes out of his way to show "mercy," even when Blamor has specifically requested to be slain. We have in The Morte Darthur, then, a book of action in which the precepts of true knighthood, only briefly stated, are demonstrated time and again through the deeds of famous knights.

D. The Political Significance of Chivalry
in The Faerie Queene

Returning to The Faerie Queene, we still find a mood of historical retrospection and a presentation of a code and

its maintenance--but to what end? We have already seen that
Elizabethan chivalry was somewhat of a charade and that its
applications were more diplomatic and propagandistic than
legal, administrative, or practical.[8] Moreover, Spenser's
knights are primarily allegorical--"faceless knights," as C.
S. Lewis calls them (<u>Spenser's Images</u> 113)--rather than
hortatory exemplars intended for literal emulation, such as
Malory and Caxton offer.[9]

The chief purpose of the knight in <u>The Faerie Queene</u>
aligns with the code expressed in <u>The Morte Darthur</u>. In a
number of places Spenser interjects commentary on the
standards and purpose of chivalry through authorial
intrusion, narration, and utterances of characters. Several
examples follow:

> Nought is more honorable to a knight,
>   Ne better doth beseeme braue chevalry,
>   Then to defend the feeble in their right,
>   And wrong redresse in such as wend awry.
>   (V.ii.1.3-4)

Of Guyon and Redcrosse:

> Full many Countries they did oueronne,
> . . . .
> And many hard adventures did atchieue;
> Of all the which they honour euer wonne,
> Seeking the weake oppressed to relieue,
> And to recouer right for suche, as wrong did grieve.
>   (III.i.4-9)

Arthur to Guyon:

> Are not all knights by oath bound, to withstond
> Oppressours poure by armes and puissant hond?
>   (II.viii.56.4-5)

These passages communicate much of the chivalric idealism of Malory's code. A number of Spenser's episodes, too, purport the same idealism. Artegall defends Irena from Grantorto (V.i), and Arthur delivers Belge from Gerioneo (V.xi). However, the action following the first above-cited comment on chivalry subverts all of Spenser's apparent chivalric idealism. The tone and action of Artegall's battle with Pollente ring mildly of Ariostan parody. Pollente's custom is to challenge his foes to combat on a bridge rigged with a trapdoor, and when they fall through it into the river below, to assail them in the water, where he has the advantage. In a burlesque of heroic conflict, the opponents are compared to "a Dolphin and a Sele" which "snuf,""snort," and "bounce" in their aquatic spectacle (V.ii.15). Artegall is said to be "in swimming skillful" (16.6), and thus, prescribes the narrator, "so ought each Knight" to be (8-9).

The poet inserts distinctively Malorian usages, as if to call to mind that author's religiously serious treatment of chivalric combat: "But Artegall was better breath'd beside, / And towards th'end grew greater in his might" (17.5-6). In The Morte Darthur we find "but Sir Lancelot was better brethed" (8.26). While this precise formula does not recur, Malory has a number of very close approximations: "Sir Trystram waxed . . . better wynded and bygger" (8.7); "at the last Sir Palomydes waxed bygge and better wynded"

(10.62). Malory also uses the non-comparative "well brethed" several times (9.11;10.62,83;12.14;18.18). Where Spenser has "grew greater in his might," Malory has the non-alliterating "his myghte encreaced" (4.18[x2];20.21[x2], 22).[10]

Finally, there is the hero's decapitation of his foe, followed by the antics of the severed head:

> That as his head he gan a litle reare
> Aboue the brincke, to tread vpon the land,
> He smote it off, that tumbling on the strand
> It bit the earth for very fell despight,
> And gnashed with his teeth, as if he band
> High God, whose goodnesse he despaired quight
> (18.2-8)

The episode so far amounts to a comic subversion of chivalry. The poet's sympathetic enhancement of knighthood deconstructs before our eyes, and we are left wondering what has become of Milton's "sage and serious Spenser." The action turns from parody and burlesque to black humor as Talus ferrets out Pollente's daughter, Munera, first mutilating and then drowning her: "But he her suppliant hands, those hands of gold, / And eke her feete, those feete of siluer trye, / . . . . Chopte off, and nayled on high, that all might them behold" (26.6-9).

Such treatment of a lady, any lady, directly violates the code of chivalry found in Malory. We note that the first great misfortune of the ill-fated Balin is his slaying of a woman who has come under safe conduct into Arthur's court. Balin has his just reasons--she has killed his

mother and intends to kill him. Yet Arthur declares: "I shalle neuer foryeve you that trespas" (II.3). Arthur's primary reason is because the lady was under his "sauf conduyte," although we cannot but think that her sex contributed to the odiousness of the deed. Even more pronounced is the episode where Gawain, in his refusal to show mercy to the vanquished Alardin, who has pleaded for it, accidentally slays his lady instead when she throws herself upon Alardin as Gawain's sword falls. The cardinal sin here is not beheading the lady but failing to show mercy. However, killing the lady becomes a horrifying consequence of the moral failure. Gaheris proclaims that the "shame" of slaying the lady "shal neuer from yow" but adds, "Also ye shold gyve mercy vnto them that ask mercy, for a knyght without mercy is without worship" (III.7). It is especially significant that Gawain's misdeed occurs in the same book as the oath of chivalry, where Arthur's knights must swear to show mercy to those who ask it and to succor women. Ironically, Gawain is saved from death only by the intervention of four ladies, who mete to him, because he is Arthur's nephew, a lesser penalty: "that he should bere the dede lady with hym," her head "aboute his neck" and her corpse "before hym on his hors mane" (8).

Michael Murrin observes that from antiquity a common technique of allegorists has been "to overwhelm the senses with a strong image and impress the memory and yet, to distort the image and create a nonvisual effect." This kind

of "deliberate distortion" of the image impels the reader "behind the veil to the truth" (142). In the scene with Munera, the "distortion" is not so much of the image, although it too possesses its disconcerting absurdity, as of the intertext. The incongruity of the action with the codes of the earlier chivalric romances forces readers versed in that tradition into recourse to an allegorical reading: Munera is no lady, but the attractive profit of unjust gain. Merlin L. Neff has identified the target of the entire bridge episode as royally sanctioned commercial monopolies, which reached new heights under Elizabeth. The moral allegory of Talus' merciless subduing of Munera helps to justify the incompatibility of the act with the most basic tenets of chivalry. Execution of justice may result in the destruction of beauty and the ruin of those who have thrived on corruption. At this raw justice, one's aesthetic and humane sensibilities shrink, as Artegall Munera's "seemless plight did rew" (25.9). Talus, on the other hand, not troubled by such weaknesses, relentlessly carries out the law.

This explanation, however, does not completely satisfy. It does not explain the subversion, both humorous and horrifying, of chivalry, which works against the tradition as a whole and against the general treatment of chivalry in the poem itself. In an article on "embattled allegory" in Book II of <u>The Faerie Queene</u>, Madelon S. Gohlke speculates that the problem that "the meaning of the book and its

apparent message 'meete not'" may point to Spenser's "concern with the subversive possibilities inherent in the allegorical mode, and thus towards some recognition of the dualism of the medium as a reflection of a dualistic vision" (140). Stephen Greenblatt exposes as a principle pervading the poem, "Civility is won through the exercise of violence over what is deemed barbarous and evil, and the passages of love and leisure are not moments set apart from the process but its rewards" (186). What is barbarous and evil is, Spenser shows, often also beautiful, even sympathetic. This conception is epitomized in an episode closely related to the one under discussion, Guyon's destruction of the Bower of Bliss. In Spenser's moral universe, therefore, in order to follow virtue one must at times not abandon, but set aside, aesthetic and humane sensibilities. Both Guyon and Artegall inwardly recoil at the ruthless acts, but Guyon follows through with vengeful zeal, and Artegall does nothing to hinder Talus. Regarding the Bower of Bliss, Greenblatt summarizes: "Temperance--the avoidance of extremes, the 'sober government' of the body, the achievement of the Golden Mean--must be constituted paradoxically by a supreme act of destructive excess" (172).

In order to understand this puzzling episode fully, we must examine some technological and conceptual changes which occurred between the Middle Ages and Renaissance surrounding war. In the Middle Ages, whatever it was in practice, war was noble and virtuous in theory and representation. As

Sidney Painter remarks, "To Froissart the Hundred Years War
was a long series of knightly deeds" (57-58). The French
chronicler states as the purpose of his voluminous
undertaking

> Afin que les grans merveilles et biau fait
> d'armes, qui sont avenu par les grans guerres de
> France and d'Engleterre et des royaumes voisins,
> dont li roy et leurs consaulz sont cause, soient
> notablement registré et ou tamps present et à
> venir veu et cogneu . . . (Prologue 1)

In reality, of course, as Huizinga points out, Froissart
"recounts an endless list of betrayals and cruelties without
being very much aware of the contradiction between his
general views and the contents of his narrative" ("Chivalric
Ideas" 198).

Other chronicles of the Hundred Years War also depict
warfare as a gentlemanly pursuit. The chronicle of the Duke
of Bourbon records that after his men had tunneled their way
into the castle of Verteuil, the duke, in order to make the
most of the occasion, sent a challenge for knights from
opposing sides to duel in the mine. When Regnaud de
Montferrand, the squire in charge of the castle, learned
that he was to meet the duke in single combat, he exclaimed:
"Je doi bien louer Dieu, quant il m'a aujourd'hui fait tant
de grâce et d'honneur d'avoir fait armes à ung si vaillant
prince" (Chronique 150). Furthermore, Regnaud agreed to
surrender the castle if the duke would knight him "de sa
main," since he could never have received the rank "plus
honnorablement" (150-51). After the castle keys had been

turned over and Regnaud knighted, the two leaders agreed to postpone the formal surrender until the day following, so that each of their men could be "content d'avoir combatu en la mine" (151).

During the Renaissance, accelerated trends toward warfare as an applied science began to dissolve these kindly illusions. Roger Aho marks the period from 1560 to 1660 in Europe as "a watershed period in military history," noting that, according to the estimation of Pitirim Sorokin, "war casualties in the seventeenth century increased by more than one hundred percent over what they appear to have been in the previous one hundred years" (194). John R. Hale writes:

> War had become more professional, more impersonal: it had become a study, a science, and though drum and fife, armor and horse trappings, pavilions and banners still gave an army a picturesque appearance, and though the highest commands were still allotted to birth rather than experience, and though inefficiency and peculation dogged every step between recruitment and battlefield, the wars of the Renaissance reflect the period's interest in statistics, learning, and method rather than its famed "individualism." (1)

Where the fifteenth century had seen the publication of many handbooks of chivalry in English, the sixteenth century saw a surge of vernacular books on military science. Peter Whitehorne presented to Elizabeth his 1560 translation of Machiavelli's Art of War with the high claim: "Of many straungers [books], whiche from forrein countries, have here tofore in this your Majesties realme arrived, there is none in comparison to bee prefered, before this worthie

Florentine and Italian" (236-37). Machiavelli's concern for expediency over decorum is of course proverbial. In his book of military strategy he presents, in the place of deeds of brave knights, practical examples from his own observation and from his study of classical authors. Telling of his change in emphasis, particularly in light of the above-cited passages from chronicles of the Hundred Years War, is his advice to officers: "Teach your men to hold the enemy in contempt, as Agesilaus the Spartan did when he showed his men some naked Persians so that, having seen their soft, white skin, his men would no longer have cause to fear them" (129).[11]

Although warfare had undergone such pragmatic reemphases, Spenser generally dresses it up in heroic chivalric vestments, as he does the vanquishing of Orgoglio and Gerioneo by Arthur, and of Grantorto by Artegall. But its grimness and absurdity are no longer suppressed in scenes such as the aquatic battle with Pollente and the subsequent dissection of Munera. Aho asserts that the Reformation Protestant soldier, zealously centered on his goal and ideology, was less concerned than the medieval knight about how the battle was fought. The former, "in identifying his cause with the perfect righteousness of God, uses the ferocity of his violence as a confirmation of his own purity;" the latter, "in being asked to recognize himself in the enemy and the enemy in himself, is thus bound to deal with him within the limits of ritual propriety,

using only a restricted inventory of relatively harmless

weapons and strategies" (33).[12] The inexorable efficiency

with which Talus, who "represents military ruthlessness"

(West "Art of War" 667), dispatches Munera very much seems

to be a reflection of this development.

As Spenser's experience in Ireland had taught him, such

activities were a part of the "vertuous and gentle

discipline" of "a gentleman or noble person." Greenblatt

comments:

> It is there that he is fashioned a gentleman,
> there that he is transformed from the former
> denizen of East Smithfield to the "undertaker"--
> the grim pun unintended but profoundly
> appropriate--of 3,028 acres of Munster land.
> (185)

Spenser's new status meant that for the sakes of

Protestantism and the crown, he would disregard humane and

aesthetic constraints and become, like Artegall, an overseer

of the ruthless, calculating destruction of a culture and

its people. In A View of the State of Ireland Eudoxus

argues against clemency toward the Irish on grounds of

political expediency:

> So I remember that in the late government of that
> good Lord Grey, when after long travell, and many
> perillous assayes, he had brought things almost to
> this passe . . . that it was even made ready for
> reformation, and might have been brought to what
> her Maiesties would, . . . complaint was made
> against him, that he was a bloodie man, and
> regarded not the life of her subiects no more then
> dogges, but had wasted and consumed all, so as now
> she had nothing almost left, but to reign in their
> ashes; eare was soon lent therunto, and all
> suddenly turned topside-turvy; the noble Lord

> eft-soones was blamed; the wretched people
> pittied; and new counsells plotted, in which it
> was concluded that a general pardon should be sent
> over to all that would accept of it, upon which
> all former purposes were blancked, the Governour
> at a bay, and not only all that great and long
> charge which shee had before beene at quite lost
> and cancelled, but also that hope of good which
> was even at the doore put back, and cleane
> frustrated. (432-33)

The brutal slaughter of Munera accoutered in the superficies of chivalric enterprise becomes a self-incriminating apology, possibly even subconscious, for policy in Ireland. While posing as a romance knight, Artegall seems what he is--a Machiavellian captain overseeing his juggernaut war machine. The romance has gone out of combat, and the chivalric trappings prove insubstantial. Yet, as Michael West points out, the English were still using much of the hardware of chivalric warfare against the still less technologically sophisticated Irish:

> The guerilla warfare of the Irish marches made
> possible military anachronism that would have
> proved out of place in the increasingly
> mathematical siege warfare of the Lowlands.
> Spenser's nostalgia for the mounted knight
> obliquely reflects the essential backwardness of
> Elizabethan armies, among the last in Europe to
> abandon the lance.[13] ("Art of War" 658-59)

Therefore, while distinct changes in the procedures and codes governing war had occurred, just enough externals had remained the same to render convincing ruthless, calculating policy adorned in chivalric vestments.

The Renaissance understanding of the trappings of knighthood as a veil for statecraft had made chivalry an

easy target for ridicule among continental authors. At the
same time, because it was there more practicable, it
continued to be held in relatively greater reverence in
England. Therefore, Spenser can array the brutal treatment
of Munera in chivalric vestments and try to cast it in the
tradition of the noble deeds of the past, but, because times
have changed, he cannot make it totally convincing. Thus,
he is at times constrained to resort to mock-heroic and
burlesque, despite his high esteem for chivalry itself.

We learn from West that Spenser is incorporating
Renaissance theories of aquatic combat in the battle between
Artegall and Pollente. West notes illustrated in

> several 16th-century editions of Vegetius . . . .
> among some stunningly improbable engines for
> battering gates and lobbing projectiles, . . . a
> knight whose waterproof armor enables him not
> simply to swim but to engage in submarine warfare
> if desired. ("Swimming" 21)

In medieval chivalric warfare, where the honor of the
knight is based on his observance of protocol, the reliance
on such unseemly gear and its associated stratagems would
have seemed ludicrous. Although the longbow, perhaps the
simplest medieval advancement in military technology, was
immensely popular among the English, it was still a
commoner's weapon, far beneath the knight's dignity. We
note that it is never wielded by any of Malory's knights,
while, on the other hand, Chaucer makes his ridiculous Sir
Thopas "a good archeer" (l. 49). The French nobility
disdained to acknowledge its usefulness, even after being

devastated by its application at Crécy in 1346. C. W. C. Oman comments that the French nobles, "unwilling, in the bitterness of their class pride, to ascribe the victory to the arms of mere peasants, . . . came to the conclusion that it was due to the stability of the phalanx of dismounted [English] knights" (129). Incredibly, the French again refused to take the point at Poitiers (1356), Agincourt (1415), Cravant (1423), Verneuil (1424), and the Day of the Herrings (1429), where, out of their insistence upon applying chivalric frontal attack strategies against archers, they were repeatedly trounced by the English. Oman states that the English longbow was "employed for the . . . end of terminating the ascendancy in war of the mailed horseman of the feudal regime," a fact which, he speculates, would have "horrified" the Black Prince, had he realized it (116).

While many Renaissance authors, including Spenser (FQ I.vii.13), condemn firearms as the devil's invention, Cervantes probably most poignantly highlights their incongruity with chivalric principles, and their destructive effects on the institution of knighthood. Don Quixote attacks them as

> the Cause that very often a cowardly base Hand
> takes away the Life of the bravest Gentleman; and
> that in the midst of that Vigour and Resolution
> which animates and inflames the Bold, a chance
> Bullet (shot perhaps by one who fled, and was
> frighted at the very Flash the mischievous Piece
> gave, when it went off) coming no Body knows how,
> or from whence, in a Moment puts a Period to the
> brave Designs and the Life of one that deserv'd to

have surviv'd many Years. (329)

Malory appears to support this perspective in showing Mordred and his men alone using firearms, "grete gonnes," in battle (21.1).

The continuing development of military technology, then, forced the transition from a practical and essential chivalry to an ideological and ornamental one. The aquatic combat in Spenser's bridge episode highlights the fundamental unseemliness of contorting the externals of ancient chivalry to accommodate new aims, tactics, and technology. As strategy and policy have gained the upper hand over honor and decorum, the poet finds that he must strain, sometimes to the point of absurdity, to clothe his matter in chivalric allegory.

E. The Political Significance of Chivalry in The Morte Darthur

Malory envisioned knighthood not as a cloak for government to masquerade in but as its very right arm. Knights were not mere courtiers but extensions of the king himself, agents acting on his behalf. The Morte Darthur bears out the idea that as long as Arthur's knights act consistently with the principles of chivalry, his kingdom will remain stable and prosper. But when the principles are not observed and the knights turn to self-interest, the kingdom is imperiled and finally collapses. The code of

chivalry and the aristocrats who uphold it are the mainstay of government--indeed, are the government.

Ernst Kantorowicz explains that in late medieval England "the Crown was and remained a complex body, a body politic which was not separated from either its royal constituent as the head nor from those co-responsible for the status coronae as limbs" (382). This model was an elaboration of John of Salisbury, who, drawing upon Plutarch, specified:

> The place of the head in the body of the commonwealth is filled by the prince . . . . The place of the heart is filled by the senate . . . . The duties of eyes, ears, and tongue are claimed by the judges and the governors of provinces. Officials and soldiers correspond to the hands. (64-65)

In The Morte Darthur, the agents most actively engaged in maintaining the realm--the right hand of the body politic, as it were--are the knights. We can see the proper valuation of the knight for this reason in Malory's contrasting examples of Arthur and Mark. Arthur, the good king, places his knights above his queen. He comments after Lancelot and Guenevere have left him: "More am I soryar for my good knyghtes losse than for the losse of my fayre quene; for quenys I myght haue inow, but such a felyship of good knyghtes shall never be togydirs in no company" (20.9). The greatness of Arthur's realm is contingent not solely upon his qualities as a ruler, but also upon the unprecedented company of peers he has assembled. Malory consistently

portrays Lancelot as Arthur's most valuable knight and the

epitome of honorable knighthood. This portrayal is

concentrated in Sir Ector's lamentation over his dead

brother:

> A, Launcelot . . . 'thou were hede of al
> Crysten knyghtes. And now I dare say . . ., thou
> Sir Launcelot, there thou lyest, that thou were
> neuer matched of erthely hande. And thou were the
> curtest knyght that euer bare shelde; and thou
> were the truest frende to thy louar that euer
> bestrade hors; and thou were the trewest louer of
> a synful man that euer loued woman; and thou were
> the kyndest man that euer strake wyth swerde; and
> thou were the godelyest persone that euer cam
> emonge prees of knyghtes; and thou was the mekest
> man and the ientyllest that euer ete in hall
> emonge ladyes; and thou were the sternest knyght
> to thy mortal foo that euer put spere in the rest.
> (21.13)

Arthur knows that the governance and continuation of

his realm depends on good knights in his service, especially

Lancelot--which is why he strives to ignore the adulterous

goings on with Guenevere. It is plain that Arthur's knights

are well aware of the liaison when Agravaine raises the

subject in the king's absence. Nonetheless, Gawain,

Gaheris, and Gareth will hear nothing of it--not because

they do not believe it to be true but because they are loyal

to Lancelot and realize his indispensability to the body

politic. Gawain reminds Agravaine: "Ye must remember how

oftymes Syr Launcelot hath rescowed the kynge and the quene.

And the best of vs all had ben ful cold at the herte rote

had not Sir Launcelot ben better than we, and that hath he

preved hymself ful ofte" (20.1). Arthur enters just as the

dispute is coming to a contentious end. Gawain, Gareth, and
Gaheris leave; then Agravaine and Mordred waste no time in
renewing the topic with Arthur and offering, ostensibly out
of righteous indignation, to catch the pair in the act. The
king is strangely equivocal: "Yf hit be soo . . . wete yow
wel, he is none other; but I wold be lothe to begynne suche
a thynge but I myght haue preues vpon hit" (20.2). Malory
interjects an explanation that is especially relevant to our
discussion:

> the kynge was ful lothe therto that ony noyse
> shold be vpon Syr Launcelot and his quene, for the
> kynge had a demynge, but he wold not here of hit.
> For Syr Launcelot had done soo moche for hym and
> the quene soo many tymes that, wete ye wel, the
> kynge loued hym passyngly wel. (20.2)

Arthur's primary concern in the matter is not for his
queen but for his best knight. When Mordred escapes with
news that Lancelot has been caught in the queen's chamber,
Arthur has no choice but to accept the evidence and render
judgment. His great lament is not that he must have
Guenevere burnt but that he has lost his best knight, which
means the demise of his government: "Allas, me sore
repenteth, sayd the kynge, that euer Syr Launcelot shold be
ageynst me. Now I am sure that the noble felaushyp of the
Round Table is broken foreuer, for with hym wille many a
noble knyghte holde" (20.7). Arthur's forced judgment of
the queen is the effective turning point in the demise of
his kingdom, for it precipitates Lancelot's slaying of
Gareth and Gaheris and his erection of what amounts to an

opposing government in exile at Joyous Gard.

Although Arthur's attempt to burn Guenevere for her offense seems brutal, it is in keeping with medieval political theory; for a ruler was not to place his wife above his subjects in legal or political matters. John of Salisbury prescribed: "Princes should tolerate or remove the faults of their subjects" in the same way they would their wives, "for the bond which unites them is equal to or closer than conjugal affection" (264). Because Guenevere's adultery amounts to treason, Malory explains that "there shold be none other remedy but dethe" (20.7).[14] Aegidius Romanus also warned of the perils of princely uxoriousness: "If a king were jealous of his wife, he would be apt to become involved with his own problems and neglect the more important ones, those of his kingdom" (E. Kennedy 194).

Mark, Malory's contrasting example of a vicious and irresponsible ruler, conducts himself in exactly the opposite way toward his queen and his best knight. Mark comments, "I may not love Sire Trystram, bycause he louyth my quene and my wyf, La Beale Isode" (10.51). Yet it is clear that the welfare of Cornwall has been almost exclusively due to Tristram. None of the worthless Cornish knights is able to stand up to Marhalt, the Irish champion whom King Angwysshe has sent to collect the seven years' tribute owed by Mark. It is clear that without an effective fellowship of knights Mark is helpless as a ruler. He is further handicapped by the fact that Marhalt is a member of

the Round Table; therefore, he cannot borrow one of Arthur's
able knights to fight for him. In this critical hour enters
Tristram, a young unknown who has been living in France
(and, unbeknownst to Mark at this point, is his very
nephew). Mark promptly knights him, sets him to the task,
and Tristram conquers but is gravely wounded with a poisoned
sword. At this stage Mark properly recognizes the value of
his best knight and acts accordingly. He is "passynge heuy"
for his wounded nephew (20.8) and does everything in his
power to save him. Malory even has Mark personally arrange
the means for Tristram to go to Ireland and be healed at the
place where "the venym came fro" (20.8). In Malory's
source, Mark has nothing to do with this process.[15] It
seems that the author is striving at this point to show that
Mark realizes Tristram's value to his realm and is loyally
committed to him.[16]

The relationship between king and knight deteriorates
quickly, however, and Malory pointedly makes the object of
contention a woman. When Tristram returns to Tintagel, Mark
is "passyng glad," but presently "there befelle a ialousye
and an vnkyndenes betwyxe Kynge Marke and Sir Tristram. For
they loued both one lady, and she was an erles wyf that
hyght Syre Segwarydes" (8.13). This situation sets the
pattern for the rest of the story as Malory recasts it.
Mark tries to kill Tristram in an ambush, and thereafter
secretly hates and tries to destroy him on account of two
women--first Segwarides' wife, then Isolde. Not having

recognized his nocturnal assailant, Tristram is long unaware
of this animosity. These facts provide for strong dramatic
irony when Mark comes to the bedside of his best knight,
whom he has failed to kill:

> And soo the kynge askaunce came to Sir Tristram to
> comfort hym as he laye seke in his bedde. But as
> longe as Kynge Marke lyued, he loued neuer Sire
> Trystram after that; though there was fayre
> speche, loue was there none. (8.14)

Even Mark's sending of Tristram to Ireland for Isolde
is calculated to destroy him. Mark finally succeeds.
Lancelot recounts that

> whanne by meanes of treatyce Syr Tristram brought
> ageyne La Beale Isoude vnto Kynge Mark from Ioyous
> Gard . . . . that fals traitour Kyng Marke slewe
> hym. As he sat harpynge afore his lady La Beale
> Isoud, with a groundyn glayue he threst him in
> behynde to the herte. (20.6)[17]

Lancelot points up the reason for the grievousness of
Tristram's murder: "for alle the world may not fynde suche a
knyghte." This is a fact of prime importance of which Mark
has been unappreciative, a failure that has brought shame
upon him and made him an ineffectual ruler. Bors is quick
to observe: "Kynge Arthur and Kyng Marke were neuer lyke of
condycyons" (20.6). The knights of the Round Table consider
Mark "the shamfullist kynge that is now lyuynge, for he is a
grete enemy to alle good knyghtes" (10.8). His refusal
consistently to treat Tristram as part of the body politic
has nullified his status as a ruler. At one point, having
bungled an attempt to kill Tristram by himself, he commands

his bystanding knights: "I charge you, sle this traytowre!" (8.32). But the narrator recounts, "There was nat one that wolde meve for his wordys." Later, after Tristram has escaped from Mark's prison and taken Isolde to England with him, a knight[18] brings news "that Kynge Marke is put in pryson by his owne knyghtes, and alle was for loue of Sire Tristram" (10.53). It is clear that Mark has lost control because he has attempted to act independent of the body politic, and, to follow the metaphor, the limbs have turned against the head. The king has been brought to nothing through his attempts to act absolutely and for his private interest, the marks of a tyrant in fifteenth-century political theory.[19]

As Elizabeth T. Pochoda observes, Mark has dealt similarly in murdering his own brother, Bodwyne, who delivered the realm from a Saracen invasion. "The consequence of Mark's behavior is that the best knights leave his kingdom, thus exposing it to both internal and external threats" (99). Arthur, on the other hand, does all in his power to retain good knights and uses them in governing his realm. Returning to the code of chivalry in Book 3, we see that Arthur assigns his knights peacekeeping and judicial duties, and in return they receive "londes," "worship," and "lordship of Kyng Arthur" (15). In the pages of Malory we witness Arthur's knights regularly carrying out tasks of this nature. Beverly Kennedy notes that Lancelot acts as one of Arthur's chief counselors along with Beaudoin

of Bretaygne, who later becomes vice-regent (196). Kennedy
also observes that Lancelot acts as the king's justiciar
when he authoritatively overrides local mob justice to free
Palomides from twelve knights whose lord he has accidentally
killed in a tournament (197; 10.84-85).

For Malory, then, Arthurian knighthood was a working
model of a just, effective government. It could be so,
however, only as long as the members of the body politic
upheld the standards of chivalry, as embodied in the code.
When these standards are ignored or overshadowed by
self-interest, the ties that bind and harmonize government
and society quickly dissolve. As D. S. Brewer puts it,
"When the honourable are not good, and when law becomes an
instrument of revenge, when loyalties clash and good men are
at odds, then treachery flourishes. The bonds of society
fall apart and chaos is come again" (Introduction 30). This
is the Arthurian tragedy. Pochoda insists that Malory, in
showing the demise of Arthur's realm, is exposing the
inadequacy of chivalry as a model for government in his
present (104). Rather, I hold, Malory was presenting the
final failure of Arthur and his knights to adhere to the
high standards of chivalry as a warning to his present, a
time when knighthood was loosely practiced, and self-
interest and divisiveness were rampant. Chivalry was to
Malory far from outmoded and was not yet a solely literary
ideal. As Ferguson argues, it was really the only available
option in terms of secular political ideals:

> Both Malory and Caxton sought to recall the
> laggard knights of England to their "high order"
> by the example of their ancestors. But this could
> not be taken to mean, as has frequently been the
> case, that they, and presumably the generation of
> Englishmen to whom and for whom they may be
> considered to have spoken, were harking back to a
> society and a culture they knew to be gone
> forever. Like Stephen Hawes, who also hoped to
> restore the "flower of chivalry," they hoped to
> "Renew that [which] hath been long decayed," not
> that which hath been long dead. The fact is, they
> did not need to look backward to find chivalry.
> It was all around them. Their tone is hortatory,
> rather than elegiac. The chivalric tradition may
> have needed revitalizing, much as the religious
> life of the community did in those days; but on
> neither account did fifteenth-century Englishmen
> have any real choice. As far as their secular
> values were concerned, chivalry was all they had.
> (Chivalric Tradition 21)

F. Spenser's Transformation of the Chivalric Ideal

As we have already seen, however, a major change was just around the corner, fostered by the nascent Tudor humanism, as well as by Tudor policy. Ferguson cites some trends underway by the 1530s:

> For diplomatic purposes, chivalry could in fact
> provide little more than a front, a familiar and
> cherished myth capable for a while of glossing
> over the Machiavellian realities . . . . To the
> other problems becoming critical in that period,
> in the church, in the constitution, and in the
> countryside, chivalry had really nothing to say.
> Humanism, not chivalry, was to provide the
> language of public discussion during the critical
> years of social change in the thirties and
> forties. By the same toke [sic], chivalric themes
> and modes of expression were being diluted by
> those borrowed . . . from classical antiquity.
> (45-46)

The new diplomatic form which chivalry took was also

encouraged by the reign of Henry VII, whose vigorous
managerial style of politics has been recognized as
constituting a turning point in English governmental policy
(Grant 46-50). As R. L. Storey points out, "After his
statesmanship had matured in 1492 . . . Henry VII turned his
back on the chimera of military glory" (214). This sort of
trade-off contributed to the development of chivalry as less
practically essential, more symbolic and decorative.

Furthermore, chivalry and its literature in general,
and The Morte Darthur in particular, had come under attack
by humanist scholars. More's Utopians disdained war, the
source of chivalric honor, "as an activity fit only for
beasts," considering "nothing so inglorious as the glory won
in battle" (71). Erasmus, in his Enchiridion militis
Christiani, substituted an ideal of spiritual knighthood and
warfare for its military counterpart (Adams 30). And Roger
Ascham singled out The Morte Darthur as particularly idle
and harmful, although still only one tenth as bad as "these
bookes, made in Italie, and translated in England" (231):

> In our forefathers tyme, whan Papistrie, as a
> standyng poole, couered and ouerflowed all
> England, fewe bookes were read in our tong, sauyng
> certaine bookes of Cheualrie, as they sayd, for
> pastime and pleasure, which, as some say, were
> made in Monasteries, by idle Monkes, or wanton
> Chanons: as one for example, Morte Arthure: the
> whole pleasure of which booke standeth in two
> speciall poyntes, in open mans slaughter, and bold
> bawdrye: In which booke those be counted the
> noblest Knightes, that do kill most men without
> any quarell, and commit fowlest aduoulteries by
> sutlest shiftes . . . (230-31)

That chivalry was no longer a viable code for governing the state, and that its literature had come under censure from some of the foremost intellectuals of the time, no doubt encouraged Spenser to transcend its external and literal aspects in order to treat it as a network of symbols embodying moral and spiritual values. By doing so, the poet revitalized chivalric romance for the educated classes of his time. R. S. Crane comments:

> The most important result of the rejection of the romances by the leaders of Elizabethan letters and their increasing relegation to a somewhat humble public was to limit seriously their influence on current literature. (24)

Spenser and Sidney, however, showed that the chivalric romance harbored great possibilities for a new era, in which chivalry was no longer the only, or even a viable, option for running the state. Spenser's knight is no more an exemplar to be literally emulated; he is a symbol of a specific virtue, an Everyman figure in quest of salvation. His weapons, his quest, his setting, and his enemies all take on a highly figurative significance which, with the qualified exception of the Tale of the Sankgreal, they generally lacked in The Morte Darthur.[20] In this way, whereas The Morte Darthur had been a sort of handbook for shaping the practical conduct of the nobility, The Faerie Queene became a handbook for shaping the moral and spiritual consciousness of the equivalent class.

The highly charged symbolism of numerous elements in

Spenser's poem gathers around them manifold associations
that simply did not exist in Malory and that are not as
profuse in any medieval chivalric romance. Michael Leslie
reveals the significations of the shields belonging to
various knights in the poem. Some of these shields take
their attributes from those possessed by Malory's knights,
but, as we shall see, their symbolic associations expand in
the process of reapplication. In The Morte Darthur, King
Evelake owns a shield which originally bore a crucifix, by
means of which he once miraculously overcame King Tolleme:

> For whanne Euelake was in the batail, there was a
> clothe sette afore the sheld, and whanne he was in
> the grettest perylle he lete putte awaye the
> clothe, and thenne his enemyes sawe a fygur of a
> man on the crosse, wherethurgh they alle were
> discomfyte. (13.10)

Sometime following this event, the crucifix mysteriously
disappears, which moves Evelake and many of his subjects to
undergo baptism. Joseph of Arimathea later restores the
cross with "his own blood," predicting that "it [the cross
of blood] shall be alweyes as freshe as it is now," and that
none should be able to bear it until Galahad, who "shall do
many merueyllous dedes" (13.11).

Spenser transfers one aspect of this marvelous shield
to that of Red Cross Knight and another to that of Arthur.
Rather than mysterious but essentially literal numina, as in
Malory, the shield and its emblem become expressive symbols
of Redcrosse's piety and aspiration toward holiness.[21] The
"bloudie Crosse" on both "his shield" and "his brest" are

for "the deare remembrance of his dying Lord" and "for
soueraine hope, which in his helpe he had" (I.i.2).
Arthur's shield of adamant, on the other hand, like
Evelake's, "all closely couer'd was" (I.vii.33.1):

> The same to wight he neuer wont disclose,
>   But when as monsters huge he would dismay,
>   Or daunt vnequall armies of his foes,
>   Or when the flying heauens he would affray
>   (I.vii.34.1-4)

Arthur vanquishes not physical but spiritual enemies by
means of his shield, which comes to symbolize the power of
grace over sin. When Arthur is fighting Orgoglio, the veil
falls from the shield "by chaunce . . . / The light whereof,
that heauens light did pas, / Such blazing brightnesse
through the aier threw, / That eye mote not the same endure
to vew" (I.viii.19.2-5). This immediately incapacitates
Orgoglio, who is a projection of the personal sin which has
enthralled Redcrosse. The giant "has read his end / In that
bright shield, and all their forces spend / Themselves in
vaine: for since that glauncing sight, / He hath no powre to
hurt, nor to defend" (viii.21.4-7).

The makeup and condition of Arthur's and Redcrosse's
shields is symbolically significant. On Redcrosse's "siluer
shielde" are seen "old dints of deepe wounds . . . / The
cruell marks of many'a bloudy fielde" (I.i.1.2-4). Upton
has commented on the broad application of this symbolism to
the individual Christian: "Those old dints have been made by
the fiery darts of the wicked: and this panoply has been

worn by every Christian man in every age" (Hamilton 49).

Arthur's shield is consciously contrasted with Redcrosse's

battered shield:

> Not made of steele, nor of enduring bras,
> Suche earthly mettals soone consumed bene:
> But all of Diamond perfect pure and cleene
> It framed was, one massie entire mould,
> Hewen out of Adamant rocke with engines keene,
> That point of speare it neuer percen could,
> Ne dint of direfull sword diuide the substance
> (I.vii.33.3-9)   [would.

Leslie compares the symbolic value of Arthur's shield

with that of Redcrosse's:

> Arthur's diamond shield is superior to that of the
> Red Cross Knight as Christ is superior to the
> Christian soldier. Spenser may well intend us to
> recognise as much as a result of the reference to
> 'Adamant rock': the Latin adamas is obviously
> suitable for puns on the relationship between St.
> George, as the 'old Adam', and his saviour or
> redeemer Prince Arthur as the new. Indeed Spenser
> may be suggesting that Arthur is associated with
> Christ in his initial lines on the shield, where
> the insistent negative applied to 'earthly
> mettals' places diamond in the heavenly sphere
> . . . (17)[22]

Malory relies on the widely accepted historicity of his

knights for the authority of his examples; also, as we have

seen, his examples of knighthood in action were shaped by

the conditions of his day, and they literally shaped

aristocratic conduct. Spenser, on the other hand, is not

interested in reviving chivalry for its practical value, but

sees in it a wealth of moral and spiritual symbolism capable

of shaping and stabilizing the humanistic and Protestant

values of his day--precisely that for which scholars like

Ascham contended it was unsuitable. Spenser's treatment of chivalry is no longer dependent on the credibility of the legends or the practical efficacy of knighthood but taps directly into the romantic and symbolic revival of chivalry under the Tudors. Each author, however, is in an analogous manner striving to cultivate his own ideal of virtue through a portrayal of knights and knighthood, and in this feature Spenser has obviously drawn much inspiration from Malory. We can also see a distinct correspondence in the moral dichotomy between characters in the two works. What Vinaver says about Malory's handling of the Tristram section generally applies to the rest of his tales, and also to Spenser's poem: "He insists on making his heroes uniformly happy and, like the French prose-writer, builds their happiness on a wholesale condemnation of their enemies" (Commentary 1445). For Malory, this black-and-white depiction of characters sprang from "his strong sense of the value of chivalry as the noblest human institution" (1446). The comparable tendency in Spenser arises from his nationalism, his religious convictions, and his political views, all of which he had found could be transmitted powerfully and effectively through chivalric symbolism.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Arthur of Malory and Spenser

A. A Brief Survey of Scholarship

The Arthur of <u>The Faerie Queene</u> has received relatively

little attention due to the opinions of prominent critics

such as Richard Hurd, Thomas Warton, R. E. N. Dodge, W. L.

Renwick, and J. W. Bennett that Arthur was a superfluous

add-on to the poem.[1] This may seem odd in light of the fact

that Spenser specifically states, "In the person of Prince

Arthur I sette forth magnificence in particular, which

vertue . . . is the perfection of all the rest" (<u>Letter</u>

737). Ronald Arthur Horton, in his 1978 summary of critical

opinions on the relationship of the <u>Letter to Raleigh</u> to the

poem, cites "the limited role of Arthur" as one of the three

"most serious and persistent" objections to the letter as a

reliable guide: "The impression that <u>The Faerie Queene</u> is

not really about Arthur has caused many critics to dispense

with the explanation offered in the Letter" (9).

Charles Bowie Millican, in 1932, made a substantial

contribution to our understanding of the importance of the

Arthurian legend to Spenser's poem, and, since that time,

several other critics have built on Millican's work to

expose dimensions of Arthur's centrality to the poem. Edwin

Greenlaw (1932) and, more recently, Michael Leslie (1983)

and A. Kent Hieatt (1988) have shown the historically and politically allegorical significance of Arthur in the poem. None until Hieatt, however, has given any serious consideration to the influence of Malory's King Arthur upon Spenser's Prince Arthur. Millican, in fact, at the outset quotes Lillian Winstanley's statement that Ascham probably "'dissuaded or helped to dissuade Spenser from making much use of Malory's Morte d'Arthure'" (3), and he gives virtually no attention to the Arthur of Malory in his book. Hieatt, whose argument I discuss in this chapter, is the first to build any kind of case for the debt of Spenser's Arthur to Malory's. While I am indebted to Millican, Greenlaw, Leslie, and Hieatt for my rendering of the present topic, this chapter is, to the best of my knowledge, the first focused study of the influence of Malory's Arthur in particular on Spenser's Arthur.

B. Spenser's Arthur as an Intertextual Construct

Spenser indicates in his Letter to Raleigh that his purpose in portraying Arthur is twofold, in emulation of the great "poets historicall": to represent both "a good gouernour and a vertuous man" (737). Having embraced this twofold purpose, the author projects a change of emphasis between the two large divisions of his work. The second part of his great romance-epic he never achieved, let alone finishing the first. He describes the Arthur of the first

twelve books as "the image of a braue knight, perfected in the twelue priuate morall vertues." Prince Arthur, then, is primarily Arthur the "vertuous man." Spenser's portrayal of King Arthur, contingent upon the favorable reception of the first twelve books, is to be of "the other part of polliticke vertues in his person," i.e., "a good gouernour."

Spenser has chosen Arthur for his epic purposes because he envisions him as the closest native parallel to the epic heroes of Homer and Virgil. He enumerates as his reasons "the excellency of his person" and his distance "from the daunger of enuy, and suspition of present time." These are obvious qualifications necessary for an epic hero and will not be the focus of my discussion. A particular advantage of Arthur as a choice is that, as Spenser mentions, he has already been "made famous by many mens former workes." Spenser, unlike Homer and to a greater extent than Virgil, worked from written texts. His hero was already an intertextual construct, which he incorporated into his own intertext. Hence, readers' recognition of Arthur in The Faerie Queene as "a good gouernour and a vertuous man" was vitally determined by Arthurian texts and traditions extraneous to the poem itself. This fact becomes especially important when we recognize that Spenser, like Arthurian writers before him, was depicting Arthur in both exemplary and allegorical modes.

Although Arthur had been recast for political purposes by almost every author prior to Spenser who had treated him,

The Morte Darthur epitomized the portrayal of Arthur as a
model for rulers and went further than most in making Arthur
an historically allegorical figure.[2] While Spenser takes
most of his specifically Arthurian material from Geoffrey of
Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae, these two key
strategies which the poet uses are patently Malorian.
Furthermore, for contemporary readers of The Faerie Queene
the most familiar context for understanding and visualizing
the figure of Arthur would have been The Morte Darthur. As
Ascham complained, "I know, when God's Bible was banished
the Court, and Morte Arthure receiued into the Princes
chamber" (231). In 1579 Nathaniel Baxter, Philip Sidney's
tutor, expressed his disapproval of the "reading of vile and
blasphemous, or at least of prophane and frivolous bokes,
such as are that infamous K. Arthur (which with shame inough
I heare to be newly imprinted)" (Gaines 11). It was one of
the few medieval romances which continued to be reprinted
well into the English Renaissance.[3]

We find a number of strikingly close parallels between
Caxton's version of Malory's Roman War Story in Book 5, and
Arthur's interventions on behalf of Mercilla and Belge in
Book V of The Faerie Queene. In the Roman War Story,
Arthur's realm is threatened by a world power which demands
his recognition in the form of tribute. In the two episodes
in Spenser, on the other hand, Arthur intervenes on behalf
of others. The similarity lies in the fact that the threat
is an oppressive world power and that Arthur, in conquering,

installs justice and attains a greatness suggesting or realizing empire. While the Roman War Story is found in earlier accounts originating in Geoffrey of Monmouth, Malory's version is unique in that Arthur retains the great empire which he justly conquers, and in that the conquest takes place early in his career. In other accounts-- Geoffrey, Layamon, Wace, the Prose Brut, and Malory's major source, the Alliterative Morte Arthure--Arthur's conquest of Rome takes place just prior to the last battle, in which his entire kingdom disintegrates. Just as Rome is within his grasp, he receives the fateful news from England that Mordred has usurped his throne and forced Guenevere to marry him. In the Alliterative Morte the moral implications are made especially clear. Arthur has gone too far--his lust for empire has resulted in the destruction of his proper kingdom.[4]

In The Morte Darthur, by contrast, Arthur's conquests and hegemony are legitimated and established. As Arthur strides triumphantly eastward he delivers the oppressed rather than becoming increasingly oppressive, as he does in the Alliterative Morte.[5] When he arrives in Rome, instead of learning of chaos at home and being forced to rush back, he is magisterially "crouned Emperour by the Popes hand, with all the ryalte that coude be made" (5.12). Afterward, he remains in Rome for a time to install a just and stable government throughout his newly attained empire:

[Arthur] establysshed all his londes from Rome

> into Fraunce, and gaf londes and royammes vnto his
> seruauntes and knyghtes, to eueryche after his
> desert, in suche wyse that none complayned, ryche
> ne poure. (5.12)

When all is to his satisfaction and he decides to return
home, he is "nobly receyued of alle his commyns in euery
cyte and burgh, and grete yeftes presented to hym at his
homecomyng to welcome hym with."

How completely different is this ending from any other
surviving account of the story. The only remote equivalent
is Hardyng's Chronicle, in which Arthur is "crowned . . .
with crownes thre of gold / As emperoure moste principall"
(145). But Hardyng's Arthur, much as in the other accounts
apart from Malory's, must after a mere winter in Rome return
"home in hast" in a vain and fatal attempt to quell domestic
chaos (145-47). Far from a beleaguered, tottering, would-be
emperor or an overreaching tyrant, Malory's Arthur is a
just, benevolent, virile ruler who has fittingly been
promoted to world emperor. How could a poet wishing
preferment from a monarch in the process of acquiring an
empire resist such a story as this?

The accounts of Prince Arthur's interventions on behalf
of Mercilla and Belge are close to the Roman War Story in
spirit and details. The Romans in Malory's version have had
a long record of oppressiveness. King Angwysshe counsels
Arthur to refuse them the recognition of renewing the
tribute because "when they regned on vs they destressyd oure
elders and putte this land to grete extorcions and taylles"

(5.2). Furthermore, Rome is presented as, if not pagan itself, closely allied with the pagan nations which the Emperor Lucius summons to his aid, along with "fyfty geaunts, whiche had be engendred of fendys" to serve as his shock troops and personal bodyguards (5.2). The threats in both of Spenser's episodes are allegories for the foremost "pagan" (i.e. Roman Catholic) oppressive empire on the Elizabethan horizon--Spain. Therefore, as Hieatt speculates, "Spenser would have been grateful to know that [Malory's] Lucius is supported by many thousands of Spaniards" (184).

Mercilla, "a mayden Queene" (viii.17.2), is menaced by the Sultan, a "miscreaunt" who "neither hath religion nor fay, / But makes his God of his vngodly pelfe, / And Idoles serues" (19.6-8) and who "with most fell despight and deadly hate, / Seekes to subuert her Crowne and dignity" (18.3-4). Similarly, Geryoneo, upon having gained all of the widow Belge's wealth by pretending to be her champion,

> . . . gan forth from that howre
> To stirre up strife, and many a Tragicke stowre,
> Giuing her dearest children one by one
> Vnto a dreadfull Monster to deuoure,
> And setting up an Idole of his owne,
> The image of his monstrous parent Geryone.
> (x.13.4-9)

As the Arthur of the Roman War Story is the just and welcome conqueror, and liberator of the oppressed, so is the Arthur who intervenes on behalf of Mercilla and Belge. In this, he stands in sharp contrast to his foes. When

Malory's Arthur is encamped in Champagne, two messengers, "of whome that one was Marchal of Fraunce," bear him tidings "that th'Emperour was entryd into Fraunce and had destroyed a grete parte, and was in Burgoyn, and had destroyed and made grete slaughter of peple, and brente townes and borowes" (5.2). The messengers plead urgently for Arthur's intervention: "Yf thou come not hastely, they must yelde up their bodyes and goodes." Belge renders to Arthur a similar picture of the destruction of her realm by Geryoneo:

> Are not all places full of forraine poures?
> My pallaces possessed of my foe,
> My cities sackt, and their sky-threating towres
> Raced, and made smooth fields now full of flowres?
> (x.23.2-5)

When Malory's Arthur takes the city of Urbino, he orders "that none of his lyege men shold defoule ne lygge by no lady, wyf, ne maide" (5.12). Going beyond mere protection of the conquered, he "comforted them that were in sorou, and ordeyned ther a captayn."

As Spenser's Arthur faces the Sultan in his "charret hye,[6] / . . . arm'd dreadfully, / And drawne of cruell steedes" (viii.28.4-6), the narrator lays bare their contrasting motives:

> Thus goe they both together to their geare,
>   With like fierce minds, but meanings different:
>   For the proud Souldan with presumpteous cheare,
>   And countenance sublime and insolent,
>   Sought onely slaughter and auengement:
>   But the braue Prince for honour and for right,
>   Gainst tortious powre and lawlesse regiment,
>   In the behalfe of wronged weake did fight:
> More in his causes truth he trusted then in might.

(viii.30)

When Arthur destroys Geryoneo he refuses any reward from
Belge on the grounds that "vertue selfe . . . her reward
doth pay" (xi.17.9). Belge then implores him to go even
further: "Till ye haue rooted all the relickes out / Of that
vilde race, and stablished my peace" (18.6-7). It would be
hard to imagine a more welcome conqueror.

Finally, there is a resemblance between two of the
accounts in that both Arthurs are named by the titles of the
vanquished. While Malory's Arthur attains emperorship,
Spenser's Arthur, in his duel with the Sultan, is
suggestively referred to as "infant" (viii.41.2),[7] the
Spanish title for Prince Philip, whom the Sultan in his
"charret hye" plainly represents. Although the narratorial
conferring of title does not culminate in imperial dominion
for Spenser's Arthur, as it does for Malory's, it appears to
foreshadow it. And imperial status is portended even more
strongly in the Belge episode, where Arthur is offered the
territory he has retaken for her but magnanimously refuses
it (xi.16.8-9;17). As Hamilton notes here, "Arthur's
refusal reflects Elizabeth's" to receive sovereignty of the
Netherlands (605).

That Elizabeth is represented at least partially by the
allegorical Arthur here is indicated by Britomart's
revelation in Merlin's cave. Merlin prophesies:

> Then shall a royall virgin raine, which shall
> Stretch her white rod ouer the Belgicke shore,

      And the great Castle smite so sore with all,
     That it shall make him shake, and shortly learne to
     (III.iii.49.6-9)   [fall.

The "great Castle" to be smitten is, like the Sultan, a representation of Philip II. As Hamilton points out, "In the Dedicatory Sonnet to Lord Howard, S[penser] refers to the Spanish Armada as 'those huge castles of the Castilian king'" (334).

Spenser, it seems, is not the only author who allegorizes a conquering English monarch in his presentation of Arthur. Vinaver argues that Malory goes out of his way to remind readers of Henry V in recounting Arthur's continental exploits. Much as Arthur is honorably received and crowned in Rome,

> . . . Henry V . . . was once acclaimed in his former enemy's capital as a victor and was, in the words of the 'Bourgeois de Paris', moult joyeusement et honorablement receu. The French king himself—Charles VI—had agreed by the Treaty of Troyes to let Henry V succeed him on his death. In the meantime Henry V had married Charles VI's daughter and taken possession of the Louvre and the Bastille. Not only in the eyes of Charles VI, but in those of the authorities and part of the population Henry V was virtually king of France. He died in 1422, two months before Charles VI, and so never received the French crown, but his infant son, Henry VI, was then proclaimed king simultaneously in England and France and crowned in Notre Dame in 1430 by Bishop Beaufort. All this seems to point irresistibly to the conclusion that the happy ending of Malory's story was calculated to make it appear as something more significant than a mere record of the rise and fall of a legendary kingdom. (Commentary 1368)[8]

Malory has even "altered his source so as to make Arthur's journey across the Continent resemble Henry V's itinerary"

(1368, cf. 1396-97). Nellie Slayton Aurner has seen even more extensive allegorical connections running through the entire Morte Darthur. "In general features," she claims,

> the personality and career of Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI correspond respectively to (1) the Arthur of the first three books, (2) the Arthur of book four extending through to the Grail section, and (3) the Arthur of the post-Grail period. (367)[9]

There is no evidence that Spenser recognized any of these correspondences, but neither is it inconceivable that he might have. He no doubt saw, however, that his own political allegory favoring foreign conquest and domestic stability would be more greatly enhanced by Malory's version of the Roman War Story than by other extant versions. Hieatt sets forth some compelling evidence that Spenser intended in his second twelve books to go beyond the early rumblings of foreign conquest seen in Prince Arthur's exploits, to present a King Arthur who actually conquers Rome. While browsing through the ancient tomes in the library of Alma's castle, Arthur chances upon "an ancient booke, hight Briton moniments" (II.ix.59.6), which traces the line of British kings from Brutus to Uther Pendragon—i.e., up to Arthur himself, who was destined to consolidate rule for the first time under "one mans gouernments" (59.9). The narrator's strategy in this section is not to recount Prince Arthur's precise reading of the chronicle, but to summarize and comment on it for the "soueraine Queene" who is Arthur's descendant (x.4).

When the narrator comes to the place where Caesar achieves conquest over Britain through the treachery of Androgeous, he provides a bit of proleptic commentary to which Prince Arthur is not privy:

> Thenceforth this land was tributarie made
> T'ambitious <u>Rome</u>, and did their rule obay,
> Till <u>Arthur</u> all that reckoning defrayd;
> Yet oft the Briton kings against them strongly
> (49.6-9)   [swayd.

Hieatt bases his argument that Spenser's King Arthur would, after the manner of Malory's Arthur, conquer Rome on the sense of the word "defrayd" used here. In Malory's Roman War Story, Arthur pays the demanded tribute in a macabre coin of corpses. He has the bodies of Lucius, nineteen foreign kings, and sixty senators placed in coffins, and commands three surviving senators to bring the bodies to Rome for presentation to the "potestate" and to announce that Arthur himself would "hastely be atte Rome" (5.8). The senators are then to relay Arthur's proclamation to what remains of Rome's governing body:

> I sende to them these dede bodyes for the trybute
> that they haue demaunded. And yf they be not
> content with these, I shal paye more at my
> comynge, for other trybute owe I none, ne none
> other wylle I paye. And me thynketh this
> suffyseth for Bretayne, Irlond, and al Almayne,
> with Germanye. And ferthermore I charge yow to
> saye to them that I commaunde them upon payne of
> theyre heades neuer to demaunde trybute ne taxe of
> me ne of my londes. (5.8)[10]

It is only a matter of time until Arthur enters the city to be crowned emperor.

As Hieatt comments on this chain of events, "Arthur reverses the relation of mastery and subjection between the Romans and Britons, and in particular he pays the demanded tribute in a paradoxical way that ends it forever" (181). The actions described in the Briton moniments and, particularly, the usage of the verb "defrayd," he argues, reiterate part of Malory's Roman War episode. Although Malory uses no form of the word in his account, Spenser's application of "defrayd" encompasses the action seen in Malory. Hieatt compares Spenser's other applications of the word:

> In all of Spenser's other uses of forms of "defray"[11] the meanings seem to be, either literally or figuratively, "to discharge (the expense or cost of anything) by payment: to pay, meet, settle" (OED "defray" 2). Perhaps the clearest parallel is in Epithalamion 315-18: "Now welcome night . . . / That long daies labour doest at last defray, / And all my cares, which cruell loue collected, / Hast sumd in one, and cancelled for aye." (182)

Hieatt concludes on the basis of Spenser's usage, "Arthur all that reckoning defrayd" (final italics mine), and its allusiveness to Malory's Roman War Story, "that Spenser is . . . inserting into his fictional space the datum that his Arthur conquered Rome" (183). The actual unfolding of this event would have taken place in the second twelve books, which were to portray Arthur after he became king. This progression would have provided Spenser with a theme of truly epic proportions, allowing him to excel his romance-epic predecessors and forcefully to indicate the

future direction and horizon of Elizabethan influence.

Hieatt speculates:

> Given the relation to the realities of politics
> and patronage, such a work would have pointed to
> the Protestant destruction of contemporary
> Spanish-dominated, Roman Catholic power and the
> founding of a Universal Reformed Church. As such,
> it would have had a great appeal to such earlier
> Protestant activists as Spenser's early patron
> Leicester and Sir Philip Sidney, with the latter's
> notions of a militant Protestant League of which
> Elizabeth would be the head. But the Protestant
> cleansing would have been performed allegorically.
> At the literal level the sequel would have built
> on a central British tradition of great antiquity,
> concerned with the most important British hero,
> leading a host in the cause of national honor and
> the right, to world-triumph over the greatest
> power ever known. As the Protestant,
> Reformationist epic of a crusade against Catholic
> unbelievers to liberate their power-center for the
> forces of purity, it would have challenged Tasso's
> great Catholic epic of the First Crusade and the
> liberation of Jerusalem from the unbelievers, and
> Ariosto's less seriously intended epic of the
> forces of Charlemagne who fight the unbelievers
> and finally capture their center. (183)

C. The Political Applications of Spenser's Arthur

Hieatt's theory that Spenser intended to make Arthur

conqueror of Rome in his second twelve books seems

convincing, although, ultimately, it can only remain

conjecture. However, the prophetic passage in Book III, and

Prince Arthur's exploits on behalf of Mercilla and Belge,

clearly connect the Arthurian theme in the poem with victory

over threatening foreign powers strongly suggestive of

Malory's Roman War Story. The allegory of Arthur in the

Mercilla and Belge episodes transparently signifies

Elizabeth in her triumphs over Spanish domination.
Therefore, in the poem, while there is not a simple
one-to-one allegorical relationship between Elizabeth and
Arthur, the historical and the legendary personages often
coalesce. At other points, of course, we know that
Gloriana, Britomart, and Mercilla also represent
Elizabeth.[12] However, setting Elizabeth and her
achievements in Arthurian allegory was so fitting as to be
practically inevitable for Spenser. Michael Leslie reminds
us:

> The Tudors derived a specious aura of legitimacy
> and authenticity from the legend of King Arthur,
> from whom they claimed descent. But in the late
> sixteenth century this legendary history of
> England became valuable for other than purely
> dynastic reasons. With the Reformation and Henry
> VIII's rejection of Roman sovereinty [sic],
> powerful nationalistic support for English
> independence of the Papacy and the Empire could be
> found in the stories of Arthur's conquests. (187)

The Arthurian legend helped Elizabeth not only to
consolidate support for imperial ventures, but also to
establish local hegemony by bringing the Welsh agreeably
under the English crown. Henry VII, Elizabeth's
grandfather, claimed descent from Arthur through his
grandfather, Owen Tudor. This tie, especially in the eyes
of the Welsh, fulfilled the "Briton hope" of Arthur's return
to rule.[13] The Welsh "sincerely considered" Henry "not only
the possessor of the iron crown of Britain and the restorer
of Arthur and the line of ancient British kings, but also
'the first Brittish King' of England" (Millican 15).

Millican relates that although "Henry was little more than 'the proscribed grandson of a Welsh squire,' yet the Welsh bards broke into song, relating him to Brutus, Arthur, and Cadwalader" (12). Several lines of Lewis Glyn Cothi's "I'r Brenin Harri VII" read

> Mîl yw o Wynedd, wr moliannus,
> Adar a tharw o waed Arthurus;
> Goludawg vrenin o gorf Gwladus Ddu;
> A deryw dŷnu o Dardanus.
>
> Aeth a'r hêt alawnt air Twilius,
> A mawr lawenydd gair Merlinius;
> A gwr ydyw sy gariadus a theg,
> A'i wyr yw deuddeg anrhydeddus.

> The beast from North Wales, a man of
> renown, birds and bull of the blood of
> Arthur; a wealthy king descended
> from Gladys Ddu; traced back to Dardanus.
>
> He has won the heat of the greyhound according to
> the word of Tullius, and the great joy predicted
> by Merlin; he is kindly and fair, and his men are
> twelve honorable ones. (Millican 12-14)[14]

Spenser's Merlin promises Britomart, in comparably prophetic style, that this great sovereign shall come of her union with Artegall:

> Ther shall a sparke of fire, which hath longwhile
> Bene in his ashes raked up, and hid,
> Be freshly kindled in the fruitful Ile
> Of Mona, where it lurked in exile;
> Which shall breake forth into bright burning flame,
> And reach into the house, that bears the stile
> Of royall maiesty and soueraigne name;
> So shall the Briton bloud their crowne againe reclame.
> (III.iii.48.2-9)

Henry VII was known as the Bull of Mona because he "was born in the Isle of Anglesey (Mona), the last stronghold of the

Britons" (Hamilton 334). Spenser appears to be in complete agreement with the Welsh bard in placing Henry as the restorer of Arthur's line to the throne.

This legendary prestige was inherited by Elizabeth, whom numerous genealogies showed to be the sole survivor of the line. As Millican writes, she "was considered by her subjects before the date of The Faerie Queene as 'the right inheritrice of the Principalitie of Wales' and as a continuator of the Welsh faery blood" (38). On her 1575 progress to Kenilworth she was met at a pool by a woman posing as the Lady of the Lake, who addresses the queen:

> I am the Lady of this pleasant Lake,
> who since the time of great king Arthures reigne
> That here with royal Court abroade did make,
> have led a lowring life in restles paine.
> Til now that this your third arrivall here
> doth cause me come abroad, and boldly thus
> (Gascoigne 93-94)   [appeare.

The focus of the entire entertainment, as Jean Wilson notes, "was Arthur, and Arthur-come-again as Elizabeth" (119). The Lady recognizes in Arthur's descendant salvific virtues which none since that great king has possessed, assuring the queen, "as my love to Arthure dyd appeere, / so shalt to you in earnest as in sport" (Gascoigne 94).

The queen benefited greatly from such propaganda, and Spenser was obliging in his readiness to extend it. Merlin predicts that after Henry's accession will come a time of unification and prosperity, culminating in the golden age of "a royall virgin":

> Thenceforth eternall union shall be made
>   Betweene the nations different afore,
>   And sacred Peace shall louingly perswade
>   The warlike minds, to learne her goodly lore,
>   And ciuile armes to exercise no more:
>   Then shall a royall virgin raine, which shall
>   Stretch her white rod ouer the Belgicke shore
>   (III.iii.49.1-7)

The final lines of the stanza, already cited, allude to Elizabeth's victory over Spain. This passage styles Elizabeth's reign as the apogee of Tudor magnificence, as is the reign of Malory's Arthur of the line of ancient Briton kings. Both figures unite divided kingdoms, conquer an oppressive 'pagan' world power, and achieve and maintain just rule over an empire. In no other account based on Geoffrey's Historia is this the case; for, as we have seen already, in the other tales as soon as Rome is within Arthur's grasp, his proper kingdom begins to disintegrate.

In order to compound Elizabeth's majesty and to reach back to the legendary roots of Tudor glory, Spenser incorporates allusions to Virgil's vision of the line of Aeneas reaching its zenith in Augustus. Whereas Merlin predicts Britomart's progeny, Anchises, from the vantage point of Elysium, reveals to Aeneas the descendants of his union with Lavinia:

> hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius
> Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet [audis,
> saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
> Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos
> proferet imperium (iacet extra sidera tellus,
> extra anni solisque vias . . .)   (6.791-96)

> . . . this is the man, this one,

> Of whom so often you have heard the promise,
> Caesar Augustus, son of the deified,
> Who shall bring once again an Age of Gold
> To Latium, to the land where Saturn reigned
> In early times. He will extend his power
> Beyond the Garamants and Indians,
> Over far territories north and south
> Of the zodiacal stars, the solar way . . .
> (Fitzgerald 187-88)

Here, as in Spenser, is presented a dynastic line from which arises an especially gifted and blessed ruler, long awaited, who will restore the nation to its true greatness. R. G. Austin comments that the "Golden Age of Saturn" which Augustus is to bring in would have symbolized to Virgil's audience "the purity and simplicity of early Italian life, the ways that had made Rome great" (243). Similarly, Elizabeth is pictured as reviving the pristine splendors of ancient Britain--which, like Rome, traced its origins to Troy--and effecting her just rule in other lands.

At the end of his prophecy Anchises addresses, as it were, the future Roman nation:

> tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
> (hae tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem,
> parcere subiectis et debellare superbos
> (6.851-53)
>
> Roman, remember by your strength to rule
> Earth's peoples--for your arts are to be these:
> To pacify, to impose the rule of law,
> To spare the conquered, battle down the proud.
> (Fitzgerald 190)

H. R. Fairclough comments on line 852 that "The poet has in mind the beneficent rule of Augustus, who brought peace to the world, and then to that peaceful world gave the

blessings of law and order" (566). Spenser, as we have
seen, describes the Tudor period as one in which peace
triumphs. Moreover, Elizabeth, who like Augustus in
Anchises' vision epitomizes the nobility of the dynastic
line, acts "parcere subiectis" in a higher sense than
Augustus ever did by delivering the beleaguered Netherlands
from Spain and, in the person of Arthur in Book V, returning
to Belge her conquered lands. In the same stroke she acts
"debellare superbos" by smiting "the great Castle," Philip
II.

Whether Spenser was thinking of the exact words just
cited in describing Elizabeth's reign is impossible to say,
but he was undoubtedly thinking in terms of Augustus.
Spenser is doing more here than reaffirming his Virgilian
design and intentions. He is paralleling British history
with Roman to show that it is equally significant; that the
New Troy is well within reach of rivaling, if not
surpassing, in splendor both earlier Troys; and, most of
all, that Elizabeth is a "Tudor Augustus," who equals in
rank and stature the emperor of the then-known world. In
making this final connection, Spenser is no doubt
encouraging the nascent British expansionism.

We have already seen that in Malory's Roman War Story
Arthur inherits and maintains the emperorship of Rome.
Although Malory excises the material from the chronicles
tracing Briton origins to Troy in order to focus on the
reign of Arthur, the same legendary origins are assumed.[15]

Malory makes it clear that Arthur has legal and moral rights
to the empire, and his power and prestige have already
outstripped decadent Rome's. Early records confirm that the
British kings Bellinus, Brenius, and Constantine have
previously held the empire, leading Arthur to conclude: "We
that ben descended of them haue ryght to clayme the tytle of
th'Empyre" (5.1). King Angwysshe then addresses Arthur: "Ye
oughte of ryght to be aboue al other kynges, for vnto yow is
none lyke no pareylle in Crystendome of knyghtehode ne of
dygnyte" (5.2). The Romans, by contrast, Angwysshe reminds
him, have done nothing when in power but "destressyd oure
elders and putte this land to grete extorcions and taylles."
Finally, when Lucius' messengers return to him they report
that Arthur, far from being the weak and servile vassal the
emperor had anticipated, is a man to be reckoned with. One
of the senators admonishes Lucius:

> I fere me ye haue made a rodde for yourself, for
> he entendeth to be lord of this Empyre, whych sore
> is to be doubted yf he come, for he is al another
> man than ye wene and holdeth the most noble courte
> of the world . . . . And in his persone [he is]
> the moost manly man that lyueth, and is lyke to
> conquere alle the world, for vnto his courage it
> is to lytel. (5.2)

It is clear that the time is ripe for transfer of
empire from Rome to Britain. Arthur is the new Augustus,
who conquers and then establishes peace and justice in the
world. Malory shows us throughout The Morte Darthur what is
from his standpoint the best of all possible earthly
governments—although, being earthly, it is fatally flawed

and therefore ephemeral. Arthur, likewise, is the noblest
of all historical rulers, mortal though he is. This minor
paradox is illustrated perhaps most poignantly when Tristram
reproves Lameroke for having borne Morgan le Faye's horn of
chastity, which has the ability to unmask sexual infidelity,
to Mark's court instead of Arthur's, for which it was
intended. Lameroke replies: "And it were to doo ageyne, soo
wold I doo, for I had leuer stryf and debate felle in Kyng
Marks courte rather than Arthurs courte, for the honour of
both courtes be not ylike" (8.38). While Arthur's court is
as vulnerable as Mark's to the mischievous effects of the
horn of chastity, there is no comparing the two. Mark is a
self-interested tyrant, characteristic of the absolute
monarchs described by Sir John Fortescue; Arthur, as Edward
D. Kennedy puts it, "has many of the best traits of the
medieval ruler: interest in the common good, love of his
men, courage, concern for law, a sense of justice" (211).
In essence, the new British Troy, established by the
superior revelation of Christianity and the superior virtues
of a Christian prince, rightfully eclipses the unregenerate
yet highly esteemed second Troy, Rome. "By the grace of
God," Arthur declares to Lucius' messengers, he will "take
possession in th'Empyre and subdue them that ben rebelle"
(5.2).

Arthur, then, in becoming the new Caesar, as it were,
at the same time becomes greater than Caesar. He is not
simply an avatar, or one figure in a succession, he is the

fulfilment, the bright pinnacle of historical rulership, in Malory's scheme of things. Spenser takes this progression one step further. As we have seen already, he presents Elizabeth as a female Augustus and a realization of the promise of Arthur's return. She often merges with Prince Arthur as we see him in the poem. But she is not confined to Arthur's allegorical persona; in fact, Spenser causes her to surpass Arthur himself to become, in a sense more explicit than that of Malory's Arthur in relation to Caesar, a fulfilment of all that the once and future king represented.

Spenser establishes this order by explicitly identifying Gloriana in the poem with Elizabeth. In the Letter to Raleigh he emphasizes: "In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceiue the most excellent and glorious person of oure soueraine Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land" (737). She is the subject of the poem and its most important character, even though she appears only fleetingly.[16] Moreover, she is the unseen orchestrator of all the virtuous knights' quests, except for Arthur's, of which she is the object. Whereas the book of Briton moniments breaks off abruptly after Uther Pendragon, Arthur's sire, leaving the prince ignorant of his destiny, the greatness of Gloriana is assured by the Antiquitie of Faerie lond, which Guyon reads:

> Fairer and nobler liueth none this howre,
> Ne like in grace, ne like in learned skill;
> Therefore they Glorian call that glorious flowre,

> Long mayst thou <u>Glorian</u> liue, in glory and great
> (II.xi.76.6-9)   [powre.

Gloriana is the Queen of Fairies who appears to Arthur in a dream, ravishing his heart "with delight" (I.ix.14.6). Arthur determines upon awakening "to seeke her out with labour, and long tyne, / And neuer vow to rest, till her I find" (15.7-8). Una, to whom Arthur is explaining his quest, discloses that Gloriana is the one who has assigned to her Redcrosse, her now wayward champion. She assures Arthur, significantly, that of all living men he alone, "through prowes priefe" (17.8), "of that great Queene may well gaine worthy grace" (7). Spenser's device of making Prince Arthur seek Gloriana imputes the legendary greatness surrounding Arthur and the Round Table to Elizabeth and her government. But beyond this, it is plain that Arthur is seeking his fulfilment in Gloriana. The lines cited above point clearly to a matrimonial union of Arthur and Gloriana at some later place in the poem. Hence, the once and future king who, according to Malory and the chroniclers, established his just rule in all the civilized world seeks Elizabeth as the perfection of all he sought to achieve in his own time. Arthur expresses this relationship when, referring to Gloriana as "that Goddesse," he explains to Guyon: "My whole desire hath beene, and yet is now, / To serue that Queene with all my powre and might" (II.ix.7. 3-4,7).

Another link between the historical Elizabeth, Gloriana

in the poem, and the legendary Arthur as presented in Malory, is the orders of chivalry over which each presides. In The Faerie Queene it is Gloriana who holds the power to confer the Order of Maidenhead, which is, Guyon remarks, "the most renownd, / That may this day in all the world be found" (II.ii.42.4-5). The Order of the Garter, too, was the most prestigious chivalric order of its time, with a strictly limited and elite international membership. The Dictionary of the Middle Ages specifies that it was inspired by the Order of the Knights of Cyprus and became among the first of a number of secular orders founded by European monarchs. Edward III, who established it in 1348, consciously modeled the Order of the Garter "after the legendary Knights of the Round Table, who were thought to have been the first secular order, just as the equally legendary Knights of the Holy Grail were thought to have been the first religious order" (Nickel 306-07).

The continued strong association of the Order of the Garter with the primitive Round Table is evidenced by the Winchester Round Table, which, unlike those mentioned in any earlier sources,[17] seats twenty-four knights--the precise number in the Order of the Garter--and prominently displays the Tudor Rose.[18] Michael Leslie stresses that the seating capacity of the Winchester Round Table, in particular, "is evidence of the self-conscious association of King Arthur and his band of knights with the revived Order of the Garter" (188). It was plainly meant to be seen as a

resurrected Order of the Round Table, just as the Tudor dynasty was to be seen as a restored line of Arthur, if not _Arthurus redivivus_. Leslie conjectures that "had Henry VII's eldest son [christened Arthur] lived to accede to the throne as King Arthur, this Tudor development of the Order as a revived Round Table would no doubt have gone even further" (188).

Thus we see that two of the orders of which we have been speaking, those of the Garter and of the Round Table, were already linked prior to the poem. These Spenser associates with a third in the allegorical world of _The Faerie Queene_. Millican suggests a connection between Spenser's projected twenty-four book structure and the number of knights in the Order of the Garter. He especially makes note of the inscription encompassing the table: "'This is the Round Table of Kynge Arthur with XXIIII. of his namyd Knyghtes'" (116). The Winchester Round Table itself, with the Tudor Rose at its center, might even provide a conceptual model of the poem as Spenser envisioned it: a twenty-four book Arthurian romance-epic featuring twenty-four titular knights errant,[19] glorifying the house of Tudor, whose present monarch fulfills the virtues typified in Arthur. Leslie, citing Millican's numerary analogy between the table and the poem, affirms that "given the chivalric nature of the poem and the many incidental references to the Garter," the connection "would have been clear to his [Spenser's] original readers" (189). Leslie

adds:

> The obviousness of the allusion is confirmed by
> the stress in the <u>Letter to Raleigh</u> on the
> 'Annuall feast' presided over by a Virgin Queen
> and stated to be the occasion at which each quest
> commences; a direct allusion to one of the central
> events in the ceremonial of Elizabeth's court, the
> Garter feasts held each year in celebration of
> (though rarely on) St George's day. (189)

There can be little serious doubt, therefore, about the
centrality of the Orders of the Garter and of the Round
Table to the poem by association with the Order of
Maidenhead. What this connection does is further emphasize
the correspondence and continuity between Arthur's reign and
Elizabeth's. While this conceptual relationship was
reinforced by such aspects of the material culture as the
Winchester Round Table and by such documents as chronicles
and genealogies, none of these features made its
significance more explicit than did <u>The Morte Darthur</u>.
Here, once again, Spenser depended heavily on Malory's
presentation of Arthur and his fellowship of knights. For,
as has already been discussed, Malory brings the Arthurian
legend to a higher degree of codification as a model of
exemplary earthly kingship than had any previous romance
writer or chronicler. He presents Arthur as founder and
maintainer of a code of chivalry and a fellowship of the
world's best knights, as conqueror of oppressive pagan
powers, as a world emperor who achieves enduring and stable
rule, and as an exemplar of good governance according to
fifteenth-century models. These were all with little doubt

attributes with which Elizabeth wanted to be associated, and the vehemence with which the Tudor line insisted on its Arthurian origins indicates that both the English and the Welsh were aware of their political significance. As Anthea Hume has stated,

> . . . perhaps the most fundamental compliment paid to her [Elizabeth] by Spenser was that of making Arthur, the most illustrious of her alleged ancestors, the supreme hero of a poem which would ultimately have had twelve other protagonists. (145)

While the chronicles of British history, which Spenser painstakingly synthesizes in his chronicle passages of the poem,[20] vouch for Arthur's greatness in the nation's history, The Morte Darthur is the English work that sets in high contrast the meaning of that greatness and presents it as a model. Spenser takes the next logical step in purposefully projecting features of that model onto a living ruler. Elizabeth is portrayed as having fulfilled the political virtues exemplified in Malory's Arthur and thus shown to be, in verity, Arthurus redivivus.

Edwin Greenlaw asserts that "Spenser's great conception" in The Faerie Queene, "that goes to the root of his real thought, is bound up with the widespread interest in the return motif. England is saved by the interposition of Arthur the Briton" (98). While many of the Welsh looked for a literal reappearance of Arthur, for the most part, according to Greenlaw, "the prophecy was interpreted mystically; in the Tudors, Arthur reigned again" (57). With

regards to Elizabeth, however, the interpretation would have
been more than just mystical. She, as Spenser strove to
affirm, fulfilled in real political achievements the return
of Arthur. Greenlaw visualizes the reign of Elizabeth as it
must have appeared to an English observer on the eve of the
Armada:

> To such an observer, it would seem that England's
> prosperity was due to the great gifts of the Queen
> for peace in religion and international relations,
> and the consequent return of the Golden Age.
> Stirred by the mighty sequence of events, those to
> whom the tradition of the Roses had come down, or
> the Marian terror, must have felt that they had
> witnessed the birth of a new nation. Yet not all
> new, surely, but a recreation. For now the
> ancient Britons, descended from mighty Troy, had
> returned to their own. Rome was once more
> conquered, by a new Arthur, whose return was to be
> mystically expressed, a continued allegory or dark
> conceit. (57)

How much more would such a vision have been enhanced by the
demolition of the Armada?

The ancient prophecies of Arthur's return predicted
that he would one day intervene to redeem the British
nation. Layamon records Merlin's alleged prediction "þat an
Arður sculde ȝete cum Anglen to fulste" (4090).[21] John Rhŷs
has in this century collected a number of local Welsh
traditions of Arthur and his men sleeping in caves or hollow
hills, until the day of a great battle, on which they will
awaken to rout the Saxons (456-84). In drawing upon this
tradition, Spenser recasts Arthur as the savior of the
England which he knows, rather than of the Britons alone.
We have already noted that the relative paucity of Prince

Arthur's appearances is characteristic of the Arthurian

romance cycles. However, his peculiar interventionist role

in the poem goes even further to explain the fleeting nature

of his appearances. Like Gloriana herself, he is a central

character, always present and influential in the poem but

seldom seen. When he does appear, it is at some impasse

requiring providential deliverance. In the case of

Redcrosse, this impasse represents a critical juncture in

the history of the nation; for as St. George, Redcrosse

represents England, which has been enthralled by the

guileful designs of Mary Tudor and Philip II. Having

identified Redcrosse with England, Emile Legouis offers this

historical interpretion:

> Le rapprochement de Croix-Rouge et d'Una, c'est
> alors le symbole de la Reforme sous Henri VIII et
> Edouard VI. Leur separation, c'est la rechute de
> l'Angleterre dans le papisme sous Marie Tudor qui
> est figurée par Duessa. Orgoglio n'est pas
> l'orgueil, mais un orgueilleux, le grand
> orgueilleux, Philippe II qui, par son mariage avec
> Marie Tudor, tient un temps l'Angleterre en son
> pouvoir. C'est Marie Tudor qui livre Croix-Rouge
> et se livre elle même à ce brutal. Et les
> oubliettes du château d'Orgoglio où gît le pauvre
> chevalier, sont une évocation des prisons et des
> tortures de l'Inquisition importées en Angleterre
> sous Marie la Sanglante. (235)

Arthur's intervention delivers Redcrosse from these

abject circumstances. Although Arthur has been identified

in this episode with the Earl of Leicester (Winstanley x), I

would argue that he more strongly suggests Elizabeth in her

role as redemptress of the English nation, conqueror of

Spain, and restorer of Arthur's royal line. She, as the messianic Arthur, appears to triumph in her nation's hour of great need. Indeed, she must have seemed to be fulfilling this role to many at Tilbury on the advent of the Armada. Elizabeth appears to have been striving to reinforce the point in telling her forces there: "I have the Body but of a weak and feeble Woman, but I have the Heart and Stomach of a King, and of a King of England too" (E. C. Wilson 89). Additionally, Arthur's appearance in Spenser's Book I, like his other appearances that are most suggestive of Elizabeth, has a close parallel in Malory's Roman War Story--the battle with the Giant of Mont-Saint-Michel.[22]

Although Spenser's figuration of Elizabeth as a messianic ruler in his portrayal of Arthur allowed him to intensify an already potent mythology surrounding her, he was not inspired by Malory in this particular. For Malory expressed a certain skepticism regarding the survival and return of Arthur:

> Yet somme men say in many partyes of Englond that
> Kyng Arthur is not deed, but had by the wylle of
> oure Lord Ihesu into another place. And men say
> that he shal come ageyn and he shal wynne the Holy
> Crosse. I wyl not say that it shal be so, but
> rather I wyl say here in thys world he chaunged
> his lyf. (21.7)

The single great factor which allowed Spenser to use Malory and his other Arthurian sources so eclectically and flexibly, as we see in this case, was his radically altered

historical approach to his material in relation to his medieval Arthurian predecessors. This shift and its implications will be the subject of my next two chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

History and Fiction in Malory and Spenser (I)

A. An Introductory Comparison of the Two Authors'

Historical Approaches

The cumulative example of what we have so far seen
demonstrates that what Spenser received from Malory in the
way of particular borrowings and themes, he also
transformed. Howard Maynadier accounts for this difference
between the two authors by observing that "Spenser's spirit
in handling the [Arthurian] legends . . . . is as far
removed from Malory's as if Spenser were one of ourselves;
he is on our side of the gulf which separates us from the
Middle Ages" (272). The essence of this contrast between
the two writers is their difference in attitude toward the
historicity of their Arthurian sources. As Maynadier
suggests, before Spenser's time "the usual attitude of the
reading public was to regard the old stories as so largely
historical that authors dared not change the main incidents
of them" (273). Spenser's aim, on the other hand, "was to
make up a brand-new story, for which he was willing to draw
material from all possible sources" (273).

Spenser's more modern "spirit" in rehandling the
Arthurian legends consists largely in the more critical
Renaissance distinction between history and fiction. The

difference can be seen clearly in comparing the openings of
the two works. Malory begins at the beginning and
immediately immerses us in the objective "facts":

> Hit befel in the dayes of Uther Pendragon, when he
> was kynge of all Englond and so regned, that there
> was a myghty duke in Cornewaill that helde warre
> ageynst hym long tyme, and the duke was called the
> duke of Tyntagil. (1.1)

Spenser, on the other hand, announces: "Fierce warres and
faithfull loues shall moralize my song," which is to be of
"Knights and Ladies gentle deeds" (I.Proem.1). He then
plunges in medias res into the unlocalized, ahistorical,
fanciful vision of "A Gentle Knight . . . pricking on the
plain" (i.1.1).

William Henry Schofield comments that "Malory begins
his book as if he were writing about a monarch of the House
of Lancaster, whose right to the throne was not quite clear"
(90). Although he does alter certain particulars in his
tales, he generally reconstructs the main characters and
events as he finds them in his sources. Malory is the first
English writer to achieve a comprehensive synthesis of
native English accounts based on Geoffrey of Monmouth with
the French Arthurian romances. His main concern in
"reducing" material from "certeyn bookes of Frensshe . . .
into Englysshe" (Caxton 2) appears to have been rendering a
fuller account of the history of the Round Table fellowship.
This mingling of various traditions resulted in an account
that is markedly different from those of the chronicles, and

at times Malory even changes the roles of his characters to make them fit his story. He was, nonetheless, as I shall demonstrate in the sections that follow, writing as an historian according to the medieval definition.

B. Malory's Treatment of the Roman War Story

E. V. Gordon and Eugène Vinaver affirmed three years after the fact that the 1934 discovery of the Winchester MS. "removes all uncertainty" that the Alliterative _Morte Arthure_ (c. 1400) comprised "Malory's immediate source" for his Roman War Story (81). Malory's dependence on this Middle English source places his version directly in the lineage of Arthurian accounts in the English chronicle tradition. Geoffrey's _Historia_ (1136) became the authoritative source for numerous other chronicles, both British and continental, which followed. The two receiving the widest insular circulation were the Prose _Brut_ (c. 1400) and Higden's _Polychronicon_ (1363/4), "the two most popular works (excluding the Bible) of the late Middle Ages in England" (Matheson "King Arthur" 253).[1] The Alliterative _Morte Arthure_ depends primarily upon an influential derivation of Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace's Anglo-Norman _Roman de Brut_ (1155).[2] Therefore, Malory's alliterative source is a direct descendant of the Galfridian chronicles.

Laura Keeler, in her meticulous study of fifty-six Latin chronicles that draw upon Geoffrey's _Historia_, gives

us a good idea of how highly that work was regarded as an
authoritative historical document:

> . . . investigation proves that Geoffrey's book
> was regarded unquestioningly as authentic history
> by chronicler after chronicler, and that not a few
> incorporated in their histories large sections of
> it as sober facts: its long line of kings
> descended from Brutus, the prophecies of Merlin,
> the "Briton hope" that supremacy in the island
> would be restored to the Welsh, the origins of the
> right of Britain to domination over neighboring
> countries, and more. (1)

According to Keeler, the main reason that Geoffrey's account
was so esteemed, apart from the fact that its author took
great pains to effect veracity, was that

> it supplied a glorious prelude for the already
> known history of Britain, and it filled a gap for
> which there were scant documents extant, namely,
> the period between the departure of the Roman
> legions in 410 and the coming of St. Augustine in
> 597. (1)

The placement of Malory's Roman War Story in this
tradition strongly suggests that Malory viewed himself as
writing history. But we have already noted in the previous
chapter that Malory makes some significant modifications
upon his major source. The question, then, is whether in
doing so he regards the account as unhistorical and thus
deliberately fictionalizes his retelling, or whether he is,
despite his alterations, still operating within recognized
limits of medieval historiography.

We have already noted that Malory's version of the tale
culminates in a vision of Arthurian dignity and splendor,

with the king enthroned as emperor over the entire civilized
world. The alliterative poem, by contrast, concludes with
the tragic end of a great ruler and an empire within grasp
but never apprehended. Malory does, however, assert an
authority in recounting that Arthur "was crouned Emperour by
the Popes hand": "as the romaunce telleth" (5.12). William
Matthews was the first to suggest that Malory took his
conclusion from Hardyng's Chronicle (172), and Edward D.
Kennedy and R. H. Wilson have since shown that he inserted
material from Hardyng at a number of junctures throughout
The Morte Darthur (Kennedy 42-44). But Matthews'
speculation, however well founded, does not solve the real
problem because, as we have observed in the previous
chapter, Malory departs from all known chronicle sources in
having Arthur return to a stable and prosperous England over
which he is to rule for years to come. As Matthews
perceives, "If Malory, at the time he was adapting the
alliterative poem, intended to follow the course of the
French cycle to its end, it would have been logically
impossible for him to retain the tragic close of the poem"
(173). Matthews adds that "A precedent for omitting this
tragic ending was available to him in the French version of
Arthur's Roman campaign" (173), although that version does
not portray Arthur's coronation at Rome.[3]

The picture that begins to emerge is of Malory, as a
man more widely read in the Arthurian tradition than
English authors before him, choosing among his accounts.

Given his extensive knowledge of the French cycles, he decides that in order to form a coherent scheme that will accommodate all his material, he must follow the sources in which the Roman War ends in triumph and Arthur's kingdom remains intact for some time.

Although this departure by Malory from the Alliterative Morte Arthure is to a degree supported by other sources, he makes other departures and changes in which this is not discernably the case. One example is in Arthur's appointment of regents before departing on his Roman campaign. In the poem Arthur chooses Mordred, which, of course, naturally leads toward the tragic conclusion (ll. 709-11). Malory, however, reports that Arthur appointed two regents, "sir Bauden of Bretayne" and "sir Cadore . . . that was at that tyme called sir Constantyne" (195;5.3).[4]

Vinaver, who notes that Malory "deliberately alters his source" in this instance (Commentary 1377), sees in this change and others an attempt at political allegory, and suggests that the author "replaces Mordred's sinister figure by two characters, each reminiscent of a prominent contemporary" (1367). These two Vinaver identifies as Bishop Beaufort, whom Henry V appointed Chancellor, and the Duke of Bedford, whom he appointed regent, before leaving on his French campaign (1367). Whether this hypothesis is correct or not, Arthur's selection of others than Mordred is an alteration that accommodates Malory's intended direction

for the story--to establish Arthur as head of a stable and harmonious empire; but it is also one in which he has taken marked liberties.

Mary E. Dichmann has observed a number of other alterations between source and text, which she demonstrates are generally geared toward the promotion of Lancelot as Malory's hero. Gawain is second in command to Arthur in the Alliterative Morte, while Lancelot "is mentioned only six times" (74-75). Malory enhances Lancelot's role as a chivalric hero by attributing to him the words and deeds of other knights and by expanding the already existing passages that refer to him. In the poem, for instance, Cador is placed in charge of a company of knights escorting Roman prisoners to Paris (1601-10). In The Morte Darthur, however, Lancelot is made first in charge with Cador under him. The king calls Lancelot "in heryng of all peple" and requests, "'I pray the, sir, as thow lovys me, take hede to these other knyghtes and boldly lede these presoners unto Paryse towne'" (212;5.6). In the poem Cador "commaundes his peeres" (1637) to scout the area for enemies in hiding, "that no scathel in the skrogges scorn us hereafter" (1642). In Malory, Lancelot gives this order, and Cador merely echoes his approval: "'I assente me'" (212-13;5.7). When the enemy is discovered and engaged, the alliterative poem reports that the king of Syria surrenders to Cador, while Lancelot is not so much as named. In The Morte Darthur, on the other hand, Lancelot is credited with the king of

Syria's capture, whereas Cador is said to have overcome "the senatur of Sautre" (216;5.7)--a victory attributed to Sagramore in the poem (1871).

Malory has made a number of similar changes in his text to enhance Lancelot's role. These alterations Dichmann ascribes to authorial foresight, asserting that the writer's care in developing his hero as a promising young knight "seems to suggest strongly that while writing the story of the Roman wars Malory was thinking of the position Lancelot would have in the coming portions of Le Morte Darthur" (79). In keeping with this promotion of Lancelot in his story, Malory demotes Gawain. While Gawain is the first British knight in the Alliterative Morte to vanquish a Roman warrior (1368-73), in The Morte Darthur this distinction is given to Bors (208;5.6). To this observation, Dichmann adds, "In Malory's account of the last battle with Lucius (222-23) Gawain, who leads an attack alone in the Morte Arthure (2218 ff.), is accompanied by Lancelot, Lovel, and various other heroes who equal him in might" (87). In this manner, Malory relegates to a place of less prominence the knight who is Arthur's second in the poem and opens the way for Lancelot to supplant him.

It would be easy to go on multiplying examples of these kinds of alterations, but to do so would be superfluous.[5] R. M. Lumiansky effectively summarizes the import of Malory's changes when he says of the author, "He controlled

the source; it did not control him" (<u>Malory's Originality</u>
6).

C. Malory as Historiographer

The modifications surveyed suggest that Malory is more
concerned about the story's significance than about its
historical accuracy. Modern readers would readily label as
fiction any account that changes a tragic ending into a
triumphant one and radically alters the roles, dispositions,
and fates of its characters. And although we have observed
slight precedent in other sources for Malory's
transformation of the tragic closure, we have also seen that
others of his changes were pure invention.

Thus, Malory is going beyond simply trying to reconcile
data from various sources and attempting to project certain
attitudes and ideals via his retelling. Suzanne Fleischman,
speaking of the French tradition, comments that in Arthurian
romance

> ritual jogging of the collective memory [as in
> epic (or chronicle?)] was replaced by the
> unfolding of new and familiar plots, whose truth
> was not to be sought in the immediate and
> objective <u>sensus historicus</u> of an immanent past,
> but in a second meaning, a <u>sensus moralis</u>, which
> had to be interpreted. Plots were invented, whose
> social function was to reinforce, typically
> through <u>exemplification</u>, not so much a collective
> identity as value structures and codes of conduct.
> (283; brackets not mine)

This generalization probably became true of the

Arthurian matter in England much later than in France,
primarily because as a national hero Arthur imposed himself
more powerfully on the English historical consciousness, as
we see in the chronicle tradition. The tendency cited by
Fleischman, however, is visibly at work in Malory as he
specially tailors an interpretation of Arthurian ideals for
his own day. We have already discussed, in the chapters on
chivalry and on Arthur, how Malory presents both as
exemplary models to meet contemporary social and political
needs. If he is consciously fictionalizing, though, Malory
is doing all that he can to create the illusion that he is
writing history. He frequently reminds us of his
authorities with phrases like "as the book of Frensshe
reherceth" (11.1). He is also careful to set his accounts
in identifiable times and places, although with nothing
resembling the precision of a modern historian. As we have
already seen, the entire history begins in the England of
Uther Pendragon, and the occasion of the <u>Tale of Gareth</u> is
the feast of Pentecost, which was being held at Kynke
Kenadonne near Wales. As Schofield points out, Malory
commonly identifies the places in his tales with
contemporary localities: Camelot is Westminster, Astolat is
Guildford, Joyous Guard is either Alnwick or Bamborough, and
Logres is England (92-93).

The seeming contradiction between Malory's placement
within an historical tradition and his historical manner of
writing, on the one hand, and his free handling of the

details, on the other, is resolved by the fact that, as Ruth
Morse explains, medieval authors were given considerably
more latitude in historical writing than are modern
historians. She points out that the Middle Ages had
inherited from classical antiquity certain moral
justifications for revising history:

> Plato wanted certain versions of the past (e.g.
> that no citizen ever quarreled with another
> citizen) to be presented to his citizens as a true
> report in order to influence their behaviour
> . . . . The implication of this kind of use of the
> "past" is that the report may be manipulated on
> moral grounds, a sort of morally inspired forgery.
> (90)

Exactly where the boundary lay between what was
acceptable and what was not in the way of invention is hard
for us to know. But, as Morse explains,

> history as substance and history as style appeared
> as one word, without clarification, in the manuals
> which the Middle Ages inherited from antiquity.
> We are left with the assumption that writers who
> have something important to say (i.e. some moral
> end) will use the past properly. (91)

It appears that the sort of justification for revising
history which Morse cites in the two quoted passages would
have applied to Malory, although Malory's license would have
been more ideological than moral. Morse adds that "The
difficulty of distinguishing the convincing from the true is
acknowledged but unresolved" by contemporary manuals of
rhetoric. The impossibility of establishing facts about the
past with any certainty made invention more acceptable,

practically inevitable, and difficult to discriminate.
Morse writes: "In a culture where the 'true' facts are
known, the inspired fiction can be seen for what it is.
When the surrounding cultural facts have been lost, the
fiction may take the place of the truth" (91).

The comments made by Caxton in his Prologue suggest
that he viewed The Morte Darthur's historicity along these
lines discussed by Morse. Caxton alludes to skepticism
regarding Arthur's historicity in his day--although he gives
no hints as to its dubious magnitude--and summarizes the
evidence whereby he became convinced that Arthur actually
lived (1-2). His comments suggest that although he stands
without qualification behind the historicity of Arthur, he
is less certain about some particulars in Malory's story
and therefore leaves the matter to the reader's
discrimination: "For to gyve faythe and byleve that al is
trewe that is conteyned herin, ye be at your lyberte" (3).
But whether Malory's readers consider all of his story
literally true or not, Caxton leaves them with no doubt as
to its exemplary value: "But al is wryton for our doctryne,
and for to beware that we falle not to vyce ne synne, but
t'exersyse and folowe vertu" (3). In the medieval sense of
the word, then, as Morse discusses its meaning, "Caxton
thought of Malory's work as historical" (Morse 98).

A partial explanation for Malory's more liberal
handling of the Arthurian material than the mainstream of
English tradition preceding him may be found in the

distinction between history and chronicle, as elucidated by Fleischman. Employing the theory of Hayden White, she explains that histories "gain part of their explanatory effect by their success in 'making stories out of mere chronicles' through the operation of 'emplotment'" (293). Chronicles, Fleischman states, "are characteristically nonexplanatory"--that is, "events are simply laid out seriatim, without explicit relationships, or else conjoined by the minimal connectives 'and' and 'then'" (292). In romance, on the other hand (which comes close to White's intriguingly medieval definition of history), "causality and 'focus' (the foregrounding and backgrounding of events) are expressed through explicit narrative subordination" (292).

In this sense Malory is much closer to the modern historian than is the chronicler. He gets beyond mere scissors-and-paste piecing together of "a heap of broken images," and communicates a tangible moral and ideological message through narrative subordination of events. Edward Hallett Carr, discussing how modern historians, often unconsciously, subordinate their data to their ideologies, advises his readers, "Study the historian before you begin to study the facts" (502). After that, he prescribes,

> When you read a work of history, always listen out for the buzzing. If you can detect none, either you are tone deaf or your historian is a dull dog. The facts are really not at all like fish on the fishmonger's slab. They are like fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean; and what the historian catches will depend partly on chance, but mainly on what part of the ocean he chooses to fish in and what tackle he chooses to

> use--these two factors being, of course,
> determined by the kind of fish he wants to catch.
> By and large, the historian will get the kind of
> facts he wants. (502)

The main distinction here appears to be that while the
medieval author hadn't access to as wide a range of recorded
data, he was, unlike the modern historian, accorded the
privilege of fabricating a certain amount of his material.
With this in mind, though, it seems clear that Malory was
operating well within established historiographical bounds
for his time in rehandling his alliterative source as he
did. Although his approach may have been somewhat bold for
his own setting in the English tradition, the matter of
Britain had already received more liberal treatment in
France, whence came much of his inspiration. When he was
able, he followed his source as closely as possible; but his
overriding concern was to bend reality into a meaningful and
intelligible shape for his age.

At the same time, even given his much greater freedom
than a modern historian, it is Malory's historical approach
to his subject matter that has molded and, in a sense,
limited his work. This becomes all the more clear when we
compare Malory's rendition of the Arthurian legend with
Spenser's. D. S. Brewer comments that Malory does not lack
art, but "he lacks sophisticated, ironic, i.e. modern, art"
("Malory" 95). "Malory's writing," he adds, ". . . is a
clear evocation of what it has become common amongst

anthropologists to call 'the savage mind'" (95). Brewer,

for his purposes, chooses to refer to this mindset as seen

in Malory as "'the archaic mind'" (95).

D. Spenser as Poet Historical

Spenser is on the other side of the gulf that separates

the Middle Ages from the Renaissance, history from fiction,

and the archaic mind from the modern mind. In his Letter to

Raleigh he announces that his method in The Faerie Queene is

not that of the "historiographer," but of the "poet

historical" (738). The sixteenth century was a time when

the demarcation between history and fiction was solidifying.

Historians were being forced to abandon their long-held

license to invent and conjecture freely in order to fill in

gaps and fit their histories to moral and ideological ends.

William Nelson writes:

> As historians were beginning to withdraw from such
> freedoms, Renaissance storytellers and their
> apologists seized upon them as their proper realm.
> That which was neither true nor demonstrably a
> lie, the long ago and . . . the far away about
> which historians and geographers had no reliable
> information, came to be accepted as the
> appropriate domain for fictional invention. (43)

Sidney defended fiction on the grounds that although

the poet "recount things not true, yet because he telleth

them not for true, he lieth not" (168). He argued that "a

feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true

example," and that, moreover, fiction has the advantage

because "the feigned example may be tuned to the highest key
of passion" (162). It is, in effect, a fictionalization of
Malory's matter-of-fact history, "tuned to the highest key
of passion," that Spenser presents. We have already
compared the openings of the two works, Malory's
chronological, localized, identifiable; Spenser's
achronological, unlocalized, fanciful. By renouncing
objective history and embracing areas freshly abandoned by
the late crop of historians, Spenser creates a brave new
world in which the imagination sets the limits. He avoids
for the most part using the names of Malory's characters so
that he can fit his own to the specific virtues he wants
them to exemplify. The most prominent character from
medieval chronicle and romance whom he does develop is
Arthur; and Spenser's Arthur is not the mature king of those
accounts, but young Prince Arthur. The portrayal of Arthur
at this obscure stage gave Spenser more latitude to
fabricate, much as the childhood of Jesus gave apocryphal
writers room for invention. The Arthur whom we meet in
Spenser, "the image of a braue knight, perfected in the
twelue priuate morall vertues" (Letter 737), is free from
the shortcomings of the mature King Arthur of Malory's work,
who commits incest, slaughters infants, becomes a cuckold,
and attempts to burn his queen. In like manner, Spenser's
Tristram is "Chyld Tristram"[6] (VI.ii.36.2), not much like
the one we meet in Malory; and Spenser's Merlin, oddly, is
said to be the offspring "of a guilefull Spright" and "a

faire Ladie Nonne . . . hight / Matilda, daughter to Pudibus" (III.iii.13). Upton comments, "This Matilda and Pudibus are our poets [sic] invention, as far as I can find: no such names being mentioned in Morte Arthur, or in Jeffry of Monmouth" (Var. III.226).

Spenser also diverges from Malory's custom of locating his events in time and place. His characters wander through unlocalized forests and pastoral settings, and visit highly symbolic places of testing and perfecting such as the Houses of Pride and of Holiness. In the Mutabilitie Cantos Arlo-hill (Galtymore) and Ireland are mentioned, but both are mythicized. Arlo-hill is spoken of as a former place of assembly for the gods (vii.3) and Ireland as a happy island where the immortals "us'd (for pleasure and for rest) / Oft to resort" (vi.38.4-5). In the Proem for Book II Spenser playfully defends the existence of his Faery Land and the veracity of the history that follows by arguing that although "none, that breatheth liuing aire, does know" its location (1.6-7), neither had anyone "ever heard of th'Indian Peru" until recently (2.6). Likewise, he carefully gives us the precise location of Merlin's cave and urges, "If thou euer happen that same way / To trauell, goe to see that dreadfull place," at the same time cautioning, "But dare thou not . . . / To enter into that same balefull Bowre, / For feare the cruell Feends should thee unwares deuowre" (III.iii.8).

Malory on rare occasions describes his settings in a

way that lends them an air of unreality. The most prominent examples are to be found in the <u>Tale of the Sankgreal</u> (e.g. 14.8-9). At almost any point that we enter <u>The Faerie Queene</u>, however, we are immersed in a dreamlike world of fantasy. Even Book V, with its dismally realistic (although allegorized) pictures of earthly justice, contains the phantasmagoric episode of the Temple of Isis (vii.1-21), among the strangest and most otherworldly in the entire poem. In medieval writing, a key mechanism for accommodating allegorical fiction within the framework of quasi-historical narrative was the dream-vision. A. C. Spearing writes:

> Many of the themes, genres and conventions of medieval literature--romance narrative, allegory, debate among symbolically embodied principles, religious revelation, and so on--are non-realistic. They belong to the world of the mind, could not be part of anyone's objective experience, and might therefore appropriately be framed in dreams. (2)

It is striking just how many medieval works employ the dream-vision in order to make unrealistic allegorized settings and events seem plausible--the <u>Roman de la Rose</u>, <u>Piers Plowman</u>, <u>Pearl</u>, and Chaucer's <u>Book of the Duchess</u>, <u>House of Fame</u>, and <u>Parliament of Fowls</u>, to name a few.[7] As I shall discuss more fully in the next chapter, Malory also places his highly allegorical dragons in dream-vision contexts.

Spenser, however, as poet historical, is more apt to circumvent the dream-vision convention and present his

allegory as waking reality. Although he does occasionally
apply dreams, as in part of the Temple of Isis episode, he
makes remarkably little use of them, presenting even such
bizarre, unearthly scenes as the Pageant of the Seven Deadly
Sins (I.iv) and the Mask of Cupid (III.xii) as conscious
reality. Thus, while the ambience of Spenser's poem is
predominately one of dream, because the poet is unabashedly
fictionalizing, he does not feel the compulsion that his
medieval predecessors did to frame its settings and events
in dream.

E. The Influence of Historiography on Both Authors' Treatments of Arthur

In the final part of this chapter, we shall examine the
historiographical contexts for Malory's and Spenser's
treatments of Arthur, in order to explore how contrasting
historiographical milieux manifested themselves in
contrasting renderings of a common theme by the two authors.
As noted at the outset of this chapter, Arthur was
consistently portrayed as an historical figure by the
chroniclers, who exercised a degree of care in accurately
transmitting their material concerning him. Hugh MacDougall
points out that although there were always skeptics, literal
belief in the Arthur of romance and chronicle survived into
the eighteenth century in England. He cites Nathaniel
Crouch's History of the Nine Worthies of the World, which

"was well received and ran into three further editions by 1700":

> As it may be judged folly to affirm there never
> was any Alexander, Julius Caesar, Godfrey of
> Bullen, or Charlemagne, so may we be thought
> guilty of incredulity and ingratitude to deny or
> doubt the honourable Acts of our Victorious
> Arthur. (25)

Caxton presents evidence for what amounts to historical belief in a legendary Arthur in his _Prologue_ to Malory's work. He first cites Arthur's tomb at Glastonbury and his mention in Geoffrey of Monmouth, the _Polychronicon_, and Boccaccio. He then points to bits of material evidence such as a seal inscribed "Patricius Arthurus Britannie Gallie Germanie Dacie Imperator," kept at Westminster Abbey, and the Round Table at Winchester. He notes, as Crouch later does, that Arthur has been placed among the Nine Worthies and that many books are written of him in other languages. Finally, he refers to the ruins at Carleon, which he identifies as Camelot. From this evidence Caxton concludes, "I coude not wel denye but that there was suche a noble kynge named Arthur, and reputed one of the IX worthy, and fyrst and chyef of the Cristen men" (2).

Higden's _Polychronicon_, cited by Caxton, recapitulates William of Malmesbury's arguments against the Arthur presented in Welsh tradition and Galfridian chronicle. William preeminently questions the Roman war story:

> meny men wondreþ how it myȝte be sooþ þat is
> i-told of hym. For ȝif Arthor hadde i-wonne

> þritty kyngdoms, as Gaufridus telleþ, 3if he hadde
> i-made þe kyng of Fraunce sugette, 3if he hadde
> i-slawe Lucius in Italy . . . why lefte alle þe
> writers of stories of Romayns, Frenschemen, and
> Saxons, and speke no3t of so greet [dedes and so
> greet] a victor . . . (Trevisa 335)

Following the summary of William's doubts, Trevisa,

Higden's translator, inserts his own apology into the text:

"Here William telleþ a magel tale wiþ oute euidence,"

against which, Trevisa asserts, "schulde non clerke moove

þat can knowe an argument" (337). He points out, among

other things, that John mentions many events not found in

the synoptic gospels and that William could not really know

because he did not have access to Geoffrey's "Brittische

book"! Churchill Babington's notes to the Polychronicon

indicate that this entire passage was missing from Caxton's

printed edition of Trevisa's rendering (337). Lister

Matheson, observing the correlation between this gap and

Caxton's direct citation of the Polychronicon in his

Prologue, believes that Caxton may have been shown, perhaps

by Earl Rivers, a manuscript of Trevisa containing the

insertion, after he had already published the one without

it. In order to correct this deficiency, Matheson

speculates, Caxton worked parts of the apology, with a few

additions of his own, into the preface of his current

undertaking, The Morte Darthur ("King Arthur" 264).

Caxton cites in his Prologue the very chapter where

Trevisa's insertion occurs--"the v book the syxte chappytre"

(2). Also, where Trevisa argues that "meny noble nacions

spekeþ of Arthur and of his noble dedes," Caxton maintains
that Arthur "is more spoken of beyonde the see, moo bookes
made of his noble actes, than there be in Englond" (2).
Finally, Caxton's comment--"dyuers men holde oppynyon that
there was no such Arthur, and that alle suche bookes as been
maad of hym ben but fayned and fables, bycause that somme
cronycles make of hym no mencyon ne remembre hym noothynge
ne of his knyghtes" (1)--is very reminiscent of William's
arguments recapitulated in the Polychronicon directly
preceding Trevisa's interpolation. In asserting that
"dyuers men" disbelieve in Arthur, Caxton appears to be
setting up a straw man; for not even William goes this
far--he simply maintains that "many idel tales" have been
told about Arthur, adding "he þat sooþ stories telleþ, and
nou3t lyes, is worþy to be preysed" (331). It appears that
Caxton was attempting both to promote his edition of the
Polychronicon and to cultivate a purposeful, patriotically
dedicated readership for The Morte Darthur.

That Malory himself believed in an historical Arthur is
demonstrated by his sober discussion of the Briton hope of
Arthur's return and his determination, partly based on the
evidence of the tomb at Glastonbury, that "in thys world he
chaunged his lyf" (21.7). For medieval historians the
question of which accounts surrounding Arthur were true was
somewhat analogous to the question of canonicity for the
early Church Fathers. There was no doubt about the
historicity of Jesus and his disciples or about certain

events in his life, but many of the accounts in circulation
had to be called into question. In this sense, Caxton
leaves open the canonicity of Malory's writings--"to gyve
fayth and byleue that al is trewe that is conteyned herin,
ye be at your lyberte" (3). But he certainly does not doubt
Arthur, or, I think we could safely add, the main framework
of events presented by Malory.

By the Elizabethan era humanist scholarship had begun
to distinguish between the historical and the legendary
Arthurs. Polydore Vergil's 1513 Anglica Historia was an
affront to traditionalists who clung to the Arthur of
chronicle and romance. As MacDougall comments, "He devoted
a single barbed paragraph to Arthur, presenting him as a
mysterious man of romance and legend akin to Roland, a
presentation certain to outrage Arthurian enthusiasts" (18).
Polydore states disparagingly:

> . . . the common people . . . extol Arthure unto
> the heavens, alleginge that hee daunted three
> capitans of the Saxons in plaine feelde; that hee
> subdewed Scotlande with the Iles adjoyninge; that
> in the teritorie of the Parisiens hee manfullie
> overthrew the Romaines, with there capitan Lucius;
> that hee didd depopulat Fraunce; that finallie hee
> slewe giauntes, and appalled the hartes of sterne
> and warlike menne. (122)

He concludes by calling into doubt Arthur's burial at
Glastonbury: "whearas in the dayse of Arthure this abbaye
was not builded" (122).

Prominent traditionalists vigorously refuted Polydore.
John Leland writes:

> He ["Polidorus the Italian"] handleth _Arthures_
> cause in deed, but by the way, he yet is so fainte
> harted, luke warme & so negligent y^t he makes me
> not onely to laugh, but also to be angry (as while
> he is contrary to truth, and filled w^t _Italian_
> bitternesse) I know not whether to smile or be
> angry. For he wresteth him selfe wretchedly in
> the aptnesse of the history, which yet that he
> might frame after a fort, he is compelled, will
> hee nill hee, to come in fauour w^t _Geoffry of_
> _Monmouth_: whom before (as it seemed vnto him) he
> had in many words (proceeding mightely rather of
> bitter stomacke, then of good disgestion)
> corrected also at his own controlment. (53)

Even conservative scholars such as Leland, however, had begun to make some crude distinctions between the historical and the legendary Arthurs. Leland states:

> _Italy_ in times past so esteemed of _Arthure_, and
> yet still doth, when bookes printed both of his
> prowesse, & victories . . . are read in the
> _Italian_ tongue yea in ye Spanish, and also in the
> French tongue: whereupon also the _English_
> collection of _Thomas Mailerius_ his trauaile, is
> published abroade. The aduersarie I know will
> say, that many lyes haue crept into those bookes.
> Wherefore this is nothing els, but to _Teach him_
> _which is fully taught_. As I contemne fables, so I
> reuerence & imbrace ye truth of the [Geoffrey's]
> history . . . . Unthankfull persons I vtterly
> eschew and I betake me vnto those Rockes &
> monuments, the true witnesses of _Arthures_ renoume
> and maiestie. (53-54).

On the same head, as A. B. Ferguson notes, Sir William Seegar "recognized that Arthur and his knights occupied a key position in the history of knighthood, but he refused to accept the fabulous element in the Arthurian stories" (_Chivalric Tradition_ 136-37). Interestingly, though, Richard Carew, an Oxford-educated squire and friend of Sir Philip Sidney, evinces some continuing belief in even the

popular Arthurian romances among the educated classes. In his _Survey of Cornwall_ (1602) he argues, "That Mark swayed the Cornish sceptre you cannot make question, unless you will, withal, shake the irrefragable authority of the Round Table's romance" (151).

The overall historiographical development, however, would have allowed Elizabethans to eat their cake and have it too. They could look to Arthur as the historical progenitor of the Tudor line and at the same time envision him as the idealized founder of the Round Table, manipulating the mythology surrounding him to fit the needs of the time. Norhnberg descries the presence of "a plurality of Arthurs" in _The Faerie Queene_. There is "a romantic Arthur, legendary for his chivalry and courtesy;" a "British and 'historical'" Arthur, "introduced . . . as a compliment to the Welsh ancestry of the Tudor dynasty;" and a "messianic Arthur," who "defeats the power of Rome" (44-46). The historical distinction thus allowed the development of an Arthurian fiction that would inculcate both personal virtue and loyalty to the state and, at the same time, delight readers by stimulating the imagination. These are Spenser's stated purposes in his _Letter to Raleigh_:

> . . . to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: Which for that I conceiued shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profit of the ensample . . . (737)

In contrast, Malory writes to preserve tradition for its exemplary value. He can do this because he and his audience believe in the fundamental veracity of the events he recounts; but at the same time he is limited--albeit not to the same degree as a modern historian--by his concern for that veracity. Spenser, on the other hand, is aware of the basic uncertainty of the Arthurian material, and this awareness has freed him to apply it to larger ends. His aim is not to instruct by reminding his readers of the great deeds of the past, but to entertain with a pleasing fiction that will at the same time, via allegory, lay bare great moral truths. Thus, whereas Malory portrays "the noble Kynge Arthure that was Emperoure hymself thorow dygnyté of his hondys" (247),[8] Spenser presents "in the person of Prince Arthur . . . magnificence in particular, which vertue . . . is the perfection of all the rest" (_Letter_ 737).

CHAPTER SIX

History and Fiction in Malory and Spenser (II)

A. Malory's Treatment of the Supernatural in General

In this final chapter I intend to compare the effects
of the two authors' attitudes toward history and fiction on
their renderings of several rather diverse themes and
elements: the marvelous and the supernatural; humor and
irony; and time and eternity. I do not claim any intrinsic
interrelation among these categories except that the
authors' differing approaches to their material, informed by
divergent conceptions of history and fiction, may in some
way be seen in each of them. Because the effects are
various and complex for each category, I shall discuss them
in the context of each theme or element, rather than trying
to render a comprehensive overview here.

One of the essential vehicles for Spenser's historical
fiction is the marvelous, an element which Malory usually
ignores and sometimes plays down, although not out of any
particular skepticism, as Vinaver has argued (cited below).
C. S. Lewis comments that a comparison of <u>The Morte Darthur</u>
"with its sources seems to show Malory almost everywhere
labouring to eliminate the marvellous and introduce the
humdrum" ("Prose <u>Morte</u>" 7). Lewis suggests that this
trimming down of the fantastic in Malory may proceed not

from skepticism, but "from a far fuller belief and a more profound delight in it than the French authors had ever known" (13). This assertion he grounds in the principle that "two enchanters, two ghosts, two ferlies are always half as impressive as one" (13). Vinaver, in an essay answering Lewis, contends that "Malory the man was certainly not a believer in the supernatural: the simple method of collation shows how consistently he cut it down in adapting his French books" ("Art and Nature" 33).

Both critics are in agreement that Malory excised much of the fantastic from his sources, but this does not necessarily purport either "delight" or disbelief. I would argue that we find in Malory neither attitude, but rather a serious and level-headed belief, as befitted the time. Elsewhere, Vinaver attempts to classify Malory in his attitude toward the supernatural as a kind of premature philosophe: "He has neither the simple faith of his medieval forerunners nor the imaginative outlook of his successors; he is, as indeed one would expect him to be, equally remote from the naïveté of the former and the sophisticated conventions of the latter" (Commentary 1279). Neither an examination of Malory's intellectual milieu nor one of his text, however, bears out this assertion. In the first place, we have not yet arrived at the Enlightenment, let alone the Renaissance. For Malory to have disbelieved in the Christian supernatural would have been inconceivable; and belief in God at all, in medieval terms, necessitated

belief in miracles, i.e., divine intervention in the temporal world. As Benedicta Ward affirms, "Throughout the Middle Ages miracles were unanimously seen as part of the city of God on earth, and whatever reflections men might have on their cause and their aim, they formed an integral part of ordinary life" (2).

In the medieval view, allowing the Christian supernatural logically made room for magic as well. Although most did not concern themselves with precise definitions, as Richard Kieckhefer points out

> Broadly speaking, intellectuals in medieval Europe recognized two forms of magic: natural and demonic. Natural magic was not distinct from science, but rather a branch of science. It was the science that dealt with "occult virtues" (or hidden powers) within nature. Demonic magic was not distinct from religion, but rather a perversion of religion. It was a religion that turned away from God and toward demons for their help in human affairs. (9)

Lynn Thorndike surveys the opinions of foremost medieval theologians and philosophers on magic, to include John of Salisbury, Hugo of St. Victor, Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Michael Scot, and Roger Bacon. The only author he finds to have expressed any skepticism is Bacon, who exposes much of it as sleight of hand. At the same time, however, Bacon says that when magic is effective "'the devil is the real author of the work'" (Thorndike 135). Furthermore, Thorndike observes, Bacon classifies as science what "would be classified as magic" by many of the other authors. Therefore, "he really goes about as far as

Albertus Magnus in credulous acceptance of superstition and marvels, but does not apply the term magic to what Albert admits is magic" (136). Although Malory may not have read these authors on the subject, the evidence they provide renders it highly unlikely that he could have disbelieved in either magic or miracles. This does not, of course, mean that they were his main interest as an author. They were not; chivalry was, and this controlling interest often causes him to subordinate other elements from his sources.

We notice in Malory's rendering of the marvelous elements which he does retain a tendency to condense, as he does with many other features, and also to Christianize, which does not equate with rationalization. One of the outstanding marvels early in the Morte Darthur is its two sword tests. Alexandre Micha traces the sword tests of Arthurian romance back to the golden bough described to Aeneas by the Sybil, without which he cannot enter the underworld, and which no man can pluck unless preordained by fate (39). The sword, then, bears an otherworld significance in its early appearances in Arthurian romance. Micha writes, "Énée va tenter la descente aux Champs-Elysées; Lancelot lui aussi, pénétrant au royaume de Gorre, a franchi sur le pont de l'épée les frontières du royaume des morts" (39-40). After Chretien, however, the otherworld significance disappears. As Micha puts it, "les écrivains ont perdu le sens originel et original du l'épreuve" (41). In later romances, though, the sword test retains its

significance as a sign of divine election, and takes on a
new one as an indicator of knightly worth and prowess.

In Malory we find the first example of such in Arthur's
sword test and the second in Balin's, both of which derive
from the Suite du Merlin. The first, which signifies
Arthur's right to the throne, was initially given its
heavily Christian significance in the Prose Merlin (Micha
42). In the Suite, the nobles and clergy seek Merlin's
advice on how to choose a new king after Uther's death.
Merlin counsels them that all the land should await a sign
from God at Christmas. In response, "li preudomme del
roiaume et li menistre de sainte eglise firent ceste cose
par tout savoir et que li preudomme del roiaume venissent
tout au Noel a Logres pour veoir l(e)'election de
Jhesucrist" (I.133). The main addition Malory makes is to
have Merlin approach the Archbishop of Canterbury (not named
in the Suite) and initiate the process of seeking a sign:

> Thenne Merlyn wente to the Archebisshop of
> Caunterbury and counceilled hym for to sende for
> alle the lordes of the reame and alle the
> gentilmen of arms, that they shold to London come
> by Cristmas vpon payne of cursynge, and for this
> cause, that Ihesu that was borne on that nyghte,
> that He wold of His grete mercy shewe some
> myracle, as He was come to be Kynge of mankynde,
> for to shewe somme myracle who shold be rightwys
> kynge of this reame. (1.3-5)

In both accounts the sword in the stone is to be an
explicitly Christian sign, and in both Merlin is the one to
advise seeking it. In Malory, however, Merlin's unsolicited
counseling of the Archbishop (who promptly responds by

"send[ing] for alle the lordes and gentilmen of armes")
appears to lend him greater spiritual authority,[1] at the
same time further Christianizing the magician himself. As a
result of these preceding events, when the sword
mysteriously appears in the stone "in the chircheyard ayenst
the hyhe aulter" (1.3-5), it is an explicitly Christian
miracle, and Malory is closely following his source in
making it so. He does not need to de-emphasize something
that he as a medieval Christian can easily accept as
factual; and that he considers it factual is suggested by
his concern for such surrounding details as whether the
church "were Powlis or not," since "the Frensshe booke
maketh no mencyon" (1.3-5).

The other sword test in the Tale of King Arthur,
accomplished by Balin, has more of an air of magic, as
opposed to Christian miracle, about it. When a damsel
arrives at Arthur's court with the sword as a test of
knighthood, the king immediately proclaims it "a grete
merueill" (2.1). Only the unassuming Balin is able to draw
it out of the sheath; and immediately after doing so, the
damsel informs him of the curse that lies upon it:

> . . . ye ar not wyse to kepe the swerde from me,
> for ye shalle slee with the swerd the best frende
> that ye haue, and the man that ye moste loue in
> the world, and the swerd shalle be youre
> destruction. (2.2)

Malory makes this sword test not less but more magical
than his source. The damsel in the Suite requests the

knights to attempt "'desnoer le[s] renges de l'espee'" (214). Balin alone is able to undo the Gordian knot: "Lors prent les renges de l'espee et met les mains as neus et les desnoue erraument et tire l'espee a lui" (216). What apparently enables Balin to succeed in the source, then, is either superior skill, or fortune--the ultimate cause in either case being superior virtue. Malory alters the immediate causation to magical sanction. Some numinous power has stubbornly cemented the blade in its scabbard and will not release it for any knight except Balin, who draws it out with ease. Through this change Malory has also achieved a striking parallel with the sword which Arthur pulls from the stone. But Balin's sword seems much more of pagan magic than Arthur's.

Although Malory heightens the magical element in this sword test, significantly, he makes some effort to Christianize the sword. This he does not accomplish, however, until it has fulfilled its fateful career in Balin's hands--slaying the Lady of the Lake (through a blunder by Malory, actually),[2] Lanceor (whose Lady then commits suicide), and, finally, Balan, his own brother. In addition, his killing of the sinister Garlon with the same sword leads to his committing of the Dolorous Stroke. In the end, though, Malory 'converts' this symbol of the nemesis that has dogged Balin into a Christian symbol by having Merlin place a new pommel on it after the knight's death. It is then fit to be wielded only by the Grail

knight or his father, having again become a gauge of virtue.

When Merlin commands a bystanding knight to brandish it, "he

assayde and he myght not handle hit" (2.19). Upon this,

Merlin foretells that no one except for Lancelot or Galahad

(yet unborn) shall be fit to do so. Here, as R. H. Wilson

has shown, Malory is conflating two swords from his source

into one:

> In the Suite, it is foretold by Merlin that
> Balin's sword can be lifted only by Lancelot, who
> will kill Gawain with it. Merlin later fixes
> another sword in a floating stone, to be drawn
> from it by the best knight in the world,
> apparently Galahad. In Malory, however, there is
> only one sword, Balin's, which "there shall never
> man handyll . . . but the beste knyght of the
> worlde, and that shall be sir Launcelot other
> ellis Galahad, hys sonne. And Launcelot with hys
> swerde shall sle . . . sir Gawayne." (37)

In this way, Malory connects Balin's sword, not to

mention the entire tale of Balin, much more intimately to

his Book of the Sankgreal. The sword, analogously to

Arthur's, is "put into a marbil stone stondyng upryght" by

Merlin, where it miraculously "houed allweyes aboue the

water" for many years until, on a Whit Sunday, Galahad came

along and drew it out (2.19). Had Malory not conflated the

two swords from his source in this manner, Balin's sword

would have continued uninterrupted, guided by an unholy

nemesis toward the slaying of Gawain. Paradoxically, the

Grail knight's sword in The Morte Darthur does eventually

destroy Gawain. But before this tragic event, unlike

Balin's sword in the Suite, it takes on a markedly Christian

significance, thus becoming more miraculous than magical.
In any case, Malory has certainly not watered down or
suppressed the marvelousness of his sword tests. If
anything, in creating new parallels and unities between
them, he has intensified their projection of supernatural
significance and potency. But it is a supernatural which
fits comprehensibly into Malory's world view; and, although
it has this effect, it is not applied primarily to enhance
the enjoyment or wonder of the story, but rather to enable
the author to reconstruct its narrative events coherently.
Malory neither consistently plays down nor intensifies the
marvelous, but relates it believably in keeping with a
medieval European Weltanschauung.

B. Malory's Treatment of Fairy Lore

While Malory appears to take a very rationalizing
approach to fairy lore, we find that this had previously
been accomplished for him by his sources. There was a
diversity of medieval opinion on fairies, but it was
generally agreed that they were preternatural and endowed
with special powers. C. S. Lewis, in The Discarded Image,
summarizes four of the most prominent theories surrounding
them: 1) "they are a third rational species distinct from
angels and men;" 2) "they are . . . a special class of
angels who have been demoted;" 3) "they are the dead, or
some special class of the dead;" 4) "they are fallen angels;

in other words, devils" (134-37).

The fairies of The Morte Darthur, however, seem quite mortal, although often threatening and far from trustworthy. Morgan le Fay, descended from a Celtic goddess and originally possessing inherent magical powers, has become in Malory an ordinary mortal, sister to Arthur, who must learn magic as an art. Malory writes that she "was put to scole in a nonnery, and ther she lerned so moche that she was a grete clerke of nygromancye" (1.2).

By some apparent confusion on Malory's part the Lady of the Lake, who in the French romances is identical with Nineve (Viviene), is beheaded by Balin (2.3). Nor does she pick up her head and walk away, as she might have had she been an undegenerate fairy of mythology and folklore. Vinaver says that in the Roman de Balain the "damoisiele" whom Balain beheads "is an anonymous messenger from the Lady of the Isle of Avalon who wishes to destroy Balin because he has killed her mother" (Commentary 1306). Because Malory in his confusion has already done away with her, when Nineve turns up again in his source, he makes her "one of the damesels of the Lady of the Laake" (125;4.1).[3] Not only is she demoted in status through this mix-up, but she seems to have lost her supernatural powers also. She has become merely a treacherous, conniving femme fatale. Malory writes: "And euer she maade Merlyn good chere tyl she lerned of hym al maner thynge that she desyred" (4.1). She manages to learn enough magic from him to use against him at a

strategic moment:

> And soo on a tyme it happed that Merlyon shewed to
> her in a roche whereas was a grete wonder, and
> wroughte by enchauntment, that wente under a grete
> stone. So by her subtyle wyrchynge she maade
> Merlyn to goo vndir that stone and to lete her
> wete of the merueilles there, but she wroughte so
> ther for hym that he cam neuer oute for alle the
> crafte he coude doo. And so she departed and
> lefte Merlyn. (4.1)

Malory's Nineve, therefore, much like his Morgan,
retains her fairy treachery and cruelty but not her inherent
supernatural powers. This divestment of powers, however,
began not with Malory but with the prose romances he used as
his sources. Laurence Harf-Lancner comments on the gradual
rationalization of fairies in these works:

> L'assimilation des fées à des enchanteresses
> favorise en effet le developpement de récits
> morganiens dans un contexte de plus en plus
> rationalisé. La fée qui entraîne un mortel dans
> l'autre monde devient une magicienne qui joue de
> ses sortilèges pour retenir un chevalier ou même
> une châtelaine amoureuse qui, sans recours à la
> magie, attire et emprisonne l'élu de son coeur.
> (426-27)

We have an extremely lucid example of this development in
the episode where Lancelot is abducted by four queens, one
of whom is Morgan. In my first chapter, I compare this
instance with earlier sources in which the episode does
indeed retain a more magical and otherworldly character.[4]

Therefore, although Malory presents us with fairies
humanized and stripped of their pristine powers, he is doing
nothing more than his sources have done already.

Nevertheless, he may have favored this tendency in the
French prose romances out of his interest in chivalry and
human affairs. For instance, as Vinaver notes,

> He dismissed in a very summary fashion the episode
> of Morgan le Fay changing herself and her
> followers into stones in order to elude Arthur,
> and when he came across an example of Morgan's
> gift of prophecy he omitted it altogether from
> his account: in the Suite Morgan, having
> withdrawn to her castle, erects a tomb and places
> in it a book which foretells the manner of
> Arthur's and Gawain's death; Malory confines
> himself to the remark that she fortified her
> castle against Arthur. (Commentary 1278)

Malory's tendency to cut and condense, and to manipulate
elements in order to achieve a different outcome, as seen in
the Roman War Story, could also have contributed to such
alterations. But he demonstrably does not expurgate the
material of fairy or magic from outright disbelief, as
Vinaver has suggested.

C. Spenser's Treatment of Fairy Lore

What was a matter of little interest, at times an
obstacle, to Malory, became a powerful tool to Spenser,
whose approach to the marvelous is as the stuff of
imagination rather than as moderately rationalized
supernatural phenomena. The Celtic flavor is much closer to
that of the early French Arthurian romances. In fact,
Spenser can take the fairy maiden visitation motif, which
Chaucer parodied in Sir Thopas, and make it a centrally

important event in his poem. When Spenser's Arthur is
entertained by Gloriana in his sleep, upon awakening he is
unsure "whether dreames delude, or true it were" (ix.14.5).
He is convinced enough, however, "to seeke her out with
labour, and long tyne" (15.7). The incident has an air of
unreality but it almost certainly did occur, whether in this
world or another we cannot say. Lucy Paton observes that
Celtic heroes such as "Culchulinn, Oisin, Merlin and Ogier,
all came under the sway of a fairy mistress." She adds,
"The idea that there was an original theme which we know
only through a transformed version, allotting to Arthur's
share an amorous sojourn in fairyland, receives a limited
support by analogy with the experiences of other heroes"
(29). Whether Malory may have excised from some unknown
source an account in which Arthur has such an experience, we
do not know. But Spenser, whether by pure invention or, as
Paton suggests, from some "lingering tradition" (29 n.),
reinserts this Celtic feature and uses it to advantage in
his poem.[5]

The fairy creatures of Book II often come closer to the
mysterious, lustful, malignant ones of folklore and popular
belief than to the partly rationalized ones of the romances.
The Phaedria episode, Greenlaw points out, is "fundamentally
. . . the story of a _fée_ who dwells in an enchanted island
to which she lures mortals whom she desires to become her
lovers" (_Var_.II.445). Near the beginning of Canto vi she
spirits Cymochles away in "her shallow ship" (5.1). We note

that the vessel moves as if by magic, "withouten oare or
Pilot it to guide" (5.3). Paton describes how in many
Celtic tales the fairy mistress draws the mortal she desires
by means of "a magic boat, marvellously beautiful and swift,
pilotless and rudderless, sent to convey him, in obedience
to her magic guidance, to the other world" (16-17). Certain
of the Tristan romances feature a magic boat of this sort.
Vinaver informs us that the source for Malory's Book of Sir
Tristram de Lyones is among these,[6] but that Malory, instead
of having Tristram "set adrift upon the sea in a rudderless
boat" and magically guided to Ireland, invents "a 'wytty
lady' who tells him 'playnly' where he should go"
(Commentary 1458). Mark himself ensures that the vessel is
"well vytayled" and Governal accompanies him on the voyage
(8.8). In short, the story is made far more believable, far
less imaginative. But Malory, unlike Spenser, is more
concerned about instructing his audience by plausibly
reconstructing past events, than he is about delighting it.

Acrasia, like Phaedria a fairy temptress, has wrought
tragedy for the babe with bloody hands, whom Guyon is to
avenge, by seducing his father and driving his mother to
suicide. Greenlaw comments that through these deeds Acrasia
demonstrates "the characteristic of so many fées, cruelty
and lust" (447). In this sense she is very much like the
primitive Morgan, who in her vicious designs to kill Arthur
and confound his knights partially survives in Malory.[7]

Spenser's treatment of Mammon as a fairy creature is a

fine example of the moral and theological interpretation with which he endows his pleasing fiction. Guyon happens upon him in "a gloomy glade" (vii.3.1) in a "desert wilderness" (2.9). "And round about him lay on every side / Great heaps of gold" (5.1-2). Greenlaw writes that in Celtic folk tradition "The old man who guards a fairy hill is a stock character; sometimes he is a leprechaun, who guards a treasure that he tries to hide when he is caught by a mortal; sometimes he is a fairy king" (445). The temptations to eat fruit in an underworld setting and to rest under an apple tree (vii.63) are also motifs from Celtic tradition. In the ballad Thomas Rymer, the hero is warned by the queen of Elfland not to eat of the fruit in an otherworld garden, "For a' the plagues that are in hell / Light on the fruit of this countrie" (43-44). Dame Herodis in Sir Orfeo is accosted, and later abducted, by the king of fairies after she has fallen asleep "vnder a fair ympe-tre" (70,142 ff.). Significantly, the fairy king in Sir Orfeo is identical to Pluto, lord of the underworld. As we have well noted already, Malory retains a fairy abduction bearing some of these motifs, which not he but his sources transformed from an otherworldly to a worldly adventure. In casting Mammon in the role of tempter, Spenser is returning to the medieval notion that fairies and related beings are demons. Harry Berger observes that the poet "follows traditional ideas about demonology" in developing Guyon's testing by Mammon:

> The demon can only tempt, he cannot offer direct
> violence to a man's will. Furthermore, since
> devils are in a sense fools of God sent into the
> world to exercise men, there are limitations on
> their understanding. Mammon is shrewd enough to
> play on Guyon's curiosity, but he is continually
> angered by Guyon's refusal to succumb. (22)

The entire episode thus takes on undertones of Christ's

temptation in the wilderness, and of Everyman's overcoming

of temptation by mythic reenactment of Christ's experience.

D. Giants in Malory and Spenser

It is often the case that Spenser's ahistorical

treatment of supernormalities such as giants and dragons

enables him to exploit their archetypal associations more

fully than Malory. That these two classes of beings once

existed, for Malory, would have been beyond question. Both

appear in Geoffrey's history. The Bible tells of Goliath,

of the antediluvian and Canaanite giants, and of monstrous

beasts such as behemoth and leviathan. Encyclopedists such

as Bartholomaeus Anglicus, too, vouched for the literal

existence of giants and dragons. Bartholomaeus records how

the Trojans who found their way to Britain "fau3te with

geauntes long tyme þat woned þerynne and ouercome þe

geauntes boþe with crafte and with strenghþe and conquered

þe ilond" (733). He includes dragons amongst dogs,

crocodiles, and horses in his natural history and notes that

"bitwen elephantes and dragouns is euerlastynge fightynge"

(1184).

Malory's most prominent giant, the one of Mont-Saint-Michel, comes most directly from the Alliterative Morte Arthure but also appears in the Galfridian chronicles. As we have earlier observed, Malory has modified the giant's hideous appearance from the poem, making him more realistic. At the same time, however, he displays several of the archetypal characteristics of mythical giants. Like Homer's Polyphemus he is a lawless, cannibalistic oppressor, who is overcome by the courage and wit of the hero. Yet the detail in Malory surrounding both giant and battle focuses on the large externals. The importance of the giant is that he existed, of the battle, that he was vanquished by Arthur. One more testimony stands to Arthur's greatness; as an historical reminder Sir Howell is to "ordeyne for a chirche to be bylded on the same hylle in the worship of Saynte Mychel" (5.5).

In turning to Spenser's treatment of Orgoglio, we immediately see the intensification of archetypal associations which the poet's fictionalizing approach has allowed him. Orgoglio's name translates "pride," and Spenser's description of him suggests most strongly the blustering egotism of the biblical Goliath but may also recall the grasping ambition of the Titans, whose name means "overreachers" and who attempted to supplant the gods. We are told that "his talnesse seemd to threat the skyes" (I.vii.7.5), that he is "puft up with emptie wind" (9.9),

and that "through presumption" he scorns "all other powers"
(10.3-4). In associating Orgoglio with the wind, however,
Spenser is doing more than making him a representation of
empty pride; he is relating him to Typhoeus, who, as Hesiod
describes, makes "the sound of a bellowing bull, /
proud-eyed and furious" (832). Upon Orgoglio's approach,
Redcrosse "heard a dreadful sound, / Which through the wood
loud bellowing, did rebownd" (7.3-4).

Spenser makes Orgoglio the offspring of Earth (Gaia)
and Aeolus (Wind). No such pairing is found in Hesiod,
where Ouranos and Gaia generate most of the giants and
Typhoeus is born of Tartarus and Gaia. Spenser, in thus
manipulating Orgoglio's parentage, gives him seismological
associations. S. K. Heninger writes: "Spenser expressly
states that Orgoglio has been generated by a boisterous wind
blowing through caves in the earth. By the principles of
Renaissance meteorology, this origin identifies him as an
earthquake" (172). Heninger claims, "No Elizabethan would
have missed the transparent mythologizing" (173).
Therefore, as Typhoeus is the mythical embodiment of the
wind so is Orgoglio of the earthquake, which was seen by
Spenser's audience as a divine portent. As Heninger relates

> the terrifying earthquake of 6 April 1580 . . .
> was an event which few Englishmen forgot. It was
> so frightening that a special order of prayer was
> decreed "upon Wednesdayes and Fridayes, to avert
> and turn Gods wrath from us, threatned by the late
> terrible earthquake, to be used in all parish
> churches." Sermons for a long time thereafter
> cited the earthquake as an admonition "to amende
> our evill life, to reforme our wicked

conversation, to be renewed in the spirite of the inwarde man, and to be heavenly minded." (173)

This connection lends Orgoglio a special significance as an instrument of divine judgment, meant to return Redcrosse to the path of holiness. It is when he lies "pourd out in loosenesse" with Duessa, having cast aside his spiritual armor, that he hears the "dreadful sownd" of Orgoglio's approach (7.2-4). In biblical terms, Redcrosse's sin has found him out, and he is taken in unreadiness and enthralled by the malignant forces at work in his own person. Orgoglio, then, is "the lawe of sinne" spoken of by St. Paul, which overcomes unaided human striving for holiness:

> But I se another law in my membres, rebelling against the law of my minde, and leading me captiue vnto the law of sinne, which is in my members. O wretched mã that I am, who shall deliuer me from the bodie of this death! (Rom. 7:23-24)

As captivity to the law of sin moves Paul to cry for deliverance, so captivity by Orgoglio pushes Redcrosse from his state of moral abandonment toward spiritual regeneration. After Orgoglio has served his purpose, he in turn is judged. When he hears the sound of the trumpet announcing Arthur's arrival and his own doom, he is in the very position in which Redcrosse had earlier been: "The Gyant selfe dismaied with that sownd, / Where he with his Duessa dalliance fownd" (viii.5.3-4). The pattern for these two corresponding judgments is strikingly paralleled in the

tenth chapter of Isaiah, which may have inspired Spenser.

Yahweh declares through the prophet:

> O Asshur, the rodde of my wrath and ye staffe in
> their hands is mine indignatiõ. I wil send him to
> a dissembling nation, and I wil giue him a charge
> against the people of my wrath to take the spoile
> & to take the praie, and to treade them under
> fete like the myre in the strete. But he thinketh
> not so, nether doeth his heart esteme it so: but
> he imagineth to destroye and to cut of not a
> fewe nacions. For he saith, Are not my princes
> all together Kings? . . . . Shal not I, as I haue
> done to Samaria, & to the idoles thereof, so do
> to Ierusalem and to the idoles thereof? But when
> the Lord has accõplished all his work upon mount
> Zion and Ierusalem, I wil visit the frute of the
> proude heart of the King of Asshur, and his
> glorious and proude lokes . . . (5-12)

Reading the Orgoglio episode in the light of this passage

strengthens the concept that the giant is an unwitting

instrument of Providence, meant to redirect and purify the

faltering elect. When he has fulfilled this role, he

himself becomes the object not only of judgment but of

wrath.

According to Cirlot's <u>Dictionary of Symbols</u>, "The

deepest and most ancient meaning of the myth of the giant"

is that of "an immense, primordial being, by whose sacrifice

creation was brought forth" (117). There is this archetypal

facet also to Orgoglio. Norhnberg notes that Martin Luther,

"writing on the subject of Christian mortification in Romans

. . . speaks of those who 'die' willingly: 'Their prototype

is Christ--Christ who died crying with a loud voice like the

bravest giant'" (274). Norhnberg comments that "Orgoglio

dies as a suffering giant of a special kind; his blood, for

example, 'Forth gushed, like fresh water stream from riven
rocke' (I.viii.10), the image suggesting the rock that was
Christ and the sacramental release from Christ's side"
(274). Although the idea of Orgoglio as a Christ-figure may
seem incongruous, the biblical associations made by Spenser
render the identification unmistakable. St. Paul
typologically identifies the rock that gushed water for
Israel in the wilderness with Christ: "For they drank of the
spiritual Rocke that followed them: and the Rocke was
Christ" (I Cor. 10:4). Elsewhere, Paul states that Christ
was made "sinne for vs . . . that we shulde be made the
righteousnes of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21), and Peter, that
Christ "bare our sinnes in his bodie" (I Pet. 2:24). The
giant thus becomes not merely a projection of Redcrosse's
own sin and a personification of the law of sin, but a
sin-bearer as well. Arthur's sacrificial slaying of
Orgoglio frees Redcrosse from thralldom to sin, represented
by his imprisonment in the dungeon, and liberates him to
pursue holiness effectively.

Finally, viewing Redcrosse's predicament in the light
of the archetypal giant-slayer theme unveils both the humor
and the irony of his pathetic failure. David, Odysseus, and
Arthur all conquer their giants with impressive panache,
rescuing the oppressed and helpless, and aiding their
countrymen. Redcrosse, in a ludicrous reversal of these
examples, offers the giant no resistance whatsoever and is
only delivered from being "battred quight" "to dust"

(vii.14.3) when Duessa, the 'fair maiden', offers herself to
Orgoglio as paramour in order to save the 'hero'. The
episode becomes a graphic portrait of the Christian's utter
helplessness before the power of sin. Only divine grace,
represented by Arthur, can deliver Redcrosse from such a
gargantuan force.

E. Dragons in Malory and Spenser

Malory's dragons take on a more expansive symbolism
than his giants, but in order to achieve it, the author must
remove them from ordinary waking reality. After he has
begotten Mordred upon his half-sister, Arthur has a
foreboding dream in which

> ther was come into this land gryffons and
> serpentes, and hym thoughte they brente and slough
> alle the peple in the land, and thenne hym
> thoughte he faughte with hem, and they dyd hym
> passynge grete harme and wounded hym ful sore, but
> at the last he slewe hem. (1.19)

This prophetic dream signifies that Arthur has unknowingly
set in motion forces that will destroy him and his kingdom.

In the Roman War Story Arthur dreams of a dragon,
equally prophetic, but more fantastic in appearance and more
intricately allegorical:

> his hede was enameled with asure, and his sholders
> shone as gold, his bely lyke maylles of a
> merueyllous hewe, his taylle ful of tatters, his
> feet ful of fyne sable, and his clawes lyke fyne
> gold, and an hydous flamme of fyre flewe oute of
> his mouthe . . . (5.4)

This dragon engages in combat with a black bear ("bore" in Caxton's edition), which he smites "all to powdre." A philosopher interprets the dream:

> . . . the dragon that thow dremedest of betokeneth thyn owne persone . . . , and the colours of his wynges ben thy royames that thow haste wonne, and his taylle whiche is al totatterd sygnefyeth the noble knyghtes of the Round Table. And the bore that the dragon slough comyng fro the clowdes betokeneth some tyraunt that tormenteth the peple, or els thow arte lyke to fyghte with somme geaunt thyself . . . (5.4)

The sense of this vision and its interpretation in Malory's source goes beyond the obvious one indicated by the immediately following episode of the Giant of Mont-Saint-Michel. Karl Heinz Göller writes that, in the Alliterative Morte,

> Seen superficially, the dragon stands for Arthur as the embodiment of organic order and of the idea of an Empire. The bear, on the other hand, stands for the giant, and at the same time for Lucius as an opponent of the concept of ordo. But the name Arthur='bear',[8] which was evidently common knowledge at the time, acts as a signal that the dream refers to Arthur's victories over both the giant and Lucius only on a surface level. Its true meaning lies in its function as a portent of Arthur's downfall. (135)

Whether Malory understood the symbolism on these three levels is open to question. It is possible that Caxton's alteration of 'beare' to 'bore' was intended to provide a more immediately recognizable allegory for Arthur, so that the subtle symbolism of Arthur's demise would not be lost on

the audience. In Geoffrey's history Merlin prophesies of
Arthur as "the Boar of Cornwall" who will subdue all
invaders, and whose "deeds will be as meat and drink to
those who tell tales" (vii.3). Therefore, it seems likely
that Arthur would have been more immediately associated with
the boar than the bear in the minds of contemporary readers.
If Malory does comprehend the third level of meaning,
however, he defers its effects to the end of his "hoole
book," in order first to establish Arthur as a great king.
As we have already discussed, Malory portrays Arthur far
more favorably than does the alliterative poet. It is
noteworthy, though, that at the beginning of the dream as
recounted by Malory, the dragon "dyd drowne moche of his
peple" (5.4). While much of the symbolism centers on the
story itself, the archetypal associations of the dragon show
through. These associations, as Göller remarks, range "from
the satanic fiend to the merciful guardian . . . 'from the
destructive and terrible to the benign and helpful'" (132).

Geoffrey of Monmouth records that at the time of
Aurelius Ambrosius' death, a star which produces a flaming
dragon appears in the sky, and from the mouth of the dragon
stream "two rays of light, one of which seemed to extend its
length beyond the latitude of Gaul . . ." (viii.14). Merlin
interprets for Uther, "The star signifies you in person, and
so does the fiery dragon beneath the star. The beam of
light, which stretches towards the shore of Gaul, signifies
your son, who will be a most powerful man" (viii.15).

Hence, Arthur seems largely to inherit the positive
associations of the dragon archetype, although there are
sinister undertones even in Malory.

Sir Bors encounters his dragon in the Castle
Adventurous, where the boundaries between dream and reality
tend to blur:

> Ryght soo Syre Bors forthwithall sawe a dragon in
> the courte passynge horryble, and there semed
> letters of gold wryten in his forhede, and Sir
> Bors thoughte that the letters made a
> sygnyfycacyon of Kynge Arthur. Ryghte soo there
> came an horryble lybard and an old, and there they
> foughte longe and dyd grete batail togydere. And
> at the laste the dragon spytte oute of his mouthe
> as hit had ben an honderd dragons, and lyghtely
> alle the smal dragons slewe the old dragon and
> tare hym all to pyeces. (11.5)

Where the purely visionary dragons are prophetic, this
waking dragon, it seems, constitutes more of a portent, like
the bird omens in Homer. By keeping it in the realm of
mysterious supernatural phenomena, Malory is able to endow
it with high symbolism. Here the dragon is ostensibly
Arthur, the leopard Lancelot,[9] and the small dragons Mordred
and his supporters.[10] Arthur here projects the ominous side
of the dragon archetype: he is "passynge parelous and
orryble." Yet at the same time, in being tragically
destroyed by his offspring, he is strangely, even
sympathetically, vulnerable.

This dragon's demise reminds us of Error's end at the
hands of Redcrosse in Book I of The Faerie Queene. During
the battle "She poured forth out of her hellish sinke / Her

fruitfull cursed spawne of serpents small" (i.22.5-6).
After he beheads her, the offspring "flocked all about her
bleeding wound, / And sucked up their dying mother's blood,
/ Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good"
(25.7-9). Whereas the symbolism of Malory's dragons is
predominantly centripetal, relating primarily to the history
itself, that of Spenser's is centrifugal, relating to
universal moral and spiritual truths.[11] Hamilton detects a
parody of the Christological symbolism of the pelican
feeding its young with its own blood. He adds, "Here it is
an emblem of ingratitude, as in Lear's reference to his
'pelican daughters' (Lear III iv 74), and brings death
rather than life" (37). (Error's swollen offspring burst.)
The scene also clearly emblemizes the truism "Error feeds
upon error."

Spenser's most notable dragon is of course the one
slain by Redcrosse at the end of Book I. His historical
fiction once again allows him to exploit its archetypal
significance more freely than even Malory's visionary
dragons. The Satanic associations are clear. Redcrosse's
triumph over the dragon ritually reenacts the casting down
of Satan from heaven by Michael and his angels, and
recapitulates the experience of the individual Christian
who, by resisting temptation, overcomes the Devil. Hence,
in the Book of Revelation, when Michael prevails and "the
great dragon, that olde serpent, called the deuil and Satan"
is "cast into the earth" (12:9), a voice from heaven

announces that the saints have mystically participated in
this ultimate triumph over evil: "But they ouercame him by
the blood of the Lambe, and by the worde of their
testimonie" (12:11). Susan J. Verhaeghe has observed the
parallels between the fall of the dragon in the Apocalypse
and that of the dragon in Book I. The fall of Spenser's
dragon is greatly dramatized by the use of anaphora:

> So downe he fell, and forth his life did breath,
>   That vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift;
>   So downe he fell, that th'earth him vnderneath
>   Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift;
>   So downe he fell, as an huge rockie clift,
>   Whose false foundation waues haue washt away,
>   With dreadfull poyse is from the mayneland rift,
>   And rolling downe, great <u>Neptune</u> doth dismay;
> So downe he fell, and like an heaped mountaine lay.
> (xi.54)

In the same passage, as Hamilton notes (154), the
dragon's fall is made to recall that of Babylon in
Revelation: "It is fallen, it is fallen, Babylon the great
citie" (14:8). Verhaeghe points out that the dragon's
"carefully choreographed" fall is laced with gloating echoes
of Redcrosse's previous falls in the preceding combat: "Fall
for fall, there is a sense of balance and retribution as the
dragon tumbles down and crashes" (13). Carol Kaske provides
an overview of the wider Christian symbolism of the dragon
fight:

> The three day structure of the battle . . . is
> that of a re-enactment of mankind's struggle for
> deliverance from "That old Dragon," in three
> states of human nature: it begins on the first day
> with unregenerate man under law--identified as
> such by his inconvenient armor, his defeat through

unchecked concupiscence, and his subsequent
baptism; it progresses through Christian
regenerate man, identified by his use and need of
both sacraments and his qualified victory over
concupiscence; it culminates in Christ the perfect
man, showing his swift and final victory over
Satan both on his own behalf and that of others.
(638)

Finally, what these examples demonstrate is that
Spenser's fiction, aimed at _poiesis_, achieves a synthesis
that concentrates itself in the stories and diffuses out in
manifold directions. Malory's history, aimed at _mimesis_,
concentrates fewer symbolic associations in each element of
its tales, but together they press toward the center to
create a kind of objective correlative. We see this effect
clearly in the gathering significance of the dragon
appearances in The Morte Darthur. Our observation at this
point brings us back to the fact that the historian can
manipulate his material within limits to make his case, but,
as Sidney asserts, "the feigned example may be tuned to the
highest key of passion" (162), or, in the case of Spenser,
to the highest concentration of symbolic and archetypal
signification.

F. Humor and Irony in Malory and Spenser

Another marked distinction between the two authors due
in part to their understanding of the nature of their
material is their development of humor and irony. Malory,
because of his more literalistic approach to his matter,

rooted in his sense that he is writing about important
events which in all probability happened, and because of his
serious-mindedness concerning chivalry, plays down humor
much as he does the marvelous. Vinaver writes:

> Dinadan's unconventional criticisms of the
> chivalrous code are a redeeming feature in the
> monotonous picture of 'perfect' chivalry as set
> forth in the French romances. But Malory fails to
> appreciate this. He has no sympathy with anything
> that reveals a critical attitude towards his
> favorite ideal, and tries hard to delete Dinadan's
> most characteristic comments. (<u>Malory</u> 67)

At the same time, Malory continues to characterize Dinadan
as "a scoffer, and a iaper, and the meryest knight amonge
felaushlp that was that tyme lyuynge." But Malory has
transformed him into an admirable knight of the Round Table:
"He loued euery good knyghte, and euery good knyght loued
hym ageyne" (10.47). He therefore tailors and redirects
Dinadan's mockeries to reflect this recharacterization and
his own reverent attitude toward chivalry. For instance,
Malory retains Dinadan's derisory comments on courtly love,
an ideal for which he as an author appears to have had
little sympathy in the first place; but he deletes Dinadan's
references to his own "miscreance" in the French text
(10.56; Vinaver, Commentary 1511-13). His taunting of
Tristram is meant to provoke him to greater prowess: "For
wel knewe Syr Dynadan that and Syr Tristram were thorouly
wrothe, Syre Palomydes shold not gete the pryce vpon the
morne" (10.72). But Dinadan's pranks are given full rein
against the enemies of true knighthood. He composes a lay

about Mark "whyche was the werste lay that euer harper sange with harp," which he then teaches to "an harper that hyght Elyot," who in turn "taught hit to many harpers" (10.27).

Malory turns a large part of his rather spare comic arsenal on the hapless Cornish king. When Mark assaults Tristram for talking to Isolde, Tristram handily snatches the king's sword from him. Mark then fumes at his men, "I charge you slee this traytour" (8.32). Following this ignored command,

> Whanne Syre Trystram sawe that there was not one wold be ageynst hym, he shoke the swerd to the kynge and made countenaunce as though he wold haue stryken hym. And thenne Kynge Marke fledde, and Sir Tristram folowed hym and smote vpon hym fyue or sixe strokes flatlynge on the neck, that he made hym to falle vpon the nose. (8.32)

The clear effect of this slapstick is further to diminish Mark's dignity and further to distinguish Tristram's prowess. The humor is neither subtle nor ironic, which may also be said for Malory's few other comic scenes.

Another episode much to the same effect is where Mark has been set up (by who else but Dinadan!) to think that Dagonet, Arthur's fool, is Lancelot. When Mark sees the armored Dagonet riding toward him, with the cry "Allas, now am I destroyed," he flees in terror (10.12). The bystanding knights "laughed all as they were wood, and thenne they toke theire horses and rode after to see how Sir Dagonet spedde." Another of the handful of examples is where an unidentified knight, thinking he is getting in bed with his lover,

snuggles up to Lancelot and barely escapes with his life: "And whanne Syre Launcelot felte a rough berd kyssyng hym he starte oute of the bedde lyghtely" (6.5).[12] There is also the scene where Lancelot is alarmed, not by a bearded knight in his bed, but by a stray arrow from a lady's bow, "in the thyck of the buttock ouer the barbys" (18.21). Lancelot chides the huntress, "The deuylle made yow a shoter!"

Spenser's humor is not pronounced, but it is far more pervasive than Malory's; and his sense that he is not transmitting a record of the past allows him to interject a playfully ironic tone where Malory is most serious. William Nelson has perceptively stated that Spenser at times "confronts literary convention with the world as it is, not by means of guffaw, but by a subtle use of devices common to all burlesque, hyperbole, bathos, and patent illogic" (77). The contrast with Malory is best observed in the combat scenes, many of which use clearly related narrative formulas. Malory relates his combat scenes with gusto, but also with a wearying serious sameness. The Morte Darthur is permeated with phrases such as "they rasshed togyders lyke borys, tracynge, raysynge, and foynynge" (7.4); "now tracynge and trauersynge, on the ryght hand and on the lyfte hande" (8.17); "Palomydes smote hym soo hard that he wente to the erthe, hors and man" (10.46); "they . . . lasshed togyder many sadde strokes" (10.42); "the Reed Knyght waxed wrothe and doubled his strokes" (7.10); "but Sir Launcelot was better brethed" (8.26). Spenser adapts these formulas

to his own combat scenes: "they trac'd and trauerst to and
fro" (IV.vi.18.1); "as when two Bores with rancling malice
met" (I.vi.44.4); "she hew'd, she foynd, she lasht, she laid
on euery side" (V.v.6.8-9); "he them overthrew both man and
horse" (xii.7.7); "much was she moued with the mightie sway
/ Of that sad stroke" (v.9.5-6); "the knight . . . / . . .
doubled strokes" (I.v.7.4-5); "but <u>Artegall</u> was better
breath'd" (V.ii.17.5). Nelson notes several instances in
which Spenser parodies the kinds of conventionalized battle
scenes which he found in Malory (82-83). Corflambo, for
instance, slashes at Arthur "So fiercely, that ere he wist,
he found / His head before him tombling on the ground"
(IV.viii.45.4-5). When Artegall sees Grantorto "prostrated
on the plaine," he is kind enough that he "lightly reft[s]
his head, to ease him of his paine" (V.xii.23.8-9). When
Britomart defeats Scudamour, the poet relates that she
"entertaind him in so rude a wise, / That to the ground she
smote both horse and man; / Whence neither greatly hasted to
arise, / But on their common harmes together did deuise"
(IV.vi.10.6-9).

Where Spenser applies subtle physical comedy to
Malory's serious combat scenes, he applies ironic wit to
Caxton's and Malory's sober historical verifications. We
have already observed Caxton's evidence for Arthur's
existence, as well as Malory's references to his "Frensshe
booke" and his concern for the accuracy of place names.
These concerns have not been lost on Spenser, with his

radically different approach to what these men considered

historical material. We have also seen his playful defense

of the existence of Faery Land and his fanciful directions

to Merlin's cave. Spenser does something similar with

Brutus' extermination of the British giants in Book II:

> He fought great battels with his saluage fone;
> In which he them defeated euermore,
> And many Giants left on groning flore;
> That well can witnesse yet vnto this day
> The westerne Hogh, besprincled with the gore
> Of mightie Goemot, whom in stout fray
> Corineus conquered, and cruelly did slay.
> (x.10.3-9)

While not outrageously comical, the historical reference is

almost certainly not meant seriously. Geoffrey of Monmouth

gives a ludicrous account of how when Brutus and his men had

handily destroyed all of the British giants except for

Gogmagog, Brutus ordered him to be spared so that Corineus

could wrestle him. In the match, when Gogmagog breaks three

of Corineus' ribs, the hero becomes so infuriated that

> He heaved Gogmagog up on to his shoulders, and
> running as fast as he could under the weight, he
> hurried off to the nearby coast. He clambered up
> to the top of a mighty cliff, shook himself free
> and hurled this deadly monster, whom he was
> carrying on his shoulders, far out into the sea.
> The giant fell on to a sharp reef of rocks, where
> he was dashed into a thousand fragments and
> stained the waters with his blood. (i.16)

Some of the differences in Spenser's details appear to stem

from a local tradition of the battle, referred to by Richard

Carew in his Survey of Cornwall.[13] While Carew gives

qualified credence to the tradition, it seems probable that

many Elizabethans familiar with the story as it appears in
Geoffrey would have smiled at Spenser's assertion of
historicity, and his citing of a landmark associated with a
local Cornish legend as evidence.

The contradictory note on Nennius' sword in Canto x is
comparably subtle. Caesar slew Nennius, "But lost his
sword, yet to be seene this day" (49.5). Spenser is
similarly playing with the historical evidence topos when he
records that after his death Gloriana carries Arthur's sword
"To Faerie lond, where yet it may be seene, if sought"
(I.vii.36.9). The poet gains additional satisfaction by
whimsically moving on without telling us how to find Faery
Land.

These mentions of surviving physical evidence
ironically echo Caxton's discussion of the location of such
'proofs' of Arthur and his knights as Arthur's seal,
Gawain's skull, Cradok's mantle, Lancelot's sword, and the
Winchester Round Table (2). In the same spirit as Spenser
parodies this unhistorical history, he parodies the
unnnatural natural science which the Middle Ages had
uncritically adopted from classical antiquity. He
sportively compares the parthenogenesis of Belphoebe and
Amoret to spontaneous generation on the Nile floodplains:

> Miraculous may seeme to him, that reades
> So straunge ensample of conception;
> But reason teacheth that the fruitfull seades
> Of all things liuing, through impression
> Of the sunbeames in moyst complexion,
> Doe life conceiue and quickned are by kynd:
> So after <u>Nilus</u> inundation,

> Infinite shapes of creatures men do fynd,
> Informed in the mud, on which the Sunne hath shynd.
> (III.vi.8)

On this improbable basis, put forth as 'reason's teaching', we are urged to believe also that Chrysogone was made by the sun to conceive her twin daughters. Yet, such phenomena were presented in all seriousness in medieval encyclopedias and scientific writings. The gnat, writes Bartholomaeus Anglicus, "is igendred of roted [and] corrupt vapoures of careyns and corrupt place of marreys" (624). This, of course, seems very plausible in comparison with the phoenix, which Bartholomaeus soberly describes two entries later. This bird, of which only one exists at a time, at the close of its three-to-five-hundred year life span, immolates itself upon its flaming nest. Three days later, "a litil worme is igendred and comeþ of þilke asken and wexiþ litil and litil and fongiþ feþeres and is ischape and iturned to a bridde" (625).

As with medieval historiography, we can see that Spenser is rather wryly parodying medieval science. Through his playfully ironic treatment of ways of knowing, he effectively renders the medieval scholarly climate, methods, and assumptions a part of his fantasy. Rather than launching a polemic against medieval historiography and science, he fondly absorbs them into his fiction--a sure sign that he is writing in the modern age.

G. Time and Eternity in Malory and Spenser

While Malory's history is consciously placed in time,

Spenser's historical fiction is set at once in and out of

time. There can be little serious doubt that Caxton's

twenty-first book, the final part of the Most Piteous Tale

of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon, is as far as Malory

intended to take his history. Spenser, on the other hand,

ambitiously planned to take his poem much further but could

not fulfill his original design. The poet's reference to

his "weary steps" in the first line of Book VI indicates he

may be aware that this is his last complete book, and, as

A. C. Hamilton comments, "the Book itself gives the reader

the sense that the poem is drawing to an end" (621).

Northrop Frye surmises that

> . . . the appearance of Spenser's "signature" in
> Colin Clout and two other symbols from The
> Shepheards Calender, the four Graces and the
> envious beast that barks at poets, make the end of
> the sixth book . . . a summing up and conclusion
> for the entire poem and for Spenser's poetic
> career. ("Structure" 110)

Humphrey Tonkin also comments that "Book VI sums up and

evaluates the driving purpose of the whole poem" (11).

Frye adds that the Mutabilitie Cantos represent "the poet's

'Sabbath's sight' after his six great efforts of creation"

(111).

The breakdown of the ideal of courtesy, the crown of

chivalric virtues, with the escape of the Blatant Beast at

the end of Book VI, and the subsequent transcendent vision
of the Mutabilitie Cantos, is strongly reminiscent of the
collapse of the Arthurian ideal in Book 21 of Malory's work
and its displacement by a vision of eternity. The questing
beast, Malory's most fantastic non-dream creature, appears
in The Faerie Queene as the Blatant Beast, which Calidore
temporarily muzzles. The connection between the two
creatures is formed in part by etymology. Malory's questing
beast is also called the "glatysaunte beast" ('barking' or
'yelping'), while Spenser's beast takes its name from the
English "blatter," "'to speak or prate volubly,'" and the
Latin blatero and blateratus, meaning, respectively, "'to
bable in vayne'" and "'barking'" (Hamilton 618). Malory's
beast is said to have "quested ['barked'] in the bely with
suche a noyse as it hadde ben a thyrtty couple of houndes"
(13.12). Similarly, Spenser's beast, with "his hundred
tongues," "began aloud to barke and bay" when set upon
Artegall by Envy, Detraction, and Grandtorto (V.xii.41.2-7).

Spenser sets pursuit of the beast by Calidore before
its pursuit by knights named in Malory: "long time after
Calidore, / The good Sir Pelleas him tooke in hand, / And
after him Sir Lamoracke of yore, / And all his brethren
borne in Britaine land" (VI.xii.39.5-8).[14] These knights
having failed, Spenser reports, "So now he raungeth through
the world againe, / And rageth sore in each degree and
state" (40.1-2). Despite his ambiguous time reference,
"long time after," the way in which Spenser abruptly brings

the matter up to his present gives the sense that little
time has elapsed between Calidore, the Knights of the Round
Table, and the poet's own time. However, it becomes
difficult at once to place Prince Arthur contemporaneously
with Calidore, and King Arthur "long time after Calidore"
with the Round Table knights, Pelleas and Lameroke. It
becomes apparent that while time exists in the world of The
Faerie Queene, it is not conventional time. As for T. S.
Eliot, for Spenser, "history is a pattern / Of timeless
moments" ("Little Gidding" 234-35). His entire epic takes
place in a kind of eternal now, in which Elizabeth's England
and Arthur's Britain merge and separate. Once again,
Spenser would likely have approved of Eliot's line, "History
is now and England" (237). The nation's experience is the
nation. It is not a part of the past, but of the
present--its total identity.

Malory, with his retrospective vision of the great
kingdom that was Arthur's, stands in contrast to this. For
him, history is largely what was, although he often draws
parallels with his present and hopes to reestablish the
admirable institutions of the past, not yet extinct. The
retrospective nature of his vision intensifies with his
narratorial intrusions in the final books. At the end of
Book 18 he contrasts love in his present with that in
Arthur's days: "Ryghte soo fareth loue nowadayes: sone hote,
soone cold. . . . But the old loue was not so: men and
wymmen coude loue togyders seuen yeres and no lycours lustes

were bitwene them; and thenne was loue trouthe and
feythfulnes" (18.25). And at the beginning of Book 21, he
compares the fickleness of his contemporaries with that of
their alleged ancestors who side with Mordred:

> Lo, ye all Englisshmen, see ye not what a myschyef
> here was? For he that was the moost kyng and
> knyght of the world, and moost loued the felyshyp
> of noble knyghtes, and by hym they were al
> vpholden, now myght not this Englysshmen holde
> them contente wyth hym. Loo, thus was the olde
> custome and vsage of this londe, and also men saye
> that we of thys londe haue not yet loste ne
> foryeten that custome and vsage. Alas, thys is a
> grete defaulte of vs Englysshemen, for there may
> nothynge plese us noo terme. (21.1).

Both works, however, insofar as they are completed,
leave history behind as trivial in the light of eternity.
Arthur's final dream shows him as he truly is in temporal
terms, perched briefly at the top of Fortune's Wheel, only
to be cast down. When Gawain, with a bevy of fair ladies,
appears posthumously in a vision to warn Arthur of his
imminent death, we sense that he has passed happily from the
strife of Arthur's earthly realm to a place where
reconciliation and restoration are truly possible. Only
there does Gawain fully realize the rewards of virtuous
knighthood: "Alle these ben ladyes for whome I haue foughten
whanne I was man lyuynge" (21.3). The wounded Arthur
expresses his final concern to his knights: "Praye for my
soule" (21.5). The most important surviving knights abandon
temporal concerns to become monks, and Guenevere takes the
veil. Finally, at the moment of Lancelot's death, the

former Bishop of Canterbury sees in a dream "Syr Launcelot with . . . mo aungellis than euer I sawe men in one day." Lancelot is quickly borne up, "and the yates of heuen opened ayenst hym" (21.12).

As much importance as Malory places on secular knighthood and temporal kingship, the end of his Arthuriad evokes a strong sense of their transitoriness, yet, at the same time, their fulfillment in eternity. The effect of this final section is one of epiphany. Gawain and Lancelot are rewarded in a final sense for their knighthood. The entire history of the Round Table takes on a gathering new significance from a vantage point beyond history.

The Mutabilitie Cantos, which, intentionally or not, provide an evocative capstone for The Faerie Queene's six completed books, also generate a sense of time being absorbed into eternity. The wheel of Change recalls Fortune's Wheel from which Arthur tumbles down:

> What man that sees the euer-whirling wheele
>   Of Change, the which all mortal things doth sway,
>   But that therby doth find, and plainly feel,
>   How MUTABILITY in them doth play
>   Her cruell sports, to many mens decay?
>   (vi.1.1-5)

The trial of Mutability and the panoramic vision from Arlo-hill trigger a moment of epiphany, and a turning toward "that same time when no more Change shall be, / But stedfast rest of all things firmly stayd / Vpon the pillours of Eternity" (viii.2.2-4).

In Anatomy of Criticism, Frye defines "epiphany" as

"the symbolic presentation of the point at which the undisplaced apocalyptic world and the cyclical world of nature come into alignment" (203). Epiphany, in Frye's terms, usually represents some kind of movement between earth and heaven, its usual settings being "the mountain-top, the island, the tower, the lighthouse, and the ladder or staircase" (203). While no such loci appear at the end of The Morte Darthur, its twenty-first book, as I have just discussed, becomes in effect the holy mountain, the connection between time and eternity, in the romance. There is a turning from earthly affairs toward heavenly ones--but the former are ennobled rather than devalued by the latter. The Mutabilitie Cantos place us among "the Gods assembled all on Arlo hill" (vii.3.2), whence may be seen a comprehensive vision of all things being purposively swept toward Eternity by Mutability. The temporal activity of both works is thus redeemed and brought into more significant perspective by a mythopoeic synthesis. True to form, however, Malory, the realist, achieves that synthesis via mimetic action consistent with the literally accepted Christian world view of his time. Spenser, on the other hand, applies a pagan cosmology, long defunct, that will elevate the reader to a none-the-less Christian vision of the universe, a "Sabaoth's sight."[15]

CONCLUSION

What I have sought to demonstrate through this study is
not only the interrelatedness of two literary works, but
also the transmission of one of the grandest of English
literary traditions. The Faerie Queene is the critical
nexus that brought Arthurian literature across an
historically transitional period; The Morte Darthur was its
most vital link with the main corpus of that tradition.

Spenser's genius and the secret of his success was his
ability to amalgamate romance and epic form and material
into a potent and historically relevant synthesis. As we
have seen, the medieval romances had suffered under humanist
scrutiny. At the same time, while ancient epic and other
classical genres were admired and imitated, the content was
culturally and historically distant. Spenser saw the epic
possibilities of Britain's greatest legend; he also saw that
epic history was in the making with the alleged final
descendant of Arthur on the throne, Spain defeated, and the
prospects for a Protestant empire beginning to look very
real. But he also saw the value of romance form, from which
the native British material could not without damage be
divorced. Failing to recognize this consideration was the
downfall of Thomas Hughes' 1587 tragedy, The Misfortunes of
Arthur. Much as Shakespeare managed to conflate the
conventions of medieval English drama and Senecan tragedy
with historical matter, both ancient and recent, Spenser

succeeded in balancing multiple genres, primarily romance
and classical epic, but also, among others, chronicle,
biblical narrative, and pastoral. Romance provided the
broad expanses in which these genres could coexist; epic set
the grandness of the scope and themes, and the high
rhetorical style; romance tempered this grandness and
stabilized this highness.

In studying The Faerie Queene as an intertext, I have
treated but one segment of the poem's intertextual
space—medieval chivalric romance—and I have further
restricted the focus to a single literary constituent of
this space—The Morte Darthur. In doing so, I believe that
I have shown to a greater degree than yet has been, not only
the extent of influence of that single constituent, but also
its significance. Spenser was well aware of the power
Arthurian romance had to speak to Elizabethans, contingent
on his rendering it in a form which suited their tastes.
"Heroical" (i.e. epic), stated Sidney, ". . . is not only a
kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of poetry"
(166). To the same intent, Sir Thomas Elyot proclaimed:
"There is no lesson for a yonge gentil man to be compared
with Homere," placing Virgil's Aeneid a close second (37).
Spenser approached his chivalric material with such critical
dicta well in mind. As E. M. W. Tillyard points out, "In
Spenser . . . we have to do with a poet who chose to compete
with the chief epic poets, ancient and modern, . . . and who
knew precisely the rules of the competition" (263). We can

see this in such formal features of <u>The Faerie Queene</u> as a
projected twelve-book Virgilian structure; an epic opening
that echoes Virgil, Ariosto, and Tasso; adaptation of the
Italian ottava rima into his own "Spenserian stanza"; and a
regular iambic pentameter, a suitable English substitute for
the hexameters of Homer and Virgil. With these epic and
romance-epic features he combined his limpidly expansive,
softly ambling romance style, and romance characters,
themes, and plot-structure.

More than these formal features, however, Spenser's
fictionalizing approach enabled him to revitalize Arthurian
romance for his day. Medieval Arthurian romance had lost
much of its validity for a generation that largely
recognized its lack of veracity. Spenser's strategy was to
resurrect its disinherited heroes, not as historical
personages so much as symbols, applying them as speaking
pictures of moral and religious virtues couched in a
pleasing fiction. A final key strategy of Spenser's in
reapplying Arthurian romance to his own times was connecting
his Malorian source material with the living medieval
features of Elizabethan culture, such as the pageants, the
cult of honor, the Order of the Garter, and the Tudor
monarchy itself. These cultural features, as I have shown,
also make up part of the work's intertext.

By these means, Spenser proved that Malory was, despite
Ascham's vituperations, constructively relevant to his own
setting. Through Spenser's intertext, a new generation read

Malory--hence the Arthurian legends--recast to meet its specific needs and tastes. What had been the province of the Middle Ages, he brought into the modern world. Among this study's wider implications is the precedent set by Spenser in the English tradition for later authors who would reinterpret the tales for successive ages. I believe that significant work could be done on how Spenser's _tour de force_ affected later retellings. Dryden's politically allegorical drama, _King Arthur_, shows Spenserian influence and treats the traditional Arthurian materials with a free hand. We can only wonder what influence _The Faerie Queene_ would have shed upon the Arthurian epic envisioned but never written by Milton, who considered Spenser "a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas." Although Tennyson's _Idylls of the King_, Twain's _Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court_, and T. H. White's _Once and Future King_ show more direct indebtedness to Malory than Spenser, it would be interesting to explore the implications of Spenser's post-medieval recasting for later works such as these. One could also consider such questions as how Spenser's "modernized" humanist retelling may have affected, for example, T. S. Eliot's angst-filled modernist rendering of the Grail theme in _The Waste Land_.

Finally, I believe that this study carries some significant implications for theories of intertextual criticism. Because a literary text is in one sense a focused expression of the cultural and historical setting

which has produced it, those factors cannot properly be excluded from consideration as part of the text's intertextual space. The working assumption of intertextual theory is that no text is a monolith, but rather a surface construct underlain by a network of other texts as reconstructed in the author's mind. If no text is a monolith, then neither is literature itself. First, the works which the author has read (and, moreover, those he has not read which have influenced them) have been shaped by their historico-cultural contexts. Furthermore, when the author reads them, he is not reading the works per se, or the works as they were understood by contemporaneous audiences; he is reading them as his own setting and experience have conditioned him to interpret them. Therefore, in order to grasp a writer's reading and reapplication of a work in his intertext, we must take into account the historico-cultural _milieux_ of both works. Without doing so, we can understand neither the nature of the work or works being examined as part of the intertextual space, nor the nature of the author's reapplication in his own composition.

It is my hope that this study will provide a useful model for such an application of intertextual criticism, particularly for relations between works spanning some transitional period, as from the late Middle Ages to the Renaissance in England. I also hope that it will prove a

springboard for further inquiry into the relationship between _The Faerie Queene_ and _The Morte Darthur_ in particular, and _The Faerie Queene_ and Arthurian romance in general, both topics neglected in this century partly because of the authoritative pronouncements of certain respected critics.

NOTES

Chapter One

1 Bennett, in <u>The Evolution of </u>"The Faerie Queene," cites several earlier critics who consider Arthur's role in the poem superfluous: Richard Hurd, Thomas Warton, R. E. N. Dodge, W. L. Renwick (53-54). This is not, of course, necessarily tantamount to a lack of influence from medieval chivalric romances. But Rosemond Tuve notes that Bennett presupposes "epic structure, not romance structure" in her own discussion (346 n.). Spenser's twelve-book structure and his stated Homeric and Virgilian intentions (<u>Letter to Raleigh</u>) have led some in this way to underestimate the importance of the romances to <u>The Faerie Queene</u>. With regards to the particular chivalric romance in our view, Lilian Winstanley, in her 1920 edition of <u>The Faerie Queene</u>, speculates that Roger Ascham "probably . . . dissuaded or helped to dissuade Spenser from making much use of Malory's <u>Morte d'Arthur</u>" (lxviii).

2 Although Warton downplays the importance of Arthur's role (see n. 1), he recognizes the importance of chivalric romance to the poem as a whole.

3 Kristeva insinuates the same elsewhere in <u>Semiotike</u>. She refers to "culture" as "le texte général . . . dont elle

[particular texts--"organisations textuelles"] font partie
et qui fait partie d'elles" (113). This reciprocal
relationship is central to her idea of text as ideologeme:

> L'acceptation d'un texte comme un idéologème
> determine la démarche même d'une sémiotique qui,
> en étudiant le texte comme une intertextualité, le
> pense ainsi dans (le texte de) la société et
> l'histoire. L'idéologème d'un texte est le foyer
> dans lequel la rationalité connaissante saisit la
> transformation des énoncés (auxquels le texte est
> irreductible) en un tout (le texte), de même que
> les insertions de cette totalité dans le texte
> historique et social. (114)

4   Vinaver's suggestion that Malory intentionally
desacralizes the Tale of the Sankgreal must be qualified in
the light of Sandra Ness Ihle's more recent work, Malory's
Grail Quest. In comparing Malory's version of the Grail
story with its source, Ihle has found that the author's
tendency is to condense, concretize, and simplify
supernatural features that are diffuse and ineffable in the
Queste del Saint Graal. The Grail itself, for instance,
Malory transforms "from a vessel through which God has
worked miracles" to "the vessel containing Christ" (44).
Ihle comments:

> Such specificity is never found in the Queste, for
> in that work the entire narrative is a product of
> the gradual unveiling of what man can partially
> know of the meaning of the Grail. Malory, in
> contrast, is clearly establishing a specific
> meaning for the Grail from the beginning, one that
> is readily understood in Eucharistic terms. (44)

Therefore, while Malory does shift the focus of his Tale
of the Sankgreal from heavenly to earthly chivalry and from

spiritually allegorical to concrete meaning, he does not desacralize his rendering in the wholesale manner that Vinaver suggests.

5 For this citation I quote from Vinaver's edition of the Winchester MS since Caxton's edition has deleted it. See chapter two, pp. 51-57, for discussion of variations between Caxton's edition and the Winchester version.

6 On the attitudes of Ascham, More, and Erasmus toward chivalric romance see chapter 3, p. 104.

7 Malory's and Spenser's attitudes toward the historicity of their material are discussed more fully in chapters five and six.

8 All biblical quotations used with reference to Spenser's work are from the Geneva Bible of 1560.

1 Lumiansky and the contributors to <u>Malory's Originality: A</u>
<u>Critical Study of</u> "Le Morte Darthur" represent some of the
strongest proponents of unity in <u>The Morte Darthur</u>. Eugene
Vinaver has been its most vehement opponent (Introduction,
<u>The Works of Sir Thomas Malory</u> xli-li). The heyday of the
unity controversy seems to be over, however. In 1983 Sandra
Ness Ihle wrote,

> Recent scholarship tends to ignore the unity
> debate and refuses either to argue for unity or to
> maintain with Vinaver that Malory wrote eight
> books rather than one. This is a fruitful
> attitude, in that it frees scholars to examine
> other aspects of Malory's art" (<u>Malory's Grail</u>
> <u>Quest</u> 172 n. 6).

2 It is true that Caxton in his <u>Prologue</u> speaks of <u>The</u>
<u>Morte Darthur</u> as "a book" (2), and that he adds a colophon
stating "Thus endeth thys noble and ioyous book entytled Le
Morte Darthur" (<u>Caxton's Malory</u> 600). But Vinaver contends
that in doing so he obscured the true nature of the work
(Introduction xxv-xli), and since the additions are the
printer's and not the author's, they are unreliable as
reflections of Malory's intentions.

3 Brewer presents no evidence for this claim.

4 Draper comments:

> Much of the material that went to the making of

> the poem, Malory supplied in just this form:
> loosely connected books that, as they commonly
> derive their substance from separate poems,
> commonly exalt different heroes to the place of
> prominence; and, obviously, it is quite natural
> that, in composing a new group of Arthurian poems,
> . . . Spenser should have cast his new stories in
> the disjointed, cyclic mould in which he had found
> a large share of his narrative material. (315)

It is especially significant, in connection with my further

discussion in this chapter, that Draper made this

observation ten years before the discovery of the Winchester

MS.

5 In _The Rise of Romance_, Vinaver effectively summarizes

the formal contrast between the works of Malory and the

earlier Arthurian romancers:

> the traditional matter of medieval romance is
> still _his_ [Malory's] world, but the form is not.
> He is aware of the intricacies and the dangers of
> his French books of chivalry, and he also knows
> that short of allowing his knights-errant to lose
> all sense of direction, there are only two ways of
> dealing with them: one is to let them go on
> weaving the fabric of their adventures exactly as
> they did in the great Arthurian Cycle, and the
> other to make each knight complete any adventure
> he undertakes before embarking upon the next.
> Inevitably, Malory prefers the latter method . . .
> (127)

See also my discussion of Malory's treatment of the

interlacing in the French Prose romances, below, pp. 57-59.

6 A number of critics have complained of the scantiness of

Arthur's role in the poem. W. J. B. Owen calls his

introduction into the poem "an attempt to impose unity on the whole and subordination on minor motifs" which, he concludes, "contributes little or nothing towards this end" (1087). W. L. Renwick criticizes: "The place of Prince Arthur in the epic-romance was never quite clearly worked out; his appearances are fitful and unrelated, and this naturally obscures the expression of the virtue he represents" (176). Richard Hurd commented: "The adventure of Prince Arthur, whatever the author pretended and his critic too easily believed, was but an afterthought" (70). Arthur's role in the poem, however, is what any reader of medieval Arthurian romances would expect. Arthur is central and essential, but not highly visible or dominant in the action. Rosemond Tuve comments: "As Arthur's primitive kingship and symbolic embodiment of the fellowship of the Round Table did not make him actually a dominant character in the Arthurian romances but simply more basic, so Spenser's transformed Arthur, a piece of great originality in the _Faerie Queene_, is more important to structure and design than to the flow of the narrative" (358).

7 The explicits, interestingly, have been implemented to bolster both sides of the unity controversy. Brewer (below, pp. 50-51) applies them to his argument for unity, and Vinaver (Introduction xxxvi-xxxvii) to his stance to the contrary. As Vinaver correctly observes, some of the explicits tend toward continuity and some toward closure.

It is hard to know precisely what was Malory's intention from the explicits alone. But Malory's intention is not so much my concern here as what Spenser may have found usable in Malory's structure--even if it was an element which Malory had only partly or ambiguously developed.

8 Caxton's explicit reads: "Thus endeth the fyfthe booke, of the conqueste that Kynge Arthur hadde ageynste Lucius, the Emperoure of Rome. And here foloweth the syxth book, whiche is of Syr Launcelot du Lake" (5.12). The opening of Caxton's book of Lancelot is identical to that of the Winchester version, except for some spellings.

9 Matthews' argument is in an unpublished paper, read posthumously at the Eleventh International Arthurian Congress in 1975. Unfortunately, I have access to it only through the recapitulations of Lumiansky (890-91), Moorman (99-100), and Spisak (618-19).

10 For discussion of a specific textual problem with the notion that Malory himself revised the Caxton edition see chapter 6, pp. 190-91.

11 The first piece of physical evidence consisted of ink smudges, some of them discernible as reversed letters

matching the distinctive types Caxton was using between 1480
and 1483. These marks were caused when pages with wet ink
were laid face-down on the open manuscript. The second bit
of evidence was a scrap from an indulgence printed by Caxton
in 1489, used to mend a torn manuscript folio (Hellinga
127-34).

12 Crane and Esdaile both date East's edition between 1581
and 1586. More recently, however, Josephine Waters Bennett
has argued for an earlier date, based on the comments of
Sidney's tutor Nathaniel Baxter, who, "in the dedication of
his translation of Calvin's Sermons (1578), deplores the
'reading of vile & blasphemous, or at lest of prophan &
friuolous bokes, such as are that infamous legend of K.
Arthur (which with shame inough I heare to be newly
imprinted)'" (Evolution 75,76 n.). Barry Gaines holds 1579
to be the actual year of Baxter's dedication and concludes,
"thus 1578 seems the appropriate date" for East's edition
(11).

13 Caxton erroneously states that his edition contains 507
chapters (Prologue 4). See Lumiansky, 887 n.

14 Ihle treats Malory's Tale of the Sankgreal and the Queste
del Saint Graal. The architectural analogy applies equally,
however, to the other French Vulgate Cycle romances, which,

as we have discussed, were highly interwoven, and to the
other tales of <u>The Morte Darthur</u>, which Malory sought to
present in continuous fashion. See also Ihle's article "The
Style of Partiality: Gothic Architecture and the Vulgate
Cycle of Arthurian Romances."

Chapter Three

1   The number refers to plate 5, <u>Pageant of the Birth, Life,</u>
<u>and Death of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, K. G.</u>
<u>(1389-1439)</u>, ed. Viscount Dillon and W. H. St. John Hope
(London 1914).

2   Walther observes some parallels between Caxton's <u>Prologue</u>
and Spenser's <u>Letter</u>, and briefly refers to the similarities
in the overall plans of the two works which they indicate:
". . . in dem Plan der Faerie Queene und des Morte Darthur
lassen sich einige wesentliche Übereinstimmungen nachweisen,
wenngleich Spenser hier in der Hauptsache sich an Ariost
angeschlossen zu haben scheint" (5-7).

3   Spenser says that he means to emulate Homer and Virgil,
who in their heroes have "ensampled a good gouernour and a
vertuous man." He is thus consciously placing himself in
the mainstream of Renaissance interpretive theory of the
classical epics. The hero is a perfect man presented for
emulation by readers. James Nohrnberg writes:

> The <u>Aeneid</u> was generally regarded by the
> Renaissance as the representation of the whole man
> in all his parts. Speaking of the desirability of
> discovering the moral sense in Virgil, Petrarch
> writes that the poet's 'end and subject seem to me
> to be a perfect man' . . . . Virgil's
> glorification of Aeneas is permissible, because it
> is 'as if he was not describing Aeneas, but the
> brave and perfect man under the name of Aeneas.'
> (29-30)

Two of the most important Elizabethan proponents of this approach to epic are Philip Sidney and Thomas Elyot. Elyot argues that through "the worthy commendation and laude of noble princis" in Homer "the reders shall be so all inflamed, that they most feruently shall desire and coueite, by the imitation of their vertues, to acquire semblable glorie" (qtd. in Nohrnberg 47). Sidney asserts as the design of the heroic poet "to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses" (qtd. in Nohrnberg 29). Nohrnberg remarks: "In view of this tradition, it is not surprising that the heroic poem, according to the Renaissance authors, has as its end the 'institution' of a praiseworthy man who may be a model to other men" (30).

4 Although in places Spenser makes a humorous pretense of claims to historical veracity. He defends the "famous antique history" of Faery Land against the objection that no one has been there, on the grounds that other previously unknown regions have recently been discovered (II.Proem.1,2; cf. II.x.10.6-9,49.5,66.8-9,III.iii.7-10,vi.8).

5 This comparison is mildly complicated by Arthur's pursuit of Florimell in Book III. Spenser makes clear, however, that this chase is driven by purer motives than Ferrau and Rinaldo's of Angelica, for Arthur "ment / To her no euill thought, nor euill deed" (iv.50.2-3). Canto i identifies the pursuit of Florimell allegorically as "beauties chace"

(19.2).

6 Knight's suggestion here that the effects of a market
economy were relatively negligible in previous centuries
needs qualification. Sidney Painter relates that shortly
after the appearance of towns in twelfth century France,
"there were merchants and master craftsmen who could adorn
their bodies and fill their stomachs on a more lavish scale
than most knights could afford." He adds that "one purpose
of mediaeval sumptuary legislation was to prevent the
burgher from vying with the noble in richness of dress"
(24-25). Chaucer's Sir Thopas aims its satire at what had
become a familiar figure by the fourteenth century:
"nouveaux riches Flemish merchants . . . commonly seen in
London and the Low Countries" who for "their aspirations to
knighthood were ridiculed by the nobility of England and
France" (Garbaty 398).

7 Arthur personally, and with some persuasion, manages to
recruit Tristram as a member of the Round Table in 10.6.

8 Ferguson names Lord Berners and Stephen Hawes as two old-
school proponents of chivalry in the sixteenth century who
stand as relative exceptions:

> To the end of their days they spoke the language
> of a chivalric culture. But it is apparent that
> they had also felt the cooler breezes of the new
> intellectual season. They stand, in fact, just at
> the end of the era in which it was still possible

to take chivalry seriously; and they already show signs of the coming tendency to treat its traditions either romantically, largely for pleasure, or as something at best but supplementary to the broader vision of society of which the mind of Renaissance England was capable. They are in consequence difficult to assess. (Indian Summer 58-59)

9   Although Malory's characters seem quite flat by present-day standards, they are usually lifelike in comparison with Spenser's and, occasionally, even by modern standards. Maynadier selects several verisimilar portrayals of human actions from The Morte Darthur:

> Lancelot . . . is thoroughly alive when, on one of his visits to Windsor Forest, where he liked to "lie down, and see the well spring and bubble, and sometime he slept there," he is unfortunate enough to encounter a lady of no more accurate aim than many others of her sex. While he slept one day, this lady, who, Malory says, was "a great huntress," aiming an arrow at a hind, by misfortune overshot the hind, and "the arrow smote Sir Lancelot in the thick of the thigh, over the barbs. When Sir Lancelot felt himself so hurt, he hurled up woodly, and saw the lady that had smitten him. And when he saw that she was a woman, he said thus, Lady or damsel, what that thou be, in an evil time bare ye a bow, the devil made you a shooter" [18.21]. When Iseult was tired of disputing with Palamides, "then La Beale Isoud held down her head, and said no more at that time" [10.77]. When Lancelot had overcome Meliagrance, and looked to Guenever to see what she would have done with the caitiff, "then the queen wagged her head . . . as though she would slay him. Full well knew Sir Lancelot by the wagging of her head that she would have had him dead" [19.9]. (233)

Maynadier adds, "often these knights and ladies speak as well as move like real people, though never with marked individuality."

10 For other Malorian usages in <u>The Faerie Queene,</u> see chapter 6, pp. 198-99.

11 Xenophon (<u>Hellenica</u> III.4.19) accounts thus for Agesilaus' strategy: "The Persians had such soft, white skin because they always wore clothes and rode in carriages; hence, seeing them stripped, the Spartans would conclude that their enemies were no better than women" (Farneworth 129).

12 It is necessary to qualify that the standards of the medieval knight often applied only to Christians of noble class. Painter writes that when English and French knights lacked opportunity for honing their skills in chivalrous combat against one another, their "favorite resort . . . was Prussia, where the members of the Teutonic order were gradually slashing Christianity into the native inhabitants" (59).

13 West is inexplicit as to what exactly he means by "the lance" here. George Gush specifies the types and distributions of lances used by English cavalry during the sixteenth century:

> 'Men-at-Arms', with heavy lance, full armour, and often barded horse, were still used in the first half of the century, but were few in number, though of high quality . . . . Much more numerous were the 'demi-lances', ... [who]

> carried a lighter lance, and later pistols, and
> formed the main English heavy cavalry up to the
> end of the century. According to Sir Roger
> Williams, in the late 16th Century, demilances
> formed a fifth of the English cavalry, the rest
> being light horse, but the proportions in the
> militia were nearer 1:3. (36)

14 In the light of this information, had Lancelot been apprehended, he of necessity would have suffered the same "remedy," which further explains why Arthur was reluctant to notice the affair.

15 Vinaver points out that in Malory's French prose source "Tristram is set adrift upon the sea in a rudderless boat and fate takes him to Ireland" (Commentary 1458). By this alteration, he says, "M[alory] has avoided any suggestion of the supernatural." Additionally, though, this change strengthens the contrast between Mark's attitude toward Tristram before and after their unintended love rivalry. The fact that Mark understands very well how he should treat his most valuable knight deepens his culpability when he changes his behavior.

16 Mark should also by rights have been extremely dedicated to Tristram as his sister's son, just as Arthur is to Gawain. Tacitus observed the importance of this particular kinship tie among the first-century Germans: "Sister's sons are held in as much esteem by their uncles as by their fathers; indeed, some regard the relation as even more sacred and binding and prefer it in receiving hostages"

(719). We witness the similar attitudes of Hygelac toward Beowulf, and of Charlemagne toward Roland.

17 Malory disjoins his account of Tristram's death from the Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones and, rather than directly narrating it, has Lancelot relate it incidentally. This treatment deemphasizes the story as one of tragic love and yet allows Malory to maximize Mark's depravity.

18 In the Winchester MS. and Caxton's edition of 1485, the knight is identified as Palomides. In his edition of Caxton's Malory, however, Spisak replaces this with "Breuse saunce Pyte," as found in Wynkyn de Worde's 1498 reprinting of Caxton's edition, on the grounds that it enables him "to make sense of the entire conversation, especially Palomides' response to the tydynges he hears" (Notes 709).

19 Fortescue cites the French monarch, for his self-interested oppression of his subjects, as an example of a tyrant: "Wich thynge þough it be nowe colourid per jus regale, yet it is tyranne. Ffor, as Seynt Thomas saith, whan a kinge rulith his reaume only to his owne profite, and not to the good off is [sic] subiectes, he is a tyrant" (117).

20 Certain of the French chivalric romances were highly allegorical, especially those incorporating the Grail

legend, such as <u>Perlesvaus</u> and <u>L'Histoire del Sainte Graal</u>. Malory's attitude toward the symbolism of such stories is indicated by the fact that he rendered his own version of the Grail legend as a straightforward tale of chivalric adventure.

21 We may compare, for interest, Gawain's shield in <u>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</u> (II.vi-vii), with the multivalent mystical, devotional, and moral symbolism borne by its pentangle.

22 Leslie comments: "Nowhere is the abandonment of the traditional heraldry of King Arthur more evident than in the Prince's shield, for nowhere is King Arthur said to possess a blank or diamond shield" (23-24). This is not entirely true. In Lambeth Palace MS. 84, Arthur uses "a shelde of glasse" to destroy some ferocious wildcats that are ravaging the countryside (Matheson "Arthurian Stories" 86-87). It is unlikely, of course, that Spenser was aware of such an account, and in giving Arthur a blank shield he is certainly departing from the main body of Arthurian tradition--which is, after all, part of his strategy in presenting him as Prince Arthur. (See chapter 5, pp.157,160-67.)

Chapter Four

1   Bennett cites each of these critics' perspectives in
The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene," pp. 53-54.

2   The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* may be more allegorical
than *The Morte Darthur*, but it certainly does not present
Arthur as favorably. Karl Heinz Göller describes the poem
as a kind of "parable" of the Hundred Years War in which
"fourteenth century disillusionment with royal war and its
consequences has been transferred to a faraway and
fictitious world . . ." (17). At the same time, Göller
cautions not "to read the *AMA* as a *roman à clef*, or to draw
a one-to-one relationship between specific historical
personalities and major figures in the poem" (17).

3   H.S. Bennett comments that "a few" medieval romances
"still survived" in the latter part of the sixteenth
century. He mentions *Bevis of Hampton*, *Blanchardine*, *Guy
of Warwick*, *Huon of Bordeaux*, and *Octavian* (250 n.1), most
of which, he writes, "appeared only once during the whole of
the period, a striking contrast from the earlier part of the
century, by when at least fifty editions of various romances
had been published since Caxton's time" (250). Therefore,
although Malory's work "only appears in the edition of
1585," this would still make it the most popular Arthurian
romance of the period. This statistic becomes even more

significant when we consider, as Bennett relates, that "Even Chaucer himself was no longer popular enough to warrant a separate edition either of The Canterbury Tales or of Troilus and Criseyde, so that readers wanting a copy of these were forced to buy the folio of his 'Works' published in 1561, and again in 1598 (revised 1602)" (250). The dates for other early editions of The Morte Darthur are 1485, 1498, 1529, 1557, and 1634. H. S. Bennett's 1585 date, first proposed by H. Oskar Sommer, has been reevaluated as being closer to 1578 (J. W. Bennett Evolution 76 n.). See chapter 2, p. 54 and note 12, for additional discussion of early editions of Malory.

4 Göller notes that as Arthur progresses eastward, he becomes increasingly brutal and the author shifts his tone to distance himself from Arthur and his men:

> From Arthur's siege of Metz onwards, the author changes his position and is less willing to identify himself with Arthur's men. In his final lament for Arthur it is characteristic of his attitude towards 'his' sovereign that he no longer speaks of 'our king' but of 'this comlyche Kynge' (3218) and says bluntly 'Thus endis Kyng Arthure' (4342), with no romantic idea of his return from Avalon. In describing Arthur's war in Tuscany the poet uses such words as 'wastys' (3516), 'vnsparely' (3160) and 'dispetouslye' (3159) which are an obvious indication of his criticism of the wastefulness of war. (26-27)

5 Göller points out that in the poem

> It is Arthur who causes misery: 'wandrethe he wroghte' (3157) and he 'turmentez þe pople' (3153). Lines 3032-43 are similar to a

description of a <u>chevauchée</u> in Edward's reign
where villages were pillaged and burnt and
everything devastated. The poet exclaims: 'The
pyne of þe pople was peté for to here' (3043).
After this brutal assault, the common people are
seen streaming out of the town into the woods,
helpless refugees clutching their goods and
chattels (3068-71). In Metz, minsters, hospitals,
churches and chapels are struck down and razed to
the ground, and of course, houses and inns as well
(3038-42). When the city of Como is beseiged, the
poet mentions poor people and herdsmen who are
leading the swine to pasture (3120-1 [sic, 3104]).
Arthur's men slay everyone in their path (3126
[sic, 3108]). Eventually, all upper Italy is laid
waste. Here, as in many other countries, Arthur
'has schedde myche blode and schalkes distroyede,
Sakeles, in cirquytrie' (3398-9). (27)

6 Hamilton comments, "The great height of the Spanish ships
is alluded to in <u>hye</u> " (583).

7 Arthur is referred to as "the Infant" in three other
places: II.viii.56.1;xi.25.7;VI.viii.25.1. In these cases,
the usage seems to signify merely "a youth of noble or
gentle birth" ("Infant" sb[1] 3, <u>OED</u>). The circumstances of
the usage in Book V, however, certainly invite a reading of
"infant" as "a prince or princess of Spain or Portugal"
("Infant" sb[2]).

8 I contend that, allegory aside, Malory believed he was
writing about something of far greater importance than "the
rise and fall of a legendary kingdom." See my discussion of
Malory's historiography in the next chapter.

9 Aurner qualifies, "I do not for a moment imply that the

<u>Morte Darthur</u> is merely an obscure <u>roman à clef</u>. If it were
possible to equate even the leading knights of Malory's work
with the prominent men of his age, it would long since have
been done" (365).

10 The Winchester rendering of Arthur's message is more
diffuse but of the same intent. He addresses the senators:

> '. . . presente thes corses unto the proude
> Potestate and aftir [shewe] hym my lettyrs and my
> hole entente. And telle hem in haste they shall
> se me, and I trow they woll beware how they bourde
> with me and my knyghtes . . . . Now sey ye to the
> Potestate and all the lordys aftir that I sende
> hem the trybet that I owe to Rome, for this is the
> trew trybet that I and myne elders have loste this
> ten score wyntyrs. And sey hem as mesemes I have
> sente hem the hole somme, and yf they thynke hit
> nat inowe, I shall amende hit whan that I com.
> And ferthermore I charge you to saye to them never
> to demaunde trybute ne taxe of me ne of my londes,
> for suche tresoure muste they take as happyns us
> here.' (225-26)

Hieatt does not mention that the payment of tribute in
corpses appears in other accounts based on Geoffrey.
Malory, however, develops the idea much more fully than the
chronicles. Geoffrey briefly recounts that Arthur "ordered
the body of Lucius [not of the other senators] to be carried
to the Senate, with a message that no other tribute could be
expected from Britain" (x.13). The Prose <u>Brut</u> is slightly
more expansive:

> and þe Emperourres body he lete take and put oppon
> a bere, & sent hit to Rome, and sent to say to þe
> Romaynes þat 'as for Britaigne & Fraunce whiche
> þat he helde, oþere truage he wolde none paie; and
> if þai axend him eny oþere, ri3t suche he wolde

ham paye.' (87)

11 Hieatt lists references for other occurrences of "defray" in Spenser's works: FQ I.v.42.8;IV.v.31.9;V.xi.41.5;VI.viii. 24.3 (190 n.9).

12 Lewis, in Spenser's Images of Life, sets forth what appears to be an important principle for interpreting Spenser's historical allegory:

> We should not say 'To appreciate Belphoebe we must think about Elizabeth I'; but rather 'To understand the ritual compliment Spenser is paying Elizabeth, we must study Belphoebe.' The movement of the interpreting mind is from the real people into the work of art, not out of the work to them. (17)

13 It is interesting, but perhaps only coincidental, that the first published edition of The Morte Darthur came out in 1485, the year of Henry VII's accession to the throne. Caxton's colophon describes the work as having been "enprynted, and fynysshed in th'Abbey Westmestre the last day of Juyl, the yere of Our Lord M.CCCC.LXXXV."

14 Millican credits Professor Joshua Whatmough for the English translation (13).

15 Caxton's edition deletes Malory's sole reference to British Trojan origins. In the Winchester MS. Sir Clegis taunts his foreign foes: "'from Troy Brute brought myne elders'" (213).

16 This fact further refutes those who insist that Arthur, because of the scarcity of his appearances in the poem, must be an unessential afterthought. See chapter 2, note 4, above.

17 As Leslie mentions, "The number varied from La3amon's sixteen hundred, to one hundred and fifty in Malory, to twelve elsewhere" (188).

18 Geoffrey Ashe renders a detailed description of the Winchester Round Table as it now exists in the great hall of Winchester Castle:

> Strictly speaking, it is a table-top only, since
> the legs--twelve of them, to judge from the
> mortise holes--are gone. It is made of oak, and
> is eighteen feet across and two and three-quarter
> inches thick. The weight is about a ton and a
> quarter. Today, it is fixed to the wall high
> above the floor and is painted in twenty-four
> segments, green and white, allotted to knights
> whose names appear around the rim. They would
> have been rather crowded, shoulder to shoulder,
> and all the more so because there is also a place
> for Arthur himself with a picture of a king. At
> the center is a rose. The paintwork is easier to
> date than the table. Henry VIII had it done in
> 1522 for a state visit by the emperor Charles V.
> The pictured king is Henry himself, with the beard
> that he had recently grown, and the rose is a
> Tudor rose. The whole design was repainted in the
> eighteenth century without change. As for the
> table itself, one conjecture is that it was made
> for Edward III in 1344, when he formed a project
> for reviving the Arthurian knighthood (he gave up
> the notion and founded the Order of the Garter
> instead). In 1976-77, the table was moved out
> from the wall and subjected to a series of tests.
> Indications in the method of carpentry, and
> tree-ring patterns in the wood, appeared to

> support the Edward III theory, but carbon-dating
> suggested a slightly earlier time. (634-35)

Ashe concludes that the table now appears to have been "made

for a type of aristocratic festival known as a Round Table."

He notes that Edward I "attended at least five, organizing a

lavish one himself in 1299 to celebrate his second

marriage" and conjectures that "the Winchester Table could

have been made for that occasion" (635).

19 Problematic, of course, is that Book IV of the extant

Faerie Queene features two titular heroes, Cambello and

Telamond (Triamond). This may be reconciled by the fact

that the two are metaphysically unified in friendship.

20 Carrie A. Harper summarizes in her dissertation on

Spenser's use of the chronicles in The Faerie Queene:

> While apparently following Geoffrey of Monmouth in
> the main, he also draws from Hardyng, Holinshed,
> and Stow, and from the Mirror for Magistrates, and
> to the material gathered from these sources he
> adds now and again statements that he bases on
> still other authorities. (184)

21 MS. Cotton Otho C. xiii. reads "Bruttes" for "Anglen"

(Brook 127).

22 Hankins observes that the hero of Arthur of Little

Britain "conquers a giant, first striking off one arm and

then thrusting the giant through the midriff" (126).

Padelford comments, "In Arthur's battle with Orgoglio there

is perhaps a specific reminiscence of the combat in the
Morte d'Arthur in which Arthur cuts off two legs of a giant"
(Var.I.399). This reference is to the very briefly narrated
slaughter of the giant Galapas. Arthur, Malory writes,
"shorted him and smote of bothe his legges by the knees,
sayenge, now arte thow better of a syse to dele with than
thou were, and after smote of his hede" (5.8). In the
battle with the Giant of Mont-Saint-Michel, Arthur cuts off
his foe's "genytours," and finally commands Kay "to smyte of
the gyaunts hede" (5.5). What the four accounts have in
common is the severing of body parts, which is not a
pronounced feature in Geoffrey's version of Arthur's fight
with the Giant of Mont-Saint-Michel, where Arthur only after
the brute is dead commands Bedevere "to saw off the giant's
head" as a trophy (x.3). Geoffrey does not mention Arthur's
slaying of Galapas. In Spenser, Arthur lops Orgoglio's
"right leg by the knee" (I.viii.22. 4) and then beheads him
(24.3), which seems closest to Malory's two accounts,
although Spenser could very well have had some combination
of these episodes in mind.

1   The English Prose <u>Brut</u> survives in over 170 fifteenth-and

sixteenth-century MSS. The English version derived from the

Anglo-Norman <u>Brut</u>, of which more than fifty fourteenth-and

fifteenth-century MSS. exist (Matheson 253). Higden's Latin

<u>Polychronicon</u> "survives in at least 118 manuscripts and in

fragments in nine more, written in the fourteenth through

sixteenth centuries" (256). Trevisa's English translation

of Higden, completed in 1387, "survives in fourteen full

manuscripts and is excerpted in a further five" (256).

There are over 200 extant MSS. of Geoffrey's <u>Historia</u>, which

was widely distributed on the continent as well as in

Britain.

2   Matheson describes the <u>Roman de Brut</u> as "an expanded

Anglo-Norman paraphrase of Geoffrey's <u>Historia</u>" (249).

William W. Kibler summarizes Wace's modifications upon

Geoffrey:

> Wace omits the names of some minor characters,
> abbreviates purely religious history, and deletes
> some brutal passages, such as Arthur's torturing
> of the Picts and Scots. But his additions are of
> particular interest for the study of Arthurian
> romance: he is the first to mention the Round
> Table; he alludes to Breton storytellers and the
> existence around 1150 of an oral tradition
> concerning Arthur; he adds topical details based
> most likely on personal travels in southwestern
> England; he comments on the "Breton Hope" of
> Arthur's messianic return from the isle of Avalon.
> (615-16)

3 Matthews, unfortunately, does not specify to which
"French version of Arthur's Roman campaign" he is referring.
La Mort le Roi Artu, the final section of the Old French
Vulgate Cycle, recounts that immediately after Arthur kills
the emperor and the Romans are routed, a messenger arrives
with the news of Mordred's treachery, which leads to the
tragic ending (From Camelot to Joyous Guard 136-38). The
Stanzaic Morte Arthur, however, which is based on the
Vulgate Mort Artu, and which Malory uses as a source for the
Tale of Lancelot and Guinevere and the Morte Arthur Saunz
Guerdon, deletes the Roman War episode altogether. This
could have provided Malory with some precedent for
separating his Roman War Story from the events leading up to
Arthur's end. Matthews' vagueness, though, gives one pause.

4 In this section of comparisons between Book V of The
Morte Darthur and the Alliterative Morte Arthure, I have
chosen to cite the Winchester MS. (Vinaver's edition), while
cross-referencing the corresponding sections in Caxton.
Caxton's edition cuts the Roman War Story to one third of
its original length in the Winchester MS., which makes it
difficult to assess the alterations which Malory, and not
Caxton, made in his source.

5 Also notable among Malory's changes in his source is his
preservation of Kay and Bedevere from death. The
alliterative poem makes clear that both knights die in

battle. Kay suffers an unfortunate lance stroke from "a coward knight" (2172) that "the bewelles entamed" (2176). The narrator relates: "Sir Kayous knew well by that kidd wound / That he was dede of the dint and done out of life" (2177-78). Kay receives absolution from "the kinges confessour" (2193), and his passing is evidenced when we read, "Then romes the rich king for rewth at his herte, / Rides into the rout his dede to revenge" (2197-98). Malory, echoing the poem, records that "a tyraunte" strikes Kay "betwyxte the breste and the bowellys" (221-22). Malory's Kay, as in the poem, immediately whirls and strikes his assailant dead; but unlike in the poem he retorts, "'Thoughe I dey of thy dente, thy praysing shall be lyttyll'" (222). As Vinaver points out, this statement is a combination of three lines from the poem (Commentary 1391). But especially notable is the transformation of the statement that Kay knew "he was dede of the dint" in the poem, to the less certain "thoughe I dey of thy dente" in Malory.

Bedevere, the alliterative work relates, is pierced through the breast with a sword: "The real rank steel to his heart runnes" (2240). Malory simply states that Bedevere is "wyth a ranke swerde . . . merveylously wounded," and adds, "Yet sir Launcelot and sir Lovel rescowed hym blyve" (223). Malory reaffirms the two knights' survivals in mentioning of Arthur, "but for sir

Kayes recovir and of sir Bedwers the ryche was never man undir God so glad as hymself was" (224). Gordon and Vinaver comment that in the poem, "Since the whole of the Round Table is doomed to vanish before long, there is no harm in disposing of these two knights" [85] (although the poet's chronicle sources had already done this for him). In Malory's rendition, however,

> the Round Table is only just beginning its eventful career, and Kay and Bedivere are still to play an important part in its history. He [Malory] therefore decides to spare them, and adds passages explaining that their apparently mortal wounds were not as deadly as was at first feared. (85)

6   The OED defines "Child," archaically spelled "Chyld" by Spenser: "A youth of gentle birth: used in ballads, and the like as a kind of title." It also mentions that "In the 13th and 14th c. 'child' appears to have been applied to a young noble awaiting knighthood: e.g. in the romances of Ipomydon, Sir Tryamour, Torrent of Portugal, etc." By this definition, the title "Child" would befit Tristram before and very shortly after he arrived at Mark's court in Malory. Therefore, Spenser's Tristram is shown at an analogous stage in his life to that of Prince Arthur.

7   There are some notable exceptions. Spearing mentions Dante's Divine Comedy and Gower's Confessio Amantis as

allegorical works that have dreamlike qualities and, yet, are not actually set in dreams (2).

8 Caxton's edition deletes this epithet, which appears in the explicit for the Roman War Story in the Winchester MS.

1 Vinaver (Commentary 1286 n. 12.13) and Thomas L. Wright (26-27) disagree on this point. My argument favors Wright, who holds that Merlin assumes greater authority in Malory by approaching the Archbishop of Canterbury.

2 See p. 177, below.

3 Caxton alters this to "one of the damoysels of the lake" (4.1).

4 See pp. 23-25, above.

5 Sarah Michie attributes Prince Arthur's fairy mistress visitation to the influence of Arthur of Little Britain. She further asserts that

> . . . Spenser derived very little, if any, of his so-called "Celtic" source material from genuine Irish sources. The Irish Ulster stories, which contain closer analogues to the Faerie Queene than any other group of Irish romances, were no longer current in Ireland in the sixteenth century, and Spenser's knowledge of Irish was hardly sufficient to have enabled him to read them in manuscript. The "Celtic" story-patterns in the Faerie Queene are usually traceable to such continental and English romances as Arthur of Little Britain which preserve traces of early Irish influence. (106-07 n.)

There is obvious evidence, though, for Chaucer's Sir Thopas as a source, probably the major one, for Prince Arthur's fairy visitation. William Nelson summarizes the

outstanding parallels between Arthur and Thopas:

> Both chastely reject love; both on a day ride out
> hunting. Arthur is "prickt forth with jolitee of
> looser life"; Thopas pricks forth both north and
> east and falls into a love-longing. For Arthur,
> all nature laughs; for Thopas the herbs spring and
> the birds sing. Both weary of their sportful
> pricking and dismount to lie down on the soft
> grass. Arthur uses his helmet as a pillow, an
> uncomfortable practice which Chaucer tells us
> (though not in the immediate context) is also
> Thopas'. The Prince dreams that the Queen of
> Fairies lies down beside him and makes him "Most
> goodly glee and lovely blandishment." Sir Thopas
> has a similar dream: a fairy queen shall be his
> leman and lie beneath his cloak. On waking, both
> heroes resolve to find their dream loves and their
> search takes them to the country of Faery. (87)

Nelson provides an interesting discussion of the ingenious

explanations given by critics for 'sage and serious

Spenser's' use of Chaucer's burlesque of chivalric romance

(88-89). He infers that "Spenser's imitation of the Thopas

story, coupled with his mocking use of the clichés of

chivalric narrative, leads to the conclusion that he found

nothing incompatible in the association of an absurd tale

and a deeply moral significance" (89).

6 The Roman en Prose de Tristan (Löseth's edition) recounts

the wounded hero's departure and voyage:

> Il part sans le fidèle Gouvernal, emportant avec
> lui sa harpe, sa rote et ses autres instruments,
> afin de s'en deduire aucune foiz dans le voyage.
> Il se laisse emporter au gré des flots; après deux
> semaines de voyage, le hasard le conduit sur le
> côte d'Irlande, auprès de château de Hossedoc; ce
> château appartient au roi Hanguin, le père d'Iseut
> . . . (20-21)

7 Paton writes that "If we glance over the earliest extant
passages relating to Morgain, which extend from 1148 [Vita
Merlini ll. 908-40] to the end of the century" we discover
that

> she is represented as the slighted mistress who
> seeks revenge upon a mortal favorite for spurned
> love. . . . that she is endowed with the gift of
> prophecy, the power of shape-shifting and of
> transforming the shapes of mortals, an amorous and
> also a quickly revengeful nature. (7-8)

Paton characterizes the Morgan of the twelfth-century
Bataille Loquifer as "purely an other-world fay, gifted with
a primitive magic power, amorous, supreme, brooking no
rival" (50).

8 Göller points out that "the Celtic word Arthur='bear'"
and that the constellation Ursa Major--'the Great Bear'--"
is often called Charles' Wagon" in English speaking
countries. He elaborates: "The original name . . . was
Arthur's Wagon, presumably because of the star called
arctus. The explanation lies in his close association with
Arthur" (134). Grafton testifies to an English awareness of
the etymological association. He writes in the Chronicle
that Arthgall, the first Earl of Warwick and a knight of the
Round Table (and, incidentally, the prototype for Spenser's
Art[h]egall), "tooke a Beare for his beast because the first
sillable of his name which is Arth, in the Britishe speche,
and is in English a Beare" (I.83). As I speculate below,
however, Caxton may have been aware of a wider association

of the boar with Arthur.

9 In another episode featuring a dragon, when Lancelot approaches the tomb harboring the monster he sees the prophetic epigraph: "HERE SHALLE COME A LYBARD OF KYNGES BLOOD AND HE SHALLE SLEE THE SERPENT, AND THIS LYBARDE SHALLE ENGENDRE A LYON IN THIS FOREYN COUNTREY, THE WHICHE LYON SHALL PASSE ALLE OTHER KNYGHTES" (11.2). The lion to be engendered by the leopard is of course Galahad. The dragon, incidentally, is, like the other Malorian ones surveyed, prophetically significant, but the emphasis is on the realistic feat of dragon-slaying: "there came out an horryble and a fyendly dragon spyttynge fyre oute of his mouthe. Thenne Sir Launcelot drewe his swerd and fought with the dragon longe, and atte laste with grete peyne Sir Launcelot slewe that dragon."

10 See passage cited on p. 189, above, where Arthur is gravely wounded by the "gryffons and serpentes" who invade his realm.

11 The kinetic metaphors "centripetal" and "centrifugal," which I adapt here, are Northrop Frye's. His application of them is more fundamentally attached to the reading process than mine:

> Whenever we read anything, we find our attention moving in two directions at once. One direction is outward or centrifugal, in which we keep going

outside our reading, from individual words to the things they mean, or, in practice, to our memory of the conventional association between them. The other direction is inward or _centripetal_, in which we try to develop from the words a sense of the larger verbal pattern they make. (_Anatomy_ 73; italics mine)

12 This incident is extremely reminiscent of Book III of _The Faerie Queene_, where Malecasta slips into bed with Britomart, thinking her to be a man. Britomart, "feeling one close couched by her side, / . . . lightly lept out of her filed bed, / And to her weapon ran, in minde to gride / The loathed leachour" (i.62.1-4). Spenser achieves a greater comic effect than Malory by intensifying the intruder's response of surprised horror and the general melee that follows: "But the Dame halfe ded / Through suddein feare and ghastly drerihed, / Did shrieke alowd, that through the house it rong" (4-6).

13 Carew writes in _The Survey of Cornwall_ (1602):

> . . . upon the Hoe at Plymouth there is cut in the ground the portraiture of two men, the one bigger, the other lesser, with clubs in their hands, (whom they term Gog-Magog) and (as I have learned) it is renewed by order of the townsmen when cause requireth, which should infer the same to be a monument of some moment. And lastly, the place, having a steep cliff adjoining, affordeth an opportunity to the fact. (82)

As an Oxford-educated Elizabethan and a personal friend of Philip Sidney, Carew's equivocation on the historical status of the account is itself of interest with regards to the

controversy over Geoffrey and the chroniclers who follow

him. He comments:

> I am not ignorant how sorely the whole story of
> Brute is shaken by some of our late writers, and
> how stiffly supported by other some, as also, that
> this wrestling pull between Corineus and Gogmagog
> is reported to have fallen at Dover. For mine own
> part, though I reverence antiquity, and reckon it
> to be a kind of wrong to exact an overstrict
> reason for all that which upon credit she
> delivereth, yet I rather incline to their side who
> would warrant her authority by apparent verity.
> Notwithstanding, in this question I will not take
> on me the person of either judge or stickler
> . . . (82)

14 Palomides is the knight in Malory who primarily follows

the Questing Beast. Why Spenser chooses to mention

Lamoracke and Pelleas, and not Palomides, is unclear.

Palomides never apprehends the beast in The Morte Darthur

(nor does it there seem to be his intention), so Spenser is

quite free to assign this distinction to other knights.

15 Upton emends "Sabaoth" here to "Sabbath" in his 1758

edition of The Faerie Queene and Frye, as cited earlier,

apparently agrees with this change. "Sabbath" makes the

most immediate sense, but, as Hamilton observes, "the Lord

of Sabaoth" is a New Testament usage ("Lord of hostes" in

the Geneva version [Rom. 9:29, James 5:4] (735). "Sabaoth"

is a Hellenization of the Hebrew צְבָאוֹת (tsɘbæ·oθ),

"armies." Hamilton asserts: "There is no reason not to see

both meanings present. S[penser] prays for the sight of the Lord on the last day: both for the sight of the host, which will be the body of the redeemed, and for the rest which comes after the six days of history--the six books of his own history, <u>The Faerie Queene</u>" (735).

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