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A Study of Arthurian Poetry in the English Renaissance,
from Spenser to Dryden

A thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D

Marion Wynne-Davies

Royal Holloway and Bedford Colleges

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Abstract

This thesis traces the development of Arthurian literature through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A comparison of the Medieval flawed romance king and of the epic warrior of the English histories with Spenser's treatment of Arthur in The Faerie Queene reveals the extent of Spenser's originality. Spenser irreversibly altered the course of English Arthurian literature by rejecting Arthur's traditional human failings and by creating a figure of moral and political idealism. These forms of perfection -- intimately connected in the poem to Protestantism, Neoplatonism, nationalism and monarchism -- initiated two divergent, but not mutually exclusive, strands of Arthurian literature in the seventeenth century.

Spenser's Arthurian idealism manifests itself in the courtly masques, and especially in Ben Jonson's Prince Henry's Barriers (1610) and Prince Oberon (1611), Thomas Carew's Coelum Britannicum (1633) and William Davenant's Britannia Triumphans (1637). The masques affirm the link between Spenserian Arthurianism and moral perfection, but the Spenserian poets soon raised doubts regarding this pure 'idealism'. This group of poets, particularly Drayton, simultaneously imitate and alter Spenser's use of Arthurian material. In Poly-Olbion (1633) Drayton adapts Spenser's concept of Arthur in order to contrast Arthurianism with Christianity and historicity.

Spenser's Arthurian concepts of heroism, nationalism and monarchy initiated in The Faerie Queene are prominent in the political panegyrics of the Stuart period, and are fully explored by Ralph Knevett in A Supplement of the Faery Queene (1635). While Knevett proposes an allegorical representation of political idealism in his Arthurian material, he simultaneously evinces an astute awareness of the increasing contemporary demands for greater veracity and realism in fiction.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century Arthurian idealism was losing its momentum. Its final demise can be traced in the works of Milton and Dryden. Milton was initially attracted by Spenser's treatment of Arthur, but he followed the Spenserians in utilizing the moral Arthurian material primarily to foreground the higher truths of Christianity in Paradise Lost (1667) and Paradise Regained (1671). By the time Dryden completed King Arthur (1691), the Arthurian tradition could no longer sustain its traditional imaginative appeal.

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Introduction

The main bulk of Arthurian literature is concentrated in the Medieval period, from the twelfth century tales of Chretien de Troyes to the publication of Sir Thomas Malory's The Morte Arthur in 1485¹. However, the literature of the Renaissance utilizing Arthur, although not as profuse as that of the preceding age, developed a surprisingly different attitude towards the tradition. In the 1590s use of this material in The Faerie Queene introduced the innovative approach by casting Arthur as an idealized figure who guides the reader to an understanding of moral truths². This change has generally been explained by reference to the historical and political trends of the period. I hope to show instead that in Spenser it develops from the more lasting Renaissance conventions of the role of the poet, myth and allegory. Furthermore, the influence of Spenser's innovative presentation of Arthur as a figure who symbolizes ideal perfection, is apparent in the poetic manifestations of the Arthurian tradition throughout the seventeenth century. This Renaissance development in romance literature can be seen in the courtly masques of the Stuart court, in the works of the Spenserian poets, especially those of Michael Drayton, and lastly in the contemporary political allegory of Ralph Knevett's A Supplement of the Faery Queene³. Nevertheless, the Arthurian material gradually came to be regarded as an inadequate symbol of moral perfection, and its rejection finally as a viable theme for a national epic by Milton and Dryden heralded the demise of Spenser's ideal Arthurian world⁴. I

1 Chretien de Troyes, Arthurian Romances (1975)
Malory, Works (1977)

2 Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, ed. A.C.Hamilton (1980)

3 Masques: see below Chapter Four
The Spenserians: see below Chapter Five
Ralph Knevett: see below Chapter Six

4 See below Chapter Seven

intend to trace this development of Arthurian literature from Spenser to Milton and Dryden, showing how it achieved a moral and mythic greatness in The Faerie Queene and how it ultimately failed in comparison with the greater truth of Christianity.

The sixteenth century conception of the Arthurian tradition was not solely dependent upon the romance texts. In addition to this important Medieval tradition, two contrasting contemporary attitudes evolved; first, the doubt centred upon Arthur's historical role in the 'Tudor Myth' and secondly, the condemnation of the Arthurian material on moral grounds. To appreciate the radical nature of Spenser's innovative treatment of Arthur, it is important to examine each of the three basic presuppositions. Moreover, The Faerie Queene inevitably relies upon the reader's acceptance of earlier traditions in order to enact a direct move away from these attitudes to a less ephemeral, more universally applicable understanding of Arthur's role in literature.

I

In the Middle Ages, Arthurian material is the subject of many long romantic poems, which often develop along a similar thematic structure. The tales usually begin at the court where Arthur celebrates a festival, such as Pentecost, surrounded by the knights of the Round Table. Next, an extraordinary event occurs resulting in one of the knights pursuing a chivalric quest, as when Meleagant challenges the court in Chretien de Troyes's "Lancelot", causing Sir Lancelot to endure a series of trials resulting in the rescue of the Queen⁵. Often the quests involve a test of the flesh, both in sexual matters and in the knight's ability to place his faith in God rather than in the values of the physical world.

5 Chretien de Troyes, "Lancelot", op.cit., pp.270-359

These two are strikingly combined in the temptation of Sir Gawain by the wife of the Green Knight⁶. But the most important quest is the spiritual search for the Holy Grail, found in The Quest of the Holy Grail from the Vulgate Cycle and repeated in Chretien's "Conte du Graal" and Malory's "The Tale of the Sankgreal"⁷.

Despite these chivalric and spiritual quests, Arthur's court is ultimately perceived to be false to its moral ideals, and the Arthurian society collapses, primarily because of the adulterous love of Lancelot and Guinevere⁸. Its disintegration culminates in a last battle to preserve the ideal world. The conflict results in the death of the knights and of Arthur himself. This conclusion is found in Wace's Brut, in Mort Artu, and with the full articulation of its tragic implications in Malory's The Morte Arthur⁹. The shared themes of these romances are well summarized by J.D.Merriman in The Flower of Kings (1973):

In a land racked by evil, a hero of mysterious though kingly birth makes his way to the throne, cleanses the land, and founds an ideal form of life, a society of glorious heroes. That society is tested in the material world by the fleshly passions of wife and friend, and in the world of spiritual absolutes by a mysterious quest. Found false to its ideal, the society is destroyed in a tragic denouement in which both its good and evil meet their end.¹⁰

Because it fails to live up to the idealized standards set at the

6 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (1976), pp.202-229

7 The Quest of the Holy Grail (1910)

Chretien, Perceval (1957)

Malory, op.cit., pp.513-608

8 Ibid., pp.609-669

Rosemary Morris, The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature (1982), pp. 13 and 24-27

9 Wace, Arthurian Chronicles (1962)

The Death of King Arthur (1978)

Malory, op.cit., pp.671-726

10 Merriman, op.cit., p.28

beginning of the romance, the Medieval society of Arthurian poetry flounders and the ending is necessarily tragic.

II

The most immediate difference between the romances and the utilization of Arthurian legend in Renaissance literature is the shift of emphasis away from the knights to the figure of the king himself. In his authoritative study of the Arthurian legends in the sixteenth century, Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory (passim: Studies), E.Greenlaw writes about this development and suggests a reason for the change:

There was no attempt to inject the legends of the great knights; Malory was read but was without literary influence. The effort was to prove Arthur's historicity, his greatness as a founder of the nation, and the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies with the accession of the Tudors.

(emphasis added) ¹¹

When Henry VII became king in 1485 he claimed descent from King Arthur and through him traced his ancestry to Brute, supposedly the first king and founder of Britain. This assertion would support Henry's claim to the throne, but only if Arthur were regarded as a historical figure. Arthurian literature following Henry's accession logically centred upon the figure of the king; it excluded the knights as they were exclusively associated with the romances and thus more obviously fictional.

The historical and political developments of Arthurian material in the sixteenth century have been dealt with in depth by Greenlaw in his Studies. According to Greenlaw it is

11 Greenlaw, op.cit., pp.39-40

.. the combination of antiquarianism, national feeling, and political intention that I have shown to be the true meaning of the controversy about Arthur and the development of the matter of Arthur in Tudor England. 12

Greenlaw's hypothesis remains an essential base for approaching Renaissance Arthurian literature. It explains the traditional attitudes of the period to the legends which are also seemingly accepted in The Faerie Queene. Nevertheless, Spenser transcends them in order to achieve a more complex level of allegory, from which evolves the reader's self-awareness. To understand the reader's relationship to Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene and later poems, it is therefore necessary first to comprehend fully the sixteenth century attitudes to Arthur as identified by Greenlaw.

As has already been indicated, the figure of Arthur assumes a political importance in this period due to Henry VII's claim to be descended from him. Genealogies incorporating Arthur are often referred to in poetry praising the monarch, as in Arthur Kelton's A Chronycle with a Genealogie (1547), Thomas Churchyard's The Worthines of Wales (1587) and in Maurice Kyffin's The Blessedness of Brytaine (1588)¹³.

Kyffin writes,

Yee Bryttish Poets, Repeate in Royall Song,
 (With waighty woords, usde in King Arthurs daies)
Th' Imperiall Stock, from whence your Queene hath sprong
Enstall in verse your Princesse lasting praies: 14

Indeed, with more complex implications than the propagandist attitude of Kyffin, the Tudor descent is amalgamated into the more important Arthurian poems, The Faerie Queene and Poly-Olbion¹⁵.

12 Ibid., p.86

13 Kelton, op.cit., n.pag.
 Churchyard, op.cit., p.Ciii v.-Diii v.
 Kyffin, op.cit., n.pag.

14 Ibid., n.pag.

15 Spenser, op.cit., II.x. and III.iii.
 Michael Drayton, op.cit., in Vol.IV of Works (1933), v.45-80

Not only did Henry VII refer to Arthur as his ancestor, but he also asserted that he fulfilled the prophecy of Cadwallader, which claims that British kings would return to rule the country, thereby restoring Arthur's line. In order to remain a valid support of Henry's position, the prophecy, like the genealogies, had to be considered factual¹⁶. As R.F. Brinkley notes,

From that time [Henry VII's accession to the throne] the contention as to whether Arthur, the champion of the British, was a real person or only a fabulous hero had a definite political bearing. 17

The political importance of Arthur's historicity was not confined to the reign of Henry VII, but was utilized further by Henry VIII in the pageant on The Field of Cloth of Gold; by Elizabeth in the claims that she personified the return of the golden age, and even by James I, for

James was furnished with Arthurian credentials not only through his Tudor ancestors but through his ancestor Fleance, son of Banquo, who married the daughter of Griffith Llewelin, himself a descendant of Arthur and last of the Welsh kings. 18

Similarly, Sir Thomas Elyot in Bibliotheca Eliotae (1559) and Richard Hakluyt in The Principal Navigations (1582) accept Arthur's historicity¹⁹. In this way Arthurian material was utilized politically by the Tudors to reveal a continuity with the past, which implied stability rather than radical change. To be effective this propaganda depended on the Arthurian material being regarded as historical fact.

16 Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain (1979), pp.282-283

17 Brinkley, Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century (1932), p.2

18 E.M.W. Tillyard; Shakespeare's History Plays (1944), p.30
Note also: C.B. Millican, Spenser and the Table Round (1932), pp. 22-24

T.D. Kendrick, British Antiquity (1950), pp.13 and 34-98

19 Elyot, op.cit., n.pag.

Hakluyt, op.cit. (1927), Vol.I, pp.53-55

The political edge to the interpretation of Arthurian legend influenced the sixteenth century antiquarian debate on the historicity of the early British kings, encouraging the emergence of a plausible figure, rather than "aunsiyng of Arthurs maiestee with incredible fables"²⁰. Polydore Vergil instigated the controversy on Arthur's historicity in 1534 by denouncing much of Geoffrey of Monmouth's The History of the Kings of Britain in his Anglicae Historiae²¹. However, other historians also evolved towards more rational methods of research, and a sceptical attitude was adopted on the more improbable events recorded in earlier chronicles, such as John Leland's Assertio Inclytissimi Arturii Regis Britanniae²². The more fantastical attributes of the Arthurian material were thus denied, though historians such as Holinshed, Camden and Speed attempted to create a more realistic portrait of the king, for despite their obvious doubts they did not entirely reject Arthur²³. In his exhaustive and authoritative study of this problem, Greenlaw has aptly entitled the debate "a sixteenth century battle of the books"²⁴.

The "battle", apart from being influenced by the political propaganda of the Tudors and the antiquarian movement, was also affected by the Renaissance spirit of nationalism. Arthur became a heroic representative of the British race, and Brute's ancestry was traced through Aeneas to the Trojans; this historical primitivism illustrates the imitative yet competitive relationship Western European countries

20 Sir Thomas Elyot, op.cit., n.pag.

21 Geoffrey of Monmouth, op.cit.
Polydore, op.cit. (1534)

22 Leland, op.cit. (1544), pp.91-151

23 Raphael Holinshed, The First and second volumes of Chronicles (1587), pp.92-93

William Camden, Britannia (1610), p.5

John Speed, The History of Great Britaine (1611), p.164

24 Greenlaw, op.cit., p.83

experienced with classical Greece and Rome in the Renaissance²⁵. In addition to this general nationalistic trend the Tudors also utilized the tradition of Arthur's overseas conquests to support their own imperialistic claims²⁶. As Greenlaw sums up, it is the "...combination of antiquarian interest, national pride and political intention..." which caused the development of Arthurian literature from the Medieval tradition of a tragically flawed society, to a representation of a great king dependent on historicity²⁷.

Greenlaw's hypothesis has been endorsed by a number of critics writing on the uses of Arthurian literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1932 (the year in which Studies was published) C.B.Millican pays tribute to Greenlaw in his study of the antiquarian controversy on the Tudor Myth, and R.F.Brinkley writes in Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century (1932):

The use of Arthurian-British material in support of the Tudor claims to the throne is fully discussed by Professor Edwin Greenlaw in his Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory.²⁸

More recently E.M.W.Tillyard in Shakespeare's History Plays (1944) and Anthea Hume in Edmund Spenser : Protestant Poet (1984) have restated the Greenlaw position, and Frank Kermode, despite certain reservations, recognises Greenlaw's work as a milestone in literary criticism of Arthurian sixteenth century literature in Renaissance Essays (1971)²⁹.

25 Denys Hay, Europe (1968), p.108

26 Merriman, op.cit., p.35

27 Greenlaw, op.cit., p.83

28 Millican, op.cit., pp.25 and 160
Brinkley, op.cit., pp.1-4 and 197

29 Tillyard, op.cit., p.324

Hume, op.cit., pp.147-154

Kermode, op.cit., pp.36-37

But not all recent scholarship has accepted Greenlaw's position. A major reservation is advanced by Sidney Anglo in "The British History in Early Tudor Propaganda" (1961). Anglo writes that,

the Tudor use of the British History was not as extensive nor as important as has been supposed

and that it was centred mainly and therefore of necessity temporarily around the birth of Prince Arthur in 1486:

all seized upon the obvious name parallel and reduced it to just another literary device. Their expressions of joy, naturally evoked by the consolidation of the new dynasty, cannot be adduced as evidence for a continuous cult of King Arthur by the Early Tudors. 30

Thomas Wilson's The Arte of Rhetorike (1567) and Bernadus Andrea's Historia Regis Henrici Septimi (c.1500) proffer contemporary support for Anglo's supposition. Wilson writes:

If there by any olde tale, or straunge historie, well and wittellie applied to some man liuyng, all menne loue to heare it of life. As if one were called Arthure some good fellowe that were wel acquainted with king Arthures booke, and the knightes of his rounde table, would want no matter to make good sport, and for a nede would dubbe him knight of the rounde Table, or els proue hym to be one of his kinne, or els (whiche wer muche) prove him to be Arthur himself. 31

T.D.Kendrick in British Antiquity (1950) and F.J.Levy in Tudor Historical Thought (1967) also argue against the idea that belief in the historicity of Arthurian material was an essential factor for Renaissance writers. Commenting on references to British history in The Faerie Queene, Kendrick claims that

They were just signals assuring Spenser's friends that the British History was in detail such nonsense that almost any liberties could be taken with it. 32

30 Anglo, op.cit., BJRL, 44 (1961), pp.17-48; 19-20 and 30

31 Wilson, op.cit., p.74 r.

Andrea, op.cit. (1858), pp.41-42

32 Kendrick, op.cit., p.129

Levy, op.cit., pp.64-68

Similarly, Levy writes:

Henry VII realized well enough that an acceptance of his connection to the greatest of native heroes [Arthur] could hardly do him harm; but he was also sufficiently a realist to believe that Polydore's demonstration of the validity of the Tudor claim, in terms of fifteenth-century politics, was vastly more important. 33

A balanced view is professed by R.F.Hardin in Michael Drayton (1973), where he suggests that historical poetry,

was not mere antiquarianism, like much of the prose (...); it may best be described as monumental history, the effort to derive a pattern of greatness from contemplation of the past. 34

The development away from Greenlaw's hypothesis, as in Hardin, has a sound base in sixteenth century critical theory, such as Puttenham's The Arte of English Poesie (1589), where Puttenham stresses that historicity is not an essential factor for historical poetry:

These historical men neuerthelesse vsed not the matter so precisely to wish that al they wrote should be accounted true, for that was not needefull nor expedient to the purpose, namely to be vsed either for example or for pleasure. 35

Moreover, a number of works which draw upon the Arthurian tradition and which were published before 1590, evince a clearly defined non-historical attitude. The most important of these texts is Thomas Hughes' The Misfortunes of Arthur (1587), a tragedy in the Senecan mode, where the chorus concludes with an unquestioning assertion of the justness of moral retribution³⁶. Thus Arthur is portrayed as a great king who is flawed by his incestuous love of his sister and his desertion of the

33 Ibid., p.66

34 Hardin, op.cit., p.36

35 Puttenham, op.cit. (1869), p.55

36 Hughes, op.cit., V.i. p.45

kingdom for conquests abroad. This results in his destruction, as all great men inevitably fall through the turn of the wheel of fate.

Another 'literary', non-historical treatment of Arthur is afforded by Richard Robinson who writes in his book on the heraldry of the knights of the Round Table that,

many young Princes and Lordes might come to more greate perfection in following the feates and deedes of them which were also numbred and named The Knights of the Rounde Table. 37

Furthermore, Thomas Deloney is frankly indebted to Sir Thomas Malory for the plot of his ballad "The Noble Acts of Arthur of the round Table" (1592-1593), and George Peele in "The Honour of the Garter" (1593) also derives his Arthurian material from the romance texts³⁸. Although the historicity of Arthur was an important issue in the sixteenth century, it was clearly not universally held, as there is evidence which suggests that writers were also influenced by the idea of "monumental history", and by both the tragic flaw and the chivalric knights of the Medieval romances.

III

Despite the lingering attachment to the romantic themes of the Arthurian tales, Greenlaw is correct in his opinion that they had to a great extent been discarded (see above p. 7). But this was not entirely due to the importance of a historical Arthur in Tudor politics. The Arthurian romances were also rejected on moral grounds. The best known expositor of this attitude is Roger Ascham, who, in The Scholemaster

37 Robinson, The Avncient Order (1583), p.I iii r.

38 Deloney, op.cit. in The Works of Thomas Deloney (1912), pp.323-326
Malory, op.cit., pp.156-158

Peele, op.cit. in Plays and Poems (1887), p.277

(1570), writes of the Medieval tales:

One for example, Morte Arthure: the whole pleasure of which booke standeth in two speciall poyntes, in open mans slaughter, and bold bawdrye. 39

Ascham is by no means alone in his repudiation of Arthurian romances for their immorality. Joannes Ludovicus Vives in De Officio Mariti (c. 1550), Fulke Greville in Caelica (1577-1580), Nathaniel Baxter in "To the right honorable Sir Frances Walsingham" (1578), John Ferne in The Blazon of Gentry (1586), John Harvey in A Discovrsive Probleme concerning Propheesies (1588), and Thomas Nashe in The Anatomie of Absurditie (1590) all concur with his view⁴⁰. Arthurian literature in the English Renaissance does, to a certain extent, bear out Greenlaw's themes, which form a necessary basis for the interpretation of The Faerie Queene and later poems. However, it is also essential to remember that the reader's background knowledge would likewise include an appreciation of Medieval romance and the few instances of its expression in the sixteenth century, and also the moralistic stance of Ascham.

IV

The sixteenth century understanding of the representational significance of Arthurian literature depended upon the influences already discussed. In The Faerie Queene however, Spenser introduced dramatic new elements into this traditional symbolism by transforming Medieval Christianity, courtly love and chivalry into Renaissance Protestantism,

39 Ascham, English Works (1904), p.231

40 Vives, op.cit., pp.Ovii r.-Ovii v.

Greville, op.cit. in Vol.I of Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke (1939), pp.85-86

Baxter, op.cit. in The Lectures or daily Sermons, of that Reuerend Diuine, D.Iohn Caluine (1578), pp.Aii v.-Aiii r.

Ferne, op.cit., Part II p.23

Harvey, op.cit., p.55

Nashe, op.cit., pp.Ai v.-Aii r.

Neoplatonism and gentlemanly courtesy, and by making Arthur an ideal of moral perfection and heavenly grace⁴¹. Spenser presented the reader with an entirely new thematic base which could not be understood within the context of the old traditions. As I shall demonstrate, this development can be explained by reference to the concepts of myth, allegory and the role of the poet rather than through political propaganda and the antiquarian debate. Instead of limiting Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene to contemporary concerns alone, this approach reveals the use of Arthur to guide the reader to a self-awareness and an ability to comprehend the values of his society by relating them to a more comprehensive symbolic structure. It is this infusion of universal truths into Arthurian material that resulted in the growth of an important new directive in the Arthurian literature of the seventeenth century.

The role of the poet as a "vates" or counsellor was an important concept in the English Renaissance. A classic statement, and one which is representative of the period, occurs in Sir Philip Sidney's An Apology for Poetry:

For these third [poets] be they which most properly do imitate to teach and delight, and to imitate borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be; but range, only reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be.⁴²

Spenser uses Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene "to teach and delight" and to show "what may be and should be". In order to present

41 John E. Hankins, Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory (1971), p.22

42 Sidney, op.cit. (1965), p.102

In An Apology for Poetry, Sidney comments upon the beneficial worth of reading romances (p.114), and M.S. Goldman in Sir Philip Sidney and the Arcadia (1934) traces Sidney's own debt to the Arthurian texts (pp.189-207).

to the reader an image of perfection through Arthur, the poem refers to the excellencies of his romantic and heroic past, but moves beyond Hardin's "monumental history" and Puttenham's laws of "historicall poesie" to a more universal and mythic level⁴³. By an allegorical comparison of past and present, a moral code is created which moves beyond the chronological restrictions and attains that mystical, all-embracing quality associated with the "vates". Arthur is freed from his romantic past and present historic associations and is enabled to represent a transcendence of these limiting traditions to achieve a comprehensive concept of moral values.

Spenser is able to guide the reader through the disassociation of Arthurian material from its past and contemporary traditions and its elevation to a higher level of meaning, by the use of myth and allegory. The Renaissance concept of allegory is defined by Henry Peacham in The Garden of Eloquence (1577):

Aligoria, whē a sentence hath another meaning, then the proper signification doth expresse,...for an Aligory is none other thing, then a contynued Metaphor, for when many translations doe abound together, then is it sayth Cicero, an Aligory... 44

Puttenham confirms this interpretation in The Arte of English Poesie:

Allegoria is when we do speake in sence translative and wrested from the owne signification, neuerthelesse applied to another not altogether contrary... 45

The essential feature of 'translation' is also present in myth, as

Michael Murrin writes in The Veil of Allegory (1969):

- 43 Hardin, op.cit., p.36
 Puttenham, op.cit., pp.54-57
 44 Peacham, op.cit., pp.Di r.-Di v.
 45 Puttenham, op.cit., p.197

A myth, like a metaphor or an extended allegory, is by definition open-ended: it invites interpretation. 46

The poet supplies the allegoric or mythic symbol and the reader completes the sequence by providing the underlying structure of meaning a simple example is the use of "Troynovant" for London, where the venerability and age of the city is being stressed⁴⁷. The reader's interpretation or 'translation' is to a great extent dependent upon previous symbolic significations.

When the reader applies this method to the Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene, the traditional representations of romance, moral denouncement and Greenlaw's political and historical themes, are not adequate for an interpretation of the figure of Arthur. Spenser writes in his letter to Raleigh that he

chose the historye of king Arthure, as most fitte
for the excellency of his person, being made famous
by many mens former workes, and also furthest from
the daunger of enuy and suspition of present time. 48

The "excellency" of Arthur is far removed from the reader, and if our customary order fails to encompass these ideals, then a realization of our own inadequacy is inevitable.

The perfection of Arthur's role and our failure to relate it to traditional standards lends the Arthurian tale a mystical quality which is essential if the poet intends to create the impression of an inspirational revelation. Thus Arthurian material not only achieves a more universal moral tone, but is elevated on a mythic level to the standard of classical and Christian imagery and this is emphasized

46 Murrin, op.cit., p.99

47 Alexander Craig, The Poeticall Essayes (1604), p.C2 r.
Fulke Greville, "Spoken to the King at Warwick" in Vol.III of
John Nichols, The Progresses of King James I (1828), p.432

48 Spenser, op.cit., p.737

by the linking of Arthur to heavenly grace and to mythic figures such as Hercules⁴⁹. As Michael Murrin indicates:

One can say, therefore, that allegory or mythology finds its practical end in a mode of thought which itself liberates man from his environment and reveals to him his own transcendence.⁵⁰

Through Spenser, Arthurian material attains this ability to reveal "transcendence".

V

The function of Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene is now apparent, but why should Spenser have decided upon Arthur as a central thematic figure, rather than upon a classical or Christian hero? Arthurian literature in the Renaissance evinced two particular qualities which were essential for the development of an allegorical figure who would ultimately reveal the inadequacies of a society's moral standards. Initially, the flawed character of Arthur in the Medieval romances as well as the contemporary belief in his historicity fostered by Tudor propaganda, provided a suitably ambiguous personage for the attributes of moral perfection and heavenly grace. Also the particular national quality of early British history would associate him with social values, for Arthur remains an external figure and the moral order he represents is that of society rather than the internal order of the knights who must learn their failings as individuals. Both factors contributed to Arthur's ideal suitability as an allegorical figure to guide the reader to self-awareness and to an understanding of the true worth of his society's values.

49 Lilian Winstanley, "The Arthurian Empire in the Elizabethan Poets," Aberystwyth Studies, IV (1922), pp.59-66; p.59
 Geoffrey Ashe, Camelot and the Vision of Albion (1971), pp.101-109

50 Murrin, op.cit., p.162

More important, however, is Arthur's potential to symbolize a transcendent truth. The very traditions which Spenser reacted against in The Faerie Queene simultaneously unite within the reader's comprehension of Arthur to produce an all-encompassing representational figure. In this way Spenser is able to combine within Arthur the literature of Medieval and Renaissance Britain together with the suggestion of a historical and monarchical heritage. Further, he incorporates into the character of the Prince the doctrinal perfections of the courtly romances, Protestantism and Neoplatonism, and the social ideals of chivalry and courtesy. But above all, each quality is united with the central concept of a national epic. In the sixteenth century the Arthurian tradition had become wide reaching and ambiguous in its significance, and these qualities together with Spenser's own thematic innovations made the incorporation of the Arthurian material into his poem inevitable. Indeed, Spenser's conception of an all-encompassing transcendent national epic poem would have lacked an essential truth and would have been incomplete had there not been an important role for the Arthurian material within The Faerie Queene.

This introductory examination of Spenser's use of Arthurian material has been necessarily generalized in order to reveal the dramatic development from which the following literature evolved. In Chapters I, II and III, I shall deal exclusively with The Faerie Queene and reveal through a detailed analysis of the poem how the reader is guided through the text. Chapters I and II examine Arthur's various roles as a symbol of moral perfection: in Book I he appears as the ideal personification of the English sixteenth century Protestant Reformation; in Books II and III Arthur represents the perfect, but human, Neoplatonic lover; and in Book VI the Prince symbolizes the epitome of true gentlemanly courtesy. Chapter III deals with Spenser's attempt to unite fiction and reality

in Arthur through the political allegory of Books IV and V. In contrast to his representation of a moral ideal, which is completely successful, Arthur's association with political allegory ultimately leads to the isolation of the Prince and the distancing of the reader from the perfect world of the poem. These two facets of Arthur's presentation, the moral and political ideals, initiated two divergent traditions in seventeenth century Arthurian literature.

The ability of the Arthurian material to represent a moral ideal is expressed most fully in the courtly masques of the early seventeenth century, and especially in those by Ben Jonson⁵¹. The entertainments also involve the development of the audience's self-awareness through the Arthurian characters, although the interpretation is dependent more on direct involvement in the world of the masque than through the 'translation' of allegory. The idealized version of Arthurian material in Spenser inevitably affected the Spenserians, a group of poets who imitated both style and content of The Faerie Queene, while retaining a distinct identity of their own⁵². Their poetry, particularly Michael Drayton's Poly-Olbion uses Arthurian material extensively. But already the Spenserian sense of the perfect world being attainable by us through poetry is diminishing⁵³. Rather, there is an incipient sense of nostalgia, in that the ideal society of Arthur can never return.

51 Ben Jonson, "For the Honour of Wales", "Prince Henry's Barriers" and "Oberon" in Vol.VII of Ben Jonson (1925-1952), pp.493-510, 321-336 and 337-356

Thomas Campion, The Works of Thomas Campion (1969), p.207

Stephen Orgel, The Jonsonian Masque (1965), pp.6-7

52 Joan Grundy, The Spenserian Poets (1969)

53 Drayton, op.cit., Vol.IV

In comparison, the political allegory associated with Prince Arthur in The Faerie Queene is less pervasive in its influence. The panegyric verse reflects a move towards symbolism, but the true fulfilment of Spenser's concept is found in Ralph Knevett's A Supplement of the Faery Queene⁵⁴. In this continuation of Spenser's poem, Knevett introduces more closely related parallels between the fictional and real worlds. The concentration upon the representation of seventeenth century reality, to the exclusion of idealism, in the figure of Arthur creates a more substantial relationship between the reader and the Prince than in Books IV and V of The Faerie Queene. Nevertheless, the move away from perfection necessarily heralded a deterioration in the Arthurian tradition which finally culminated in the works of Milton and Dryden.

Milton moves away from the early poems and the idea of an Arthuriad, through the belief that the moral myth of Arthur was falsely attractive in comparison to the Christian truth, to the final deflation of the material in Paradise Regained and The History of Britain⁵⁵. Dryden also contemplated writing a national epic centred upon Arthur, and like Milton he finally rejected the idea and preferred a less exacting task in the opera King Arthur⁵⁶. Although Dryden attempted to recapture the ideal transcendent truth of the Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene the operatic form and the all-inclusive nature of his thematic structure, inevitably led to a trivialization of the Arthurian tradition.

54 Knevett, op.cit. (1635), Cambridge University Library Ms. Ee. 3. 53

55 John Milton, Complete Shorter Poems (1968)

Paradise Lost (1968)

The History of Britain in Vol.V of Complete Prose Works (1971)

56 Dryden, op.cit. in Vol.VIII of The Dramatic Works of John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury (1882), pp.123-201

In the English Renaissance, Arthurian literature attained the ultimate symbolic role of moral guide and perfection, only to falter and finally fall into a limbo in which it could no longer represent any form of truth, poetic or otherwise. Paradoxically, it was not until Spenser's influence had faded that Tennyson in Idylls of the King was able to restore to the Arthurian tradition both the tragic atmosphere of the Medieval romances and the perfect ideal world of The Faerie Queene ⁵⁷.

twentieth century readers find it equally as strange. The difficulty of allotting Prince Arthur to a tradition is illustrated by James D. Harriman, who claims that,

Of the spirit of the great king of myth and romance, of his beautiful and terrifying triumph and tragic destruction through his... queen and his noblest knight, there is nothing in The Faerie Queene -- which is to say that it is, in a very real way, not an Arthurian poem. ¹

Similarly, Josephine W. Bennett finds no role for him within Spenser's poems:

the poet had begun by substituting the Fairy Queen for Arthur in order to pay homage to a feminine sovereign, and he could not thereafter find a suitable place for Arthur in his poem. ²

This nebulous position may account for the neglect of Prince Arthur, who, since the works of Greenlaw, Brinkley and Millican in the early 1930s (see above pp. 4-5), has been seriously dealt with by Rosemond Tuve and Janet Murray only, both of whom, because of the expansive range of their analyses, necessarily limit their treatment of

¹ Harriman, The Flower of Kings (1973), p. 44

⁵⁷ Tennyson, op.cit., The Poems of Tennyson (1969), pp.1460-1756

Chapter One

I

The approach which Spenser adopts towards Arthurian material is completely innovative. The striking differences from the usual sixteenth century romantic, political and historical associations have been discussed in the Introduction, but it is important to recognise that Spenser's treatment of the Arthurian theme is so individual that many twentieth century readers find it equally as strange. The difficulty of allotting Prince Arthur to a tradition is illustrated by James D. Merriman, who claims that,

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This nebulous position may account for the neglect of Prince Arthur, who, since the works of Greenlaw, Brinkley and Millican in the early 1930s (see above pp.4-8), has been seriously dealt with by Rosemond Tuve and James Nohrnberg only, both of whom, because of the comprehensive range of their analyses, necessarily limit their treatment of

1 Merriman, The Flower of Kings (1973), p.44

2 Bennett, The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene" (1942), p.54

individual characters³. It is my intention in Chapters I, II and III to confine my concerns as far as possible to the Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene, focusing specifically upon Prince Arthur and to a lesser extent on Merlin, thereby avoiding the limitations of a more inclusive but less detailed work. From this examination not only will the relevance of Arthur to the poem become apparent but also the importance of Spenser's work within the Arthurian tradition, in which it instituted a unique trend which was to last for almost a century.

The Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene may be divided into three distinct groupings: first, Arthur's introduction in Book I canto vii which acts as an essential initiation into the allegoric processes of understanding his role in the poem; secondly, Books I, II, III and VI; and thirdly, Books IV and V. Arthur's most important role is found in the second section which both contains and completes within itself the two important elements mentioned above. I intend to show that, in this section, it is the Prince who provides the moral continuity which the diverse titular virtues of the books would otherwise lack, in that the values he pursues are all consistently sixteenth century ones.

- 3 E.Greenlaw, Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory (1932)
 R.F.Brinkley, Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century (1932)
 C.B.Millican, Spenser and the Table Round (1932)
 Tuve, Allegorical Imagery (1966), pp.335-436
 Nohrnberg, The Analogy of The Faerie Queene (1976), pp.35-58
 Note also: H.A.MacLachlan, The Figure of Arthur in Spenser's 'Faerie Queene' (1975), D.A.I. 37. 6504-A
 D.Brooks-Davies, The Mercurian monarch (1983), pp.22-50
 Other recent criticisms dealing with Prince Arthur essentially repeat Greenlaw's hypothesis: R.A.Horton, The Unity of The Faerie Queene (1978), pp.15-24
 R.H.Wells, Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Cult of Elizabeth (1983), pp.158-161
 A.Hume, Edmund Spenser (1984), pp.150-160

In Book I Arthur is the Protestant hero of the Reformation, in Books II and III it is primarily through him that Spenser mediates his understanding of the tripartite Neoplatonic soul, and in Book VI the Prince becomes the epitome of sixteenth century gentlemanly courtesy. This contemporary concern inevitably coincides with Spenser's stated purpose to "fashion a gentleman", and the process of understanding the allegorical interpretations of Arthur is inextricably linked to the way in which the sixteenth century gentleman is lessoned. The Medieval idea that the quality of a gentleman was dependent upon his descent had been replaced in the Renaissance by the humanist concept of individual effort towards virtue:

...what they [the humanists] defined as an individual's "virtue" became ultimately more important than the chivalrous deeds of his distant ancestors. 4

The Faerie Queene belongs to this tradition.

The "fashioning" had necessarily to involve, through the mode of allegory, active and personal participation with the text. Like the Red Cross Knight, the sixteenth century aristocratic reader had first to be humbled in order to attain the true vision ⁵. In the presentation of Arthur in Spenser's introductory letter to Raleigh and the Proem to Book I we see the first part of this process developing: the reader is distanced from his previous suppositions in order to attach a sense of learning and discovery to the new associations. The next stage of both the "fashioning" and the allegory can be seen in the first description

4 F.Caspari, Humanism and the Social Order in Tudor England (1954), p.14

M.Vale, War and Chivalry (1981), p.21

5 D.Javitch, Poetry and Courtliness (1978), pp.141-143

of Arthur. It is this passage which presents the reader with a key to all Arthur's future roles in the poem. The numerous facets of the description appeal to the exegetic temperament, and simultaneously encourage this desire for analysis by including several familiar meanings. The final and complete revelations, being the essence of the allegory, are obviously longer and more complex. Arthur's role as the perfect Christian man of the Protestant tradition is developed in Book I where he aids the Red Cross Knight, while his importance for the Neoplatonic material in the poem commences in Book I and is not fulfilled until Book III, a process which relates to three separate knights and their associated moral values. Because Arthur is able to support those themes which move beyond single values, he becomes essential to the final interpretation of the unified meaning of Part I of The Faerie Queene⁶. However, not only does the second section reveal the importance of the Prince in Spenser's poem, it also confronts him with the traditionally Arthurian problem of man's free will versus God's foreknowledge of his fate, a concern dealt with as recently as 1587 in The Misfortunes of Arthur⁷. The holy quest, another central Arthurian concern, is equally present in the first section through the Neoplatonic ideal of heavenly beauty mirrored on earth, seen in Arthur's search for Gloriana. Similarly, the virtue of knightly chivalry, which is omnipresent throughout the romances, is transformed by Spenser into the Renaissance concept of gentlemanly courtesy. Relating the sixteenth century concerns to those of the Medieval tradition in Arthur's role in Books I, II, III and

6 A.Fletcher, The Prophetic Moment (1971), p.108

7 T.Hughes, The Misfortunes of Arthur (1587)

VI adds to the poem not only a sense of immediacy but also a more lasting and universal sense of relevancy.

In contrast, the second Part of The Faerie Queene published in 1596 on the whole failed to pursue Arthur's promised roles, and in Books IV and V he has become part of a golden yet distant past. In both his character and allegoric meaning Arthur loses depth and distinction; he becomes, first, an abstracted bringer of concord and later an idealized contrasting figure used to underline Artegall's realism. These two books form the central problem area for the Prince and must be dealt with separately, for, as we have noted, in Book VI there is a revival of the past from myth, literature and even from Part I of The Faerie Queene itself. Consequently, Arthur returns to his former importance; the meanings of the first description are recalled, and his ability to relate the contemporary sixteenth century view of courtesy to the traditional Arthurian one of chivalry, suggests a full resumption of his role from Part I. But the final assessment of Prince Arthur's contribution to The Faerie Queene must accept and evaluate all aspects of the poem. I shall show that despite the abstracted idealisms of the presentation of Arthur in Books IV and V, Spenser succeeds in creating for his followers a figure dramatically transformed from the tragic Medieval king into a figure of the Renaissance, perfected in Protestantism, Neoplatonism and gentlemanly courtesy.

II

The reader's introduction to Arthur begins, not with his entry into the narrative, but with the poem's prefatory letter and the Proem to Book I. Indeed, it may be justifiably assumed on reading both pieces that Arthur has a more central role in the poem than is commonly supposed, for the Prince is the first figure to be introduced, and The Faerie Queene, it is suggested, will be concerned mainly with him:

The generall end therefore of all the booke is 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 profite of the ensample: I chose the historye of king Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of enuy, and suspition of present time.

8

Initially it appears that Spenser intends merely to reproduce the traditional romance themes -- "the historye of king Arthure" -- as others have done before; the "former workes" probably including Malory, Chretien and the Vulgate Arthur ⁹. But immediately the assumption is proven wrong, for the letter continues,

I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a braue knight, perfected in the twelue priuate morall vertues.

Spenser moves beyond the expected limits of the Arthurian story. Rather than following the usual diversifying into 'new' knights, such as Chinon of England and the Red Rose Knight ¹⁰, he moves towards the core of the Matter of Britain, Arthur himself, and to the very beginning of the king's career. The reader begins to appreciate that this poem will include Arthurian romance material for which he can provide no explanatory equivalent, and yet he must, at the same time, accept that it is of great importance to the whole tradition ¹¹. Not only does Spenser

8 All quotations are from The Faerie Queene, ed. A.C.Hamilton (1980)

9 Thomas Malory, Works (1977)

Chretien de Troyes, Arthurian Romances (1975)

Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances (1910-1913)

10 C.Middleton, The Famous Historie of Chinon of England (1925)

R.Johnson, The Most Pleasant History of Tom a Lincolne, the Red Rose Knight (1978)

11 R.Morris, The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature (1982), pp.33-44

J.Guillory, Poetic Authority (1983), p.21

deviate from the traditional concerns of the narrative romances, but also from the negative moral values of the flawed king, who is conceived in the adulterous union of Uther and Igraine and therefore doomed before his birth. Instead, Spenser excludes any such suggestion of moral limitation; in The Faerie Queene Arthur possesses the twelve "morall vertues" and indeed personifies magnificence, the "perfection of all the rest". This separation of Arthur from his traditional associations is completed in the Proem to Book I, where he is disassociated both from Guinevere and the quest for the Holy Grail.

Arthur's traditional queen is replaced by "Tanaquill" who is, as we know from the letter, the Faerie Queene of the poem and Queen Elizabeth herself.

The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights and fairest Tanaquill,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
FQ I Proem 2.4-7

Secondly, the quest for the Grail which becomes the central focus for the Arthurian court of the romances is transformed by Spenser into a love quest for the Faerie Queene, and in addition to these confusing changes in the narrative tradition, the temporal order is also necessarily disturbed. Arthur, whether historical, mythic or a figure from romance, is essentially part of the past, and yet here his life is linked, through Tanaquill, to the contemporary figure of Queen Elizabeth. Spenser's intent therefore is manifestly to disregard the previous experiences and limitations of the Arthurian material, and he will instead create an innovatory character who will both surprise and interest the reader. This distancing of the reader is corroborated by other aspects of the beginning of Book I, such as the unusual use of

archaic language and the commencing of the narrative, dramatically and without explanation, in the middle of a sequence. Although a start in medias res is an intrinsic part of epic convention its effect of disconcerting the reader remained undiminished¹². Before Arthur has even entered the poem, the reader has been forced into an awareness of his own lack of sufficient information to analyse the situation, and it is from this intended position of relative ignorance that he is made to approach openly the description of Arthur in canto vii, which contains the next stage in the process of allegory.

III

In Book I when the Red Cross Knight is imprisoned in Orgoglio's dungeon, leaving Duessa triumphant and Una deserted, Prince Arthur enters the poem to succour the good and defeat the evil. Arthur's timely entry and magnificent appearance are immediately reassuring and conclusively indicate that his role will be one of rescuer and redeemer. This initial presentation, however, transcends its immediate significance: it will influence all later responses to the Prince as well as acting as a key to his future roles. The importance of this passage is such that it must be quoted in full:

At last she chanced by good hap to meet
 A goodly knight, faire marching by the way
 Together with his Squire, arayed meet:
 His glitterand armour shined farre away,
 Like glauncing light of Phoebus brightest ray;
 From top to toe no place appeared bare,
 That deadly dint of steele endanger may:
 Athwart his brest a bauldrick braue he ware,
 That shynd, like twinkling stars, with stons most pretious rare.

And in the midst thereof one pretious stone
 Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous might,
 Shapt like a Ladies head, exceeding shone,
 Like Hesperus emongst the lesser lights,

12 K.W.Gransden, A Critical Commentary on Spenser's 'The Faerie Queene' (1969), p.10

And stroue for to amaze the weaker sights;
 Thereby his mortall blade full comely hong
 In yuory sheath, ycaru'd with curious slights;
 Whose hilts were burnisht gold, and handle strong
 Of mother pearle, and buckled with a golden tong.

His haughtie helmet, horrid all with gold,
 Both glorious brightnesse, and great terrour bred;
 For all the crest a Dragon did enfold
 With greedie pawes, and ouer all did spred
 His golden wings: his dreadfull hideous hed
 Close couched on the beuer, seem'd to throw
 From flaming mouth bright sparkles fierie red,
 That suddeine horror to faint harts did show;
 And scaly tayle was stretcht adowne his backe full low.

Vpon the top of all his loftie crest,
 A bunch of haire discolourd diuersly,
 With sprinckled pearle, and gold full richly drest,
 Did shake, and seem'd to daunce for iollity,
 Like to an Almond tree ymounted hye
 On top of greene Selinis all alone,
 With blossomes braue bedecked daintily;
 Whose tender locks do tremble euery one
 At euery little breath, that vnder heauen is blowne.

His warlike shield all closely couer'd was,
 Ne might of mortall eye be euer seene;
 Not made of steele, nor of enduring bras,
 Such 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 would.

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;
 For so exceeding shone his glistring ray,
 That Phoebus golden face it did attaint,
 As when a cloud his beames doth ouer-lay;
 And siluer Cynthia waxed pale and faint,
 As when her face is staynd with magicke arts constraint.

No magicke arts hereof had any might,
 Nor bloudie wordes of bold Enchaunters call,
 But all that was not such, as seemd in sight,
 Before that shield did fade, and suddeine fall:
 And when him list the raskall routes appall,
 Men into stoness therewith he could transmew,
 And stoness to dust, and dust to nought at all;
 And when him list the prouder lookes subdew,
 He would them gazing blind, or turne to other hew.

Ne let it seeme, that credence this exceedes,
 For he that made the same, was knowne right well
 To haue done much more admirable deedes.
 It Merlin was, which whylome did excell
 All liuing wightes in might of magicke spell:
 Both shield, and sword, and armour all he wrought
 For this young Prince, when first to armes he fell;
 But when he dyde, the Faerie Queene it brought
 To Faerie lond, where yet it may be seene, if sought.
FQ I vii 29-36

There is very little direct information about Arthur in these stanzas. The description concentrates upon the symbolic qualities of his armour. It is therefore essential to interpret the imagery before an understanding of the Prince's nature can be attained. Through the process of decoding the reader is directed towards the next stage of the allegory or "lessoning"; and from being humbled he must now learn what the new significances will be. Partly to preempt a too radical and perhaps counterproductive alienation of the reader, and partly for the sake of imaginative credibility, Spenser includes several familiar symbols derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth's The History of the Kings of Britain¹³. The two most obvious similarities are the "Ladies head" (30.3) which refers to Geoffrey's description of the representation of the Virgin Mary on Arthur's shield, and the dragon crested helmet (31) which Spenser derives from the History's

On his [Arthur's] head he placed a golden helmet,
 a crest carved in the shape of a dragon. 14

As the comparative lengths of the images -- five lines and one complete stanza respectively -- suggest, Arthur's helmet provides the more

13 Ruth Berman, "Blazonings in The Faerie Queene," Cahiers Élisabéthains, 23 (1983), pp.1-14

Geoffrey of Monmouth, op.cit. (1979)

14 Ibid., ix.4, p.217

important association with past traditions. Apart from being a pictorial link with Geoffrey's history and Welsh tradition in general, through being simultaneously "horrid" and "glorious" the helmet also reproduces the ambiguous moral nature of the romance king. This interpretation is underlined by the moral flaw which is suggested by two of the literary sources of Arthur's helmet: in Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata a similar helmet belongs to the wicked Sultan; and in the Aeneid to Turnus¹⁵. Isabel MacCaffrey proffers an explanation of the ambiguity by comparing Arthur's dragon with that of Saint George (I.xi); she sees the former as good and the latter as its parody, encompassing the unattractive characteristics and representing the false heroicall¹⁶. However, it is Kathleen Williams's subtler analysis, also relating the two dragons, which more fully explains their differing natures, for she presents them as images of power which are necessarily dependent upon their associated heroes; therefore

Arthur's dragon is now a part of his strength,
Red Crosse's is still to fight. ¹⁷

The identification of the dragon with power and strength is affirmed by the association of this symbol with kingship, as for example in Valeriano's Hieroglyphica and in King Lear¹⁸. The ambiguous nature of the power of kings, especially that of King Arthur, was commonly accepted in the Renaissance period, although this aspect of Prince Arthur is

15 Tasso, op.cit., trans. E.Fairfax (1962), 9.25, p.229
Virgil, Aeneid (1972), p.199

16 MacCaffrey, Spenser's Allegory (1976), pp.192-193

17 Williams, Spenser's Faerie Queene (1966), p.22

Michael Leslie undertakes a close analysis of Arthur's armour in Spenser's 'Fierce Warres and Faithfull Loves' (1983), pp.49-56; although Chapter I was in its completed form when this text became available there are no major repetitions.

18 Valeriano, op.cit. (1567), xv., pp.111 v.-112 r.

not fulfilled in the six books which Spenser completed. However, the familiar symbolic role of the dragon on Arthur's helmet provided the necessary encouragement to pursue further the interpretation of the more obscure meanings of the armour.

Despite the traditional representations, both Spenser's letter to Raleigh and the Proem to Book I imply that Arthur's primary significance in the poem is to be found in his love and pursuit of Gloriana; and indeed the first symbolic accoutrement in Arthur's description, the bauldrick, joins Arthur to the Faerie Queene through its stellar significance. The "one pretious stone" which "Shapt like a Ladies head, exceeding shone/ Like Hesperus" represents the Faerie Queene, for it resembles a similar image depicted on the shields of the knights of Maydenhead. The stone is also compared to the star "Hesperus" which by virtue of being another name for Venus, stresses the romantic nature of the relationship between Arthur and Gloriana, especially as the central stone lying on the Prince's breast probably covers his heart. The romantic association indicated, however, remains within the courtly love tradition of the Arthurian romance. In order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the symbolic potential of the bauldrick it is necessary to undertake a more complete interpretation of its stellar role.

There are two other references in Spenser's poetry to bauldricks comprised of stars, first in Prothalamion where Spenser writes

That like the twins of Ioue they seem'd in sight,
Which decke the Bauldricke of the Heauens bright.

173-174

and secondly in Book V of The Faerie Queene, where we read,

Now when the world with sinne gan to abound,
Astraea loathing lenger here to space
Mongst wicked men, in whom no truth she found,
Return'd to heauen, whence she deriu'd her race;

Where she hath now an euerlasting place,
 Mongst those twelue signes, which nightly we doe see
 The heauens bright-shining baudricke to enchace;
 And is the Virgin, sixt in her degree,
 And next her selfe her righteous ballance hanging bee.

FQ V i 11

In both instances the stellar bauldricks represent the zodiac, and as Arthur's bauldrick is also comprised of "twinkling stars", it too carries a similar zodiacal connotation¹⁹. In this context, the central stone would represent Astraea, the sixth of the twelve signs, a point which strengthens the zodiacal interpretation of the bauldrick, for this goddess was commonly used to represent Elizabeth I, who as we have seen is also imaged in Gloriana²⁰. The double reference, through Virgo Astraea and Gloriana to the figure of Queen Elizabeth, and so sixteenth century reality, implies that the bauldrick is able to encompass significations both within and without the world of the poem. This is borne out by Arthur's corresponding stellar role, which if followed to its logical conclusion relates him to Leicester. Spenser thereby creates a closely structured parallel between the love pair in the poem and a comparable couple in the sixteenth century. Although not specifically referred to at this point in the poem, the conjunction of Arthur and astrological figures recalls Arcturus and its constellation Boötes, which is situated directly next to Virgo Astraea in the Northern Hemisphere. The myth of Arthur's stellification into Arcturus was frequently referred to in this period (as in "The Reception for Katherine of Aragon" at her betrothal to Henry VII's son Prince Arthur, and in many political panegyrics)²¹. Spenser himself twice utilizes Boötes: first, within The Faerie Queene when he writes that,

19 Nohrnberg, op.cit., p.40

20 F.Yates, Astraea (1975)

21 S.Anglo, Spectacle Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy (1969), pp.56-97

F.Bacon, The Historie of the Reigne of King Henry the Seventh (1641), p.205

By this the Northerne wagoner had set
 His seuenfold teme behind the stedfast starre,
FQ I ii 1.1-2

J.Nohrnberg has related this directly to Prince Arthur and his "heauenly" interventions to aid the titular knights of each book:

The constellation, Boötes, is also known as the Plow, and other team-drivers appear in Book I on the earth below. Saint George himself proves to be the adopted son of a plowman, who discovers the foundling while driving his toilsome team (I.x.66). Redcrosse is also discovered and raised up by Arthur, and it is very possible that the celestial prototype of the Wain has been chosen to intimate the Arthurian character of the heavens' watchful supervision. 22

The second reference to Boötes is found in The Teares of the Muses, where the Muse Calliope talks of her ability to immortalize men in the stars:

Bacchus and Hercules I rauid to heauen,
 And Charlemaine, amongst the Starris seauen.
 461-462

The wain or wagon was also said to be driven by the other major romance king, 'Charlemaine', who here has replaced Arthur, a fact which confirms that Spenser was not only familiar with Boötes, but was also aware of the permutations in its significance²³. One of the terms for Arcturus was bear-guard, which comes from the Greek Arktos --bear and ouros -- to guard, and can be seen in the astrological position of Boötes following Ursa Major, the Great Bear²⁴. Spenser particularly associated the Great Bear with Leicester, whose emblem was a bear and ragged staff. This connection can be seen both in the October Aeglogue of The Shepheardes Calender:

22 Nohrnberg, op.cit., p.38

23 O.E.D., Vol.II p.291

24 C.Whyte, The Constellations and their History (1928), pp.160-162

Advauce the worthy whome shee loueth best,
That first the white beare to the stake did bring
47-48

and in The Ruines of Time:

The Harpe well knowne beside the Northern Beare
616

which Renwick interprets as Sidney and Leicester being in the heavens together ²⁵. These associations, together with the general love theme of the stars in the bauldrick and the traditional association of Arthur and Leicester, confirm the introduction of the real love relationship as a parallel to the fictional one of the Prince and the Faerie Queene ²⁶.

More importantly, the bauldrick's stellar role does not only imply a reflection of reality, but provides a key to other love relationships in the poem. Boötes was also known as the ploughman and this identification relates Arthur to the Red Cross Knight who is protected in infancy by a ploughman and so is "brought... vp in ploughmans state to byde" (I.x.66.5). Arthur as the stellar ploughman protects the Red Cross Knight in the same way that Prince Arthur rides into the poem to rescue him from Orgoglio's dungeon. Conversely, Una is related to Gloriana through a reference to Hesperus (I.xii.21) ²⁷. Further, the description of Virgo from Book V, apart from being a bauldrick description, associates the goddess Virgo Astraea, and therefore Gloriana, closely with Artegall, who, as we shall see, is an Arthur-figure. The bauldrick itself links Arthur to Artegall's love, Britomart, for she is one of the only two characters in the poem other than himself, to

25 Spenser, Variorum (1932-1938), Minor Poems Vol.II, p.306

26 A.Fowler, "Oxford and London Marginalia," Notes and Queries, 8 (1961), pp.416-419

27 Nohrnberg, op.cit., pp.38-39

wear a bauldrick (III.iii.59), the third being Belphebe (II.iii.29). It is clear that Arthur's description introduces him, not merely as the lover of the Faerie Queene, which would echo the courtly love of the romances, but as the basis for a more universal concept, which is able to encompass reflecting relationships within and without the poem, while simultaneously relating them to the eternal movements of the stars, and especially to Venus, the goddess of love.

One of Venus' most important and elevated roles in the Renaissance was as a Neoplatonic image of God's perfect beauty on earth, which could inspire man's love and create a desire to return to that perfection from whence the beauty arose. Certainly, Spenser was greatly influenced by Neoplatonism, and it seems unlikely that having created a link between the perfect and inspiring Faerie Queene and a similar Venus he would not have been aware of the Neoplatonic implications²⁸. Renaissance Neoplatonism is inextricably linked to the names of the mid and late fifteenth century Florentine philosophers, Ficino and Pico who expounded the Neoplatonic concepts of emanatio, raptio and remeatio²⁹. The emanation of beauty from God creates an ecstasy in man on one of three levels: bodily, rational or celestial, which in turn encourages him to attempt to return to God in an ultimate and complete unity. The similarities between this concept and the incidents within the poem related to Prince Arthur are immediately apparent³⁰. The ecstatic vision of the beauty of God can be seen in Book I, which draws extensively upon

28 Both Amoretti (1595) and Fowre Hymnes (1596) reveal a strong Neoplatonic influence; see further: R.Ellrodt, Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser (1960), pp.40-45 and 111-193

29 M.Ficino, A Commentary on Plato's Symposium (1944), I.ii., p.124 and II.i., p.133
Pico Della Mirandola, A Platonick Discourse Upon Love (1914), II.xi. pp.33-34

30 M.Evans, "Platonic Allegory in The Faerie Queene," RES, XII (1961), pp.132-143

the apocalyptic experiences of Moses and Saint John, and moreover constructs several dramatic revelations for the reader, one of which occurs when Arthur's shield is unveiled. Finally, Book I also introduces a traditional Neoplatonic symbol of the experience, with an Endymion-like dream vision ³¹. The vision of beauty results in three reactions, bodily, profane and divine love which are presented to the reader in Book II. First Pyrochles and Cymochles represent the unrestrained passions of man. The Prince, on the other hand, moves between bodily love -- in that he loses control of both horse and sword ³² -- and divine love -- in that he is also a messenger of God. Arthur therefore becomes the most excellent form of the rational soul because he is able to comprehend both animal and celestial natures (I.vii.38-52). This is a particularly apt role in the Book of Temperance, which to a certain extent advocates the Aristotelian mean (II.ii.12-46) ³³. The abilities of the rational soul are, however, more fully expressed and encapsulated in the Chronicles, suitably so as this soul was often symbolized by the image of a book offered by Pallas ³⁴. Finally, the true attempts at unity with the heavenly love and beauty are seen, not through Arthur, but through Britomart's vision in Merlin's magic glass where she sees her own image transformed into that of Artegall (see below pp.88-90). Nevertheless, this fleeting suggestion of the highest Neoplatonic soul -- the hermaphrodite -- is dependent upon the complex unities

31 E.Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (1980), pp.158-159
Other revelations occur at I.x.55-59 and I.iii.4

32 Ibid., pp.81 and 145-146

33 Pico, op.cit., II.xxi., pp.45-46

34 Wind, op.cit., p.81 and Illus. 60 (Raphael, The Dream of Scipio)

of male and female characters already presented in the poem, and especially upon those between Arthur, Gloriana, Britomart and Artegall³⁵. In this sense, the bauldrick provides a key to the essential androgynous themes of Part I of the poem and, more importantly, prefigures the transformation of the courtly love of the Arthurian tradition into an image of perfection rooted in Renaissance Neoplatonism.

IV

Although through most of Part I of The Faerie Queene Arthur does develop his role as lover of Gloriana, his more immediate identification in Book I, the Book of Holiness, will be that of the perfect Christian man. Consequently, the description of the armour is permeated with religious significations. This applies even to the bauldrick's presumed twelve stones, which may be related to the priestly breastplate of Aaron, which was similarly decorated (Exodus xxxix: 8-14), and to the golden walls of Jerusalem, which were set with twelve precious gems (Rev xxi: 19-20)³⁶. However, by far the most important Christian symbol in Arthur's description is his shield, which simultaneously is made to intimate symbolically the processes of allegory. The shield is "all closely couer'd" like Moses' face in Exodus:

And the children of Israel sawe the face
of Moses, how the skin of Moses face
shone bright: therefore Moses put the co-
uering vp̄ his face, vntil he went to spea-
ke with God.

Exodus xxxiv: 35 37

The reason for the veil is that the human eye cannot bear the true

35 Ibid., pp.211-215

36 R.Eisler in The Royal Art of Astrology (1946) relates the twelve precious stones on Aaron's breastplate to the zodiac, p.249

37 Geneva Bible (1560); all subsequent biblical quotations are from this edition

light of God, which Moses' face reflects, and Spenser in the poem refers to a similar usage, although here the glory is Elizabeth I's:

The which O pardon me thus to enfold
 In couert vele, and wrap in shadowes light,
 That feeble eyes your glory may behold,
 Which else could not endure those beames bright,
 But would be dazled with exceeding light.

FQ II Proem 5.1-5

Una's face is similarly treated at I.i.4 and I.vi.4³⁸. The elevated symbolic interpretation of the shield suggested by these comparable uses, is maintained by the description of its substance which is not "earthly mettels", but diamond. This again recalls Moses' "face more cleare, then Christall glasse" from the July Aeglogue of The Shepheardes Calender (159). The qualities of clarity and oneness are those which are stressed, indicating obvious religious overtones. Indeed, God is directly identified with a shield in Psalm 84:11, and in Ephesians 6:16 the shield in the armour of God is called "the shield of faith"³⁹. Within the narrative structure therefore, Arthur must place his faith in the shield which is God's truth, and must only reveal it against "monsters huge" and "vnequall...foes", for it is both too special and too powerful to be used in every confrontation (I.vii.21).

The analysis of the first section of the shield's description appears to remove an allegoric veil so that we can clearly perceive its meaning as God's glory and truth. However, the conclusion to stanza 34 reintroduces an ambiguity,

For so exceeding shone his glistring ray,
 That Phoebus golden face it did attaint,
 As when a cloud his beames doth ouer-lay;
 And siluer Cynthia wexed pale and faint,
 As when her face is staynd with magicke arts constraint.

FQ i vii 34.5-9

38 I.iii.4 and I.xii.22

39 W.J.B.Pienaar, "Arthur's Shield in the Faerie Queene," Modern Philology, XXVI (1928-1929), pp.63-68

Although the shield is brighter than the sun, as God would be, the word "attaint" suggests a flaw which is confirmed by the shield's power to make the moon wax pale, reminding us of the powers attributed to witches. This sense is compounded by the concluding line of the stanza, which directly compares the properties of the shield to "magicke arts" ⁴⁰. Indeed, a source for Arthur's shield, which reinforces this moral ambiguity, is the shield of Atlante, the wicked magician in Orlando Furioso ⁴¹. A possible interpretation of this ambiguity is that the symbolism of magic obscures the religious truth, just as Moses' face was dimmed by the veil, and as in Ben Jonson's words, "perplexed allegories" wrap up the "springs of wisdom" ⁴². If this is accurate then, by pursuing the order of the actual workings of allegory, the veil and shield symbol will, after having suggested the truth and then partially concealed it, finally reveal it in its full glory thereby presenting the reader with a sense of mystical revelation. Although this is not fully achieved until the next canto, when the veil falls off Arthur's shield in the fight with Orgoglio (viii.19-20), an intimation of this event is provided in stanza 35:

No magicke arts hereof had any might,
 Nor bloudie wordes of bold Enchaunters call,
 But all that was not such, as seemd in sight,
 Before that shield did fade, and suddeine fall:
 And when him list the raskall routes appall,
 Men into stones therewith he could transmew,
 And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all;
 And when him list the prouder lookes subdew,
 He would them gazing blind, or turne to other hew.

FQ I vii 35

- 40 D.Brooks-Davies, Spenser's Faerie Queene: A critical commentary on Books I and II (1977), p.78
 Merlin is treated in a similarly ambiguous manner at III.iii.10-11
- 41 Ariosto, Orlando Furioso (1974), pp.17-18 and 54-56
- 42 B.Jonson, The Alchemist in Vol.V of Ben Jonson (1937), II.iii. 206-207, pp.327-328

P.Alpers's thorough analysis of Arthur's shield comments on the first line:

When Spenser clinches the first stanza by apparently commending to us "magicke arts constraint" and then completely reverses our expectations at the beginning of the next stanza, he puts us rather in the position of the shield's victims, and certainly not in the position of the person who wields the power of the shield.

43

However, having been "daunted" by Spenser's sudden revelation, the reader becomes aware that this stanza does not merely tell us what the shield was made of (33), or when it was used (34), but spells out its actual powers. Initially we learn that it reveals falsehood, a quality which supersedes, by virtue of its clear presentation, the allusion to Atlante's shield which is used to deceive ⁴⁴. It also turns men into stones and thus recalls Medusa's head which is used by Perseus and placed by Minerva on her breastplate. In this latter position N.Conti interpreted the Gorgon's head as signifying the stunning powers of both the sun and wisdom, meanings which are particularly apt for the qualities of Arthur's shield already mentioned by Spenser ⁴⁵. However, not only does the shield turn men into stones, but it appears to defy time itself in that it may convert all into dust and "dust to nought at all", a process of centuries reduced to seconds; and this property of the shield is confirmed by its composition, for diamond was said to be eternal and immutable ⁴⁶. Finally, once again revealing its God-like qualities, the shield's light can blind (Acts ix:3-9), and in this

43 P.Alpers, The Poetry of The Faerie Queene (1967), p.178

44 Ariosto, op.cit., 2.55-56, p.17

45 N.Conti, Mythologiae (1568), IV.v., p.97 v. and Mythologie (1627), Vol.I p.296, IV.vi

46 Brooks-Davies, op.cit. (1977), p.76

instance Spenser has omitted all complex allegory so that the reader is able to perceive with comparative ease the true Christian quality of the shield.

Arthur's Christian significance is also seen in his plume which is

Like to an Almond tree ymounted hye
On top of greene Selinis all alone,
With blossomes braue bedecked daintily;
Whose tender locks do tremble euery one
At euery little breath, that vnder heauen is blowne.
FQ I vii 32.5-9

Once again Arthur is related to Aaron for Aaron's priesthood was confirmed by the following sign:

And when Moses on the morowe went
into the Tabernacle of the Testimonie,
beholde, the rod of Aaron for the house
of Leui was budded, and broght forthe
buddes, & broght forthe blossoms & bare
ripe almondes.

Numbers xvii:8

Aaron's importance in this part of the poem derives from his role as God's first priest, as is shown by Spenser's other references to him outside The Faerie Queene. In the July Aeglogue of The Shepheardes Calender he is described as

the first of all his cote,
A shepheard trewe,
162-163

and in Mother Hubberd's Tale Spenser writes,

Therefore said he, that with the budding rod
Did rule the Iewes, All shalbe taught of God.
439-440

The importance of beginnings as in Aaron's priesthood, is further emphasized by the reference in Ecclesiastes (xii:5), where the flowering of the almond tree is related to the very beginnings of the church.

Again, almonds figure prominently in another book of the Pentateuch, the description of the seven-stick candelabra at Exodus xxv:33-34,

Three bolles like vnto almondes, one
knop and one floure in one branche: and
three bolles like almondes in the other brā-
che, one knop and one floure: so through
out the six branches that come out of the
Candelsticke.

And in the shaft of ye Candelsticke shalbe
foure bolles like vnto almōdes, his knops
& his floures.

Exodus xxv:33-34

The seven "lights" remind us of the seven stars linked by Spenser with Boötes and Arcturus at I.ii.1.2 ("seuenfold teme") and in The Teares of the Muses ("Starris Seauen"). The image of the almond tree, through its biblical associations, is concerned with beginnings, and thereby suggests the imminent commencement of Arthur's quest for Gloriana and his role as "patrone".

Above all, the overwhelming effect produced by the shield's symbolism is one of the highest and purest forms of Christianity, which has been conveyed to Prince Arthur so that he may express God's heavenly truth on earth. Spenser does not, at this point in the poem, particularize Arthur's Christian role into that of a sixteenth century Protestant redeemer. Nevertheless, this association is prefigured by the firm relationship between the Prince and an early uncorrupted Christianity, which is created by the many references to the beginnings of the church.

V

Arthur's traditional background is imaged in the dragon crested helmet, while his roles in Part I of The Faerie Queene are prefigured by the shield and the bauldrick. The remaining accoutrements, the plume and the sword, intimate the concerns of Part II of the poem. The setting and tone of Book VI utilize the pastoral tradition and emphasize the sense of new beginnings, which contrasts with the moral compromises of Book V. The plume, while not directly prefiguring Arthur's role

in the Book of Courtesy, does introduce the image of natural freshness and youth into the poem with regard to the Prince. The emphasis on beginnings in the interpretation of the plume is not confined to the Christian significances discussed earlier, for in the cycle of nature and in the emblem books of the period, the almond tree has an early flowering⁴⁷. Also the positioning of the first line describing the plume as on "the top of all his loftie crest" immediately after the last line on the dragon helmet, "adowne his back full low" (emphasis added) provides a striking sense of optimistic freshness. The plume further suggests the pastoral qualities of Book VI for its pictorial idea is derived from an identification with the blossoming almond tree "on top of greene Selinis", a position which comes from the Aeneid where Selinis is referred to as "leafy" (3.705). Arthur's plume suggests through its association to the almond tree, the Prince's role as both Christian and courteous knight. However, by pursuing the analysis of the allegoric symbol to its logical conclusion, a more complex meaning emerges. Although the almond tree implies freshness, Spenser would have undoubtedly associated the plant with the myth of Demophoon he refers to in Virgil's Gnat:

And that same tree, in which Demophoon,
By his disloyalty lamented sore,
201-202

Phyllis was metamorphosed into a tree after hanging herself for grief over the prolonged and disloyal absence of Demophoon, who finally returns and embraces the tree which suddenly blossoms into white

47 Alciati, Emblemes (1549), p.267 and Emblemata (1621), pp.875-879

almond flowers ⁴⁸. The implications for The Faerie Queene of this myth are poignant feelings of grief and death, which provide a strong contrast to the freshness mentioned above. This underlying sense of frailty and sadness is a plausible interpretation for the crest is "all alone" and its "locks do tremble euery one/ At euery little breath"; and indeed, Arthur's other association with a tree symbol, the poplar, is equally ambiguous ⁴⁹. The combination of beginnings and weakness seems apt, but because the image follows the dragon helmet and is attached to it visually, it also contributes a sense of danger and sadness to the heroic and Christian perfection of Arthur's presentation. Correspondingly, Arthur's sword -- the traditional emblem of justice -- probably anticipates Book V, the Book of Justice, while the Book of Friendship (IV) is foreshadowed in the brief mention of Arthur's squire in stanza 37. These remain necessarily mere suggestions as it is unlikely that Spenser would, in anticipation, have created precise and complex emblems for the three later, as yet unwritten, books.

Ultimately, however, the frailty of Arthur suggested by the interpretation of his plume is re-emphasized by the conclusion of his description, in the last two lines of stanza 36:

But when he dyde, the Faerie Queene it brought
To Faerie lond, where yet it may be seene, if sought.

The pronouncement of Arthur's death is arresting, particularly because it is the first direct personal comment on the Prince, rather than

48 Hyginus, The Myths of Hyginus (1960), p.62
Virgil, The Eclogues of Virgil (1932), v.10 and Servius' note in Col. 56, Opera Omnia (1586)

49 D.Cheney, Spenser's Image of Nature (1966), p.70
W.Caxton, The Royal Book of Wynkin de Wode (1488), ch.cxxiiii, n.pag.

a description of his armour. The thwarting of our expectation of a conventional completion of the description -- as for example with Art-egall in FQ III.ii.24-26 -- and the destruction of the chronological order already formed in The Faerie Queene, distances us from the text and presents us with the problems of reordering our awareness to include this unexpected piece of information⁵⁰. The sense of temporal chaos which was initially suggested in the Proem to Book I stresses the fictional nature of the poem through its destruction of chronological and therefore realistic order. The reader is in a paradoxical position, for he is distanced from the text by the recognition of its fictional nature. Yet at the same time he is related to the character of Prince Arthur, who is shown to belong to the world of death and time, and thus reality. Spenser offers no solution to the paradox at this point, but Arthur's "death" is important in that it marks the commencement of an association between the reader and the Prince which is essential to the full understanding of his role in the poem and the effectiveness of his allegoric lessoning. The relationship is confirmed by the fact that both hero and reader are strangers in a fairy world, and that both search for an ideal: Arthur for the Faerie Queene and the reader for the meaning of the poem. The immediate involvement demanded of the reader by the last line of stanza 36 emphasizes the importance of this union. Perhaps an explanation for this emphasis resides in the concept of the Prince's traditional origins, for King Arthur was essentially mortal despite his glorious achievements. As in the romances his humanity

50 Spenser, The Faerie Queene (1980), p.104

The description of a knight's armour in The Faerie Queene usually concludes with a complete return to narrative concerns.

Also note: Red Cross Knight, I.i.1-3 and Britomart, III.i.4 and III.iii.58-60

enables the reader to identify and sympathize with him. The full implication of this association is that the reference to Arthur's death does not only create a unity between the character and the reader, but also prefigures Spenser's creation of an interdependency between the transformation and the retention of Arthur's traditional qualities.

VI

Arthur's introduction in The Faerie Queene demands a complex and detailed allegorical interpretation, which fulfils both the function of distancing the reader from his past suppositions and simultaneously encouraging his desire to analyse the innovative significations of the Prince. Moreover, through its symbolism the description of Arthur's armour provides a key to his various roles in the poem. In this way the concept of The Prince's ideal Christian perfection, his role as a Neoplatonic lover and, to a lesser extent, his representation of justice and courtesy are all prefigured in Book I canto vii stanzas 29-36. In Chapter II I intend to examine Arthur's relationship to the moral ideals of The Faerie Queene, that is his Christian (Section I), Neoplatonic (Sections II-VI) and courteous (Section VII) representations. Lastly, in Chapter III I shall concentrate on the social and political roles of the Prince in the Books of Friendship and Justice. Nevertheless, the description of Arthur's armour also suggests a thematic unity which occurs in each of the Prince's roles. The continuity is provided by the emphasis on Renaissance themes and by the association of the reader and the Prince. More importantly, the bridging of fiction and reality perceived through our relationship with Arthur ultimately determines not only the success of his role in The Faerie Queene, but also Spenser's ability to create an essential and lasting contribution to the Arthurian tradition.

Chapter Two

I

As we have seen in Chapter I the final stage in the workings of allegory and the humanist idea of "fashioning" involves a momentary sense of liberation and transcendence when fiction and reality are able to merge in the fleeting and mystical revelation of the poem's truth¹. In Book I of The Faerie Queene it is Arthur's role as Christian redeemer which is fulfilled in this manner, when he rescues the Red Cross Knight and Una, and defeats Orgoglio and Duessa. However, within this general religious meaning Arthur's presentation clearly diverges into two interrelated interpretations: first, the Christian "heavenly grace" (I.viii.1.3) used to defeat the giant and save Saint George, and secondly, the more particular sixteenth century Protestant figure who humbles Duessa and succours Una.

Arthur's major religious role in Book I is the non-sectarian one of Christian redeemer. The Prince is able to personify this role through his adumbration of the biblical saviours, Michael, Moses and Christ². The climax of Arthur's role as redeemer occurs at the end of the battle where his triumph over Orgoglio is described in the same terms as the description of the crucifixion in Matthew³. The rending of the veil, the bright light of God, and the earthquake (xxvii:51; xxviii:2-3) are reproduced by Spenser in the uncovering of the shield:

And in his fall his shield, that couered was,
 Did loose his vele by chaunce, and open flew:
 The light whereof, that heauens light did pas,
 Such blazing brightnesse through the aier threw,
 That eye mote not the same endure to vew,
 FQ I viii 19.1-5

1 M.Murrin, The Veil of Allegory (1969), pp.162-163

2 Michael : J.E.Hankins, "Spenser and the Revelation of St.John,"
PMLA, 60 (1945), pp.364-381
 F.Kermode, Renaissance Essays (1973), pp.14-15

Moses : FQ I.viii.10.6-9 -- Numbers xx:11

3 J.Nohrnberg, The Analogy of The Faerie Queene (1976), pp.273-275

and in the effect of Orgoglio's fall,

Such was this Gyaunts fall, that seemd to shake
The stedfast globe of earth, as it for feare did quake.

FQ I viii 23.8-9

Further, when Arthur enters Orgoglio's dungeon he parallels Christ's harrowing of hell, and the Prince, like Jesus in the York Cycle first calls through and then "rent that yron dore" (I.viii.39.5) ⁴. Indeed, by following the order of the Mystery Cycle and placing the harrowing of hell after the crucifixion, Spenser underlines Arthur's symbolic affinities with Christ.

The religious associations in Part I, however, are not fixedly defined in terms of good and evil. Orgoglio is also linked with Christianity in a parody of Arthur's role, which dialectically and dynamically reveals the baser side of mankind ⁵. The relationship is finally affirmed by one meaning of the giant's name, for 'Orge', meaning "tilling", recalls the role of Arthur as the stellar 'ploughman' Boötes (see above pp.33-36) ⁶. "George" too contains the word 'orge' and the Red Cross Knight's relationship to the Prince, with specific reference to the ploughman image, has already been made. Arthur, the Red Cross Knight and Orgoglio are all thus linked through their representations of mankind ⁷, each appearing at different stages: the Prince and the giant are at

4 English Mystery Plays (1975), p.559, ll.193-197

Further biblical parallels with this episode may be seen at:
I.viii.36.6-7 -- Rev vi:9 ; I.viii.39 and I.ix.1 -- Rev xx:1 (note Nohrnberg, op.cit., pp.36-37) ; I.viii.10.8-9 -- I Corinthians x:4 and John xix:34

5 Orgoglio is associated with Jove at I.viii.9.1 and 21.8

A.C.Hamilton, The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene (1961), p.76

N.Frye, Fables of Identity (1963), p.79

Nohrnberg, op.cit., pp.273-274

6 A.Barclay, The Life of St. George (1955), p.112

7 Genesis iii:23

A.C.Hamilton, "Spenser and Langland," SP, 55 (1958), pp.533-548

M.W.Bloomfield, Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-century Apocalypse (1962), pp.106-107

S.S.Hussey, Piers Plowman. Critical Approaches (1969), pp.22-23

opposite ends of a Christian scale, the latter simultaneously reflecting and distorting all the qualities of the former, including his relationship to Christ. The Red Cross Knight, on the other hand, is still at a transient stage: he is like Orgoglio, for he too has wooed Duessa, and yet he is destined to be sainted, and thereby reflects Arthur's heavenly grace.

Arthur's more particularly sixteenth century role is introduced when he meets Una at the close of canto vii where the context of the poem is subtly transferred from the initial romance situation of a knight meeting a gracious lady in distress, to a dialogue on the Protestant values of reasoning and questing. The Prince advocates a faith based upon man's ability to reason,

Flesh may empaire (quoth he) but reason can repaire.

FQ I vii 41.9 8

and the constant effort which the quest ethic involved,

but he, that neuer would,

Could neuer: will to might giues greatest aid.

FQ I vii 41.3-4 9

This increasingly particularized role is emphasized by an overall sense of movement from indirectness towards clarity, in the change from the "Faire feeling words" (38.6) of Arthur's first address to Una, to the direct speech of his following statement (40), and in their developing relationship in the realistic narrative.

Arthur's role as the Protestant redeemer of the English Reformation is made clear in canto viii through his victory over Duessa, who symbolizes the Church of Rome, and through his championing of Una, who may be associated with Elizabeth I as the head of the Protestant Church

8 R.Hooker, The Works (1850), Vol.I p.313

9 H.Felperin, Shakespearean Romance (1972), p.34

in England ¹⁰.

The revelation of Arthur's shield initiates a victory over his enemies and the conclusion to the final stage of the allegory of the Prince as both Christian, and more particularly Protestant, perfection. The effect of the shield is overwhelming: the beast "became stark blind, and all his senses daz'd,/ That downe he tumbled" (I.viii.20.3-4); Duessa "for faintnesse reeld" (I.viii.20.7) and the giant, although he attempts to retaliate, is unable to do so, for,

where th'Almighties lightning brond does light,
It dimmes the dazed eyen, and daunts the senses quight.

FQ I viii 21.8-9

Contrastingly, the unveiling of the shield lifts, for the reader, the veil of allegory, revealing the truth about both Orgoglio and Duessa. The real worthlessness of the enchantress is seen later in the canto in her unrobing, but Orgoglio's parody of Arthur's association with Christ is immediately exposed through his ignominious manner of death:

But soone as breath out of his breast did pas,
That huge great body, which the Gyaunt bore,
Was vanisht quite, and of that monstrous mas
Was nothing left, but like an emptie bladder was.

FQ I viii 24.6-9

Orgoglio's defeat had to be expressed in such a way that Arthur's triumph was unquestionable and the image of the "bladder" shows us literally and conclusively that Orgoglio has no substance. Moreover, because bladders were traditionally part of the court-fool's costume Orgoglio also appears ridiculous ¹¹. It is important to realize

10 Duessa : The Geneva Bible (1969), Rev xvii, notes a, d, e and f
Una : is referred to at I.viii.26.1-3 as the "royall Virgin"
and note Kermode, op.cit., pp.33-59

A.Hume, Edmund Spenser (1984), pp.94-96

11 E.Welsford, The Fool (1935), pp.121-122

that the revelation of Arthur's true significance to the reader takes place only through this simultaneous awareness of opposites, both in the general and sixteenth century connotations. So that although we witness on one level the fulfilment of the shield's Christian promise, we can also perceive the beginnings of a more pervasive dialectical structure. The emphasis upon opposites and moral levels is seen in the moral scale of Christianity, where the Prince, through his relationship to Christ, is at the head of humanity; Orgoglio, his distorted reflection, at its base; and the Red Cross Knight at an intermediate point. The necessity of parody emphasized here signifies the importance of recognising opposing dualities, before a true appreciation of the moral perfection can be attained.

The unveiling of the shield in the narrative parallels the lifting of the allegory for the reader, and this similarity encourages us to accept an effect, parallel to that of the startling results of the revelation in the fiction. Indeed, there is a fleeting moment of 'transcendence' when the final and complete revelations occur simultaneously, not only in the poem itself, but also in the workings of the allegory and in our own awareness. From this elevated point at which fiction and reality appear briefly to merge, one might expect the narrative to pursue a triumphant course. Instead, when Arthur frees the Red Cross Knight, he does not transport Saint George to Hierusalem, the symbol for heaven in the poem. The Prince returns the knight to earth, where Saint George has yet to learn how to combat the forces of evil. Indeed, Arthur's final explication undermines all possible sense of triumph:

This dayes ensample hath this lesson deare
 Deepe written in my heart with yron pen,
 That blisse may not abide in state of mortall men.
FQ I viii 44.7-9

The "lesson deare" is addressed to the reader as much as to the fictional companions, and reminds us that although we have perceived the shield unveiled it is not the ultimate redemption, but part of a long quest; and from this first role the reader must continue his attempts to interpret the allegory of the poem, that is to learn new "lessons" and especially those relating to Arthur.

II

In the preceding Chapter and the first section of this Chapter, the development of the processes of allegory and "fashioning" have been traced from the initial humbling and presentation of new ideas to the revelation of Arthur's first allegorical role as Christian redeemer. In this section I intend to examine another facet of the Prince's character already prefigured in the description of his armour, that is, Arthur's presentation as the true lover of the Faerie Queene through Neoplatonic symbolism.

The Neoplatonic cycle of emanatio, raptio and remeatio commences with a visionary experience and so Spenser is able to build upon the mystical revelation of Arthur as a Christian redeemer already presented in canto viii of Book I. The emblematic image of this revelation, which is the unveiling of the shield, is particularly appropriate to the Neoplatonic doctrine, as Pico had utilized a similar symbol in Heptaplus and had also referred, as does Spenser, to Moses' face in Exodus ¹². Nevertheless, despite the suitability of the shield's unveiling

12 Pico, Heptaplus in On the Dignity of Man. On Being and the One. Heptaplus (1965), pp.63-174. Proem Book I pp.69-70 and Proem Book II p.94

for the initial revelation, Spenser also introduces a more potent image in the dream-like vision of Gloriana¹³. Arthur's relation of his vision to Una and the Red Cross Knight contains within it, as did the introduction to his role as lover, two facets: that of the sixteenth century contemporary allegory and the other broader concept of a dream about a God being representative of a blissful and spiritual death. The Prince relates that while sleeping

Me seemed, by my side a royall Mayd
Her daintie limbes full softly down did lay:
So faire a creature yet saw neuer sunny day.

FQ I ix 13.7-9

The "royall Mayd" is, on one level, Elizabeth I, an identification confirmed in the sixteenth century reader's interpretation by the recent production of John Lyly's play Endimion, which Spenser almost certainly used in this passage. The play was performed at court in February 1586. Spenser was in Ireland at this time but the play's strong element of contemporary court allegory would almost certainly have ensured his familiarity with it¹⁴. The main protagonist, Endimion (the ideal courtier and possibly Leicester) is in love with Cynthia the Queen of the Fairies (Elizabeth I); he falls asleep and while dreaming is kissed by the Queen, a vision which he later relates to the court,

Me thought I sawe a Ladie passing faire... 15

13 An additional link is made with Elizabeth I at I.ix.4.6-8, where Arthur is said to have been brought up at "Rauran", which was one of the ancestral seats of the Tudors.

D.Brooks-Davies, Spenser's Faerie Queene: A critical commentary on Books I and II (1977), p.86

14 Lyly, "Endimion" in Vol.III of The Complete Works of John Lyly, ed. R.W.Bond (1902), pp.13 and 101

15 Ibid., p.66, v.i.81

P.Saccio, The Court Comedies of John Lyly (1969), p.173

There is a strong similarity in the contemporary allegory of poem and play. Both draw upon the particularly apt myth of Cynthia's chaste love for the shepherd Endymion. The analogue's suitability is self-evident for it was politically necessary to intimate the proper distance between Elizabeth and any gentleman of her court. Consequently, Prince Arthur's doubt about his vision parallels the decorum of the contemporary court world. However, the dream of Endymion has far deeper implications than its contemporary sixteenth century role.

The second and more important interpretation of the Prince's dream vision, is that often dreams are seen as symbols of death. Arthur's particular love dream of Gloriana may thus be interpreted in the context of human-divine love. As E.Wind notes:

To die was to be loved by a god, and partake
through him of eternal bliss. 16

The myth of Endymion and Cynthia was specifically related by Renaissance Neoplatonism to that bliss attained by man when he was received in heaven, and so Arthur as the dreamer appears to be able to pass beyond the barriers of mortality and achieve that bliss, although only for a moment in a mystical vision. The dream inspires Arthur with love for Gloriana and initiates his quest for an ultimate union with her, and as such his vision becomes the ecstatic vision which the Neoplatonic soul experiences, and Arthur's search becomes one with the desire for a consummation with the beauty and truth of God.

Despite the interpretations above, there remains an uncertainty

16 E.Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (1980), p.154

about the physical reality of the vision, which is voiced by the Prince himself:

But whether dreames delude, or true it were,
 Was neuer hart so rauisht with delight,
 Ne liuing man like words did euer heare,
FQ I ix 14.5-7

The reader shares his awareness of the ambiguity, for although we accept the dream-like nature of the vision, there remains "pressed gras, where she had lyen" (I.ix.15.2). This doubt echoes earlier concerns, for on discovering the Christian allegory of the Prince's role in Book I, the reader becomes aware of a mystical revelation of truth, of a heaven beyond the limits of time. Yet, when the Red Cross Knight is freed we are presented with a plain and duller world where our knowledge of our own mortality makes it difficult to accept that we could ever transcend it, a view encapsulated by the knowledge "That blisse may not abide in state of mortall men" (I.viii.44.9). In both visions it is Arthur who indicates the doubt, and he also translates the uncertainty about the dream itself to its source and purpose:

For whither he [God] through fatall deepe foresight
 Me hither sent, for cause to me vnghest,
 Or that fresh bleeding wound, which day and night
 Whilome doth rangle in my riuen brest,
 With forced fury following his behest,
 Me hither brought
FQ I ix 7.1-6

Arthur distinguishes two possible reasons for his presence in Faerye land: first, that it is through God's predetermining the fate of man, or secondly, that he has been driven by the forces of profane love. The ambiguity can be seen in that the reader has received positive confirmation of the former through the allegory of Arthur's redemption of the Red Cross Knight, while the Prince himself explains the situation in terms of secular love, expressing this love in traditional

terminology such as is later utilized by R. Burton in The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621) III.ii.3¹⁷. The images of war, fire and uncertainty seem directly to oppose "heavenly loue", and indeed, earthly love appears to have its own 'God' (I.ix.10.7) whose followers are subject to the fates,

Nothing is sure, that growes on earthly ground:

FQ I ix 11.5

Indeed, the dualities of secular love and God's intervention can also be seen in the two levels of interpretation of the dream, as either a contemporary political allegory or a Neoplatonic ecstatic vision of heavenly beauty, or both. Finally, the ambiguities interrelate to form alternative options for both the Prince and reader: either the dream is a fantasy of physical love, merely representing actual relationships such as Elizabeth and Leicester, for man's life is basically worldly with no place for God's active intervention through heavenly visions; or, on the other hand, the dream is a heavenly vision, representing the possible union of man with an ultimate beauty and truth, prefiguring the final union as predestined by God. To assert that one aspect must be true and the other false would be to deny the complexity of Arthur's position, because he must necessarily belong to both secular and celestial worlds. The Prince is presented as a perfect mortal in the Christian understanding and as the ideal rational soul in the Neoplatonic order.

In addition to concluding Arthur's role as Christian redeemer and commencing that of Neoplatonic lover, the dream vision also introduces a more traditional Arthurian concern. The issue of whether the Prince is ruled by his own earthly desires or whether God has foreseen both

17 op.cit. (1971), pp.596-622

vision and quest becomes a problem of man's free choice versus God's foreknowledge. King Arthur, as early as Geoffrey of Monmouth's History, is faced with the inevitable results of his self-willed striving for fame. The King becomes, either through a challenge or vision, dissatisfied with the harmonious or static existence in Camelot and enters with his knights upon an endless quest. In the early works this is often a conquest of foreign lands, while in the more traditional romance material the fellowship of the Round Table searches for the Holy Grail. The country is left undefended and treachery, especially that of Mordred, Arthur's illegitimate son, is able to undermine the basis of the society. The King and his knights then return and attempt to restore the peace and order that had once existed in Camelot; their failure and the resulting last battle culminate in Arthur's death¹⁸. Despite all attempts to attain both worldly and heavenly glory, Arthur and his knights are inevitably doomed to failure because inherent in their society are the moral flaws which make the attainment of perfection impossible. The adulterous love of Guinevere and Lancelot is the traditional flaw, but Arthur's own conception in an act of adultery (that of Uther and Igraine) has doomed him even before his birth. In this way the romance narratives enact the problem of man's free choice versus God's foreknowledge of events. For although Arthur and his knights strive continually for perfection their lack of success has been

18 Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain (1979), pp.257-261

predetermined by inherent moral flaws¹⁹. These failings have been engendered by a sin committed at a time beyond the compass of the story, which on a more abstract level clearly symbolizes the first sin of man when he fell from grace in the Garden of Eden. Although this traditional concern is only introduced in Book I of The Faerie Queene, it gradually becomes equally as important to the Arthurian material in the poem as its concerns with Christianity and Neoplatonism. The introduction of Merlin in Book III introduces the reemergence of the traditional Arthurian themes of free-will and God's foreknowledge, although even in these cantos Spenser continues to assert his contemporization of the romance material. For in The Faerie Queene perfection and glory remain realistic possibilities and Prince Arthur and his moral flaws are fully redeemable²⁰. But despite the introduction of the Renaissance's optimistic faith in the redemption of mankind the consistent retention of the traditional themes ensures that not only were the romances an essential basis for The Faerie Queene, but that Spenser's poem belongs

19 Morte Arthure (1978), pp.205-206

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (1976), pp.157-254

T.Malory, Works (1977), pp.29-30

R.Morris, The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature (1982), p.108

It was, however, a more widespread Medieval concern:

G.Chaucer, Works (1974), "The Nun's Priest's Tale" 3231-3250

(A Text) and "Troilus and Criseyde" Book IV 958-1078

The orthodox view can be seen in: T.Bradwardine, "Concerning the Cause of God against Pelagius," (J.Milner, The History of the Church of Christ (1810), Vol.IV), pp.80-81

Augustine, The City of God (1952), pp.213-215, Book V ch.9

The humanist and Platonist developments can be seen in Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy (1969), Book V chs.iii and iv, pp.150 and 168

20 See below pp.63 and 78-84

indubitably to the main Arthurian tradition²¹.

III

Arthur's first presentation in Book II concentrates upon his Neoplatonic role as the ideal rational soul and the lover of the Faerie Queene. In Book I of The Faerie Queene the first process in the Neoplatonic cycle of love has already been expressed through the mystical revelations. The second stage of the development of love, which is seen in Book II, is a sense of raptio, that is an overwhelming love for the source of the vision. This love, however, is experienced on three different levels: first, in a purely physical manner which is the reaction of the basest and most animal-like soul; secondly, in both a physical and spiritual way, for the rational soul is aware of the more esoteric love, but is only able to perceive the physical image of God's beauty; and finally, with a purely spiritual love which is the prerogative of the perfect celestial soul²². This section will deal with the second stage of the Neoplatonic doctrine of love as it is related to Arthur, for the Prince's rescue of Guyon, the titular knight of Book II, presents the reader with representations of the three forms of soul. On one level of interpretation the paynims may be seen as the basest souls, Arthur as the rational soul, and the angel who comes to aid Guyon, as the celestial soul.

21 The debate on God's foreknowledge and man's free will continued into the Renaissance; the two arguments are encapsulated in M.Luther, De Servo Arbitrio (1969), p.332 and D.Erasmus, De Libero Arbitrio (1969), pp.84-85
R.Hooker, Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie (1597), p.69
I.Rivers, Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry (1979), pp.114-116

22 J.Spens, Spenser's Faerie Queene (1934), pp.49-51

The angel's figuration as the most perfect soul is confirmed by his role as a messenger from God and his glorious outward appearance:

Beside his head there sate a faire young man,
 Of wondrous beautie, and of freshest yeares,
 Whose tender bud to blossome new began,
 And flourish faire about his equall peares;
 His snowy front curled with golden heares,
 Like Phoebus face adorned with sunny rayes,
 Diuinely shone, and two sharpe winged sheares,
 Decked with diuerse plumes, like painted layes,
 Were fixed at his backe, to cut his ayerie wayes.

FQ II viii 5 23

However, as the shield was too powerful to be experienced by mortal men, so the angel must also 'veil' his glory by transferring his guardianship of Guyon to the Palmer, who will represent him on earth, and who must bless Arthur's efforts thereby revealing the spiritual facet of the Prince's rational soul. As the angel, and to a certain extent the Palmer, are representatives of the celestial soul and attempt to aid Guyon, so Cymochles and Pyrochles in the narrative present and Mammon in the past provide the opposing forces of the lowest soul, attempting to destroy the knight of Temperance. The two paynims represent the unrestrained passions, the former sexual excess and the latter unbridled anger, and are furthest away from the influence of God. Prince Arthur provides the moderate force, he symbolizes the Neoplatonic rational soul and thus is able to control both sensual desires and anger. Archimago calls attention to Arthur's horse and his control over it:

23 Apart from the obvious interpretation of angels as celestial a more conclusive identification can be shown by a comparison with a similar description of divine purpose in the Neoplatonic Hymne of Heavenly Love 65-70

Well kend him so farre space
 Th'enchauter by his armes and amenaunce,
 When vnder him he saw his Lybian steed to prounce.

FQ II viii 17.7-9

The horse was a common Neoplatonic symbol of sensuous passion or libido, or what Pico called amore bestiale²⁴, which coincides with the earlier description of Arthur's horse in Book I as,

His stubborne steed with curbed canon bit,
 Who vnder him did trample as the aire,
 And chaft, that any on his backe should sit;
 The yron rowels into frothy fome he bit.

FQ I vii 37.6-9

Because Arthur is able at this point in the poem to control his horse, he is seen to be in command of his sexual desires and is therefore the opposite of Cymochles who is unable to restrain his passions. Similarly, Arthur is reserved in both actions and words, for his sword is useless to any but himself, and he calmly reasons with the paynims before being forced to fight, in sharp contrast to the quick-tempered and hasty Pyrochles. Nevertheless, like all the knights, Arthur's virtues must be tested and his human nature revealed, before he is able to triumph conclusively.

The importance to the battle's thematic concerns of the Prince's love for Gloriana is demonstrated by the image of his wound -- "Red as the Rose" (39.2) -- which recalls Elizabeth's emblem of the Tudor rose and thus the Faerie Queene, and from the fact that Arthur is unable to attack Cymochles' (Guyon's) shield:

Whereon the Faery Queenes pourtract was writ,
 His hand relented, and the stroke forbore,
 And his deare hart the picture gan adore,

FQ II viii 43.3-5

24 Wind, op.cit., p.145

Further, these symbols of Gloriana, together with Cymochles' identification as unrestrained passion and Arthur's fall from his horse (33.6-7) which implies that the Prince loses control over his sexual desires, clearly indicate that Arthur is susceptible to sensuous love²⁵. Of course, Arthur's ability to conquer these passions is never really doubted, for the position of the wound "in his right side" (38.9) recalls his previous association to Christ, and the Palmer reinforces this interpretation:

Sir Guyons sword he lightly to him raught,
 And said; Faire Son, great God thy right hand blesse,
 To vse that sword so wisely as it ought.

FQ II viii 40.2-4 26

Guyon's sword and the Christian blessing aid Arthur not only in his defeat of Cymochles, but also in his triumph over Pyrochles and thus unbridled anger²⁷. The sword is the emblem of justice and as such relates to Arthur's emphasis upon judgement: first, when he tries to persuade the paynims towards mercy, for

Indeed (then said the Prince) the euill donne
 Dyes not, when breath the bodie first doth leaue,
 But from the grandsyre to the Nephewes sonne,
 And all his seed the curse doth often cleaue,
 Till vengeance vtterly the guilt bereaue:
 So streightly God doth iudge.

FQ II viii 29.6-1

Secondly, when Pyrochles hastily strikes Arthur, the Prince asserts that he "broken hast/ The law of armes" and that he will "feelee the law, the which thou hast defast" (31.6-7 and 9); and indeed, when Arthur has defeated Pyrochles, the paynim is seen to be subject to "the victours law" (50.5) (emphasis added throughout). It is important to note

25 Arthur wounds Cymochles in the thigh, again emphasizing the sexual connotations of the battle: 36.3-5

26 John xix:34

27 R.Horton, The Unity of The Faerie Queene (1978), p.20

that although Arthur's own sword must be equally representative of justice it is not used, for Morddure's associations are not as clearly Christian as those of Guyon's sword²⁸.

Finally, Cymochles' and Pyrochles' representations of the baser Neoplatonic souls are confirmed by Arthur's stern judgement. For not only does the Prince as the rational soul, who is prey to these forces, have to resist strongly because of his susceptibility, but also the paynims' relationship to the lowest souls places them in the world farthest away from God, where harsh justice alone is understood. Indeed, Arthur's final comment "I haue done my dew in place" (56.6), concludes the sense of dull baseness which characterizes the iron age in which the base soul lives, and the Prince proves himself to be a true rational soul in control of sensuality and anger.

IV

The defence of Guyon introduces the three forms of the Neoplatonic soul as they are related to Arthur. The castle of Alma, where the two knights journey next expands our understanding of the Neoplatonic elements and presents them in an encapsulated form in the British and Elfin chronicles. The key to our understanding of Arthur's own Neoplatonic role in Book II is provided by the emblematic figure of Prays-desire, whose introductory function parallels the description of Arthur's armour in Book I. Arthur's meeting with this emblematic figure and indeed the entire description of Alma's castle jointly provide a period of static analysis in comparison to the quickly moving narrative which combine to make him "inly moued" (39.1) and induce a sense of self-contemplation

28 Significantly it is the magic property of Arthur's sword which is stressed in this canto : viii.20

and a questioning as to the true significance of Prays-desire:

The Prince by chaunce did on a Lady light,
That was right faire and fresh as morning rose,
But somewhat sad, and solemne eke in sight,
As if some pensieve thought constrained her gentle spright.

FQ II ix 36.6-9

Prays-desire is clearly a symbolic figure, specifically dressed in "a long purple pall, whose skirt with gold/ Was fretted all about" (37.1-2) and carrying a "Poplar branch" (37.3). The colour of her robe appropriately makes the lady a symbol of temperance (mixture of blue and red) for this is the Book of Temperance²⁹. More significantly, she represents Elizabeth I and so Gloriana, as purple is also the colour of royalty, and the dark and light sides of the poplar leaf recall Elizabeth I's own colours of black and white³⁰. Indeed, Arthur meets Prays-desire in the chamber of the emotions (the heart)³¹.

Apart from the immediately obvious significations of temperance and the love relationship of Prince and Queen, Prays-desire has a more difficult quality to interpret: she is sad, and Arthur asks her

Gentle Madame, why beene ye thus dismaid,
And your faire beautie do with sadnesse spill?
Liues any, that you hath thus ill apaid?
Or doen you loue, or doen you lacke your will?
What euer be the cause, it sure beseemes you ill...

FQ II ix 37.5-9

to which she replies

Pensieve I yeeld I am, and sad in mind,
Through great desire of glory and of fame;
Ne ought I weene are ye therein behind,
That haue twelue moneths sought one, yet no where can her find.

FQ II ix 38.6-9

29 C.Ripa, Iconologia (1593), p.268

30 T.H.Cain, Praise in The Faerie Queene (1978), p.120

These associations have been prefigured by the introduction of Guyon's shield at II.ix.2-7

31 FQ II.ix.34.6

Chaucer, op.cit., p.267

The sadness related to the desire for fame and the poplar tree recalls the myth of Phaeton, a legend which Spenser used at least twice; in Virgil's Gnat (197-200) and at FQ I.i.8³². Phaeton also desires glory but being mortal cannot sustain the heights to which he aspires, an idea which recalls Arthur's earlier comment that "blisse may not abide in state of mortall men". The sadness through the recognition of man's mortality is linked to the inevitability of the passing of time, both in that the poplar may be

identified with time, because its leaves are white (symbolizing day) on one side and black (symbolizing night) on the other. 33

and because Prays-desire herself comments upon the continual movement of time "ye.../ That haue twelue moneths sought one, yet no where can her find" (38.8-9). In this manner the significance of the emblem figure not only points towards temperance and love, but also indicates that the quest for glory must battle with the mutabilities of time and mortality, so that desire and sadness are sensed simultaneously. Thus Arthur as the rational soul must search for the beauty and truth of God as represented on earth by the Faerie Queene, but will also be continually restrained by the frailty of his human nature.

Arthur and Guyon end their tour of Alma's castle in the chamber which represents the highest part of the sensitive soul, and because this concentrates upon the memory, they are able to read here the chronicles of their races. The inclusion of a history coincides perfectly with the tradition of a romance epic which Spenser followed

32 Ovid, Metamorphoses II.346-366
Golding edition (1567), pp.14 v.-20 v.
Sandys edition (1632), pp.65-69

33 P.Alpers, The Poetry of The Faerie Queene (1967), p.206

as for example in Orlando Furioso and Gerusalemme Liberata³⁴. The reading of a chronicle was also an appropriate activity for the rational soul, as reasoning and the abilities of the mind are its most natural occupations. In addition, because the rational soul is able mentally to perceive both the higher and lower souls, the chronicle is ideally suited for an encapsulated presentation of the Neoplatonic order. This condensing is also facilitated by the structural idea of a book within a book. Finally, the reflection of themes and figures in the chronicles from The Faerie Queene, which the infolding implies, conclusively makes this canto an integral part of the poem and adds to the sense of continuity which permeates the histories, and which commences in stanza 4 with the uniting of Arthur and Elizabeth I:

Thy name O soueraine Queene, thy realme and race,
 From this renowned Prince deriued arre,
 Who mightily vpheld that royall mace,
 Which now thou bear'st, to thee descended farre
 From mightie kings and conquerours in warre,
 Thy fathers and great Grandfathers of old,
 Whose noble deedes about the Northerne starre
 Immortall fame for euer hath enrold;
 As in that old mans booke they were in order told.

FQ II x 4

The stellar reference linking Arthur and Elizabeth recalls the earlier association through the bauldrick, and the union is further emphasized by the reference to the "Northerne starre" which was a symbol of constancy. However, before commencing an analysis of the Briton chronicle it is helpful to introduce a pattern that can be followed through the rather overwhelming mass of material found in the 64 stanzas (5-69). H. Berger has already, and most effectively, divided them into the

34 Ariosto, op.cit. (1974), 3.16-59, pp.22-27
 Tasso, op.cit., trans. E. Fairfax (1962), XVII. 64-81, pp.431-435

three following parts:

- I. 5-36
- II 36-53/4
- III 54-69

Berger sums up Spenser's intention in the following manner,

The presentation of history in Canto x further embodies the traditional Christian attitudes toward the meaning of earthly existence, and it is only in this context that the problems of British history assume a poetic, rather than a merely political or didactic function. 35

This conclusion, however, does not explain the lack of moral causation in the chronicle, the importance of Numa (x.37-42) or, more particularly, the presence of those preceding themes of Book II which suggest the tripartite framework of Neoplatonism. So that although we may accept Berger's division, it is necessary to retain an awareness of the many reflections in the chronicle of other passages in the poem, especially those which relate to Arthur and the Faerie Queene.

In the first section of the chronicle (II.x.5-36) there are two kings, Brute and Lochrine, who resemble Arthur. Brute recalls Arthur through his battle against the giants which resembles the Prince's defeat of Orgoglio in Book I, while Lochrine's battle against the invaders of Britain is described in the same terms as the attack of Malger's army in canto xi ³⁶. Humber's troops are

a nation straunge, with visage swart,
And courage fierce, that all men did affray,
Which through the world then swarnd in euey part,
And ouerflow'd all countries farre away,
Like Noyes great flood, with their importune sway,
FQ II x 15.1-5

35 H.Berger, The Allegorical Temper (1957), p.90

36 I.vii.8.4 -- II.x.9.3-5 and I.viii.39-40 -- II.x.11.1

and similarly Arthur will be attacked by an army

Like a great water flood, that tomling low
 From the high mountaines, threats to ouerflow
 With suddein fury all the fertile plaine,
FQ II xi 18.4-6

Moreover, Humber is thrown into a river by Loctrine, as Arthur throws Maleger into a standing lake (x.16.6-9 and xi.46)³⁷. Correspondingly, Gloriana may be related to Guendoline who is both a British queen and the "glorie of her sex" (x.20.6; emphasis added).

In addition to the reflecting images of Gloriana and Arthur, the moral framework of the Neoplatonic doctrine is also implied by this first part of the chronicle. The giants are easily identifiable as base souls. Moreover, there is also a pervading sense of despair manifested throughout these cantos (5-36), which suggests the inability of the higher souls, represented by Brute, Loctrine and Guendoline, to defeat the baser instincts of man. The despair is seen in the lack of a standard of moral causation in the procession of monarchs and in the emblematic image of Cordeill's suicide³⁸.

The second section of the Briton chronicle (37-53) begins dramatically and optimistically with another Arthur-figure, Dunwallo, who like the Prince both acts as a saviour figure and has a vision of a Fay (42.7-8). Moreover, Dunwallo resembles Arthur in his identification with the ideal qualities of the rational soul, for he upholds law and peace. Further, Dunwallo is associated, through Numa upon whom Spenser based his description, with the Neoplatonic concepts of a mystical revelation and the double-headed god, Janus, who signified the

37 L.H.Miller, "Arthur, Maleger, and History in the Allegorical Context," UTQ, 35 (1966), pp.176-187

38 For example, Madan -- x.21.1 and x.33-36
 Cordeill -- x.32.7-9

celestial soul³⁹. Similarly, Gloriana is mirrored in Mertia through their equivalent "fairy nature" and by the fact that Mertia's name recalls 'Mercilla', who is one of the most clearly defined Faerie Queene figures in the poem⁴⁰. Thus the commencement of Part II of the Briton chronicle introduces and links two very definite Arthur and Faerie Queene representatives. It simultaneously suggests an elevation to the higher form of reaction to God's beauty -- the visionary experience -- and subsequently to a perception of both the corporal and spiritual worlds.

The importance of mystical revelations to this central section is affirmed by Spenser's introduction of the traditional Arthurian image of the Holy Grail at a point where it is out of place both within the time order of the chronicle and in the narrative of Prince Arthur (II.x.53.6-9). Yet within the Neoplatonic theme it is appropriate as another instance, however ambiguous, of the mystical revelation of God to mankind. But despite the inclusion of these divine revelations the last line of stanza 53 -- "the truth, but since it greatly did decay" -- leaves a doubt as to the permanency of any good attained by the rational soul as represented by Dunwallo and Mertia, an idea already presented through Prays-desire's emblematic emphasis upon mortality and the mutability of time. Indeed, Part III of the chronicle appears to return to the chaos of the past

- 39 Geoffrey of Monmouth, op.cit., II.17
 Livy, Titus Livius (1919-1959), Vol. I p.69, I.19.5
 T.Cooper, Thesavrus Lingvae (1565), n.pag. c.f. under "Numa"
 Pico, A Platonick Discourse Upon Love (1914), II.xxi, pp.45-46
- 40 Mertia may also be related to Gloriana through another Faerie Queene figure, Britomart. Mertia's husband Guitheline is the "iustest and trewest" (42.2), which recalls Britomart's love, Artegall the knight of Justice.

Whereof great trouble in the kingdome grew,
 That did her selfe in sundry parts diuide,
 And with her powre her owne selfe ouerthrew,
 Whilest Romanes dayly did the weake subdew:

FQ II x 54.2-5

Through the figures resembling Arthur and Gloriana Parts I and II of the chronicle are able to present images of the baser and rational Neoplatonic souls. Part III moves towards an understanding of the celestial soul and prefigures its fuller conception in Book III in the figures of Britomart, Artegall and the hermaphrodite ⁴¹. Bunduca as a British warrior queen must be related to Britomart and thus to the Neoplatonic concept of Venus Armata, whereas the other important figure in this section, Helena, suggests the Venus Urania through her musical skill and her description as the "fairest liuing wight" (59.5) ⁴². Thus by symbolizing the inner union of Mars and Venus, Bunduca and Helena prefigure the next stage in the Neoplatonic doctrine of love, no longer dealing with the reaction of the rational soul to a vision of beauty, but with an attempt towards a full union with God, seen on earth as an ideal joining of man and woman. However, neither Bunduca nor Helena attains that perfection: the former is morally ambiguous and Helena's reign is afterwards followed by confusion and murder. It is important

41 III.xii.43-47 (1590 version)

42 Bunduca: II.x.54-57

Britomart is directly compared to Bunduca at III.iii.54.7

Wind, op.cit., pp.91-92

A.Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time (1964), pp.123-124 and 134

Helena: II.x.59

Helena may be related to Florimell, and thus Venus, through her description as "fairest". Florimell is described in this manner 13 times (III.i.18.8; III.v.5.5; III.v.5.9; III.v.23.2; III.vii.13.2; III.viii.13.9; III.viii.19.6-7; IV.ii.8.3; IV.ii.22.9; IV.ii.23.4; V.ii.2.8; V.ii.15.6; V.ii.27.8). Furthermore, Florimell's beauty in the false Florimell wins the competition for the fairest lady at IV.v.10-16.

Florimell may be identified with the Neoplatonic Venus, as this goddess was identified with beauty, and the flower was the symbol of the celestial soul (Wind, op.cit., pp.81-89 and 138).

to remember that Bunduca and Helena are ultimately flawed reflections of an ideal, which is imaged in the unattainable figure of Gloriana⁴³. If by virtue of her Neoplatonic attributes the Faerie Queene becomes an image of the perfected Venus, then Arthur who is represented to an equal extent in the chronicle and whose unity with Gloriana has been stressed will become an image of Mars. The implication is that at the very end of the poem there will be a presentation of the ultimate united Neoplatonic truth.

The Briton chronicle never reaches this perfect fulfilment. Helena and Bunduca prefigure the events in Book III, while Arthur remains the symbol of the rational soul striving for perfection and yet inevitably having to accept the limitations of his own mortality. Nevertheless, the suggestion that it is he who concludes the Briton chronicle together with the actual ending of the Elfin chronicle with Gloriana does serve to relate Arthur to the Faerie Queene, and so indicates that the ultimate union may be possible. Arthur's concluding comment on the reading accords with his role as the rational soul:

How brutish is it not to vnderstand,
How much to her we owe, that all vs gaue,
That gaue vnto vs all, what euer good we haue.

FQ II x 69.7-9

The word "brutish", unusual in other circumstances, becomes understandable when related to the corporal and animal comprehension of beauty, and the use of "her" suggests that beauty emanating from a Venus figure in a revelatory vision. Arthur thus concludes with the appropriate

43 W. Blissett, "Florimell and Marinell," Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, 5 (1965), pp.87-104

comment for the soul receiving the emanatio of beauty.

Despite this sense of conclusion Spenser begins the following stanza with "But Guyon all this while his booke did read" (70.1) presenting us with the realization that the comprehension of the chronicles is not yet complete. My account of the Elfin chronicle will be concise as it is not read by Arthur, and furthermore it is thoroughly examined elsewhere by I.Rathborne in The Meaning of Spenser's Fairyland (1937), H.Berger in The Allegorical Temper (1957) and T.P.Roche in The Kindly Flame (1964)⁴⁴. Although Spenser in the Elfin chronicle attempts a more universal history of mankind, Guyon's history like the Briton chronicle, retains images reflected from The Faerie Queene. As T. P.Roche writes,

Elfe's inspiration at the sight of this woman
recalls Arthur's vision of the Faery Queene.
In fact, this stanza [2.10.71] can be taken as
an adumbration of Arthur's search for Gloriana
and of the glory he will attain when his quest
is completed. 45

The references to Cleopolis and Panthea recall their earlier mention in Book I (I.x.58) while Elfinor is a reflection of Merlin:

Then Elfinor, who was in Magick skild;
He built by art vpon the glassy See
A bridge of bras, whose sound heauens thunder seem'd to bee.
FQ II x 73.7-9

Elfinor, like Merlin, is skilled in magic and is also related to a "glassy See"; the misspelling and capitalizing of "See" suggest

- 44 Rathborne, op.cit., pp.63-154
Berger, op.cit., pp.89-114
Roche, op.cit., pp.34-50
Note also: Hume, op.cit., pp.145-161
45 Roche, op.cit., p.35

Merlin's glass in which it was possible to "See", "What euer thing was in the world contaynd" (III.ii.19.2). Finally, the "bridge of bras" equates with Merlin's "brassen wall in compas to compile/ About Cairmardin" (III.iii.10.3-4), and the "thunder" prefigures the bellowing sound of the demons building the wall, supposedly heard on Barry Island in South Wales ⁴⁶, which Spenser refers to in Book III.iii.9. The final monarch in Guyon's chronicle is, of course, the Faerie Queene herself:

He dying left the fairest Tanaquill,
 Him to succede therein, by his last will:
 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 Glorian liue, in glory and great powre.

FQ II x 76.4-9

There is a complex and subtle transference of history into fiction here, in that the chronicle has been the story of mankind and yet Gloriana is a fictional character in the poem, and simultaneously of fiction into history, for the 'Elfin' book is by its fairy nature unreal, while Tanaquill is the real Elizabeth I. The commingling of history and fiction in the Elfin chronicle echoes that of the Briton chronicle, which has followed the accepted histories of the period while utilizing the same material not only to reflect parts and figures of the poem, but also to continue the Neoplatonic doctrine of love. Finally, as H. Berger notes, the two chronicles themselves symbolize the juxtaposition of history and fiction as do the knights who read them ⁴⁷. The opposition

46 Giralduſ, Itinerariuſ Cambriae (1585), p.119
 R.Holinshed, The First and ſecond volumes of Chronicles(1586),
 p.129

47 Berger, op.cit., p.129

is typified by the two concluding figures: Arthur and the Faerie Queene. Arthur belongs to the 'history' chronicle, while Gloriana is in the Elfin or fictional chronicle; at the same time she is the contemporary Elizabeth I and he the fictional character Prince Arthur. In this way the prefigured union of Arthur and Gloriana becomes not only a vision of Neoplatonic excellence, but more importantly a point at which the division between fiction and reality may be mystically bridged⁴⁸.

The conclusion of the chronicles prefigures that ultimate unity of Neoplatonism which the final transcendental vision of allegory and humanist fashioning will reveal to us, again implying that canto x echoes the thematic roles of Arthur and Gloriana in Part I of The Faerie Queene. However, this ability to reflect the poem as a whole also confirms the chronicles as an integral part of the work and endows the poem with a universality gained from the continual linking of past with present and fact with fiction. With regard to its more particular implications for Arthur's role, we are able to perceive that he is at the height of his importance in the central section where he predominates over Gloriana by resembling the rational soul as imaged in Dunwallo. However, in Part III there is a reversal of roles and the female aspect of the harmonious vision is seen to be uppermost in the figures of Bunduca and Helena who are related to Britomart and Gloriana. Indeed, the change of emphasis prefigures the narrative concerns

48 Elizabeth I was often used to symbolize this complete unity: G.Peele, "The Araynement of Paris" (1584), Works (1952-1970), Vol.III pp.111-112, V.i.1166-1173
J.Lyly, "Iouis Elizabeth" (1580), op.cit., II. pp.216-217
H.Eworth, Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses, Hampton Court. Illus. 96 in The English Icon by R.Strong (1969), p.144

of Book III where Britomart becomes the titular knight and to a great extent adopts Arthur's role in the poem. The pervading feminine quality, which Spenser utilizes in the presentation of the most perfect moral aspects of The Faerie Queene (as with Una, Mercilla and of course Gloriana) may perhaps be explained by the political necessities involved in praising a female monarch. However, it simultaneously allows Spenser to retain Arthur's essentially human characteristics which were stressed in his introduction and recalled through the emblematic significance of Prays-desire . This inevitable mutability and the necessity of perseverance is itself repeated in the chronicles where man is continually striving against time and mortality.

Ultimately, the chronicles serve a threefold purpose: first, through their reflective qualities they suggest a universality and a mystical bridging of fiction and reality encapsulated in the vision of Neoplatonic excellence which is, in turn, personified in the union of Arthur and the Faerie Queene. Secondly, together with the fleeting concept of perfection we are presented with continual reminders of man's mortality and the mutability of time. Finally, Arthur's human qualities and his representation of the rational soul strengthen the bond between the reader and the Prince, while our glimpse of perfection remains essentially illusory, as does Gloriana herself.

V

Arthur's final test in Book II is the battle against Maleger where, in the Neoplatonic cycle, he fully represents the rational soul. When Arthur undertakes the fight for Alma and her house he is not conquering intemperance within himself, the way Guyon does for example in the Cave of Mammon and the Garden of Acrasia. Instead he fights

for an Everyman figure. Book II canto xi thus echoes canto viii of Book I where the Prince defeats the devil figures and harrows hell for the Red Cross Knight who is at that point also a representative of all mankind, and the repetition of the role implies that the battles for Everyman belong to Arthur as the moral ones do to the titular knights. There are, however, differences between the two examples: in Book I the fight is for the soul alone, whereas in the second confrontation Arthur fights for man on earth -- his body (the castle) and his soul (Alma) -- against Maleger, who with his associations of death and disease is opposed directly to life and man's living body.

Whereas in Book I Arthur in his role as heavenly grace was equipped to fight for the soul, in Book II he represents the Neoplatonic rational soul. Therefore his link to humanity is stressed, which makes a battle for both body and soul the most fitting. At first Arthur is successful against Alma's foes who,

And therewith all attonce at him let fly
 Their fluttring arrowes, thicke as flakes of snow,
 And round about him flocke impetuously,
 Like a great water flood, that tombling low
 From the high mountaines, threats to ouerflow
 With suddein fury all the fertile plaine,
 And the sad husbandmans long hope doth throw
 A downe the streame, and all his vowes make vaine,
 Nor bounds nor banks his headlong ruine may sustaine.

Vpon his shield their heaped hayle he bore,
 And with his sword disperst the raskall flockes,
 Which fled a sunder, and him fell before,
 As withered leaues drop from their dried stockes,
 When the wroth Western wind does reauē their locks;
 And vnder neath him his courageous steed,
 The fierce Spumador trode them downe like docks,
 The fierce Spumador borne of heauenly seed:
 Such as Laomedon of Phoebus race did breed.

FQ II xi 18-19

Furthermore, Arthur's control over his horse -- associated with the baser souls -- , his relation to the heroic figure of Aeneas and the

unsophisticated nature of the vices and senses, make Arthur's victory seem inevitable⁴⁹. Here he merely repeats and so recalls the earlier battle against Cymochles and Pyrochles, but his major foe in this canto is both more difficult to combat and to interpret.

The description of Maleger introduces his paradoxical significance. In one respect he is strong and swift, qualities which are symbolized by his riding a tiger (20.4) and by his large body (20.7), while the reference to the tiger also implies lust, since the personification of this vice in Book IV was "with milke of Wolues and Tygres fed" (IV. vii.7.9). In contrast to this vitality he symbolizes fear and death, as can be deduced from his pale complexion, his comparison to a ghost and his skull helmet (22.1; 20.9; 22.9). These ambiguities are compounded by the image of Maleger's helmet which is a parody of Arthur's glorious one, and by his tactics in the battle against the Prince where he simultaneously fights and flees:

And in his flight the villein turn'd his face,
 (As wons the Tartar by the Caspian lake,
 When as the Russian him in fight does chace)
 Vnto his Tygres taile, and shot at him apace.

Apace he shot, and yet he fled apace,
 Still as the greedy knight nigh to him drew,
 And oftentimes he would relent his pace,
 That him his foe more fiercely should pursew:
FQ II xi 26.6-9 and 27.1-4

Unlike his earlier victory Arthur's first encounter with Maleger is unsuccessful:

He gan auize to follow him no more,
 But keepe his standing, and his shaftes eschew,
 Vntill he quite had spent his perlous store,
 And then assayle him fresh, ere he could shift for more.

49 These cantos recall Aeneid II.305-308 and 496-499 and Iliad v.265ff. Moreover, Aeneas is the Prince's ancestor: III.ix.40-43

But that lame Hag, still as abroad he strew
 His wicked arrowes, gathered them againe,
 And to him brought, fresh battell to renew
 Which he espying, cast her to restraine
 From yielding succour to that cursed Swaine,
 And her attaching, thought her hands to tye;
 But soone as him dismounted on the plaine,
 That other Hag did farre away espy
 Binding her sister, she to him ran hastily.

And catching hold of him, as downe he lent,
 Him backward ouerthrew, and downe him stayd
 With their rude hands and griesly graplement,
 Till that the villein comming to their ayd,
 Vpon him fell, and lode vpon him layd;
 Full litle wanted, but he had him slaine,
 And of the battell balefull end had made,
 Had not his gentle Squire beheld his paine,
 And commen to his reskew, ere his bitter bane.

FQ II xi 27.6-9; 28-29

In order to defeat Maleger Arthur stands still, which is a tactic he used effectively against Pyrochles (viii.47), but in this instance he falls to Impotence and Impatience. The reason for the Prince's failure is suggested by Timias' aid:

So greatest and most glorious thing on ground
 May often need the helpe of weaker hand;
 So feeble is mans state, and life vnsound,
 That in assurance it may neuer stand,
 Till it dissolved be from earthly band.
 Proofoe be thou Prince, the prowest man aliue,
 And noblest borne of all in Britayne land;
 Yet thee fierce Fortune did so nearely driue,
 That had not grace thee blest, thou shouldest not suruiue.

FQ II xi 30

Arthur has become over-confident and to be able to triumph he must accept help thereby signifying a humble awareness of his own inadequacies. Indeed, Arthur renews his onslaught and appears to defeat his foe:

For neither can he fly, nor other harme,
 But trust vnto his strength and manhood meare,
 Sith now he is farre from his monstrous swarme,
 And of his weapons did himselfe disarme.
 The knight yet wrothfull for his late disgrace,
 Fiercely aduaunst his valorous right arme,
 And him so sore smote with his yron mace,
 That groueling to the ground he fell, and fild his place.

FQ II xi 34.2-9

Despite this victory Arthur's battle is not yet concluded; Maleger amazingly revives and thereby initiates a second phase of the combat. The simultaneous presentation of life and death in Maleger reintroduces his multiple ambiguities:

When suddein vp the villein ouerthrowne,
 Out of his swowne arose, fresh to contend,
 And gan himselfe to second battell bend,
 As hurt he had not bene. Thereby there lay
 An huge great stone, which stood vpon one end,
 And had not bene remoued many a day;
 Some land-marke seem'd to be, or signe of sundry way.

The same he snatcht, and with exceeding sway
 Threw at his foe,

FQ II xi 35.3-9 and 36.1-2

Maleger's rise from the ground is derived from Hercules' battle against Antaeus, a legend which is utilized by Spenser throughout the remaining stanzas of this canto. The implications of this comparison are twofold: first, Arthur becomes associated with Hercules, the archetypal saviour-hero of classical mythology. Secondly, through the interpretation of this myth by Boccaccio in Genealogie Deorum as signifying the defeat of earthly lust, Maleger becomes associated more directly with the baser Neoplatonic soul⁵⁰.

Arthur is also linked to Aeneas since the attack with a large boulder recalls two similar onslaughts which were made by Turnus and Diomedes against the classical hero. The allusion to Aeneas and Diomedes is the more plausible here because the incident in the text is intimately linked to the comment on Aeneas' horses, and Diomedes' opposition to the Gods relates him most closely to the baser souls (Aeneid

50 op.cit. (1531), I.xiii., p.xv v.; the writings of Boccaccio are subsumed in the mid sixteenth century mythographic treatises of Giraldi, Conti and Cartari. Hercules is also the foe of the corporal soul in the Briton chronicle (II.x.11.5-7)

xii.98-168 and Iliad v.230-250). But the comparisons with heroes do nothing to help Arthur. Indeed, they act as a contrast, for the traditionally accepted methods of heroic warfare are obviously ineffective in this battle; and it is only through the reversal of such processes that the Prince achieves his second advance:

His owne good sword Morddure, that neuer fayld
At need, till now, he lightly threw away,
And his bright shield, that nought him now auayld,
And with his naked hands him forcibly assayld.

Twixt his two mightie armes him vp he snatcht,
And crusht his carkasse so against his brest,
That the disdainfull soule he thence dispatcht,
And th'idle breath all vtterly exprest:
Tho when he felt him dead, a downe he kest
The lumpish corse vnto the senselesse grownd;
Adowne he kest it with so puissant wrest,
That backe againe it did aloft rebownd,
And gaue against his mother earth a gronefull sownd.

FQ II xi 41.6-9 and 42

By throwing away both sword and shield Arthur should be, within the general context of the poem and in the world of heroism, defenceless. The meaning of this action has been analysed in detail by L.H.Miller, J.Nohrnberg and A.S.P.Woodhouse. Thus Miller writes,

What Spenser here tells us almost directly is that Arthur's battle with Maleger is a psychomachia; that his battle, being purely personal, can be fought only if Arthur discards the usual accoutrements of outward battle in order to turn his attention inward, to grapple finally with himself. 51

Nohrnberg and Woodhouse both expand the battle to include not only Arthur but all mankind, the former emphasizes Maleger's role as death,

Arthur in this episode successfully confronts the spectre of his own mortality, then there may still be a more recondite sense in which he conquers death itself. 52

51 Miller, op.cit., p.181

52 Nohrnberg, op.cit., p.322

and the latter in "Nature and Grace in The Faerie Queene" (1949) notes that Maleger is original sin

I suggest that Maleger is original sin or human depravity, the result of the fall, and that the marks of physical disease and death are the symbols of the inherited taint, the moral and spiritual malady, which man is powerless to remove, and which may betray the strongest and most secure in the natural virtues. 53

By relating these three analyses the explanation for Arthur's act of throwing away conventional weapons becomes apparent. Maleger represents the baser qualities of man and his inevitable mortality, but rather than being an external symbol such as Pyrochles and Cymochles, he is an internalized personification of those aspects inevitably present in the rational soul and therefore Prince Arthur. The key to the understanding of Maleger has already been given to the reader in the significance of Prays-desire, where the relationship of the rational soul's continual questing to the recognition of the inevitable passing of time, is the cause of pensive sadness. By recognising Maleger's true significance and so his own mortality Arthur is able to attain a certain degree of success, but he is still unable to kill his foe.

This final triumph is attained when Arthur,

remembred well, that had bene sayd,
 How th'Earth his mother was, and first him bore;
 She eke so often, as his life decayd,
 Did life with vsury to him restore,
 And raysd him vp much stronger then before,
 So soone as he vnto her wombe did fall;
 Therefore to ground he would him cast no more,
 Ne him commit to graue terrestriall,
 But beare him farre from hope of succour vsuall.

53 Woodhouse, op.cit. in Elizabethan Poetry, ed. P.Alpers (1967), pp.345-379; p.366

Tho vp he caught him twixt his puissant hands,
 And hauing scruzd out of his carrion corse
 The lothfull life, now loosd from sinfull bands,
 Vpon his shoulders carried him perforce
 Aboue three furlongs, taking his full course,
 Vntill he came vnto a standing lake;
 Him thereinto he threw without remorse,
 Ne stird, till hope of life did him forsake;
 So end of that Carles dayes, and his owne paines did make.

FQ II xi 45-46

The question arises at this point where Arthur "remembered well, that had bene said"? It might be in the legend of Antaeus. Conversely, as L.H. Miller suggests, he might remember the history he has just read in the Briton chronicle of Humber's drowning⁵⁴, or of the giants whom Brute defeats. Or he may be recalling Orgoglio, who is also conceived by the earth. By deliberately omitting an exact reference for Arthur's recollection, and by echoing incidents from within his own poem and myth in general, Spenser makes the reader remember all of them. Thus the encompassing quality of this reference provides the battle of Arthur and Maleger with its sense of universality. Whichever source Arthur does recall, he carries Maleger "Vpon his shoulders.../ Aboue three furlongs" (46.4-5), an act which intimates his perseverance by moving beyond a customary tripartite division and by analogy with the knight of Temperance, who also travels on foot. Finally, he reaches "a standing lake;/ [and] Him thereinto he threw" (46.6-7). The lake carries obvious Christian overtones in that it recalls the waters of baptism and life (Luke viii:33 and Rev xx:10 and 14). More especially, because of the previous emphasis on water as a flood, the "standing" nature of the lake becomes by contrast its most important feature. Still waters almost certainly symbolize the true calm of temperance and Pico

54 Miller, op.cit., p.184

also used them as a symbol for the angelic mind⁵⁵. The full implication is that man's mutability can only be overcome through perseverance and the direction of thought towards the Christian and Neoplatonic versions of the peace and temperance of God.

However, Arthur's defeat of Maleger not only directs the rational soul towards perseverance and belief in God, but also towards an acceptance of order on earth. This is achieved through the repetition of the water imagery in canto xi, which stresses both its importance and that of the other three elements. Maleger represents the earth because he is her son; both Impatience and Arthur are associated with fire: Arthur as a volcano (32) and the hag because she is armed with raging flame (23.9); and finally, the Prince alone is the symbol for air, in his similarity to the west wind and a flying falcon (19 and 36). By following the moral implications of these associations, Maleger is obviously the basest element, with the passions of the waters following. However, the still waters of the lake are praiseworthy and similarly, although Impatience's excessive flame is morally wrong, Arthur's fire image is merely attaining "his native seat" (36.6). Spenser's concern is not to construct a moral list, but the maintenance of each element in its proper place, which is clearly defined as a purpose in the Neoplatonic An Hymne of Loue⁵⁶,

The earth, the ayre, the water, and the fyre,
Then gan to raunge them selues in huge array,
And with contrary forces to conspyre
Each against other, by all meanes they may,
Threatning their owne confusion and decay:
Ayre hated earth, and water hated fyre,
Till Loue relented their rebellious yre.

55 Pico, Platonick Discourse, op.cit., II.xiii p.36

56 M.Ficino, Commentary on Plato's Symposium (1944), p.128

He then them tooke, and tempering goodly well
 Their contrary dislikes with loued meanes,
 Did place them all in order, and compell
 To keepe them selues within their sundrie raines,
 Together linkt with Adamantine chaines;
 Yet so, as that in euery liuing wight
 They mixe themselues, and shew their kindly might.

78-91

Similarly, the elements in canto xi are being ordered by Arthur so that they regain their temperate state in the living body of Alma.

Arthur's defeat of Maleger, his meeting with Prays-desire and the reading of the chronicle express how the rational soul may perfect itself by the continual quest for God and the celestial soul, through perseverance and continuity, despite the recognition of mortality, and finally, by conforming to the order of the world. The latter emphasis is given both by the structuring of the elements and by the refractory qualities of the chronicle which suggest a pattern, thereby relating canto x to the pattern of the poem as a whole. The two former efforts are essentially Neoplatonic and find full expression in Book II, but the necessity of accepting an existing order will only be fulfilled in Book III where Spenser broadens his Arthurian material to encompass more traditional themes, while simultaneously moving the Neoplatonic doctrine forwards to the presentation of the celestial soul.

VI

Although throughout Books I and II Arthur has been the most perfected Neoplatonic figure, he is firmly identified with the rational soul, and as such must relinquish the primacy in the allegoric presentation of the celestial soul to Britomart, whose association with this role has been predicted by the chronicle. The necessary emphasis upon the spiritual rather than the physical love is appropriate for

the Book of Chastity, and it is Britomart's vision of Artegall together with her direct involvement in canto xii's presentation of the perfect unity of a hermaphrodite (1590 version) that concludes the Neoplatonic treatment of the Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene⁵⁷. However, this final transcendence is dependent upon the previous associations with Arthur and Gloriana, without which the complex unities would be meaningless. Britomart is related to the Prince in a number of aspects: both are granted visions of their beloved and both are Britons on a quest in Faerye land. They are similarly presented with national histories and they make comparable complaints to the night⁵⁸. Britomart's enchanted spear is another similarity, for it has been made by Bladud, a magician figure connected in canto iii.60 to Merlin, who is responsible for the Prince's enchanted arms (I.vii.36). The spear is made from "Hebene" wood (IV.v.8.2) which links it to Arthur's lance; also it replaces Arthur's sword as the armorial symbol for Book III; and by being similar to Minerva's spear it echoes Arthur's shield which resembles Minerva's gorgon breastplate⁵⁹. Simultaneously, Britomart is also related to the Faerie Queene, for apart from the obvious British, royal and virginal similarities,

Britomart's warlike qualities give the poet several opportunities to compliment Elizabeth upon her recently demonstrated prowess as a war leader, and to place her in a tradition of valiant female warriors.

60

57 Fowler, op.cit., pp.123-124

Spenser, The Faerie Queene (1980), p.306

Ficino, op.cit., II.viii, pp.144-145

58 Roche, op.cit., p.48

I.MacCaffrey, Spenser's Allegory. The Anatomy of Imagination (1976), pp.295-299

59 Fowler, op.cit., p.125

60 Ibid., p.123

Further a direct link may be found in Britomart's consultation with Merlin, which parallels a visit we know was paid by Elizabeth I to John Dee, when he scryed for her in one of his stones⁶¹. Britomart is thus related to both Arthur and Gloriana, which implies that she is able to compound male and female characteristics within herself; this double-sexed aspect of her role is further imaged in her armour as she is a woman dressed in male clothing.

Conversely, the presentation of Artegall in Britomart's vision also relates him equally to both Arthur and Gloriana,

Eftsoones there was presented to her eye
 A comely knight, all arm'd in complete wize,
 Through whose bright ventayle lifted vp on hye
 His manly face, that did his foes agrize,
 And friends to termes of gentle truce entize,
 Lookt foorth, as Phoebus face out of the east,
 Betwixt two shadie mountaines doth arize;
 Portly his person was, and much increast
 Through his Heroicke grace, and honorable gest.

His crest was couered with a couchant Hound,
 And all his armour seem'd of antique mould,
 But wondrous massie and assured sound,
 And round about yfretted all with gold,
 In which there written was with cyphers old,
Achilles armes, which Arthegall did win.
 And on his shield enueloped seuenfold
 He bore a crowned litle Ermilin,
 That deckt the azure field with her faire pouldred skin.

FQ III ii 24-25

The first description of Artegall parallels that of Arthur with the comparison to Phoebus, the description of the armour and even his name which here is significantly spelt "Arthegall" (8.9 and 9.9), with an 'h'. However, the ermine is a symbol of chastity and in particular an emblem of Elizabeth I, who is of course the Faerie Queene⁶²; and

- 61 R. Deacon, John Dee (1968), p.80
 Nichols, The Progresses of Queen Elizabeth (1823), Vol.I pp.414-416
 62 Sir William Segar, Elizabeth I (1585), Illus 202 in R.Strong,
Tudor and Jacobean Portraits (1969), Vol.II, n.pag.

later in the poem he is also seen in transsexual dress⁶³. Finally, to compound the complex unities of male and female characters, the glass transforms the image of Britomart into that of Artegall:

Where when she had espyde that mirrhour fayre,
Her selfe a while therein she vewd in vaine;

Eftsoones there was presented to her eye
A comely knight, all arm'd in complete wize,
FQ III ii 22.5-6 and 24.1-2

By combining and interrelating the male and female characters in this manner, the reader becomes aware that the meaning must move beyond that of a simple courtly romance relationship towards a more essentially sixteenth century concept of love. It is the description of Merlin's glass which introduces this more contemporary significance:

The great Magitian Merlin had deuiz'd,
By his deepe science, and hell-dreaded might,
A looking glasse, right wondrously aguiz'd,
Whose vertues through the wyde world soone were solemniz'd.

It vertue had, to shew in perfect sight,
What euer thing was in the world contaynd,
Betwixt the lowest earth and heauens hight,
So that it to the looker appertaynd;
What euer foe had wrought, or frend had faynd,
Therein discovered was, ne ought mote pas,
Ne ought in secret from the same remaynd;
For thy it round and hollow shaped was,
Like to the world it selfe, and seem'd a world of glas.

Who wonders not, that reades so wonderous worke?
But who does wonder, that has red the Towre,
Wherein th'Aegyptian Phao long did lurke
From all mens vew, that none might her discoure,
Yet she might all men vew out of her bowre?
Great Ptolomae it for his lemans sake
Ybuilded all of glasse, by Magicke powre,
And also it impregnable did make;
Yet when his loue was false, he with a peaze it brake.

63 V.v.17-23

Such was the glassie globe that Merlin made,
 And gaue vnto king Ryence for his gard,
 That neuer foes his kingdome might inuade,
 But he it knew at home before he hard
 Tydings thereof, and so them still debar'd.
 It was a famous Present for a Prince,
 And worthy worke of infinite reward,
 That treasons could bewray, and foes conuince;
 Happie this Realme, had it remained euer since.

FQ III ii 18.5-9 and 19-21

Immediately the similarities of the glass to a magician's crystal ball become apparent, a sense added to by the possible identification of Merlin with John Dee who was well known for his scrying, and by the comparison with Ptolomy⁶⁴. The joining of male and female in a magician's glass is an especially Neoplatonic unity, for the stones were supposed to unite hard male and fluid female materials into an image of a hermaphrodite, which was a concept derived from Neoplatonism⁶⁵. This Neoplatonic ideal originated with Plato's idea that the beloved is a mirror of the lover's own soul, which united the two into one and which Pico developed into the more universal concept that the hermaphrodite symbolizes the true perfection found in God's first creation of man,

Likewise it was not without mystery why God created that man male and female. It is the prerogative of the heavenly souls to perform simultaneously both the function of contemplation and that of governing their bodies, and the latter cannot hinder or be an obstacle to the former, nor the former to the latter.

66

- 64 Fowler, op.cit., p.114
 Chaucer, op.cit., pp.129-130, 11.132-145 and 225-235
- 65 M.Delcourt, Hermaphrodite (1961), pp.80-81
 B.Jonson, Ben Jonson (1925-1952), Vol.V pp.283-408, 326-327;
The Alchemist II.iii.142-176
 Wind, op.cit., pp.214-215
 Conti, Mythologie (1607), p.360
- 66 Pico, "Heptaplus" op.cit., II.vi. pp.103-104, p.104
 Plato, Phaedrus (1972), 255d., p.105

E.Wind actually refers to the Temple of Venus in The Faerie Queene to illuminate Pico's theory:

The cause why she was couered with a vele,
 Was hard to know, for that her Priests the same
 From peoples knowledge labour'd to concele.
 But sooth it was not sure for womanish shame,
 Nor any blemish, which the worke mote blame;
 But for, they say, she hath both kinds in one,
 Both male and female, both vnder one name:
 She syre and mother is her selfe alone,
 Begets and eke conceiues, ne needeth other none.

FQ IV x 41

The hermaphroditic Venus described by Spenser symbolizes the perfect compounded unity of man and woman, the achievement of the highest Neoplatonic soul and the closest to God. The action of the glass, with its alchemical and Neoplatonic implications upon Britomart, Artegall, Arthur and Gloriana, presents the reader with a brief glimpse of the possibility of the celestial soul. It is impossible to pursue a methodical analysis of this perfected harmony, for like the glass which presents it, it is necessarily fragile⁶⁷. That Spenser intended the vision to be fleeting and therefore mystical can be seen in the reference to the sphere as "a world of glas", a fragile harmony achieved only through concord and perfect love of the absolute union of male and female.

Merlin, however, is more than a catalyst who presents Arthur, Gloriana, Britomart and Artegall in a fleeting image of the perfected Neoplatonic celestial soul: he also serves as an essential link between the Renaissance concept of Neoplatonism and the traditional concerns of the Arthurian romances. By virtue of being one of the three characters in The Faerie Queene who is derived from the old tales, Merlin is, in

67 An Hymne of Heavenly Beavtie 41-42
 E.Panofsky, Studies in Iconology (1972), p.162

himself, able to recall the traditional themes. In addition, these recollections are strengthened by the similarity between Spenser's presentation of the magician and the descriptions found in the romances. In The Faerie Queene, as in the Medieval texts, he is able to perceive more than common men: for example Merlin is able to pierce Britomart's disguise (III.iii.19), he prophecies the future both within and without the poem⁶⁸, and lastly, he has made Arthur's shield which can reveal falsehood. Moreover, the power of greater awareness enables Merlin, both in Spenser's poem and in the earlier works to advise Arthur and to help him overcome the most problematic situations where ordinary strength is insufficient.

In the immediate context of the poem Merlin directs Britomart's quest, while he also indirectly provides a resolution to Arthur's predicament in Book III. The Prince has futilely followed Florimell, an act which recalls the general problem of where his quest will end:

For whither he through fatall deepe foresight
Me hither sent, for cause to me vnghest,
Or that fresh bleeding wound, which day and night
Whilome doth rancle in my riuen brest,
FQ I ix 7.1-4

Merlin appears to answer this question in Book III, although the explanation is not received by the Prince, but by Britomart who is one of the figures related to Arthur in the poem. Merlin comments first on the role of God,

It was not, Britomart, thy wandring eye,
Glauncing vnwares in charmed looking glas,
But the streight course of heauenly destiny,
Led with eternall prouidence, that has
Guided thy glance, to bring his will to pas:

68 III.iii.21.6-9 - III.xi.21.5-6 and 22
III.iii.49.6-9 - V.x.16ff.
W.Blackburn, "Spenser's Merlin," Renaissance and Reformation,
IV (1980), pp.179-198

Ne is thy fate, ne is thy fortune ill,
 To loue the prowest knight, that euer was.
 Therefore submit thy wayes vnto his will,
 And do by all dew meanes thy destiny fulfill.

FQ III iii 24

and then on man's responsibility,

Then Merlin thus; Indeed the fates are firme,
 And may not shrinck, though all the world do shake:
 Yet ought mens good endeouours them confirme,
 And guide the heauenly causes to their constant terme.

FQ III iii 25.6-9

69

Merlin explains how by focusing upon, and questing for a union with the beauty of God, man will reach an understanding of God's will, and aid the universal order by complying with the pattern rather than rebelling against it.

More significantly, Arthur's pursuit of Florimell reasserts his identification with the Neoplatonic rational soul. At the beginning of Book III the Prince and Guyon meet Britomart and Florimell. The relationship of the Prince and the Briton maid and its fulfilment in the vision, have already been discussed. However, her decision not to pursue the fleeing Florimell reveals the true perception of the celestial soul, whereas his awareness is seen to be only that of a rational soul and so essentially human. Arthur is thus still susceptible to external beauty and his pursuit inevitably leads him away from the perfection of his earlier roles into a demonstration of his first major flaw in the poem. The indication that Arthur's chase of Florimell implies a moral failing occurs when the pursuit is compared to

a fearefull Doue, which through the raine,
 Of the wide aire her way does cut amaine,
 Hauing farre off espyde a Tassell gent,
 Which after her his nimble wings doth straine,

69 Pico, A Platonick Discourse, II.xvii, p.40

Doubleth her haste for feare to be for-hent,
 And with her pineons cleaues the liquid firmament.
FQ III iv 49.4-9

This division of dove and falcon signifies disturbance, for in the golden age "the Doue sate by the Faulcons side" (IV.viii.31.2). But the full revelation of Arthur's limitations occurs only with the coming of the night,

that now the golden Hesperus
 Was mounted high in top of heauen sheene,
 And warnd his other brethren ioyeous,
 To light their blessed lamps in Ioues eternall hous.

All suddenly dim woxe the dampish ayre,
 And griesly shadowes couered heauen bright,
 That now with thousand starres was decked fayre;
 Which when the Prince beheld, a lothfull sight,
 And that perforce, for want of lenger light,
 He mote surcease his suit, and lose the hope
 Of his long labour, he gan fowly wyte
 His wicked fortune, that had turnd aslope,
 And cursed night, that reft from him so goodly scope.

Tho when her wayes he could no more descry,
 But to and fro at disauenture strayd;
 Like as a ship, whose Lodestarre suddenly
 Couered with cloudes, her Pilot hath dismayd;
 His wearisome pursuit perforce he stayd,
 And from his loftie steed dismounting low,
 Did let him forage. Downe himselfe he layd
 Vpon the grassie ground, to sleepe a throw;
 The cold earth was his couch, the hard steele his pillow.

But gentle Sleepe enuyde him any rest;
 In stead thereof sad sorrow, and disdaine
 Of his hard hap did vexe his noble brest,
 And thousand fancies bet his idle braine
 With their light wings, the sights of semblants vaine:
 Oft did he wish, that Lady faire mote bee
 His Faery Queene, for whom he did complaine:
 Or that his Faery Queene were such, as shee:
 And euer hastie Night he blamed bitterlie.

FQ III iv 51.6-9 and 52-54

Arthur's moral flaw can be explained through his imperfect perception of the night. Even though the Prince's ensuing complaint against the night is in some aspects correct, since darkness and light are well known symbols for hell-ignorance-evil and heaven-knowledge-good respectively,

there are three significant flaws in this reasoning ⁷⁰. First, Arthur cannot see the stars; secondly, he calls for "Titan" to bring light (60.3), when Titan is a rebel against God, and when the sun does rise Arthur remains disgruntled:

So forth he went,
With heauie looke and lumpish pace, that plaine
In him bewraid great grudge and maltalent:
His steed eke seem'd t'apply his steps to his intent.

FQ III iv 61.6-9

71

Also by failing to appreciate the stars he does not notice "golden Hesperus" (51.6), the star directly related to the Faerie Queene in Book I (vii.30). This rest is in complete opposition to the earlier dream vision, for "fancies" and "semblants" beset him. Finally, he inverts the traditional lovers' complaint against the night by attacking its length rather than its brevity ⁷². At this point in the poem Prince Arthur's awareness is obviously corporeal, for by following Florimell he ceases to pursue his true quest, that is the idealistic and Neoplatonic search for the truth and beauty of God imaged in Gloriana. Instead he succumbs to the lure of physical beauty and so when faced with the night as a symbol of death, he sees only its bitterness, whereas in Book I his vision was mystical and bitter-sweet ⁷³.

Although Arthur's flaw serves as a contrast to the more perfected character of Britomart, more importantly his very pregnable humanity makes him a more attractive and sympathetic figure, and simultaneously

70 P. Alpers, op.cit., pp.396-397

71 Titan's light is compared detrimentally with that of God in An Hymne of Heavenly Beavtie 162-163

72 Chaucer, op.cit., p.436 ll.1429-1442 and 1450-1456

73 Ficino, op.cit., II.viii p.144

Wind, op.cit., p.161

The Faerie Queene III. ii.17.6-7

stresses the importance of traditional Arthurian concerns to the poem. These are seen in the desire for physical beauty alone which is a theme constantly used in the Arthurian romances. Indeed, King Arthur ultimately loses his kingdom and life because this moral flaw is present in his court.

In this way Book III concludes Part I of The Faerie Queene by relating the Arthurian characters, Arthur and Merlin, to the traditional Arthurian material. However, while Merlin directly links the older tradition to the Renaissance concept of Neoplatonism, Arthur grafts the idea of physical desire onto a sixteenth century concept of love. Whereas King Arthur and his court must fall because they are seen to be morally corrupt, Prince Arthur is renewed,

Wonder it is to see, in diuerse minds,
 How diuersly loue doth his pageants play,
 And shewes his powre in variable kinds:
 The baser wit, whose idle thoughts alway
 Are wont to cleaue vnto the lowly clay,
 It stirreth vp to sensuall desire,
 And in lewd slouth to wast his carelesse day:
 But in braue sprite it kindles goodly fire,
 That to all high desert and honour doth aspire.

Ne suffereth it vncomely idlenesse,
 In his free thought to build her sluggish nest:
 Ne suffereth it thought of vngentlenesse,
 Euer to creepe into his noble brest,
 But to the highest and the worthiest
 Lifteth it vp, that else would lowly fall:
 It lets not fall, it lets it not to rest:
 It lets not scarce this Prince to breath at all,
 But to his first poursuit him forward still doth call.

FQ III v 1-2

Thus Arthur as the perfected Christian and rational soul of Books I and II of The Faerie Queene cannot fall as does the Arthur of the romances. Instead he must learn to accept his failings and persevere on his quest.

To conclude, in Book I of The Faerie Queene Arthur represents Christian perfection, while in Books II and III his role as the ideal

Neoplatonic rational soul and lover of Gloriana is developed. But as we have seen, Spenser moves beyond the creation of a perfect sixteenth century hero, for he combines the romance Arthurian concepts of a devout king and courtly love together with the Renaissance ideals in order to present a sense of universality. More importantly, in addition to the uniting of traditional and contemporary themes, Arthur, through the constant stress upon his humanity and mutability is able to create a sympathetic bond with the reader through which the mystical bridgings of fiction and reality in The Faerie Queene are perceived.

VII

In Book VI of The Faerie Queene Arthur is presented as a figure perfected in the moral virtue of courtesy. In addition to the clear prefigurement of Christian redeemer and Neoplatonic rational soul, the description of Arthur's armour also briefly suggests his representation of a courteous gentleman. However, the suitability of Arthur's adoption of this role is more clearly inferred from the importance of chivalry to the Medieval romances and of its Renaissance counterpart, courtesy, to the Elizabethan court. In this manner Book VI clearly equates with Books I, II and III in the presentation of Arthur both as a figure of moral perfection and as a pivot for the thematic transitions of Medieval Christianity, courtly love and chivalry into Renaissance Protestantism, Neoplatonism and courtesy. Although Books IV and V intervene in the Prince's placement in the narrative, Book VI reverts to the tone and themes of Part I of The Faerie Queene. This and the self-contained nature of the book in general further legitimize the analysis of Arthur's role as the ideal of gentlemanly courtesy in Chapter II⁷⁴.

74 Books IV and V are dealt with in Chapter III, see below pp.111-133

With regard to the Arthurian material in Part II of the poem there are two major differences between Books IV and V and Book VI: first, Spenser concentrates on political allegory in the earlier books as opposed to the moral allegory of the latter book. Secondly, the relationship between Arthur and the reader, which is essential to the Prince's role in Part I of The Faerie Queene, breaks down in Books IV and V only to reemerge in the general reversion of Book VI to the earlier concerns. As a motif for this contrast Spenser introduces Arthur in Books IV and VI with a meeting with Timias, but whereas in Book IV he fails to recognise the squire, in Book VI the Prince greets Timias with the warmth of true friendship. Further, the change has already been made apparent in stanza 4 of the Proem to Book VI where the new moral value, courtesy, is introduced,

Amongst them all growes not a fayrer flowre,
 Then is the bloosme of comely courtesie,
 Which though it on a lowly stalke doe bowre,
 Yet brancheth forth in braue nobilitie,
 And spreads it selfe through all ciuilitie:
 Of which though present age doe plenteous seeme,
 Yet being matcht with plaine Antiquitie,
 Ye will them all but faynd showes esteeme,
 Which carry colours faire, that feeble eies misdeeme.

FQ VI Proem 4

Courtesy is described in terms of a flower, and as such recalls the account of Arthur's crest in Book I, where it prefigures his role as a moral exemplar of uncorrupted, youthful and natural courtesy. The 'flower of courtesy' is of course particularly suited to the Prince as its partial source is clearly 'the flower of chivalry', a common value in the traditional Arthurian romances. Spenser converts the Medieval

knightly prowess into a fitting value for a sixteenth century courtly gentleman, and similarly, the 'naturalness' of courtesy is transformed from the Middle Ages' concept of wildness into the Renaissance idea of a perfected and uncorrupted origin ⁷⁵. The pattern of Part I is thus revived, for by repeating the process which contemporized the Christian and love aspects of the romances into Protestantism and Neoplatonism, chivalry is transmuted into courtesy and wildness into naturalness.

The first stanzas of the Book, however, stress the restoration of a more fictionalized world, in the return to the "land of Faery", that is the fictional world of the poem, and therefore away from the political allegory of Book V. Also there is a reference to a dream-like vision, which in Book VI will be experienced by Sir Calidore, rather than the Prince; the "Guyde ye my footing" prefigures the dance of the Muses and the hiding of the secrets from men suggests the vanishing of the dancers when they see the knight (Proem 2-3). More obviously Spenser introduces Colin Clout, a fictional second self already used in The Shepheardes Calender, while the emergence of the Graces (canto x) and Sir Tristram recalls more traditional literature ⁷⁶. Courtesy and literature are related in the poem not only through the idea of fiction, but also through the sense of 'words' and the necessity of gracious speech. These two factors reverse the earlier realism and movement away from traditional Arthurian themes in Book V, and by doing so create for Arthur a more congenial world in which he meets many kindred

75 R. Bernheimer, Wild Men in the Middle Ages (1952), p.9

76 Two other romance allusions may be found at VI.i.13-15, which is derived from Malory, op.cit., pp.36-37, and in the Blatant Beast, which is taken partly from Malory's "Beste Glatyssaunte", Ibid., pp.296, 362 and 371

characters, who combine through him to create a scale of natural courtesy.

The first and most basic level of natural courtesy is found in the Salvage Man whose kind actions Serena describes,

Had not this wylde man in that wofull stead
Kept, and deliuered me from deadly dread.
In such a saluage wight, of brutish kynd,
Amongst wilde beastes in desert forrests bred,
It is most straunge and wonderfull to fynd
So milde humanity, and perfect gentle mynd.

Let me therefore this fauour for him finde,
That ye will not your wrath vpon him wreake,
Sith he cannot expresse his simple minde,
Ne yours conceiue, ne but by tokens speake:

FQ VI v 29.4-9 and 30.1-4

In addition to his "milde humanity, and perfect gentle mynd", which are traditional qualities of courtesy, the Salvage Man is related to knight-hood: he has donned Sir Calepine's armour and has cared for his Lady thereby adopting his chivalric role (v.8). Further, Artegall's first physical appearance in the poem is as the Salvage Knight (IV. iv.39) and Tristram in Malory's romance becomes a savage man through pain of love⁷⁷. Finally, compounding his positive values, he follows Arthur faithfully and their relationship is strengthened by the similarity of their uncorrupted truth and by their identification with Artegall and Calepine, who are both Arthur figures. Calepine may be seen as a Boötes/Arcturus, and therefore an Arthur figure, when he chases the bear (iv.17-29) which recalls the constellation's alternative name 'bear-guard'. Also neither the Salvage Man nor the Prince is wounded by the Blatant Beast although both their companions are.

⁷⁷ Horton, op.cit., pp.142-143

Malory, op.cit., pp.294-320

The next level of courtesy is found in Tristram, who also evinces natural and uncorrupted associations. Tristram's forest dress and dwelling place emphasize his bond with the world of nature:

All in a woodmans iacket he was clad
Of Lincolne greene, belayd with siluer lace;
And on his head an hood with aglets sprad,
And by his side his hunters horne he hanging had.

Buskins he wore of costliest cordwayne,
Pinckt vpon gold, and paled part per part,
As then the guize was for each gentle swayne;
FQ VI ii 5.6-9 and 6.1-3

Not only do his clothing and arms make him a forest dweller, but the description is very close to Belphoebe's, who represents a Renaissance ideal of uncorrupted naturalness and who also carries a horn and wears "buskins of costly Cordwaine" (II.iii.27.3). Tristram is also compared to a flower,

Like as a flowre, whose silken leaues small,
Long shut vp in the bud from heauens vew,
At length breakes forth, and brode displayes his smyling hew.
FQ VI ii 35.7-9

and he like the Salvage Man is related to Arthur, for he is referred to twice as "chylde" (8.8 and 34.4), the description normally given to the Prince. But unlike his more natural counterpart, Tristram's associations with knighthood are far more substantial, by virtue of his origins as one of the great knights of the Arthurian romances⁷⁸.

Tristram, as yet uncorrupted by the world, becomes Calidore's squire. The next presentation on the levels of courtesy is the contrasting figure of Timias, Arthur's squire, who has been wounded by the Blatant Beast:

Then turning to that swaine, him well he knew
To be his Timias, his owne true Squire,

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.227-511

Whereof exceeding glad, he to him drew,
 And him embracing twixt his armes entire,
 Him thus bespake; My liefte, my lifes desire,
 Why haue ye me alone thus long yleft?
 Tell me what worlds despight, or heauens yre
 Hath you thus long away from me bereft?
 Where haue ye all this while bin wandring, where bene weft?

With that he sighed deepe for inward tyne:
 To whom the Squire nought aunswered againe,
 But shedding few soft teares from tender eyne,
 His deare affect with silence did restraine,
 And shut vp all his plaint in priuy paine.
 There they awhile some gracious speaches spent,
 As to them seemed fit time to entertaine.
 After all which vp to their steedes they went,
 And forth together rode a comely couplement.

FQ VI v 23-24

Arthur greets Timias as his squire from Books I and II, where his moral worth and natural courtesy could not be doubted, but the wound of the Blatant Beast has tainted Timias with worldly corruption. These failings are displayed in Timias' inability to reply to the Prince's statement of love and friendship so that their speeches become only "fit time to entertaine", which distances him from Arthur. Further, Timias' inability to perceive the worth of the Salvage Man is the measure of his failure to understand and so attain true natural courtesy.

In Book V the harsh judgement on moral failings would have condemned Timias, but Book VI is more forgiving and recognises the possibility for innate good in the flawed characters; both the squire and Serena are taken to the Hermit to be cured. This Hermit provides the next development in natural courtesy, for he like Timias has experienced the corrupted world, but has successfully overcome it and returned to his natural dwelling place, which is "Deckt with greene boughes, and flowers gay beseene" (v.38.5). That the Hermit represents a form of courtesy is made clear in his first approach:

Which breaking off he toward them did pace,
 With stayed steps, and graue beseeming grace:
 For well it seem'd, that whilome he had beene
 Some goodly person, and of gentle race,
 That could his good to all, and well did weene,
 How each to entertaine with curt'sie well beseene.

FQ VI v 36.4-9 (emphasis added)

Furthermore, the courtesy which he offers is natural,

Not with such forged showes, as fitter beene
 For courting fooles, that curtesies would faine,
 But with entire affection and appearaunce plaine.

FQ VI v 38.7-9 79

It is this knowledge of both worlds that enables the Hermit to advise Timias and Serena as to the correct cure so that Spenser is later able to say of Timias "The Squire, for that he courteous was indeed," (vi. 16.4).

By virtue of his embodiment as "magnificence" Prince Arthur is of course the perfection of courtesy. Furthermore his continual aiding of ladies in distress, his fluent speech and the loyalty of the Salvage Man confirm this perfection. However, unlike the Hermit Arthur does not gain his virtue through experience, and as such finds himself distanced from the foe of courtesy, the Blatant Beast, which represents slander. Nevertheless, the Blatant Beast is closely linked to the Beast from Book V, which Arthur has supposedly defeated. The descriptions of the two beasts confirm their similarity: the Beast in Book V is

Horrible, hideous, and of hellish race,
 Borne of the brooding of Echidna base,

FQ V xi 23.4-5

Similarly, the Blatant Beast is

bred of hellish strene,
 And long in darksome Stygian den vpbrought,
 Begot of foule Echidna, as in bookes is taught.

FQ VI vi 9.7-9

79 The Hermit also has romance associations: Malory, op.cit., pp. 628-629

The close likeness of the two beasts implies that although Arthur cannot be harmed by them, they in turn cannot be destroyed by the Prince, nor can he cure the wounds they inflict. Although he is still unable to overcome absolute evil (the Beast), Arthur no longer needs to display the untouchable and unreal perfection of Book V. The Beast only fleetingly passes through Book VI which now allows the Prince to form closer thematic and moral associations with the characters whose values are morally ambiguous. A moral relaxation which has commenced in the characters discussed, is seen far more clearly in Arthur's dealings with Turpine and Enias.

Turpine represents the 'discourteous' knight, for he refuses hospitality to errant knights and their ladies⁸⁰. He is punished by Arthur for this. Turpine therefore seeks revenge through tricking two knights into attacking the Prince. Arthur is of course victorious and Turpine is brought to him for judgement:

Therewith the cowheard deaded with affright,
Fell flat to ground, ne word vnto him sayd,
But holding vp his hands, with silence mercie prayd.
FQ VI vii 25.7-9

Turpine's reaction is cowardly and undignified, and Arthur's sentence is accordingly ignominious:

He by the heeles him hung vpon a tree,
And baffuld so, that all which passed by,
The picture of his punishment might see,
And by the like ensample warned bee,
How euer they through treason doe trespasse.
FQ VI vii 27.2-6

The two knights whom Turpine bribed to attack Arthur are similarly dealt with. Even though they were deceived their susceptibility is seen to reveal a moral flaw. On finding the Prince,

80 For an analogue Spenser may well have used, compare Ariosto, Orlando Furioso 22.47-48, op.cit., p.260

Then one of them aloud vnto him cryde,
 Bidding him turne againe, false traytour knight,
 Foule womanwronger, for he him defyde.
 With that they both at once with equall spight
 Did bend their speares, and both with equall might
 Against him ran; but th'one did misse his marke,
 And being carried with his force forthright,
 Glaunst swiftly by; like to that heauenly sparke,
 Which glyding through the ayre lights all the heauens darke.

But th'other ayming better, did him smite
 Full in the shield, with so impetuous powre,
 That all his lance in peeces shiuered quite,
 And scattered all about, fell on the flowre.
 But the stout Prince, with much more stedly stowre
 Full on his beuer did him strike so sore,
 That the cold steele through piercing, did deuowre
 His vitall breath, and to the ground him bore,
 Where still he bathed lay in his owne bloody gore.

FQ VI vii 7-8

The knight who slanders Arthur is probably the one who is killed. The moral allegory indeed confers a symbolic meaning on the other knight's failure to injure Arthur, a failure which almost certainly signifies his innate goodness; and the Prince subsequently concentrates upon this value and converts him from falsehood (Turpine) to truth (Arthur). Indeed, the knight's name is later (viii.4.3) shown to be Enias, similar to Aeneas, Arthur's ancestor. This homophonic similarity underlines the closeness of Enias' association with the Prince.

The reforming of Enias reveals that the mercy rejected in Book V may now be used and that the earlier rigorous justice is no longer necessary⁸¹. Simultaneously, and more importantly, Arthur loses the unreal perfection of Book V, by feigning illness in order to gain entrance to Turpine's castle,

81 See below Chapter III pp.124-127

To whom the Prince, him fayning to embase,
 Mylde answer made; he was an errant Knight,
 The which was fall'n into this feeble case,
 Through many wounds, which lately he in fight
 Receiued had, and prayd to pittie his ill plight.

FQ VI vi 20.5-9

and by succumbing to Blandina's false charm, even though she is clearly related in the poem to Guile, the Beast and Poena:

Yet were her words and lookes but false and fayned,
 To some hid end to make more easie way,
 Or to allure such fondlings, whom she trayned
 Into her trap vnto their owne decay:
 Thereto, when needed, she could weepe and pray,
 And when her listed, she could fawne and flatter;
 Now smyling smoothly, like to sommers day,
 Now glooming sadly, so to cloke her matter;
 Yet were her words but wynd, and all her teares but water.

FQ VI vi 42

In Books IV and V these failings would have condemned Arthur but here they may be tolerated; and they remind us of the essentially human qualities of the rational soul and the Christian man expressed by Arthur in Part I of The Faerie Queene. The Prince becomes a more sympathetic character because of these failings, and because of his mercy, his care for Timias and his companionship with the Salvage Man. Because Arthur is thus reinstated as an essential and responsive figure in the poem, Spenser is able to recall an important continuing element in the Prince's presentation -- the dream vision.

While waiting for Turpine to be brought to him, Prince Arthur unexpectedly falls asleep,

Whereas the Prince himselfe lay all alone,
 Loosely displayd vpon the grassie ground,
 Possessed of sweete sleepe, that luld him soft in swound.

Wearie of trauell in his former fight,
 He there in shade himselfe had layd to rest,
 Hauing his armes and warlike things vndight,
 Fearelesse of foes that mote his peace molest;
 The whyles his saluage page, that wont be prest,
 Was wandred in the wood another way,

To doe some thing, that seemed to him best,
 The whyles his Lord in siluer slomber lay,
 Like to the Euening starre adorn'd with deawy ray.

FQ VI vii 18.7-9 and 19

This contrasts strongly with his experience in Book III where Arthur is restless and sees only the dark night; instead it is far closer to the dream vision of Book I, for first, his sleep is "siluer" which refers to the moon and therefore Cynthia - Elizabeth I, and so to his love, the Faerie Queene. Secondly, he is compared to the evening star, an analogy already used to describe the central stone of the bauldrick (I.vii.30.1-5), and which again recalls Gloriana whom this gem represents. Finally, the return of the dream vision recalls the mystical revelation in Book I where the linking of the reader and the poem seemed a possible truth.

Finally, Arthur's encounter with Disdaine contributes to a broader understanding of courtesy. Arthur and Enias have continued together when they meet Mirabella and Timias, both of whom are in "thraldome" (viii.3.1) and are being punished cruelly by the giant Disdaine and the fool Scorn. Enias who attempts to save them is also defeated by the giant who "in his necke had set his foote with fell disdaine" (10.9)

⁸² .Mirabella explains the reason for her confinement, for she believed that love was a matter of independent choice,

But let them loue that list, or liue or die;
 Me list not die for any louers doole:
 Ne list me leaue my loued libertie,
 To pittie him that list to play the foole:

FQ VI viii 21.1-4

By refusing to live according to the laws of love, which Arthur accepts (23), she in fact condemns herself to real subjection as the slave

⁸² The battle with Disdaine also clarifies Arthur's similar treatment of Turpine: VI.vii.26.3-4. Note also, II.xi.1-2

of the vices *Disdaine* and *Scorn*. Her flaw is shared to a certain extent by *Timias* and *Enias*, whom the giant defeats and both of whom have been corrupted by false words, through the *Blatant Beast* and *Turpine* (viii.5 and 10.9). Arthur therefore battles for all three against the giant whom he easily overcomes thereby signifying his own perfect courtesy:

His dreadfull hand he heaved vp aloft,
 And with his dreadfull instument of yre,
 Thought sure haue powned him to powder soft,
 Or deepe emboweld in the earth entyre:
 But Fortune did not with his will conspire.
 For ere his stroke attayned his intent,
 The noble childe preuenting his desire,
 Vnder his club with wary boldnesse went,
 And smote him on the knee, that neuer yet was bent.

It neuer yet was bent, ne bent it now,
 Albe the stroke so strong and puissant were,
 That seem'd a marble pillour it could bow,
 But all that leg, which did his body beare,
 It crackt throughout, yet did no bloud appeare;
 So as it was vnable to support
 So huge a burden on such broken geare,
 But fell to ground, like to a lumpe of durt,
 Whence he assayd to rise, but could not for his hurt.

FQ VI viii 15-16

The moral interpretation of the defeat is that the Prince humbles *Disdaine*, attempting to make him kneel but actually felling him to the ground. The giant thus relinquishes his will to Arthur, albeit temporarily, which shows how the forces of love and -- because *Disdaine* recalls *Orgoglio* (I.vii.7-24) -- also of God, subdue those who oppose them. The result of not following God's predestined order is clearly shown to be true bondage; and the emphasis on *Disdaine's* refusal to bend his knee makes the applicability of this concern to courtesy apparent. The bending of a knee implies a bow, which was the sixteenth century's outward symbol of courtesy. The reader is encouraged to perceive the contrast between *Disdaine's* attitude and the most true and perfect courtesy of man, that which resides in openly and graciously accepting

God's order in his life.

In Book VI Arthur's moral perfection is reasserted through his role as the ideal of gentlemanly courtesy and through the symbolic return of the dream vision. In addition, there is also a revival of the transmutation of romance themes into contemporary Renaissance concepts through the developing of Medieval chivalry and wildness into sixteenth century courtesy and a belief in the uncorrupted qualities of nature. Thus Book VI proceeds with the thematic development of that Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene which commenced in Books I, II and III. More importantly, however, Arthur's moral flaws and his touching friendship with the Salvage Man revive the sympathy of the reader, so that, once again, the perfection that the Prince represents becomes an attainable ideal. This bridging of fiction and reality through the figure of Arthur together with the reassertion of the importance of art in Book VI presents the reader with the fleeting and mystical visions of an ideal and all-encompassing unity, which prefigures the true fulfilment at the end of the poem.

VIII

In Books I, II, III and VI of The Faerie Queene Arthur is presented to the reader as the embodiment of the highest moral perfection. The Prince's role encompasses the various ideals of the Christian and Neoplatonic rational souls, the perfect love of the Faerie Queene and the epitome of natural courtesy. These Renaissance concepts are intimately linked to Arthur's earlier Medieval qualities of devout kingship, courtly lover and chivalric knight. Moreover, the problem of man's free choice and God's foreknowledge, inherent in the quest themes of the romance texts, is appropriately included by Spenser in his treatment of the figures of Arthur and Merlin. While Prince Arthur provides the narrative enactment of this duality in his dream vision

and in his battles against Maleger and Disdaine, it is Merlin who provides the ideological solution to the problem. During Britomart's visit, the theurgist reveals that man must continually quest for an understanding of God's truth -- both Christian and Neoplatonic -- as it is imaged in the heavenly order of the universe. Further, true grace may only be obtained if this order is complied with rather than rebelled against. The divine order is symbolized through the Arthurian passages in The Faerie Queene, in Arthur's ordering of the elements in Book II and the defeat of Disdaine in Book VI.

The success of Arthur's ideal representations and his ability to unite Medieval and Renaissance themes resides in the relationship formed between the reader and the Prince. This association commences in the description of Arthur's armour when his mortality is dramatically introduced, and this characteristic is reemphasized in the fight against Orgoglio and in the meeting with Prays-desire. Furthermore, despite his ideal nature the Prince also reveals significant human failings in the battles for Guyon and Alma, in the comparisons with the perfect Gloriana figures in the poem -- especially in the chronicle --, in his chase of Florimell and in the general moral relaxations in Book VI. Ultimately, throughout Books I, II, III and VI of The Faerie Queene Arthur is an Everyman figure who represents man when he is confronted with his own mortality and mutability, and with the necessity of learning from his moral failings and of persevering in his quest for God's true love.

To conclude, in Book I, II, III and VI Arthur's full representational significance is that of uniting moral ideals with human failings, Medieval with Renaissance concepts, fiction with reality and the reader with the poem. These harmonious joinings are obtained only in transient and mystical glimpses throughout the poem. The climactic

passages in Arthur's presentation, as we have seen, are the unveiling of the shield in the battle against Orgoglio, the dream vision of Gloriana, the completion of the chronicles, the vision in Merlin's glass and the more dispersed human relationships of Book VI. Through these incidents Spenser is able to achieve a true interdependency between the main Arthurian tradition and the Renaissance concept of an ideal Arthur. More importantly, Spenser moves beyond these individual sixteenth century and Arthurian concerns to create an Arthur who embodies a more universal and lasting significance. Prince Arthur, through the sympathetic bond formed with the reader, is able to unite fiction and reality in a vision of transcendent truth.

Although the Prince's political significance is evident in books I, II, III and VI of *The Faerie Queene*, it is always subordinate to his moral symbolism. For example, in Book I Arthur retains within his role of ideal chivalry an ideal which is not merely a reflection of the reality he is to be, but a reality which he himself creates. In Book VI Arthur's political role is reduced to a secondary position, and the Prince becomes a part of the Arthur of these books, through the emphasis on his perfection to the detriment of his human characteristics. Spenser's sympathetic bond with the reader. Thus the attempt to impose a detailed political allegory on Arthur in Book V inevitably fails, and the Prince becomes a remote ideal, far distant from the reality of the sixteenth century world. In this chapter I intend to examine Arthur's role in books IV and V of *The Faerie Queene*, and to suggest why, despite the emphasis on

1. See above Chapter II pp. 20-31

Chapter Three

I

In Chapter I the Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene was seen to develop two distinct allegoric roles. First, the moral allegory in the descriptions of Arthur presents him as a figure of ideal Christianity, the perfect Neoplatonic lover and the epitome of gentlemanly courtesy. These roles evolve in Books I, II, III and VI of The Faerie Queene and have been dealt with in Chapter II. Secondly, Arthur functions as an essential part of Spenser's political allegory, for throughout the poem he represents British nationalistic and monarchic interests and, on a more direct level, British forces and the Earl of Leicester. Although the Prince's political significance is evident in Books I, II, III and VI of The Faerie Queene it is always subservient to his main moral symbolism. For example, in Book I Arthur retains within his main role of ideal Christian man some aspects of an English Protestant redeemer¹. In Books IV and V this harmonious uniting of ideal and reality breaks down, and the Prince becomes part of a golden yet distant past. The Arthur of these books, through the emphasis on his perfection to the detriment of his human characteristics, forgoes the sympathetic bond with the reader. Thus the attempt to impose a detailed political allegory on Arthur in Book V inevitably fails, and the Prince becomes a remote ideal, far distant from the reality of the sixteenth century court. In this Chapter I intend to examine Arthur's role in Books IV and V of The Faerie Queene, and to suggest why, despite the emphasis on

1 See above Chapter II pp.50-51

political allegory, Arthur in these books remains incapable of breaching the divide between reality and the ideal.

II

Part I of The Faerie Queene seems in many ways to complete the Arthurian material, for it presents the Prince as a perfect Christian and Neoplatonic man, while simultaneously relating him to the traditional Arthurian concerns. The first two books of the second part of the poem seem to confirm this assumption, for Arthur is out of place both in the Book of Friendship and that of Justice. This displacement begins immediately upon his entry of Part II, for unlike the other knights of Book IV, he makes no comradely bond (even Britomart rides with Scudamore) and the most likely friendship, that with Timias, also fails. Timias, having been banished by Belphoebe, has become a wild recluse in the forest when Arthur finds him:

Arriuing there, he found this wretched man,
 Spending his daies in dolour and despaire,
 And through long fasting woxen pale and wan,
 All ouergrowen with rude and rugged haire;
 That albeit his owne deare Squire he were,
 Yet he him knew not, ne auiz'd at all,
 But like strange wight, whom he had seene no where,
 Saluting him, gan into speach to fall,
 And pittie much his plight, that liu'd like outcast thrall.

FQ IV vii 43

Arthur does not recognise Timias, and he in return is not able to reply to the Prince's questions; the love and interdependency asserted earlier in the poem (I.viii.12-15; II.xi.29-31; III.v.12) no longer exist and they part without communication:

Tho when he long had marked his demeanor,
 And saw that all he said and did, was vaine,
 Ne ought mote make him change his wonted tenor,
 Ne ought mote ease or mitigate his paine,
 He left him there in languor to remaine,
 Till time for him should remedy prouide,
 And him restore to former grace againe.

FQ IV vii 47.1-7

In a way this meeting with Timias together with the one at the beginning of Book VI acts as a key to Arthur's presentation in Part II of the poem, for as we have seen, the second more effective meeting signifies the commencement of a successful role for the Prince. The meeting in Book IV is the first of many situations in which Arthur is thematically and morally misplaced.

It is not that Arthur, in this instance, is morally flawed. Indeed, Spenser retains from Part I the Prince's qualities of discernment and dutiful adherence to God's order. For example, he is able to judge correctly as to whether Belphoebe is the Faerie Queene, when Amoret and Aemylia tell him they have been rescued by a "Virgins hand"; and similarly he is not deceived by Poeana whom he finds

in her delititious boure
 The faire Poeana playing on a Rote,
 Complayning of her cruell Paramoure,
 And singing all her sorrow to the note,
 As she had learned readily by rote.
 That with the sweetnesse of her rare delight,
 The Prince halfe rapt, began on her to dote:
 Till better him bethinking of the right,
 He her vnwares attacht, and captiue held by might.

FQ IV ix 6

The discovery of Poeana playing music conveys the ambiguity of her character, for through homophony it recalls 'Paeon' which means a religious hymn. Similarly she brings to mind Concord, the daughter of Mars and Venus who was associated with music and the harmony of fellowship. But she is also a false concord, because her playing is unnatural in that it has been "learned readily by rote", and also because of her earlier association with Vengeance². Arthur, however, easily overcomes her superficial attractions, because he has learned to

² Statius, Statius (1928), II. pp.196-197
 Cicero, Pro Cluentio (1896), pp.72 and 80

discern beauty of the soul from what is superficial.

Apart from the subduing of Poena, whom Arthur marries to Placidus, he also defeats her father Corflambo who is a "mightie man"

Ryding vpon a Dromedare on hie,
Of stature huge, and horrible of hew,
That would haue maz'd a man his dreadfull face to vew.

For from his fearefull eyes two fierie beames,
More sharpe then points of needles did proceede,
Shooting forth farre away two flaming streames,
Full of sad powre, that poysonous bale did breede
To all, that on him lookt without good heed,
And secretly his enemies did slay:
Like as the Basiliske of serpents seede,
From powrefull eyes close venim doth conuay
Into the lookers hart, and killeth farre away.

FQ IV viii 38.7-9 and 39

Corflambo carries two significances: he represents lust, the fire of which traditionally passed through the eyes (his name means 'burning heart')³, and also by riding on a dromedary he becomes a symbol of sin, a meaning which is later confirmed by his swearing by "Mahoune" (44.3) and in his death⁴:

The whiles his babling tongue did yet blaspheme
And curse his God, that did him so confound;

FQ IV viii 45.6-7

To defeat Corflambo Arthur uses the power of his shield,

Who thrusting boldly twixt him and the blow,
The burden of the deadly brunt did beare
Vpon his shield, which lightly he did throw
Ouer his head, before the harme came neare.
Nathlesse it fell with so despiteous dreare
And heauie sway, that hard vnto his crowne
The shield it droue, and did the couering reare,
Therewith both Squire and dwarfe did tomble downe
Vnto the earth, and lay long while in senselesse swowne.

FQ IV viii 42

The revelation of the shield recalls its similar occurence in Book I, and also Arthur's related role as a perfect Christian man; here

³ R.Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621; rpt.1971), III.ii. 2.2, pp.549-563

⁴ Jeremiah 2:23

once again the Prince relies upon the values of Part I to defeat the opponents of Part II.

In Book IV Spenser presents Part I of The Faerie Queene as a perfect and golden past. An example of this attitude can be seen in his direct intervention into the poem with the comment upon Sclaunder:

Here well I weene, when as these rimes be red
 With misregard, that some rash witted wight,
 Whose looser thought will lightly be misled,
 These gentle Ladies will misdeeme too light,
 For thus conversing with this noble Knight;
 Sith now of dayes such temperance is rare

But antique age yet in the infancie
 Of time, did liue then like an innocent,
 In simple truth and blamelesse chastitie,
 FQ IV viii 29.1-6 and 30.1-3

By associating the unpalatable qualities of slander with the contemporary sixteenth century world, Spenser is praising his "antique age" and symbolizes it in an image of complete harmony:

The Lyon there did with the Lambe consort,
 And eke the Doue sate by the Faulcons side,
 FQ IV viii 31.1-2 5

The past significantly is here endowed with the exact moral qualities seen in Books I, II and III: "temperance" (29.6) - Guyon in Book II; "simple truth" (30.3) - Una in Book I; and "blamelesse chastitie" (30.3) - Britomart in Book III. Thus Part I of The Faerie Queene becomes symbolic of a perfect, but necessarily departed era.

Arthur's final duty in Book IV is to resolve the problems of the skirmishing knights in canto ix, by explaining the importance of free will in love:

5 Isaiah 11:6

To whom the Prince thus goodly well replied;
 Certes sir Knight, ye seemen much to blame,
 To rip vp wrong, that battell once hath tried;
 Wherein the honor both of Armes ye shame,
 And eke the loue of Ladies foule defame;
 To whom the world this franchise euer yeelded,
 That of their loues choise they might freedom clame,
 And in that right should by all knights be shielded:
 Gainst which me seemes this war ye wrongfully haue wielded.

FQ IV ix 37

However, the peace between Druon, Claribell, Blandamour, Paridell, Britomart and Scudamore is achieved far too easily and the reader justifiably expects it to be transient. Another doubt as to Arthur's complete success occurs in Book IV. Arthur must be aligned with the love between men and women, both because of his former romantic associations and the uniting of Poena with Placidus and Amyas with Aemylia. Nevertheless, it is the love of true friendship which is clearly stated to be the highest form of love:

Hard is the doubt, and difficult to deeme,
 When all three kinds of loue together meet,
 And doe dispart the hart with powre extreme,
 Whether shall weigh the balance downe; to weete
 The deare affection vnto kindred sweet,
 Or raging fire of loue to woman kind,
 Or zeale of friends combynd with vertues meet.
 But of them all the band of vertuous mind
 Me seemes the gentle hart should most assured bind.

For naturall affection soone doth cesse,
 And quenched is with Cupids greater flame:
 But faithfull friendship doth them both supresse,
 And them with maystring discipline doth tame,
 Through thoughts aspyring to eternall fame.
 For as the soule doth rule the earthly masse,
 And all the seruice of the bodie frame,
 So loue of soule doth loue of bodie passe,
 No lesse then perfect gold surmounts the meanest brasse.

FQ IV ix 1-2

6

6 Although Arthur's love for Gloriana cannot be defined in terms of a simple romance, in Book IV the absence of allusions to a more complex relationship makes the Prince's identification with the ideals of romantic love in the Book of Friendship inappropriate.

Finally, and most significantly, in order to defeat Poena Arthur has had to dissemble,

That headlesse tyrants tronke he reard from ground,
And hauing ympt the head to it agayne,
Vpon his vsuall beast it firmly bound,
And made it so to ride, as it aliuie was found.

Then did he take that chaced Squire, and layd
Before the ryder, as he captiue were,
And made his Dwarfe, though with vnwilling ayd,
To guide the beast, that did his maister beare,
Till to his castle they approached neare.

FQ IV ix 4.6-9 and 5.1-5

Initially, the Prince makes it appear that Corflambo lives in order to deceive, defeat and finally reform a false and cruel form of love of women for men. But surely even though he is feigning lust and sin, Arthur by doing so must contaminate his role as moral exemplar, a problem which is continued and concluded in Book V. Book IV presents Arthur in a paradoxical situation, for while he represents the perfect ideal of Part I of The Faerie Queene, he simultaneously reveals moral shortcomings through his pretence. However, Spenser appears to have no immediate purpose in this. The poet's treatment of Arthur in Book IV is haphazard; he associates the Prince quite clearly with his view of him in Part I and so is unable to allot him successfully to a role in Book IV. The resulting problems in Arthur's character are developed further in Book V.

III

The overwhelming paradox in Book V is manifested in the simultaneous depreciation of the present throughout the Book of Justice and the Prince's perfect success in a role derived directly from the sixteenth century contemporary allegory. Nostalgia for the past and the related distaste for the present commence in the Proem to Book V:

So oft as I with state of present time,
 The image of the antique world compare,
 When as mans age was in his freshest prime,
 And the first blossome of faire vertue bare,
 Such oddes I finde twixt those, and these which are,
 As that, through long continuance of his course,
 Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square,
 From the first point of his appointed sourse,
 And being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse.

FQ V Proem 1

Arthur, on the other hand, is clearly related to the Earl of Leicester in three events: the battle against the Souldan which refers to the defeat of the Spanish Armada; the trial of Duessa, an allegory of Mary Queen of Scots' trial; and the battle for Belge, which is the Netherlands campaign. The two facets develop in Book V through the relationship of Arthur and Artegall, and culminate in the episode of Mercilla's palace from which the Prince retains all perfect qualities and makes the 'present' mythic, while the knight returns to a world of 'realism' with its moral compromises. Although, through Artegall, the inadequacies which Arthur displays in Book IV appear to be given direction, as they become 'real' facets as opposed to the mythic past perfection which the Prince completely adopts in the later book, they are really altered in order to conform with the newly introduced pattern of fiction and reality. The subtle shifting of the earlier inadequacies is effected through the repetition of dissembling in Arthur's and Artegall's first battles, against the Souldan and Malengin, and the assertion of friendship between the knight and the Prince.

As has already been shown in the Book of Friendship, twin figures are the closest friends, and Arthur and Artegall are very similar indeed. Art[h]egall's name suggests 'Arthur's equal' and this equality is displayed when they mistakenly battle against each other:

So both anon
 Together met, and strongly either strooke
 And broke their speares; yet neither has forgon
 His horses backe, yet to and fro long shooke,
 And tottred like two towres, which through a tempest quooke.
FQ V viii 9.5-9

Artegall's reaction also displays a love of friendship, for his response is very close to that which he revealed on seeing Britomart's visage:

Tho when as Artegall did Arthure vew,
 So faire a creature, and so wondrous bold,
 He much admired both his heart and hew,
 And touched with intire affection, nigh him drew.
FQ V viii 12.6-9

Finally, the unity of the two is completed on the narrative level when they decide to fight together for Samient who through her name also implies their likeness ⁷. Arthur's close association with Artégall appears to reverse the failure with Timias, and to stress his more successful role in Book V. Spenser also repeats the Florimell episode, but this time he significantly allows the lady in distress to accept the Prince's offer of aid:

So traouelling, he chaunst far off to heed
 A Damzell, flying on a palfrey fast
 Before two Knights, that after her did speed
 With all their powre, and her full fiercely chast
 In hope to haue her ouerhent at last:
 Yet fled she fast, and both them farre outwent,
 Carried with wings of feare, like fowle aghast,
 With locks all loose, and rayment all to rent;
 And euer as she rode, her eye was backward bent.

Till that at length she did before her spie
 Sir Artegall, to whom she streight did hie
 With gladfull hast, in hope of him to get
 Succour against her greedy enemy:
 Who seeing her approach gan forward set,
 To saue her from her feare, and him from force to let.
FQ V viii 4 and 6.4-9

⁷ The Faerie Queene (1980), p.584

Having, through the meeting of Arthur and Artegall, shown that the Prince's ability to form friendships is not lacking, Spenser then repeats the pretence motif involved in the taking of Poena's castle. The knights who chase Samient were sent by the Souldan and his wife Adicia. In order to defeat these enemies of Mercilla, it is decided that Artegall must pretend to be one of the dead knights:

But thinking best by counterfet disguise
 To their deseigne to make the easier way,
 They did this complot twixt them selues devise,
 First, that sir Artegall should him array,
 Like one of those two Knights, which dead there lay.
 And then that Damzell, the sad Samient,
 Should as his purchast prize with him conuay
 Vnto the Souldans court, her to present
 Vnto his scornefull Lady, that for her had sent.

FQ V viii 25

Artegall's adoption of another identity parallels his disguises as the salvage knight (IV.iv.39-48) and in female dress (V.v.20), which confirms both Britomart's and Arthur's failure to recognise his worth on first meeting. Because of his obvious familiarity with feigning, Artegall dominates the idea of pretence in Book V and thereby vindicates Arthur who indeed issues a direct challenge to the Souldan and faces him without dissemblance. Similarly, Artegall's acceptance of a practical realism is present in the defeat of Malengin, the personification of guile. Here Arthur ironically decides to trap 'Guile' with 'guile':

She warn'd the knights thereof: who thereupon
 Gan to aduize, what best were to be done.
 So both agreed, to send that mayd afore,
 Where she might sit nigh to the den alone,
 Wayling, and raysing pittifull vprore,
 As if she did some great calamitie deplore.

With noyse whereof when as the caytiue carle
 Should issue forth, in hope to find some spoyle,
 They in awayt would closely him ensnarle,
 Ere to his den he backward could recoyle,
 And so would hope him easily to foyle.

FQ V ix 8.4-9 and 9.1-5

Malengin's origins hardly fit him for a battle against the Prince, whose foes are far more dramatically powerful and evil, such as Duessa and Maleger, and indeed it is "Artegall him after did pursew,/ The whiles the Prince there kept the entrance still" (V.ix.15.1-2). Guile is derived from two sources, the figure of 'Inganno' from Ripa's Iconologia⁸, which explains his garments, hair, eyes and tools, whereas the cave in which he lives (ix.6) and his robbing of the neighbouring countryside (ix.4) are derived from the story of Cacus, who was killed when attempting to steal Geryon's cattle from Hercules⁹. Artégall's association with Hercules has already been implied in the poem when Artégall wears female clothes, which recalls the hero's donning of Omphale's garments. The link with Hercules introduces mythic elements into Artégall's character which diminishes the effect of his dissembling and reminds us of the knight's similarity to Arthur. However, Artégall's association with Hercules is not on the same ideal level as the Prince's own resemblance to the hero in Book V. Consequently, by comparison with the Prince's true mythic perfection, Artégall's flaws become more apparent.

Arthur resumes the perfection of his roles in Part I of The Faerie Queene, for when the Prince fights the Souldan, the episode's direct derivation from the myth of Hercules is made clear. The "cruell steedes" (28.6) which draw the Souldan's chariot are

Like to the Thracian Tyrant, who they say
 Vnto his horses gaue his guests for meat,
 Till he himselfe was made their greedie pray,
 And torne in peeces by Alcides great.
 So thought the Souldan in his follies threat,

⁸ C.Ripa, Iconologia (1593), p.134

⁹ Ovid, Works (1851-1852), "Fasti" I.545, Vol.I pp.34-36

Livy, Titus Livius (1919-1959), I.7, Vol.I pp.24-31

Either the Prince in peeces to haue torne
 With his sharpe wheelles, in his first rages heat,
 Or vnder his fierce horses feet haue borne
 And trampled downe in dust his thoughts disdained scorne.

FQ V viii 31 10

The defeat of the Souldan is thus related to Hercules' defeat of Diomedes, but while Arthur gains a mythic greatness through this association with the hero, the Souldan's mythic role is compounded by a reference to Phaeton, as his horses, scared by Arthur's shield run amok:

As when the firie-mouthed steeds, which drew
 The Sunnes bright wayne to Phaetons decay,
 Soone as they did the monstrous Scorpion vew,
 With vgly craples crawling in their way,
 The dreadfull sight did them so sore affray,
 That their well knowen courses they forwent,
 And leading th'euer-burning lampe astray,
 This lower world nigh all to ashes brent,
 And left their scorched path yet in the firmament.

FQ V viii 40 11

The overall impression of chaos is further emphasized by the image of the body being torn into pieces, which is echoed by the Hercules and Phaeton myths already referred to, as well as that of Hippolytus¹². Similarly, in the case of Adicia, Ino, Medea, the Maenades and Hecuba are drawn upon¹³:

Like raging Ino, when with knife in hand
 She threw her husbands murdred infant out,
 Or fell Medea, when on Colchicke strand
 Her brothers bones she scattered all about;
 Or as that madding mother, mongst the rout

- 10 Ovid, Metamorphoses ix.194-196
 Boccaccio, Genealogie (1531), 13.1, p.ccxvii v.
 N.Conti, Mythologiae (1568), VII.i pp.205 r. and 210 r. and
Mythologie (1627), Vol.II VII.ii. pp.679-680 and 706
- 11 Ovid, Metamorphoses, ii.1-366
- 12 Ibid., xv.528-529
- 13 Ino : Ibid. iv.480-541
 Medea : Conti, op.cit. (1568), VI.vii. pp.175 v.-178 r.
 Maenades : Ovid, Metamorphoses, iii.701-733
 Hecuba : Ibid., xiii.567-569

Of Bacchus Priests her owne deare flesh did teare.
 Yet neither Ino, nor Medea stout,
 Nor all the Maenades so furious were,
 As this bold woman, when she saw that Damzell there.
FQ V viii 47

On a mythic level, Arthur as the great hero is seen to defeat the forces of appalling chaos, and he furthers this representation of a perfect past by recalling earlier battles from Part I of The Faerie Queene. The description of Adicia's "lewd parts" (ix.2.4) and her dismissal after the battle inevitably remind us of Duessa, while her comparison to a tiger (49.7 and ix.1.1) relates her to Maleger. The Souldan also reminds us of Maleger through the "horses speedie flying" and the "shivering dart" (viii.32.3 and 6) which echo the actions of the Prince's foe in Book II who shot darts at him while moving at speed; and the emphasis on horses out of control (36.7-9 and 38-41) also refers to the unrestrained passions represented in this way in Book II¹⁴. By "banning most blasphemously" (28.2) the Souldan reveals his infidel beliefs, which Arthur combats as the representative of "heavenly grace" from Book I, a role confirmed in the revealing of the shield:

At last from his victorious shield he drew
 The vaile, which did his powrefull light empeach;
 And comming full before his horses vew,
 As they vpon him prest, it plaine to them did shew.

Like lightening flash, that hath the gazer burned,
 So did the sight thereof their sense dismay,
 That backe againe vpon themselues they turned,
 And with their ryder ranne perforce away:

FQ V viii 37.6-9 and 38.1-4 15

Thus the light of God and Jove's thunderbolt defeat the Souldan on a religious level.

14 Plato, Phaedrus, trans. R.Hackforth (1972), 253c-254e, pp.103-104

15 A.Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time (1964), p.202

The unveiling of the shield, however, is also part of the contemporary political allegory, for the Elizabethans believed that it was an act of God that a wind arose to disband the Spanish Armada of 1588¹⁶. The "charret hye, / With yron wheelles and hookes arm'd dreadfully" (28.4-5) are the ships of the Armada which were actually armed with iron hooks¹⁷, while, of course the Souldan is Philip II of Spain. Consequently, in the contemporary political allegory Arthur becomes a representative of chivalrous England who with the aid of God defeats the Spanish invaders. The linking of Arthur to contemporary events inevitably detracts from his mythic qualities, so that he becomes more like Artegall, as that knight becomes more akin to him through an association with Hercules; a joining which is affirmed by the similarities revealed in their first meeting. Although Arthur and Artegall are already developing as the representatives of opposing aspects, perfect past and flawed present, they maintain a fragile unity, which is perfected in the figure of Mercilla.

IV

Mercilla unites within herself both ideal mythification and realistic contemporary allegory. Within the confines of the sixteenth century allegory Mercilla is obviously Elizabeth I. The description of her accoutrements is almost an exact explication of many of the Queen's portraits. Arthur and Artegall are

...guyded by degree

Vnto the presence of that gracious Queene:
 Who sate on high, that she might all men see,
 And might of all men royally be seene,
 Vpon a throne of gold full bright and sheene,
 Adorned all with gemmes of endlesse price,

16 The Faerie Queene, op.cit., p.586

17 W.Camden, The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth (1688), III. p.404
The Faerie Queene (1932-1938), Vol.V p.227

As either might for wealth haue gotten bene,
Or could be fram'd by workmans rare deuice;
And all embost with Lyons and with Flourdelice.

All ouer her a cloth of state was spred,
Not of rich tisew, nor of cloth of gold,
Nor of ought else, that may be richest red,
But like a cloud, as likest may be told,
That her brode spreading wings did wyde vnfold;
Whose skirts were bordred with bright sunny beams,
Glistring like gold, amongst the plights enrold,
And here and there shooting forth siluer streames,
Mongst which crept litle Angels through the glittering gleames.

Seemed those litle Angels did vphold
The cloth of state, and on their purpled wings
Did beare the pendants, through their nimblesse bold:
Besides a thousand more of such, as sings
Hymnes to high God, and carols heauenly things,
Encompassed the throne, on which she sate:
She Angel-like, the heyre of ancient kings
And mightie Conquerors, in royall state,
Whylest kings and kesars at her feet did them prostrate.

Thus she did sit in souerayne Maiestie,
Holding a Scepter in her royall hand,
The sacred pledge of peace and clemencie,
With which high God had blest her happie land,
Maugre so many foes, which did withstand.
But at her feet her sword was likewise layde,
Whose long rest rusted the bright steely brand;
Yet when as foes enforst, or friends sought ayde,
She could it sternely draw, that all the world dismayde.

FQ V ix 27-30

The main event recorded in the court is the trial of Duessa, which is on the level of political allegory, the trial of Mary Queen of Scots, both being accused of "vylde treasons, and outrageous shame" (40.8)¹⁸; and Arthur's sympathy for Duessa (46) can be explained through his role as Leicester, who may have favoured Mary's claim to the throne¹⁹. But Mercilla also belongs firmly to the moral allegory of the poem; her name means mercy and she personifies that virtue in a god-like manner

18 S.T.Bindoff, Tudor England (1980), p.245
A.Northrop, "Mercilla's Court as Parliament," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XXXVI (1972-1973), pp.153-158

19 The Faerie Queene (1932-1938), Vol.V p.246

(V.x.1.7-9 and 2). In addition to her emblem "Mercie" being born of "th'Almighties euerlasting seat" (x. 1.7), Mercilla's own golden throne resembles God's Mercy Seat (Exodus 25:17-18) and stanzas 27 to 30 recall a number of biblical representations of God²⁰. The entire impression, apart from recalling Elizabeth I, also suggests an image of the Almighty on his throne, which renders redundant a precise source. Nevertheless, Spenser's own An Hymne of Heavenly Beavtie reveals some very close parallels. Indeed, the "mercie seat" (1.148) is mentioned, but it is the figure of Sapience who provides the closest reflection of Mercilla:

There in his bosome Sapience doth sit,
 The soueraine dearling of the Deity,
 Clad like a Queene in royall robes, most fit
 For so great powre and peerelesse maiesty.
 And all with gemmes and iewels gorgeously
 Adornd, that brighter then the starres appeare,
 And make her natie brightnes seem more cleare.

And on her head a crowne of purest gold
 Is set, in signe of highest soueraignty,
 And in her hand a scepter she doth hold,
 With which she rules the house of God on hy,
 And menageth the euer-mouing sky,
 And in the same these lower creatures all,
 Subiected to her powre imperiall.

183-196

Apart from being perfected in both Christian and Neoplatonic doctrine Mercilla is also associated with the Faerie Queene, for she is "a mayden Queene of high renowne" (V.viii.17.2). But despite all these ideal associations she is able to accept the contemporary necessity for harsh justice and condemn Duessa to death (x.4).

Mercilla is able to unite the ambiguities of mercy and harsh justice within herself and thus she provides a contrast to the fragile unity of the same aspects attempted by Arthur and Artegall. It is

²⁰ Psalms 97:2; Isaiah 6:1-3; Revelation 7:11 and 14:2-3

this revelation of the inadequate harmony of their relationship that initiates and vindicates for the reader their final separation in Mercilla's palace. The Prince and the knight are strangers in the palace, a point which is emphasized by six repetitions (ix.21.9; 24.3; 34.2; 35.6; 36.2; and 37.5). This distancing implies that Arthur and Artegall are also strangers to those symbolic aspects which the palace and Mercilla represent. Thus the unity which Mercilla symbolizes not only alienates them in its perfection, but also divides them, for they sit on either side of her throne, Arthur advocating clemency and Artegall the necessary justice ²¹. When they leave the palace, Artegall's world further develops its associations with moral compromises and realistic contemporary allegory, even to his final appearance in the poem where he is pursued by Detraction (V. xii.43). Arthur, while still in the palace fails to perceive that Mercilla is related to his love Gloriana, for a recognition would have involved both too 'real' a love within the poem (an essential aspect of the Faerie Queene is that she remains an intangible dream vision), and a too realistic representation of Elizabeth I, which would have involved making Arthur more exclusively representative of Leicester. It is important that the Prince both maintains an emphasis upon the mythic perfection rather than the contemporary allegory, and also that he continues to relate the two. Thus in the battle for Belge he is used by Spenser with a view to transforming reality into myth, which provides an attractive alternative to the realism of canto xii.

21 Fowler, op.cit., p.197

V

The contemporary allegory in cantos x and xi is immediately apparent: "Belge" represents the Low Countries, while her oppressor Geryoneo is Philip II of Spain, whose idol in the poem is Roman Catholicism. Mercilla symbolizes Elizabeth I and Arthur embodies Leicester whom the Queen sent to lead the campaign. Apart from these general identifications there are more explicit ones such as Arthur's battle against the Seneschall, who is the Regent of the Netherlands whom Geryoneo (Spain) leaves in charge of the castle:

There eke he placed a strong garrisone,
And set a Seneschall of dreaded might,
That by his powre oppressed euery one,

FQ V x 30.1-3

22

Also when Arthur has defeated Geryoneo, Belge offers him rulership of her country,

Him thus bespake; O most redoubted Knight,
The which hast me, of all most wretched wight,
That earst was dead, restor'd to life againe,
And these weake impes replanted by thy might;
What guerdon can I giue thee for thy paine,
But euen that which thou sauedst, thine still to remaine?

FQ V xi 16.4-9

This is a record of the Low Countries' offer of sovereignty to Elizabeth I when her troops had been successful, which she like Arthur in the poem refuses (xi.17). But despite the prevalence of contemporary allegory throughout this section of the poem, the mythic and religious elements are far more pervasive and completely dominate the battles against Geryoneo and the Beast.

Geryoneo is also mythic:

But this fell Tyrant, through his tortious powre,
Had left her now but fiue of all that brood:

22 Bindoff, op.cit., p.277

For twelue of them he did by times deuoure,
 And to his Idols sacrifice their blood,
 Whylest he of none was stopped, nor withstood.
 For soothly he was one of matchlesse might,
 Of horrible aspect, and dreadfull mood,
 And had three bodies in one wast empight,
 And th'armes and legs of three, to succour him in fight.

And sooth they say, that he was borne and bred,
 Of Gyants race, the sonne of Geryon,
 He that whylome in Spaine so sore was dred,
 For his huge powre and great oppression,
 Which brought that land to his subiECTION,
 Through his three bodies powre, in one combynd;
 And eke all strangers in that region
 Arryuing, to his kyne for food assynd;
 The fayrest kyne aliue, but of the fiercest kynd.

For they were all, they say, of purple hew,
 Kept by a cowheard, hight Eurytion,
 A cruell carle, the which all strangers slew,
 Ne day nor night did sleepe, t'attend them on,
 But walkt about them euer and anone,
 With his two headed dogge, Orthrus hight;
Orthrus begotten by great Typhaon,
 And foule Echidna, in the house of night;
 But Hercules them all did ouercome in fight.

His sonne was this, Geryoneo hight,
 Who after that his monstrous father fell
 Vnder Alcides club, streight tooke his flight
 From that sad land, where he his syre did quell,
 And came to this, where Belge then did dwell,
 And flourish in all wealth and happinesse,
 Being then new made widow (as befell)
 After her Noble husbands late decesse;
 Which gaue beginning to her woe and wretchednesse.

FQ V x 8-11

As with the Souldan the allusion to Hercules' twelve labours, in this instance the battle against Geryon, is made explicit in the poem. So is the hero's other victory over the Hydra who dwelt in Lerna (32.1-5) and the same holds true for Orthrus the dog referred to in the first description of Geryoneo (x.10.6-8). The Beast which Arthur must defeat has qualities of both these latter creatures, for it has the body of a dog like the Hydra, and supposedly Echidna who was the mother of both bore him also:

An huge great Beast it was, when it in length
 Was stretched forth, that nigh fild all the place,
 And seem'd to be of infinite great strength;
 Horrible, hideous, and of hellish race,
 Borne of the brooding of Echidna base,
 Or other like infernall furies kinde:
 For of a Mayd she had the outward face,
 To hide the horroure, which did lurke behinde,
 The better to beguile, whom she so fond did finde.

Thereto the body of a dog she had,
 Full of fell rauin and fierce greedinesse;
 A Lions clawes, with powre and rigour clad,
 To rend and teare, what so she can oppresse;
 A Dragons taile, whose sting without redresse
 Full deadly wounds, where so it is empight;
 And Eagles wings, for scope and speedinesse,
 That nothing may escape her reaching might,
 Whereto she euer list to make her hardy flight.

Much like in foulnesse and deformity
 Vnto that Monster, whom the Theban Knight,
 The father of that fatall progeny,
 Made kill her selfe for very hearts despight,
 That he had red her Riddle, which no wight
 Could euer loose, but suffred deadly doole.
 So also did this Monster vse like slight
 To many a one, which came vnto her schoole,
 Whom she did put to death, deceiued like a foole.

FQ V xi 23-25 23

The most direct source for the Beast, however, is the sphinx, which is referred to in stanza 25 and is endowed with exactly the same attributes as Spenser's Beast by Thomas Cooper in his Thesavrvs Lingvae (1565)²⁴. Morally the Beast represents, with its fair face and hidden animal parts, guile and hypocrisy (23.9 and 25.9), which once again Arthur is able to defeat through his role as a perfect mythic figure.

Arthur also reemphasizes his Christian associations in his battles against Geryoneo and the Beast, which in the former is shown by the giant's blasphemous words, for he

23 Hesiod, Hesiod (1959), "Theogony" pp.140-142
 Apollodorus, Apollodorus the Library (1921), II.v.2 Vol.I pp.
 187-188 and II.v.10 Vol.I p.211

24 Cooper, op.cit., p.Qi v.

And curst, and band, and blasphemies forth threw,
 Against his Gods, and fire to them did threat,
 And hell vnto him selfe with horroure great.

FQ V xi 12.3-5

In the latter battle against the Beast, Arthur's role as Protestant reformer is expressed far more strongly,

Which when the Prince heard tell, his heart gan earne
 For great desire, that Monster to assay,
 And prayd the place of her abode to learne.
 Which being shew'd, he gan him selfe streight way
 Thereto addresse, and his bright shield display.
 So to the Church he came, where it was told,
 The Monster vnderneath the Altar lay;
 There he that Idoll saw of massy gold
 Most richly made, but there no Monster did behold.

Vpon the Image with his naked blade
 Three times, as in defiance, there he strooke;
 And the third time out of an hidden shade,
 There forth issewd, from vnder th'Altars smooke,
 A dreadfull feend, with fowle deformed looke,

FQ V xi 21 and 22.1-5

The altar "smooke", which is incense, and ornate decoration are both symbolic of the Catholic Church, and Arthur's three knocks further suggest that the Beast is a parody of the Trinity, while the action itself recalls Christ's knocking on the doors of hell in the Mystery play The Harrowing of Hell²⁵. Finally, it is his shield, already uncovered, that the Prince takes to defeat the Beast, thereby underlining the symbolic meaning of this battle as a fight between God's truth and the forces of Satan and irreligion.

The mythic and Christian elements obviously supersede the contemporary political allegory in cantos x and xi. In order, however, to act as a contrast to the flawed and supposedly 'realistic' aspects of canto xii, which would imply that Artegall and Book V represent the reality of Part II, the Prince would have to subsume the political

25 The Harrowing of Hell in Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays
 (1976), pp.157-169
 See above Chapter II p.49

aspects of cantos x and xi into a greater image of mythic perfection. But Arthur remains a figure from the past and the imposition of his perfection on the sixteenth century political allegory is uneasy ²⁶. Unlike the chronicle canto and the dream vision which merely suggest and therefore fleetingly and mystically attain that union, the over-awareness in Book V of the attempted harmony and its delineated division of Arthur and Artegall make this same unity impossible. The attempt in Book V is to resolve the problem of Arthur's character in Part II of The Faerie Queene, but the friendship with Artegall and the attempt to make him a unifying force through simultaneous representation of reality and myth, fails. Perhaps an explanation for this failure lies in the Prince's traditional origins which Spenser has asserted at the end of Book II, for above all King Arthur is always part of the past, golden era, and essentially human despite his glorious achievements. In Books I, II, III and VI of The Faerie Queene, even in his introduction, the Prince's simultaneous mortality and perfection are stressed, which not only aligns him with the Arthurian tradition, but as in the earlier works, makes the reader able to identify and sympathize with him. It is Arthur's identification with perfection and the resulting loss of human characteristics which makes him one of Spenser's most unsuccessful characters in Books IV and V of The Faerie Queene.

VI

The importance of Prince Arthur to The Faerie Queene is evident. He represents both Protestant reformer and Neoplatonic soul in Part I

26 R.H.Wells, Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Cult of Elizabeth (1983), p.111

of the poem, while in Part II he is a necessary contrast to Artegall and representative of perfect courtesy. But of equal importance is the role of Spenser's Arthur in the Arthurian tradition. The Faerie Queene is indeed the first work to contemporize the traditional romances by transforming Medieval Christianity into sixteenth century English Protestantism, courtly love into Neoplatonism and chivalry into courtesy. The influence of Spenser's innovation can be seen in the masques and the poems of the early seventeenth century; more particularly in the works of the Spenserians; in Milton's early verse and his History of Britain; and finally, in Dryden's opera King Arthur. But the 'Arthur' whom these later writers adopted was not the unreal perfected Prince of Books IV and V. Instead they remembered the ideal but essentially mortal figure who dreams of the Faerie Queene and risks his life to save the Red Cross Knight. The success of Spenser's transformation of Arthur into a Renaissance figure in The Faerie Queene resides above all in the conceptual compromise with the orthodox Medieval characteristics of the romance king. Thus the Prince fails in Books IV and V, where he does not retain his traditional roles, but in Books I, II, III and VI where he does, he is completely successful as a character. This is not only a tribute to the enduring mythic quality of the Arthurian material on which he is based, but to Spenser's ability to create a complete interdependency between the transformation and retention of the essential qualities of Arthur.

Chapter Four

English masques achieved their literary zenith in the first half of the seventeenth century and despite Bacon's comment that "These things are but toys...", some of the foremost writers of the age contributed to these court entertainments¹. The most prominent exponent of the masque tradition is Ben Jonson, who elevated the genre of eulogy upon the reigning monarch to a dramatic art form that moralized and pleased simultaneously². Although other writers such as Thomas Campion, Thomas Carew and William Davenant were influenced by the matter of Britain in The Faerie Queene, their references are limited to figures and phrases. It is Jonson alone who perceived the full import of Spenser's Arthurian material. In this Chapter I intend to consider this development of the Arthurian theme in Prince Henry's Barriers (1610) (passim: Barriers) and Oberon, the Fairy Prince (1611) (passim: Oberon)³. Before we undertake the detailed analysis of Barriers and Oberon it is important to examine both the literary and historical contexts of the masques. First, I shall trace the development of the Arthurian material as it was used in courtly entertainments of the English Renaissance. Secondly, I intend to consider the resurgence of interest in chivalric

- 1 Bacon, "Of Masques and Triumphs" (1625) in Vol.VI part ii of The Works of Francis Bacon (1858), p.467
- 2 Stephen Orgel has more than adequately analysed Jonson's attempt and success in this respect in The Jonsonian Masque (1965) and in The Complete Masques (1975). Also note Jonson's own statement in the title of his masque Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue in Vol.VII of Ben Jonson (1925-1952), pp.473-491
- 3 Campion, Lord Hay's Masque (1606) in The Works of Thomas Campion (1969), pp.203-230
Carew, Coelum Britannicum (1633) in The Poems of Thomas Carew (1949), pp.151-185
Davenant, Britannia Triumphans (1637)
Barriers, op.cit., Vol.VII pp.321-336
Oberon, op.cit., Vol.VII pp.336-356

themes which occurred in the Stuart court and which was centred about King James' elder son, Prince Henry.

The Arthurian Tradition in Courtly Entertainments

The first English masques which feature Arthur are those which, by emphasizing the deliberate name parallel, compliment Henry VII's elder son, Prince Arthur⁴. These entertainments, especially those created to celebrate the betrothal of the Prince to Katherine of Aragon, also utilize the commonly accepted relationship between the mythic King Arthur and the star Arcturus⁵. Moreover, because of the mistaken application of the name 'Arcturus' to Ursa Major, the traditional steadfast and perfect Christian values associated with that constellation are transferred through Arcturus to the figure of Arthur⁶. These facets in the use of Arthurian material in courtly entertainments are fully expressed in The London Pageants for the Reception of Katherine of Aragon (1501)⁷.

Princess Katherine's entry into the city began at London Bridge and ended at St. Paul's, where she was betrothed to Prince Arthur. There were six pageants produced along the route, two of which (the first and fourth) referred to the nomenclative similarity between the bridegroom,

4 1486-1502. The Prince of Wales was to die shortly after his betrothal.

5 Sydney Anglo, Spectacle Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy (1969), pp.62-64

G.Kipling, The Triumph of Honour (1977), pp.83-85

6 Gregory the Great, Morals on The Book of Job (c.1470; rpt.1844-1847), Vol.I pp.503-508 and Vol.III pp.350-356

Anglicus Bartholomeus, De Proprietatibus Rerum (1495), Bk.VIII ch.23 n.pag.

D.Brooks-Davies, The Mercurian monarch (1983), pp.29-33

7 Anglo, op.cit., JWCI, XXVI (1963), pp.53-89

the legendary king and the star Arcturus. The astrological significance is introduced by Saint Ursula, who in "The Pageant of St. Katherine and St. Ursula" performed on London Bridge states:

Unto the kyng, strong, ffamows and prudent,
 Nere kyn am I, and namyd am ursula,
 By which name I also Represent
 An othir Image callid minor ursa
 That othyr wyse Is callid Cinosura
 Set ffast by Arthur, wyth othyr sterris brygth
 Guyvyng grete comfort to travaylours by nygth. 8

S. Anglo explains:

St. Ursula is present because she represents the constellation Ursa Minor which, in the heavens, is adjacent to "Arthur" or Arcturus -- the name often employed erroneously for Ursa Major. 9

Anglo also confirms that the "sum of all the virtues, or the Christian life of virtue", traditionally signified by Ursa Major, would thus have been transferred to the figure of the young Prince. The praise is continued in the "Sphere of the Sun" presented at the Conduit in Cheap where Arthur is seen at the centre of a large wheel representing the earth ¹⁰. The London Pageants utilize 'Arthur' in the sense of his traditional greatness and in the perfection of his stellar association in order both to praise the young Prince and to offer him an example of ideal rulership. The inclusion of Arthur and Arcturus together with the praise of the young heir to the throne is especially interesting in that it provides a direct parallel with the later entertainment Barriers, which was written by Jonson for Prince Henry ¹¹.

8 Ibid., p.58

Bacon, The Historie of the Reigne of Henry The Seventh (1641), p.205

9 Anglo, op.cit. (1969), p.62

10 Ibid., pp.61 and 72-79

11 Jonson may have been familiar with the entertainment from Bernadus Andrea, Historia Regis Henrici Septimi (c.1500), ed. J.Gairdner (1858), pp.39-42 or, from Edward Hall, Hall's Chronicle (1809), pp.493-494

A.Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time (1964), pp.256-257

In addition to the use of Arthur's stellar role the masques also frequently derived Arthurian material from the Medieval romances. These entertainments include the Corpus Christi Pageant in Dublin (1498), the Revels of 1519, the Field of Cloth of Gold (1520), Emperor Charles V's London entry in 1522, Leicester's entry into Belgium in 1585, and "An Epithalamion vpon the Marques of Huntlies mariage" (1588) written by James VI of Scotland¹². However, of all the entertainments which drew upon the Arthurian romance tradition it is the Kenilworth Festivities (1575) which stand out as being the most memorable and impressive. During Elizabeth I's four week sojourn at the castle of Kenilworth, she was presented with a number of masques for her entertainment, two of which utilize Arthurian material; and whereas the London Pageants had relied upon the 'historical' greatness of King Arthur, George Gascoign's entertainment was more indebted to the Medieval romances, especially those of Sir Thomas Malory. On the Queen's arrival she was greeted by the Lady of the Lake:

I am the Lady of this pleasant lake,
 Who since the time of great King Arthur's reign,
 That here with royal court abode did make,
 Have led a low'ring life in restless pain.
 Till now that this your third arrival here
 Doth cause me come abroad, and boldly thus appear. 13

- 12 Corpus Christi Pageant in Vol.II of E.K.Chambers, The Medieval Stage (1903), p.364
Revels of 1519 : Henry VIII, Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII (1867), Vol.III part ii pp.1548-1550
Field of Cloth of Gold : E.Hall, op.cit., p.619
 J.G.Russell, The Field of Cloth of Gold (1969), pp.185-186
 J.D.Merriman, The Flower of Kings (1973), p.35
Charles V's entry : Hall, op.cit., pp.638-639
 R.Withington, English Pageantry An Historical Outline (1919-1920), Vol.I p.177
Leicester's entry : Raphael Holinshed, Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland (1577; rpt. 1808), Vol.IV p.645
"An Epithalamion" in Vol.II of The Poems of James VI of Scotland (1958), p.140
- 13 Kenilworth Festivities: comprising Laneham's Description of the Pageantry, and Gascoigne's Masques (1825), part ii p.8

This theme was repeated in a more elaborate masque on the tenth day of the Queen's visit, when Triton begs her to aid the Lady of the Lake as,

Sir Bruce had her in chace:
And sought by force, her virgin's state,
full foully to deface.
Yea, yet at hand about these banks,
his bands be often seen:
That neither can she come nor 'scape,
but by your help, O Queene. 14

Elizabeth as a "worthier maid" is seen to resolve all conflicts and free the beleaguered maiden. Sir Bruce Sans Pit e's pursuit of a lady is described in Malory's Tristram de Lyones, and Malory is also the source of the Lady of the Lake's relationship to Merlin, who according to Robert Laneham's account of the entertainment is the cause of her distress:

Sir Bruce Sans piti e, in revenge of his cousin Merlin the Prophet (whom for his inordinate lust she had inclosed in a rocke) did continually pursue the Lady of the Lake. 15

The festivities at Kenilworth were meant to praise and delight, and the tone of the Arthurian romances was ideally suited to provide the pleasurable devices favoured by the Queen. However, these masques, like the London Pageants, essentially remain within the confines of praise for the crown. It was only through the liberating innovation of The Faerie Queene that the Arthurian material could be elevated "to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show...the very age and body of the time his form and pressure" 16.

As we have seen, in the courtly entertainments Arthur had become

14 Ibid., part ii p.23

15 Ibid., part ii p.22

Malory, Works (1977), pp.76-77 and 316

16 For Jonson's knowledge of the Kenilworth Festivities see footnote 76

through Arcturus an ideal figure perfected in the virtues of Christianity, and through the romance tradition the epitome of chivalric prowess. In The Faerie Queene Spenser develops both these characteristics in the figure of Prince Arthur who represents an ideal of Christianity and chivalry, and further is perfected in all the moral virtues. This enhancement of Arthur served to increase his importance and popularity with regard to the courtly masques, and material derived from The Faerie Queene was often utilized in these entertainments ¹⁷.

Although the true fulfilment of Spenser's Arthurian idealism is found in Jonson's Barriers and Oberon, other masque writers also adapted the romantic and chivalric aspects of Spenser's poem in their works.

In A Maske presented on Candlemas night at Coleoverton, by the earle of Essex (1618), the six knight masquers, with the exception of "Sr Vere" are derived from The Faerie Queene:

Such the Heroes [were] of old.
His name Sr Arthur, & in field
A crowned Lion on his shield.
Wisdom and Justice then, wch call
Sir Sapient & Artegall
Virtues twines, whose upright hands
Atlass like uphold all lands,
Keepe ye world, it does not run
To the old confusion.
Next Sr Guion doth advance
The golden Virtue Temperance.
Last in the Ranck, but not the least,
One that joyned to the rest
Does relish them and make them right,
Calidore the curteous Knight.

18

The masque concludes with the overcoming of the antimasque through the

17 See below pp.139-147

18 Coleoverton Masque in Die Englischen Maskenspiele (1902), ed. R.Brotanek, pp.328-337; pp.332-333
Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series 1611-1618 (1858), pp. 514-515

"Sr Vere" refers to the Earl of Essex himself who probably played this part, and is derived from his name 'Devereux'.

reformation of "Bob ye Buttrie" and with the harmonious dance of the six masculine and six feminine virtues. The main purport of the masque is romantic and it reaffirms the nobles in their values while offering a perfected form of courtly virtue to which they must aspire¹⁹.

Thomas Carew's masque Coelum Britannicum (1633) (passim: Coelum) derived similar romance Arthurian material from Spenser²⁰. The court masquers are British heroes symbolic of a knightly ideal, whose leader is Arthur:

We bring Prince Arthur, or the brave
St. George himselfe (great Queene) to you,
1030-1031

while each lady of the court receives "some true Round-Table knight" (1034). Clearly the British heroes are intended to represent Arthurian figures and more especially those taken from Spenser, as can be seen from the reference to "Prince" and "St. George", the latter being the titular knight of Book I of The Faerie Queene. Further, the assimilation of Arthurian material into the tradition of the Order of the Garter, which Spenser contributed to in Book I, is also suggested. The masquer presented to the Queen is said to be equally "Prince Arthur" and "St. George" so that the romance hero and the patron saint of the Order of the Garter are united²¹. Finally, again recalling the Arthurian idealism of Arcturus and The Faerie Queene the masque concludes with the stellification of the worthies:

19 The Coleoverton Masque is founded on the traditional masque pattern examples of which are, The Twelfth Night Masque of 1515, MS. PRO. E. 36/217 fols.195-204 and the Entertainment in March 1522, MS. PRO. SP. 1/29 fols.224 v.-233 r.

20 Carew, op.cit.

21 Elias Ashmole, The Institution, Laws and Ceremonies of the most Noble Order of the Garter (1672), pp.182-183
D.Brooks-Davies, op.cit., pp.102-107

In the firmament about him [Eternity],
was a troope of fifteene starres, expressing
the stellifying of our British Heroes.

1080-1082

The heroes then join with the ladies of the court in a harmonious dance. Carew uses Spenser's poem to present a British ideal of courtly love linked to praise for the monarchy, such as,

This Royall Payre, for whom Fate will
Make Motion cease, and Time stand still;

1093-1094

Indeed, the King probably played the Arthur/ St. George character, as he is listed as the chief masquer and it is Arthur/ St. George who is presented to the Queen ²². Moreover, as the supreme knight of the Garter Charles would fittingly be identified with the Order's patron saint, Saint George and with its, supposedly, most illustrious holder, King Arthur ²³.

The unrestrained praise in Coelum suggests that the moral teaching of both Spenser and Jonson is not present ²⁴. Indeed, there is never any doubt in the Arthurian masques discussed of the splendour and virtue of monarch and court. R.Strong comments on Coelum that it establishes

the perfection of the union of the King and
Queen as an example to all, both in their roles
as knight and romantic heroine, and as ideal
husband and wife. ²⁵

22 Carew, op.cit., l.1145 p.185 and ll.1023-1047 pp.181-182

23 Ashmole, op.cit., p.188

George Marcelline, The Triumphs of King James The First (1610), p.21

24 However, Coelum is to a certain extent moral in tone, its philosophy being derived from Giordano Bruno, Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante (1584), trans 1964, pp.67-272; pp.124-125

25 Strong, Splendour at Court Renaissance Spectacle and Illusion (1973), p.236

Orgel and Strong, Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court (1973), pp.69-70

In the same way Arthur's role in the masques is primarily one of ideal virtue meant to praise the monarch, and through the king to provide an example of perfection for the court.

Prince Henry and the Revival of Chivalry

In the seventeenth century the chivalric ideal represented in The Faerie Queene and personified in Prince Arthur came to be regarded as an essentially Elizabethan concept. This linking of the Arthurian world with the golden age of the Elizabethan period is clearly expressed by the Spenserian poets and especially by Michael Drayton²⁶. However, parallel to the nostalgic resignation of the Spenserians there was an active attempt to revive the chivalric and moral idealism of Elizabeth's court. As early as 1607 Thomas Campion in Masque at Lord Hay's Marriage compares the courts of Elizabeth and James²⁷. At the commencement of the entertainment an Epigram relates King James to Arthur:

Merlin, the great King Arthur being slaine,
Foretould that he should come to life againe,
And long time after weild great Brittaines state
More powerfull ten-fould, and more fortunate.
Prophet, 'tis true, and well we find the same,
Save onely that thou didst mistake the name. 28

The simplistic rhyme scheme belies the seriousness of any eulogistic intentions, an ambiguity which is confirmed in the masque itself where the contemporary court, represented by Apollo is contrasted with Elizabeth's reign, which is symbolized by Diana²⁹. D.Lindley in

26 The attitude of the Spenserians to the Arthurian tradition will be examined in Chapter V

27 Campion, op.cit.

28 Ibid., p.207

29 D.Lindley, "Campion's Lord Hay's Masque and Anglo-Scottish Union," Huntington Library Quarterly, XLIII (1979-1980), pp.1-11

"Campion's Lord Hay's Masque and Anglo-Scottish Union" offers a possible cause of Campion's attitude:

Much more significant is the fact that by 1607 the memory of Queen Elizabeth was being revived. Plays and poems reenacted the events of her reign. This revival was not a simple matter of recalling times past, but had frequently the specific purpose of contrasting the present reign of James, unfavorably with the age of Elizabeth. 30

Thus even before Prince Henry's influence became a factor in political considerations there was a revival of Elizabethan chivalric values in the court entertainments and this resurgence was often expressed in Arthurian and Spenserian terms.

Prince Henry made his first official public appearance in Jonson's Barriers (1610) which celebrated Henry's investiture as Prince of Wales. By adopting a chivalric role in these entertainments, the Prince was able to present himself to the populace as an embodiment of the golden chivalry of Spenser's poem and more importantly of the Elizabethan age:

As the fairy prince Oberon, the hero of Jonson's masque of 1611, Henry appeared as the true descendant of the Faerie Queene: anti-Spanish, anti-Catholic, martial, chivalric and unafraid. 31

However, as Frances Yates in Shakespeare's Last Plays (1975) suggests, even before his appearance in Jonson's masques, the Prince had become a focus for the desire to revive the values of the Elizabethan court 32.

This attitude is clearly seen in the dedications to Henry which

30 Ibid., pp.7-8

31 A.Barton, "Harking Back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline Nostalgia," ELH, 48 (1981), p.715
Note also: R.Ashton, James I By his Contemporaries (1969), pp. 87-100

R.Strong, The Cult of Elizabeth (1977), pp.187-191

N.Council, "Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and the Transformation of Tudor Chivalry," ELH, 47 (1980), pp.259-275

32 Yates, op.cit., p.24

link him with the matter of Britain, as for example in John Davies of Hereford's Microcosmos (1603), and in Robert Fletcher's The Nine English Worthies (1606)³³. However, after 1610 the attempts of the Prince and those of his personal court to revive the chivalric iconography of Elizabeth I became more marked. Apart from Barriers and Oberon the association between Prince Henry and the closely interwoven traditions of Arthur, the matter of Britain and the Order of the Garter, which jointly represented the Elizabethan age, can be seen in Robert Amerie's Chesters Triumphant in Honor of her Prince (1610), John Webster's Monuments of Honor (1624), Henry Peacham's Minerva Britanna (1612) and Michael Drayton's Poly-Olbion (1613 edition)³⁴. The identification of the Prince with the ideals of Elizabeth's reign inevitably distanced him from the values of the contemporary court and King James, and contributed to the political tensions between Henry and his father³⁵.

Although Spenser's Arthurian material was used in the early Stuart masques to emphasize Prince Henry's potential for chivalric idealism and perfect rulership, this purpose is strikingly repeated by Samuel Sheppard in a long epithalamic masque which is contained in his poem

- 33 John Davies, op.cit. in Vol.I of The Complete Works (1878), pp.19-22
Robert Fletcher, op.cit., dedication to Prince Henry, fols.A2 r. -A3 v.
- 34 Amerie, op.cit.
Webster, op.cit. in Vol.III of The Complete Works of John Webster (1927), p.325
Peacham, op.cit., Dedication to Prince Henry, p.B2 r.
Drayton, op.cit. in Vol.IV of The Works of Michael Drayton (1933), pp.iii-iv
E.C.Wilson, Prince Henry and English Literature (1946), pp.78-127 lists many more.
- 35 Henry's popularity with the court can be seen in the disagreement between himself and the King, where most of the company followed the Prince when he rode away from his father. Calendar of Venetian State Papers 1610-1613 (1905), Vol.XII p.142
R.Ashton, op.cit., p.87

The Faerie King³⁶. However, in this instance the contrast occurs between the deposed Charles I and the future king, Charles II. The Faerie King is an allegorical work based upon Spenser's The Faerie Queene, and in Book V Sheppard's protagonists, the Princess Olivia and her knight Byanor, are presented with a detailed masque (V.v. fol.60 v.-62 v.)³⁷. This is followed by the Lady Metanoia's (repentance) list of the great writers, and by her giving to Olivia a veil -- recalling Una's -- and to Byanor, Arthur's sword:

this sayd to Byanor shee gave a sword
of wondrous strength and of as wondrous worth
the same Prince ARTHUR, England's mighty Lord
only would the likes not to be found on earth...

VI i 28.1-4. fol. 70 r. 38

In the political allegory of the poem Byanor represents Charles II, for not only does he receive the emblem of British rulership in Arthur's sword, but he also succeeds the slain Ariodant as king of Faerie land, which is Britain. Further, Byanor partners Olivia who is derived from Britomart and thus suggests Elizabeth I and the ideal peace of the Elizabethan age, which Charles in exile appeared to promise. Olivia's association with Elizabeth I is confirmed by her shield which recalls Prince Arthur's in The Faerie Queene and thereby stresses her British and royal characteristics (II.i.8-9). Lastly, Byanor is related to the Boötes and Arcturus idealism when he knocks down the evil knight, Zolamie:

that ZOLAMIE on his horse-back doth reele
the Sun, & Moone, & starres are in his sight
with CHARLES HIS WAINE supported by one wheele.

III v 28.4-6 fol. 32 v.

36 Sheppard, op.cit. Bodleian Library MS. Rawlinson Poet 28

37 Sheppard's praise for Spenser is consistent throughout The Faerie King: III.i.1; III.v.14; IV.i.1.1-4; V.iii.20.3-8; V.vi.44-45; and VI.vi.3.1-4.

38 Note also: V.vi and VI.i

Zolamie looks up to see the emblematic Byanor, that is Boötes. The constellation's traditional associations with Arthur and British kingship are referred to by Sheppard through the use of Boötes' alternative name "CHARLES HIS WAINE" which recalls both the other romance king, Charlemaine, and Charles II himself. Thus through the allegorical processes of the masque Sheppard presents Charles II as an ideal chivalric figure who will revive the golden age of Elizabeth I, unite the most perfect forms of love and return to a true appreciation of the arts.

Byanor is opposed in the poem by numerous forces representing aspects of the Commonwealth, but he is also contrasted with his predecessor Ariodant who symbolizes Charles I. Sheppard derives the name 'Ariodant' from Ariosto's Orlando Furioso where the character becomes a Duke at the Scottish court, which suggests Charles I's Stuart ancestry³⁹. Moreover, Ariodant's queen, Olympia, is also derived from Ariosto's poem, where she marries the King of Hibernia⁴⁰. Finally, Sheppard's Ariodant is presented as the King of Ruina (England) which implies Charles I's rulership over Britain. However, Byanor's honourable love for Olivia is contrasted with Ariodant's adulterous desire for the warrior princess. This moral flaw is emphasized by Ariodant's persistent unfeeling treatment of Olympia and by his ill-judged military campaigns. Byanor's success in defeating the evil enchanter, Magorto, winning the love of Olivia and becoming the King of Ruina contrasts sharply with Ariodant's failure in each of these tests⁴¹. Thus Sheppard's masque in The Faerie King recalls the early Stuart

³⁹ Ariosto, op.cit. (1532; rpt. 1974), 5.16-6.15, pp.41-52

⁴⁰ Ibid., 9.19-10.34, pp.83-96 and 11.33-80, pp.110-115

⁴¹ Magorto : the Commonwealth
 Olivia : the Elizabethan golden age
 Ruina : England

entertainments by contrasting the old king with the heir to the throne and by presenting the latter as an ideal figure who encapsulates the perfection of a combined Arthurian, Spenserian and Elizabethan golden age.

Sheppard's masque is able to echo the earlier entertainments because once more there was an heir to the throne who promised to recapture a past ideal. Contrastingly, the courtly entertainments which followed Henry's premature death in 1612 often reveal a disillusionment with the chivalric Arthurian material. This attitude towards the matter of Britain occurs in the anonymous Maske of Flowers (1613), where Silenus (representing wine) says of Kawasha (symbolic of tobacco):

The Worthies they were nine, 'tis true,
And lately Arthur's knights I knew,
But now are come up worthies new,
The roaring boys, Kawasha's crew.

42

There is no direct condemnation of Arthurian material, yet its use in a comparison with the rowdy Indians of Kawasha's tribe obviously suggests a burlesque connotation. Similarly, in Ralph Knevett's masque Rhodon and Iris (1631), there is a parodic version of Merlin's prophecy⁴³.

Finally, and most significantly, William Davenant's Britannia Triumphans, which was presented to the court in 1637, clearly treats the Arthurian and romance material in a burlesque manner⁴⁴.

In Britannia Triumphans Merlin claims that he is able to:

42 Maske of Flowers in A Book of Masques (1967), pp.149-177; 11.228-231, p.166

43 Knevett, op.cit. in The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevett (1966), pp.167-242; II.iii.714-767, pp.202-204

44 Davenant, op.cit.

...charme the Spirits of the night,
And unto Hell conjure their wings to steere, 45

Yet the phantoms Merlin presents are antimasque figures, first by representing comic characters such as maids with urinals and secondly, by being a mock romansa. The romansa, through its participants -- a damsel, dwarf, knight, squire and giant -- recalls Arthur's and Timias' meeting with Una and her dwarf and their battle against Orgoglio in Book I of The Faerie Queene ⁴⁶. The damsel attempts to persuade the giant not to attack them:

Fatience sweet man of might! alas Heaven knowes
We onely hither came to gather sloes,
And Bullies two or three; for truth to tell ye
I've long'd six weeks with these to fill my belly: 47

The knight's speech is equally comic in tone:

Feare not! let him storme on, and still grow rougher,
Thou that art bright as candle cleer'd by snuffer,
Canst n'ere endure a blemish or Eclipse
From such a hookt nose foule mouth'd Bobber lips: 48

Finally, however, the antimasques are dismissed and the classical, mythic figure of Bellerophon reveals a palace of fame and British poets to Charles I, who played Britanocles in the masque. Nevertheless, the Arthurian material is not completely condemned for Merlin himself raises a group of modern poets to praise the Queen. As D.Brooks-Davies writes in The Mercurian monarch (1983),

To have identified him [Merlin] completely with Imposture would have been to dissociate Charles from the Arthurian roots of the Britanocles - western kingdom myth. 49

45 Ibid., p.9

46 Ibid., pp.10-18

The Faerie Queene I.vii.29-52 and viii.1-28

47 Davenant, op.cit., p.16

48 Ibid., p.16

49 Brooks-Davies, op.cit., p.109

Note also: J.Collier, The Stage Condemn'd (1698), pp.12-31

Inigo Jones, Designs by Inigo Jones for Masques and Plays at Court, ed. P.Simpson and C.F.Bell (1924), p.103

A.Harbage, Sir William Davenant. Poet Venturer 1606-1668 (1935), p.77

The comic but essentially benevolent treatment of Spenser's Arthurian material in the masques after 1612 is paralleled by the gradually increasing disillusionment with the matter of Britain, which is found in the poetry and drama of the mid-seventeenth century⁵⁰. The fact that the earlier masques had perceived the very real possibility of an Arthurian ideal as it had been presented in The Faerie Queene reveals the extent of Prince Henry's influence on these court entertainments. It was the Prince's desire to revive the chivalric and Protestant perfection of the Elizabethan age and its associated Arthurian and Garter concerns that abetted Jonson's successful perpetuating of Spenser's concept of Arthur as the epitome of Christian and courtly virtue.

Jonson's Treatment of the Arthurian Material

In his utilization of the Arthurian tradition, Ben Jonson's attitude is often ambiguous, for he both praises and ridicules it. Jonson condemns the romances in The New Inn where Master Lovel says of Lord Beaufort's reading,

He had no Arthurs, nor no Rosicleer's,
 No Knights o'the Sunne, nor Amadis de Gaule's,
Primalions, and Pantagruel's, publique Nothings;
 Abortiues of the fabulous, darke cloyster,
 Sent out to poison courts, and infest manners: 51

Similar sentiments are expressed by Carlo Buffone in Everyman Out of his Humour:

CARL. What? a tedious chapter of courtship, after
 sir LANCELOT, and queene GVEVENER? away. 52

50 See below Chapters V, VI and VII

51 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.VI p.422, I.vi.124-128

52 Ibid., Vol.III p.471, II.iii.67-68

and are reiterated by Jonson himself in Underwoods XLIII (An Execration upon Vulcan):

Had I compil'd from Amadis de Gaule,
Th'Esplandians, Arthurs, Palmerins, and all...

Thou then hadst had some colour for thy flames,
On such my serious follies; 53

Not only did Jonson disparage the Arthurian material, but he also used it in a burlesque manner in the masque For the Honour of Wales (1618), in which the Welsh are seen as comic figures whose references to Arthurian material reveal national quirks, such as pride in genealogy:

'Is not come here to tauke of Brut,
from whence the Welse do's take his root;
Nor tell long pedegree of Prince Camber,
whose linage would fill aull this Chamber; 54

This aspect of Jonson's treatment of the Arthurian material clearly belongs to the general disillusionment and burlesque tradition expressed by Davenant and Knevet in the masques, Shakespeare and Rowley in drama, and Drayton and Milton in poetry⁵⁵. Yet, like the two poets, Jonson was also positively influenced by Spenser's Arthurian poem The Faerie Queene.

Despite this denigration of the popular Arthurian romances,

53 Ibid., Vol.VIII pp.203-204, ll.29-30 and 40-41

54 Ibid., Vol.VII p.504, ll.217-220

J.O.Bartley, "The Development of a Stock Character: II The Stage Scotsman; III The Stage Welshman (to 1800)," MLR, XXXVIII (1943), pp.279-288; p.286

'Ursa Major', whose associations with Arthur have been discussed above (pp.135-136), is also treated in a burlesque manner in Bartholomew Fair, where the Pig-woman, Ursula is related to the constellation: II.v.39-177 in Jonson, op.cit., Vol.VI pp.51-55

55 Davenant and Knevet : see above pp.147-149

Shakespeare and Rowley : see below Chapter V pp. 226-229

Drayton : see below Chapter V pp. 219-224

Milton : see below Chapter VII pp. 304-318

Jonson simultaneously perceived the greater potentials indicated by The Faerie Queene. In Conversations With Drummond (1618) he told the Scottish poet that,

he had ane intention to perfect ane Epick Poeme
intituled Heroologia, of the Worthies of his Country,

and that,

For a Heroik poeme, he said, ther was no such
ground as King Arthurs fiction. 56

It is these intentions which anticipate those of the young John Milton, and which seem to have found partial expression in the masques of 1610 and 1611.

The Arthurian material in Barriers and Oberon can be seen to be mainly Spenserian, not only in the utilization of similar symbolism, but more importantly in the thematic developments and especially in the humanist concept of moral instruction⁵⁷. Jonson in these masques achieves a Spenserian tone by using the Arthurian figures to represent the ideal of Christian, nationalistic and chivalric rulership, and by relating the "hieroglyphics" to the king, prince and courtiers whose official roles they echo⁵⁸. Yet, encouraged by the presentation of the other dualities, such as peace versus heroism in arms, the king

56 William Drummond, Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden (1923), pp.1 and 14. Jonson also talked of Sidney converting his Arcadia into an Arthurian (or more probably a heroic) work, p.14

57 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.VII pp.473-491 and Vol.V p.294 11.15-16
Horace in W.K.Wimstatt and C.Brooks, Literary Criticism (1957), p.92

I.Rivers, The Poetry of Conservatism 1600-1745 (1973), p.55

58 D.J.Gordon, "Hymenaei: Ben Jonson's Masque of Union," JWCI, 8 (1945), pp.107-145; "Ben Jonson's 'Haddington Masque': The Story and the Fable," MLR, 42 (1947), pp.180-187; "Poet and Architect: The Intellectual Setting of the Quarrel Between Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones," JWCI, 12 (1949), pp.152-178

A.H.Gilbert, The Symbolic Persons in the Masques of Ben Jonson (1948), p.5

and court saw themselves distanced from the Arthurian ideal world of the masque. Nevertheless, Jonson does not make Arthur abandon the world which is revealed as unworthy of him (as did the Spenserians), but makes him enter through the person of the Prince into the real world of the court, thereby finally joining ideal and reality. As Jonson himself stated of the King and courtiers, his purpose was "to redeeme them as well from Ignorance"⁵⁹. However, in order to appreciate the full import of the Arthurian material's influence on Jonson's masques and the significance of Prince Henry's chivalric revival, a more detailed analysis of Barriers and Oberon is now essential.

Prince Henry's Barriers

The Barriers was written to celebrate the investiture of Henry as Prince of Wales in 1610. The entertainment, which preceded the joust, opens with the Lady of the Lake and Arthur. Together the two romance figures call upon Merlin to present Prince Henry, who plays 'Meliadus', with a shield of valour. In the process of this presentation the Prince is told his chivalric ancestry and his name is seen to wake the allegoric figure of Chivalry. Finally, after the jousting, Merlin prophesies fame and glory for the King and his heirs. As the chivalric plot suggests, Jonson's entertainment encapsulated Prince Henry's desire to revive the Elizabethan ideals of knighthood and to present himself in the image of a perfected future king⁶⁰. Furthermore, Henry's newly acquired political independence as the Prince of Wales was stressed in two ways. First, Prince Henry's identification with Arthur and

⁵⁹ Jonson, op.cit., Vol.VII p.169

⁶⁰ M.C.Williams, "Merlin and the Prince: The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers," Renaissance Drama, NS. VIII (1977), pp.221-230; p.222

hence the Tudor dynasty is emphasized by his personal association with, and responsibility for, the principality of Wales. Secondly, Henry's role as Meliadus related him to King Melyodas of Lyones who independently rules his own lands despite the higher allegiance to King Arthur⁶¹. Thus, through the symbolism of Barriers Prince Henry was able to distance himself from King James and also to establish an independent image founded in the Elizabethan concept of chivalric and nationalistic rulership.

In order to create the impression of Elizabethan chivalry Jonson inevitably drew upon The Faerie Queene. Indeed, Spenser's poem was the preferred model for other works celebrating Prince Henry, such as Drayton's Poly-Olbion⁶². The general indebtedness to The Faerie Queene can be seen in the thematic development of knightly prowess and nationalistic heroism, concepts which are present throughout Barriers. However, a more direct derivation is found in the symbolic figures of Arthur and Merlin. In Book I of The Faerie Queene Arthur symbolizes heavenly grace and perfection, and through his stellar role Jonson's Arthur is also seen to embody these moral ideals. Arthur is "Discouerd as a starre aboue" (65) which refers to his traditional association with Arcturus, as Arthur himself confirms:

I, thy ARTHVR, am
Translated to a starre; and of that frame
Or constellation that was calld of mee

61 Malory, "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones," op.cit., pp.227-511; pp.229-232

62 Drayton, op.cit., in Vol.IV; see below Chapter V passim.

John Davies of Hereford, Microcosmos, op.cit.; see below Chapter VI pp. 254-256

R.Fletcher, The Nine English Worthies, op.cit.; see below Chapter VI p. 253

H.Peacham, Minerva Britanna, op.cit.; see above Chapter IV pp.144-145

So long before, as showing what I should bee,
ARCTVRVS, once thy king, and now thy starre.

66-70

"ARCTVRVS" is one star in Boötes; however, there are two references in Barriers which suggest that Jonson mistakenly identifies Boötes with the seven star constellation of Ursa Major⁶³. First, Arthur refers to Arcturus as a constellation (68), and secondly Meliadus is with "his sixe assistants here discovered" (131). As the Prince is an Arthur figure whose stellification is also suggested, these two lines clearly recall the seven stars of Ursa Major. The relating of Arthur to Arcturus/ Ursa Major makes his position denote heavenly grace and perfection, for the Renaissance defined this constellation as a symbol of the universal church, as seen in the seven golden candlesticks of Revelation⁶⁴. Thus Meliadus and Arthur in the Barriers symbolize the same moral and Christian perfection as does Prince Arthur in The Faerie Queene, which implies that Prince Henry too will uphold the Protestant ideal embodied in Book I of Spenser's poem⁶⁵.

Apart from the thematic similarity between Jonson's and Spenser's Arthur, the Prince's own stellar role in The Faerie Queene also implies an important interpretative source of Barriers. In Part I of Spenser's poem Arthur's stellar associations suggest his role as ideal lover of Gloriana, who in the sixteenth century political allegory is Elizabeth I. In the contemporary seventeenth century court the quest for the Faerie Queene is transferred to Prince Henry, who as Meliadus adopts Arthur's chivalric and knightly roles. Arthur's quest for

63 Anglo, "The Court Festivals of Henry VII," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 43 (1960), pp.12-45

64 Anglo, op.cit. (1963), pp.59-60

65 Yates, op.cit. (1975), pp.15-37

Gloriana thus becomes Henry's desire to recapture the ideal chivalric truth of the Elizabethan golden age, personified in the figure of Elizabeth I.

In addition, Prince Arthur's stellar role in The Faerie Queene provides a further link with the presentation of the chivalric ideal in Barriers. Henry as Meliadus is discovered in "St GEORGE'S Portico!" (136) which clearly refers to the Order of the Garter and the revival of perfect knighthood that this image infers⁶⁶. However, the allusion to Saint George in conjunction with Arthurian material also recalls the union of Arthur and the Red Cross Knight in Book I of Spenser's poem. Arthur's traditional association with Boötes -- alternatively described as the 'ploughman' -- is referred to by Spenser in order to create a bond between the Prince and Saint George, who has been raised "in ploughmans state to byde" (FQ I.x.66.5)⁶⁷. Furthermore, symbolically Arthur as the stellar ploughman protects the Red Cross Knight in the same way that in the narrative the Prince rescues Saint George from Orgoglio's dungeon (FQ I.viii.29-50). In Barriers Meliadus' entrance associates him with Saint George and therefore also with the Red Cross Knight, while Arthur retains his Spenserian significance of Patron by presenting his shield to Meliadus (94-96). Thus in addition to the concept of perfect chivalry inspired by the reference to Saint George and the Order of the Garter, Meliadus --and so Prince Henry -- becomes through the fiction of Book I of The Faerie Queene related to a Christian and more especially Protestant ideal.

⁶⁶ Ashmole, op.cit., "Appendix", n.pag.

⁶⁷ Note also: The Faerie Queene I.ii.1.1-4 and I.x.66
See above Chapter I p.35

The chivalric and Christian virtues which are epitomized in Prince Henry's fictional role are finally confirmed by Arthur's symbolic act of transferring his shield to Meliadus. As has already been indicated, Meliadus to a certain extent adopts Arthur's role, and this transition is more clearly expressed by the presentation:

But first receive this shield; wherein is wrought
The truth that he must follow; and (being taught
The wayes from heauen) ought not be despisd.
94-96

This symbol strengthens the Christian and chivalric interpretations of the stellification, for in The Faerie Queene Prince Arthur's shield is an important representation of Christian grace which aids the Prince when he fights Orgoglio:

And in his fall his shield, that couered was,
Did loose his vele by chaunce, and open flew:
The light whereof, that heauens light did pas,
FQ I viii 19.1-3 (emphasis added) 68

The shield in Barriers carries the same import of Christian truth, for it reveals "The wayes from heauen" (96) which must be entrusted to Meliadus.

Apart from its Christian connotations the shield, as in Spenser's poem, relates Arthur to classical and heroic literature. Jonson probably utilized the description of Aeneas' shield (Aeneid viii. 600-731) as he refers to the central scene depicted upon it -- the battle at Actium -- at line 303, "As if whole Ilands had broke loose, and swame"⁶⁹. This intimates that Arthur must have similar heroic attributes to Aeneas. Thus the sense of ideal, both classical and chivalric is perpetuated for the court not merely in the fictional figure of Arthur, but in their own Prince Henry.

68 J.E.Hankins, Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory (1971), p.108

F.Kermode, Renaissance Essays (1973), p.14

69 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.X p.517 note to line 303

In The Haddington Masque (1608), Vulcan presents to the court a sphere of the universe; Ibid., Vol.VII p.258, ll.276-280

A final association between Barriers and The Faerie Queene occurs when the shield is delivered to Merlin so that he may present it to Meliadus and read the Prince's fate from it. First, this recalls the description of Arthur's armour in Book I where,

It Merlin was, which whylome did excell
 All liuing wightes in might of magicke spell:
 Both shield, and sword, and armour all he wrought
 For this young Prince, when first to armes he fell;
 FQ I vii 36.4-7

Secondly, it is Merlin who tells Britomart the history of Britain in Spenser's poem (I.iii), in the same way that he relates the heroic exploits of British princes, as depicted upon the shield, to Meliadus. Moreover, this again suggests Aeneas' shield on which,

the God whose Might is Fire had wrought Italy's
 story and the triumphs of Rome. 70

Jonson, by relating Arthur, Merlin and Meliadus of Barriers to Prince Arthur, Merlin and Saint George of The Faerie Queene creates for his audience a sense of the great tradition of chivalry and heroism. In particular this association confers on Meliadus, and so Prince Henry, the ideal Christian and chivalric roles of Prince Arthur and Saint George in Book I of Spenser's poem⁷¹. But above all, Spenser's treatment of Arthur as it is represented in Barriers, serves to link Henry directly with the concept of chivalric heroism and Protestantism of the Elizabethan period, and with Gloriana, the symbol of the highest ideals of the Elizabethan age.

Jonson compounds the chivalric atmosphere of Barriers by adding to the material from The Faerie Queene references obtained from more

70 Aeneid (1972), p.220

The popularity of Aeneas' shield and of Aeneas himself in the Renaissance can be seen in Sidney, Apology for Poetry (1595; rpt. 1973), pp.119-120

71 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.II p.283 and Vol.X p.515

traditional romance texts. Indeed, the name under which Prince Henry chose to issue invitations to the tournament was 'Meliadus', which as well as being "an ancient title of the Scottish heir apparent", was closely associated with Medieval Arthurian literature ⁷². As we have already seen, King Melyodas figures in Malory's "Tristram de Lyones" and he is also the main protagonist of Meliadus de Leonnoys (1532) ⁷³. Alternatively, as a chivalric knight Meliadus features in La triumpante Et Veritable Histoire des haultz et cheualereux faictz darmes/ du tres puissant et tres magnanime/ Et plus que victorieux prince Meliadus (1535) and in La Mort de Roi Artu (c.1230), where he acts in a chivalric manner:

Meliadus the Black, who was actively helping
Lancelot and avenging the queen's disgrace. ⁷⁴

Meliadus also appears in Les Prophecies de Merlin (1526) which, because of its close association of the Lady of the Lake and Merlin with Meliadus is almost certainly a direct source of Barriers ⁷⁵.

In contrast to Meliadus' traditional derivation and Arthur's and Merlin's obvious romance associations, the Lady of the Lake reverses her accepted role. The Lady's usual characterization may be seen in The Faerie Queene:

Ladie of the Lake,
Whom long he lou'd, for him in hast did send,
Who thereby forst his workemen to forsake,
Them bound till his returne, their labour not to slake.

In the meane time through that false Ladies traine,

⁷² E.Waith, The Herculean Hero (1962), pp.49-50

⁷³ Malory, op.cit., pp.227-511; pp.229-232

Meliadus de Leonnoys, op.cit.

⁷⁴ La triumpante Histoire, op.cit.

La Mort de Roi Artu, trans. J.Cale (1978), p.122

⁷⁵ Les Prophecies de Merlin, op.cit., pp.Ki v.-Kii v.

Jonson, op.cit., Vol.X p.515 note to line 122

M.S.Williams, op.cit., passim

He was surprisd, and buried vnder beare,
 FQ III iii 10.6-9 and 11.1-2

However, in Barriers the Lady of the Lake regrets that she has imprisoned Merlin and states "My error I acknowledge" (109). Jonson may well have been thinking of the Kenilworth Festivities, which he certainly knew, in which the Lady does arouse sympathy⁷⁶. The combined effect is that while retaining sufficient traditional attributes to arouse the audience's familiarity, Jonson makes it clear that he feels at liberty, as indeed did Spenser, to alter the characters' roles. Thus, at the commencement of the masque it is made apparent that this is a consciously created and originally developed work and not a mere imitation of a previous piece of literature or history.

Arthur, Meliadus and the Lady of the Lake combine to create a chivalric atmosphere which unites the seventeenth century court and especially Prince Henry with the ideal knighthood and Protestantism of the Elizabethan age as it is expressed by Spenser in The Faerie Queene. Merlin, although he does contribute to this overall chivalric tone, is a more ambiguous figure. The magician is the most important symbolic character in Barriers; his speech to Meliadus runs to 201 lines and he is mentioned right at the beginning of the masque (7), although his entry --introduced dramatically with thunder and lightning -- does not occur until a quarter of the entertainment has been acted. He is omnipresent not only in his recounting of the past, but in his ability to reveal the future as at the end of the entertainment (419-438). The Lady of the Lake in addition to her repentance refers to him as a "great soule" (111), and Arthur comments,

76 Jonson must have known about the Kenilworth Festivities as The Masque of Owls (1624) refers to them directly and to various incidents, such as the bear fight, from them. op.cit., Vol.VII pp.779-786

The learned MERLIN; when thou shutst him there,
 Thou buriedst valure too, for letters reare
 The deeds of honor high, and make them liue.

102-104

Merlin is not only a central and revered figure within Barriers but is associated with "letters". It is important to notice that Arthur does not refer to 'art' with its possible interpretation of magic, but to a definite literary skill ⁷⁷. This association of Merlin with literature is emphasized by his derivation from The Faerie Queene (III.iii) where he is also linked to armour and where he recounts the history of Britain to Britomart stressing the inevitable duality of peace and war:

And sacred Peace shall louingly perswade
 The warlike minds, to learne her goodly lore,
 And ciuile armes to exercise no more.

FQ III iii 49.3-5

Similarly, Jonson's Merlin relates the history of British kings to Meliadus and also speaks of peace,

His arts must be to gouerne, and giue lawes
 To peace no lesse then armes.

175-176

Another literary connection can be seen in Inigo Jones' visual image of Merlin which was derived from Raphael's figure of Homer in Parnassus ⁷⁸. It is clear that with these associations Merlin would have been accepted as being in a literary tradition.

However, Merlin's representational significance develops in a complex manner, for while he is a fictional character in his role in Barriers and in his derivation from The Faerie Queene, he also rises above this level through the stress upon his own literary skill

⁷⁷ OED (1933), Vol.VI p.220 col.i
 M.C.Williams, op.cit., pp.227-228

⁷⁸ Orgel and Strong, op.cit., Vol.I p.167

as suggested by Arthur and his visual figure as Homer. The latter interpretation is strengthened by his own use of literary terms,

These were bold stories of our ARTHVRS age;
But here are other acts; another stage
And scene appears; it is not since as then:

171-173 79

Merlin recognises Barriers for what it is: a play or "stories" set upon a "stage" in which this sequence is a "scene" or "act". It is through this perception of art as art and through the stress upon his literary skill, that Merlin must be related to the 'writer'. It follows that if Merlin to a certain extent equates with Jonson, as the writer, the shield he presents to Meliadus corresponds to the entertainment presented to Prince Henry⁸⁰. Indeed, on a basic 'word-play' level, the shield is a 'barrier' and, more significantly, Merlin uses the shield to teach Meliadus and to inspire him to greatness, as the Prince is lessened by Jonson through the masque.

In addition to Merlin's simultaneous presentation in the three roles of literary Arthurian figure, writer and Jonson, Meliadus and his knights also have triple representative values. Henry is firmly related to Arthur, to the idea of a heroic and Christian prince, which in the real world he must sustain. The knights too present themselves in Barriers as ideals who are inspired by chivalry:

Of all the world, come knight-hood like a flood
Upon these lists, to make the field, here, good,
399-400

and are related to the idealized figures in The Faerie Queene where valiant knights are aided by Prince Arthur. However, at the same time they represent the knights of the court of James I, who are

79 The thunder and lightning below ground was associated with Merlin in The Faerie Queene III.iii.9

80 Merlin's role in Barriers is similar to that of Prospero in The Tempest, especially IV.i (the masque scene).

chastised at the beginning of Barriers for Chivalry's slumber and the disused armour:

Cob-webd, and rusty; not a helme affords
A sparke of lustre, which were wont to giue
Light to the world, and made the nation liue,
When in a day of honour fire was smit

40-43

In this way the knights represent knighthood -- the immutable value --, the Arthurian/ Spenserian ideal knights and finally, the courtiers of reality.

Each figure in Barriers, with the exception of the Lady of the Lake, who as we have seen may be dependent upon her characterization in a previous entertainment, is presented in these triple roles. This is demonstrated more clearly in the following table:

<u>BARRIERS</u>	<u>IMMUTABLE VALUE</u>	<u>REALITY</u>
Arthur/ Meliadus	Christian and heroic rulership	Prince Henry
Merlin	Writer (moral/ aretological)	Jonson
Shield	Work of art	<u>Barriers</u>
Knights	Chivalric knighthood	Courtiers

Each aspect of the real occasion is reflected in the fiction: the court audience, the Prince, the author and the masque itself. If this is so then a role for the King, who would have been the most important spectator, must be present within Barriers. Indeed, James I is referred to many times, always as the ideal monarch:

Royall, and mightie IAMES, whose name shall set
A goale for all posteritie to sweat,
In running at, by actions hard and high

353-355

By analogy, interpretations of the King translate into similar structures as used for the other figures: James' role in the drama is that of a perfect king, the immutable role symbolized is 'monarchy', and outside the masque he is, of course, himself. It is in these three levels that the symbolism of Barriers can be seen: the ideal fictional world (the masque itself and its derivation from The Faerie Queene); the

immutable role in which all interpretations meet; and lastly, the recognition of the figures in the reality of the court.

In the letter to Raleigh Spenser asserts of The Faerie Queene:

The generall end therefore of all the booke is
to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous
and gentle discipline:

Jonson echoes this intention in the creation of his masques which are meant both to please and to 'fashion' the court and, in Barriers, the young Prince himself. Thus the interpretative processes of symbolism are developed beyond the simple act of identification towards the audience's active participation in the fiction. In this way the perfection perceived in the masque may only be attained by the development of the court's awareness of its own imperfections, so that the true ideal may be revealed by sharp contrast. Jonson suggests these self-doubts first by distancing the audience from the perfection of the fictional world, and secondly, through creating parallels which stress the difference between masque and court.

The main device Jonson employs to achieve the distancing of the audience is the intentional and obvious failure of one of the accepted methods for linking the masque and court. The unity of fiction, reality and immutable role was often attained through the King, who as a central figure could be seen to be superior to all aspects and thus provided an unchanging point of reference. Jonson was capable of conveying this sense of unity as he does in Oberon (see below pp.181-182). However, the references to James I in Barriers appear perfunctory and, moreover, are ill-placed within the poetry. In the Lady of the Lake's first speech, she refers to the King:

And that a monarch aequall good and great,
Wise, temperate, iust, and stout, claimes ARTHVRS seat.

"[C]laimes ARTHVRS seat" was a well known anagram of 'Charles James Stuart'; it is more suited to the political panegyric which makes no attempt to produce a dramatic narrative unlike the masque⁸¹. It would have appeared out of place and uninspired because of its familiarity, particularly in comparison with the general wonder and excitement traditionally inspired by these entertainments⁸². The anagram inevitably platitudinises the praises associated with it and seems to suggest that they too are banal and probably artificial.

The artificiality of the praises for James is also suggested by Merlin when in his last speech he states:

I dare not speake his [James'] vertues for the feare
Of flattring him, they come so high and neare
To wonders:

415-417

By calling attention to the possible flattery of the praises, Jonson implants the suspicion within the audience that they might be ironic. This reference is strengthened by the often mocking tone of the rhymes, as for example at lines 353-355. It is thus suggested, although never directly, that James is unable to correspond to the ideal image of kingship presented in the fictional world of Barriers. This failure of the usual symbol of unity reveals that the court, which is indivisibly associated with the King, also fails to attain the perfection expressed by its fictional counterpart in the masque. By reversing the traditional role of kingship in the masque Jonson is able to disassociate the audience from the drama, and more importantly, to imply that the cause of this distancing is the failure of king and court to reflect

81 Indeed, Jonson uses the anagram in a burlesque fashion in For the Honour of Wales, op.cit., Vol.VII p.509

82 D.Cunningham, "The Jonsonian Masque as a Literary Form," ELH, XXII (1955), pp.108-124; p.120
Jonson's own dislike of anagrams is recorded by Drummond, op.cit. (1923), p.38

the moral ideal of the fictional world.

Jonson underlines the sense of the court's insufficiency by comparing the present, as represented by the figure of Chivalry asleep by her house:

Onely the house of Chiualrie (how ere
The inner parts and store be full, yet here
In that which gentry should sustaine) decayd
31-33

with the past:

O, when this Aedifice stood great and high...
And Trophaees, reard, of spoyled enemies,
Whose toppes pierc'd through the cloudes, and hit the skies
45 and 61-62

This traditional device for throwing the limitations of the present into greater relief was anticipated by Spenser in The Faerie Queene where the golden world is also Arthurian⁸³. The perfection of the past is also distanced from the seventeenth century court audience by this very derivation from literature. Further, the masque in its entirety is distanced from reality through its comments on its own fictional nature and through its references to classical mythology, such as in the Lady of the Lake's speech to Meliadus:

Do's he not sit like MARS...
And those his sixe assistants, as the pride
Of the old Graecian Heroes had not died?
Or like APOLLO, raisd to the worlds view,
The minute after he the Python slew.
142 and 144-147

In Barriers, however, Jonson expands the theme of dualities beyond that of ideal fiction versus decadent reality into the more topical opposition between a policy of peace and glorious achievement in arms.

83 The comparison of a past ideal Arthurian world with the inadequacies of the contemporary world is manifested frequently in the works of the Spenserian poets. See below Chapter V pp. 218-224 Spenser, op.cit., Book V Proem 1-5

peace was associated with King James (who consistently pursued this policy) and Jonson appears to approve when directing Meliadus to turn to James:

His equall Iustice, vpright Fortitude
 And settled Prudence, with that Peace indued
 Of face, as minde, alwayes himselfe and euen.
 411-413

Simultaneously, however, the audience perceives that James is distanced from the fictional ideal, and Jonson proceeds to develop this duality in the comparison he now initiates between the chivalric Prince and the peace-loving King. Throughout the entertainment Prince Henry as Meliadus is consistently related to heroic warrior figures. Apart from the romance comparisons with Arthur, Saint George, Tristram, Tor and Lancelot (86-87 and 136), Henry is also linked to classical heroes. As we have already seen, the shield presented to Henry is derived from Aeneas' shield, and Merlin's whole participation in the entertainment from the introductory storm to his listing of Henry's heroic ancestors recalls Aeneas' journey through the underworld⁸⁴. Moreover, Prince Henry is also compared with Mars (142, 202, 255 and 267), "Graecian Heroes" (145), Apollo when he slew Python (146-147), and Hercules (414). The literary and mythological derivations clearly praise heroic warfare and encourage Prince Henry to imitate the classical and chivalric ideal.

Finally, all the figures Merlin reveals to Meliadus in his lecture on ideal rulership have achieved greatness through warlike means. The first monarch mentioned improved his kingdom:

Like a bright planet strengthned by the hand
 Of first, and warlike EDWARD; then th'increase

⁸⁴ Aeneid vi and note also viii. 520-731

Of trades and tillage, vnder lawes and peace,
186-188

Here peace and wars are treated equally, yet as the list proceeds 'arms' very much supersede 'peace'. One of the most important heroes is Richard the Lion Heart, who,

Powre on the Saracens, and doth performe
Deedes past an angell, arm'd with wroth and fire,
Ploughing whole armies vp, with zealous ire,
226-228

Battles are thus linked to religious causes and indeed this appears to render war not only acceptable but praiseworthy. Nationalistic battles are regarded similarly,

Yet for the next (what was his right by lawes
Of nations due) doth fight that MARS of men,
254-255

and the epitomes of greatness in this respect are Edward the Black Prince and, significantly, Elizabeth I. Finally, Merlin reverts to James I and praises his success in Ireland:

Ireland that more in title, then in fact
Before was conquer'd, is his Lawrels act.
347-348

In comparison to the extended praise used for other monarchs James' claims for peace appear unimportant in their brevity. Merlin's speech is thus more than a mere genealogical scenario designed to praise the Stuart dynasty, which as Herford and Simpson rightly suggest would have had

...more solidity than grace, and can have
done little to conciliate the attention of
spectators impatient for the Tilt. 85

Although this is a valid criticism, the history also illustrates for

85 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.II p.284

the court the conflict between the more universal concepts of peace and heroic warfare. More importantly, because these moral issues are presented to the audience embodied by the King and the heir to the throne, Jonson is able to reflect a very real political tension. By creating these final ambiguities between Henry and James, and between chivalry and peace, the distancing of the audience from the ideal Arthurian fictional world is completed. Thus, before the tournament commences the audience is able to perceive itself as morally imperfect in comparison with the ideal world of the masque.

However, Jonson's purpose in the masque is not to condemn the King and court, but instead, like Spenser in The Faerie Queene, to "fashion" the audience and bring it, through active participation in the fiction, closer to the chivalric ideal to which it aspired. This final process in the 'fashioning' occurs when at the end of the entertainment the court is united with the masque in a complete and ultimate harmony which transcends the duality of fiction and the real world.

The unification of the masque and reality is achieved in three ways: first, in the physical action of the joust, which is Barriers' equivalent of the dance. On the field Prince Henry and the courtiers are seen to participate in an event which was the essence of the nature of Arthurian chivalry⁸⁶. By recreating this world, the jousters are able, in the perception of the audience, to become their literary predecessors, thereby unifying fiction and reality⁸⁷. Secondly, after the tournament Merlin prophecies to James,

86 Malory, op.cit., pp.642-648

87 George Peele, Anglorum Feriae (1595; rpt. 1830), pp.18-19

the context of the world of the masque? Despite the appearance that it is the former that Jonson intends -- and indeed the majority of the seventeenth century court probably accepted this interpretation -- Merlin as the main character suggests a sense of uncertainty. It is he who predicts the ultimate attainment of perfection (in the royal children and the star emblem), but as an 'artist' figure logically he must be creating another fiction, and indeed the previous doubts about flattery could easily be applied here. If Merlin is on the same level as Jonson, then to a certain extent the King and courtiers must become part of the fictional world, and thus their attainment of perfection is as illusory as Inigo Jones' presentation of Arthur as a star. But the interpretation is always uncertain, and Jonson suggests rather than asserts the problematic tensions existing between the King and Prince Henry. Nevertheless, despite the political complexities of this theme Jonson was to utilize similar features in Oberon the following year.

Oberon: The Fairy Prince

Oberon has a number of features corresponding to those of Barriers, the most apparent being that both were written for Henry, and that the Prince played the major role each time. This relationship is fairly easily perceived by the twentieth century reader, but to the seventeenth century court audience the idea of Oberon as a sequel to Barriers must have been even more apparent⁸⁹. In addition, the association is strengthened in that both derive material from The Faerie Queene, a fact which is recognised by Herford and Simpson, who comment that

89 The two masques also evince similar political motives: J. Wilson, Entertainments for Elizabeth I (1980), pp.12-13

Oberon,

...finally arrayed himself in all the
glory of chivalry as the elfin knight of
Spenser. 90

To a certain extent Jonson relies upon the audience's familiarity with Barriers, and indeed without considering the two entertainments together Henry's almost complete supplantation of Arthur becomes difficult to perceive. Moreover the narrative structure of Oberon, which was intended for a stage performance at court, clearly differs from the series of speeches found in Barriers.

In Oberon the satyrs led by Silenus attempt to wake the guardians of Oberon's palace and at the appropriate moment this palace is discovered and Oberon with his knights descends into the audience for the final dance. The traditional order of the masque is reversed for Oberon begins with the antimasque -- "all wildnesse, that could be presented" (2-3)⁹¹. Initially, the antimasques had been introduced by masque writers to vary the main entertainment. However, they were so popular that eventually they were to supersede the masque itself⁹². Jonson was aware of this tendency and attempted to utilize both parts of the entertainment. As E.Welsford remarks in The Court Masque (1927),

It seems to me extremely likely that he [Jonson] deliberately invented the term antimasque and used it instead of the form anticmasque in the hope that he would be able to emphasize the fact that the antimasque was meant as a foil, and not as a mere variety entertainment. 93

- 90 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.II p.285
M-T.Jones-Davies, Inigo Jones, Ben Jonson et le masque (1967), p.51
91 E.Welsford, The Court Masque (1927), pp.184-186
92 Davenant, op.cit. contains two very long antimasques; see above pp.147-148
Jonson, Gypsies Metamorphosed (1621), op.cit., Vol.VII pp.539-622
93 Welsford, op.cit., p.186
Orgel, op.cit. (1975), p.14

The tone of the "foil" was often satyric or burlesque. However, the satyrs of Oberon are more complex for they express immoral and pleasing characteristics simultaneously⁹⁴. For example, they make sexual boasts, which Silenus duly corrects:

SATYRE 5

Are there any Nymphes to woo?

SATYRE 4

If there bee, let mee haue two.

SILENVS

Chaster language.

45-50

Similarly, the satyrs' less positive characteristics are revealed by the way in which it is said that they intend to awaken the Sylvan guards. The proposed actions include whipping the Sylvans, clubbing their heads, "Or an eele,/ In their guts, to make 'hem feele?" (188-189), and when the Sylvans are aroused the Third Satyr informs them,

We had thought we must haue got
Stakes, and heated 'hem red-hot,
And haue bor'd you, thr[o]ugh the eies

227-229

The satyrs' intentions suggest the activities of demons, and together with their costume of horns, tail and cloven feet, conclusively relate them to the demonic stage characters⁹⁵.

However, the satyrs are not immoral, for they are comical and eager to please Prince Oberon. They sing:

Grandsire, we shall leaue to play
With LYAEVS now; and serue
Only OB'RON?

77-79

94 Jonson was aware of the supposed relationship between the terms 'satyr' and 'satire', as can be seen from his ridicule of Wither's use of this similarity in Time Vindicated (1623), op.cit., Vol. VII pp.649-673; p.658 l.73

The inaccuracy of the comparison is attested to by Isaac Casaubon in De Satyrica Graecorum Poesi (1605), Book I ch.I p.1

95 Marlowe, Doctor Faustus V.ii.95-200 in Christopher Marlowe The Complete Plays (1975), pp.334-338
Welsford, op.cit., p.36

Indeed, the audience could not but be sympathetic to these characters who, although they threaten the Sylvans with "a good nayle/ Through their temples?" (185-186) do no more than sing a song and tickle them awake (210-217)⁹⁶. More importantly, the seventeenth century court audience would have perceived a stronger relationship with the satyrs than a mere comic sympathy; for the mythic figures appear to imitate them. As S.Orgel in The Complete Masques (1975) writes of the satyrs,

their pleasures, indeed, are courtly ones:
dancing and drinking. 97

The satyrs also expect gifts, wine and gold, and they ask of Oberon

Will he giue vs prettie toyes,
To beguile the girles withall?
84-85

Wine and gold were the traditional presents awarded by a monarch, and especially by James I, to his courtiers⁹⁸. Finally, there is a direct reference to the Stuart court through a comment upon the fashion of wearing one earring. The satyrs sing:

Yes, and stick our pricking eares
With the pearle that Tethys weares.
118-119

The most famous example of this fashion is probably Charles I in Van Dyck's portrait "Charles I in Three Positions", although Shakespeare also refers to the custom in A Midsummer Night's Dream where Peaseblossom explains her duties to Puck:

96 The seventeenth century concept of satyrs was not unsympathetic, as can be seen from Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet written in reply to Edward Dyer: "Sonnet 16" in The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney (1962), p.145

97 Orgel, op.cit. (1975), p.18

98 J.P.Kenyon, Stuart England (1979), pp.55-56
John Nichols, The Progresses of James I (1828), Vol.I pp.66-607

The cowslips tall her [Titania] pensioners be;
 In their gold coats spots you see;
 Those be rubies, fairy favours,
 In those freckles live their savours.
 I must go seek some dewdrops here,
 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear. 99

The Queen's "pensioners" are, as H.F. Brooks explains, Elizabeth's "gentlemen of the royal bodyguard within the palace" and were "of noble blood"¹⁰⁰. The "favours" are gifts, which in both works are pearls for the ears. The association of courtiers, gifts and pearl earrings suggests that Jonson utilized Shakespeare's play in his creation of the antimasque. Although there are no actual satyrs in A Midsummer Night's Dream, in the Renaissance fairies and hobgoblins were often identified with classical figures such as satyrs. This is confirmed by Thomas Nashe in The Terrors of the night Or, A Discourse of Apparitions (1594) where he writes,

The Robbin-good-fellowes, Elfes, Fairies,
 Hobgoblins of our latter age, which
 idolatrous former daies and the fantasticall
 world of Greece, ycleaped Fawnes, Satyres,
Dryades & Hamadryades, did most of
 their merry pranckes in the Night. 101

The relationship of Oberon to A Midsummer Night's Dream enables us to perceive the role of Jonson's satyrs more clearly. In Shakespeare's play there are clearly common fairies such as Puck, distinct from the

- 99 Sir Anthony Van Dyck, op.cit. (c.1636), The Pelican History of Art: Painting in Britain 1530-1790 (1978), p.72
 Other examples can be found in D.Foskett, A Dictionary of British Miniature (1972), Vol.I p.1 No.7 and Vol.II p.181 No.463
 Shakespeare, op.cit., II.i.10-15
- 100 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream. The Arden Shakespeare (1979), ed. H.F.Brooks, p.27 notes to lines 12 and 14-15
 J.L.Nevinson, "Portraits of Gentlemen Pensioners before 1625," Walpole Society, XXXIV (1952-1954), pp.1-13
 B.N.De Luna, Jonson's Romish Plot (1967), p.70
 R.Strong, op.cit. (1977), p.37
- 101 Nashe, op.cit., fol.B2 v.
 K.M.Briggs, The Anatomy of Puck (1959), p.71

noble romance ones such as Titania and Oberon. Jonson's satyrs equate with the Puck-figures, while we recognise the noble fairies in the knights of Oberon's palace, who are later contrasted to

the course, and countrey Faery,
That doth haunt the harth, or dairy.
418-419

In addition, the courtiers' association with the satyrs or "course" fairies is affirmed through the last song of the antimasque, which parodies the courtier's invitation to his lady to dance, at the conclusion of the masque. Indeed, the last song is, as S.Orgel writes

a brilliant parody of two central masque conventions, the masquer's invitation to his lady and the final dance. The song inverts all the courtly values. 102

Thus, although the relationship of satyrs and courtiers is achieved in a humorous fashion, the audience of Oberon is made to question its own ability to represent ideal courtly values, and this implication is underlined by the revelation of the bright palace of Oberon.

Oberon's palace is probably derived from The Faerie Queene:

There the whole Scene opened, and within was discover'd
the Frontispice of a bright and glorious Palace, whose gates
and walls were transparent
138-140 103

The spectacle would have appeared awe-inspiring and magical. A glass palace which, lit from within, shed a glittering light into the darkened hall. The image is reminiscent of Panthea, of which the Red Cross Knight says,

And that bright towre all built of christall cleene,
Panthea, seemd the brightest thing, that was:
FQ I x 58.5-6 104

102 Orgel, op.cit. (1965), p.86

103 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.VII p.346

104 The glass palace also suggests the influence of the Burgundian court entertainments: Kipling, op.cit., pp.106 and 113

While Panthea belongs to the Faerie Queene, Jonson's palace is given to the "Fairy Prince" and the latter, like Spenser's tower is placed in "Fairie land" (151). However, Prince Oberon's palace also recalls King Oberon's palace in Huon of Bourdeaux which is one of the main sources of A Midsummer Night's Dream. The castle is described as follows:

Huon sawe appeare before him a great Citie, and
upon the one side thereof a faire and rich
Pallaice, the wals and Towers of the Citie and
the Pallaice, were al of white Marble pollished,
the which did shine so bright against the Sunne,
as though it had been all of Christall. 105

The effect of these associations would have been to imbue the palace in Jonson's masque with the traditional qualities of fame and earthly glory expressed by the two romance castles, and this supposition is confirmed by Silenus' speech:

Looke! Do's not his Palace show
Like another Skie of lights?
Yonder, with him, liue the knights,
Once, the noblest of the earth,
Quick'ned by a second birth;
Who for prowesse, and for truth,
There are crownd with lasting youth:

143-149 106

The idea of fame is introduced by the reference to stars -- "Skie of lights" -- and confirmed by the claim to immortality, which is explained

- 105 Huon of Bourdeaux (1601), fol.KK4 v.
Other crystal palaces may be found in:
John Lydgate, Lydgate's Fall of Princes (c.1431-1439; rpt. 1923),
Vol.III p.910
Geneva Bible (1560), New Testament p.121 v.
Chaucer, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (1974), p.283
'Oberon's palace' continued in popularity after Jonson's masque
as can be seen from Robert Herrick's poems: "The Fairie Temple:
or, Oberon's Chappell", "Oberon's Feast" and "Oberon's Palace" in
The Poems of Robert Herrick (1965), pp.90-93, 119-120 and 165-168
- 106 Note also Spenser, "The Visions of Bellay," ll.15-56 in Poetical
Works (1975), p.523
I.Rathborne, The Meaning of Spenser's Fairyland (1937), pp.40-47

by I.Rathborne in The Meaning of Spenser's Fairyland (1937):

the immortal life of Fairyland may well be
symbolic of the fame which the poets had bestowed. 107

The timelessness of the palace is finally confirmed by Inigo Jones' design in which, according to Orgel, he

seems to be creating a visual temporal allegory for the spectator, moving him from the architecture of the middle ages, through the mixed style of the present to the Palladian order of the future. 108

To the seventeenth century court audience, both visually and in its derivation from the romances, Oberon's palace would have been seen to symbolize a perfect heroism, fame and immortality, and the figures within the crystal wall strengthen this interpretation.

Oberon and the fairies are concealed both within the rock and inside the palace. These must be opened in order to reveal the splendour and perfection which has already been associated with the Prince by Silenus:

Satyres, he doth fill with grace
Euery season, eu'ry place;
62-63

Similarly, Silenus describes Oberon's knights as "Once, the noblest of the earth," (146). Prince Henry in the role of Oberon is related to the fairy world through A Midsummer Night's Dream in which the king of the fairies is called Oberon. Moreover, the Prince, like his palace, is partly derived from The Faerie Queene, where King Oberon accompanies Guyon, the titular knight of Book II, to Faerie land (II.i.6.9). These associations serve to present the Prince to the audience in a dream-like atmosphere, far from the reality of the court.

107 Ibid., p.187

108 Orgel and Strong, op.cit., p.39

Oberon is also given ideal associations through the role of Prince Henry in Barriers, in which Meliadus supplants Arthur as the heroic ideal. The relationship with the British hero is maintained in Oberon's presentation:

At the
 further end of all, OBERON, in a chariot, which to a lowd
 triumphant musique began to moue forward, drawne by two
 white beares, and on either side guarded by three Syluanes,
 with one going in front.

294-298

109

The white bears recall the constellation Ursa Major, and Ovid's myth, which Jonson was certainly familiar with as he refers to it in Epicoene, or The Silent Woman (1609) where he writes:

and was not CALISTO, the mother of
 ARCAS, turn'd into a beare, and made
 a starre, mistris VRSVLA, i'the heauens? 110

However, Jonson has made a mistake as is pointed out by Herford and Simpson:

but she [Callisto] became the Great Bear,
 Ursa maior, and should not have been described
 by the diminutive Vrsula. 111

It is highly likely that the mistake was the common one outlined by S. Anglo, who argues that the larger bear was often identified with Arcturus, while the smaller bear was considered to be the female Ursula. This, together with Silenus' earlier mention of stars and the number of the Sylvans being seven, of necessity recalls the seven stars of the constellation and clearly relates Oberon to Arthur through the name

109 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.VII p.351

On the use of bears to pull chariots in masques note Bacon,
op.cit. (1858), Vol.VI part ii p.468

110 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.V p.207, III.iii.127-129

111 Ibid., Vol.X p.25

Arcturus¹¹². Since Prince Oberon is related to the fairies through A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Faerie Queene, and to Arthur through the latter work and through Barriers, this completes the symbolic signification of fame and immortality contained within the glass wall of the perfect, dream-like palace.

As we have already seen, the satyrs are related to the courtiers, and the revelation of Oberon's palace served only to strengthen this association. The "darke Rocke" provided a strong contrast to the "bright and glorious Palace"¹¹³, and the dramatic effect would have been that of the dark outside world gazing into an idealized, bright "Fairyl-land". The court remained outside in the dark hall with the satyrs on the dark stage. The audience is made simultaneously to associate itself subconsciously with the antimasque, and further to perceive that it is excluded from the moral perfection which is "crownd with lasting youth" (149). Finally, when Oberon did appear he was "At the further end of all, (294-295) and this deep perspective only added to the audience's sense of distance from the ideal presented by Prince Henry"¹¹⁴.

Jonson underlines the dualities of inner and outer masque worlds by relating them to the traditional, nationalistic conflict between British and classical arts¹¹⁵. In Oberon the masque proper is British in its

112 The relationship of Prince Henry to Arthur, to Arcturus would have been strengthened by the similar device in Barriers. The relationship of a bear to Arthur is also underlined because "the first sillable of his name which is Arth in the Britishe speche, and is in English a Beare" Richard Grafton, A Chronicle at Large (1569; rpt. 1809), Vol.I p.83

113 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.VII pp.341 and 346

114 Ibid., Vol.VII p.351

Leggatt, op.cit., p.244

Orgel, op.cit. (1975), p.19

115 J.Grundy, The Spenserian Poets (1969), p.70

William Browne, The Poems of William Browne of Tavistock (1905), Vol.I p.225 11.986-994

literary origin, and also in its reference to sleeping knights, which is almost certainly derived from the folk belief that King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table were not dead, but merely slept, and would come again¹¹⁶. On the other hand, the antimasque is derived from Greek mythology and utilizes some of the more immoral and comical figures from classical literature¹¹⁷. For Jonson, however, nationalism is not the main theme. Rather, it serves, as did 'peace' and 'chivalric war' in Barriers, to underline the central tensions.

If the whole audience is excluded from perfection by Jonson's simple, but effective, device of contrasting an outer dark with an inner light, then inevitably the King, like the courtiers, would have been distanced from the ideal of Oberon's palace. In addition to the dualities already mentioned, this introduces a new tension, for Henry as Prince Oberon is already within the perfect world and, through a comparison with James I by means of the motif of "ARTHURS chaire" (323), he becomes dramatically opposed to the King. Despite the Arthurian material being utilized in the symbolism of the masque Arthur is never mentioned directly, but only in the reference to the anagram "Clames Arthur's seate", which translates to "Charles James Stuart". The first Sylvan sings,

A night of homage to the British court,
And ceremony, due to ARTHURS chaire,
322-323

The implication of these lines, apart from their obvious function of identifying the King's actual place during the performance, is

116 Malory, op.cit., p.717

R.W.Barber, Arthur of Albion (1961), pp.53-54

117 Nonnus, Dionysiaca (1940), Vol.I pp.472-501 and Vol.II p.389

Aelianus, A Registre of Hystories (1570), p.40

Euripides, Plays (1956), Vol.II pp.349-370

clearly outlined by W.T.Furniss:

the ceremony is due to "ARTHVR'S chaire,"
that is, the office of a British king. By the
end of the speech, the office of the king has become
a symbol of the proper working of the universe 118

Arthur thus develops multiple significations, as in Barriers: he is James; the immutable role of British kingship; and finally, an ideal to which all reverence is due. Oberon's ultimate movement towards the King echoes this triple meaning: Henry moves towards James literally; he also moves chronologically towards being a British monarch; and morally, through the instructive process of the masque, Henry moves towards a form of perfect rulership. Yet the very use of this hackneyed anagram of James' name and the over-lavish praise, as in Barriers, undermine the King's presentation as Arthur. Meanwhile Oberon's triumphant move towards kingship in a chariot pulled by white bears, representative of the heroic Arthur, strengthens the sense of difference between the King and Prince. Henry's role as Oberon allies him to the Arthur of The Faerie Queene -- they are both idealized princes -- whereas James as King Arthur is related to the flawed monarch figure of the romances and histories. Thus the masque vividly dramatizes the current political situation, showing the old King as imperfect, whereas the heir to the throne reveals an inspiring perfection to which all future hope must be directed. Nevertheless, despite their estrangement, it is through the dramatic uniting of Prince and King that a final harmony is perceived.

The last necessary masque constituent -- a harmonious conclusion -- is fluently achieved. This enables us to imagine the whole dramatic

118 W.T.Furniss, "Ben Jonson's Masques," Three Studies in the Renaissance: Sidney, Jonson, Milton (1958), p.98

scene of the Prince in his chariot "drawne by two white beares" (196-297) moving slowly into the court, dismounting and then beginning the final dance, encouraged by the fairies:

Then, princely OBERON,
Goe on,
This is not euery night.
391-393

The presence of both James and Henry in the hall implies the final union of that which they ultimately represent -- reality and ideal --and this in turn reconciles all attendant dualities redeeming the court from its earlier sense of inadequacy, and presenting to it the possibility of perfection. In the formal dance that followed, the courtiers were able to forget the association with the dance of the satyrs, and join in the implied perfect order of the universe. The night setting of the masque, the emphasis upon stars through the presence of the white bears and Phosphorus, and the music, suggest that in concluding Oberon, Jonson may be utilizing the idea of the music of the spheres to emphasize the complete harmony and perfection already presented¹¹⁹.

Oberon, however, does not conclude with a dance, for Phosphorus, the morning star, appears to warn the masquers

not [to] defer
Your parting longer. Then, doe I giue way,
As night hath done, and so must you, to day.
441-443

In Barriers it was the role of Merlin as artist which revealed the whole function of the masque as a fiction, including a belief by the audience that they had attained perfection. In Oberon, Phosphorus, on one level reveals this same transient nature by heralding the reality of the

119 Jonson, op.cit., Vol.V p.73 and Vol.IV p.50

morning, which necessarily questions the validity of the ideal qualities previously attained by the court. Jonson's reaffirmation of reality and revelation of the fiction as such confirms this suggestion of ambiguity.

There is one last song used to conclude the masque:

O Yet, how early, and before her time,
 The envious Morning vp doth clime,
 Though shee not loue her bed!
 What haste the iealous Sunne doth make,
 His fiery horses vp to take,
 And once more shew his head!
 Lest, taken with the brightnesse of this night,
 The world should wish it last, and neuer misse his light.

448-455

The song states that the "brightnesse of this night", in other words the masque, can replace the sun, which implies that fiction can supplant reality. Moreover, if night has become indistinguishable from day because of the light of the masque, time has become irrelevant. The paradoxical combination of this claim for the 'greater reality' of fiction, together with the ultimate evidence of the masque's mutability in that it does end at this point -- "And with a full song, the starre vanish'd, and the whole machine clos'd" (444-446) -- recalls both the literary sources of Oberon. Prince Arthur in Book I of The Faerie Queene relates his visitation by Gloriana:

But whether dreames delude, or true it were,
 Was neuer hart so rausht with delight,
 Ne liuing man like words did euer heare,
 As she to me deliuered all that night;

FQ I ix 14.5-8

The dream vision of the Faerie Queene is comparable to the 'dream-like' vision of the Fairy Prince, Oberon, and his palace. The audience is left in doubt as to whether the reality of day reveals the fiction's delusory nature, or whether it is true and eternal in a universal sense beyond the bounds of the transitory world. However, it is the last

scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream that enables us to perceive the full import of the paradox. King Oberon and his fairies have entered Theseus' palace as Prince Oberon with his faies have descended into James' court. While Shakespeare presents the audience with the actual presence of the mythic figures while making one of their kind deny their very existence -- "...you have but slumb'ed here/ While these visions did appear" V.i.414-415 -- Jonson reverses the process and reveals the masquers as real people in the light of day, and gives one a speech which proclaims the truth of their fictional world. Spenser, Shakespeare and Jonson present no resolutions to these ambiguities, but the lines above do imply the nature of a response: Prince Arthur regards his vision with "delight"; Puck fears that his audience might be "offended" (V.i.412); and Oberon's personifications of Morning and the Sun are "iealous". The essence, then, lies directly within the personal emotive reactions of the audience or reader to the fiction itself.

The only masques in which the full import of Spenser's Arthurian material can be seen are Barriers and Oberon. Both derive their symbolism, moral structure and theme of instruction of court and King from The Faerie Queene. However, while the earlier entertainment only indicates a brief concern with the relationship of fiction and reality, Oberon rises above the contemporary political and moral comments. In this way Jonson is able to create a masque equally as relevant to the twentieth century reader as to the seventeenth century court. By moving beyond the theme of moral instruction he, like Spenser, questions the very essence of Arthurian material. Both perceive it as a fiction and not as the mundane realities of histories or as the imitation of human flaws as in the romances -- it represents that form of art which is

so perfect and ideal that it transcends the normal barriers of reality and lays claim to a greater universal truth. Its ability to succeed, however, lies within the compass of the emotive response, and when the mystical, perfect Arthurian material ceased to "delight" it failed to make good its claim to truth. By the time Milton wrote Paradise Lost he could only perceive it as a delusory dream and no longer the greater reality he needed for the production of an epic fiction. However, before Spenser's Arthurian material was diminished in this manner, the Spenserian poets were to realize its potential and Michael Drayton in particular revitalized its perfect dream-like quality and was able to say of the Arthurian fiction:

But whether dreames delude, or true it were,
Was neuer hart so rausht with delight,
Ne liuing man like words did euer heare.

FQ I ix 14.5-7

1 Grundy, op.cit.
2 Ibid., pp. 31-33, 107 and 149
3 Ibid., pp. 107-142

Chapter Five

Spenser's influence on early seventeenth century poetry was such that a sizeable group of writers attempted to preserve his values, methods and themes in their own work. These poets are known as the 'Spenserians'. Their most notable characteristics have been analysed in detail by J.Grundy in The Spenserian Poets (1969)¹. In the study of that group of poets, I am therefore necessarily indebted to this standard work, especially with respect to the Spenserians' concern with literary tradition, nationalistic sentiments and mythology. However, there will be two major areas where I differ from Dr. Grundy: first, the thematic boundaries of this chapter are focussed exclusively on matters of Arthurian interest, about which J.Grundy is, of necessity, brief². Secondly, because of this single concern I am able to include in my analysis a greater number of those poets who were influenced by Spenser. However, like J.Grundy, I shall concentrate upon the works of the foremost Spenserian, Michael Drayton³. The intention of this chapter then is to trace and analyse the literary development of the Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene through the works of the Spenserian poets in the first half of the seventeenth century.

To structure this comparison clearly, I shall follow the pattern of Arthurian concerns as indicated by The Faerie Queene itself. In Spenser's letter to Raleigh there are three directions propounded: that the treatment of Arthur will be literary and not historical, that the purpose of the poem will be to 'fashion a gentleman', and that the Prince must therefore, be morally perfect. The poem then proceeds

1 Grundy, op.cit.

2 Ibid., pp.31-33, 107 and 149

3 Ibid., pp.107-142

to further these intentions by presenting Arthur as a Protestant redeemer and perfect Neoplatonic lover (Books I-III). In Books IV and V, however, Spenser attempts to relate Arthur more closely to contemporary political concerns and this results in both the aesthetic and moral distancing of the reader from the Prince. Nevertheless, the ensuing alienation of the reader from Arthur is reversed in Book VI, where many facets of a golden and perfect past are recovered. By following these aspects of Arthur's development in The Faerie Queene and by comparing them to similar material in the works of the Spenserians it will be possible to assess both their success in retaining Spenser's values, and also their ability to attain the redemptive qualities of Book VI where the golden Arthurian world is finally asserted. Consequently, Chapter V will be directed as follows:

- I : The literary tradition
- II : Arthurian material used to teach and 'fashion'
- III : Arthur as morally perfect
- IV : The Christian emphasis
- V : Neoplatonism
- VI : Contemporary political concerns
- VII : The golden world of the past
- VIII : The attempted revival and its success

I

In Spenser's prefatory letter to Raleigh, the distinction between a fictional and historical emphasis is clearly asserted:

For the methode of a Poet historical is not such,
as of an Historiographer.

This concern with a literary tradition was of great importance to the Spenserians also, as J.Grundy indicates:

They share his [Spenser's] sense of 'the great tradition', and are aware, with him, of the making of literature as a continuous process, in which one artist provides material for another.

4

The resulting stress upon the nature of Arthurian literary material can be seen in William Browne's Britannia's Pastorals (1614-1616)⁵. The complex plot of this long poem is based on the love relationships of nymphs and shepherds, which H.E.Cory suggests, is derived from "the tangled story of Florimel"⁶. In Book II Thetis listens to the songs (poetic works) of the British swains (poets):

Now Thetis stays to hear the shepherds tell
Where Arthur met his death, and Mordred fell:

II.4.219-220

The British bards add further material from the matter of Britain:

...to their sweet harps sung their famous Brute:
Striving in spite of all the mists of eld,
To have his story more authentic held.

Why should we envy them those wreaths of fame:
Being as proper to the Trojan name,
As are the dainty flowers which Flora spreads
Unto the spring in the discolour'd meads?

II.4.240-245

By linking the matter of Britain to classical mythology and by emphasising its value as fictive ornament, Browne clearly denies the need to assert the material's validity. Instead, Britannia's Pastorals follows Spenser's concern with the literary uses of the Arthurian material.

Analogously, Barnabe Barnes mentions Arthur briefly, "whilst some of Bryttish Arthures valure sing," (emphasis added), which again stresses

4 Ibid., p.42

5 Browne, op.cit. in The Poems of William Browne of Tavistock (1905), Vol.I pp.1-384 (Books I and II) and Vol.II pp.1-75 (Book III)

6 Cory, "The Golden Age of the Spenserian Pastoral," PMLA, 25 (1910), pp.241-267; p.243

his fictional heritage ⁷.

Edmund Waller is more immediately indebted to The Faerie Queene's Arthur, in his "In answer to One who writ against a fair lady" where he writes:

Hast thou not read of fairy Arthurs shield,
Which but disclos'd, amaz'd the weaker eyes
Of proudest foe, and won the doubtfull field?
So shall thy Rebell wit become her prize.
Should thy Iambecks swell into a book,
All were confuted with one Radiant look. ⁸

Waller's use of the Arthurian material in the context of a cavalier love poem is completely non-historical. Sir Francis Kynaston (1587-1642), the royalist and Spenserian poet, refers to Prince Arthur's shield in his romance poem Leoline and Sydanis, where Amanthis receives a magic ring from Leoline:

For in it was an admirable stone,
Whose colour (like the Carbuncle) was red,
By day, it with its native lustre shone,
And like the Sun-bright beames abroad did spread.
But that which greatest admiration bred;
It had a quality ne're seene before,
First to keep light, then after to restore.

v.230 ⁹

The ability of the stone to emit sun-like beams and light recalls Spenser's description of the diamond shield which "so exceeding shone .../ That Phoebus golden face it did attain" (I.vii.34.5-6). The use of Spenser's Arthurian material in romance and love poetry, conforms with both the Prince's search for Gloriana and the Medieval courtly tradition. Finally, even more general references to Arthur followed this same Spenserian trend, as can be seen in John Donne's love poem "The Relique" (1633) ¹⁰. P.D.Carleton argues that the line "A bracelet

⁷ Barnes, Parthenophil and Parthenophe (1593), p.40 Sonnet LX

⁸ Waller, The Workes of Edmond Waller (1645), p.18

Warren L.Chernaik, The Poetry of Limitation (1968), pp.183-184

⁹ Kynaston, op.cit. (1642), p.59

¹⁰ Donne, The Complete English Poems (1973), pp.75-76

of bright haire about the bone" refers to Holinshed's well known description of the opening of Arthur's and Guinevere's tomb in Glastonbury, where the queen's hair was said to be preserved and golden in colour ¹¹. The striking similarity of both the pictorial images and the romantic themes suggest that Donne utilized this Arthurian anecdote in his poem.

A more extensive utilization of Spenser's Arthurian material in a romance context, and therefore a literary one also, can be found in Robert Chester's Love's Martyr ¹². This poem follows Nature's journey to earth in order to encourage the Phoenix to mate and hence perpetuate beauty. Nature then travels with the Phoenix towards a love union with the Turtle Dove, passing on their flight notable places and country scenes. Interpolated into this journey is "The Birth, Life and Death of honourable Arthur King of Brittain" ¹³. There is a thematic link between the main plot of Love's Martyr and The Faerie Queene, for the Phoenix on one level represents Elizabeth I, and the Turtle Dove the Earl of Leicester, an identification which echoes Spenser's depiction of the love relationship between the Queen and her courtier ¹⁴. The role of the Arthurian piece within the central fiction has, however, been

11 Raphael Holinshed, The First and second volumes of Chronicles (1586), Book V ch.13 p.92

12 Robert Chester, Love's Martyr (1601), p.74; there are only two surviving editions of this work, one in California and the other in Washington. However, an identical copy, except for the title page -- The Anuals of great Britaine (1611) -- can be found in the British Library. I refer to The Anuals throughout. W.Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (1936), pp.301-302

Carleton, "John Donne's 'Bracelet of Bright Hair About the Bone'," MLN, LVI (1941), pp.366-368

12 Chester, op.cit.

13 Ibid., pp.34-77

14 W.H.Matchett, The Phoenix and the Turtle (1965), pp.134-186; p.150
F.Kermode, Renaissance Essays (1973), pp.194-195

consistently questioned by critics -- C.Brown for example writes that "it lacks all connexion with the allegory of the Phoenix and Turtle", and both E.Greenlaw and W.H.Matchett concur¹⁵. Nevertheless, the Arthurian interpolation cannot be dismissed so easily, for 'histories' were never random insertions in Renaissance allegorical poems, as can be seen from Book II canto x of The Faerie Queene. In addition, there are further similarities between Chester's work and Spenser's Arthurian material. In his prefatory letter "To the courteous Reader" Chester twice refers to Arthur as 'Prince' as well as the traditional 'King' and also utilizes the word 'Historiographer' which recalls Spenser's similar usage in his introductory letter¹⁶. The Arthur of Love's Martyr has to battle against "The King of Giants" as does Prince Arthur in The Faerie Queene (I.viii.5-24)¹⁷. Finally, Chester's description of Arthur's shield clearly recalls The Faerie Queene I.vii.29-36:

A rich wrought Shield and a most heavenly Armour,
That to the proud Foe strucke a deadly terrour. 18

Chester refers to Spenser's Arthurian material, because in the allegory of The Faerie Queene Arthur is Leicester and Gloriana Elizabeth I, which allowed Chester to emphasize his own romantic theme, to link the Queen and Earl. It is evident from Love's Martyr and other poems considered in this section that the Arthurian material used owes a great deal to Spenser and thereby follows a literary rather than a historical tradition.

15 C.Brown, Poems by Sir John Salusbury and Robert Chester (1914), p.lv

E.Greenlaw, Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory (1932), pp.37-39

Matchett, op.cit., pp.58-59

16 Chester, op.cit., pp.34-35

17 Ibid., p.67

18 Ibid., p.62

The Spenserian however, who dealt most seriously with the dichotomy of a fictional and a real Arthur was Michael Drayton. In the early work Idea : the Shepherd's Garland he appears to accept the tales of the Medieval tradition:

Come sit we downe under this Hawthorne tree.
The morrowes light shall lend us daie enough,
And tell a tale of Gawen or Sir Guy,
Of Robin Hood , or of good Clem a Clough,
4th Eglog 33-36 19

However, in the far more ambitious Poly-Olbion, Drayton follows Spenser more closely and is clearly aware of the historian's divided opinion on Arthur's validity²⁰. The content of the poem is described by its title:

POLY-OLBION.
or
A Chorographicall Description of Tracts, Riuers,
Mountaines, Forests, and other Parts of this renowned Isle
of Great Britaine,
With intermixture of the most Remarquable Stories, Antiquities,
Wonders,
Rarityes, Pleasures, and Commodities of
the same:
Vol.IV p.i

The title confers equal weight on the contrasting 'factual' values, such as "A Chorographical Description" and "Antiquities", and the 'fictional' ones, which are represented by "Remarquable Stories" and "Pleasures". This double allegiance in the title and throughout the poem has led critics to charge Drayton with confusion. O.Elton's claim that "there is no line between legend and fact" is supported by H.H.Child:

His real object is to preserve whatever history
or legend (both are of equal importance in his eyes,

19 Drayton, The Works of Michael Drayton (1931), Vol.I p.61

20 Ibid., Vol.IV

and he draws no clear distinction between the two) has recorded of great deeds, and great men. 21

These charges imply that the poem is a conglomeration of tales and descriptions, but this is not the case. Poly-Olbion is essentially a poetic work which creates a fictional structure and tone, and derives its imagery from mythology and literature; the Arthurian material utilized contributes to the overall literary allegiance of the work.

The structure of the poem is based superficially on the movements of the Muse about Britain, yet the information she gathers along her route fails to conform to either a chorographical or chronological order. This can be seen clearly in the Arthurian references, which commence in Song I where the Argument implies that we will hear of Brute, "Dert undertaketh to revive/ Our Brute, and sings his first arrive:" (I.Arg.11-12). However, the first allusion in Song I to the matter of Britain deals with Arthur:

...ever since her [Camell's] British Arthurs blood,
By Mordreds murtherous hand was mingled with her flood.
I 183-184

This reference is striking not only because it is unexpected but also because of the sudden presentation of Arthur's death, which should not precede Brute chronologically and which would be more suitable chorographically in the major Arthurian regions of Glastonbury and Wales rather than in Cornwall and Devon. The dramatic quality of Arthur's introduction creates a suspenseful atmosphere, which stimulates the reader into greater interest in the poem. Drayton uses a similar literary device in Song III where the Argument leads us to expect

21 O.Elton, Michael Drayton : A Critical Study (1905), p.116
H.H.Child, "Michael Drayton," Cambridge History of English Literature (1909), Vol.IV p.190
J.D.Merriman, The Flower of Kings (1973), pp.52-53

information about Arthur:

The Muse...
Through Marshes, Mines, and Mores doth toyle,
To Avalon to Arthurs Grave,
 III Arg. 9 and 14-15

Instead the reader is first told of Merlin, "But Traytor basely turn'd to Merlins skill doost flie" (III.55). This same undermining of expectation occurs in both Song IV and V, where the singing contest and the description of the birth of Merlin, respectively have delayed introductions. By presenting the Arthurian material in a dramatic order, Drayton reveals a clear preference for a fictional impact over and above historical validity.

The literary structure of Poly-Olbion is commented on at length by A.d'Haussey and also by J.Grundy who suggests that the Muse's travels and receptions are very similar to those of a monarch²². Indeed, the tales the Muse hears from the river and wood nymphs recall the triumphs and masques presented to Elizabeth I at the Kenilworth Festivities of 1575, where the Queen was met by a lady rising from the lake²³. This association suggests that Drayton's Muse is more than a chorographical device moving lineally about the regions; as an allegorical figure of a monarch and especially Elizabeth I she introduces the formal air of procession as well as a nostalgia for the past glory and golden aura of the Elizabethan age. Poly-Olbion denies the forward moving linear structure of history and chorography, and emphasises not only a poetic order but also a literary tone. This latter mythic feeling, which was suggested by the Muse is borne out by the general attitude in the

22 d'Haussey, Poly-olbion ou L'Angleterre Vue par un Élisabéthain (1972), pp.43-45

Grundy, op.cit., p.135

23 Kenilworth Festivities (1825), part i pp.10-11

poem to the Arthurian material. Drayton does not attempt a realistic documentation of events. Instead he endows Arthur with the powers of a mythic hero, who "Three hundred Saxons slew with his owne valiant hand" (IV.271); and the legend of Brute is treated equivalently:

Where Turon (of the rest) Brutes Sisters valiant sonne
 (By whose approved deeds that day was chiefly wonne)
 Sixe hundred slue out-right through his peculiar strength:
 I 459-461

Concluding the importance of the mythic element in Poly-Olbion, Drayton introduces the concept of metamorphosis into the legend of Sabrina, thereby recalling the similar well-known classical examples²⁴. The Severn --who is Sabrina -- tells the story of how the innocent girl and her mother were cast into the

...Flood, the whilst the Rocks aghast
 Resounded with your shriekes; till in a deadlie dreame
 Your courses were dissolv'd into that crystall streame,
 Your curles to curled waves, which plainlie still appeare
 The same in water now, that once in locks they were:
 VI 172-176

This addition to the tale of Sabrina, which was more commonly related as an example of a just punishment for adultery²⁵, shows Drayton's overwhelming intention to adapt every opportunity toward the assertion of a fictional bias in the poem.

The legend of Sabrina is an apt point for the insertion of the mythic process of metamorphosis, as the river and water sections of Poly-Olbion appear to appropriate the most important developments. For example, Arthur is continually associated with rivers (Camell : I.181-184; Test : II.233-236; Ochy : III.287-292; Wye : VI.259-341), but the most significant use of water imagery with regard to him is an almost direct simile:

²⁴ Ovid, Metamorphoses, v 412-480

²⁵ As for example: FQ II.x.17-19

As some soft-sliding Rill, which from a lesser head
 (Yet in his going forth, by many a Fountaine fed)
 Extends it selfe at length unto a goodly streame:
 So, almost through the world his fame flew from this Realme;
 III 401-404

The image implies that Arthur's fame has been adopted by many writers, and not merely by British ones, but its success lies in its close association with the poem as a whole. For as Britain itself is represented by the lady on the frontispiece, so one of the country's rivers is seen to be Arthur himself, an integral part of Poly-Olbion's allegory. Another essential use of a river image in conjunction with Arthur occurs in Song X (308-323). This complex piece, which illuminates Drayton's full appreciation of Spenser's Arthurian material will be examined in Section V of this Chapter.

Drayton is directly indebted to Spenser for his emphasis, not only on rivers -- The Faerie Queene IV.xi --but also on more particularly Arthurian concerns. In Song IV Arthur's armour is described:

The temper of his sword (the try'd Escalaboure)
 The bignes and the length of Rone, his noble Speare;
 With Pridwin his great Shield, and what the prooffe could beare;
 His Baudrick how adorn'd with stones of wondrous price,
 The sacred Virgins shape he bore for his device;
 IV 248-252

Although there is a general similarity with the Prince's accoutrements --sword, shield, spear and the Virgin Mary -- it is the bauldrick which provides, through its rare occurrence and jewelled decoration, the clearest link:

Athwart his brest a bauldrick braue he ware,
 That shynd, like twinkling stars, with stons most pretious rare.
FQ I vii 29.8-9

Similarly, Drayton echoes Spenser's oblique suggestion of a sexual relationship between Arthur and the Faerie Queene; the Prince dreams of Gloriana and on waking finds "nought but pressed gras, where she had lyen" (I.ix.15.2), whereas in Poly-Olbion Drayton relates of Arthur

The feasts that under-ground the Faërie did him make,
And there how he enjoyd the Lady of the Lake

IV 307-308

Another similarity is seen in Spenser's striking innovation of abruptly referring to Arthur's death, as soon as the reader encounters the Prince in Book I in a mere two lines:

But when he dyde, the Faerie Queene it [his armour] brought
To Faerie lond, where yet it may be seene, if sought.

FQ I vii 36.8-9

When referring to Arthur's death Drayton imitates Spenser's early positioning and remembrance of the King's demise and is equally succinct. In Song I of Poly-Olbion the river Camell has been

...frantick, ever since her British Arthurs blood,
By Mordreds murtherous hand was mingled with her flood

and she tells herself that

...time upon my waste committed hath such theft,
That it of Arthur heere scarce memorie hath left:

I 183-184 and 202-203

The impact of the revelation is the same in both The Faerie Queene and Poly-Olbion, but Drayton fails to attain the complexity of Spenser's meaning. While Prince Arthur in The Faerie Queene moves beyond his personal significance to comment upon the nature of fiction and reality (see above pp.45-47), Drayton's Arthur dies melodramatically and the only overtone is that of castigation of those who have forgotten the King. Finally, the descriptions of Merlin's entombment in both poems are strikingly alike. The closeness of the two texts at this point -- not noted in J.W.Hebel's standard edition of Drayton's works -- is gleaned from a juxtaposition of the relevant passages. In Poly-Olbion Merlin

...for Carmardens sake, would faine have brought to passe,
About it to have built a wall of solid Brasse:
And set his Fiends to work upon the mightie frame;
Some to the Anvile: some, that still inforc't the flame:
But whilst it was in hand, by loving of an Elfe
(For all his wondrous skill) was coosned by him selfe.
For, walking with his Fay, her to the Rocke hee brought,

In which hee oft before his Nigromancies wrought:
 And going in thereat his Magiques to have showne,
 Shee stopt the Caverns mouth with an enchanted stone:
 Whose cunning strongly crost, amaz'd whilst he did stand,
 Shee captive him convay'd unto the Fairie Land.

Then, how the laboring spirits, to Rocks by fetters bound,
 With bellows rumbling groanes, and hammers thundring sound,
 A fearefull horrid dinne still in the earth doe keepe,
 Their Master to awake, suppos'd by them to sleepe;
 As at their work how still the grieved spirits repine,
 Tormented in the Fire, and tyred at the Mine.

IV 331-348

Drayton unmistakably derived this directly from The Faerie Queene:

But standing high aloft, low lay thine eare,
 And there such ghastly noise of yron chaines,
 And brasen Caudrons thou shalt rombling heare,
 Which thousand sprights with long enduring paines
 Doe tosse, that it will stonne thy feeble braines,
 And oftentimes great grones, and grieuous stounds,
 When too huge toile and labour them constraines:
 And oftentimes loud strokes, and ringing sounds
 From vnder that deepe Rocke most horribly rebounds.

The cause some say is this: A litle while
 Before that Merlin dyde, he did intend,
 A brasen wall in compas to compile
 About Cairmardin, and did it commend
 Vnto these Sprights, to bring to perfect end.
 During which worke the Ladie of the Lake,
 Whom long he lou'd, for him in hast did send,
 Who thereby forst his workemen to forsake,
 Them bound till his returne, their labour not to slake.

In the meane time through that false Ladies traine,
 He was surprisd, and buried vnder beare,
 Ne euer to his worke returnd againe:
 Nath'lesse those feends may not their worke forbear,
 So greatly his commaundement they feare,
 But there doe toyle and trauell day and night,
 Vntill that brasen wall they vp doe reare:
 For Merlin had in Magicke more insight,
 Then euer him before or after liuing wight.

FQ III iii 9-11 26

Drayton's description of the magician and his fiends is equivalent to Spenser's except that the former creates a wholly 'black' enchanter and pursues this theme throughout the poem, whereas in The Faerie Queene Merlin's moral standing is ambiguous. For while Spenser's mage

26 Note also FQ II.vii.35-36

is in charge of fiends and therefore related to Satan, he also "had in Magicke more insight" which recalls his 'white' creation, the shield which destroys enchantments. Nevertheless, despite Drayton's often unsubtle utilization of Spenser's images, it is emphatically the case that like the other Spenserians he intended to follow the essentially literary tradition of Arthurian material.

It has already been suggested that the romantic Arthurian poetry of the early seventeenth century was indebted to the Medieval tradition as well as to Spenser. Drayton also utilized these earlier works. In Song III the knights of the Round Table are mentioned:

Like Camelot, what place, was ever yet renownd?
Where, as at Carlion, oft, hee kept the Table-round,
Most famous for the sports at Pentecost so long,
From whence all Knightlie deeds, and brave atchievements sprong.
III 397-400

The scene presented is more akin to Malory and Chretien de Troyes than to Geoffrey of Monmouth's History where the Pentecost feasts are depreciated; and B.H.Newdigate confirms that from

Morte D'Arthur and the other Arthurian romances
he [Drayton] drew the stories of King Arthur
and Merlin. 27

Indeed, as well as being closest to Spenser in the ways he used Arthurian material, Drayton was by far the most wide-ranging Spenserian. These encompassing perceptions enabled Drayton to be as acutely aware of Arthur's historical background as he was of his literary heritage; and although in the first part of Poly-Olbion he clearly favours the latter for his own tone of approach, the many historical and

27 Malory, Works (1977), p.177
Chretien de Troyes, Arthurian Romances (1975), p.270
Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain (1979), pp.225-232
B.H.Newdigate, Michael Drayton and His Circle (1941), pp.163-164

chorographical allegiances of the poem (including Selden's appended illustrations) made it imperative for him to deal with the former attitude also. Song VI balances the two concerns equally: the first part (129-178) tells the story of the Severn and her metamorphosis from the child Sabrina; the second part (259-341) consists of an angry tirade against all those who dismiss the Arthurian stories as untrue. As has already been seen, the tale of Sabrina relies mainly on mythology and literature, for she is associated either to Ovid's Arethusa or to Florimell, who

...out of her Christall eyne
Few trickling teares she softly forth let fall,
That like two Orient pearles...

FQ III vii 9.1-3 28

Spenser's image anticipates Drayton's description of Sabrina's "...spring of pittying teares...when, dropping liquid pearle" (VI.165). It should also be noted that the innocent and beautiful Florimell is saved and taken by Proteus to the bottom of the sea (FQ III.viii. 30-42), just as the innocent and beautiful Sabrina is saved and accepted by the waters of the river (PO VI. 174-178). Drayton successfully transforms this episode from the matter of Britain into a romantic and allegoric tale of innocence being saved, which Milton was to adopt later in Comus

²⁹ .The contrast between this attractive and delicate piece of poetry and the harangue of the second part of Song VI is considerable:

Of famous Arthur told'st, and where hee was interr'd;
In which, those retchlesse times had long and blindlie err'd,
And Ignorance had brought the world to such a pass
As now, which scarce beleeves that Arthur ever was...

28 Ovid, op.cit., v.412-440

For Drayton's use of Ovid c.f. note to Poly-Olbion Song VII 261

29 Milton, op.cit. 11.823-857. See above Chapter VII pp. 314-316

Heere then I cannot chuse but bitterlie exclaime
 Against those fooles that all Antiquitie defame,
 Because they have found out, some credulous Ages layd
 Slight fictions with the truth, whilst truth on rumor stayd;
 VI 269-272 and 275-278

Drayton later refers to those who doubt Arthur's historicity as "Soule blinded sots that creepe/ In durt," (303-304) and never wavers from the aggressive and self-righteous tone of the passage. Instead of encouraging belief in Arthur this attitude distances the reader from the poem through its disturbingly strong emotional tone. Drayton describes the fictionalizing in terms of prostitution: "to purchase her respect,/ With toyes then trimd her up, the drowsie world t'allure" (280-281), while in the very same song and throughout the poem he has simultaneously contributed to the "fictive ornament" (286) of the matter of Britain. Not only is the reader alienated, but he is also confused by the dichotomy presented in the two parts of Song VI. Although Drayton defines fiction and historicity clearly, his seeming belief in both presents a conflicting duality. It is not until Song X that this problem is once more broached in a different context -- it will be treated fully in Section VII of this Chapter. Nevertheless, despite the ambiguity of Song VI Drayton like other Spenserians was concerned primarily with the literary rather than the historical aspects of the Arthurian material.

II

In his letter to Raleigh Spenser writes that

The generall end therefore of all the booke is
 to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous
 and gentle discipline.

Towards this end he created as an example the figure of a perfect Arthur, which directly contradicted the previous views that the King was either tragically doomed by his adulterous conception or that the

romances in general encouraged a low moral standard of bawdry and violence³⁰. Sir William Cornwalllys and Henry Peacham both follow Spenser's approach by commenting on the usefulness of Arthurian literature. In providing moral encouragement, Cornwalllys (1579-1614), an essayist who was influenced by Montaigne, wrote in "Of the observation and use of things":

I was bound then [in his youth] to Arthur of
Brittaine and things of that price... yet I have found
good vse of them; they haue added to my experience.

This typifies the poet's colloquial and practical attitude, for while recognising contemporary aspersions on romance material, he also comments upon their worth³¹. In The Complete Gentleman Peacham meanwhile concludes that the valour of the ancient Britons came from the bards who "sung the life and acts of King Arthur"³². These judgements differ markedly from the hostile attitude taken in similar pre-The Faerie Queene works, such as The Scholemaster by Roger Ascham³³.

As one would expect, the Spenserian poets reflected this positive attitude towards the didactic potential of Arthurian literature. Michael Drayton displays this belief in the heroic poem Mortimeriados, where the hero, Mortimer, is said to resemble Arthur:

Worthy the Grand-chyld of so great a sier,
Brave Mortimer who liv'd whilst Long-shanks raign'd,
Our second Arthur, whom all times admire,
At Kenelworth the Table round ordayn'd,
And there in Armes, a hundreth Knights maintaind;
A hundreth gallant Ladies in his Court,
Whose stately presence royaliz'd this sport.

78-84
34

³⁰ See above Introduction pp.11-12 and Chapter I pp.26-27

³¹ Cornwalllys, Essayes by Sir William Cornwalllys the Younger (1946), p.51; note also Sidney, An Apology for Poetry (1965), p.114

³² Peacham, op.cit. (1962), p.93

³³ Ascham, English Works (1904), p.231 and see above Introduction pp.11-12

³⁴ Drayton, op.cit., Vol.I p.311. The Barons Warres, Drayton's reworking of Mortimeriados, differs a little in wording but not at all in content. Ibid., Vol.II p.15. Note also Vol.II p.169

The note appended to this verse explains that Drayton is here referring to Roger Mortimer, the grandfather of the main protagonist. The reader is therefore supplied with three ages of Arthurian greatness: Arthur himself; Roger Mortimer the "second Arthur"; and Roger Mortimer's grandson who is also like Arthur. The threefold pattern generates a paradigm intended to encourage the reader to search for more modern examples of Arthurian greatness. To the Elizabethan reader the references to Kenilworth and festivities would have suggested the Earl of Leicester in the role of the new Arthur³⁵. These multiple associations intimated in the poem not only praise Mortimer as well as the hero of Mortimeriados and Leicester, but they also direct the three of them and the contemporary reader of the poem to look back for a heroic example in Arthur.

Drayton's rather subtle application of Arthurian material to the process of 'fashioning' exposes by contrast the unrefined, exhaustive use of 'teaching by example' found in A Mirovr for Magistrates³⁶. At first Arthur did not figure in this regularly expanded work, but in 1610 Richard Niccols added the Arthurian "A Winter Night's Vision" which set out to provide "A perfect Mirroure of true Maiestie"³⁷. Despite the usual formula for A Mirovr for Magistrates, which depicted the inevitable fall of a hero through his own moral failure, Niccols is at pains to point out Arthur's exemplary qualities and even denies Arthur's adulterous conception:

The sonne I [Arthur] was of Uter that stout Knight,
Pendragon called for his policie
 Not in Ignoble birth brought forth to light,

35 Kenilworth, *op.cit.*

36 A Mirovr for Magistrates (1610)

37 Niccols, *op.cit.*, pp.549-584; p.562

Though foes false imputation vilifie:
 My royall birth with taint of bastardie:
 But in true wedlockes bands a noble Dame
 Bore me, the fruit of loue without defame. 38

Niccols' attitude reflects Spenser's influence and this is confirmed by further similarities with The Faerie Queene, as when a Lady comes in a dream to ask for Arthur's aid:

Behold, gouth she, behold me wretched wight,
 The forlorne Ladie of this noble Ile,
 From trowing state cast downe by foes despight,
 And of an Empresse, which I was ere while
 Of Saxon yoke now made a subject vile:
 What bootes it what I was, sith now I am
 The scorne of Fortune and the Britons shame?

(O noble Prince) vnsheath thy conquering blade
 And saue that little, which is left to mee,
 Left not for aye my antient glorie vade,
 Nor let me subiect liue, as thus you see,
 To pride of barbarous foes, but set me free.
 Thus ended she her plaint, and in sad plight
 With piteous lookes departed from my sight. 39

The general tone of Niccols' verse recalls the formal, courteous and romantic aspects of Spenser's writings. More particularly Arthur is referred to as "Prince" and the Lady who visits him is the allegoric figure of Britain. As such she is related through Elizabeth I -- a British not Saxon "Empresse" -- to the Faerie Queene. Compounding this identification, Gloriana visits Arthur in a dream vision, as the "Ladie of this noble Ile" visits Niccols' Arthur. However, the actual plea for help resembles that made to Arthur by the Lady Belge in Book V of The Faerie Queene, for she calls herself a "wretched woman, miserable wight," which relates to Niccols' "wretched wight"; also the Prince is moved by Belge's "piteous plight" and the King by the corresponding Lady's "sad plight" (FQ V.x.21.3 and 22.1). By aiding the Lady the Arthur of A Winter Night's Vision not only strengthens his

38 Ibid., p.564
 "Locrine" Ibid., pp.22-27, provides an example of a protagonist falling because of moral failure.

39 Ibid., p.566

imaginative link with Prince Arthur, but maintains the level of excellence needed for Niccols' Spenserian intention to teach by the example of perfection.

III

The implicit assumption shared by the two previous sections has been that Arthur is morally perfect. This perfection enabled the Prince to be the ideal example for imitation and 'fashioning'. In the letter to Raleigh Spenser claimed to

...labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a braue knight, perfected in the twelue priuate morall vertues.

A number of Spenserians upheld Arthur's "morall vertues", some of whom concentrated on the denial of his adulterous conception. In Love's Martyr Robert Chester, for example, writes that Guinevere "fully knew her innocencie" and she rejoices to find that Uther is the father of her child⁴⁰. Similarly, Thomas Heywood in The Life of Merlin writes that Arthur's "very begetting, conception and birth, carry with them the novelty of a Miracle". In A Winter Night's Vision Richard Niccols records Arthur's ghost as saying "...in true wedlockes bands a noble Dame/ Bore me, the fruit of loue without defame" and Martin Parker supports the assertion of Arthur's legitimate birth in his The Famous History of That Most Renowned Christian Worthy Arthvr King of the Britaines⁴¹. Analogously, Joseph Wybarne refers to Arthur's perfect virtue:

40 Chester, op.cit., p.45

41 Heywood, op.cit. (1641), p.43

Niccols, op.cit., p.564

Parker, op.cit. (1660), p.2 ; Martin Parker was a London ballad-monger and a royalist who alternated between a sentimental and humorist style.

Vertue according to the Stoickes, was diuided into Cathecon and Catorthoma, that is, into vertue meane and possible, or Vertue transcendent and heroycall, such as the Scriptures ascribe to Sampson, the Poets their Apes to Hercules, and our writers to Prince Arthur. 42

Other Spenserians such as Drayton, who has rightly been acclaimed as "the true inheritor of Spenser's heroic ideal", chose to affirm the heroic stature of Arthur. Even poets with a comparatively slender debt to Spenser praised Arthur's heroism, although in these instances the influence of the pro-Arthurian histories such as Leland's must be seen as a contributory factor⁴³.

In the first three sections of this chapter Spenser's intentions in The Faerie Queene as outlined in the letter to Raleigh have been set against uses of them by a number of poets who imitated the 'literary', 'fashioning' and 'moral' elements of his Arthurian proposal. But The Faerie Queene does not offer a neat, programmatic development of the suggested themes: in Books I-IV Arthur's role is identified with the respective and, in this case non-exclusive, Christian and Neoplatonic ideals. In Sections IV and V I intend to examine the Spenserians' ability both to follow the more specific manifestations of Arthur's moral perfection and their reaction to The Faerie Queene's purpose of unifying and relating diverse philosophies and doctrines.

42 Wybarne, The New Age of Old Names (1609), pp.23-24 and 72 ; there are no biographical details available on Wybarne.

43 Grundy, op.cit, p.108
Grundy, "Brave Translunary Things," MLR, LIX (1964), pp.501-510; p.504

For example: Sir Aston Cockayne, Poems (1662), pp.118-119
John Leland, Assertio Inclytissimi Arturii Regis Britanniae in Chinon of England (1925), pp.91-151

IV

When Prince Arthur agrees to help the Red Cross Knight in Book I of The Faerie Queene, Spenser interprets the allegory as follows:

Ay me, how many perils doe enfold
The righteous man, to make him daily fall?
Were not, that heauenly grace doth him vphold,
And stedfast truth acquite him out of all.

FQ I viii 1.1-4

The "heauenly grace" which will "vphold" Saint George refers to the Prince. To a certain extent Spenser adopts the traditional Christian values appertaining to Arthur in the romances, but rather than questing for the truth as in the Medieval texts, Prince Arthur has already attained that perfection⁴⁴. Both Thomas Heywood and Drayton comment on Arthur's Christianity, the former writing that "Hee was a great planter and supporter of Religion, and the Christian Faith", and the latter relating him through Glastonbury to "holy Josephs Grave"⁴⁵. Despite the Christian emphasis no direct derivation can be assumed from these brief comments. Nevertheless, Heywood and Drayton also stress Merlin's holy nature, which recalls Spenser's introduction of the magician as creator of the Prince's shield. The shield had the power to defeat "magicke arts" which inevitably suggests that Merlin must be aligned with the predominant Christianity of Book I. Heywood says of Merlin that he "was a professed Christian", which confirms the significance of Heywood's frontispiece showing Merlin in the clothes of a hermit and of the letter to the reader⁴⁶. Similarly, Owen Tudor in Drayton's

44 "The Quest of the Holy Grail" in Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances (1910-1913), Vols. III-VI

Malory, "The Tale of the Sankgreal," op.cit., pp.513-608

45 Heywood, op.cit., p.41

Drayton, PO. Song III. 307

46 Heywood, op.cit., n.pag. Frontispiece and letter to the reader

"Owen Tudor to Queene Katherine" writes in his letter,

By our great MERLIN was it not fore-told,
(Amongst his holy Prophetes enrol'd)

33-34

and in "Amour 19" of Ideas Mirrour Merlin's birth is prophecied with the same degree of emphasis as Christ's nativity⁴⁷. Like Heywood Drayton also relates the magician to a hermit by placing him in the usual habitat of a cell:

BORRILL, why sit'st thou musing in thy coate?
like dreaming Merlyn in his drowsie Cell

1-2 48

The conjunction in Heywood and Drayton of Arthur's and Merlin's holy natures confirms an overall debt to The Faerie Queene.

Robert Chester's similar insistence on Arthur's Christianity is more clearly derived from Book I of The Faerie Queene. As has already been noted, the Arthur of Love's Martyr bears a shield and fights a giant in a similar fashion to Spenser's Prince, and it is significant that both these aspects are essential to Arthur's role in the Book of Holiness. Further, Chester's hero travels to battle against Rome immediately after defeating the giant:

After this Conquest is King Arthur minded,
With all his royall power to march to Rome. 49

This exactly reflects the order in which Prince Arthur kills Orgoglio and then proceeds to defeat the symbols of Rome, Duessa and her beast at The Faerie Queene I.viii.25⁵⁰. Nevertheless Chester, like Drayton and Heywood, appears to be merely adapting Spenser's images without

47 Drayton, op.cit., Vol.II p.209 and Vol.I p.108

48 Ibid., Vol.I p.77; Idea the Shepherds Garland 7th Eglog
Similar positive references to Merlin can be found in Drayton's
Idea 8th Eglog. 63-64, Ibid., Vol.I p.86 and in Peirs Gaveston,
1265-1266, Ibid., Vol.I p.194

49 Chester, op.cit., p.67

50 Kermode, op.cit., pp.33-49

realizing their full implications. Whereas Spenser makes Arthur a perfect redeeming personification of heavenly grace, the Spenserians settled for a 'Christian hero'. Their attitude to Arthur as a Christian figure was overwhelmingly positive. Contrastingly, they were far more reticent towards the more complex and unusual idea of Arthur as a Neoplatonic lover.

V

In Chapter II Arthur's role as the perfect Neoplatonic lover of Gloriana was discussed fully. Although in two Books (II and III) of The Faerie Queene Spenser uses the Arthurian material mainly towards this end, very few of the Spenserians followed suit in their own poems. Robert Chester's Love's Martyr was published in 1601, while Elizabeth I was on the throne, which to some extent explains why he adopted Spenser's idea of an allegoric, perfect love union between the Queen and a courtier. But he does not use Neoplatonic doctrine in any way. Rather he draws on Arthurian material for its illustrative value to the romance element in the relationship⁵¹. After the Queen's death in 1603, it was perhaps the absence of a strong female figure which diverted the Spenserians from using a Neoplatonic allegoric formula which would have entailed male and female roles of equal importance. But Neoplatonic material does appear in post-Spenserian Arthurian literature, although only in relation to Merlin. In The Life of Merlin Thomas Heywood refers to the mother's account of how the prophet

51 See above pp.190-191

...was conceived by the compression of a fantastical spirittuall creature, without a bodie

and he continues:

Plato For Speusippus the sonne of Platoes sister, and
and Elearchus the Sophist, and Amaxilides in the second
Merlin book of his philosophie, affirme in the honour of
had Plato, that his mother Perictione having congression
fathers with the imaginary shadow of Apollo, conceived, and
alike. brought into the World him who proved to bee the Prince
of Philosophers. 52

Heywood makes no doctrinal judgement on the material. Such a positive attitude could plausibly be explained by reference to its publishing date -- 1641 -- for as K.Thomas argues in Religion and the Decline of Magic

the literature of the Civil War period suggests a disposition to welcome any type of prophetic utterance, regardless of the foundation upon which it purported to rest. 53

Neither Love's Martyr nor The Life of Merlin could reasonably be interpreted as followers of Spenser's Neoplatonic material. Not unexpectedly this leaves Michael Drayton as the sole Spenserian to utilize this doctrine. J.Grundy writes that "Drayton's views on poetry were founded on neo-Platonism", and both J.W.Bennett and B.C.Ewell support this claim⁵⁴. The introduction of Merlin's conception in Song V of Poly-Olbion appears to bear out Grundy's view. Drayton writes that Merlin

...of a British Nymph was gotten, whilst shee plaid

52 Heywood, op.cit., pp.2-3

53 Thomas, op.cit. (1978), p.486

54 Grundy, op.cit. (1964), passim; p.509

J.W.Bennett, "Britain Among the Fortunate Isles," SP, 53 (1956), pp.114-140; p.139

E.C.Ewell, "Drayton's Poly-Olbion: England's Body Immortalized," SP, 75 (1978), pp.297-315

With a seducing Spirit, which wonne the goodlie maid;
 (As all Demetia through, there was not found her peere)
 Who, be'ing so much renown'd for beautie farre and neere,
 Great Lords her liking sought, but still in vaine they prov'd:
 That Spirit (to her unknowne) this Virgin onelie lov'd;
 Which taking humane shape, of such perfection seemd,
 As (all her Suters scorn'd) shee onelie him esteem'd.
 Who, fayning for her sake that he was come from farre,
 And richlie could endow (a lustie Batcheler)
 On her that Prophet got,

V 163-173

The mock romanticising of this episode in the Merlin tradition is quite clear. Merlin's mother is described straightforwardly as "renown'd for beautie", a "goodlie maid" and a virgin⁵⁵. The Spirit however, merely appears to have the qualities of a gentleman from a courtly romance, for although he has "onelie lov'd" the lady, the suggestion that he pretends to be a foreign dignitary "for her sake" is made tongue in cheek. Finally, the mock-courteous element is compounded by the phrase "a lustie Batcheler" which Drayton derived from Chaucer's description of the Squire as "A lovyere and a lusty bachelor" in The Canterbury Tales⁵⁶. From this introduction it can justifiably be assumed that any Neoplatonic material related to the same incident would be of a positive, if humorous, nature.

Drayton's following comment on Merlin's conception provides the same startling ambiguity as was seen in Song VI:

But, of his fayned birth in sporting idlie thus,
 Suspect mee not, that I this dreamed Incubus
 By strange opinions should licentiouslie subsist;
 Or, selfe-conceited, play the humorous Platonist,
 Which boldlie dares affirme, that Spirits, themselves supply
 With bodies, to commix with fraile mortalitie,

V 175-180

- 55 Compare the treatment of the same episode in William Camden, Britannia (1610), pp.649-650
 John Selden's Illustrations in Drayton, op.cit., Vol.IV pp.107-108
- 56 Chaucer, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (1974), p.18
 This mocking tone is repeated by Drayton in Song V 159-160

After denouncing Neoplatonic sentiments, Drayton asserts that spirits are

...those immortalls long before the heaven, that fell,
Whose deprivation thence, determined their hell

and that their jealousy of man is such that they intend

...to seduce the spirit, oft prompt the frailer blood,
Invegling it with tastes of counterfitted good,
And teach it all the sleights the Soule that may excite
To yeeld up all her power unto the appetite.

V 185-186 and 191-194

The images of the fallen angels and the tempting of man by Satan recall the dilemmas of Faustus in Marlowe's play and, rather than imitating Spenser's treatment of Neoplatonism in The Faerie Queene they anticipate Milton's images in Paradise Lost ⁵⁷.

The explanation for this negative approach does not lie in the dismissal of Neoplatonism, for Neoplatonism was an important element in Drayton's poetry ⁵⁸. Similarly, it is difficult to accept in this instance B.C.Ewell's explanation of "discordia concors" because Drayton directly denies the efficacy of this doctrine in the same passage:

They Reason so will clothe, as well the mind can show,
That contrarie effects, from contraries may grow;

V 197-198 59

The answer to the ambiguities is provided by the lines which Drayton chooses to introduce a new subject:

But, toyld in these darke tracts with sundrie doubts repleat,
Calme shades, and cooler streames must quench this furious heat:

V 203-204

57 Marlowe, Doctor Faustus II.i. in The Complete Plays (1975), pp. 285-291

Milton, op.cit., I.34-74

58 Grundy, op.cit. (1964)

59 Ewell, op.cit., p.302

The "darke tracts" of "deepe Philosophy", that is the Neoplatonic doctrines, were for Drayton a cause of "sundrie doubts"; he sincerely questioned the theories of Neoplatonism and in Poly-Olbion did not reach a conclusion. The ambiguities we see in the treatment of Neoplatonic Arthurian material are manifestations of the genuine conflict in Drayton's mind which extends even to the introductory narrative where there is an element of parody in its romantic tone. The doubt present in Song V reveals that Drayton felt unable to accept the full Spenserian interpretation of Arthur and Merlin. Further, it reveals a more far reaching trend in seventeenth century poetry. It is significant that Drayton was alone in combining Arthurian matter with Neoplatonism and in perceiving that an even-handed poetic allegiance to many divergent ideologies was no longer acceptable. By 1667 John Milton had completely rejected any moral ideals present in the Arthurian material as used by Spenser, and had moved irrevocably towards a purely Christian doctrine. Drayton's dilemma provides a striking literary manifestation of a central point in the development from the universal moral attitude of The Faerie Queene to the radically different choice of a single faith in Paradise Lost ⁶⁰.

VI

After the refusal of the Spenserians to imitate the Neoplatonic element in The Faerie Queene, it may momentarily appear that the Arthurian material came to be neglected or rejected. This was not the case. Indeed, many poets followed the thematic concerns of Books IV and V where Arthur becomes more closely related to the contemporary world, and identified through the Netherlands campaign with Leicester and British imperialistic claims. The most common political statement made by

60 Milton, op.cit.

the Spenserians and related to Arthur was a nationalistic one. J.Grundy comments upon this:

they sought to put their country poetically on
a level with Greece and Rome and Italy. 61

R.F.Hardin reaches an identical conclusion about one of the underlying motives of Drayton's work alone:

the desire to place English poetry in competition
with that of the ancients and moderns of other
countries; to revere the past and praise the natural
beauty of England; to make clear to his English
readers their virtues as a people. 62

For the Spenserians, the praise of British heroes such as Arthur was inextricably linked to a similar eulogizing of those writers who glorified them. William Browne typifies this attitude in Britannia's Pastorals where he praises the British Worthies:

Whose deeds were sung by learned bards as high,
In raptures of immortal poesy,
As any nations, since the Grecian lads
Were famous made by Homer's Iliads: 63

Later in Song I Browne narrows the praise of poets to Spenser:

He sung th'heroic knights of fairyland
In lines so elegant, of such command,
That had the Thracian play'd but half so well,
He had not left Euridyce in hell. 64

The nationalistic competition clearly unites poets and heroes in its praise comparing them to their classical equivalents, especially Homer.

In the dedication to Prince Henry at the beginning of A Winter Night's Vision, Richard Niccols refers to himself in this manner:

Yet while your English Homer silent seeks
To consummate his great Moeonian song,

61 Grundy, op.cit. (1969), p.70

62 R.F.Hardin, Michael Drayton and the Passing of Elizabethan England (1973), p.9

63 Browne, op.cit., II.i.95-98, Vol.I p.191

64 Ibid., II.i.991-994, Vol.I p.225

Our Britan Princes, greater then the Greekes,
 To shew their deeds vnto your grace do throng.
 Our Arthur gainst Achilles we relie on, 65

Conversely, Drayton writes that the Arthurian material has never been enhanced by a poet as great as Homer:

For some abundant braine, & there had been a storie
 Beyond the Blind-mans might to have inhanc't our glorie. 66

However, Drayton alters this approach to the more expected conviction of Spenser's ability to rival Homer in "To Henry Reynolds of Poets & Poesie":

Grave morrall Spencer after these came on
 Then whom I am perswaded there was none
 Since the blind Bard his Iliads up did make,
 79-81 67

A more general praise of Spenser can be found in Sir Aston Cockayne's epigram "Of Edmond Spenser":

Who hath the Faery Queen so stately writ:
 Yield Grecian Poets to his Nobler Style;
 And ancient Rome submit unto our I'le. 68

Sir John Denham, on the other hand, assumes Arthur's equivalence with foreign historical heroes:

Whether to Caesar, Albanact, or Brute,
 The Brittish Arthur, or the Danish Knute. 69

Altogether it is clear that the spirit of nationalism was a common element amongst the Spenserians. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries this attitude had important political implications⁷⁰.

65 Niccols, *op.cit.*, n.pag., dedication ll.5-9

66 Drayton, *PO* III.407-408

67 *Ibid.*, Vol.III p.228

Note also Milton, *The Reason of Church Government* in Vol.I of *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton* (1953), pp.810-814

68 Cockayne, *op.cit.*, p.155 ; Sir Aston Cockayne (1608-1684) was a staunch Catholic and royalist. His many Stuart poems are valuable for their genealogical content rather than any literary merit.

69 Sir John Denham, "Cooper's Hill" ll.67-68 in *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham* (1928), p.67

70 Greenlaw, *op.cit.*, p.20

T.D.Kendrick, *British Antiquity* (1950), p.35

Spenser's most apparent political eulogy can be seen in his direct praise of Elizabeth I, for throughout The Faerie Queene he glorifies the Queen, as for example in the introduction to the British chronicle:

To decke my song withall, I would assay,
Thy name, O soueraine Queene, to blazon farre away.

Thy name, O soueraine Queene, thy realme and race,
From this renowned Prince deriued arre,

FQ II x 3.8-9 and 4.1-2 71

The use of Arthurian material in political poetry will be discussed in the next chapter. But such is Drayton's debt to Spenser, especially in Poly-Olbion, that its full implications would be lost by examining this section of his work elsewhere. Whereas Spenser could transpose Arthur's glory directly onto his supposed descendant -- the Tudor Elizabeth -- Drayton's genealogical tracings were to a certain extent more problematic due to the advent of a Scottish king. He manages to unite James to the Arthurian material through Merlin's 'prophecy' of the Tudor race and its co-mingling with the Stuart dynasty, which ultimately reunites the country in emulation of Brute:

Two famous Kingdoms seperate thus long,
Within one Iland, and that speake one tongue,
Since Brute first raigin'd (if men of Brute allow)
Never before united untill now,
What power, nor war could do, nor time expected,
Thy blessed birth hath happily effected.

137-142 72

While this mode of political praise was suitable for a panegyric dedicated to the King and for the occasional brief allusion, Drayton's poetic dependence upon identical material in Song V of Poly-Olbion is deeply problematical⁷³.

71 Similar praise can be seen at I.Proem.4; II.Proem.4; IV.Proem.4; V.Proem.11; VI.Proem.6.

72 Drayton, "To the Majestie of King James," in Vol.I op.cit., p. 474

73 Drayton, "Owen Tudor to Queene Katherine" 11.29-42, Ibid., Vol.II pp.208-209
PO II.149-160

In Song IV the Saxons and the Britons participate in a singing competition for the possession of the island of Lundy, and tell of their famous kings and heroes. The Welsh song includes accounts of Arthur and Merlin (245-348). In Song V the Severn river judges the competition and declares her ruling that "Lundy like ally'd to Wales and England is" (V.80). The reason for this decision is a prophetic vision, which recalls Merlin and which enables her to see the union of Britain under James I. The "Stewards" and "Tudors" will be united and their line

Suppressing every Plant, shall spread it selfe so wide,
As in his armes shall clip the Ile on every side.
By whom three sever'd Realmes in one shall firmlie stand,
As Britain-founding Brute first Monarchiz'd the Land:

V 65-68

The implicit reference to James I would have been as apparent to the majority of seventeenth century readers as it was to Selden who refers to "our mighty Sovereigne" in his Illustrations to these lines⁷⁴.

Considering that the competition has lasted for 557 lines, including the whole of Song IV, the Severn's political solution with its ingratiating overtones appears to be an anticlimax. Not only is Drayton's solution to the poetic duality he has created over-simplified, but it also distances the reader by its subservience to political demands. B.C. Ewell's suggested solution of discordia concors seems to be what Drayton intended, but the conflict is never seen in terms other than a recital of old tales and legends, and the final union fails even in its attempts to harmonize these adequately⁷⁵. Although Drayton and the other Spenserians had followed Spenser in using Arthurian material for

⁷⁴ Ibid., Vol.IV p.107

⁷⁵ Ewell, op.cit., pp.301-302

political purposes, by doing so they distanced the reader from the text. Significantly, it was the same political aspects of Book V of The Faerie Queene, where Arthur attains an unreal perfection, that alienated the reader from Spenser's Arthurian material. Spenser, however, was able to rise above the constraints he had created in Books IV and V. The more restricted views of the Spenserians appear to have denied them this redemptive alternative ⁷⁶.

VII

At the close of the previous section it was noted how, when faced with the problem of successfully relating Arthurian material to the contemporary world, both Spenser and Drayton failed through presenting the reader with over-simplified political analogues. In Book VI of The Faerie Queene, however, Spenser's Arthur transcends this ambiguity and is reintroduced into a world of fiction and a sense of pastoral redemption. Drayton is unable to accomplish this dramatic change. Like the other Spenserians he does not recreate a golden world and must be content to look back upon its existence with nostalgia ⁷⁷. Joseph Hall in Virgidemiarvm castigated modern degeneracy and praised the "time of Gold" to which he assigns Merlin; in two other satires he elevates Spenser as a great poet and Arthur for his modest tomb ⁷⁸. Hall's contemporary, William Browne also mourns for a golden age of poetry when Spenser was alive. This best informed criticism of this topic confirms the prevalence of a general nostalgic attitude amongst the Spenserians ⁷⁹. But it is in Drayton's work that this attitude can be seen most clearly. In Mortimeriados, Mortimer is at first related to Arthur

⁷⁶ Ralph Knevett, on the other hand, succeeds completely in uniting Arthur with contemporary political allegory in his poem A Supplement. See below Chapter VI pp. 258-261 and 283-285

⁷⁷ Jonson's masques use post-The Faerie Queene Arthurian material which does attain this perfection. See above Chapter IV pp. 154-185

⁷⁸ Hall, op.cit. (1597), pp. 11, 49-53 and 54-55

⁷⁹ Browne, op.cit., Vol. I pp. 224-226

Grundy, op.cit. (1969), pp. 72-73

and described in terms of heroic grandeur:

Our second Arthur, whom all times admire,
 At Kenelworth the Table round ordayn'd,
 And there in Armes, a hundreth Knights maintaind;
 80-82 80

However, as the poem develops Mortimer loses his innocence by participating in the civil war, and the Arthurian material is altered accordingly:

Behold the remnant of Troyes famous stocke,
 Laying on blowes as Smithes on Anviles strike,
 Grappling together in this fearfull shock,
 The like presse forth, t'incounter with the like,
 And then reculing to the push of pyke:
 Yet not a foote doth eyther give to eyther,
 Now one the ods, then both alike, then neither.
 407-413 81

The "remnant of Troyes famous stocke" are for Drayton the Britons and their heroes, the most important of whom is Arthur. But instead of being in the company of warriors and knights they are associated to black smiths, and their ineffectual blows are those of a hammer rather than a sword. The Barons Warres, Drayton's reworking of Mortimeriados, further underlines these mundane associations by adding to the list of weapons "the Speare, or Browne Bill, or the Pike", the traditional arms of the common soldier rather than of the knight⁸². In the development of his own poetic awareness Drayton introduces the theme of a golden Arthurian world moving inexorably further into the past. The civil war has destroyed the period in Mortimer's existence which can be related to the perfect Arthurian images and we can only look back on this era with nostalgia when faced with the lack of glory and ineffectualness of the poem's present.

80 Drayton, op.cit., Vol.I p.311

81 Ibid., p.320

82 Ibid., Vol.II p.36. Only the fifth line of the stanza changes.

Drayton's nostalgia for the past in Poly-Olbion is immediately obvious in the first song where the river Camell bemoans Arthur's "too untimelie death" (I.186) and the present "penurious age" (199). O.Elton accounts for such pessimism by noting that

into Drayton, English as he was, had sunk the Renaissance feeling of the wreck and destruction accomplished by Time upon beauty, and power, and noble visible monuments, and the glory of the great. 83

Drayton's nostalgia and his anger at the contemporary world are symptoms of his own ultimate failure to follow Spenser and to create a perfect, golden fictional world. Although, as we have seen, Poly-Olbion is based upon a literary structure and tone Drayton never surrenders fully to a fictionalized creation and thus loses the arguably greater depth and insight which this would have entailed. He is unable to align himself either with the literary or with the historical tradition of the Arthurian material. This conflict surfaces in Song VI where the reader is presented with the ambiguities of an equal preference for fiction and fact; in the doubts about the Neoplatonic material of Song V; and finally in the reliance upon contemporary political concerns for the resolution of the song competition in songs IV and V. But Drayton was not unaware of the dualities in Poly-Olbion with regard to the Arthurian material and in Song X he chose to address them .

The explanation is given to the river Dee (186-330) which is appropriate in that he is a northern male river concluding the Muse's tour of Wales (the centre, as Drayton sees it of the Arthurian material)

83 Elton, op.cit., p.110
Hardin, op.cit., p.9

and so balances the southern female river Severn who heralds the entrance of the Muse into the country. The conflicts discussed all follow the Severn's introduction and two are directly related to her -- she judges the song competition and in the form of Sabrina represents the fictionalized part of Song VI. The Dee, however, is given equal weight by Drayton, for he also separates England and Wales, has the power of prophecy -- "...the future ill, or good,/ Of either Country told" (206-207) --, and is referred to as "hallowed" and holy (215 and 200). The Dee argues for the validity of the legends that the Severn (who as Sabrina is herself a literary figure) has introduced, and so to a certain extent they further their opposing roles by appearing to champion reality and myth respectively. The argument for the historicity of the matter of Britain is reasoned, calm and plausible. The Dee points out that the British bards and druids "[t]o letters never would their mysteries commit" (267), and compares their memorized lore with the work of Moses and with the Bible, which were considered in the seventeenth century to be irrefutable truth. The Dee logically argues:

For though Time well may prove that often shee[Tradition] doth lie,
Posteritie by her yet many things hath known,
That ere men learn'd to write, could no way have been shown:
280-282

Continuing in the same reasonable tone, the river then directs the reader's consideration to Caesar's derogatory comments on the British already discussed by Drayton in Song VI. The Dee suggests that there is a flaw in the Roman argument, for the conquerors endured severe battles before overcoming the native Britains:

I faine would understand how this that Nation was
So ignorant hee would make, and yet so knowing warre.
306-307

If Song X finished at this point we would need to draw a threefold

conclusion: that Drayton embarks on his Arthurian material with a strong allegiance to its literary tradition; that the work's progress released the conflicts attendant on the factual elements in Poly-Olbion and which are acted out in the Muse's travels through Wales; and finally that he concludes with the Dee's statement of allegiance to both historicity and fact. But such an anticipation is challenged by the extended simile which ends Song X:

But, in things past so long (for all the world) we are
 Like to a man embarqu't, and travelling the Deepe:
 Who sayling by some hill, or promontory steepe
 Which juts into the Sea, with an amazed eye
 Beholds the Cleeves thrust up into the lofty skie.
 And th'more that hee doth looke, the more it drawes his sight;
 Now at the craggy front, then at the wondrous weight:
 But, from the passed shore still as the swelling saile
 (Thrust forward by the wind) the floating Barque doth haile,
 The mightie Giant-heape, so lesse and lesser still
 Appeareth to the eye, untill the monstrous hill
 At length shewes like a cloud; and further beeing cast,
 Is out of kenning quite: So, of the Ages past;
 Those things that in their Age much to be wondred were
 Still as wing-footed Time them farther off doth beare,
 Doe lessen every howre.

X 308-323

The structure of these lines and particularly the linear forward movement of man and boat -- compounded by the use of perspective -- initially seems to bear out the earlier claim to historicity. But it must be remembered that a river speaks these lines, that water imagery is very important in Poly-Olbion, and that every river becomes a character in the poem and so an essential part of the literary structure. In addition, the 'man' remains moving in the artificial boat, while the natural element of the water is constantly present in equal force about him and about the rock which he views. Thus we are confronted with the paradoxical presentation of the fictionalized Dee using a literary device -- the extended simile -- to explain man's linear and factual perception of reality. Concluding these varying levels of ambiguity, the rock which represents the Arthurian material is a natural element

like the water, and so is associated simultaneously to fiction and, through the Dee's previous arguments, to historicity. Drayton's belief in the powers of art and his continual movement towards it and away from factual accounts cannot be doubted. Indeed the same sort of image can be found in Song XX, where Drayton becomes completely involved in "Neptune's Feast" forgetting the historical and geographical descriptions of Norfolk and Suffolk ⁸⁴. But Drayton was also fascinated by the factual elements of his poem and saw them as equally important to the British heritage. Consequently he never resolved the conflict, despite attempts to unify the two (Song V) or to elevate one element above the other (Song X).

This double allegiance was not an aspect of Drayton's work alone, but more importantly a stage in the development of a seventeenth century mode of thought. For Spenser, fiction, reality, past and present were all equal and unifiable, such as in the love of Arthur for the Faerie Queene. For Drayton this all-embracing plane of awareness was desired and believed in, but never fully attained. A desire for a consequential and linear approach led to the growth of a directional rather than a centrifugal poetic mode ⁸⁵. Thus Spenser's Arthurian material, because it was essentially of the past and had achieved primacy in a different literary period, was unusable in the progressive movement utilized by the mid and late seventeenth century writers. A similar development has already been noted at the close of section IV where the narrowing of moral perceptions in the same period was discussed. As with the doubt over Neoplatonism, Drayton's conflict of attitude towards a completely perfect, golden world of fiction is a manifestation of the point of

⁸⁴ Drayton, *op.cit.*, Vol.IV pp.409-416

⁸⁵ Isabel Rivers, Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry (1979), pp.58-60

balance between Spenser's The Faerie Queene and Milton's The History of Britain. That it was Michael Drayton's work that embodied this development, of which the other Spenserians remained ignorant, remains a tribute not only to his poetic awareness, but to his ability to express the ambiguities he perceived.

VIII

Although Drayton was aware of the problems of using Arthurian material, he was to a great extent alone in his realization. The most unsophisticated attempt to revive the Arthurian romances in a popular form is Richard Johnson's Tom a Lincolne⁸⁶. Parts of the tale are reminiscent of Spenser's The Faerie Queene, such as Tom's (Arthur's illegitimate son) title of "Red Rose Knight" which recalls the Tudor rose and so Elizabeth I's association to Arthur through the figure of Gloriana⁸⁷. Tom also falls in love with a fairy queen as the title to Chapter III explains:

How the Red-ROSE Knight trauelled from
the King of Englands Court, and how he arriued
in the Fayerie-land, where he was entertained
by a Mayden Queene, and what
happened to him in the same Country. 88

Although Tom's association to Arthur together with these references to a fairy queen creates a link with The Faerie Queene, Johnson's Arthur could hardly be more different from Spenser's Prince. Indeed, Tom's conception is a result of the adulterous union between Arthur and Angellica, a nun, and Arthur is never condemned for his moral laxness, but dies contentedly after confessing his sins⁸⁹. There is no moral structure in the work, and the racy, fast moving narrative is clearly designed to entertain on a superficial level. Although the romance

86 Johnson, op.cit. (1978)

87 Especially The Faerie Queene II.viii.39.1-2

88 Johnson, op.cit., p.21

89 Ibid., pp.9 and 59-61

was popular -- there were seven editions of it by 1635 --in comparison to The Faerie Queene and Spenserian works such as Britannia's Pastorals and Poly-Olbion, it appears flat and almost meaningless⁹⁰.

Similar works using Arthurian material superficially include John Taylor's praise of Arthur's heroic qualities and greatness in Wanderings to see the Wonders of the West, A Memorial of all the English Monarchs and The Number and Names of all the Kings of England and Scotland⁹¹. A characteristic example of the Water Poet's doggerel verse is afforded by the second of these works:

Of the nine Worthies was this Worthy one,
Denmarke and Norway, did obey his Throne:
 In twelue set Battels he the Saxons beate,
 Great, and to make his Victories more great,
 The Faithlesse Sarazens he ouercame,
 And made them Honour high Iehouah's Name.
 The Noble order of the Table round,
 At Winchester, his first inuention found. 92

John Cleveland also praises Arthur on a simplistic level in "Upon Sir Thomas Martin" by comparing the knight with a "Voider to King Arthurs Table", and a similar reference can be found in Sir Kenelm Digby's letter to Edward Lord Conway⁹³. Not only was the Arthurian material treated lightly and superficially, it was also used to make comic statements. John Taylor's work can be cited in this context, for in his mock romance The Great O Toole he asks of his hero "matcht with thee

90 R.F.Brinkley, Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century (1932), p.98

91 Taylor, Wanderings and The Number and Names in The Works of John Taylor the Water Poet not included in the folio volume of 1630 (1870), separate pagination.

A Memorial (1622)

92 A Memorial op.cit., pp.D3 v.-D4 r.

93 Cleveland, The Poems of John Cleveland (1967), p.53 l.16
 Digby, Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series, Charles I 1636-1637, p.379

what was our Britain Arthur?", and a similar attitude is found in his The Travels of Twelve-pence and A Short Relation of a Long Journey ⁹⁴. Richard Corbet and Samuel Rowlands may be added to those poets who used Arthur irreverently although not antagonistically -- Corbet for example complains that he was stopped by the guard "in their new Coates" even though he could sing "Chevy, and Arthur, and the Seige of Gaunt" ⁹⁵.

The seventeenth century drama used Arthurian material almost exclusively in a burlesque fashion, an example of which may be seen in William Rowley's The Birth of Merlin ⁹⁶. R.F.Brinkley comments in Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century:

Though Rowley in The Birth of Merlin burlesques the mystic birth of the seer in representing the mother and uncle as ridiculous peasants and the father as a cloven-hoofed demon, he depicts Merlin himself as a serious child engrossed in books and gives him a splendid dignity. ⁹⁷

To elevate Merlin in this fashion is to misread his role not only as a character in the drama, but also his increasing identification with Satan and irreligion. Although Merlin does bridge the sub and main plots of Rowley's play, his association with the court does not supersede his comic role. His burlesque function is expressed most fully in his interchanges with the Clown:

94 Taylor, The Great O Toole in All the Workes of Iohn Taylor The Water Poet (1630), pp.15-19; p.17
The Travels in The Works of John Taylor the Water-Poet (1869), p.65

A Short Relation, op.cit. (1870), p.18

95 Corbet, "To the Lord Mordant upon his returne from the North" 129-138, in The Poems of Richard Corbet (1955), p.28
Rowlands, The Melancholy Knight in The Complete Works of Samuel Rowlands (1880), Vol.II pp.2-3

96 Rowley, op.cit., in The Shakespeare Apocrypha (1908), pp.349-382

97 Brinkley, op.cit., p.93

- Clown. Ha, ha, I'de laugh at that, yfaith. Do you know me, sir?
- Merlin. Yes, by the same token that even now you kist the swinherds-wife i'th'woods, and would have done more, if she would have let you, Uncle.
- Clown. A witch, a witch, a witch, sister: rid him out of your company, he is either a witch or conjurer; he could never have known this else. 98

In addition to the comic sexual innuendos, a subliminal sense of mysticism attaches to Merlin, which induces the Clown to call him a witch. This morally ambiguous aspect of Merlin's character persists, despite the later rejection of his father the devil. The coupling of a comic tone with the idea of the devil, who, disguised as a 'gentleman', begets Merlin, is almost certainly derived from Drayton's description of the tale in Poly-Olbion, where the spirit pretends "that he was come from farre,/ And richlie could endow (a lustie Batcheler)"⁹⁹. This corresponds to June's description of the 'gentleman' who fathers Merlin. But Rowley merely hints at the ambiguity which was so important to Drayton, and concentrates fully upon the burlesque possibilities of the situation. The movement towards a more comic approach is echoed in William Davenant's masque Britannia Triumphans, which also parodies Arthurian romance; and it is likely that Richard Hathway's lost play, Arthur, King of England also incorporated burlesque elements¹⁰⁰.

The outstanding writer to utilize Arthurian material in a humorous manner is Shakespeare who confines his references to primarily comic characters. Falstaff is associated to the matter of Britain and the romances no less than three times: first when he sings "'When Arthur

98 Rowley, op.cit., III.iv.38-47, p.369

99 PO V.171-172

See above pp.210-213

100 Davenant, op.cit. (1637). For a discussion of the masque see above Chapter IV pp.147-149

For Hathway's lost play see, A.Harbage, Annals of English Drama 975-1700 (1964), pp.66-67

first in court' -- Empty the jordan 'And was a worthy king'" (Henry IV part ii II.iv.33-34); secondly when he parodies the romance Amadis, Knight of the Burning Sword by referring to Bardolph as "the Knight of the Burning Lamp" (Henry IV part i III.iii.25-27); and finally, when the Hostess relates his death and replaces 'Abraham' with 'Arthur':

Nay, sure, he's not in hell: he's in Arthur's
bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom.

Henry V ii iii 9-10

It is significant that Shakespeare chose Falstaff as the character to be associated more strongly with the Arthurian material than any other, for he adopts the same humorous and indulgent tone to both. The roles of Arthur are seen to be as fantastic as Sir John's exploits and yet both are accepted for the comic pleasure they provide. So that when the Hostess says the old knight is in "Arthur's bosom" she is not entirely in error, for as Hal rejects Falstaff, so the chivalric fiction becomes unnecessary when compared to the historical battles of Henry V.

Henry IV provides two other Arthurian references: in part ii where Justice Shallow relates how he took part in "Arthur's show", and in part i where Hotspur becomes impatient of Glendower's talk of "the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies" (Henry IV part ii III.ii.275-276 and Henry IV part i III.i.150). Even though Justice Shallow's reference to Arthur is positive in tenor -- as is the later reference to Camelot made by Kent in King Lear II. ii.78-79 -- Shakespeare's overall use of Merlin is more ambiguous. Hotspur's comment is not altogether in jest. If the play is sympathetic towards Glendower, the character nevertheless wrongly believes in his enchantments, which participate in the play's several dualities -- in this case the difference between Hotspur and the mystic Welshman. The most important reference to Merlin, however, is in King Lear, where the Fool concludes his prophecy with:

This prophecy Merlin shall make, for I live
before his time

King Lear III ii 95-96

By referring to Merlin's future existence the Fool both parodies the idea of prophesying by foretelling the prophet, and also places himself outside the fiction by his awareness of Merlin and his own parodic comment. The Fool is thus able to mock the supposed seriousness of meaning and create, through his roles both within and without the play, an ambiguity as to what is fiction and what reality. The differing treatments of Arthur and Merlin by Shakespeare anticipate the more serious antagonism towards the enchanter when criticism against his non-Christian characteristics became paramount -- an attitude which was finally expanded to include Arthur as well.

The failure of the Spenserians to revive a perfect Arthurian world had led to banal praise and sympathetic burlesque, and these in turn were followed by an actively hostile attitude towards the Arthurian material. E.Greenlaw has explained this in terms of a reaction against the obvious lack of historical validity in the tales, an attitude which is supported by R.F.Brinkley and R.S.Crane¹⁰¹. Their argument is verified by several contemporary seventeenth century writers, such as Sir Francis Bacon who writes in his essay "Of Dignity":

...it will not be wrong to say that it is as far
differing in truth of nature from such a knowledge as we
require, as the story of King Arthur of Britain,
or Hugh of Bordeaux, and such like imaginary heroes.¹⁰²

101 Greenlaw, op.cit., Chapter I passim
Brinkley, op.cit., p.26

Crane, The Vogue of Medieval Chivalric Romance (1919), p.18

102 Bacon, op.cit., in The Works of Francis Bacon (1857-1858), Vol.IV
p.367; note also Vol.III p.234

Similarly, Sir John Beaumont (1583?-1627), the elder brother of Francis Beaumont, and Thomas Randolph (1605-1635), a follower of Ben Jonson, directed their criticism against Merlin, of whom Randolph comments:

Or will the Welchman give me leave to say
 There is no faith in Merlin? none, though they
 Dare sweare each letter creed, and pawne their blood
 He prophecied, an age before the flood
 Of holy Dee; which was, as some have said,
 Ten generations ere the Arke was made.
 All your predictions but Impostures are,
 And you but prophecy of things that were. 103

Despite the obvious importance of the controversy over Arthur's historicity this approach fails to take into account the positive insistence of both Spenser and of many Spenserians upon Arthur's literary function. It also ignores the large group of seventeenth century writers who did not object to the Arthurian material's non-historicity, but to its lack of Christianity. Initially, it would appear that a body of literature which depends as greatly on Christianity as do the Arthurian Medieval romances and Book I of The Faerie Queene could not possibly be castigated for its religious and moral ideologies. It is Merlin who attracts the greatest condemnation. As we have already seen, both Drayton and Rowley link the magician with the devil, and similar associations are made by Samuel Daniel, William Perkins, Samuel Rowlands and Samuel Sheppard¹⁰⁴. But some of this hostile critique is reflected on Arthur

103 Beaumont, "Bosworth Field" in The Poems of Sir John Beaumont (1869), p.35

Randolph, The Poems of Thomas Randolph (1929), p.68

104 Drayton, PO IV.329-348 and V.175-202

Rowley, op.cit., passim, but especially Act III scene i

Samuel Daniel, Mvsophilvs 331-372, in The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel (1885), Vol.I pp.236-237

William Perkins, "A Friutfull Dialogve" in The Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ In the Universitie of Cambridge (1631), Vol.III p.467

Rowlands, op.cit., Vol.II p.20

Samuel Sheppard, The Faerie King, Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet 28., II.v.14-16, fol.22 v. See above Chapter IV pp.144-147

as well. Henry Crosse writes that the consequence of the Arthurian tales is

that the floud-gates of all impietie are drawne
vp, to bring a vniuersall deluge ouer all holy
and godly conuersation. 105

Similarly, Pierre de La Primaudaye suggests that Arthurian tales were written "to mainteine Popery in the dayes of ignorance"¹⁰⁶. There is a direct conflict between Spenser's Arthur who is a morally perfect representation of heavenly grace, and an Arthur who is banal, comic or impious. Furthermore, Spenser's Merlin who is the maker of the shield which destroys enchantments contrasts strongly with the Merlin who is allegedly the son of Satan.

The examination of the Spenserians and their work has enabled us to understand how two conflicting attitudes on Arthurian material could exist in a comparatively short space of time¹⁰⁷. As these poets attempted to transpose Spenser's ideas into their own works, they inevitably encountered difficulties. The analysis of these problems, especially in Drayton the most articulate and interesting of the Spenserians, illuminates a widely spread ideological development. At first the Spenserians found the imitation of a literary, perfect and Christian Arthur a comparatively easy task to accomplish. But the ambiguities of their attempts at preservation soon became apparent, particularly in Drayton's work. The ability of Spenser to create an all-encompassing cyclical unity of fiction and fact, past and present, Neoplatonism and Christianity, eluded Drayton, partly because the seventeenth century was developing a more exclusive mode of thought. As we saw, a tendency

105 Crosse, Vertves Common-wealth (1603), p.02 r.

106 La Primaudaye, The French Academie, II "The Epistle to the Reader" (1594), n.pag.

La Primaudaye was a sixteenth century French author of moral philosophical discourses.

107 1593 (Barnes, op.cit.) to 1662 (Cockayne, op.cit.)

emerged towards a linear, consequential approach which was coupled with a narrowing of doctrine so that only Protestant Christianity came to represent the moral perfection of truth and "heavenly grace". The attempt to reconcile Spenser's ideals with those of the contemporary society led to a vast ideological divergence on Arthur, epitomized in Poly-Olbion. Paradoxically, if The Faerie Queene with its moral elevation of Arthur had never been written, there would have been neither the strong support for, nor the harsh antagonism against, the Arthurian material. Without this stimulus however, the works of the Spenserians, particularly that of Drayton, would have lost an ideal, even if unattainable. They would also have failed to achieve the complexity born of the necessary ambiguities. The resolution of these conflicts was accomplished finally by the last and most radical of the Spenserians, John Milton.

... More particularly, the influence of Arthur in the works of Spenser is seen in Book II and Spenser's poetry in Book I, II and III. The Queen's right to the throne by creating her actual, mythical and universal authority. Finally, Arthur plays a major role in the political allegory of Book V. By examining the effect of these three aspects of Arthur's political significance on seventeenth century panegyric verse, it will be possible to attain a more complete view of the influence of The Faerie Queene on Arthurian literature and to provide a historical unbroken conceptual link between Spenser's poem and Dryden's opera, King Arthur.

The first political poem to utilize Arthurian material after

¹ The Faerie Queene II. Epoc, III. Epoc, IV. Epoc 4-5

² For an analysis of King Arthur see below Chapter III pp. 125-140

Chapter Six

The concept of Arthur as a figure of supreme moral perfection which originated with Spenser initiated the major development in seventeenth century Arthurian literary tradition. In the previous two chapters we examined how the masques, especially those by Jonson, modified the ideal but remained true to the moral theme, and how the Spenserians retained the idea of perfection but never fully realized its mystic conclusion. However, in addition to the moral tradition Spenser introduced into his Arthurian material a complex and closely structured form of political allegory, and it is this alternative aspect of his influence that I intend to consider in Chapter V. Although Arthur functions mostly on a moral level, The Faerie Queene undoubtedly contains a great deal of political allegory in which the Prince is involved. First, Elizabeth I is continuously praised through both Arthur and Gloriana in a general panegyric manner ¹. More particularly, the histories read by Arthur and Guyon in Book II and Merlin's prophecy in Book III assert the Queen's right to the throne by tracing her actual, mythic and universal ancestry. Finally, Arthur plays a major role in the political allegory of Book V. By examining the effect of these three aspects of Arthur's political significance on seventeenth century panegyric verse, it will be possible to attain a more complete view of the influence of The Faerie Queene on Arthurian literature and to provide a hitherto unnoticed conceptual link between Spenser's poem and Dryden's opera, King Arthur ².

The first political poems to utilize Arthurian material after

1 The Faerie Queene II. Proem; III. Proem; IV. Proem 4-5

2 For an analysis of King Arthur see below Chapter VII pp. 327-340

the publication of The Faerie Queene were those written to celebrate the accession of James I to the British throne in 1603³. References to Arthur in panegyric verse had been common throughout the sixteenth century, as we noted in the Introduction. But this Tudor tradition had concentrated solely upon the historicity of the romance king. In the verses of 1603, despite the essentially uninventive and conservative nature of political poetry, this historical concern faded into the background and the Arthurian story gradually took on symbolic meanings. However, the symbolic readings were a comparatively minor development, especially when compared to the major successor of Spenser's political allegory, Ralph Knevett's A Supplement of the Faery Queene. Wherein are allegorically described Affaires both military and ciuill of these times (1635) (passim: A Supplement)⁴.

In view of Knevett's central importance to the argument of this chapter some preliminary explanations concerning A Supplement are necessary. Ralph Knevett (1601/2-1671/2), a Cambridge graduate, who was attached in a clerical capacity to the Paston household from 1628 until 1637, wrote five extant works: Stratitikon, or a Discourse of Militarie Discipline (1628), Rhodon and Iris (1631), A Supplement (1635), and

³ William Harbert, A Prophetie of Cadwallader (1604), The Poems (1870), pp.177-257
 Henry Chettle, "England's Mourning Garment" (1603), The Harleian Miscellany (1809), Vol.III pp.524-546
 William Alexander, The Monarchike Tragedies (1604), The Poetical Works (1921), Vol.I pp.3-442
 Michael Drayton, "To the Majestie of King James" (1603), Works (1931), Vol.I pp.469-477
 John Davies of Hereford, Microcosmos (1603), The Complete Works (1878), Vol.I, no continuous pagination
 R.F.Brinkley, Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century (1932), p.11

⁴ Knevett, op.cit., MS. Ee 3 53, Cambridge University Library and An Edition of Ralph Knevett's Supplement of the Faery Queene (1955), by Andrew Lavender. See below footnote 8

Funerall Elegies (1637)⁵. A Supplement is Knevett's only Arthurian work and was intended as a completion of Spenser's plan set out in the letter to Raleigh, although he, like Spenser, never reached the end of the task he set himself⁶. The poem conforms to the structure of moral allegory in The Faerie Queene, but the Arthurian material is almost entirely political and, as Knevett's own subtitle promises, this is the general trend of the whole work. A Supplement was never published because of the political dangers incurred by those writers whose works appeared to evince royalist sympathies. Consequently, the poem is only to be found in the original manuscript in The Cambridge University Library⁷.

A Supplement was first investigated by C.B. Millican, who intended to produce an edition of the poem. However, the project remained untouched until Andrew Lavender, utilizing some of Millican's notes, submitted an edition as a doctoral dissertation⁸. Although Lavender's thesis meticulously deciphers the manuscript and offers a good analysis of the references to contemporary political events, it makes few literary comments and often fails to locate analogues and sources even

5 Stratitikon in The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevett (1966), edited by A.M. Charles, pp.85-153; Rhodon and Iris, Ibid., pp.167-247; A Gallery to the Temple, Ibid., pp.275-396; and Funerall Elegies, Ibid., pp.249-273

6 "Three other morall Vertues remaine to bee discoursed of (to make this Zodiacke perfect) which if God shall give me leave to finish, I shall yet forbear to write," The Preface to A Supplement, ll.195-197

7 MS Ee 3 53

Brinkley, op.cit., pp.108-111

8 C.B. Millican, Spenser and the Table Round (1932), footnote 41 to Chapter V on p.201

"Ralph Knevett's "A Supplement of The Faery Queene", " TLS, Oct. 1935, p.631

"Ralph Knevett, Author of The Supplement to Spenser's Faerie Queene," RES, XIV (1938), pp.44-52

Lavender's thesis was submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Science at New York University in 1955.

from The Faerie Queene itself⁹. The relative inaccessibility of A Supplement together with its importance to seventeenth century Arth-
urian poetry in general make a prefatory table and a précis of the work
essential at this point in the analysis.

Character List

P -- indicates a political interpretation or a contemporary seventeenth
century interpretation.

M -- indicates characters with a moral symbolism.

Book VII

Albanio, titular knight	King James /Prudence	P and M
Irene, Albanio's Lady	Peace /Ireland	P and M
Malfida, wicked enchantress	False faith /Catholicism	P
Misanactus, evil magician	Wrong doer /Catholicism	P
Aphronimon, wicked knight	Imprudence	M
Dysnomia, Aphronimon's lady	Ill usage /Catholicism	P
Pseudophron, Dysnomia's champion	False thinking /Catholicism	P
Leucippe, lady captured by Aquilino (cf. VIII)	Netherlands	P
Matea, lady who beguiles Albanio	Vanity	M
Prince Arthur, rescues Albanio	Charles I	P
Granvanio, Matea's champion	Great Vanity	M
Sophia, a lady abducted by Aphronimon	Wisdom	M
Sir Euphues, Sophia's knight	Nobility	M

Book VIII

Callimachus, titular knight	Fortitude /Gustavus Adolphus II of Sweden	P and M
Tendron, a young squire	Young and tender shoot	M
Prince Arthur, rescues Callimachus	Magnanimity	M
Panarete, lady who revives Callimachus	All virtue and honour	M
Leucippe, lady captured by Aquilino	Netherlands	P
Aquilino, a wicked giant	Habsburg and Holy Roman Empire	P

⁹ Also, the only copy of Lavender's edition available in Britain,
in the university library of Royal Holloway and Bedford Colleges,
is a poor reproduction.

Cenoclea, lady who beguiles Callimachus	Vainglory	M
Sir Thrason, Cenoclea's knight	Rash braggart	M
Princess Vittoria, Callimachus' lady	Protestant victory	P
Androgeus, Aquilino's ally and Vittoria's suitor	Forces of the Catholic League	P
Marinella, Auranion's lady	United Provinces of the Netherlands	P
Auranion, knight who fights Aquilino	Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange	P
Uranion, brother of Auranion	Frederick Henry of Nassau	P
Traiecta, a nymph threatened by Sir Ferraugh, and later, the wife of Uranion	Maestricht	P
Sir Ferraugh, wicked knight	Spanish forces	P
Prince Arthur, Uranion's ally	Charles I and English forces	P
Sir Crenepolemo, befriender of Androgeus	Maximillian I, Elector and Duke of Bavaria	P
<u>Book IX</u>		
Belcoeur, titular knight	Liberality	M
Albanio, accompanies Belcoeur at first	James I	P
Sir Julian, offers hospital- ity to Albanio and Belcoeur	Hospitality	M
Sir Iustine, upholds just cause in battle against Sir Lereall	Just cause	M
Sir Lereall, falsely chall- enges Sir Iustine	Impudent slander	M
Prince Arthur defeats Sir Lereall and jousts in Queen Thalastera's tournament	Magnanimity /Charles I	M and P
Scota and Angela, two warring sisters	Scotland and England	P
Esclaedor, a miser	Slave of gold	M
Gastador, Esclaedor's champion	Relisher of gold	M
Lady Synedesia, Sir Phil- odore's lady and kin of Arthegall	The conscience of justice	M
Sir Philodore, Synedesia's knight	Lover of gifts	M and P
Arthegall, mortally wounds Philodore	Justice	M
Polydore, Philodore's other love	Many gifts	M
Sir Priester, Polydore's next love	Knight-priest /Catholicism	P
Harpax, a brigand	One who snatches	M
Queen Eleutheria, captured by Coravido	Freedom	M

Coravido, evil pagan knight	Crow	M
Diocea, lady abused by Riccolozell	Justice	M
Riccolozell, evil giant	Profligacy	M
Sir Gratian, faery knight who rescues the graces	Grace	M
Erothea, lady who heals Belcoeur	Goddess of Spring	M
Maldesir, giant who has captured Mount Parnassus	Foul desire	M
Sir Technophil, knight killed while trying to rescue the graces	Spenser	P
Merlin, prophecies of future great men of learning	Magician and prophet	P and M
Basilia, lady rescued by Belcoeur	Henrietta Maria	P
Cenodoxon and Braggadochio, boastful knights	Vain and empty boasters	M
Sir Merhonour, faery knight who weds Thalastera	Honour of the seas	P
Queen Thalastera, lady who holds tournament	Rule of seas	P
Philargyra, Coravido's sister	Lover of silver	M

The Précis of 'A Supplement'

Book VII: The legend of Albanio or Prudence

The Book commences with Albanio and his lady, Irene, riding in pursuit of a quest (canto i). They defeat the enchantress Malfida and her companion, the wicked magician Misanactus (canto ii), but their main antagonist is Aphronimon -- Imprudence. Albanio first learns of Aphronimon's existence from the seven ladies representing the seven liberal arts who have been imprisoned by this wicked knight and the lady Dysnomia. Albanio defeats Dysnomia and her champion Pseudophron (cantos iii and iv), but before he begins his search for Aphronimon he is diverted by another plea for help. A dwarf asks Albanio to aid the lady Leucippe whose lands are being attacked by Aquilino (canto v). Albanio agrees, but first he and Irene travel to the Holy Isle so that she may wait there in safety. While resting on the Holy Isle Albanio resolves a religious controversy and kills a plague of harpies with Hercules'

bow (cantos vi and vii).

Albanio then undertakes the journey to aid Leucippe, but he is waylaid twice. First, by Misanactus who sends him a false dream in which Irene appears to need his aid, which results in Albanio turning back towards the Holy Isle (cantos viii and ix). Secondly, he is halted by the lady Matea who makes him forget both Irene and Leucippe, and leads him to adopt a life of courtly pleasures on the Isle of Vanity. The dwarf, meanwhile, has returned to the Holy Isle where he meets Irene and they both set out to rescue Albanio. On their way to the Isle of Vanity they meet Prince Arthur, who recalls Albanio to his duty and defeats Matea's champion, Granvanio (cantos x and xi).

Albanio, however, relinquishes the quest to aid Leucippe and merely accomplishes his first mission, which was to defeat Aphronimon. He frees the lady Sophia and her lover, Sir Euphues, after vanquishing his enemy. The Book concludes with the double marriage of the rescued couple and Albanio and Irene, and with the return to Gloriana's court (canto xii).

Book VIII: The legend of Callimachus or Fortitude

This Book concentrates upon the quest to aid Leucippe, which Callimachus has undertaken. On his journey Callimachus meets a squire Tendron. He knights him and together they rescue Tendron's mother, who is being besieged by eight suitors (canto i). Two of the defeated suitors, however, revenge themselves by killing Tendron and seriously wounding Callimachus, who is saved from death by the timely intervention of Prince Arthur. Callimachus is revived by a heavenly potion administered by the lady Panarete, who invites the two knights to her home Mont Plaisant (canto ii). Arthur soon leaves, but Callimachus remains

to defeat a dragon which is attacking the land (canto iii). It is only at this point that Knevett inserts the story of Leucippe herself and relates how she was captured by the giant Aquilino (canto iv).

While he rests at Panarete's house, Callimachus learns to emulate Hercules' heroism, but he also falls in love with the lady Cenoclea who has deserted her own suitor, Sir Thrason (canto v). However, when challenged by Thrason, the vain and fickle Cenoclea returns to her former love, and Callimachus, able at last to perceive her true worth, leaves to pursue his quest. Subsequently Callimachus competes in a tournament for the Princess Vittoria against Androgeus, who is an ally of Aquilino and who is known to have raped Parthenia and murdered her followers (canto vi). Knevett again interpolates another story, which in this instance concerns Marinella and her champion Sir Auranion. Auranion has died, but his brother Uranion succeeds to the throne and undertakes many battles against Aquilino's allies. In one of these combats, to save the nymph Traiecta from Sir Ferraugh, Arthur participates in order to win honour and glory. The Prince defeats Sir Ferraugh, and Traiecta weds Uranion (cantos vii and viii).

The joust for Vittoria's hand is won by Callimachus, although Androgeus escapes. During the wedding celebrations two knights challenge one another for the love of a lady. The situation, however, is resolved when it is revealed that they are all siblings (cantos ix and x). Afterwards, Callimachus continues on his quest with Vittoria. They defeat Androgeus and the knight with whom he has taken refuge, Sir Crenepolemo (canto xi). The Book concludes with Sir Callimachus' death through one of Aquilino's knights and he dies asking Vittoria to relate his end to Gloriana and to find another knight to aid Leucippe

(canto xii).

Book IX: The legend of Sir Belcoeur or Liberality

The quest of this titular knight is not made apparent until the fifth canto. At the beginning of the Book he is merely riding with Albanio to the castle of Sir Julian, where he tells the tale of how Sir Lereall defeated Sir Iustine with a magic lance, but was in turn defeated by Arthur. On leaving the castle Albanio rescues two ladies, Scota and Angela, and reconciles them (canto i). At this point the two knights separate and Belcoeur rides on to the house of the miser Esc-lauedor. Belcoeur is tempted by Esclauedor, first to despair, then to covet gold and finally to surrender his quest (canto ii). The knight, however, leaves after defeating the miser's champion, Gastador, and subsequently meets the lady Synedesia who is mourning her knight Philodore. Sir Arthegall has mortally wounded Philodore because he was unfaithful to Synedesia who is Arthegall's and Albanio's kinswoman. Belcoeur helps the lady to bury her love (canto iii). Meanwhile, Philodore's false love, Polydore, has wooed first Sir Iustine, then Sir Priester and lastly the brigand Harpax, who captures Priester (canto iv).

Knevett here introduces us to the titular knight's quest. Belcoeur has been sent to aid Queen Eleutheria who was abducted by Coravido during a masque. But he is diverted from this course and proceeds to aid the lady Diocea who has been abused by the giant Riccolozell (canto v). On his way he rescues Priester, Polydore and Harpax from a pirate ship, and when he reaches Diocea's castle he defeats Riccolozell. Belcoeur then continues on his quest and meets Sir Gratian; they are both poisoned by Coravido's magician but the lady Erothaea saves them (canto vi). The two knights then aid the Muses to regain Mount

Parnassus from the giant Maldesir who has already killed Sir Technophil. Belcoeur fails, but Sir Gratian defeats the giant and learns of the future great writers from Merlin (cantos vii and viii).

Riding again on his quest to aid Eleutheria Belcoeur stops to rescue Basilia (canto ix) and is then halted in Cenodoxon's palace where he rebukes the vain boasters, including Braggadochio (canto x). Knevett at this point apologises for not referring to Arthur earlier. To compensate he inserts the tale of a tournament in which Arthur has gained great honour and his companion Sir Merhonour has won the hand of the lady Thalastera (canto xi). Finally, the Book returns to Belcoeur who has arrived at the castle where Eleutheria is held captive for a human sacrifice. The knight overthrows the pagan idol which Coravido worships; Coravido's jealous sister, Philargyra, hangs herself; and Belcoeur is able, at last, to rescue and marry Eleutheria (canto xii).

In the pages which follow I shall examine the Arthurian material in Knevett's A Supplement and in the panegyrics dedicated to King James and his family. The analysis will follow the three major categories of political poetry as utilized in The Faerie Queene, while simultaneously contrasting the seventeenth century works with Spenser's own. The three areas to be studied are: general panegyric praise of the monarch; an assertion of the monarch's right to the throne; and detailed representations in the poetry of contemporary political events. The Chapter will concentrate upon A Supplement and examine why Knevett decided to pursue the political rather than the moral allegory of the poet he admired so much. Finally, from this latter consideration, and from the several distinct differences between A Supplement and The Faerie Queene,

it will be possible to extrapolate the development of the ideological concepts which link the Arthurian material in the works of Spenser, Knevett and Dryden.

I

General Panegyric Praise of the Monarch

The panegyric praising of a monarch for heroism, goodness or other virtues such as munificence, mercy and justice, is the simplest and most common form of political poetry. In The Faerie Queene, however, Gloriana, Britomart and Mercilla are not figures exclusively representing Elizabeth I, and their perfections are therefore not direct praise of the Queen, but emblems of the poem's moral themes. But despite this innovative basis, in general Arthurian political verse concentrated upon symbolic links between the contemporary and romance kings. The similarities emphasized were: (i) the peace and unity brought to Britain by James, Charles and Arthur, and (ii) the heroic, knightly qualities of Charles I, Prince Henry and Arthur.

(i) The Arthurian material as symbolic of peace and unity

In this section I shall first consider A Supplement and then analyse similar material in the seventeenth century panegyric verse, with particular emphasis upon comparison with Knevett's work. As we shall see, the political works of the early seventeenth century successfully utilize Arthurian material in a symbolic manner to link James with the concepts of peace and unity. Simultaneously they stress continuity and stability rather than change in the monarchy. A Supplement also evinces these attitudes, and through the figure of Albanio James is associated with peace and unity¹⁰. Lavender correctly identifies

10 James' association with peace and unity is discussed below, pp.245-249

Albanio, the titular knight of Book VII, with James I; and there are numerous references to the political events of his reign which confirm this, such as a detailed account of the gunpowder plot (VII.ii.14-42). Throughout Book VII Albanio travels with his lady Irene who represents peace, both through her name (EIPHNH -- 'peace') and her actions, as for example when she tames two lions:

But ere he [Albanio] 'gan assaile his feerefull foes,
 Irene held him, sayeing stay (Sr Knight)
 Mildnes is oft of more effect, then blowes,
 Perswasion often overpowers might,
 When peace can doe ye deed, what need you fight:
 With this she touch'd the Beasts wth her white wand,
 Who sudainely, seem'd to abate their spite,
 Their manes no more did like ear'd ridges stand,
 Like Dogs they fawn'd, and crowchd, and were at her command.
 VII i 16

At the conclusion of Book VII James' association with peace is further compounded by the marriage of Albanio and Irene (VII.xii.55)¹¹.

Similarly, the union of England and Scotland under James is represented by Albanio's reconciliation of the two ladies representing these countries. Albanio has saved the two daughters of Britanna, Angela and Scota (England and Scotland) from brigands (IX.i.44.1-2). But he soon perceives their contentious natures. Finally, he persuades them to cease their strife:

His rhetoricke did so prevaile with them,
 That they eternall peace sware for his sake,
 And what by strife they'd lost, for to redeeme
 With loue vnparalel'd, thus hands they take,
 And many signes of deare affection make;
 IX i 53.1-5

11 'Irene' also recalls Ireland and James' peaceful political settlement there. In addition, 'Irene' may have been derived from Spenser's A View Of The Present State Of Ireland (1596), where one of the two speakers is called Irenius.

Although Knevetts presents James in the same symbolic roles as used by the earlier panegyrists, he is obviously writing with hindsight. Rather than the emphasis upon moral worth necessitated by James' contemporary rule, it is the fictional demands of Albanio's symbolic role which prevail, as can be seen in the individual personification of peace in Irene. The need to suggest continuity as in the panegyrics is also obviated, as there is of course no longer any immediate cause to affirm James' right to the throne. Above all, Knevetts intends to compliment the contemporary monarch Charles, through praising the peace and unity achieved in Britain by his father, James I.

Unlike Knevetts, the panegyric poets confined the symbolic development of Arthurian material to an unquestioning and all-encompassing praise of the reigning monarch. Thus, in the panegyric verse the concepts of peace and unity are linked to a broader spectrum of Arthurian material -- especially to Brute -- in order to increase the possibilities of laudation.

The emphasis on unity was initiated by James himself in a proclamation of 1604 whereby he announced that

...he will begin the work of closer union by assuming the title of 'KING OF GREAT BRITTAINE', not from vain glory but to indicate the accomplished fact. 12

The title "BRITTAINE" linked James to early British history, as Brute

12 R.Steele, Tudor and Stuart Proclamations (1910), Vol.I, pp.115-116
D.Hay, Europe (1968), p.129

was the supposed originator of the name (Brutaine) and Arthur had been a British rather than a Saxon king. The poets quickly recognised the implications of the King's claim and utilized the renaming of Britain in their panegyric verse. Michael Drayton's poem refers to the time when "Brute first raign'd" and continues four lines later with

O now revive that noble Brittaines name,
From which at first our ancient honors came,
Which with both Nations fitly doth agree
That Scotch and English without difference be,
And in that place wher feuds were wont to spring
Let us light Jigs, and joyfull Paeans sing. 13

James is associated with Brute, the legendary king and "our ancient honors". No attempt is made at creating an aura of historicity. The connection between the two kings is purely symbolic. What is stressed is the heroic glory and the veneration of the royal name. John Fenton (King James his Welcome to London, 1603), Francis Pilkington (The First Booke of Songs or Ayres of 4. Parts, 1605), William Warner (Albions England, 1612), William Fennor ("Fennors Descriptions", 1616) and William Slatyer (The History of Great Britanie, 1621) place similar interpretations on the use of the term 'Britain' ¹⁴. William Harbert's A Prophetie of Cadwallader (1604) refers to James as Brute: "Britaine should be the name, for Brute doth raigne" ¹⁵, and at the end of the poem he similarly claims that

Thrice happy Britaine, strong vnited Ile,
Disioynted by her first monarche's fall:
...Vaile Sorrowe's roabes, Ioue's father comes againe,
The golden age begins with Iacob's raigne. 16

13 Drayton, op.cit., Vol.I p.474 ll.143-148

14 Fenton, op.cit., n.pag.

Pilkington, op.cit., fol.Lii v.

Warner, op.cit., p.378

Fennor, op.cit., in Vol.III of The Progresses of James I (1828), p.155

Slatyer, op.cit., p.7

15 Harbert, op.cit., pp.182-183

16 Ibid., p.246

No attempt is made at producing a historical effect. The hyperbolic praise of James as Saturn who will restore the golden age in which Britain will be "Thrice happy" recalls the mythology of Ovid (Metamorphoses I) and as such is intrinsically non-historical. Its function is to mediate to the reader a symbolic understanding of the King's role, and not historical fact. Drayton's questioning of Brute's historicity, while discussing the unification also indicates this representational use of Brute:

Two famous Kingdoms separate thus long...
 Since Brute first reign'd (if men of Brute allow)
 Never before united untill now. 17

Brute is used to represent unity by William Warner, John Savile ("A Salutatorie Poeme to the Majestie of King Iames", 1603), William Slatyer, Henry Chettle ("England's Mourning Garment", 1603) and Anthony Munday (A Briefe Chronicle, of the Successe of Times, 1611); and in the same way as the renaming of Britain, each poet suggests that James' act is reunification, a stabilizing of the throne through stressing the factor of continuity¹⁸.

On his accession to the throne of England James I had succeeded in unifying Britain peacefully, and not through a conquest. Brute symbolized unification, but by war, and therefore James could be compared favourably with him. In Drayton's words:

What power, nor war could do, nor time expected,
 Thy blessed birth hath happily effected. 19

17 Drayton, op.cit., Vol.I p.474 ll.137 and 139-140

18 Warner, op.cit., p.378

Savile, op.cit., p.Ciii r.

Slatyer, op.cit., p.7

Chettle, op.cit., p.545

Munday, op.cit., p.466

K.Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (1978), p.502

19 Drayton, op.cit., Vol.I p.474 ll.141-142

The same point is made by Henry Chettle, William Slatyer and John Davies of Hereford (*Microcosmos*, 1603)²⁰. William Harbert, however, is more complex. Brute, he writes,

Britaine's first monarch...
Of all the northern world, this Isle did chuse.
With fire and sword he did obtaine his sute

and then compares him to James:

Our second Brute, like to the morning starre,
To England's Court doth light of comfort bring,
Now Concord's boult doth Ianus' temple barre,
Binding in chaines the sternest god of Warre.
Vertue and valour triumph euermore,
Augustus liues adorn'd with Crassus store.²¹

James becomes a "second Brute", for although that ancient British king represents conquest, he also remains faithful to his role as unifier. But James is connected not only to Brute, but also to Caesar Augustus who could legitimately close the gates of the temple of Janus in Rome, signifying peace after the civil wars; and further, Augustus reunified the empire through the symbolic significance of his regaining the eagles lost by Crassus in his Syrian campaign against the Parthians²². In this way Brute and Augustus are used in similar symbolic functions, the former to represent union and conquest, the latter, union and peace, regardless of their historicity.

By concentrating on the stabilizing effects of 'peace' and 'unity' the political poets are able to praise James for the moral worth of his policies, while at the same time suggesting that the new monarchy is not a radical innovation, but a benevolent continuation of the previous

20 Chettle, *op.cit.*, p.545
Slatyer, *op.cit.*, frontispiece
Davies, *op.cit.*, Vol.I p.20

21 Harbert, *op.cit.*, pp. 244 and 246

22 Harbert probably derived this from Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars* (trans. R.Graves 1980), as the two events mentioned by Harbert are here in the same order.

regime. On the other hand, because of the greater scope and complexity of A Supplement, Knevett is able to expand the values of peace and unity beyond the limitations of monarchic eulogy. The overall allegoric structure of Knevett's poem presents the reader with an ideal moral code in which the virtues of Prudence and Peace naturally and harmoniously move together; and in turn this general concord advocates the ethical worth of 'unity' itself. Thus although both Knevett and the panegyrists recognise the importance of seventeenth century Arthurian material to political symbolism, the earlier poets concentrate mainly upon its political application, whereas Knevett moves beyond conventional praise to a deeper awareness of the possible complexities of Arthurian allegory.

(ii) The symbolic use of Arthur's heroic qualities

The differences between Knevett and the political panegyrists have already emerged in the consideration of peace and unity. The following analysis, which is centred upon the more comprehensive concept of Arthur as a hero-king, notes Knevett's further divergence from a simple praise of the monarch, and reveals his greater involvement with, and contribution to, this major feature of the Arthurian tradition²³. Moreover, when considering the heroic Arthurian symbolism in Knevett's work the minor symbolic identifications of 'peace' and 'unity' become redundant, for rather than being associated to Arthur through the

23 Arthur as a hero-king:

Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain (1979), pp.212-261

R.Nevo, The Dial of Virtue (1963), p.24

R.Morris, The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature (1982), pp.50-93

qualities of heroism and kingship, in A Supplement Charles I is Arthur.

The identification of Charles I with Prince Arthur in Knevet's poem is made immediately apparent in the Proem to Book VII. Initially, the poem is dedicated to Charles who as Knevet writes "sitt'st in Arthur's seate" (VII. Proem.2.2). But the relationship is developed further when Queen Henrietta Maria is included in the praise:

Thou Gloriana ar't (oh Lady Bright)
Whom British Arthur wonne (maugre the frowne
Of adverse Fate) in her are blazon'd right,
Thy beauty, bounty, and thy Vertues exquisite.

VII Proem 3.6-9

Just as Henrietta Maria appears as Gloriana in the poem, so Charles figures as Prince Arthur. Thus the king and queen of Britain are represented by the royal pair in the fictional world. Knevet's political identifications are more restrictive than those of Spenser. The strictly defined nature of the symbolism in A Supplement is clearly revealed by an interpretation of the characters' accoutrements. Arthur's arms and armour are changed from those in The Faerie Queene to present an emblematic purport which is particularly British and royal. The Prince is described most fully when entering the tournament against Sir Ferragh in Book VIII:

Nor was Prince Arthur more uncomely dight,
With purple surcote on his shoulders spred,
With princely ermine lin'd; his plume was white,
A rich Caparison adorn'd his steed,
Embroiderd all with roses, white and red,
Which worke a wauy border did confine,
That those faire flowers round environed:
On his helme did a golden Lion shine,
But on his brest was figured a crosse devine.

VIII viii 30

The "purple surcote" and the "ermine" are commonly worn by monarchs; the emblematic "roses, white and red" on the horse's caparison refer to Charles' Tudor ancestry; the "golden Lion" figures on the British

royal coat of arms; and lastly the "crosse devine" recalls the Red Cross Knight who represents Saint George, the patron saint of England, in The Faerie Queene²⁴. The associations with British royalty are underlined by a similar description of Arthur's arms in Book IX:

A crowne upon his helme Prince Arthur wore,
By which his regall stemme might bee descryd,
And on his shield, hee passant Lions bore,
A shield that (whilome) was of all ydrad full sore.
IX xi 14.6-9

In this latter instance, however, Arthur's significance has been expanded to include Charles I's political ambitions, which are here focussed on mastery of the seas (see below pp.281-282). In each instance Knevetts directly identifies Arthur with the monarchic role and governmental policies of Charles I. The victories of the fictional monarch are seen to imply similar success for the King in the real world. Thus Knevetts is able to praise Charles both for the image of royalty he adopts and for the direction of his political aspirations.

Once the identification of Charles with Arthur is affirmed, the praise of his king becomes, for Knevetts, a simple matter. In The Faerie Queene the Prince is a heroic figure, and in order to extol Charles' knightly heroism and honour Knevetts has only to perpetuate Arthur's original role. In Book VII he is introduced within the Spenserian tradition as a saviour figure:

Albanio comes to ye place,
Where Vanity doth dwell;
Prince Arthur calleth him from thence,
And doth Granvanio quell
VII xi Arg.

24 purple: T.H.Cain, Praise in The Faerie Queene (1978), p.120
ermine: Sir William Segar, Elizabeth I (1585), Illus. in Tudor and Jacobean Portraits by Roy Strong (1969), Vol.II plate 202
lion : Charles Boutell, English Heraldry (1907), pp.267-280

and in Book VIII he saves the titular knight Callimachus (VIII.ii. 18-22). The Prince's desire for honour is asserted twice, first when he attends the tournament to fight for Traiecta, where he has been "incited by the fame and brute, /Of honour great that there was to be wonne," (VIII.viii.28.1-2), and secondly, when he jousts for Queen Thalastera:

Prince Arthur also (though desireing least,
To winne a Mistris, or a crowne to gaine,
But thirsteing after honour) did request
His Ladyes license, for the entertaine
This rare emprize, and did his sute obtaine.

IX xi 9.1-5

However, the most interesting sequence in which Arthur, and so Charles, is praised for his heroic qualities occurs when he rescues Albanio. The titular knight of Book VII has been lured by Matea (MATIA --vanity) into a life of courtly pleasures on the Isle of Vanity. The intended contrast between Albanio and Arthur becomes immediately apparent through the description of Albanio's dress:

His massy coate of maile he had layd by,
And was yclad in a mandilion light,
Of sea greene Taffata, purfled with silver bright.

In stead of horrid helme he wore a bonnet,
Whereon a wanton plume did lightly waue,
And many fond love toyes were fix'd vpon it,
Like those wherewith vaine youths are wont t'embraue,
Their womanish attire, when they enslaue
Their neckes to Cupids yoke, and condescend
That passion shall triumph o're reason graue,
His bugle tipp'd with siluer at each end,
Was pendant by his side, in a greene silken bend.

VII xi 42.7-9 and 43

This contrasts strongly with Arthur's "glorious armour" (VII.xi.44. 2) and his mission to aid Irene rather than to hunt with courtiers. The heroic warrior existence is praised above that of a life of pleasures; this is reaffirmed in Book VIII where the youths on the ideal Mont Plaisant are seen training for battle (VIII.iii.5). The Prince

recalls Albanio to his quest and affirms the superior worth of his moral code by defeating the monster Granvanio. Apart from the allegorical lesson against vanity and the direct praise of Charles' martial heroism through Arthur, there is an implicit criticism of the moral laxity and extravagance of James I and his court. This implication adds to Knevett's commendation of Charles, because it contrasts the real figures through the medium of the fictional ones, to the obvious detriment of James and benefit of Charles.

Whereas the association with Arthur is used by Knevett to praise Charles I, the earlier panegyrists had utilized the same material, on a more basic level, to suggest the heroic and knightly qualities of James I and Prince Henry. In his poem The Nine English Worthies (1606) Robert Fletcher includes Arthur, as he was one of the original worthies:

Arthur of Britaine most renowned king,
Sixe of the nine were not his equall peeres,
Full thirty kingdomes he to his did bring 25

and compares both 'sets' of worthies to James, because

So long as worthiest of all Worthies liues,
King Iames to whome all Eighteen Worthies giues
Their Scepters, Crownes, their Diadems and power. 26

This comparison suggesting that James, too, is a great warrior king is used by George Buck (ΔΑΦΝΙΞ ΠΟΛΥΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΣ, 1605), Anthony Munday, Samuel Daniel (The Collection of the History of England, 1626) and John Thornborough (A Discovrse, 1604) ²⁷. However, it is in "Cambria",

25 The nine worthies originally came from The Vows of the Peacock and were then used in the alliterative Morte Arthure. c.f. R.S. Loomis, The Development of Arthurian Romance (1970), p.150
Fletcher, op.cit., pp.46-47

26 Ibid., p.48

27 Buck, op.cit., fols.Bii v.-Biii r.
Munday, op.cit., p.466

Daniel, op.cit. in The Complete Works (1896), Vol.IV p.99
Thornborough, op.cit., pp.23-24

These writers also incorporate non-symbolic references to Arthur in their poetry, and this existence of two opposing attitudes within the same text suggests a complex appreciation of the implications of using Arthurian material in this period.

one of the dedicatory pieces prefacing Davies of Hereford's Micro-cosmos, that the symbolic use of Arthurian material in this way becomes most evident²⁸.

John Davies' dedication is to Henry, the young Prince of Wales. The speech is therefore appropriately directed from Wales, also the poet's own country. At the beginning of the poem Henry's lineage is traced to the early British kings:

From Owen Thewdor, who from Camber came,
 (From Camber Sonne of Brute who came from Troy)
 Art thou descended. 29

This gives the impression of a fairly direct genealogy, relying on historicity; Davies then concentrates upon Aeneas (the great grandfather of Brute)³⁰:

Runne over all the Stories Tymes affoord,
 Or prie vpon them with the sharpest sight,
 We shall not finde one did more with his Sword
 Then this braue Brittaine, and true Troian-Knight. 31

Davies claims that Aeneas "...putt Achilles in his Tent to flight"³².

He probably borrowed this reference from the Iliad (xx), which recounts the duel between the two champions. Secondly, the poem states that

Quite through & through Death's grizzely Iawes hee [Aeneas] ran,
 And made a way through Horror's vgli'st Hell. 33

28 Davies of Hereford, op.cit., pp.19-22

29 Ibid., p.20

30 For the complete family tree see George Owen Harry, The Genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch, James (1604)

31 Davies of Hereford, op.cit., p.21

32 Ibid., p.21

33 Ibid., p.21

This may refer to "The Visit to the Underworld" in Virgil's Aeneid ³⁴. By glorifying Aeneas Davies is indirectly praising Prince Henry, his supposed descendant. Finally, Davies asserts the veracity of his material:

Should I recount the pettie Miracles
By him [Aeneas] performed, in his martiall course,
My words would scarce be held for Oracles. ³⁵

Paradoxically, it is the dogmatic character of his insistence that reveals Davies' underlying acceptance of the tenuous and exaggerated nature of his claims ³⁶. However, if read in the context of the following verses on what feats the Welsh will perform in honour of Henry, Davies' attitude becomes increasingly clear. He claims that

Weele cleue the Mountaines Neptune to let in,
That Ships may floate, where now our Sheepe do feede, ³⁷

and, in the next verse asserts that

Caerleon, where king Arthure liu'd of yore,
Shall be rebuilt, and double gilt once more. ³⁸

Arthur and Neptune are classified in the same extravagant manner; the ideas of flattening a mountain and gilding a city are fairytale tasks, of which there is no hope of accomplishment. Aeneas is part of this mythic pageant of glory and wealth; he symbolizes a British hero, as Neptune symbolizes the sea, and Arthur a great king. John Davies

34 Virgil, op.cit., VI

35 Davies of Hereford, op.cit., p.21

However, this is a common attitude seen throughout the seventeenth century: Mathias Prideaux, An Easy and Compendious Introduction For Reading all sorts of Histories (1648), pp.289-290

Edward Howard, The Brittish Princes: An Heroick Poem (1669), pp.1-2

Nathaniel Crouch, The History of the Nine Worthies of the World (1687), p.147

Sir Richard Baker, A Chronicle of the Kings of England (1643), p.5

36 See above Chapter V pp.200-201

37 Davies of Hereford, op.cit., p.21

38 Ibid., p.21

of Hereford is clearly not interested in the historicity of the Arthurian material and consequently adopts a symbolic tone for his political poem with no loss of propagandic significance.

In "Cambria", as we noted, the evidence for the symbolic utilization of Arthurian material was derived from its link with non-Arthurian myths; the admission of doubts about its historicity; and finally, the inclusion of impossible 'fairytale' events. These features are also present in the poems "To the Majestie of King James" by Michael Drayton and in William Harbert's A Prophetie of Cadwallader³⁹. However, despite the symbolic nature of the early political poetry, the emblems of peace, unity and heroism serve primarily to praise the monarch and they are interesting only in that they mark the increasing development of Arthurian material away from historicity to symbolism. That this change was influenced by The Faerie Queene cannot be doubted, for apart from the poem's innovative attitude towards Arthurian material, the thematic similarities between Knevett's work, which is directly indebted to Spenser, and the works of the earlier writers are clearly apparent. Nevertheless, there are divergences from The Faerie Queene, caused by the praise of a male rather than a female monarch. However, as we have seen, while in simple panegyrics these differences are negligible, in a complex continuation such as A Supplement they initiate major developments. Knevett's divergences from The Faerie Queene represent a significant phase in the progression of the political applicability of Arthurian material in the seventeenth century, and as such must be considered separately.

39 Drayton, op.cit., Vol.I pp.469-477
Harbert, op.cit.

(iii) Divergences from 'The Faerie Queene' generated from the general political allegory of 'A Supplement'

As we have seen, Gloriana represents Henrietta Maria, who in seventeenth century reality was already united with Prince Arthur's counterpart, Charles I. This, together with the fact that attention is primarily directed towards the male rather than the female royal figure leads to major differences from The Faerie Queene. The union of Gloriana and Arthur promised in Spenser's poem is, of course, no longer relevant, but its lack creates both a structural divergence and, through the ensuing redundancy of a major directive, a reduction in the importance of the associated love themes in the poem. Also, because of the close political identifications the high moral role of the Prince is undermined and even the traditional Arthurian themes are ignored. In order to assess the consequences of these differences between A Supplement and The Faerie Queene, it is necessary to examine each in greater detail.

The importance of the theme of 'love' to The Faerie Queene cannot be questioned, for apart from the chaste love of Britomart, the love of friendship in Book IV, and the dependence of the narrative structure upon a complex weave of romance attachments, there are the more doctrinal revelations of Christian and Neoplatonic loves, in which Arthur is an important figure (see above Chapter II). To a great extent, these are ignored by Knevett who disregards Neoplatonism completely and despite the marriage of each titular knight reduces the overall importance of romantic love⁴⁰. Moreover, Callimachus' love for

40 Albanio marries Irene : VII.xii.55
 Callimachus marries Vittoria : VIII.ix.11
 Belcoeur marries Eleutheria : IX.xii.47

Cenoclea leads him to abandon his quest so that

His sheathed blade rust did contaminate,
 His target strong dust foully did defile,
 And spiders in his steely helme did daily toile.

VIII v 44.7-9

In the same way that Albanio's and Arthur's arms reveal their moral standing, so the neglected condition of Callimachus' armour symbolizes his distance from what is right and good. Knevett's condemnation of Callimachus' love is made clear by emotive words such as "contaminate", "fouly" and "defile", but he further asserts this opinion in the next stanza with an unusual, and therefore important, authorial intrusion:

Love is the bane of noble actions,
 The poison of an honorable mind,
 By which great persons oft have bin vndone,
 For it doth so the vnderstanding blind,
 That to true bliss it can't the right way find,
 Hurtfull in youth, but monstrous 'tis in age:
 A bird of fairest hue, and seemeing kind,
 That vnawares the heart of man doth gage
 With deadly dole, while hee no euill doth presage.

VIII v 45
 41

Even judged upon its own merit rather than as a continuation of The Faerie Queene, the disregard for love themes in A Supplement must be considered a flaw, for Knevett intends, and utilizes the structure for, a romance epic. The complex framework of narratives cannot sustain cohesion on the basis of political allegory with a few token attempts at portraying romance narrative relationships. Even the aborted search for Leucippe cannot compare with the compelling quests undertaken by Britomart and Arthur who have been inspired by visions of their beloveds.

The second major development of A Supplement pertains more

41 Compare with Spenser's more ambiguous attitude: FQ VI.x.1-4

exclusively to the Arthurian material, for Knevett's Prince Arthur is no longer a figure of the highest worth⁴². Indeed, the most important innovation in The Faerie Queene with regard to the tradition of Arthurian literature was to create an Arthur who symbolized perfection through a spectrum of moral and doctrinal values. In A Supplement, however, Arthur ceases to be the 'patrone' of the titular knights. Albanio in Book VII pursues his quest after the Prince has rescued him from Matea:

But soone forgetting, what had past before,
Hee tooke his humble leave of Arthur stout,
VII xii 2.5-6

Similarly, it is Panarete who saves the life of Callimachus with a heavenly potion, rather than Arthur who only "mourned o're the dyeing knight" (VIII.ii.23.1). In The Faerie Queene Arthur's perfection is perceived through his quest, which will lead him not only to Gloriana but to the ideal source of all spiritual and heavenly desires. This is reduced by Knevett to a series of smaller quests in which Arthur searches only for earthly fame and honour, such as in the tournament for Traiecta (VIII.viii.). The reason for these devaluations in Arthur's moral role is that Knevett has clearly recognised the impossibility of the Prince symbolizing both a fictionalized all-encompassing ideal, as well as the contemporary political ideal of kingly heroism necessitated by the praise of Charles I. Although this results in a moral decline in the Renaissance Arthurian tradition, within the poem itself it is completely successful, especially when compared to the problems encountered by Spenser with regard to Arthur's identification with Leicester in

42 Arthur: Christian perfection in Book I; Neoplatonic role in Books II-III; politically ideal in Book V; and perfect courtesy in Book VI.

Book V (see above Chapter III pp. 117-132).

Medieval Arthurian literature surfaces hardly at all in A Supplement although Kneveit is greatly indebted to other romance texts, primarily Spenser's The Faerie Queene and Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata⁴³. Moreover, the other references to traditional Arthurian material are all unrelated to a considered moral or historical pattern within the poem (Lancelot: VII.vii.27.8; the Lady of the Lake: IX.i.28.1; and Sir Tristram: IX.xii.9.6)⁴⁴.

Finally, and most importantly, the relationships of Arthur with Charles I and of Gloriana with Henrietta Maria completely disrupt the thematic and poetic structures of Arthur's role in The Faerie Queene. Rather than being portrayed in a long quest for Gloriana ending at her court, Arthur, in A Supplement, is often seen to be united with his love. Twice he leaves the fairy court to participate in a tournament, first for Traiecta (VIII viii) and secondly for Thalastera (IX xi). Similarly, in Book VIII there is a reference to the knighting of the noble savage Sir Eupraton by Arthur at the fairy court (VIII.x.39) and Belcoeur's tale in Book IX tells of how Arthur has defeated Sir Lereall, also in the presence of Gloriana (IX.i). Arthur's identification with Charles I explains this placing, for in the tournaments the Prince represents the King's British forces sent from England. Similarly, Arthur's royal act of knighting Sir Eupraton is befitting for a

43 for example: Tasso, op.cit., XV.62-66 : A Supplement VIII.v.45
 Tasso, Ibid., XVI.29-35 : A Supplement VII.xi.42-48
 Tasso, Godfrey of Bulloigne. A critical edition of Edward Fairfax's translation of Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata (1981), pp.446-447 and 455-457

44 With the exception of Merlin who is treated later; see below pp.272-277

king, as is the defeat of the impudent challenger Sir Lereall. Indeed, each of the divergences from The Faerie Queene is dependent upon this same political emphasis. The themes of love and moral perfection are sacrificed to the overriding desire for a realistic representation of contemporary figures and events. All that is associated with fiction, such as the poetic structure and traditional Arthurian literature Knevelt regards as unimportant when compared to the political allegory.

In conclusion, although A Supplement and the panegyric verses are greatly indebted for their Arthurian material to The Faerie Queene, ultimately they coincide in a rejection of an Arthur who represents moral perfection. Ironically, it was this very moral innovation in the traditional material which released Arthurian political poetry from historicity to symbolism. The literature written to celebrate James and Henry, however, was never intended for comparison with The Faerie Queene, and on their own terms the panegyrics successfully utilize the Arthurian material to praise the King. On the other hand, Knevelt's work, in that it attempts a continuation of Spenser's poem, must be evaluated in relation to the great romance epics. The poetry of A Supplement inevitably loses diversity and depth from ignoring the complex and allegoric levels of The Faerie Queene. Conversely, by concentrating above all on the political identifications Knevelt is able to avert the attendant problems of contemporary allegory. Arthur's symbolic roles are so closely aligned with Charles I's aspirations that, within the limitations of political allegory, A Supplement is seen to unite fiction and reality in the transcendent image of kingship.

(iv) Divergences from 'The Faerie Queene' in the Arthurian symbolism of minor seventeenth century political poems

Nevertheless, a few panegyrists remained largely unaffected by The Faerie Queene and maintained a dogged loyalty to the sixteenth century concept of Arthur's heroic greatness. William Drummond's "Forth Feasting" (1617) and William Warner's Albion's England (1612) are examples of the effects of this attitude⁴⁵. However, by far the most important divergence from the influence of Spenser's work in the minor panegyrics is found in the political anagrams of the period. The lengthy narrative structure and strong romance content of traditional Arthurian literature makes Arthur's popularity as a subject for anagrams somewhat surprising. But the greater emphasis upon Arthurian symbolism in the seventeenth century facilitated this development, because the anagrams depend for their effect upon symbolic interpretation.

Anagrams are literary devices in which historical associations are mostly coincidental, and they function through the interpretative ability of the reader. The deeper meaning is discovered only by a rearrangement of the letters and a comparison between the original and resulting phrases, while the significance is brought home to the reader by memorable word-play. Although Puttenham dismisses anagrams as "a meete study for Ladies", they were frequently used in a political context⁴⁶. As we have seen, Ben Jonson includes one of the most popular anagrams in his antimasque, For the Honour of Wales:

45 Drummond, op.cit., in The Poetical Works (1913), Vol.I pp.150-151
Warner, op.cit., p.378

46 Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie (1589), p.121

Ev. Yow will pyt your selve to these
plunses, yow meane his Madestees Anagrams of
Charles James Stuart.

Jen. I, that is Claims Arthurs Seate. 47

This anagram is also recalled in John Davies' "Charles his Waine", in Camden's Remaines and most fully in the anagrammatic poems of Walter Quinn⁴⁸. Indeed, Quinn's anagrams are particularly interesting in that they form part of the answer to Spenser's portayal of Mary Stuart as Duessa in The Faerie Queene⁴⁹. James VI assigned the task of refuting the image of Duessa to Walter Quinn, who was tutor to the King's sons. Several of Quinn's sonnets commence with Arthurian anagrams:

A worthie peerles Prince claymes Arthur's seat,
Ceas lets Arthur I am, of Britain King,
Qui est la? Cesar Arthus princes de grand honeur,
(emphasis added) 50

The involved manipulation of the letters from Charles James Stuart in each sonnet to include the name 'Arthur' reveals Quinn's interest in the idea of the great ruler of the past. There is an introduction of the romance element, "To renew Chevalry almost forgone", and in a sense James becomes Arthur through the anagram:

Who doth me overthwart, not holding me
For Arthur, my name let him turne, and spell: 51

47 Jonson, Ben Jonson (1925-1952), Vol.VII p.509

48 Sir John Davies, The Poems (1975), pp.231-232
Camden, op.cit. (1605), p.153

Quinn, Calendar of Scottish State Papers 1595-1597 (1952), pp.
81-82

49 Ibid. (1597-1603), p.167

E.Greenlaw, Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory (1932), p.42

50 F.I.Carpenter, A Reference Guide to Edmund Spenser (1923), pp.41-42
K.Neill, "The Faerie Queene and the Mary Stuart Controversy,"
ELH, 2 (1935), pp.192-214

J.E.Phillips, Images of a Queen (1964), pp.201-203

51 Quinn, op.cit. (1595-1597), p.81

By linking Arthur and James in this manner, Quinn is able to undermine completely Spenser's intended political comment on Mary Stuart. First, the identification of Arthur with James questions Spenser's association of Duessa -- Arthur's moral enemy -- with James' mother Mary Stuart, within the context of The Faerie Queene, and further, makes an absurdity of the political identifications. More subtly, Quinn also suggests that the conclusion of the poem will be Arthur/ James' inheritance of Gloriana/ Elizabeth's throne, rather than a marriage of love.

Despite the interest Quinn's anagrams hold for us with regard to The Faerie Queene, probably the most memorable Arthurian anagram of the period is included in Joshua Sylvester's dedicatory poem from Job Triumphant (1621)⁵². The poem which is in concrete verse, like its more famous contemporaries, George Herbert's "Easter Wings" and Robert Herrick's "The Pillar of Fame", deserves to be transcribed in its entirety (see below p.265)⁵³.

Sylvester's image of "Arthur's Castle" symbolizes the throne of Britain from which Charles I rules. Although initially there appears to be no reason for using Arthur's castle other than the convenience of the letters (forming Charles Stuart), there is a sense of the particularly British quality of the symbolic material:

(Past all the Patterns
of old Rome & Greece)

However, as Charles' name is also translated into "Art's Chast Lure" and "Hart's Last Cure" it would be wrong to stress the Arthurian

52 Sylvester, The Complete Works (1880), Vol.II p.144

53 Herbert, The Metaphysical Poets (1972), p.121

Herrick, Cavalier Poets (1978), p.154

[Arthur's Castle]

*	*
<u>To</u>	<u>My</u>
AR-	<u>Hope</u>
THUR'S	<u>Heere</u>
CASTLE	<u>Hastneth,</u>
(call'd by	<u>For My</u>
ART'S CHAST LURE)	HEART'S LAST CURE.
*****	*****
Sir, You A SWEET	A REAL In My St.
have seen IDEA	ACT of L EW IS
In my Pa- Of -Our	that -Ideal Roy-All-
NARETUS, hopesinYou:	VIEVVE, Vertuous.
Here (more HEROIK,	and more HOLY-True)
<u>I bring your Highness</u>	<u>(Past all the Patterns</u>
<u>Yet a Higher Peece</u>	<u>of old Rome & Greece)</u>
Faith's PATIENT Champion, in His Triumph due.	
<u>Farre be His Crosses</u>	<u>Neer be His Courses</u>
<u>From my Prince, I pray:</u>	<u>(As the most complete</u>
In sacred GRACES that beseem The GREAT)	
Tow'rds God & Man ; in cleer or cloudy Day;	
<u>So much more needfull</u>	<u>By how much Satan</u>
<u>In This Sin-full Age,</u>	<u>(neer his end) doth rage:</u>
With Whom and His, the better Aye to wrestle,	
Great <u>Michael</u> gard & strengthen ARTHUR'S CASTLE;	
<u>Praies</u>	
<u>Prostrate</u>	
JOSHUA SYLVESTER. 54	

material too strongly. In conclusion it must be noted that although the popularity of anagrams using Arthur contributes to the shift towards symbolism in Arthurian political poetry, ultimately their interpretative inventiveness was necessarily limited.

The Arthurian tradition in the Renaissance consistently incorporates political material, and especially a general praise of the monarch. Significantly after the publication of The Faerie Queene the political allusions in Arthurian panegyric verse become increasingly symbolic. This symbolism manifests itself in the ideals of peace, unity and heroic kingship. Nevertheless, it was not until Knevett undertook a continuation of The Faerie Queene that the promise seen in Spenser's

political allegory was fulfilled. In A Supplement Knevettt concentrates primarily upon the possibility of representing and commenting upon contemporary political and religious situations. Charles I is closely identified with Prince Arthur and the unchallenged praise of the Prince in the poem reveals Knevettt's largely uncritical approach to the representation of the King. In this sense Knevettt may be classed as a panegyric poet. But the complexity of his allegoric representations and their intrinsic necessity to the overall historical and moral aspects of the work clearly align A Supplement with the great romance epics. Similarly, despite the derivation from Spenser, the political allegory of A Supplement works more effectively than that in The Faerie Queene. Knevettt's concentration upon contemporary representations, while limited in its meanings, eliminates the problems of reconciling ideal and reality in political allegory: difficulties which were clearly manifested in Book V of The Faerie Queene. The contrasts between The Faerie Queene, panegyric verse and A Supplement, which we have seen developing through an analysis of the general praise of a monarch, become more apparent in the poets' assertion of the monarch's right to the throne.

II

The Monarch's Right to the Throne

The second major theme in Arthurian political poetry of the seventeenth century is the assertion of the monarch's right to the throne. This form of verse manifests itself in two structures -- genealogies and prophecies -- both of which were utilized by Spenser in The Faerie Queene and by the writers of the major romance epics⁵⁵. The

55 Ludovico Ariosto, Orlando Furioso (1974), pp.22-27

political purpose of the genealogies and prophecies is examined by Keith Thomas in Religion and the Decline of Magic (1978). Thomas writes:

The genealogical history of rulers is endlessly rewritten to maintain the fiction of unbroken continuity with the past, while the first action of the social parvenu is to invent himself a pedigree. The facts of change are rapidly re-interpreted to sustain the illusion of a static society. 56

The prophecies share the same purpose of suggesting continuity. Thomas again confirms:

For what these predictions did was to demonstrate that there was a link between contemporary aspirations and those of remote antiquity. Their function was to persuade men that some proposed change was not so radical that it had not been foreseen by their ancestors. 57

By referring to prophecies the poets were suggesting that the accession of the king was inevitable. Thus both prophecies and genealogies asserted the contemporary monarch's political legitimacy. In this section I intend to examine how these two forms of political verse manifest themselves in A Supplement and the minor panegyric poetry.

Spenser includes a genealogy in Book II canto x of The Faerie Queene where Arthur and Guyon read their respective British and Faerie histories. By linking the early British chronology to the all-inclusive Faerie account Spenser succeeds in creating a comprehensive descent for the Prince and Gloriana, and also therefore for Elizabeth I. Thus Spenser is able to suggest the fulfilment of a universal order. Further, by the simultaneous use of the poem's allegory he is able to stimulate the reader towards an interpretation of the histories, which ultimately leads to a more complete appreciation of a final

56 Thomas, op.cit., p.505

57 Ibid., p.502

revelation⁵⁸. The genealogical material utilized in A Supplement and the panegyric verse of the early seventeenth century differs markedly from that seen in The Faerie Queene. Indeed, Knevett rejects the concept of genealogies, while the panegyrics revert to the Medieval assumption that Arthur's historical role is factual. However, both Spenser and the panegyric poets accept that genealogies are important to the glorification of the reigning monarch and they often utilize Arthurian and more general material derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain⁵⁹.

In A Supplement Knevett's rejection of genealogies can be seen clearly in Book VIII canto ix. In this canto he specifically repudiates the Trojan origin, which many poets including Spenser use to begin their genealogical tables (FQ II.x.9-13). Knevett writes:

How many Kingdomes build their pedigrees,
 Vpon the scatterd ruines of old Troy,
 As if it were an honour great to these,
 To bee deriu'd from some vnhappy boy,
 Whom hostile swords disdained to destroy,
 Or from some wandring Varlet, that durst not,
 By death an honorable name enioy,
 But his deare friends, and loueing wife forgot,
 Them leaueing to the rage of Mars and Vulcan hote.

VIII ix 4

This denial of the Troy story is repeated in Book IX where Belcoeur reproves Hypsibremetor (Braggadochio) for boasting of his Trojan descent:

While thus Sir Hypsibremetor did prate,
 Sir Belcoeur interrupted his discourse,
 Sir Knight (sayd hee) it sutes not with thy state,
 To vaunt thus of thy rotten ancestours,
 Whose worth, and vertue you cannot call yours;
 For graunt that truth dwells in this talke of thine,

58 see above Chapter II pp.66-76

59 Geoffrey of Monmouth, op.cit.

Yet ar't not thou, the better, but the worse,
 For what thy Grandsires did, if thou decline
 To doe those noble feates, which made them so divine.

For as darke Night, succedeing gladsome day,
 From it no grace, or glory, doth resume,
 But doth appeare more ougly farre away,
 So if in sloth, thy dayes, thou shalt consume,
 Their worth cannot thy sluggardise perfume;
 But as a staine on cloth of purest day,
 Or sable spot upon the whitest plume,
 So shall thy vice bee more apparantly,
 A spectacle of shame, and lothsome infamy.

IX x 44-45

In addition, Knevetts also questions the validity of the Trojan legends in Funerall Elegies:

Homer, and Virgill caroling her praise,
 (Had they liv'd now) might well have wonne the bayes,
 Although the Iliads, and the Aeneids both,
 Had nere been borne: these works were built on froth:
 For 'tis a question, not resolved yet,
 When Ilium was sack'd, or whether it,
 Was ruin'd by the Greekes at all; and why
 Should Virgill censur'd be for flattery?
 'Cause he deriv'd the great Cesarian name,
 From Varlets...

...True Vertue is my subject. 60

Rather than accepting a worthless reliance upon the past Knevetts advocates individual effort and, for verification, he refers to "Ottoman" and "Tamerlane" in history and Callimachus in A Supplement, who have all risen through their own merit to greatness from humble origins:

Not alway doe the highest mountaines beare,
 The tallest pines, the valleys low sometimes,
 As goodly masts for vessells large doe reare:
 Poore Ottoman bred in an obscure clime,
 Of parentage ignoble, and infirme,
 A beeing to the Turkish empire gave:
 From this small root a tree sprung, so sublime,

60 Knevetts, "Elegy I" 11.13-22 and 29 in Funerall Elegies, op.cit. (1966), pp.253-254

That nations build therein, and kingdomes have,
Their nests among the branches of this Cedar brave.

Great Tamerlane who with such rage, and might,
Rush'd from the East, as if the Caspian seas,
Had broke their hilly bounds, and limits quite,
Vpon the Straites of Bosphorus to sease,
And drowne the lesser Asias Provinces:
This Chieftaine was a simple Netheards sonne,
Brought up in base, and rurall offices,...

And though Callimachus, were fairely bred,
Of princely stemme, yet were in Faery Court,
Many that did in birth farre him exceed,

VIII ix 2, 3.1-7 and 6.1-3

Finally, Knevett states the importance of "vertue" and "industry" to the monarchy:

Thus Time the seedes of monarchyes doth sowe,
Which first obscur'd in base contempt may lye,
But when that Fortune doth her bright beames showe,
Vpon their vertue, and their industry,
They doe encrease in bounds, and glorious maiesty.

VIII ix 5.5-9

The fact that Knevett differs so drastically from Spenser and the panegyric poets over the essentially political device of genealogies indicates an important development. The emphasis in A Supplement is consistently upon fresh and independent beginnings rather than on inheritance and tradition.

In contrast the political panegyrics reverted to the traditional concept of genealogies as historical fact. Initially it was the interest of James I in genealogies that encouraged many writers to incorporate them in their poetry. The King's interest is attested to by Anthony Munday in A Briefe Chronicle of the Successe of Times (1611) and Roger Coke in "A.D. 1603 A Reg I" of A Detection of the Court and State of England (1719)⁶¹. Some poets merely inserted simple

61 Munday, op.cit., pp.478-479
Coke, op.cit., Vol.I p.37

genealogies into their verse, as did John Davies of Hereford, Michael Drayton, William Warner and Thomas Heywood⁶². While William Slatyer's Palae-Albion (1621) and George Buck's ΔΑΦΝΙΞ ΠΟΛΥΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΣ (1605) are, in reality, only genealogical tables culminating in praise for the King⁶³. Buck refers to the royal family tree as the "Genest Plant", which is an anagram of 'Plantagenets', and there are also references to Arthur as one of James' ancestors:

Successor and heire in all by right
To great King Artur Iesu's faithfull knight. 64

Not only is the King's right to the throne confirmed through his ancestors, but he is also praised by their glorification.

Occasionally, the genealogies made pretensions towards an instructive function, for example George Owen Harry, in the dedicatory letter to James from The Genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch, James (1604), suggests that

by recounting of our Predecessors, (if
good,) we are excited to vertue by their
Example; if badd, auerted from their vice,
for feare of their end. 65

This is comparable to the idea of 'monumental history' (see above Introduction p.10) and suggests that the King is taught by example the duties of a good monarch. Unfortunately, despite Harry's promising introduction the poem merely presents the figures and does not attempt a guiding comparison with James. The didacticism of the genealogies is confined to the creation of a highly patterned structure by the

- 62 Davies of Hereford, op.cit., p.20
Drayton, op.cit., Vol.I pp.472-474
Warner, op.cit., pp.358-359 and 378
Heywood, Troia Britannica or, Great Britaines Troy (1609), p.427
- 63 Slatyer, op.cit.
Buck, op.cit.
- 64 Buck, op.cit., fol. Eii r.
- 65 Harry, op.cit., fol. A v.

writer. The reader is intended to follow this easily, and further to accept unquestioningly the order which leads to the contemporary society. Although this ordering device may have been politically sound, the result tends to be a loss of poetic interest and depth.

The other political device used to illustrate the monarch's right to the throne is through the use of prophecies, which, by recording a precognition of the accession, suggest its inevitability. Spenser includes a prophecy made by Merlin to Britomart in Book III. However, it does not simply trace the Saxon and Welsh ancestries of Elizabeth I to prove her right to govern (III.iii.29-50). Instead, Merlin is an essential and integral part of The Faerie Queene and his prophecy serves to motivate Britomart further in her quest, to transfer the thematic 'love-quest' from Arthur to the British Maid, and to commence the uniting of private and public themes within the poem⁶⁶. However, previous Arthurian material also included prophecies so that Knevett and the panegyric poets were following both a Spenserian and a romance tradition when including this political device in their verses.

As with genealogies, Knevett's attitude to prophecies differs from that of both Spenser and the political poets. The fact that in A Supplement he attributes a prophecy to Merlin would, however, imply a certain indebtedness to all his predecessors: Spenser, the panegyrists and the romances (IX.viii.11-17)⁶⁷. However, the magician does not foretell Charles I's accession to the throne. Instead he reveals to Sir Gratian the names of those who will contribute greatly to the arts.

66 See above Chapter II pp.90-92

67 Knevett includes a parodic version of Merlin's prophecy in Rhodon and Iris, op.cit. (1966), pp.167-247; pp.202-204

Merlin praises Basilius (James I), Astrophel (Sidney), Tityrus (Chaucer) and Colin (Spenser). But Knevett concludes the prophecy with a condemnation of the inadequacies of contemporary poets:

Vnlett'd Fooles, and Buffoones impudent,
 Whose friendship is the source of drunkennes,
 Whose valour's othes, and language insolent,
 Base Flatterers, whom gaine, or fearfullnes,
 Tempts to approue of any wickednes,
 In future times shall obtaine all respect;
 Your great Magnifico's shall gather these,
 And for their dearest Cam'rades them select,
 While worth, and honesty, gaine nothing but neclect.

IX viii 16 68

The praise of past literature combined with a depreciation of contemporary works recalls one of the traditional Spenserian attitudes. The Spenserian poets idealize a past golden literary period and mourned the deterioration of literature in their own age (see above pp.218-224). The inclusion of a Spenserian attitude in Merlin's speech suggests that Knevett, who certainly needs to be regarded as a follower of Spenser, is here representing his own personal convictions. The emotional tone of the stanza further confirms Knevett's involvement in the issue outlined. Thus the complexity of Merlin's role is made evident through his dual association with the figure of a prophet and with Knevett, as well as through his simultaneous praise and condemnation of literature. In addition, the magician's emblematic presentation contributes to his ambivalent role: Sir Gratian, having slain the giant Maldesir, climbs one of the mounts of Parnassus and there

In a darke glade, he happen'd to behold
 A Father grave...

IX viii 7.2-3

68 Basilius: IX.viii.12.1; Astrophel: IX.viii.14.1; Tityrus: IX.viii.15.1; and Colin: IX.viii.15.6

The "darke glade" implies mysteries and may be morally ambiguous, but the appellation "Father" suggests a Christian role for Merlin. The magician then proceeds to explain why he is no longer on earth:

I aw'd th'infernall fiends, with my Venite,
 And all th'intentions of the starres knew well,
 But while men wonder'd at my knowledge might,
 The fabricke of my corps to ashes fell,
 My skill could not the force of Fate repell;

IX viii 9.1-5

The reference to "infernall fiends" associates Merlin with the devil and also refers to Spenser's phrase "cruell Feends" (FQ III.iii. 8.9). Yet the magician's presence on the heavenly Mount Parnassus serves to compound the presentation of his moral ambiguity.

The references in A Supplement to magic inevitably ally themselves to Merlin's role in the poem because of the Spenserian and romance uses of the magician and his arts. Knevett, however, uniformly abjures any form of magic in favour of its Christian alternative. For example, Arthur and his fellow knights renounce enchantments before the tournament for Traiecta, and Panarete uses holy water rather than magic herbs to revive Callimachus (VIII.viii.33 and VIII. ii.28)⁶⁹. Indeed, Merlin's magic itself, is condemned in comparison to the Lady of the Lake's power to defeat enchantments (IX.i.25-28). In the light of these earlier associations, Merlin's moral worth must be considered not just ambivalent but more completely reprehensible. This rejection of Merlin and his magic arts is combined with a dismissal of prophecy. Knevett's distrust of magic and prophecy is also expressed in Rhodon and Iris where, to create disorder, the wicked Agnostus prophecies like Merlin:

69 c.f. also VIII.i. : a denial of astrology

Ag. Twice twenty times and ten, hath Titan run
 Quite through the Zodiacke, since I begun
 To converse with wise fiends, that I might get
 The golden key of Natures Cabinet.
 By industry I got immortall fame,
 For ignorance begets contempt and shame:
 So perfect in the Magicke Arts I grew,
 That natures secrets most abstruse I knew
 The spirits of ayre and earth did me dread,
 And did at my venite come with speed; 70

The reason for Knevett's attitude is clearly perceived through the earlier preference for Christian virtues, which coincides with the overall concern with religious events in A Supplement⁷¹. However, this does not explain the unusual literary content and ambivalent presentation of Merlin's prophecy.

The Arthurian magician appears only twice in A Supplement and on both occasions he is related to the arts and learning: IX.i.25-28 and IX.viii.11-17. As we have seen, in the latter instance Merlin is morally ambiguous and the art of which he prophecies is similarly both praiseworthy and worthless. In the former situation there is also a moral duality related to the magic and art presented. Sir Belcoeur tells the tale of Iustine and Lereall in the first canto of Book IX which introduces the reader to the second theme of the Book of Liberality, that of learning and the arts⁷². Although this aspect of Book IX is dealt with later it is important at this point in the Chapter to appreciate the relationship of Merlin and magic to art and literature.

Sir Iustine, as his name suggests, represents the just cause which

70 Knevett, op.cit. (1966), pp.202-203

71 See below pp.283-285

Also Sir Simonds D'Ewes, The Primitive Practise for Preserving Truth (1645), pp.27-28

Prideaux, op.cit., pp.289-290

72 First theme -- liberality. For the role of the arts in Book IX see below pp.287-290

through his supporters -- the nine Muses -- becomes that of true art and learning⁷³. The challenger, Sir Lereall, as his name suggests is symbolic of impudent slander (ΛΙΠΟΞ : impudence and ΙΑΛΛ : to assail with words). Thus the two knights parallel the two forms of literature present in Merlin's prophecy. Iustine, again following the theme of the prophecy, is defeated by Lereall, because the latter champion has unfairly used a magic lance which has been made by Merlin:

For hee [Lereall] is owner of a lance (they say)
Which was compos'd by Merlins skill, and care,
And dight by him with vertues singular,
For by direction of the starres divine,
By their aspects, and influences rare,
Hee did this weapon forge of mettall fine,
Temper'd by magicke art, and cunning masculine.

IX i 25.3-9

Lereall, however, is in turn defeated by Arthur, for the Prince carries a shield which has been made by the Lady of the Lake:

This targe the Lady of the Lake,
On him bestow'd, it was indu'd with might,
To frustrate all enchantments, and to make
All magicall inventions vaine, and light,
Quelling the rage of all infernall spite.

IX i 28.1-5

Arthur's shield is an essential emblematic device in Spenser's description of the Prince and its creation by Merlin is of great importance to the meaning (see above pp.38-42). For Knevett to contradict Spenser's poem points to a very important statement on poetic theme and moral belief. Merlin is dismissed as unworthy because he uses "magicke art", while the Lady of the Lake's shield is approved because it confounds "all enchantments" and "magicall inventions vaine". The choice of the Lady herself is probably due to her traditional opposition to Merlin and to her romance role as bestower of the sword Excalibur on Arthur⁷⁴. More importantly, this relates the Lady of the Lake

73 Muses : IX. i.6-9

74 FQ III.iii.10-11

Malory, Works (1977), p.35

to Spenser and the earlier romances, both of which are approved of in the prophecy (canto viii). Thus the prophecy and the battle between Lereall and Iustine echo one another. Iustine represents true learning which in the prophecy is embodied by Basilius, Tityrus, Astrophel and Colin. Lereall, who symbolizes false art and impudent slander recalls the "Buffoones impudent" of the prophecy. Iustine is defeated by Lereall in the same way that Merlin says true learning has been supplanted by false art. Further, in the narrative sequence the differences between the two opposing art forms are underlined by the account of Arthur's defeat of Lereall with the aid of the Lady of the Lake. Arthur and the Lady are able to triumph over Lereall, that is 'false art', because they symbolize the great romance and Spenserian literature of the past. Thus, like the prophecy, the battle between Lereall and Iustine idealizes past literary achievements and condemns the contemporary deterioration from perfection.

Knevett's attitude to art is made clear both through Merlin's prophecy and the battle of Lereall and Iustine. He reveres the literature of the past, but believes that in his own age true worth is largely ignored and that false artists have triumphed too often. Knevett proceeds to link the spurious art to Merlin and magic because in his consideration both are false and have made false claims to moral worth. This rejection of Merlin, magic and prophecies presents the reader with the second important difference between A Supplement and The Faerie Queene. Together with the emphasis on fresh beginnings and independence, the rejection of magic and the depreciation of contemporary literature will be analysed more closely in section IV of the Chapter.

Unlike Merlin's prophecies in A Supplement and The Faerie Queene, those in the panegyric verse of the early seventeenth century were not used in a literary manner. Instead the prophecies were directed towards an acceptance of their own validity and a support for the Stuart ascent to the throne. Because James had utilized the prophecies foretelling the unification of England and Scotland under the name 'Britain', references to the prediction of that union and the change of name came to be included in many poems, such as George Owen Harry's The Genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch James, Drayton's "To the Majestie of King James" and Warner's Albions England⁷⁵. In William Harbert's A Prop-
hesie of Cadwallader, Cadwallader reads four books of prophecies and in the last book James is mentioned:

He with vnnumbred linkes of Reason's chaine,
Shall three in one, and one in three vnite,
Britaine should be the name... 76

Similarly, William Alexander writes to James in his dedicatory preface to The Monarchike Tragedies (1604 edition):

The World long'd for thy birth three hundreth yeeres,
Since first fore-told wrapt in Propheticke rimes;
His love to thee, the Lords deliveries cleeres, 77

Alexander compounds the assertion of the Arthurian prophecy's validity by a suggestion that these events have been preordained by God⁷⁸.

A more realistic attitude towards prophecies can be seen in Sir

75 Geoffrey of Monmouth, op.cit., pp.170-185

Les Prophecies de Merlin (1526)

Harry, op.cit., pp.39-40

Drayton, op.cit., Vol.I p.473

Warner, op.cit., p.164

76 Harbert, op.cit., pp.182-183

77 Alexander, op.cit., pp.3-4

78 A.E.Parsons, "The Trojan Legend in England," MLR, XXIV (1929), pp.253-264 and 394-408; pp.407-408

Francis Bacon's reference to one of the most famous predictions on James I's accession to the throne of England:

The Trivial prophecy which I heard, when I was a child, and Queen Elizabeth was in the flower of her years, was:

When Hempe is sponne,
England's done.

Whereby it was generally conceived that after the princes had reigned which had the principal letters of that word hempe (which were Henry, Edward, Mary, Philip, and Elizabeth), England should come to utter confusion: which, thanks be to God, is verified only in the change of the name; for that the King's style is now no more of England, but of Britain. 79

Despite Bacon's dismissal of the prophecy the fact that he devotes attention to this form of political doggerel suggests its importance during the early seventeenth century. Indeed, Sir John Harington also refers to the popularity of 'hempe' in his Tract on the Succession to the Crown⁸⁰. Finally, despite the popularity of prophecies in panegyric verse and their political soundness, they inevitably fail to interest the reader to the same degree as the symbolic or allegorical uses of the Arthurian material.

Although Spenser, Knevet and the panegyrists include Arthurian material in their political poetry, the ways in which they utilize this form of verse differs markedly. As we have seen, the divergences initially appear in the symbolic praise of the monarch but become more apparent when considering the genealogies and prophecies often included in the political poetry. For Spenser both the histories and Merlin's prediction are incorporated so completely into the allegoric structure of the poem that the tracing of Elizabeth I's ancestry represents

79 Bacon, Essays (1972), p.111

80 Harington, op.cit. (1602), p.17

only a part of the whole meaning. Conversely, the panegyrists elevate the historical context of both genealogies and prophecies to the exclusion of any literary import. Thus the minor political poems revert to a sixteenth century acceptance of Arthur's historicity and the Tudor myth⁸¹. Whereas the panegyrists appear to revert to a pre-Spenserian attitude, Knevett moves beyond the political concerns evinced in favour of Christianity. This may be taken to reveal that Knevett's beliefs are more closely aligned with those of Milton than with the all-encompassing attitude found in Spenser's work⁸². More importantly, however, Knevett rejects inherited greatness and emphasizes the necessity of independent effort. This again resembles Milton's approach in Paradise Lost. But with regard to the political context it also reveals Knevett's clear intention to teach, as well as to praise, the reigning monarch⁸³. However, the full import of these novel themes will be discussed below in section IV.

III

Detailed Representations of Contemporary Political Events

The first two poetic devices used in Arthurian panegyric poetry, that is the general praise of the monarch and the assertion of his right to the throne, have already been discussed. The third device used in relation to Arthurian verse is the detailed representation of contemporary political events through allegory. However, although important to Spenser and essential to Knevett, this form of political allegory was not adopted by the panegyrists. The reason for this omission is that the panegyric verses were often simply too short for this form of

81 See above Introduction pp.5-8

82 See below Chapter VII pp. 316-326

83 See below Chapter VII pp. 308-309

representation to be effective. Further, the complex contemporary allegory was too lengthy and detailed in structure to provide the short and emphatic stress required by the panegyrists. In longer works, such as A Supplement and The Faerie Queene, complex and extended contemporary political allegory plays an important part and in both poems Arthur is used in these representations of current events. However, in addition to the general analysis of the allegory, it is also important to examine the differences between the two works.

The detailed political allegory involving Arthur in The Faerie Queene is concentrated in Book V where the Prince represents the British forces and the Earl of Leicester in the Netherlands campaign of 1585, but also, Protestant religion opposing the Catholic forces of Spain (V.x.6-39 and xi.1-35; see above Chapter III pp.128-132). In A Supplement the close political allegory is found throughout the poem. As we have already seen, Albanio consistently represents James I, while Arthur embodies Charles I together with the King's forces and ambitions. The contemporary events are utilized most extensively in Book VIII. The titular knight of the Book of Fortitude is Callimachus whose coat of arms identifies him as Gustavus Adolphus II of Sweden:

...and on his shield he bare three garlands, in faire port
VIII i 11.9

and the events in this Book are mainly concerned with Gustavus' battles against the Catholic League. Arthur represents the forces of Charles I in one of the Protestant campaigns described by Knevett in Book VIII. Frederick Henry of Nassau, Prince of Orange (Uranion) attacked the Spanish forces (Ferraugh) at Maestricht (Traiecta) to liberate the town and expell Catholicism (Malfida) in 1632. The English forces (Arthur) had come to aid Frederick. After the victory Maestricht was joined to the Protestant United Provinces of the Netherlands (Marinella)

(VIII.viii.14-44)⁸⁵. Arthur's role in this canto is repeated to a certain extent in Book IX canto xi, where he again enters a tournament, this time representing Charles I's ambition to gain mastery of the seas. The Prince and his companion, Sir Merhonour (honour of the seas) enter a joust to win the hand of Thalastera of Britomaria, who as her name suggests, symbolizes the rule of the British seas. This latter identification is confirmed by the Lady's appearance⁸⁶:

Whereon faire Thalastera first was seene,
 Enthroniz'd in a carre of iuory
 Drawne by a teme of Dolphins, like that Queene
 Which is the soveraigne Lady of the Waters greene.

IX xi 11.6-9

The Prince triumphs and Sir Merhonour weds Thalastera. Thus Knevetts praises the King for his success in gaining mastery of the seas around Britain, as he formerly elevated Charles' troops for their success in the battle of Maestricht. Both A Supplement and The Faerie Queene utilize the close allegoric representations in presenting the monarch's foreign ambitions as praiseworthy and successful. There is no condemnation of either Charles or Elizabeth. Also, Knevetts follows Spenser by concentrating upon campaigns in the Netherlands, which were part of the same war between Protestant and Catholic factions that had featured in Book V of The Faerie Queene.

85 Lavender, Vol.II p.792, note on VIII.i.11.9:

three royal crowns in a fair frame; this "clue" to the identity of Callimachus...points strongly to Gustavus Adolphus II, King of Sweden and easily the greatest and most celebrated figure of the Protestant cause during the Thirty Years' War. The coat-of-arms of Gustavus Adolphus and the Swedish royal family carries three "garlands," or royal crowns. And although a "foreigner", Gustavus Adolphus qualified as a knight of the "Faery court", having received the Order of the Garter, England's most distinguished badge of chivalry, from Charles I in 1627.

86 ©AAAZA : the sea

In Book V of The Faerie Queene Arthur represents the British forces and Leicester, but he also symbolizes the Protestant triumph over Catholicism. Knevetts reflected Spenser in this interweaving of political and religious allegory, and both poets often appear to present the two as indivisible⁸⁷. Apart from the obvious triumph of Arthur as the Protestant British forces over the Spanish Catholic troops (Ferraugh) in the battle for Traiecta/ Maestricht, Aquilino, the oppressor of Leucippe, represents the Habsburg Holy Roman Empire throughout Book VIII, and the dragon threatening Mont Plaisant in canto iii symbolizes the Catholic Church (VIII.iii.13.1-4)⁸⁸. But neither Arthur nor Callimachus appears as idealized Protestant saviour, as the Prince does in Book V of The Faerie Queene. Knevetts's detailed contemporary allegory, whether religious or political, remains within the boundaries of real events, and Arthur is presented only as the British Protestant King and his troops and never as a personification of a doctrinal belief.

A comparison of the detailed contemporary religious allegory in A Supplement and The Faerie Queene yields another important difference between Knevetts and Spenser. In Book V of The Faerie Queene Arthur is made to represent simultaneously the real British forces and an unreal idealized conception of Protestantism. In Chapter III the failure of this attempt to unite two disparate themes within the figure of Arthur has been discussed and the resulting distancing of the reader noted (see above pp.128-132). In A Supplement Knevetts's dedication to a true representation of contemporary events excludes any moral consideration and although he could never hope to rival Spenser poetically, in

87 Contemporary political and religious allegory were often compounded in the Renaissance; for example, see below Chapter VII pp. 327-340

88 Note also VII.x

this one aspect of the continuation the later writer is the more successful. Knevet's ability to convey the contemporary responses to political events is clearly shown in canto xii of Book VIII where Callimachus dies without completing his quest:

Since life (quoth hee) refuseth to abide
 And Death I see my proiect will prevent,
 While still Leucippe suffers, by the pride
 Of Aquilino fierce, and insolent,
 To punish whose iniustice I was bent,
 (My deare Vittoria) I doe thee request,
 My last respects to Gloriane to present,
 Tell her how I, by sudaine Death opprest,
 Did want no willing mind, to fulfill her behest.

Loe I Callimachus, that here am layd
 Fitt for the common Hospitall of Death,
 Haue lost my life Leucippe faire to aide,
 Yet thinke I not I haue mispent my breath,
 Beeing assur'd of a triumphall wreath;
 Thus spake the Knight while lasted uitall force,
 Perpetuall sleepe would him permitt vnneath
 To speake ought more, shutteing those iuory dores
 Of his cleare eyne, then he became a senceles corse.

VIII xii 37-38

Up to the last canto of Book VIII the reader has generally been allowed to trust his expectations, founded upon the knowledge that A Supplement follows The Faerie Queene in most respects. The conclusion therefore to Callimachus' quest should be the successful defeat of Aquilino and the beginning of the triumphant return to the Faery court. Instead, the reader is shocked when Callimachus not only fails in his quest but also dies. The reason for this final twist in the narrative of Book VIII is partly because Gustavus Adolphus, whom Callimachus represents, died in battle on November 16th 1632. But more importantly, Knevet wishes to reproduce for the reader the shock felt by the Protestant world at the King of Sweden's death. By utilizing the reader's literary expectations A Supplement completely succeeds in echoing the contemporary feelings about the event. From the awareness of Knevet's achievement in

detailed political allegory in comparison with Spenser, we can deduce another important difference between the two poets. A Supplement concentrates upon that which is 'true' in the sense of contemporary reality. This move towards realism will now be considered, together with the other thematic divergences.

IV

The Comparison of 'The Faerie Queene', the Panegyric Poems and 'A Supplement'

The major Arthurian similarities between The Faerie Queene, the panegyrics and A Supplement have already been identified through the three devices which these works utilized in their political poetry. Knevett and the panegyrists concur with Spenser in their emphasis upon interpretative symbolism, and partly in the assertion of the monarch's right to the throne through prophecies and genealogies. Finally, Knevett follows Spenser in many aspects including the use of detailed allegory to convey contemporary political events. The other more obvious similarities between A Supplement and The Faerie Queene reside first, in their basic structures; secondly, in the moral allegory; and finally, in the numerous likenesses between characters and sequences, such as Arthur finding Callimachus in a death-like state as the Prince had earlier found Guyon (A Supplement VIII.ii. 18-20 and FQ II.viii.23-27)⁸⁹. The differences between Spenser, the political poets and

89 Other similarities are: (i) Albanio and Irene resemble the Red Cross Knight and Una; the magician Misanactus (Archimago) sends a vision to delude Albanio (RCK) into believing that Irene (Una) is being unfaithful. A Supplement VII.xi.14-20 : FQ I.ii.2-6
 (ii) Bower of Bliss scenes. A Supplement VII.x.1-8 : FQ II.xii
 (iii) Irene and her dwarf meet Arthur as Una and her dwarf meet the Prince. A Supplement VII.xi.34-35 : FQ I.vii.28-29
 (iv) Arthur is related to a noble savage, Sir Eupraton when he knights him. A Supplement VIII.x.39 : FQ VI.v.25-32

Knevett are, however, far more important than the similarities, since they reveal the works' essential and individual characteristics. The most interesting divergence of the panegyrics is their overwhelming concern with the impression of continuity and stability especially in the prophecies and genealogies. They look back to an already established tradition, and are only able to utilize Spenser's perfected Arthur and interpretative Arthurian symbolism because it is qualified by the Medieval romances. In the final assessment of the Arthurian panegyric verse it must be accepted that although they were enhanced by the liberating features of The Faerie Queene, their own purpose prevented them from fulfilling a completely allegoric role.

As we have seen, the differences between A Supplement and The Faerie Queene often arise from the fact that, for Knevett, Arthur is clearly identified with Charles I. This central development proves to be detrimental to the other Arthurian themes, both romance and Spenserian. In A Supplement Knevett rejects the emphasis on love and Neoplatonism and the use of Arthur as a moral exemplar. He refuses to engage the problem of how to reconcile God's foreknowledge with man's free will, and he rejects the main Spenserian poetic structure. Yet despite these moral losses, Knevett is more successful with his Arthurian political allegory than Spenser, especially in the comparison of Book V with Book VIII. In its overriding political concern, A Supplement is more akin to the political panegyrics than to The Faerie Queene. But in other developments away from Spenser it stands alone. These latter differences have been identified. Examining them in more detail will provide a key to Knevett's overwhelming political concern.

The analysis of Knevet's qualified independence from Spenser will proceed as follows: (i) the disillusionment with contemporary literature; (ii) the associated ambivalent attitude to art and magic; (iii) the search for new beginnings and independence; and (iv) the move towards realism. This examination will point not only to significant differences between A Supplement and The Faerie Queene, but to a hitherto unnoticed trend in Arthurian political poetry, which encapsulates the important conceptual link between Spenser's work and Dryden's opera King Arthur.

While Book IX of A Supplement concentrates upon the moral virtue of liberality, it also develops the parallel theme of literature in general, which is made apparent through the numerous sequences concerning literary attitudes and developments. These instances mostly reinforce the ambiguous moral nature of contemporary art which has already been partially illuminated through the analysis of Merlin's prophecy in canto viii. In canto iii Knevet tells the story of Philodore, an artist and clerk who is corrupted by his love of gifts, while in canto v a masque is used to deceive Eleutheria so that the wicked Coravido may abduct her (iii.11-38 and v.17-30)⁹⁰. In canto vii the nine Muses weep for Technophil (Spenser) who has died trying to stop Crysophilia (love of gold) and Maldesir (foul desire) taking over Parnassus (vii. 7-10). Finally, in canto xi, Arthur enters a tournament for Thalastera which proves to be a "Battle of the Books" for the romance hero must fight Sir Amadis de Gaule of the numerous French tales and Sir Agramant who recalls the King of Africa in Ariosto's Orlando Furioso. The following

90 Knevet himself wrote a masque, Rhodon and Iris, op.cit.

day Sir Merhonour battles with Sir Huon, another famous romance figure (xi.16-30)⁹¹. Apart from the last sequence, art is condemned for its deceptive abilities and the corruption born from the love of gifts and gold. Knevett's disillusionment with literature, however, is made even more emphatic at the beginning of Book IX in Belcoeur's tale of Iustine and Lereall.

Although this sequence has already been outlined (see above pp. 275-277) a fuller description is necessary for a more complete appreciation of its implications. The joust between the two knights concerns the right to an emblem, which consists of a crown, a laurel wreath and a book. Although Sir Iustine is supported by Celesia and "those Virgins nine" (24.6), he is defeated by Sir Lereall because the latter possesses a magic spear, Chrysaker, which has been made by Merlin. Despite this victory, Lereall is eventually defeated by Prince Arthur whose own powerful shield renders the magic of Chrysaker useless. The allegoric meaning of this incident is most easily explained through an identification of the characters and emblems involved. As was noted previously in this Chapter, Sir Iustine's name implies a "juster cause" (21.1), which is confirmed by his Lady's identity (Celesia: celestial one), and is related to art through the association with the Muses. Iustine is also, through the idea of justice, connected with Arthegall who, like him, has been defeated by Lereall:

Sr Arthegall, whom in a full carreere,
Hee [Lereall] did vnhorse, and layd on ground in heavy cheere.
IX i 26.8-9

91 Amadis: The Ancient, Famous And Honourable History of Amadis de Gaule (1619)

Agramant: Ariosto, *op.cit.*, 41.68-42.9, pp.492-498

Huon: The Ancient, Honorable, Famous, and delightfull Historie of Huon of Bourdeaux (1601)

Moreover, just as Sir Arthegall fails to triumph over the slanderous attacks of Envy and Detraction in The Faerie Queene so here Iustine cannot defeat the impudent verbal assaults of Lereall⁹². Contrastingly, Sir Lereall's name (explained on page 276) suggests an impudent or insolent attack with words, a meaning which is underlined when Knevett writes that,

...swell'd up with insolence,
 Hee battell 'gainst Prince Arthur durst durraine
 IX i 27.1-2 (emphasis added)

Sir Lereall's sword "Chrysaker" links him with Sir Arthegall as well, for the Knight of Justice's sword is called 'Chrysaor'. However, unlike Iustine, Lereall parodies Arthegall because Chrysaor means golden sword, while Chrysaker means golden maimer (XPY : gold and AKAP : to maim). There is also a consequential parody, then, of Arthegall's true likeness, Iustine. The conclusion to be drawn from the associations with Arthegall compounds the original identifications, for Iustine is seen to be the true representative of learning, whereas Lereall is merely a parody.

The shield over which the two knights fight, through the symbols of book and wreath, carries obvious connotations of learning. However, the combination of the book and laurel wreath together with a crown suggests "Academy". In Cesare Ripa's Iconologia "Academy" is portrayed as a lady wearing the crown of academic thought, carrying the wreath of the forces of poetry, and having books at her feet to suggest the value of academic study⁹³. The owner of the shield, true learning, is defeated and "Academy" becomes the property of impudent slander, a meaning which

92 FQ V.xii.28-43

93 Ripa, op.cit. (1625), fig.2, pp.2-6

closely resembles Merlin's condemnation of contemporary literature in canto viii. Finally, although Belcoeur's tale does end with Arthur's victory, it has occurred before the combat of Lereall and Iustine⁹⁴. Knevett looks back on the Arthurian/ Spenserian past age as a golden age of art, and analogously he is bitterly disillusioned with contemporary learning and literature.

Through its reference to an ideal past and the condemnation of the present, Knevett in A Supplement reveals an important Spenserian trend (see above Chapter V pp.218-224), which resembles a similar attitude seen in the political panegyrics where Arthur's historicity is vehemently asserted. A striking example of this is provided by John Davies of Hereford's Microcosmos (1603), in which he stresses the truth of the Arthurian material while clearly aware of the antiquarian debate surrounding it⁹⁵. Davies wishes to dismiss the doubts and uncertainties about far distant British history:

so dissolve Oblivion's foggy mists,
And blind the Eies of squint-Ei'd Satyrists,

and he suggests that the writers who deny the historicity of Arthur are "they that most envie our Brittish fame"⁹⁶, perhaps alluding to the Italian Polydore Vergil. Similar references to doubt can be found in Drayton's "To the Majestie of King James", Henry Chettle's "England's Mourning Garment" and William Harbert's A Prophetie of Cadwallader⁹⁷. Each writer suggests that the Arthurian material is true in spite of

94 IX.i.27.1: the battle is introduced by "But whilome," that is, formerly

95 Davies of Hereford, op.cit.

96 Ibid., pp.20-21

97 Drayton, op.cit., Vol.I p.474

Chettle, op.cit., p.544

Harbert, op.cit., p.244

contemporary doubts about its historicity. The reason for this emphatic assertion is that the contemporary rejections had instigated an angry response which triggered an over-enthusiastic attempt to protect all the material indiscriminately. The similarity between these political poets, the Spenserians and Knevett lies in their revisionist response to contemporary condemnation of Arthurian, and often of Spenserian literature as well. The pervasive impact of this development became an important feature of post-Spenserian Arthurian poetry, even though the Spenserians and panegyrist themselves confined their dissent to indignant repudiation. In A Supplement, Knevett's anger and disillusionment at contemporary literature combine with the other differences from The Faerie Queene to provide the next conceptual development in seventeenth century Arthurian literature --a search for something more inherently 'true'.

Knevett's rejection of all forms of magic and Merlin has already been discussed. The important point extracted from this was that A Supplement elevated Christianity as the sole true doctrinal belief. Indeed, Spenserian Neoplatonism is completely ignored⁹⁸. It seems probable that a rejection of art and literature together with the simultaneous suggestion that Christianity symbolizes moral perfection would result in a primarily religious poem or even a doctrinal tract. This expectation is supported by the fact that Milton followed this course. But for Knevett, either the impact of The Faerie Queene was too powerful or perhaps, as a poet, he was too subdued, rather than reject the Arthurian material he adopted an essentially new approach.

98 See above pp.273-277

The desire for something new and 'more true' than literature and the ideologies expressed in The Faerie Queene led Knevet to renege on traditional Arthurian and Spenserian concepts. Spenser had encapsulated in his poem the idea of an inner perfect knowledge which could be revealed through a series of mystical revelations that in literature were orchestrated by the artist. Truth was a static, if mysterious, concept which was objectively obtainable and to which the artist as vates had greatest access. A Supplement differs from the two basic premises of this approach. For Knevet the artist was on the same level as the reader, as for example when he criticises James I and contemporary literature directly in an authorial voice rather than creating a series of events whose interpretation led to this conclusion (VI I.xii.1-7 and IX.viii.15-16). Secondly, there is no concept of an existing perfect truth in Knevet's poem. Rather there is a sense of inevitable moving and searching even after failure, as when Callimachus dies entreating Vittoria to pursue the quest to aid Leucippe (VIII. xii.37-38). In order to discover 'truth', Knevet concludes, one must not rely upon the past but search for something fresh, and instead of examining existing beliefs and concepts one must move outwards in new directions. Rather than the cyclical internal truth of The Faerie Queene, A Supplement introduces the linear external search for truth in Arthurian literature.

As we have already noted, Milton also felt the need to present something 'more true' than the Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene, and responded accordingly by ultimately rejecting Arthur completely in favour of Christianity. The 'truth' for Knevet was more prosaic. The contemporary political and religious world seemed to him more relevant and more 'real' than the allegories of literature or moral doctrines.

The reason why Knevett chose to follow the political Arthurian allegory in The Faerie Queene is that, to him, it revealed the truth to a far greater extent than did the abstract moral allegory of other parts of the poem.

V

This Chapter has examined the Arthurian political poetry of the first half of the seventeenth century, concentrating upon the works of the panegyric poets and Knevett's A Supplement. Through a study of the three central aspects of seventeenth century Arthurian political poetry, the general praise of the monarch, the assertion of his right to the throne and the detailed representations of contemporary events, the extent of Spenser's influence on the panegyrists and the differences between The Faerie Queene and A Supplement have been demonstrated. In conclusion we need to accept that although Spenser's Arthurian material did influence and improve the panegyrics, their poetic limitations inevitably were accentuated by overriding political purposes.

The divergences of Knevett's work from Spenser's enhanced our perception of the effect of the incipient disillusionment with contemporary literature and Spenserian themes, and its part in a search for something more relevant and true. The result was a concentration upon contemporary political allegory. Thus the panegyric poets and Knevett pursued only the political aspects of the Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene. Because it was no longer partly at least identified with moral perfection, the Arthurian literary tradition was inevitably devalued. By the middle of the seventeenth century the figure of Arthur as portrayed by Spenser had become divided into his moral and political roles. The former had been completely rejected by Milton, while the latter

was preserved in isolation by Knevet. Before the discovery of A Supplement the adoption a century later of Spenser's Arthurian political material by Dryden seemed rather unusual. Dryden almost certainly did not know Knevet's work, but the presence of A Supplement proves that the idea of Arthurian political allegory was an accepted concept at a point mid-way between Spenser and Dryden. The importance of Ralph Knevet's A Supplement of the Faery Queene is confirmed by its dual role as running parallel to Milton's The History of Britain and providing the conceptual link between Spenser's The Faerie Queene and Dryden's King Arthur.

Chapter Seven

But Arthur, as a sort of counterpoise to his extravagant reputation during the middle ages, was doomed, in the seventeenth century, to be reluctantly abandoned by Milton and Dryden, and to be celebrated by the pen of Blackmore. ¹

Scott's quotation implies that the latter part of the seventeenth century could fairly be entitled "The Barren Age of Arthurian Literature" ². R.F.Brinkley in Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century (1932) and J.D.Merriman in The Flower of Kings (1973) -- the only two critical texts which trace the development of Arthurian legend in this period -- both concur with Scott's pessimistic judgement ³. Brinkley discusses Arthur's role in Milton's The History of Britain (1670), but centres her argument mainly upon Blackmore's Prince Arthur (1695) and King Arthur (1700) (12 pages as opposed to 49). Her conclusion is significantly expressed in exclusively negative terms:

It [the Arthurian story in the seventeenth century] has revealed to us a poetic legend shorn of its romance and used by statesmen for the practical purpose of politics; it has accounted for the discredit heaped upon British legend with the development of interest in law and the new admiration for the Saxons; it has shown how it fell into a period of extreme disrepute with the downfall of the Stuarts and the establishment of the Commonwealth; and it has indicated the substitution for the traditional British-Tudor-Stuart usage by a new kind of employment growing out of the changed conception of political allegory which in the later years of the century implied the use of parallel

- 1 Sir Walter Scott, "King Arthur" in Vol.VIII of The Dramatic Works of John Dryden, ed. G.Saintsbury (1882), p.126
- 2 E.Van der Ven-Ten Bensel, "The Barren Age," Chapter VIII of The Character of King Arthur in English Literature (1925)
- 3 Brinkley, op.cit., pp.123-195
Merriman, op.cit., pp.54-72

ancient stories for the discussion of contemporary people and events. 4

Merriman devotes only seventeen pages to the whole period and concludes of Arthur in an equally pessimistic tone:

As for the great king himself, in the popular imagination he sank low enough during the century to be easily linked with such folk figures as Jack the Giant Killer and Tom Thumb...From such folk elements and such puerile humor, it is clear that in such tales Arthur was being relegated to the nursery. And perhaps, as MacCallum observed, that was the best place for him "till he should be healed of the greivous wound that the rationalism of the period had dealt him, and return once more to gladden the hearts of his Britons." 5

From the point of view of literary excellence, Arthurian literature is presumed to peak in the Middle Ages, to decline gradually throughout the Renaissance and to come to a temporary conclusion in the comparative vacuum of the last fifty years of the seventeenth century. Subsequently, emancipated from previous influences, the romantic treatment of Arthur is once more free to grow until its Medieval traditions are fully reinstated by Tennyson in Idylls of the King (1857-1888) 6 .

In this Chapter I intend to show that the Arthurian tradition in the Renaissance does not follow the simple course erroneously ascribed to it by Brinkley and Merriman. Instead, rather than revealing an absence of Arthurian traditions, the latter half of the seventeenth century, through the works of Milton and Dryden, can be seen as the

4 Brinkley, op.cit., pp.194-195

Brinkley writes fifteen pages on Milton (126-141) and five on Dryden (141-146), yet forty nine pages on Blackmore (146-195).

5 Merriman, op.cit., p.72

6 Tennyson, op.cit., in The Poems of Tennyson, ed .C.Ricks (1969), pp.1460-1756

continuation of the essentially Renaissance treatment of Arthur, which had been initiated by Spenser and perpetuated by Jonson and the Spenserians. In his minor poems, Milton reveals an attraction to the Arthurian material as used by Spenser and indeed contemplated writing an *Arthuriad* himself ⁷. However, he relinquished this aim for the sake ultimately of the superior claim of the intrinsically valid Christian epic, *Paradise Lost* (1667) ⁸. Similarly, Dryden was attracted by the idea of an Arthurian epic poem, and in his opera, *King Arthur* (1691) revived many of Spenser's Arthurian themes ⁹. Through an analysis of Milton's ideas about a proposed *Arthuriad* and of Dryden's opera *King Arthur*, I shall show how their interest evolves from the concept of a national and heroic epic. Spenser's treatment of Arthur in *The Faerie Queene* had rejected the tragic romance king of the Medieval period and Spenser had propounded a figure inextricably bound to the concept of an all-encompassing national epic poem. Indeed, it proved to be both the strength and the weakness of Renaissance Arthurian literature that the material was closely linked to this tradition of great national poets and poetry. Partly for that reason, the Arthurian theme attracted only those writers, such as Milton and Dryden, who could hope to rival the national epic poets of Greece and Rome. In this Chapter therefore, I shall argue that in the latter half of the seventeenth century Arthurian literature retained a considerable imaginative force. I shall concentrate upon the persistent perpetuation of those Renaissance themes in the works of Milton and Dryden which provide a significant contribution to the Arthurian tradition, and which will finally proffer an explanation

7 E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Miltonic Setting* (1947), pp.188-197

8 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler (1979)

9 Dryden, "King Arthur" in Vol. VIII of *The Dramatic Works*, *op.cit.*, pp.123-201; all page references are to this edition.

as to why Tennyson's Idylls of the King was in its first format entitled The Epic ¹⁰.

The development of Arthurian tradition in the seventeenth century is inextricably linked to Spenser's treatment of Arthur in The Faerie Queene. This influence can be seen primarily in the early Stuart masque and in the works of the Spenserians. In her classic study of this latter group of poets Joan Grundy refers to Milton as a "Spenserian type". Similarly, H.E.Cory in "Spenser, the School of the Fletchers, and Milton" (1912) argues for the lasting impact of Spenser's influence and notes that

...the hero of Spenser was as much in Milton's mind as the hero of the chronicles and romances. ¹¹

Further confirmation of this indebtedness is provided by, among others, E.M.W.Tillyard, The Miltonic Setting (1947), T.H.Banks, Milton's Imagery (1950) and J.B.Leishman, Milton's Minor Poems (1969) ¹².

Finally, Milton's general admiration of Spenser is evident from his own comments in Comus (1634) where Spenser, as Meliboeus, is said to be "The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains" (822), and in Areopagitica (1644),

10 Tennyson, op.cit., pp.582-584; "The Epic" became lines 170 to 440 in "The Passing of Arthur" from Idylls.

11 J.Grundy, The Spenserian Poets (1969), p.207
Cory, op.cit., University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 2.5 (1910-1912), pp.311-373; p.349

12 Tillyard, op.cit., pp.185-192
Banks, op.cit., pp.167-250
Leishman, op.cit., pp.33-39

...our sage and serious Poet Spenser, whom
I dare be known to think a better teacher
then Scotus or Aquinas, describing true
temperance under the person of Guion. 13

Similarly, Dryden's King Arthur reveals both a specific and a general indebtedness to The Faerie Queene, which will be discussed in the last section of this Chapter¹⁴. Nevertheless, Dryden's admiration of Spenser is rather more qualified than Milton's. In A Discourse Concerning Satire (1693) in which he praises Spenser's poetic merit and the function of Prince Arthur in The Faerie Queene, Dryden simultaneously condemns the poem for its lack of unity:

The English have only to boast of Spenser and Milton, who neither of them wanted either genius or learning to have been perfect poets; and yet both of them are liable to many censures. For there is no uniformity in the design of Spenser: he aims at the accomplishment of no one action; he raises up a hero for every one of his adventures; and endows each of them with some particular moral virtue, which renders them all equal, without any subordination or preference. Every one is most valiant in his own legend: only we must do him that justice to observe that magnanimity, which is the character of Prince Arthur, strives throughout the whole poem; and succours the rest, when they are in distress. 15

- 13 All quotations from Milton's minor poems are taken from Complete Shorter Poems, ed.J.Carey (1978) Areopagitica in Vol.II of The Complete Prose Works of John Milton (1959), pp.480-570; p.516
Further allusions to Spenser's works may be found throughout Milton's poetry, as for example, the catalogue of rivers in "At a Vacation Exercise" (1628), 1-100, which recalls FQ IV.xi.20-47. Milton also reveals an indebtedness to the Spenserian poets, as the same river catalogue is reminiscent of Drayton's Poly-Olbion, passim. in Vol.IV of The Works of Michael Drayton (1933). Similarly, William Browne's Britannia's Pastorals I.ii.389-404 and II.i.991-994 in Vol.I of The Poems of William Browne of Tavistock (1905), pp.61 and 225 are very like Milton's lines in "L'Allegro" 101-114 and 145-150
- 14 For example: KA I.i.p.142: FQ I passim. (St.George); KA II.i.p.152: FQ III.ii.18-21; KA IV.p.183: FQ II.xii.63-68; KA IV.i.pp.185-187: FQ I.i.45-55; KA V.p.191: FQ II.viii.39-40
- 15 Dryden, op.cit. in Vol.II of Of Dramatic Poesy and other Critical Essays (1962), pp.71-155; p.83

Despite this reservation Dryden's familiarity with The Faerie Queene and his admiration of Spenser's poetry largely outweigh his critique of it.

More particularly the imaginative legacy of Spenser's nationalistic Arthur is manifest in the works of Milton and Dryden. At the end of "Epitaphium Damonis" (1639)¹⁶, Milton vows to relinquish the pastoral genre and to undertake a national epic poem based upon the matter of Britain and the history of Arthur:

Ipse ego Dardanias Rutupina per aequora puppes
Dicam, et Pandrasidos regnum vetus Inogeniae,
Brennumque Arviragumque duces, priscumque Belinum,
Et tandem Armoricos Britonum sub lege colonos;
Tum gravidam Arturo fatali fraude Iogernen
Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorlois arma,
Merlini dolus. O mihi tum si vita supersit,
Tu procul annosa pendebris fistula pinu
Multum oblita mihi, aut patriis mutata camoenis
Brittonicum strides, quid enim?

162-171

[I shall tell of Trojan keels ploughing the sea off the Kentish coast, and of the ancient kingdom of Inogene, daughter of Pandrasus, of the chieftains Brenus and Arviragus and of old Belinus, and of the settlers in Brittany, subject at last to British law. Then I shall tell of Igraine, pregnant with Arthur as a result of fatal deception: I shall tell of the lying features which misled her, and of the borrowing of Gorlois's armour, Merlin's trick. O, if I have any time left to live, you, my pastoral pipe, will hang far away on the branch of some old pine tree, utterly forgotten by me, or else, transformed by my native muses, you will whistle a British tune.] 17

Agreeing, Dryden in A Discourse Concerning Satire writes of his proposed epic work:

This, too, I had intended chiefly for the honour of my native country, to which a

- 16 J.K.Hale, "Sion's Bacchanalia: An inquiry into Milton's Latin in Epitaphium Damonis," Milton Studies, XVI (1982), pp.115-130; p.123
17 All verse translations are taken from Complete Shorter Poems, op.cit.

poet is particularly obliged. Of two subjects, both relating to it, I was doubtful whether I should choose that of King Arthur conquering the Saxons which, being farther distant in time, gives the greater scope to my invention; or that of Edward, the Black Prince... wherein, after Virgil and Spenser, I would have taken occasion to represent my living friends and patrons of the noblest families, and also shadowed the events of future ages, in the succession of our imperial line. 18

In King Arthur Dryden utilizes the suggested idea of setting Arthur against the Saxons, and further concludes the opera with the Order of the Garter and a procession of British heroes:

Mer. These, who last entered, are our valiant Britons,
Who shall by sea and land repel our foes.

V i p.198 19

Thus the Spenserian concept of Arthur as a pivot of poetic nationalistic sentiment is perpetuated in the latter half of the seventeenth century by Milton and Dryden.

In the pages which follow I shall examine in greater detail the manifestation of the Renaissance nationalistic and heroic Arthurian tradition, first in Milton's attitude towards the Arthurian material and in his abandonment of the Arthuriad, and secondly in Dryden's Arthurian work, the opera King Arthur.

Milton and the Renaissance Arthurian Tradition

I

In "Epitaphium Damonis" (1639) Milton clearly contemplates writing an Arthurian national epic poem. In "Mansus" written earlier in the

18 Dryden, op.cit. (1962), Vol.II pp.91-92
Note also: "Letter to John Dennis" (1694), Ibid., p.178; "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting" (1695), Ibid., p.193; "To the Most Honourable John, Lord Marquess of Normanby, Earl of Mulgrave" (1697), Ibid., p.233; and "Preface to Fables Ancient and Modern" (1700), Ibid., pp.292-293

19 See above Chapter IV pp.140-142

same year he had already begun to discuss this possibility of handling a specifically British theme. In the poem he relates druids to the classical worship of Phoebus and hence links British and Greek culture to the enhancement of the former (38-48). In this context Milton refers to Boötes:

Sed neque nos genus incultum, nec inutile Phoebus,
 Quo plaga septeno mundi sulcata Trione
 Brumalem patitur longa sub nocte Booten.
 35-37

[But we who have to put up with wintry Boötes for long nights on end, in that region of the world which is furrowed by his seven-starred wagon, are neither an uncultured race, nor useless to Phoebus.]

The commonly accepted identification of Arthur with Arcturus and Boötes has been discussed in Chapters I and IV²⁰. This relationship is intimately linked to the material concerning druids, which suggests that Milton, at this point, anticipates the poem's concluding image of the proposed Arthurian nationalistic epic²¹. Arthur is referred to directly as a heroic and nationalistic figure:

Si quando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
 Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem;
 Aut dicam invictae sociali foedere mensae,
 Magnanimos heroas, et (O modo spiritus ad sit)
 Frangam Saxonicas Britonum sub Marte phalanges.
 80-84

[if ever I bring back to life in my songs the kings of my native land and Arthur, who set wars raging even under the earth, or tell of the great-hearted heroes of the round table, which their fellowship made invincible, and -- if only the inspiration would come -- smash the Saxon phalanxes beneath the impact of the British charge.]

The term "Magnanimos" recalls Spenser's association of Prince Arthur

20 See above pp.33-36, 136 and 153-155

21 There is a full discussion of the relationship between Arthur and the Druidical cult of the seventeenth century in Douglas Brooks-Davies, The Mercurian monarch (1983), pp.150-179

with the quality of magnanimity. More generally the image in the poem suggests a great warrior king and his knights.

In 1642 the concept of a national epic poem still remained a viable proposition for Milton. In The Reason of Church-Government in that year he writes:

That what the greatest and choycest wits of Athens,
Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old
did for their country, I in my proportion with this
over and above of being a Christian, might doe for
mine: not caring to be once nam'd abroad, though
perhaps I could attaine to that, but content with
these British Ilands as my world...

22

Indeed, Milton here places the national epic on an equal level with the Christian one in his order of poetic priorities. In this decision Milton was influenced by Spenser and Tasso. His suggesting Saint George as a suitable epic hero recalls the Red Cross Knight of The Faerie Queene as does his reference to Tasso's study of a hero:

And as Tasso gave to a Prince of Italy his
chois whether he would command him to write of
Godfreys expedition against the infidels, or
Belisarius against the Gothes, or Charlemain
against the Lombards.

23

Like Spenser, Tasso had advocated the use of Arthur for an epic hero:

Laonde proporrei di gran lunga la persona
di Carlo e d'Artù a quella di Teseo e di
Giasone.

[That is why I would put Charlemagne or Arthur
as epic persons far ahead of Theseus or Jason.]

24

Milton's stay in Italy from 1638 to 1639 and the years immediately following this period see the climax of his interest in a national

22 Milton, Complete Prose, Vol.I p.812

23 Red Cross Knight: Milton, Ibid., Vol.I pp.815-817
Tasso: Milton, Ibid., Vol.I p.814

24 Torquato Tasso, "Discorsi del Poema Eroico" in Prose (1959), p.539
Tasso, Discourses on the Heroic Poem, trans M.Cavalchini and I.
Samuel (1972), p.39

epic poem with Arthur at its centre. At this time Milton perceived Arthur as an axis of moral, Christian, heroic and nationalistic ideals²⁵. Nevertheless this all-inclusive view was not devoid of ambiguities, for even as Milton conceived his epic plan, Arthur's birth was seen in terms of a "fatali fraude" ("Epitaphium Damonis" 166) arranged by man, rather than the traditional mystical and magic atmosphere in which the event is presented²⁶. The ambiguity of Milton's attitude towards the Arthurian tradition remains an important element throughout his work and culminates in his rejection of the Arthuriad in favour of the historical scepticism of the legend in The History of Britain.

II

The question of why Milton failed to pursue his plan for the Arthuriad has been examined by critics usually in relation to The History of Britain. It is suggested that Milton's direct epistemological condemnation of the story of Arthur for its lack of veracity explains the rejection of the planned Arthuriad. C.Firth in Essays Historical and Literary (1938) adequately summarizes received opinion:

One of the reasons for the abandonment of the intended epic on the story of Arthur was that his [Milton's] studies had convinced him there was no more truth in it than there was in the story of Brutus. 27

Firth's view is echoed to varying degrees by M.J.French in "Milton as a Historian" (1935), H.Mutchmann in "Milton's Projected Epic on the Rise and Future Greatness of the Britannic Nation" (1937), J.H. Hanford in A Milton Handbook (1939), M.Fixler in Milton and the Kingdoms of God

25 Tillyard, op.cit., pp.186-188

J.M.Steadman, Milton's Epic Characters (1968), p.6

26 See above Chapter V p.205

27 Firth, op.cit., p.74

(1964), F.R.Fogle in "Milton and Clarendon" (1965) and "The History of Britain 1670-1671. Introduction and notes by French Fogle" (1971), and C.Hill in Milton and the English Revolution (1977)²⁸. The text of The History of Britain itself fully corroborates Firth's argument, since Milton doubts the authenticity of Uther:

And if ever such a King in Britain there
were as Uther Pendragon... 29

More importantly, the tales of Arthur are referred to as "Fables" and "Fabulous" (p.171); his traditional victory at Badon Hill is denied (pp.163 and 168); and Geoffrey of Monmouth's The History of the Kings of Britain is continually vilified as fictitious (pp.18, 155, 159-160 and 165). Indeed, Milton suggests that the only reason for including the Arthurian material in the history is

...in favour of our English Poets, and
Rhetoricians, who by thir Art will know,
how to use them judiciously.

p.3 30

The critical and textual evidence suggests that Milton's disbelief in the Arthurian legend is the outcome of a historical separating, as opposed to a poetic amalgamating, of truth and legend. Despite the validity of this argument the assumption that the Arthuriad was rejected on the grounds of 'historicity' fails to take into account Milton's exaggerated and persistent discrediting of Arthur in the History.

- 28 French, op.cit., PMLA, 50 (1935), pp.469-479; p.474
Mutchmann, op.cit., Acta et Commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis, XL (1937), pp.1-87; p.21
Hanford, op.cit., pp.115-116
Fixler, op.cit., p.138
Fogle, op.cit., William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, passim. and Vol.V of The Complete Prose Works of John Milton (1971), pp.xix-xlx
Hill, op.cit., pp.360-365
29 All page references are to Vol.V of The Complete Prose
30 Note also Ibid., p.196

Not only is Arthur's parentage found doubtful, but his name is supposed to derive from "Mab-Uther, that is to say, a cruel Son..." (p.166). Milton's source here is James Ussher's Britannicarum Ecclesiarvm Antiquitates (1639), which with regard to Arthurian material is undoubtedly one of the more obscure sources³¹. Yet Milton deliberately chose to use this unusual information which is a particularly injurious treatment of Arthur's name. Similarly, Arthur's military and kingly powers are diminished:

Melvas King of that Country which is now Summerset, kept from him Gueniver his Wife a whole year in the Town of Glaston, and restor'd her at the entreaty of Gildas, rather then for any enforcement, that Artur with all his Chivalry could make against a small Town defended only by a moory situation; had either his knowledge in War, or the force he had to make, bin answerable to the fame they bear, that petty King had neither dar'd such an affront, nor he bin so long, and at last without effect, in revenging it.
pp.166-167

Once again this passage may have originated in Ussher's Britannicarum Ecclesiarvm Antiquitates, which further demonstrates that Milton continued to detract from the traditional qualities of heroism³². Finally, Milton misreads William of Malmesbury's The History of the Kings of England in relation to Arthur's victories over the Saxons:

...and by this rate hardly can the latter be thought won by Artur, unless we reck'n him a grown youth...if Malmsbury be heard, who affirms all the exploits of Ambrose, to have bin don chiefly by Artur as his General, which will add much unbeleif to the common assertion of his reigning after Ambrose and Uther, especially the fight at Badon, being the last of his twelve Battels.

p.169

By asserting that Arthur was Ambrose's general, Milton simultaneously

31 Ussher, *op.cit.*, p.467

32 *Ibid.*, pp.469-470

denies him both the renown of a great king and his role as the true descendent of the British throne. In addition, the supposed confusion of dates implies a doubt as to the actual existence of Arthur. The fact, however, is that Malmesbury does not state that Arthur was Ambrose's general, but that he aided Ambrose in battle against the Saxons³³. Jointly the above passages clearly indicate that Milton intended to discredit Arthur in every possible manner, and particularly to undermine his historicity.

In addition to the vehement rejection of Arthur in The History of Britain, Milton further reveals an incipient antagonism towards the entire concept of a national epic poem. Initially, it would appear that the planned Arthuriad became transformed into the history, as much of the same material must have been essential for both; but whereas the former had been planned as a celebration of his country, in the latter Milton condemns Britain. At the beginning of the third Book Milton states that the contemporary reader with his experience of the Commonwealth may learn from the situation of the ancient Britons when Roman rule ceased to exist:

we may be able from two such remarkable
turns of State, producing like events among us,
to raise a knowledg of our selves both great
and weighty, by judging hence what kind of men
the Britans generally are in matters of so
high enterprise.

pp.129-130

Although this accords with the humanist concept of teaching through history, Milton quickly concludes the meaning we may derive from the comparison of the two ages, for both have a chance of freedom but

33 William of Malmesbury, The History of the Kings of England, trans. J. Sharpe (1815), p.13
Further denigration of Arthur may be found at The History of Britain pp.3, 156, 163-164 and 167

they soon remitted thir heat, and shrunk more
wretchedly under the burden of thir own libertie,
than before under a foren yoke.

p.131

The reader is meant to feel the impact of Milton's criticism of his nation as a whole. Indeed, in The History of Britain Milton specifically condemns nationalistic writing:

But either the inbred vanity of some, in that
respect unworthily call'd Historians, or the fond
zeal of praising thir Nations above truth hath so far
transported them, that where they find nothing
faithfully to relate, they fall confidently to invent
what they think may either best set off thir
Historie, or magnifie thir Countrie.

p.134

Milton's disenchantment with contemporary Britain led him to reject the planned national epic which would have been intended to glorify his country. The several stages of Milton's rejection of a planned national epic for the greater glory of his country are analysed in detail by H.E.Cory in "Spenser, the School of the Fletchers, and Milton" (1912; p.362), R.F.Brinkley in Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century (1932; pp.134-141), M.Ross in Milton's Royalism (1943; pp.50-55), E.M.W.Tillyard in The Miltonic Setting (1947; p.199), and J.D. Merriman in The Flower of Kings (1973; pp.56-58). The main direction of their conclusion, that it was Milton's disappointment with the nation's failure to utilize fully its new found liberty which made him abandon the national epic, is subsumed in what follows.

The vehemence of Milton's reaction against the notion of a national epic reveals his disillusionment with British contemporary values, but more significantly, it also reveals his movement away from nationalistic poetic themes in general. This development in The History of Britain is paralleled by an analogous one in Paradise Regained (1671) where Satan tempts Christ with the prospect of becoming a national hero:

If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal,
 And duty; zeal and duty are not slow;
 But on occasion's forelock watchful wait.
 They themselves rather are occasion best,
 Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free
 Thy country from her heathen servitude;
 So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
 The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign,
 III 171-178

The role of national saviour is not offered to Christ for his own glory, but as a double duty to God and his people. The subtle attraction of becoming a national heroic saviour has, however, already been experienced and rejected by Christ:

...yet this not all
 To which my spirit aspired, victorious deeds
 Flamed in my heart, heroic acts, one while
 To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
 I 214-217

Christ personifies the true heroism of the Christian man (PL IX.31-33) and is able to overcome Satan's temptations. It is God alone who determines the history of men and their countries:

All things are best fulfilled in their due time,
 If of my reign prophetic writ hath told,
 That it shall never end, so when begin
 The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
 He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
 What if he hath decreed that I shall first
 Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
 By tribulations, injuries, insults,
 Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
 Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
 Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
 What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
 Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
 Well hath obeyed;
 III 182 and 184-196

Milton's treatment of heroic nationalism in Paradise Regained suggests a further reason for his rejection of the nationalistic epic genre in The History of Britain. Christ's failure to accept the role of national saviour signifies Milton's own disillusionment with the poetic validity of nationalistic themes and explains why an epic poem glorifying his country was no longer an admissible proposition.

In the same temptation episode in Paradise Regained the heroic glory is enhanced by the use of romance imagery. The armies presented by Satan to Christ are compared to those who met

When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell;
The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex Angelica
His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
Both paynim, and the peers of Charlemagne.

III 338-343

Apart from the use of two Spenserian terms, "prowest" and "paynim", the main source of the allusion is Boiardo's Orlando Innamorato (c.1471-1494)³⁴. The association of the romances with Christ's rejection of the heroic role combines to refute clearly any possible attraction of a national epic poem. Significantly, when Christ finally defeats Satan he is unarmed (IV.626)³⁵.

Milton's failure to undertake the planned Arthuriad is generally attributed jointly to the rejection of a historically invalid theme and to the disillusionment with British politics. Although both elements are essential to an explanation of the altered epic plan, they are incomplete in that they fail to take into account the vehemence of Milton's condemnation of both Arthur himself and the national epic genre. The conjoining of nationalistic heroism with romance imagery as part of one of Christ's temptations in Paradise Regained reveals a more complex attitude to these themes. This is corroborated by the fact that in "Mansus" and "Epitaphium Damonis" Milton himself had found the romance, Arthurian and nationalistic themes attractive subjects

34 Matteo Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato (1951), I.x-xiv, pp.368-446 "prowest" is used nine times in The Faerie Queene and "paynim" thirty one times.

35 A further similarity between the chivalric and heroic images presented by Satan to Christ may be seen at PR III.322-325 which recalls FQ II.xi.26.6-9

for an epic poem. In Paradise Regained his use of the concept of a national saviour figure as a powerful temptation reveals that Milton remained deeply responsive to the poetic strength of heroic, nationalistic and romance themes. Thus Milton's angry and often irrational rejection of Arthur and nationalism in his later works suggests that his attitude towards the Arthuriad was not solely one of epistemological differentiation of truth and legend or of political disillusionment. Instead, these factors must be combined with Milton's continued awareness of the attractive qualities of the heroic, nationalistic and romance epic. The consequential ambiguity of Milton's poetic use of these subjects is consistently present throughout his work.

III

In Book II of Paradise Regained Christ is tempted to adopt a chivalric and heroic role, as Satan proposes to test his

...constancy, with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise;
II 226-227

The traditional qualities of heroism are embodied in the banquet scene which is drawn from Arthurian romance imagery. Initially Satan appears in courtly garments,

Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city, or court, or palace bred,
And with fair speech these words to him addressed,
II 299-301

and Satan proceeds to invite Christ to a rich and stately banquet (II.337-365). The courtly occasion is attended by

...ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed
Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since
Of faëry damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyonesse,
Lancelot or Pelleas, or Pellenore,
II 357-361

Each of the three knights that Milton refers to is derived from the works of Malory and each is, in some manner, associated with "faëry damsels". The education of Lancelot by Ninane, the Lady of the Lake, is well known and is chronicled not only by Malory but in many Arthurian romances³⁶. Pelleas loves a lady who spurns him, but is finally rescued by Nynyve, the Lady of the Lake who accepts him as her lover³⁷. Thus both Lancelot and Pelleas are associated with the fairy Lady of the Lake and are in both instances protected by her powers. There is no direct link between Pellenore and a fairy damsel. However, in Malory's tale of "Torre and Pellinor" the knight brings to court a lady called Nenyve³⁸. The close similarity between the name "Nenyve" and the stated names of the Lady of the Lake, "Ninane" and "Nynyve", suggests that Milton concluded that Pellenore's lady was indeed the same Lady of the Lake as in the other two tales³⁹. Ironically, if we apply these conclusions to the passage from Paradise Regained, the "faëry damsels" are seen to be derived from the Lady of the Lake who, in the case of each knight mentioned, is a positive moral figure. Yet the damsels are in truth Satan's evil spirits and they meet Christ in order to tempt him to sin rather than to aid him, as the Lady of the Lake does for the Arthurian knights. The explanation for the deceptive rather than the succouring qualities given to the Lady of the Lake figures in Paradise Regained resides in Milton's sources for the Arthurian material. Although he chose Malory as a more explicit romance text, the influence of The Faerie Queene and Drayton's Poly-Olbion should not be disregarded.

36 Prose Lancelot in L.A.Paton, Sir Lancelot of the Lake (1929), pp.69-112

R.S.Loomis, The Development of Arthurian Romance (1970), p.93

37 Malory, Works (1977), pp.93-110; especially 103-104 and 109-110

38 Ibid., pp.59-76; p.73

39 R.M.Frye, Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts (1978), p.335

In Spenser's poem the Lady of the Lake deceives Merlin:

In the meanetime through that false Ladies traine,
He was surprisd, and buried vnder beare.

FQ III iii 11.1-2

Similarly, Drayton writes that

Shee stopt the Caverns mouth with an enchanted stone:
Whose cunning strongly crost, amaz'd whilst he [Merlin] did stand,
Shee captive him convay'd unto the Fairie Land.

PO IV 340-342

In both poems the fairy lady deceives her captive and then imprisons him below the earth. This image corresponds exactly with the role of Milton's "faëry damsels" who attempt to deceive Christ and, if they were to succeed, would imprison him in hell. Moreover, the romance ladies are morally reprehensible in that they are Satan's spirits, yet the romance allusion simultaneously associates Christ with the dubious morality of Lancelot, Pelleas and Pellenore. Christ's ideal role cannot ideologically be undermined by the association with Arthur's knights. We need to conclude therefore that the presence of the romance image suggests that Milton still retained a residual belief in the Christian moral values of the Arthurian romances.

A further verification of Milton's continued interest in heroic and romance themes can be found in W.N.Knight's article "To Enter lists with God" [;] Transformation of Spenserian Chivalric Tradition in Paradise Regained', where Knight concludes that

The action of the journeyings, the quest for the proof of his identity, the trial of merit, the combat for victory, and the endurance through temptation, coupled with the metaphors and imagery, show Paradise Regained heavily dependent upon the chivalric tradition of the medieval romances. 40

40 op.cit., Costerus, II (1972), pp.83-108; p.97
G.deForest Lord, "Folklore and Myth in Paradise Regain'd," in Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance, ed. M.Mack and G.deForest Lord (1982), pp.229-249; pp.229-235

Knight proceeds to identify closer parallels between Paradise Regained and romance texts: thus the description of Satan gathering "a chosen band/ Of spirits likest to himself in guile" (II.236-237) who adopt disguises to deceive Christ is related to that of Archimago sending his "creature borne without her dew,/ Full of the makers guile," (FQ I.i.46.6-7) disguised as Una to trick the Red Cross Knight. Similarly, Knight affirms that both the Bower of Bliss and the Wood of Error are used in passages concerning Satan's temptations⁴¹. In Paradise Regained Milton finally rejects the heroic and nationalistic themes of the projected Arthuriad, while at the same time using a romance image from the Arthurian texts to associate Christ with Arthur's most renowned knights.

The ambiguity of Milton's position with regard to the nationalistic, heroic and romance themes is also present in The History of Britain. For although Milton rejects the mythic and fictionalized Arthur, he nevertheless derives three areas of early British history from The Faerie Queene. First, Corineus' fight against Goemagog is found detailed in the same form in both The Faerie Queene and Poly-Olbion⁴². Secondly, the form of the name 'Cordelia' and her death by suicide are drawn directly from Spenser⁴³. Finally, the description of

41 PR II.153-162; FQ II.xii.72; PR II.295; FQ II.xii.59; PR IV.404-412; FQ I.i.7-8

Knight also identifies Satan with the Red Cross Knight and Rome with Hierusalem (Knight, op.cit., pp.100-101), but it seems unlikely that Milton would have intended this inverted identification. Further romance allusions may be seen in this passage: PR IV. 542 recalls Ariosto, Orlando Furioso (1974), IV.xviii p.32 PR IV.563-568 suggests Malory, op.cit., p.550 and FQ II.xi.45-46

42 Milton, op.cit., p.17

FQ II.x.10 and III.ix.50

Poly-Olbion I.465-506, Drayton, op.cit., Vol.IV pp.13-14

43 Milton, op.cit., pp.22 and 25

FQ II.x.28.5, 29.4 and 32.9

Dunwallo as the first British king to wear a golden crown recalls similar passages in The Faerie Queene and Shakespeare's Cymbeline 44 . Moreover, Milton goes as far as to cite a canto of The Faerie Queene at the beginning of the history:

Of which our Spencer also thus Sings.

Let Scaldis tell, and let tell Hania,
And let the Marsh of Esthambruges tell
What colour were thir Waters that same day,
And all the Moar twixt Elversham and Dell,
With blood of Henalois which therein fell;
How oft that day did sad Brunchildis see
The Greenshield dy'd in dolorous Vermeil, &c.

p.20 45

Finally, and most significantly, Milton introduces Arthur into the chronicle at a point where there is no historical or literary basis for his involvement:

First Constantine (fabl'd the Son of Cador,
 Duke of Cornwall, Arturs half Brother by the
 Mothers side) who then reign'd in Cornwall
 and Devon, a Tyrannical and bloody King,
 polluted also with many Adulteries.

p.176

Arthur is, of course, linked with tyranny and adultery by this passage, but Milton reveals an interest in the Arthurian material by referring to Arthur's relationship to Cador. There is no source for the idea that Cador and Arthur were half-brothers, yet Milton may have concluded that this was so from the fact that the first marriage of Igraine, Arthur's mother, was to the Duke of Cornwall, Cador's father⁴⁶. The allusion to Arthur in association to Cador together with the positive references to The Faerie Queene, reveal Milton's continued interest in the Arthurian material.

44 Milton, op.cit., p.27 and FQ II.x.39.9
 Shakespeare, op.cit., III.i.56-59

45 FQ II.x.24

46 Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain (1979), pp.205-213

IV

Milton's attraction to the idea of an Arthuriad is expressed most clearly in "Mansus" and "Epitaphium Damonis". Nevertheless, as we have seen, even in the works where he rejects the proposal his interest in the material remains. The foundation of Milton's concern with heroic and nationalistic romance material may be seen in his early poems. In "Il Penseroso" (1631) Milton includes, in his first list of great literature, romance texts and The Faerie Queene:

And if aught else, great bards beside,
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of tourneys and of trophies hung;
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear,

116-120

The romance context of "tourneys" and "forests" was traditionally Arthurian, but the reference to allegory -- "Where more is meant than meets the ear" -- clearly alludes more especially to Spenser. Similarly, in Comus (1637) Milton chooses Sabrina, a figure drawn from British legend, to save the Lady:

Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure,
Whilom she was the daughter of Locline,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
The guiltless damsel flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged stepdame Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood.

825-830

The tale of Sabrina is derived in part from Geoffrey of Monmouth's The History of the Kings of Britain and from the Briton chronicle in The Faerie Queene. However, the sympathetic treatment of Sabrina and her metamorphosis into the "goddess of the river" (841) is derived from Drayton's similar and original description in Poly-Olbion⁴⁷. The

47 Ibid., p.77, FQ II.x.17-19 and PO VI.130-178

A similar treatment of the Sabrina legend may also be found in Giles Fletcher, De Literis Antiquae Britanniae (1633), pp.5-6

W.M.Evans, Henry Lawes (1941), pp.96-97

J.G.Demaray, Milton and the Masque Tradition (1968), pp.60-74

J.B.Oruch, "Imitation and Invention in the Sabrina Myths of Drayton and Milton," Anglia, 90 (1972), pp.60-70

J.D.Cox, "Poetry and History in Milton's Country Masque," ELH, 44 (1977), pp.622-640

thematic importance of Sabrina's role in Comus suggests that this legend from the matter of Britain in its relationship to Arthurian and Spenserian literature influenced Milton in writing the masque.

In addition to the use of Sabrina, Milton reveals a general indebtedness to The Faerie Queene in that several of the moral virtues emphasized in Comus are prominent among the titular virtues of Spenser's poem. The virtue of chastity, which is central to the masque, recalls Book III. Similarly, the ideal of temperance, which is presented in Book II of The Faerie Queene is also present in Comus where it is particularly evident in the dialectic argument of the two brothers. The Elder Brother claims that chastity creates a heavenly strength, while the Second Brother perceives only its frailty, an argument which reveals the two opposite views of chastity (330-607). The ideal manifestation of the virtue is revealed by the Attendant Spirit who must liberate the brothers through confirming their faith in God, which is symbolized by the divine plant "haemony" (637)⁴⁸. In addition J.B. Leishman notes a similarity between the Elder Brother and Guyon, Spenser's knight of Temperance⁴⁹.

Finally it should be noted that Sabrina herself appears in Book II of The Faerie Queene, and that Milton alludes to this passage in Comus:

Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Meliboeus old I learnt
The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.

820-822 50

48 Milton, Complete Shorter Poems, pp.207-208, note to line 637

49 J.B. Leishman, op.cit., p.233

50 A.Kent Heatt, Chaucer Spenser Milton (1975), p.165
William A.Oram, "The Invocation of Sabrina," Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, I 24 (1984), pp.121-139

Meliboeus is Spenser, and Milton as the Attendant Spirit notes that he has heard of Sabrina (the "other means" to save the Lady) from Spenser, that is in Book II canto x stanza 19 of The Faerie Queene. In conclusion, at the end of the masque the Attendant Spirit represents the moral purpose of the performance as

To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly, and intemperance.

973-974

In Lycidas (1637) the complaint to the nymphs includes three allusions relevant to Arthur, two from Poly-Olbion and one from The Faerie Queene⁵¹:

Where were ye nymphs when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep,
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream:
Ay me, I fondly dream!
Had ye been there...for what could that have done?

50-57

The idea of the druids on Anglesey, the island's wooded appearance and the mystical association of the "Deva" (Dee) are derived from Drayton's poem⁵². Apart from the general Arthurian content of Poly-Olbion, the reference to the Dee is linked more directly to the matter of Britain, for in "At a Vacation Exercise" Milton refers to the "hallowed Dee" (98) -- a direct derivation from Poly-Olbion x. 215 -- in close proximity to a description of Sabrina (96). Moreover, the catalogue of rivers in "At a Vacation Exercise" recalls the marriage of the Thames and Medway in The Faerie Queene (IV.xi.20-47), where the Dee is

51 The description of the resurrection of the drowned Lycidas recalls the speech by the Attendant Spirit in Comus when he recounts the story of Sabrina: Lycidas 172-176: Comus 836-841

52 Anglesey: PO IX.415-429 and 436
Dee: PO X.215

referred to as "diuine" (IV.xi.39.4). However, in Spenser's poem the Dee is also where Prince Arthur spends his youth and where

Thither the great Magicien Merlin came,
As was his vse, ofttimes to visit me:
FQ I ix 5.1-2

The uniting of the Dee and Merlin in The Faerie Queene is paralleled by the similar linking of the Dee and "wizard" in Lycidas. Altogether, a complex group of allusions to Poly-Olbion and The Faerie Queene links the passage in Lycidas to Arthurian material, Arthur and Merlin.

Nevertheless, the image drawn from the matter of Britain is referred to as a 'fond' dream and it is not until Milton turns to Christ (173) that Lycidas is resurrected as "the genius of the shore" (183).

Milton's continued interest in the Arthurian nationalistic and romance material is evident from his minor poems, and the attraction may also be seen in his early prose works. In "Prolusions 6" (1628) he writes that

...nor did those valiant champions of King
Arthur more easily overcome and destroy the
enchantments of the flaming, fiery castle. 53

The image of a castle, the "flaming" qualities of which are emphasized in connection with "enchantments", is drawn from Busyrane's castle in The Faerie Queene (III.xi.21-26). In Spenser's poem, however, it is Britomart, the knight of chastity, who challenges the flames and not Arthur's champions. A similar uniting of Arthurian romance and Spenserian images occurs in An Apology Against a Pamphlet (1642) where Milton asserts:

I betook me among those lofty Fables and
Romances, which recount in solemne canto's

the deeds of Knighthood founded by our victorious
 Kings; and from hence had renowne over all
 Christendome. There I read it in the oath of
 every Knight, that he should defend to the
 expence of his best blood, or of his life, if it
 so befell him, the honour and chastity of
 Virgin or Matron. From whence even then I
 learnt what a noble vertue chastity sure
 must be... 54

Milton's early poems and prose reveal his interest in the nationalistic, heroic and romance themes, especially as they are embodied in Arthurian and Spenserian texts. Yet even in these early works the traditional Arthurian values are already questioned. For example, in Lycidas the image drawn from the planned Arthuriad's material is referred to as a 'fond dream' rather than in the absolute terms appropriate for an epic subject. The ambiguity of Milton's attitude towards the nationalistic Arthurian ideas led, on the one hand in The History of Britain and in Paradise Regained to a highly emotive and aggressive rejection of all the Arthuriad's suggested material; on the other hand, in Paradise Lost, which Milton was working on concurrently with The History of Britain and which predates Paradise Regained, the images are used in conjunction with the references to classical mythology in order to aid the construction of the complex dualities necessary to the poem.

V

The association between Satan and the fallen angels, and the heroic figures from Classical legend has been exhaustively traced by, among others, Charles G.Osgood, The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems (1900), Isabel G.MacCaffrey, Paradise Lost as "Myth" (1959), Jackson I.Cope, The Metaphoric Structure of Paradise Lost (1962), Davis P.Harding, The Club of Hercules. Studies in the Classical Background

of Paradise Lost (1962), Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry (1963), John M. Steadman, Milton and the Renaissance Hero (1967)⁵⁵. In addition to these classical identifications Satan and his host are often described in terms of heroic and romantic Arthurian imagery. In Book I the demonic host is compared to the heroic knights of Arthur and Charlemagne:

and now his [Satan's] heart
Distends with pride, and hardening 'in his strength
Glories: for never since created man,
Met such embodied force, as named with these
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes: though all the Giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia.

I 571-587

The romances of Arthur, Charlemagne, Orlando Furioso and Orlando Innamorato are referred to in this passage. The heroic and chivalric virtues evoked by this image are transferred to the fallen angels

55 Osgood, op.cit., passim.
MacCaffrey, op.cit., pp.120-133
Cope, op.cit., pp.72-148
Harding, op.cit., passim.
Bush, op.cit., pp.248-286
Steadman, op.cit., pp.xiii-20 and' 161-201

For example:

PL I.284-291: Iliad xix. 373-374
I.292-293: Odyssey ix. 322
II.528-569: Idiad ii
and Aeneid v and vi.642-659

with whom the similarity is said to exist⁵⁶. More general associations between Satan's host and the image of heroic knighthood can be seen throughout the poem in the descriptions of their arms, which are traditional chivalric accoutrements. Finally, in Book II the fallen angels pursue unmistakable knightly activities:

Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
 With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form.
 As when to warn proud cities war appears
 Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
 To battle in the clouds, before each van
 Prick forth the airy knights, and couch their spears
 Till thickest legions close.

II 531-537 57

Satan's own description also alludes to knightly and heroic literature:

hell's dread emperor with pomp supreme,
 And God-like imitated state; him round
 A globe of fiery seraphim enclosed
 With bright emblazonry and horrent arms.

II 510-513

The "emblazonry and horrent arms" carry clear chivalric implications. More significantly, the traditional journey made by a hero to the underworld, which Milton in "Mansus" (81) associates especially with Arthur, is undertaken by Satan (II.629-1055). Yet Satan inverts the

56 Arthur : "Uther's son" I.580 : Malory, *op.cit.*
 Charlemaine : I.586-587 : F.L.Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy* (1971), pp.18-19
 M.Stearns, *Charlemagne* (1971), pp. 63-73

Orlando Furioso : "Aspramont": xvii. 14
 "Montalban": i.18
 "Damasco" : xvii

Orlando Innamorato :
 "Montalban": passim.
 "Biserta" : ii

Note also J.I.Cope, *op.cit.*, p.98

A similar romance allusion may be seen at I.763-766, the words "soldan" and "paynim" recalling *FQ* V.viii.28-45

57 Also Book VI passim
 R.M.Frye, *op.cit.*, p.43

process so that he travels from hell to earth, as I.G.MacCaffrey notes:

the later heroes of myth usually reversed
Satan's path, their first "holy goal" being
the realm of death, from whose perils they
returned to gain their reward in the shape
of regained Paradise. 58

The chivalric and romance allusions are used, like the classical imagery, to enhance the heroic qualities of Satan and the fallen angels, and thus the Arthuriad material becomes an integral part of the complex dialectic structure of Paradise Lost.

The image of true Christian heroism is embodied by Christ and the angelic host. The contrast between the two groups is realized for the reader in Books III to VI, and the chivalric allusions once more serve to underline the duality of false attraction and true worth. For example, Satan's host carry an

imperial ensign, which full high advanced
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind
With gems and golden lustre rich imblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies:
I 536-539

Initially the image of the "ensign" and "Seraphic arms" induces a simple heroic interpretation, but this is immediately questioned by the "meteor" which was traditionally seen as a bad omen⁵⁹. The ambiguity is resolved when this image is compared to its heavenly parallel; the true angels appear with

Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards, and gonfalons twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;
Or in their glittering tissues bear imblazed

58 MacCaffrey, op.cit., p.196

59 S.K.Heninger, A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology (1960), pp.26-28 and 87-91

For example: FQ III.i.16

Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
Recorded eminent.

V 588-594

The angelic ensigns exhibit images of "zeal and love" rather than the Satanic "arms and trophies", and further, the angels carry "gonfalons" which are banners used specifically in ecclesiastical processions, as opposed to the banners of secular chivalry carried by the demonic host⁶⁰. The emblems of knighthood are excluded from the true heavenly perfection of God's host.

Similarly, the pastimes of the fallen angels, which as we have seen, are chivalric (II.527-538) are contrasted with those of the "unarmed youth of heaven," (IV.552) who

Bind their resplendent locks inwreathed with beams,
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement that like a sea of jasper shone
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
Then crowned again their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high;
III 361-369

The clearest parallel is that between Satan and Christ, which is made apparent at the beginning of Book III where God asks:

Say heavenly powers, where shall we find such love,
Which of ye will be mortal to redeem
Man's mortal crime, and just the unjust to save,
III 213-215

Christ alone accepts the "deadly forfeiture" (221) and thus reveals the true heroism of loving self-sacrifice. This action contrasts with Satan's lone acceptance of the journey through chaos to pervert man (II.417-505). Indeed, in the battle of heaven Christ's armour alone is devoid of chivalric and romance allusions (VI.710-714 and 749-759),

60 "gonfalon" : "A banner or ensign...esp. as used in ecclesiastical processions" OED

an absence which symbolizes a true and complete perfection.

By the end of Book VI the role of the Arthurian heroic material has become apparent. The reader's presupposed ideas initially induce attraction towards the chivalric passages and therefore implicitly to Satan and the fallen angels, an attitude which corresponds to man's post-lapsarian state. In order to apprehend the heavenly perfection that has been lost, Milton introduces closely wrought parallels which reveal the flaws of traditional heroism and its true Christian counterpart. Significantly, without incorporating the traditional Arthurian material Milton would have been unable to throw the true Christian meaning of heroism into such sharp relief.

Although Milton uses chivalric imagery mainly in the passages concerning Satan and the fallen angels, the same material is also used in the descriptions of Adam and Eve. However, in the case of Adam and Eve, the references are very different to those which are linked with Satan. In Book VI the description of Eden recalls Spenser's Garden of Adonis from The Faerie Queene III.vi, and a similar use of classical mythology enhances the quality of the images of Adam and Eve in Books IV and V. Thus for example, the former, among others, is compared to "Zephyrus", "Jupiter" and "Jove", and the latter to "Flora", "Juno", "Proserpine" and "Pomona"⁶¹. These references, at this point, imply no moral ambiguity. The possibility of a fall from grace is intimated, but the virtue of Adam and Eve is not questioned as such⁶². The heavenly

61 The Garden of Adonis, FQ III.vi.43-44 : PL IV.689-708

References to classical mythology:

Flora and Zephyrus : PL V.16

Jupiter : IV.499

Jove : IX.396

Juno : IV.500

Proserpine : IV.269

Pomona : IX.393-396

62 For example, Eve as Pandora (IV.714) and Narcissus (IV.449-482). Thus the ideology conflicts with, but does not deconstruct the poetry.

figures associated through the narrative to the 'first parents' are treated similarly. Ithuriel's spear reveals falsehood (IV.810-813), a property which parallels that of Prince Arthur's shield in The Faerie Queene (I.vii.35.3-4). In addition, Raphael's middle pair of wings resembles a zodiac belt. They

Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colours dipped in heaven;
V 281-283

This image recalls Prince Arthur's similar zodiacal bauldrick in The Faerie Queene (I.vii.29.7-11)⁶³. The allusions to classical legends and chivalric romances in the passages relating to Adam and Eve before the fall are not used ironically and are without the false attractions of Satan's heroism. Significantly, the post-lapsarian allusion to Spenser is drawn from the "Wood of Error" (FQ I.i.7-11). Adam recognises his own and Eve's sin and says to her:

O might I here
In solitiude live savage, in some glade
Obscured, where highest woods impenetrable
To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening: cover me ye pines,
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more.
IX 1084-1090

Both Spenser's and Milton's woods serve to conceal sin, and by intuiting this guilty meaning Adam reveals his own post-lapsarian state.

There are few allusions to romance material in the last Books of

63 Similar ambiguity may be seen in Michael's sword (VI.320-323) which recalls Artegall's (FQ V.i.10). However, Satan's shield is also described in the same manner (VI.255) and the "tinsel trappings" of romance literature (PL IX.36) reminds us both of Florimell's and Duessa's "tinsell trappings" (FQ III.i.15.7 and I.ii.13.8). Michael also possesses a zodiacal belt (XI.247), but it is introduced after Adam's awareness of sin commences.

Paradise Lost. Indeed, there is very little imagery in general ⁶⁴.

First, Michael appears to Adam in chivalric raiment:

over his lucid arms
A military vest of purple flowed
Livelier than Meliboean, or the grain
Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce; Iris had dipped the woof;
His starry helm unbuckled showed him prime
In manhood where youth ended; by his side
As in a glistening zodiac hung the sword,
Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the spear.

XI 240-248

The reference to a zodiac bauldrick has already been related to Prince Arthur and the image here is equally attractive, as indeed are the classical allusions ⁶⁵. Yet it is made clear that Michael has descended to Adam's level -- "but as man/ Clad to meet man" (XI.239-240) -- and the previous chivalric associations with Satan imbue the passage with an ambiguity of meaning. Secondly, the condemnation of heroism is re-affirmed when Adam is shown the moral wrong of "bloody fray;/ With cruel tournament" (XI.651-652) ⁶⁶. Lastly, true heroism is revealed in the figure of Christ ⁶⁷.

In Book XII Michael finally resolves the ambiguity of chivalric arms for both Adam and the reader:

To whom thus Michael. Dream not of their fight,
As of a duel, or the local wounds
Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son
Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy.

XII 386-390

64 S.E.Fish, Surprised by Sin: the Reader in Paradise Lost (1967), pp.286-307

65 "Meliboean" : Aeneid v.251

"Iris" : Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida, I.iii.380

66 Note also, XI.689-697

67 J.E.Seaman, "The Chivalric Cast of Milton's Epic Hero," English Studies, 49 (1968), pp.97-107; p.106

Satan will be defeated by "obedience and by love" (XII.403), and it is this "faith" which will endow mankind

With spiritual armour, able to resist
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts.
XII 491-492

The true meaning of 'heroism' is seen not in the chivalric accomplishments of those such as Arthur, but in the obedience, love and faith epitomized in Christ and given by God to mankind ⁶⁸.

VI

In the end, Milton did not write an Arthuriad, but both his perennial interest in the Arthurian material and his awareness of the attractions of a heroic, nationalistic and romance epic are evident throughout his work. The early poems and prose, especially "Mansus" and "Epitaphium Damonis", reveal a serious intention to write an Arthurian epic. Yet, even in The History of Britain and Paradise Regained where Arthur and nationalistic heroism are ultimately rejected, Milton's continued concern with Arthurian legend is clearly apparent. Finally, in Paradise Lost Milton successfully combines the Arthurian romance images together with the classical allusions in order to underline by contrast the true heroism of Christianity.

In contrast to the reductive criticisms of Brinkley and Merriman -- discussed at the beginning of the Chapter -- this analysis has shown that Milton's rejection of the Arthuriad was not a sudden and complete denial, but instead a gradual development of his awareness of the moral ambiguities of the Arthurian traditions. Milton's continued involvement with an exclusively heroic and nationalistic Arthur reveals that he unequivocally shared English Renaissance approaches to Arthurian

68 Note also, IX.14-41 and XII.580-590

material, and in this respect he can be seen to anticipate Dryden and ultimately Tennyson.

Dryden and the Renaissance Arthurian Tradition

I

At the beginning of this Chapter we saw that Dryden, like Milton, contemplated writing a national epic poem based upon Arthur. This epic was never written. Instead Dryden used the Arthurian material for the opera King Arthur. Although there can ultimately be no comparison between the projected heroic work and the actual operatic entertainment, Dryden's overall understanding of the role of the Arthurian legend in the Renaissance may be deduced from the latter work. King Arthur reveals the continuing seventeenth century tradition of relating Arthur to heroic nationalism. More interestingly, however, it also reintroduces into the Arthurian literary values the duality of private love conflicting with the responsibilities of heroic kingship. It is these combined themes which ultimately were to herald the joint heroic and romance concerns of Tennyson's Idylls of the King⁶⁹.

Throughout the opera the Arthurian material is closely associated with the traditional themes of nationalism, monarchism and heroism. Indeed, the narrative structure of King Arthur depends on the combat of the Britons and the Saxons. This battle carries expected nationalistic overtones which were initiated by Geoffrey of Monmouth in The History of the Kings of Britain⁷⁰. At the end of the opera the two forces

69 Tennyson, op.cit.

70 Geoffrey of Monmouth, op.cit., ix.1-5

are harmoniously united and the culminating praise of "our valiant Britons" (V.i.p.198) is extended to include Dryden's contemporary audience. Similarly, Arthur is linked to the concept of a heroic monarch. Although Milton's treatment of the Arthurian legend, for good reasons, does not link Arthur with the reigning monarch, all other Arthurian works of the English Renaissance do incorporate this association. In this respect, Dryden's opera does not differ from the main tradition. In his prefatory letter Dryden writes:

I will again presume to guess that her Majesty was not displeas'd to find in this poem the praises of her native country, and the heroic actions of so famous a predecessor in the government of Great Britain as King Arthur.

p.136

By associating the Queen, and therefore the King, dynastically with Arthur the glory attributed to the fictional monarch will be transmitted to the contemporary rulers. This intention is affirmed at the close of the opera, when Honour praises

Our sovereign high, in awful state,
His honours shall bestow;
And see his sceptred subjects wait
On his commands below.

V i p.198

The praise is ambiguously directed to "Our sovereign", which could equally mean Arthur or the contemporary ruler.

Finally, Arthur is presented as a heroic, national saviour figure. The Prince defeats the Saxons in battle and his first speech recalls how he learnt the "trade of war". Further, Arthur perceives the military worth of Oswald's army:

Their infantry embattled, square and close,
March firmly on, to fill the middle space,
Covered by their advancing cavalry.
By heaven, 'tis beauteous horror:

I i p.144

The chivalric heroism combines with personal valour as Arthur fights

Oswald in single combat at the close of the opera, and finally, Christian heroism is added to these qualities, for an episode in the battle against Oswald echoes the one between Prince Arthur and two pagan knights in Book II of The Faerie Queene. Arthur and Oswald are both wounded when

Enter OSMOND, from among the trees, and with his wand strikes ARTHUR'S sword out of his hand, and exit. OSWALD pursues ARTHUR. MERLIN enters, and gives ARTHUR his sword, and exit; they close, and ARTHUR, in the fall, disarms OSWALD.

V i p.191

This resembles the passage where Prince Arthur's sword has been stolen by the evil magician, Archimago, so that in order to defend Guyon against the pagan knights, Cymochles and Pyrochles, the Christian Palmer must give him a sword⁷¹. In The Faerie Queene Arthur's force is increased by Guyon's sword because it represents Christian temperance and it has been blessed by the Palmer. Correspondingly in King Arthur Osmond and Oswald head the pagan forces which must be defeated by Arthur's and Merlin's Christian troops in order to save Emmeline. Arthur also undertakes the traditional journey of the hero through the underworld, where he undergoes the temptations of lust and physical ease before being able to attain his love, Emmeline⁷².

The traditional Arthurian and romance conflict between Christian and pagan forces is personified in King Arthur by the battle between the magician figures and their spirits. Dryden transforms Merlin from his usual ambiguous religious role into a Christian powerful enough

71 FQ II.viii.17-40

72 Hercules : Odyssey xi.601-626

Apollodorus, "The Library" II.v.12 in Vol.I of Apollodorus The Library (1921), pp.232-237

Odysseus : Odyssey xi

Theseus : Apollodorus, "Epitome" I.24 in Vol.II op.cit., pp. 152-155

Hyginus, Fabulae 79 in The Myths of Hyginus (1960), pp.74-75

Aeneas : Aeneid vi

to save Philidel from damnation. Merlin refers to an obviously Christian heaven throughout the opera; he orders Arthur to "wait heaven's time" and Philidel to "follow thou the whispers of thy soul,/ That draw thee nearer heaven"⁷³. On the other hand, Osmond clearly represents the worst aspects of pagan religion, for he prepares human sacrifices and intends to "inspect their entrails" (I.ii.p.148). Furthermore he is particularly linked to Manichean worship because the sacrifices are "to propitiate hell" (II.ii.p.149). More generally, Osmond is able to pervert nature, as is seen in the Masque of Ice, and when he protects his fort against Arthur's troops:

Scarce had we stepped on the forbidden ground...
 But straight a rumbling sound, like bellowing winds,
 Rose and grew loud; confused with howls of wolves,
 And grunts of bears, and dreadful hiss of snakes;
 Shrieks more than human; globes of hail poured down
 An armed winter, and inverted day.

III i p.165 74

The true Christian and evil pagan qualities of Merlin and Osmond are reflected in their spirits, Philidel and Grimbald. As we have already seen, Philidel is redeemed by Merlin, but even before this she has the potential to be good; her name comes from the Greek $\phi\iota\lambda\iota\alpha$ meaning love and friendship and she is "Desirous to repent, and loath to sin" (II.i.p.152). Philidel continually aids Arthur, defeats Grimbald and helps Merlin to restore Emmeline's sight:

Thus, thus I infuse
These sovereign dews:
Fly back, ye films, that cloud her sight;
And you, ye crystal humours bright
Your noxious vapours purged away,
Recover, and admit the day:
Now cast your eyes abroad, and see
All but me.

III ii p.170 75

73 KA III.i.p.165 and II.i.p.153

74 Masque of Ice : III.ii.pp.177-179

75 Aids Arthur : IV.i.pp.187-188

Defeats Grimbald : III.ii.pp.168-169

In contrast, Grimbald is related to Satan, for Arthur calls him "The cloven-footed fiend" and when Osmond prepares to sacrifice the victims to hell, Grimbald replies "That's my kind master: I shall breakfast on them" (I.ii.p.149)⁷⁶. Although Merlin and Osmond must be compared because they are both magicians, the parallel between Philidel and Grimbald is made more explicit because they recall Ariel and Caliban from The Tempest. Like Shakespeare's characters they are antagonistic to one another, and while Philidel and Ariel are spirits of the air, Grimbald and Caliban belong to the earth⁷⁷. Thus the traditional romance duality of Christianity and paganism is added to the Arthurian themes of nationalism, monarchism and heroism already suggested by the opera.

As we have seen, Dryden's Arthur embodies the nationalistic and heroic qualities associated with the Renaissance understanding of the Arthurian legend. Surprisingly, however, Arthur's foe, Oswald, is not the personified opposite of heroic virtue. Nor is the Saxon chieftain a parody of a heroic Arthur designed by Dryden to encourage the reader's tendency to associate himself imaginatively with a heroic image, however false. Instead, Oswald is a truly heroic figure. At the beginning of the opera the British leaders' unbiased comments encourage our belief in their opponent's heroism:

Con. I know him well; he's free and open-hearted.
Aur. His country's character: that speaks a
 German.

76 See also, II.i.pp.153-156

77 Antagonism between Philidel and Grimbald : KA II.i.pp.152-153 and II.ii.pp.167-169

Antagonism between Ariel and Caliban : The Tempest II.ii.1-4

Philidel as 'air' : KA II.i.p.152

Ariel as 'air' : Tempest V.i.21

Grimbald as 'earth' : KA I.ii.p.148

Caliban as 'earth' : Tempest I.ii.332-346 and V.i.275

Oswald
 Con. Revengeful, rugged, violently brave;
 And, once resolved, is never to be moved.

I i p.142

Although Dryden incorporates in his opera the traditional themes of nationalism, monarchic praise, heroism and Christianity, they are not exclusively associated with Arthur. For despite our expectations that Oswald and his forces will symbolically oppose Arthur's virtues, the Saxons are gradually united with the Britons to form a heroic and Christian ideal of Britain and the British monarchy. The Arthurian legend, especially with regard to its role in English Renaissance literature, is used by Dryden as the basis for an uncomplicated and all-encompassing praise of his country and King. Nevertheless, the overall nationalistic and heroic tone of the Arthurian material is important for Dryden in that it represents part of the conflict between personal love and heroic national responsibility as experienced by a Prince or governor.

II

Dryden's interest in the tension between love and heroic responsibility is most fully explored in Anthony's role in All For Love (1677). In King Arthur the concentration upon personal love, a theme which prevails in the Medieval Arthurian romances, is evoked to such an extent that it acquires equal importance with the heroism, nationalism and monarchism of the political allegory⁷⁸. - At the beginning of King Arthur it is revealed that

For that defeat in love, he [Oswald] raised this war;
 For royal Arthur reigned within her heart,
 Ere Oswald moved his suit.

I i p.143.

78 The concern with personal love as an ideal is seen in numerous Arthurian tales of the Medieval period, for example: Malory, op.cit., pp.227-511 and 609-669

Oswald commenced battle against Arthur because he is jealous of Emmeline's love for the British King. At the same time one of Arthur's first speeches appears more like that of a courteous lover rather than of a king preparing for battle:

Your Emmeline, to Oswald's vows refused,
 You made my plighted bride:
 Your charming daughter, who, like Love, born blind,
 Unaiming hits, with surest archery,
 And innocently kills.

I i p.144

The emphasis upon love not heroism in Oswald and Arthur continues throughout the opera, and in Act II scene ii both profess that Emmeline is more important to them than kingship, nationalism or heroism. Oswald has lost the battle against the Britons but has abducted Emmeline, and Arthur's reaction is described by Albanact:

Off. How sits the conquest on great Arthur's brow?
Alb. As when the lover with the king is mixed.
 He puts the gain of Britain in a scale,
 Which weighing with the loss of Emmeline,
 He thinks he's scarce a saver.

II ii p.161

Arthur clearly places love before kingship, and Oswald also equates the two when he states that "love's an empire too; the noble soul, / Like kings, is covetous of single sway"⁷⁹. Not only does love supersede kingship, but the two champions also dismiss nationalistic claims as irrelevant when compared to Emmeline's love: Arthur offers Oswald the lands between the Medway and the Severn in return for Emmeline, but Oswald replies

Not though you spread my sway from Thames to Tiber:
 Such gifts might bribe a king, but not a lover.

II ii p.163

79 II.ii.p.162

Finally, Oswald rejects the heroic "single combat, hand to hand" suggested by Arthur to win Emmeline's love, and rather prefers to trust Osmond's pagan magic (II.ii.pp.163-164). This refusal differentiates the two figures revealing Arthur as the truly heroic character.

The importance of the love relationships in King Arthur is emphasized by the masques, of which there are five (the Pastoral Masque, the Masque of Love, the Masque in Oswald's Wood, the Masque of Ice and the Britannia Masque) in the opera⁸⁰. First, when Arthur and Emmeline have declared their love for one another Philidel presents them with the Pastoral Masque in which a Nymph and her lover echo the declaration of love:

And if we may discover
What charms both nymph and lover,
'Tis when the fair at mercy lies,
With kind and amorous anguish,
To sigh, to look, to languish,
On each other's eyes!

III ii p.174

Contrastingly, but still concerned with love, Osmond produces the Masque of Ice for Emmeline, in which Cupid sings of the powers of love:

At Love's appearing, all the sky clearing,
The stormy winds their fury spare:
Winter subduing, and spring renewing,
My beams create a more glorious year.

III ii p.178

Dryden's treatment of love in King Arthur, however, combines its spiritual dimension with comic and sexual overtones. The Masque of Ice is presented by Osmond to Emmeline who has been made motionless:

Em. I freeze, as if his impious art had fixed
My feet to earth.

III ii p.177

80 The masques are the musical parts of the opera

Osmond attempts to seduce his captive and in the opera Cupid's last song confirms the sexual connotation of the masque:

Sound a parley, ye fair, and surrender;
Set yourselves and your lovers at ease;
He's a grateful offender
Who pleasure dare seize;
But the whining pretender
Is sure to displease.

Since the fruit of desire is possessing,
'Tis unmanly to sigh and complain;
When we kneel for redressing,
We move your disdain:
Love was made for a blessing,
And not for a pain.

III ii p.179

In contrast, the Pastoral Masque provides comic as opposed to threatening sexual connotations. The Shepherd invites the

Bright nymphs of Britain, with graces attended,
Let not your days without pleasure expire;
Honour's but empty, and, when youth is ended,
All men will praise you, but none will desire.

II ii p.158

The Shepherdess replies, determined to reject the sexual advances of the Shepherd until they are married:

Shepherd, shepherd, leave decoying,
Pipes are sweet a summer's day;
But a little after toying,
Women have the shot to pay.
Here are marriage-vows for signing,
Set their marks that cannot write;
After that, without repining,
Play, and welcome, day and night.

II ii p.159

The playing of the pipes symbolizes the sexual act and the Shepherdess points out that it is she who will become pregnant: "Women have the shot to pay". The low and earthy tone of the Pastoral Masque could be explained by the fact that it is one of the operatic interludes and not part of the narrative action. However, Dryden reproduces an identical tone in the speeches of the heroine, Emmeline.

In King Arthur Dryden exploits the uneasy humorous potential of

Emmeline's blindness by constantly creating comic ambiguities based upon her ignorance and inexperience. She believes that Arthur has

a face like mine,
Two hands, and two round, pretty, rising breasts,
That heave like mine.

I i p.145

Her comment calls attention to her own sexuality, but her innocence of the fact results in a comic sentimentality. This tone is repeated when Emmeline replies to Arthur's description of 'sight':

If you can see so far, and yet not touch,
I fear you see my naked legs and feet
Quite through my clothes. Pray do not see so well.

I i p.145

Once again the injured innocence is belied for the audience by the sexual overtones and the humour of the mistaken expression in the last line -- "Pray do not see so well". Moreover, Emmeline's comic language pervades the opera through lines such as "your milk-white eyes" and "I believe his mouth, and eyes, and cheeks, / And nose, and all his face, are made of gold"⁸¹. An explanation for Emmeline's role is offered by A.C.Kirsch who concludes that Dryden's heroic drama was written mainly to conform to audience expectation and that

towards the close of the Restoration the wit
and the libertinism faded in comedy and
tragedy and both the super-hero and rake-
hero gave way to sentimental and domesticated
protagonists.

82

Emmeline appears to represent the transition period between libertinism and sentimentality, yet Dryden's awareness of the contemporary literary climate produced another parallel within the opera. For Emmeline's role as both Arthur's and Oswald's beloved links her to the heroism and

81 I.i.p.146 and II.ii.p.157

82 Kirsch, Dryden's Heroic Drama (1965), p.152

honour symbolized by these two figures, and so provides a comparison between heroic honourable love and comic sexual love.

III

The varying thematic concerns of King Arthur are united in the final scene of the opera. The nationalistic conflict abates when Oswald and Arthur are presented with a prophecy of a joint British and Saxon rule; Merlin foretells that

Britons and Saxons shall be once one people;
One common tongue, one common faith shall bind
Our jarring bands, in a perpetual peace.

V i p.193

Heroism and love are harmoniously united through the union of Arthur and Emmeline (V.i.p.192) and more emphatically through the concluding masques. Heroism is seen in the dramatic presentation of a "Warlike Consort" and the Order of the Garter, which Merlin introduces:

Now, look above, and in heaven's high abyss,
Behold what fame attends those future heroes.
Honour, who leads them to that steepy height,
In her immortal song shall tell the rest.

V i p.198 83

Alternatively true love is represented by Venus and the "Song by Mr. Howe" which ends with

He alone.
I'll be constant, you be kind.
She alone.
You be constant, I'll be kind.
Both.
Heaven can give no greater blessing
Than faithful love and kind possessing.

V i pp.197-198

Apart from the awareness of love, the song also recalls the Christian virtue of the opera as indeed does Merlin's speech on heroism, where he directs the characters to gaze at "heaven's high abyss". In addition,

the humorous tone is represented in a rustic pastoral in which the peasants sing:

1 Man.
We ha'cheated the parson, we'll cheat him again,
For why should a blockhead ha'one in ten?
 One in ten,
 One in ten;
For why should a blockhead ha'one in ten?

2 Man.
For prating so long like a book-learned sot,
Till pudding and dumpling burn to pot,
 Burn to pot,
 Burn to pot;
Till pudding and dumpling burn to pot.

V i pp.195-196

In the last scene of the opera Dryden attempts to unite nationalism, heroism, Christianity and love.

In order to incorporate the varying Arthurian and romance themes Dryden extends the last scene of the opera to cover nine separate episodes⁸⁴. Thus instead of a united and harmonious conclusion suitable to the masque-like tone of the opera, King Arthur ends with a series of songs and speeches which appear disjointed and sprawling. The problem of over-crowding the opera with themes more suitable to epic romance is compounded by Dryden's many literary allusions. In King Arthur Dryden reveals an indebtedness to Spenser's The Faerie Queene, Shakespeare's The Tempest, Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata and Milton's Paradise Lost, as well as to a lesser extent to Jonson's Prince

84 (i) Arthur's and Oswald's combat; (ii) Arthur and Emmeline united, and Merlin's prophecy; (iii) Aeolus' song; (iv) Britannia Masque; (v) Comus' song; (vi) Venus' song; (vii) song by Mr. Howe; (viii) Honour's song; (ix) Arthur's last speech.

Henry's Barriers, Drayton's Poly-Olbion and Carew's Coelum Britannicum

⁸⁵. Inevitably the attempted light and comic sentimentality of the opera suffers from the burden of such ambitious thematic and literary aspirations.

Dryden's awareness of the problems of his work is made clear in the opera's dedicatory letter:

But, not to offend the present times, nor a government which has hitherto protected me, I have been obliged so much to alter the first design, and take away so many beauties from

85 For example:

The Faerie Queene : passim.

The Tempest :

As we have seen Grimbald and Philidel resemble Caliban and Ariel. Emmeline's first speech when she is able to see (III.ii.pp.171-172) recalls Miranda's vision of a "brave new world" (V.i.183) and both heroines have a masque presented to them by an airy spirit (KA III.ii. pp.173-175 and The Tempest IV.i.59-138.)

Gerusalemme Liberata :

Arthur's journey through the enchantments on the hill parallels Rinaldo's quest on Mount Olivet (KA IV. i. pp.182-188 and GL xviii.1-38.)

Paradise Lost :

Emmeline's first sight of herself (III.ii. pp.171-172) recalls Eve's similar reaction (PL IV. 440-491). Both are drawn from the myth of Narcissus, Ovid, Metamorphoses iii.341-510.

Prince Henry's Barriers :

Merlin controls the entertainment in Jonson's masque, as he does at the end of King Arthur (V.i. pp.193-198). Jonson, op.cit., in Vol.VII of Ben Jonson (1925-1952), pp.326-336.

Coelum Britannicum :

There are similar presentations of heroes in this masque and at the end of King Arthur (V.i. pp.198-199). Carew, op.cit. The Poems of Thomas Carew with his Masque Coelum Britannicum, ed. R.Dunlap (1949), pp.175-183.

Poly-Olbion :

The uniting of the British and Saxon races which is seen at the end of King Arthur (V.i. p.193), is also seen in Song V 45-80 of Drayton's poem. Drayton, op.cit., Vol.IV pp.98-99.

the writing, that it is now no more what
it was formerly. 86

The libretto of King Arthur fails because Dryden depends too closely upon the English Renaissance concept of Arthur, which was inevitably linked to the idea of a national epic work. The themes of heroic and monarchic nationalism and the tensions between this heroic national responsibility and personal love were in themselves attractive to Dryden, as can be seen from his plan for a British epic and All For Love. However, the more serious themes fail to form a harmonious whole with the work's comedy. Yet despite the failure of King Arthur, the opera does reveal Dryden's understanding of the Arthurian legend. Indeed, King Arthur represents a point of transition, for although the heroic and nationalistic Arthur of the English Renaissance is still omnipresent, the Medieval romance themes are once more introduced as an essential aspect of the Arthurian story. Ultimately, the epic and romance traditions were to gain equal standing in Tennyson's Idylls of the King, but Dryden's opera proves that Tennyson's poem was not a sudden and dramatic reversion to Medieval themes⁸⁷. Instead the Idylls can be seen as part of a gradual but steady development based not only upon the romance works of the Middle Ages, but also upon the

86 Dryden, op.cit. (1882), p.135

R.E.Moore, Henry Purcell and the Restoration Theatre (1961), pp.70-79; p.96

M.W.Alssid, "The Impossible Form of Art: Dryden, Purcell and King Arthur," Studies in the Literary Imagination, X. I (1977), pp.125-144

J.Altieri, "Baroque Hieroglyphics: Dryden's King Arthur," Philological Quarterly, 61 (1982), pp.431-451

87 A.Chandler, A Dream of Order (1971), p.232

M.Girouard, The Return to Camelot (1981), pp.178-196

Renaissance Arthurian tradition of Spenser, Jonson, Drayton, Milton and Dryden.

The Arthurian tradition in the Renaissance is distinguished by its linking of Arthur inextricably to the concept of a great national epic poem in which he is made to represent both the moral and political ideals of Britain. This exemplary role was initiated by Spenser in The Faerie Queene (1590-1596) where, in Books I, II, III and VI Arthur represents ideal states, while in Books IV and V he is identified with perfect manifestations of nationalism and monarchism.

Spenser's imaginatively flexible concept of Arthur retained its vitality throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. Whereas Ben Jonson revived the Arthurian ideal in his masques, Prince Henry's Barriers (1610) and Prince Oberon (1611), the moral and political strands in the tradition were continued by the Spenserian poets, and by Knevet and the panegyrists. Notwithstanding the joint effect of the idea of a perfect Arthur and the revisionist responses of Robert Chester in Love's Martyr (1601), Richard Niccols in A Winter Night's Vision (1610) and Drayton in Poly-Olbion (1612-1622), a gradual retreat from the all-encompassing unity of the uses of Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene had commenced. The growth of a more linear, consequential approach and the resulting search for an inherently more authentic ideal led Knevet to abandon moral allegory for more realistic representations in A Supplement of the Faery Queene (1635). Collaterally, in the drama of the period Arthurian material became increasingly identified with burlesque, as in William Davenant's Britannia Triumphans (1637) and in William Rowley's The Birth of Merlin (1662).

In the second part of the seventeenth century Milton and Dryden are alone in their indebtedness to a Renaissance Arthurian tradition. Despite a continued awareness of the poetic strength of the Arthurian images, Milton rejected Spenser's treatment of Arthur in The History of Britain (1670) and in Paradise Regained (1671), for the higher claims of a Christian epic, Paradise Lost (1667). Conversely, in King Arthur (1691) Dryden attempted to revive the Spenserian Arthur. But the light tone of the opera could not sustain its ambitious themes of moral, nationalistic and monarchic perfection.

The gradual and inevitable erosion of Arthurian idealism, does not detract from Spenser's huge innovative influence on the English Renaissance concept of Arthur. Jonson, Drayton, Knevet, Milton and Dryden, as well as to a lesser extent, Browne, Chester, Niccols, Campion, Davenant, Sheppard, Heywood, Rowley, Davies of Hereford and Harbert, all evince a clear indebtedness to the presentation of Arthurian material in The Faerie Queene. The Arthurian tradition provided the seventeenth century with a symbolic figure large enough to reflect the political and moral fluctuations of the period, for Arthur became identified successively with the golden age of Elizabeth, the revival of chivalry under Prince Henry, the rejection of kingship in The History of Britain and, finally, the comic sentimentality of Dryden's opera. As such the figure of Arthur and the body of fiction associated with it must be judged one of the most lasting and flexible in the English Renaissance.

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