THE ROLE OF PRINCE ARTHUR

IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

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PREFACE

Although many scholars have written about *The Faerie Queene*, few have given any special attention to Prince Arthur's role in that poem, and Spenser clearly implies in his letter to Raleigh, that Arthur is an important element. However, a close examination of the poem itself reveals that Arthur is an even more complex character than Spenser indicates. In fact, he functions on several levels throughout the many episodes of the narrative. Therefore, the present study attempts to describe Arthur's roles in each episode and, then, to generalize his significance to the poem as a whole.

For their help in the preparation of this study, I wish to thank Dr. Charles E. Walton, my thesis director, and Dr. William Cogswell, my second reader. Both offered the guidance and constructive criticism necessary to enable me to complete my study with some degree of success. I also wish to thank Mrs. Dori Comer, my typist, for her patience, and the Inter-Library Loan Department for their courteous assistance in securing the materials used in this study.

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CHAPTER I.

A REEVALUATION OF SPENSER'S LETTER TO RALEIGH

In a letter dated January 23, 1589, Edmund Spenser discussed for his friend and patron, Sir Walter Raleigh, his great poem, *The Faerie Queene*, a portion of which was published in the following year. Spenser's intention in writing the letter is evident. Since he attached the letter to the poem, he apparently hoped to clarify for Raleigh, and presumably for all future readers of *The Faerie Queene*, the kind of poem that he had written, his concept of the role of a poet, the particular allegorical meanings of certain characters, his purposes for writing the poem, some of his sources of inspiration, and his complete plan for the poem. However, he better might have left the letter unwritten, or at least unpublished, since it clarifies some points, as he intended, but complicates many others. Had he not written the letter, generations of critics, scholars, and students would have been content to judge the poem on its own merits alone, without regard to what Spenser had to say about it. But since he did write the letter, anyone approaching a study of the

several aspects of this poem which the poet sets forth must deal with it. One important area of study in The Faerie Queene which received Spenser's attention in the letter is the character of Prince Arthur.

In attempting to explain his use of Arthur in the poem, Spenser indicates that Arthur fits the intended purpose, e. g., " . . . to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline . . . ."[1] He considers Arthur to be suitable to this purpose, because he adds variety to the overall scheme, because the "excellency of his person" has been made famous by previous writers, and " . . . because he is furthest from danger of envy and suspition of present time." Spenser further projects his plan:

> I labour to pourtraict in Arthur, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private moral virtues, as Aristotle hath devised, the which is the purpose of these first twelve bookes . . . I conceive [Arthur] . . . to have seene in a dream or vision the Faery Queene, with whose excellent beauty ravished, he waking resolved to seeke her out, and so . . . he went to seeke her forth in Faery Land . . . . So in the person of Prince Arthur, I sette magnificence in particular, which virtue, for that (According to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and it containeth in it them all,

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[1]Edmund Spenser, The Complete Poetical Works of Spenser, p. 136.

> therefore I mention the deeds of Arthur applyable to that vertue which I write of in that booke.[2]

Thus, he emphasizes Arthur's moral significance as well as his qualities and conflicts as a fictional character. Some scholars, attaching their comments to the use of Arthur for variety, have argued that the poet also intended Arthur as a unifying force in the structure of the poem. Some have also found an historical significance in Arthur's character, stemming, in part at least, from Spenser's careful explanation that Gloriana represents Elizabeth and that Arthur is in search of his beloved, Gloriana. However, the point in the letter that is most bitterly argued concerns Arthur's moral significance. Scholars have contended that Spenser was inaccurate in his reference to Aristotle's twelve virtues and Magnificence. Some feel that he became confused, both in his reference to twelve virtues and in his assignment of Magnificence to Arthur.[3] Since Spenser refers to "Aristotle and the

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[2] Loc. cit.

[3] J. J. Jusserand, "Twelve Private Morall Vertues as Aristotle Hath Devised," MP, III (January, 1906), 376, 382, 375; Merritt Y. Hughes, "The Arthurs of 'The Faerie Queene'," Études Anglaises, VI (August, 1953), 197; W. F. DeMoss, MP, XVI (May, 1918), 267. Jusserand says that Spenser's statement is misleading, because Aristotle has no list of twelve virtues and that even the virtues he does mention do not correspond with Spenser's. He suggests that Spenser's rememberance of

rest," it is convenient for one to by-pass the critics and judge for himself, examining some of Spenser's sources first-hand. One should consult Aristotle, of course, since Spenser refers to him by name; but St. Thomas Aquinas should also be reviewed, since he was undoubtedly known to Spenser and is probably one of the persons to whom Spenser refers as "the rest."

First of all, one notes that Aristotle asserts that "magnificence . . . appears to be a virtue concerned with wealth. It refers to the spending of wealth."[4] He indicates that the magnificent man spends with good taste and that his expenditure is appropriate to the situation. (iv.ii.5) "The motive of the munificent [magnificent] man in such expenditure will be the nobility of the action, this motive being characteristic of all the virtues." (iv.ii.7) Extremes in spending,

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[5](continued) Aristotle was vague and that Spenser mentions twelve virtues because of the sacred significance of the number twelve, and not because of Aristotle. Jusserand does, however, admit that Magnificence is one of Aristotle's virtues. But Hughes points out that Aristotle applied that virtue to the tasteful outlay of money and that Arthur does not illustrate that virtue. DeMoss contends that Magnificence is suitable to persons of rank and that Arthur fits that criterion.

[4]Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, iv.ii.1. All future references to Aristotle will be noted in the text.

Aristotle calls "vulgarity," spending too much, and "paltriness," spending too little. (iv.ii.20-21) Clearly, all of Aristotle's discussion involves money. He does not state, as Spenser does, that Magnificence is the sum of all the virtues; rather he merely states that it, like each of the others, involves a noble motive for action. Moreover, he indicates that Magnificence is reserved for the wealthy, high-born, and famous: " . . . the poor man who attempts Magnificence is foolish, for he spends out of proportion to his means . . . [and] an act displays virtue only when it is done in the right way." (iv.ii.13-14)

In examining Aristotle directly, then, one admits that M. Y. Hughes is correct in pointing out the monetary aspect of Magnificence. Certainly, he must admit that nowhere in The Faerie Queene does Prince Arthur spend money, either magnificently or otherwise. However, he must also agree with W. F. DeMoss, who states that Aristotle reserves Magnificence for persons of high rank, and that, because he is a prince, Arthur falls into that category.[5]

Scholars have also suggested that Spenser probably knew and used the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, a Christian

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[5]See note 3 above.

philsopher, who reconstructs some of Aristotle's views to make them Christian. However, he uses Magnificence in much the same way as does Aristotle. For example, he says that " . . . to do something great, whence magnificence takes its name, belongs properly to the very notion of virtue."[6] Like Aristotle, St. Thomas applies Magnificence to the spending of money and, also, indicates that the outlay should be appropriate to the occasion. (II.II.134.3)

Consequently, when one attempts to apply either Aristotle's or St. Thomas' definition of Magnificence to Arthur, he is quite aware that the virtue as they describe it does not fit Arthur. Arthur is a high-born person, but he does not engage in the spending of money, appropriately or otherwise, at any place in <u>The Faerie Queene</u>. One concludes, then, that something is amiss.

In attempting to resolve the problem of Spenser's use of Magnificence, some have suggested that Spenser confused it with <u>Magnanimity</u>.[7] Again, one turns to Aristotle and

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[6]St. Thomas Aquinas, <u>Summa Theologicia</u>, II.II.134.1. All future references to St. Thomas will be noted in the text.

[7]Michael F. Moloney, "St. Thomas and Spenser's Virtue of Magnificence," <u>JEGP</u>, LII (1953), 58; Rosamond Tuve, <u>Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity</u>, pp. 141, 98; Josephine Waters Bennett, <u>The Evolution of The Faerie</u>

St. Thomas. First, Aristotle speaks of "greatness of soul" or "magnanimitas" in reference to a person who "claims much and deserves much." (iv.ii.1-3) He says that it is ". . . a crowning ornament of the virtues: it enhances their greatness, and it cannot exist without them." (iv.iii.16) Among the chief concerns of the magnanimous man are honor and dishonor. (iv.iii.17) Furthermore, Aristotle indicates that "the great-souled man" has a right to be proud and to seek great honor, because his high estimates of himself are correct. (iv.iii.22) Moreover, "the great-souled man does not run into danger for trifling reasons . . . but he will face danger in a great cause, and when so doing will be ready to sacrifice his life . . . ." (iv.iii.23) He is unwilling to ask for help from others, but is always willing to give it. (iv.iii.26)

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[7] (continued) Queene, p. 59; Jusserand, op. cit., p. 382; Bernard E. C. Davis, Edmund Spenser: A Critical Study, p. 109. Maloney finds it difficult to believe that Spenser would have become confused, and Tuve flatly says that Spenser did know the difference between Magnificence and Magnanimity. She says, however, that the two terms were very much alike by Spenser's time. Bennett agrees and declares that, by Tudor times, Magnificence had taken on special meaning as a reference to kings, and, hence is appropriately applicable to Arthur. Jusserand and Davis both contend that Spenser was confused, and Magnificence is an inaccurate rendering of Aristotle's Magnanimity.

On the other hand, St. Thomas discusses Magnanimity as a sub-point of the cardinal virtue Fortitude which also includes Magnificence. Obviously, his definition of Fortitude has some points in common with Aristotle's Magnanimity, since it " . . . can be taken in two ways. First, as simply denoting a certain firmness of mind . . . Secondly, . . . to denote firmness only in bearing and withstanding those things where in it is most difficult to be firm, namely in certain grave dangers." (II.II.123.2) He adds that one " . . . must conclude that the proper matter of magnanimity is great honor, and that a magnanimous man tends to such things as are deserving of honor." (II.II.129.2) Like Aristotle, St. Thomas indicates that the magnanimous man believes himself deserving of great honor, and in fact he is deserving. (II.II.129.3)

It is clear that Arthur fits both philosophers' views of the magnanimous man. For example, he strives for and deserves great honor; he is not foolhearty, but he will risk grave dangers if the situation warrants such action. Consequently, one concludes that Spenser has at least borrowed more heavily from Magnanimity than from Magnificence for the characterization of Arthur, if he has not actually confused the two virtues. In fact, his use of the term Magnificence

is inaccurate if he really means it to correspond with the definitions offered by either St. Thomas or Aristotle. Of course, as author, he may call Arthur anything he likes if he sets his own standards; but it is not until the reader leaves the letter and looks at the poem itself that he understands Spenser's use of Magnificence.

Though problems have arisen because of Spenser's reference to Aristotle's virtues, there are some methods which he unquestionably borrows from "Aristotle and the rest." For example, his idea to combine all the virtues in one follows Aristotle's view that one of the virtues may be thought to contain all of the other virtues. Aristotle's "greatness of soul" fills this requirement.[8] Spenser also borrowed Aristotle's belief that the virtuous state is the mean between the two extremes and that both political and private moral virtues may be found in one man. The political virtues he apparently intended to illustrate in another work parallel to _The Faerie Queene_ in which Arthur would appear as a king.[9]

J. J. Jusserand suggests that Spenser borrowed from Aristotle, although far less than he claimed, pointing out

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[8]DeMoss, _op. cit._, p. 266.

[9]Jusserand, _op. cit._, p. 381.

that he also borrowed from Piccolomini and Bryskitt, two contemporaries.[10] Bernard E. C. Davis points out that Spenser's scheme of virtues " . . . partakes of both Plato and Aristotle, with additions from independent sources."[11] Actually, it seems quite natural that Spenser would have borrowed from many sources since, as H. S. V. Jones points out, it would be odd if " . . . the chief of the Christian knights [Arthur] should represent the most Hellenic of all virtues . . . ."[12] Aristotle, especially, needed to be Christianized, and it is from "the rest" of his sources, especially St. Thomas, that Spenser tempers and reshapes Aristotle's ideas to conform with his own. Thus, the conflict of Magnanimity and Magnificence can only be resolved when one sees that Spenser defines Magnificence as both St. Thomas and Aristotle defined Magnanimity, and that an Elizabethan probably would have understood what Spenser meant.

In addition to Magnificence or Magnanimity, however, some have decided that Arthur also represents Grace. For

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[10] Ibid., p. 282.

[11] Davis, op. cit., p. 109.

[12] H. S. V. Jones, "Magnanimity in Spenser's Legend of Holiness," SP, XXIX (April, 1932), 201.

example, Virgil Whitaker concludes that, from the Protestant point of view, it is appropriate and natural that Arthur should be the minister of Grace, since Grace is what enables man to be capable of good works even in difficult situations.[13] However, Whitaker thinks that Arthur does not represent Grace in Book II.[14] Rosamond Tuve, however, cautions that, even though he is a "channel for Christ-like power," Arthur must not be thought of as a Christ figure.[15] Furthermore, Hughes points out that in some of his encounters, Arthur is a minister of Grace; in others, some other spiritual symbol; in still others, a political symbol; and at other times, simply a knight errant in quest of glory.[16]

Spenser's giving Arthur various encounters and subsequent levels of meaning may have been his attempt to use Arthur for variety as he suggests in the Raleigh letter, but, here, a second point of argument arises when scholars suggest that Spenser hoped Arthur would prove to be a unifying force

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[13]Virgil K. Whitaker, _The Religious Basis of Spenser's Thought_, pp. 42-43.

[14]_Loc. cit._

[15]Tuve, _op. cit._, p. 352.

[16]Hughes, _op. cit._, p. 201.

as well as a means of providing variety. Richard Hurd accuses Spenser of trying to "conceal the disorder of his Gothic plan" through the use of Arthur,[17] and many agree with Hurd that Spenser's attempt at establishing order through Arthur fails.[18] Nevertheless, it is clear that Spenser follows a pattern in the use of Arthur. For example, in all except Book III, Arthur performs a rescue in Canto VIII, and he is a _deus ex machina_[19] when he performs these acts. He is literally "god (Heavenly Grace) in a machine," since the knight he rescues cannot escape his difficulty through any efforts of his own.[20] A pattern is further established in Spenser's having the

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[17]Richard Hurd, "Gothic Unity in The Faerie Queene," in _The Prince of Poets, Essays on Edmund Spenser_, p. 193.

[18]W. J. B. Owen, "The Structure of the _Faerie Queene_," _PMLA_, LXVIII (1953), 1087; Graham Hough, _A Preface to "The Faerie Queene_," p. 51; William L. Renwick, _Edmund Spenser, an Essay on Renaissance Poetry_, p. 51. Owen and Hough are among those who believe that Spenser failed. Owen says that Arthur " . . . contributes little or nothing towards this end." Hough insists that Arthur is, at best, only a single element of the total, not the main ingredient, and is of no effect as a unifying factor. Renwick agrees when he says that Spenser's attempt at unity through his use of Arthur is unsuccessful.

[19]Davis, _op. cit._, p. 68.

[20]H. Clement Notcutt, "_The Faerie Queene_ and Its Critics," _Essays and Studies_, XII (1926), 73.

remainder of a book, after the episode of the resuce, show life as it ought to be.[21]

Josephine Bennett, however, sees these indications of a pattern as producing three other problems in Spenser's use of Arthur: that he appears only infrequently; that his appearances are not related to one another; and that his services in four of six books are, indeed, mechanical. She offers these problems as proof that Arthur was not originally a part of Spenser's plan.[22] On the other hand, W. J. B. Owen has commented that, since there is no continuous thread connecting the Arthur episodes, the character fails as a unifier.[23] In fact, according to Graham Hough, the Britomart-Artegall romance is more of a unifying force than the Arthur-Gloriana romance.[24] To each of these complaints, the answer must lie in the fact that Arthur is the only character who appears in every book, that his appearances follow a pattern, and that his quest for Gloriana is the continuous thread of

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[21]John Erskine, "The Virtue of Friendship in the 'Faerie Queene'," PMLA, XXX (1915), 849.

[22]Bennett, op. cit., p. 54.

[23]Owen, op. cit., p. 1088.

[24]Hough, op. cit., p. 226.

his adventures. By virtue of these simple facts, he must serve as a unifying force for the poem as a whole. The reader soon expects to see Arthur appear at that point where the hero of the book, or some other knight, is in need of aid; and Arthur does, for the most part, follow such a pattern. Furthermore, if one keeps Spenser's purpose in mind, he sees that the reason for Arthur's presence is clear. He represents the complete, ideal gentleman, while the individual knights represent particular virtues. Thus, in Arthur are united all of the virtues of the individual knights; and as he performs his rescues, he exemplifies not only the perfection of the individual virtue that he assists, but the perfection of all of the cardinal virtues, as well. Fritz Caspari suggests that it is this purpose that holds the poem together,[25] and that, since he is the exemplar of that purpose achieved, Arthur is also a unifying force.

Arthur, then, functions on the level of the moral allegory as he represents Spenser's version of Magnificence and Grace, but, at the same time, he functions structurally to unify the poem as he embodies all of the virtues and appears in all of

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[25]Fritz Caspari, Humanism and the Social Order in Tudor England, p. 337.

the books. He also functions on the historical level. Spenser indicates his intention that part of the allegory be historical when he explains that Gloriana represents Elizabeth, as do Britomart and other female characters at various times. It is the desire to portray history through allegory that probably made him choose Prince Arthur, for, although this character adds to the meaning of the moral allegory and functions, to some degree, structurally, it is in the area of historical allegory that he is essential. Any other character could have been made to bear Arthur's role in the moral allegory and to unify the work, but Arthur's legendary figure fits Spenser's stated purpose well. He is, of course, a royal person, chivalric and gracious in all acts. The legends of King Arthur and the Round Table portrayed him as a mighty hero, and it is probably because of these legends that Spenser chose him to achieve a second purpose (not so clearly defined in the letter as the first), e. g., to glorify Elizabeth. Certainly, Spenser hints at such a purpose in making Elizabeth, Gloriana.

In selecting Prince Arthur, as an element in his work Spenser must have recognized the historical tradition behind the Arthurian legends and the Tudor connection with

them.[26] By Spenser's time, the Tudors, including Elizabeth, had established a tradition of their right to the throne of England as descendants of King Arthur.[27] This tradition was called the "return motif," and it was wide-spread.[28] It refers to the legend that, after battle with Modred, Arthur went to heal his wounds on the Isle of Avalon from which he was supposed to return some day to restore the ancient British dynasty.[29] Because the Tudors were thought to be descendants of Arthur, they were celebrated, and a national spirit began to grow.[30] Arthurian romance became to the

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[26]C. B. Millican, Spenser and the Table Round, p. 51; Bennett, op. cit., pp. 79, 54-56; Leicester Bradner, Edmund Spenser and the Faerie Queene, p. 73; Hurd, op. cit., p. 80. Millican, Bennett, Bradner, and Hurd all generally agree that Arthur was not a part of Spenser's original plan for the poem, but that after he decided to use his poem to glorify Elizabeth, his inclusion of Arthur was inevitable. Bennett argues that Spenser had difficulty finding a place for Arthur in the poem, and that, in fact, the plots of Books I, II, and III could develop just as well without him. Spenser's late decision to include Arthur accounts, Bennett believes, for the " . . . slight, schematic, and disconnected use of Arthur . . ." throughout the poem. Janet Spens, in Spenser's Faerie Queene; an Interpretation, p. 31, on the other hand, argues that Spenser planned from the beginning to use Arthur.

[27]Millican, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

[28]Edwin A. Greenlaw, Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory, p. 98.

[29]Isabel E. Rathbone, The Meaning of Spenser's Fairyland, p. 182.

[30]Greenlaw, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

Elizabethan "an image of his past."[31] Evidently in keeping with the Tudor ancestoral claims to Arthur, a cult of Arthurianism flourished among the Elizabethan courtiers, who established a "Table Round" and even held tournaments.[32] Consequently, it was "congenial" for Spenser to use the Arthurian romance as a tool for his purposes.[33]

Edwin Greenlaw points out that Spenser followed the epic tradition when he wrote about national origins and moral virtues and when he distinguished between the private citizen and the governor.[34] He thinks that, since Spenser saw the value of the history and lineage of Arthur to the developing of a national spirit, he shows Arthur deriving his strength and faith to overcome crises not from the church, but from the history of his people.[35] Arthur and other characters throughout the poem represent not only their assigned moral qualities, but also the spirit of England. Spenser's use of the Arthurian romance seems to reflect the

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[31]Arnold Williams, Flower on a Lowly Stalk, p. 82.

[32]Loc. cit.

[33]Loc. cit.

[34]Greenlaw, op. cit., p. 67.

[35]Ibid., pp. 99-100.

circumstances of the time and place in which he was living in that the temper and political situation of the time had placed a new emphasis on a man's military abilities.[37] Therefore, despite its medieval appearance, Spenser's poem was appropriate to his day.[38] Spenser conceived of the Arthurian period as the Golden Age and used it to depict life in the Renaissance.[39] However, the Arthur that Spenser creates for _The Faerie Queene_ is apart from the legendary Arthur.[40] He uses Arthur as a prince, not as a king, a role that he clearly describes in the letter; and he does not make use of the traditional knights to exemplify the virtues he has in mind. It is actually the spirit of the Arthurian romances and not the letter of the romances that Spenser imitates.[41] Nevertheless, the Arthurian link between the English past and present was a convenient one for the author.

Scholars have frequently attempted to show various

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[37]Hughes, _op. cit._, p. 343.

[38]_Ibid._, p. 344.

[39]Roberta F. Brinkley, _Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century_, p. 139.

[40]Hough, _op. cit._, p. 228.

[41]Edwin A. Greenlaw, "Spenser's Fairy Mythology," _SP_ XV (1918), 105.

persons contemporary with Spenser and Elizabeth as the real individuals protrayed in Arthur. Undoubtedly, Spenser's specific reference in the letter to the Gloriana-Elizabeth relationship encourages this kind of speculation. Scholars have attempted to discover whom Spenser was suggesting as a husband for Elizabeth, if indeed, he was suggesting anyone. Among the persons who have been suggested as the individual represented in Arthur are Leicester, Sidney, Essex, and Raleigh; but few seriously believe that Spenser intended Arthur to represent anyone consistently throughout the poem. A good many arguments have been offered against each possible choice; but the best one, which encompasses all, is Bennett's comment that "there was no living individual in Spenser's day who could be safely and appropriately celebrated as King Arthur."[42] She explains that, although it was important throughout Elizabeth's reign, the question of succession was also a delicate one and that only a king or his heir (Elizabeth) could properly be the returned Arthur. Spenser could not have made Arthur represent a mere courtier without offending the queen.[43] Bennett further

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[42]Bennett, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

[43]Ibid., p. 96.

points out that Leicester, most often thought to be Arthur, was married in 1578, and that for Spenser to suggest that Leicester should marry Elizabeth after that time would cause one to question Spenser's " . . . sanity or moral decency."[44] Moreover, Pauline Parker says that it would have been "the height of indescretion" for Spenser to have given Arthur any consistent political allegory.[45] The conclusion one must reach is that Spenser did not intend for Arthur to represent any one person throughout the poem. Undoubtedly, he used Raleigh, Sidney, Essex and Leicester as models, since he admired these men and they were regarded as gentlemen by their contemporaries; but probably he meant to portray in Arthur their fine qualities, and not these individuals personally. In the political allegory, Arthur represents the spirit of England that expresses itself in great deeds,[46] and not any one individual. In fact, Spenser indicates in the letter that he has selected Arthur to exemplify Magnificence and the perfected gentleman precisely because he is

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[44]Ibid., p. 95.

[45]Pauline Parker, The Allegory of The Faerie Queene, p. 320.

[46]F. M. Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory of the First Book of the Faerie Queene, p. 46.

famous but removed from the present time and, thus, above envy and suspicion.

Hence, Spenser establishes, in his letter to Raleigh, a four-fold role for Arthur. Allegorically, Arthur has a moral significance that Spenser labels Magnificence, and that he reveals in the poem to be his own special use of the term; and he has an historical significance which would be best interpreted overall as national spirit, but which, on occasion, may be interpreted as some specific individual in a specific event. Moreover, Arthur is a unifying force in the structure of the work by virtue of his regularity of appearance in each book and his personal quest for Gloriana. Spenser further indicates that he intends Arthur to be a character in his own right when he assigns him that personal quest. Had Spenser intended Arthur only as an allegorical or mechanical device, he would have had no need to give Arthur a personal conflict to motivate him as an individual knight. Thus, Arthur is also significant as a fictional character, a knight in search of an ideal love, Gloriana. Arthur's significance in the total poem is best illuminated by the events themselves in which he functions in multiple roles, that vary with each episode. Therefore, one must look closely at each book and at each event therein in which Arthur participates.

CHAPTER II

ARTHUR'S ROLE IN BOOKS I AND II

Even though Spenser published Books I, II, and III of *The Faerie Queene* together, Books I and II have more in common with each other than either has with Book III. Books I and II have their structures in common, and some critics have suggested that they share the moral allegory of human redemption.[47] Arthur's rescue of the titular heroes of Books I and II takes place in the eighth canto of each book; and, although they are not identical in Books I and II, his moral roles in each are parallel enough to show them "compatible" in a single individual.[48] However, just as there is much disagreement about Arthur's overall role in the poem, there is disagreement about his roles in each of Books I and II. Therefore, one must examine them individually to determine Arthur's role on each of its multiple levels throughout the various episodes. In Book I, Arthur functions in moral

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[47] A. C. Hamilton, "'Like Race to Runne': The Parallel Structure of *The Faerie Queene*, Books I and II," *PMLA*, LXXIII (1958), 331.

[48] *Loc. cit.*

allegory, in historical allegory, as a structural device, and as a fictional character. At times, he functions in several of these roles simultaneously.

Arthur's primary duty in Book I is to rescue the Red Cross Knight, the Knight of Holiness. Throughout the book, the Red Cross Knight and Lady Una have been traversing to Una's home, where the Red Cross Knight will perform the specific quest to which he has been assigned by Gloriana, the Faerie Queene. They have experienced many adventurous and dangerous situations, and, prior to Arthur's appearance, they have become separated. The Red Cross Knight has removed his armor, has courted Duessa, another lady, and, being vulnerable without his armor, has been captured by an evil giant, Orgoglio. Una, having learned of the Red Cross Knight's predicament, is despairing when Arthur rides by. Seeing her distress, he stops to offer assistance, and Una tells him of her trouble and explains how the Red Cross Knight happened to be with her. Hence, even this early in his portion of Book I, Arthur functions in one of his intended capacities. As a structural device, he proves a subtle means by which information is conveyed to the reader. As Una explains the Red Cross Knight's quest to Arthur, the reader is also informed of it. The narrator earlier has said only that the

Red Cross Knight received a quest from Gloriana.[49] Una now identifies the quest, and her subsequent narration also reveals much of the knight's nature. She explains that her mother and father, queen and king of a great land, are held captive by a dragon and adds that many knights have tried to help her and have failed because they lacked faith. She mentions that she went to Gloriana's court to find a knight who could help her and that there she found the Red Cross Knight, a " . . . fresh unproved knight, / Whose manly hands inbrewed with guilty blood / Had never beene . . . ." (I.VII.xlvii) He volunteered to help her; however, now he is in trouble. Arthur, without hesitation, offers to help her by rescuing the knight.

In doing so, Arthur reveals himself to be a chivalrous and brave knight, willing to risk even his life for a lady and a fellow knight in distress. This action, in moral terms, corresponds to the virtue of Magnanimity as explained by both Aristotle and St. Thomas, and structurally it places Arthur in the position of a _deus ex machina_, for had he not happened by when he did, the Red Cross Knight would have been

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[49]Spenser, _op. cit._, I.I.iii. All subsequent references to _The Faerie Queene_ will be cited within the text.

doomed. Arthur and Una, then, proceed to the giant's house, where Arthur battles Orgoglio and a many-headed beast upon which Duessa rides. In the course of the battle, the giant knocks Arthur to the ground and is about to defeat him when Arthur's shield becomes uncovered, blinding both Orgoglio and the beast and enabling Arthur to decapitate the giant. Duessa attempts to flee, but Timias, Arthur's squire, captures her, while Arthur enters the castle to rescue the Red Cross Knight.

Morally, Arthur's service has been magnanimous, because he thought himself worthy of the quest when he accepted it, he proved that he was worthy, and risked much willingly. However, his action has been more than simply magnanimous. On the level of moral allegory, the Red Cross Knight has been identified by Spenser as Holiness, Una as Truth, Orgoglio as Pride, and Duessa as Falsehood. Therefore, Arthur's aid must be interpreted as that of some as-yet-unidentified allegorical figure who rescues Holiness from Pride and Falsehood to restore it to Truth, and the Red Cross Knight's actions have indicated that he is a Christian knight who (as evidenced on Una's remark that all the other knights who tried to help her lacked faith) possesses Christian faith.

What, then, is it that Arthur represents on this allegorical level? Clearly, he does not merely represent Magnificence or Magnanimity, since neither virtue would help the Red Cross Knight on a spiritual level. The Red Cross Knight has yielded to Pride (Orgoglio), the greatest of all Christian sins, and requires aid against it. Arthur could logically provide this aid in the form of Divine or Heavenly Grace, as many critics have suggested. DeMoss points out that the Red Cross Knight thought himself worthy of great things when he accepted Una's quest and that he proved later that he was, indeed, worthy.[50] Therefore, the Red Cross Knight also fits the description of Magnanimity as Arthur does; but the Christian man must be cautious of Magnanimity which, carried to an extreme, would result in Pride. Pride, then, has overcome the Red Cross Knight and caused him to fall;[51] he has momentarily over-estimated his own ability.[52]

The help which the Red Cross Knight needs to raise him from his fall must come in the form of the Christian virtue that can counteract Pride. Grace, as described in Christian

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[50]DeMoss, op. cit., p. 32.

[51]F. M. Padelford, "The Spiritual Allegory of 'The Faerie Queene', Book I," JEGP, XXII (1923), 13.

[52]Ibid., p. 3.

terms by St. Thomas, would undoubtedly be able to accomplish such a task. St. Thomas states that " . . . human nature . . . can be raised by the help of grace to a higher end, which lower natures can nowise reach . . . ." (I.II.109.5) He further explains that "man by himself can no wise rise without the help of grace." (I.II.109.7) He describes Grace as an habitual gift from God or a Divine help " . . . whereby God moves us to will and to act . . . ." (I.II.110.4) Grace, he says, is prior to virtue; (I.II.110.4) that is, without Grace, one cannot have virtue. The Red Cross Knight has sinned and, therefore, must receive Divine Grace if he is to rise from his fallen state and be virtuous again.

That Arthur is, indeed, the Grace which the Red Cross Knight must have is shown symbolically by Spenser in the battle episode in which Arthur's shield is a strong weapon for him and a key to the allegory for the reader. Arthur's shield blinds Orgoglio and Duessa's beast and enables him to win the battle. Although the shield has been interpreted in various ways by other critics,[53] D. C. Allen claims that it

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[53]W. J. B. Pienaar, "Arthur's Shield in 'The Faerie Queene'," MP, XXVI (August, 1928), 63-65; Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory, p. 47. Pienaar points out that the shield is sometimes thought to be the Bible, but, he says, it is not. He says it represents faith. Padelford agrees that the shield is "superlative Christian faith."

represents Repentance, the complement of Faith.[54] He says that Faith is represented in the Red Cross Knight's shield and is the first step to Christian perfection, but argues that the finer shield of Arthur represents Repentance, the second step.[55] He, then, interprets specific aspects of Arthur's shield in support of his contention. One recalls that the shield is described by the narrator in great detail when Arthur first approaches Una. It is not made of steel or brass, "but all of diamond perfect pure and cleene / It framed was . . . ." (I.VII.xxxiii) It also has magic powers to protect Arthur. To this description, Allen offers further interpretation: Arthur needs a device that will protect him against all Satanic foes, and during Spenser's day, the diamond was valued because it " . . . resisted poison, subdued quarrels, gave one power over one's enemies, aided lunatic and possessed, subdued furious beasts, and gave one strength and power in action."[56] In Christian interpretation during the same period, the diamond was associated with

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[54] D. C. Allen, "Arthur's Diamon Shield in 'The Faerie Queene'," JEGP, XXXVI (April, 1937), 243.

[55] Loc. cit.

[56] Ibid., p. 238.

Repentance and the carbuncle with Faith.[57] Allen suggests that Spenser must have been aware of the magical and medical virtues of the diamond and of its place in Christian legend, since he associates Arthur with the diamond almost exclusively.[58]

Arthur's shield serves a very obvious practical function as a defensive piece of a knight's armor; but on the level of moral allegory, it is logical that Grace, who comes to the aid of fallen Holiness or Faith, should bring as his most powerful piece of equipment, Repentance, the second step to salvation. Furthermore, after Arthur has rescued the knight and reunited Faith and Truth, he exchanges gifts with him:

> Prince Arthur gave a boxe of diamond sure,
> Embowed with gold and gorgeous ornament
> Wherein were closed few drops of liquor pure,
> Of wonderous worth and vertue excellent,
> That any wound could heal incontinent . . . .
> (I.IX.xix)

Once again, Spenser associates the diamond with healing, and the "drops of liquor pure" may be explained as holy communion[59] through which man's sins may be forgiven or healed as he

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[57] Ibid., p. 240.

[58] Ibid., p. 235.

[59] Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory, pp. 47-48; Whitaker, op. cit., p. 52.

repents. In return, the Red Cross Knight gives Arthur a book identified by the narrator as the New Testament, or as the Book of Common Prayer, as F. M. Padelford insists.[60]

The Tudor national spirit related to the Arthurian legends is fused with Arthur's spiritual role in Book I.[61] In keeping with the moral allegory of the Arthur-Orgoglio battle, the historical allegory centers around church problems of the day. Several critics suggest that Duessa and Orgoglio should be interpreted as the papacy in England,[62] and several interesting images within the episode support such an interpretation. For example, Duessa carries a golden cup from which she pours poison after saying "charms and some enchantments." (I.VIII.xiv) She even endangers Timias with her poison, and Arthur has to rescue the squire by cutting off one of the beast's heads. A moment later, Orgoglio, slain by Arthur, is pictured as " . . . vanished quite, and of that monstrous mas / Was nothing left, but like an empty bladder was." (I.VIII.xxiv) Duessa sees the slain Orgoglio

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[60]Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory, pp. 47-48.

[61]Loc. cit.

[62]Ibid., p. 50; H. S. V. Jones, A Spenser Handbook, p. 164; Thomas Keightly, "Allegory in 'The Faerie Queene'," Notes and Queries, VII (1871), 2.

and, throwing her golden cup to the ground, attempts to flee but is captured by Timias. The allegory, here, is clear: the golden cup that Duessa carries is symbolic of the sacrament, but because she is Falsehood, it is a poisonous, false sacrament, the sacrament of the Catholic Church. Arthur's cleaving the head of the beast represents " . . . the divine intervention whereby Mary died and the Catholic Church lost England."[63] The death of Orgoglio and the pun made by the narrator in referring to him as a "monstrous mas" and an "emptie bladder" clearly are intended to mean that Arthur has destroyed the Catholic Church and its mass, which is nothing but empty words. A further direct reference to the suppression of the mass by King Edward and the substitution of the Protestant Communion service may also be intended.[64] The death of Orgoglio may also represent the conditions which allowed the reuniting of England, in the person of the Red Cross Knight, and True Religion, in the person of Una, or the accession of Elizabeth.[65] In other words, when Elizabeth

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[63]Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory, p. 50.

[64]Ibid., p. 48.

[65]P. M. Buck, Jr., "On the Political Allegory in 'The Faerie Queene'," University of Nebraska Studies, XI (1911), 168.

took the throne of England, the English church became fully established, over-riding the Catholic Church. P. M. Buck contends that the Arthur-Orgoglio episode is a representation of Leicester's freeing England from foreign domination by the Spanish and French.[66] Such an interpretation is possible, but a far better one seems to be that English nationalism (Arthur) has destroyed papal influence through the Catholic Church (Duessa, Orgoglio, and the beast). The allegory is more complete for the latter interpretation than for the former.

Arthur's rescue of the Red Cross Knight requires him to enter Orgoglio's castle where the knight is imprisoned. A. C. Hamilton suggests that this episode should be interpreted to mean that Arthur is Christ and that through Christ's descent into Hell, fallen man gains Grace.[67] On the other hand, Tuve cautions agains interpreting Arthur, or any other figure in the poem, as Christ or the Holy Ghost.[68] She says that Arthur should be thought of as a brave knight who illustrates Christ's fortitude, in that he shows what it is to be perfected

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[66] Loc. cit.

[67] A. C. Hamilton, "Spenser and Langland," SP, LV (1958), 539; Hamilton, "'Like Race to Runne'," p. 331.

[68] Tuve, op. cit., p. 136.

in a virtue by giving the individual knights, in this case the Red Cross Knight, the strength to bring their individual virtues to perfection, a task which they could not accomplish without Grace.[69] Greenlaw points out that Arthur's rescue of the Red Cross Knight may indicate that a single virtue needs Magnificence, sum of all the virtues, to give it power against emergency.[70] However, because of the arguments against assigning Magnificence to Arthur, Greenlaw might do well to revise his statement, omitting his reference to Magnificence, for Arthur does represent the sum of all the virtues, even though Magnificence is not the best term with which to explain that summation.

Once the Red Cross Knight and Una are reunited, they take action against the captive Duessa. She is not slain, but stripped by Una and her gross ugliness revealed. This episode indicates that once Truth is allowed to strip the finery from it, Catholicism is shown for what it is, ugly, loathful, and false. Arthur's defeat of Duessa and Orgoglio to rescue the Red Cross Knight means the victory of the Tudors over the papacy and its supporters.[71]

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[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

[70] Greenlaw, *Studies*, p. 97.

[71] Keightly, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

Having fulfilled his purpose in the action of Book I, Arthur prepares to leave Una and the Red Cross Knight to continue his own quest. However, before he does, he reveals the nature of his quest to Una, just as she revealed her problem to him when they first met. It is, here, for the first time, that the reader, as well as Una, discovers Arthur's quest for Gloriana. Una encourages Arthur to tell his story so that he should not "die unknown." (I.IX.ii) He reveals to her that he does not know who his real parents are, because he was taken from them as an infant and reared to adulthood by a "Fary Knight." (I.IX.iii) Later, he explains, that knight took him to Timon, who educated him in "vertuous lore." (I.IX.iv) He recalls that Merlin visited him there often and told him that he was destined to be a king. He explains, further, that he had a vision of the Faery Queene in a dream and fell deeply in love with her and that his quest now is "to seeke her out" and never to rest until he finds her. (I.IX.xv) After a short discussion with the Red Cross Knight about love, Arthur and the knight exchange gifts, and Arthur leaves to continue his search for Gloriana.

The Arthur-Gloriana romance functions, then, on more than one level. First, it establishes Arthur as a knight in love, searching for his fair lady. Morally, " . . . Arthur's

quest for Gloriana is the symbol of the soul's pursuit of the supreme good."[72] Moreover, it is a search for the glory desired by the magnanimous man. And, finally, it is a quest for Platonic love, or at least, chaste sexual love in marriage.[73] Isabel Rathbone thinks that, in 1596, Spenser could hardly have meant Arthur's quest to mean marriage for Elizabeth and concludes that he meant Platonic love.[74] The love quest does provide Spenser with an opportunity to combine two popular Renaissance themes, " . . . the desire for earthly immortality through fame, and the cult of love as a stimulus to noble action."[75] Rathbone also thinks that this love story was designed to be the central action of the poem;[76] but the allegorical center, the union with Gloriana, is missing, and, thus, one's understanding of the poem is somewhat limited.[77] Nevertheless, as a device the love story

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[72]Spens, op. cit., p. 99.

[73]Rathbone, op. cit., p. 234; Maurice Evans, "Platonic Allegory in The Faerie Queene," RES, XII (1961), 135.

[74]Rathbone, op. cit., p. 221.

[75]Ibid., p. 17.

[76]Ibid., p. 250.

[77]Clive S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, A Study in Medieval Tradition, p. 353.

does help Spenser to overcome a problem encountered in writing a complement to a female sovereign, since it would have been awkward to give to a female Arthur's masculine roles; therefore, he makes the queen the destined bride of the masculine hero.[78]

In Book I, the link is established between Elizabeth and the historical Arthur, and the return motif is brought into the poem. Arthur and Gloriana both function as vehicles for the glorification of Britain.[79] For example, Gloriana's love for Arthur the Briton implies a compliment to Elizabeth, because it means that no living man is equal to her virtue or worthy of her.[80] Throughout Book I, Arthur clearly functions on the literal level as a brave knight, willing to aid a lady and a fellow knight, and as a man in love, searching for his beloved. On the moral level, he functions as Magnanimity, Christian Grace, and Repentance; and on the historical level, he functions as the national spirit of England, overcoming the evils of a foreign power and a foreign religion. Structurally, Arthur provides a means for the revelation of Una's

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[78]Graham Hough, "Allegory in The Faerie Queene," p. 229.

[79]Hough, Preface, p. 227.

[80]Rathbone, op. cit., p. 235.

and the Red Cross Knight's characters and, through revealing his own quest, provides the motivation for his journey that will bring him in contact with each knight successively. Furthermore, he quite literally serves as a technical device for the freeing of a character from a situation from which the character is powerless to free himself. He is a _deus ex machina_; but Spenser's use of the technique is acceptable here, since Arthur functions in many other roles as well, and because a _deus ex machina_, or a "god in a machine," is exactly what a hopeless sinner must have to be saved.

Because the patterns of Books I and II are parallel, it is not surprising that Arthur's roles in Book II are much like those in Book I. Arthur, again, performs the rescue of a knight powerless to help himself. Guyon (_Temperance_), like the Red Cross Knight, undergoes many adventures throughout his book, but in Canto VII he swoons beside a lake, after resisting temptation in the Cave of Mammon. In Canto VIII, Guyon's palmer finds him guarded by an angel, who disappears when the palmer approaches. As the palmer attempts to revive Guyon, two knights, Pyrochles and Chymochles, appear and attempt to steal Guyon's armor. The palmer tells them that Guyon is dead, but they are not disuaded. At this point, Arthur enters into the action. He becomes incensed when he

learns of the unchivalrous actions of Pyrochles and Chymochles, and they attack him, using Arthur's own sword as a weapon against him. Arthur fights back, but his efforts have little effect until the palmer gives him Guyon's sword, with which he is able, then, to slay both Pyrochles and Chymochles. Guyon awakens and, learning what has happened, thanks Arthur for saving his life and showing him "so great graces." Arthur humbly replies that he has only done what all knights are pledged to do, that is, to " . . . withstond / Opressours power by armes . . . ." (II.VIII.lvi)

Arthur is magnanimous in his aiding Guyon, but the moral interpretation must not stop here. Guyon is Temperance; however, after his adventure with Mammon, he has been left in a very weakened and vulnerable condition. When his guardian angel leaves and Guyon's life becomes endangered, only Arthur can save him and permit him to complete his mission.[81] Even though Guyon is virtuous,

> . . . great demands will be made on his will and spirit for the maintaining of virtue . . . and in the Christian scheme . . . [a man] can have the strength to meet these demands . . . only with aid of divine grace.[82]

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[81]Ha[illegible]y Berger, Jr., The Allegorical Temper, p. 88.

[82]James Lyndon Shanley, "Spenser's Temperance and Aristotle," MP, XLIII (February, 1946), 173.

Hence, as in Book I, Arthur as Grace comes to rescue the hero, Guyon,[83] to help him recover his "natural moral state" and regain his rightful place in heaven.[84] Guyon's temperance is reasoned, but it needs to be combined with Heavenly Grace.[85] Guyon, who began as representing an Aristotelian virtue, is now Christianized.[86] He has learned that human weakness does exist for him, but that there is a Christian answer to it[87] in Heavenly Grace which can stand against the subleties of

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[83]Robert Hoopes, "'God Guide Thee, Guyon': Nature and Grace Reconciled in _The Faerie Queene_, Book II," _RES_, V (1954), 18; and Parker, _op. cit._, p. 136, agree that Arthur is Grace. However, E. M. W. Tillyard, _The English Epic and Its Background_, p. 284; and Lewis H. Miller, Jr., "A Secular Reading of 'The Faerie Queene,' Book II," _ELH_, XXXIII (June, 1966), 164, disagree with Hoopes and Parker. They insist that Arthur is not Grace, but rather, Magnanimity. Nevertheless, the interpretation of Arthur as Grace works here. It follows St. Thomas' philosophy of Grace; and, in context, Grace is an appropriate rescuer. See also Maurice Evans, "The Fall of Guyon," _ELH_, XXVIII (September, 1961), 221; and Hamilton, "'Like Race to Runne'," p. 331, who suggest that Arthur represents Christ here. The same argument against such an interpretation in this situation, however, must be made as applies in Book I. Arthur is not Christ, but he is a highly virtuous redeemer on a human level.

[84]Hamilton, "'Like Race to Runne'," pp. 332, 334.

[85]Hoopes, _op. cit._, p. 24.

[86]Evans, _op. cit._, p. 223.

[87]_Ibid._, p. 221.

sin.[88] He has learned that, although man can fall, no fall need be final.[89]

In Book II, Arthur has acted as a deliverer of justice as well as Grace. Pyrochles and Chymochles are committing the injustice of violating the dead when they attempt to steal Guyon's armor.[90] Thus, in stopping their unjust actions, Arthur performs the role of the just magistrate.[91] Ernest Sirluck suggests that Arthur represents universal justice and Guyon, particular justice, and that Arthur continues to be the guardian of justice throughout the poem.[92]

Pyrochles and Cymochles represent intemperance as well as injustice.[93] However, in battle with them, Arthur is so provoked to anger that he becomes intemperate himself, possessed of the same quality which he fights.[94] As long as he

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[88] Ibid., p. 219.

[89] Ibid., p. 222.

[90] Ernest Sirluck, "Aristotle's Nicomachaean Ethics and The Faerie Queene," MP, XLIX (1951), 91-92.

[91] Loc. cit.

[92] Ibid., pp. 97, 92.

[93] Berger, op. cit., p. 56.

[94] Miller, op. cit., p. 166.

remains intemperate, he cannot overcome intemperate forces; and he does not win the battle until he borrows the sword of Temperance (Guyon).[95] Thus, the incident is a trial for Arthur as well as for Guyon. Throughout most of the poem, however, Arthur is temperate, but an incident at Alma's castle later in Book II is also significant in this regard.

Historically, in the Pyrochles-Chymochles episode, Arthur may represent Leicester's brother, the Earl of Warwick, and Guyon may represent Sussex, while Pyrochles and Chymochles represent Sorley Boy and Shan O'Neil, prominent rebels identified with the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland.[96] The episode itself would, then, represent Sussex's " . . . campaign against the Northern earls, his temporary check, and the timely aid rendered by . . . Warwick . . . ."[97] Or, Arthur may represent Leicester himself. During the battle, Pyrochles used Arthur's sword which he had obtained from Braggadocchio, who may represent the Duke d'Alencon. The Duke attempted for a time to marry Elizabeth and undermined Leicester's influence at court, since Leicester did not

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[95]Ibid., p. 168.

[96]Jones, Handbook, pp. 200-201.

[97]Loc. cit.

approve of the match.[98] Leicester was, in fact, head of a Puritan faction that was the chief opponent in the situation.[99] Therefore, Braggadocchio's theft of Arthur's sword and subsequent gift of it to Pyrochles may be interpreted as an attempt of the pro-Alencon Catholics to overcome Leicester's influence.[100] The supporters of Alencon were, however, no more successful in their cause than Braggadocchio, Pyrochles, and Chymochles.

After the battle and the revival of Guyon, Arthur and Guyon ride to Alma's house, the House of Temperance, where Guyon continues to be instructed in his virtue; but, as they approach the house, they are met by a band of ruffians who have been attacking Alma's castle. Historically the battle which ensues between Arthur and Guyon and the rabble may refer to the Munster Rebellion in Ireland.[101] When Arthur and Guyon are finally able to go into Alma's castle, they meet Prays-desire and Shamefastness, two ladies. Arthur sits

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[98]Buck, op. cit., p. 173.

[99]Loc. cit.

[100]Jones, Handbook, op. cit., p. 200.

[101]M. M. Gray, "The Influence of Spenser's Irish Experiences on The Faerie Queene," RES, VI (1930), 416.

by Prays-desire, and Guyon, by Shamefastness. This choice of conversational partners reveals facets of Guyon's and Arthur's characters, since Guyon is paired with a lady who refrains from evil action while Arthur is paired with a lady who aspires to good action. Therefore, Guyon's virtue is mirrored in his lady as a passive or negative aspect of virtue; Arthur's virtue is mirrored in his lady as an active or positive virtue.[102] When Prays-desire appears dismayed, and Arthur questions her about her sadness, she replies that

> Him ill beseemes, anothers fault to name,
> That may unawares bee blotted with the same;
> Pensive I yeeld I am, and sad in mind,
> Through great desite of glory and of fame;
> Ne ought I weene are ye therein behynd,
> That have twelve months sought one, yet no
> where her can find.
> (II.IX.xxxviii)

Prays-desire reveals openly her desire for fame and glory. She is completely herself, but for Arthur to be himself, he must also admit a desire for fame and glory.[103] Arthur is moved by her speech and attempts to hide his emotions, but he does admit to himself that what Prays-desire has said of herself is true of him also. Thus, Prays-desire reinforces

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[102] Rathbone, op. cit., p. 134.

[103] Paul J. Alpers, The Poetry of the Faerie Queene, p. 2[illegible].

Arthur's role as the magnificent (magnanimous) man,[104] and she brings about a realization of self within Arthur. Allegorically, then, Arthur does represent Magnanimity; and, as an individual, he now recognizes this characteristic in himself.

A short time later, Guyon and Arthur are taken to the library where Guyon reads a book called Antiquitee of Faery Lond, in which he discovers recorded the geneology of the elves and fairies of Faery Land. Arthur, in turn, reads Briton Moniments, in which he discovers recorded the geneology of the English rulers. This episode falls into the area of historical allegory only; no moral allegory is evident. Briton Moniments establishes Elizabeth and Arthur as members of the "vertuous race," and it is a compliment to Elizabeth herself.[105] "What . . . Arthur [and Guyon] read is the Tudor view of history, the progress and triumph of British nationalism in the full heat and patriotism of the late sixteenth century."[106] However, since Arthur's name does not appear in

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[104]Sirluck, op. cit., p. 92.

[105]Rathbone, op. cit., p. 127; Padelford, "The Spiritual Allegory," pp. 13-14.

[106]Thomas P. Roche, Jr., The Kindly Flame, p. 45.

the book, he is not aware that he is reading his own geneology. Spenser probably planned to reveal Arthur's ancestory to him in a later book that he never completed,[107] but in that part of The Faerie Queene which is complete, Arthur never learns his true identity or parentage. On the basis of these facts and suppositions, one may observe that the reading of the Briton Moniments is not so significant to Arthur as an individual as it would have been had he eventually learned that it traced his own geneology, too. However Arthur's reading the book is important as a device for Spenser, since it allows the poet to allegorize on the historical level.

The next morning, Guyon and the palmer leave Alma's castle to continue on Guyon's quest, but Arthur remains. After Guyon is gone, the enemies of Temperance attack Alma's castle, and Arthur rides out to battle them. Maleger shoots arrows at Arthur, although he fails to wound him, while two old hags, Impotence and Impatience, gather up Maleger's arrows so that he never runs out of weapons. As one old hag catches Arthur and holds him to the ground, Maleger begins to attack him; but Timias attacks the hags, and Arthur fights Maleger. Arthur's weapons are ineffective against his enemy,

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[107]Rathbone, op. cit., p. 128.

although he strikes him several times. At last, Arthur kills Maleger with his bare hands, but Maleger does not remain dead. Finally, Arthur is able to destroy him by throwing him in a lake; and, seeing what has happened, the hags commit suicide. Arthur and Timias, then, return to the castle, where Alma treats their wounds.

Morally, Maleger represents vice and brutishness,[108] and he also represents some excess which opposes Temperance, perhaps "malicious eagerness."[109] He appears " . . . to symbolize an excessive desire for fame and glory which neglects proper care for the soul . . . ."[110] Hence, it is logical that Arthur battle Maleger. This struggle, a personal one for Arthur, does not involve Guyon.[111] When Arthur finds that his usual weapons are useless against Maleger, he must abandon outward battle and turn his attention inward " . . . to grapple with himself."[112] Besides with Maleger, Arthur must also struggle with the hags. He is impatient in his quest

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[108]Sirluck, op. cit., p. 97.

[109]Lewis H. Miller, Jr., "Arthur, Maleger, and History in Allegorical Context," University of Toronto Quarterly, XXXV (January, 1966), 181.

[110]Ibid., p. 182.

[111]Ibid., p. 178.

for fame and glory (Gloriana) and is impotent in his ability to complete his quest.[113] (His depression is obvious even to Prays-desire.) Because " . . . Impotence and Impatience are pernicious elements in Arthur's psyche . . . ,"[114] the victory over Maleger and the hags is, for Arthur, also a victory over himself, and he is now psychologically ready to renew his search for his beloved Gloriana.[115] Arthur is nearly defeated by his own desires,[116] since he is the magnanimous man who almost allows his desire for fame and glory to become excessive. Even though he is the perfection of Temperance in Book II, Arthur, on more than just this occasion, reaches the point of intemperance. He never falls so far that he requires assistance from another knight, as Guyon and the Red Cross Knight do, but he nears that point. In fact, he is given the assistance of Divine Grace which he has, himself, given to others on previous occasions.[117] The

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[113] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

[114] *Loc. cit.*

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[116] Woodhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

[117] Hoopes, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Grace which aids him is symbolized by the water into which Arthur throws Maleger.[118] Once he is in control of the situation, Arthur overcomes the enemies of Alma, Temperance, and the soul, and returns to his former state of Grace.[119] While the moral allegory of this episode is important on a universal level, it is also important regarding the personal level of Arthur. As an individual, he, in both the Prays-desire and Maleger incidents, learns much about himself. He realizes that he does desire fame and glory, and that he must not be overly eager or impatient in his quest for them. His initial quest for his beloved Gloriana now takes on a second level of meaning for him which the perceptive reader probably has recognized much earlier.

Two critics find historical significance in the Maleger episode. For example, they propose that Arthur's duel with Malegar may represent Leicester's near-fatal struggle with impetuous emotions which led to his marriages to Amy Robsart and the Countess of Essex, and which almost caused his political ruin.[120] Timias may represent Sidney, who defended

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[118]Woodhouse, op. cit., p. 222; Whitaker, op. cit., p. 50. Whitaker thinks that the water could imply baptism.

[119]Hamilton, "'Like Race to Runne'," p. 333.

[120]Jones, Handbook, pp. 201-202; Buck, op. cit., p. 178.

Leicester's actions,[121] or he may represent Raleigh. But if the latter, the incident refers to some unknown aid that Leicester received from Raleigh.[122] On the whole, however, the historical allegory in this episode, at least as interpreted by Jones and Buck, seems, at best, questionable and may not exist at all.

In general, Arthur plays similar roles in Books I and II; but there is, in Book II, a significant progression in his development as a character. In Book I, Arthur reveals his background, as much as he knows about it, and reveals his dream vision and subsequent quest of Gloriana, the beautiful lady whom he loves. The quest is, at this point, simply a structural device that may unify the poem. It is simply the quest of a brave knight, as far as Arthur realizes. However, in Book II, he realizes that his quest for Gloriana has a deeper significance--the search for fame and glory, and he recognizes his own frustration at not being able to complete his quest as rapidly as he wishes. He also learns that he must be patient if he is to avoid destruction.

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[121] Jones, _Handbook_, pp. 201-202.

[122] _Loc. cit._; Buck, _op. cit._, p. 178.

CHAPTER III

ARTHUR'S ROLE IN BOOKS III AND IV

Although the structure of Book II of The Faerie Queene parallels that of Book I, the structures of Books III and IV are different from each other and from Books I and II. In Books I and II, the knights representing the virtues under discussion undergo parallel series of experiences and, by the eighth cantos, are in situations from which they cannot extricate themselves. Prince Arthur functions as the rescuer in both cases, and, after the knights have recovered, both continue on their quests. Book I is joined to Book II when, in the first few stanzas of Book II, the Red Cross Knight, from Book I, meets Guyon, from Book II. After the meeting, the Red Cross Knight continues his quest while the reader begins to follow Guyon. A similar link is made between Books II and III, except that Guyon is accompanied by Arthur, who has rejoined him after having had his battle wounds healed at Alma's castle. In the first few stanzas of Book III, Guyon and Arthur meet the lady knight, Britomart, the main allegorical figure of the book; but they immediately leave the scene, and the reader follows the adventures of Britomart. From the beginning of Book III, Arthur's role is unlike what

it is in Books I and II, in which he enters the action in the seventh and eighth cantos respectively and performs a rescue in the eighth canto of each. In Book III, Arthur is first seen momentarily in Canto I and then reappears in Cantos IV and V. However, he does not perform a rescue of Britomart in Canto VIII; in fact, he never needs to rescue her. Hence, his role in Book III is unprecedented.

Books III and IV are united by a narrative that begins with Britomart in Book III and continues with her into Book IV. However, the kind of link Spenser uses between Books I and II and again between II and III is altered at the beginning of Book IV. Here, in Canto I, Britomart meets several knights, but not Cambel and Triamond, the declared representatives of Friendship, the subject of the book. Britomart does not leave the action after the transition as the Red Cross Knight and Guyon and Arthur had done previously. In fact, her quest for her beloved Artegall continues into Canto VI of Book IV, where she is at last united with him. At this point, a link is also established between Books IV and V, because Artegall cannot marry Britomart until he completes his quest, the subject of Book V, in which Artegall represents Justice. He leaves to complete his quest, and

Britomart continutes to figure in the remaining action of Book IV.

Arthur's entrance into the action of Book IV parallels his entrance into Books I and II in sofar as he enters in the seventh canto and performs a rescue in the eighth canto. But he does not rescue the hero of the book; rather, he rescues two ladies. Although he kills a giant and, in Canto IX, rescues a knight from a dungeon, he never comes into contact with Cambel and Triamond, the supposed representatives of Friendship, who hardly figure in the book at all.

As Book III opens, Guyon, Arthur, and Timias are riding together when they meet Britomart. Suddenly, they see a beautiful lady chased by a "griesly foster," and while Timias chases the forester, Arthur and Guyon pursue the lady. Britomart, who " . . . would not so lightly follow beauties chace . . ." (III.I.xix), continues on her way. Arthur and Guyon reappear in Canto IV, still chasing the beautiful lady. At a fork in the road, they separate, and Guyon is not mentioned again. Arthur sees the lady ahead of him and tries to approach her, but she is frightened and rides away. When night comes, Arthur loses sight of her and decides to stop for the night; but when he tries to sleep, he cannot, because a

> . . . thousand fancies bett his ydle bryne
> With their light wings . . .
> 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 even hasty Night he blamed bitterlie.
> (III.IV.liv)

He curses Night for the darkness which prevents him from finding the lady. When morning arrives, he continues to search for her. In Canto V, he meets a dwarf, who is also looking for the lady, from whom he learns that her name is Florimell and that she loves Marinell, who has rejected her. This dwarf and Arthur, then, join forces to search for Florimell. The Marinell-Florimell plot thereafter continues through Books III and IV to be finally resolved in Canto III of Book V, where it is Artegall, and not Arthur, who is present at the wedding of Marinell and Florimell, and who even aids Marinell in a battle. Arthur, however, never has any further contact with Florimell after Canto V of Book III.

The levels of meaning in Arthur's role in Book III are not as numerous as they are in other passages in the poem. Nevertheless, one should become immediately concerned with the fact that Arthur never rescues Britomart. The obvious explanation, and, perhaps, the only one that is certain, is that Britomart never needs to be rescued by Arthur, or by anyone else. Some suggest that Arthur and Britomart are so

much alike that both are invincible or that the nature of the virtue of _Chastity_, which Britomart represents, and her allegorical association with Queen Elizabeth make a rescue unnecessary.[123] Britomart actually usurps Arthur's role in Book III, and he almost disappears from the action.[124]

Aside from the obvious fact that Britomart does not require Arthur's aid, there are other explanations as to why Arthur's role in the book is so small. Some believe that Spenser meant to illustrate that Magnificence, while it includes all the virtues, does so in varying degrees, and that Chastity is relatively unimportant to Magnificence.[125] Another and more plausible suggestion is that Arthur could not properly fit into a discussion of Chastity in married, sexual love, since Spenser would very likely have had to keep Arthur's love for Gloriana (Elizabeth) Platonic.[126] A third theory maintains that Book III (rather than Book I)

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[123]Parker, _op_. _cit_., p. 178; Roche, _op_. _cit_., p. 203.

[124]Parker, _op_. _cit_., p. 175.

[125]Bennett, _op_. _cit_., p. 56. Bennett only reports this suggestion; she does not agree with it, and, in light of the argument against Arthur's being Magnificence at all, it is probably best forgotten.

[126]Rathbone, _op_. _cit_., p. 221.

demonstrates the first level of Arthur's quest, e. g., a devotion to beauty.[127] This theory supports both the argument that Arthur was an addition to the poem after its composition was in progress and the contention that, when he wrote the books, Spenser did not intend to put them in the order in which he eventually published them. The problem is clearly a structural one, not a moral one, since no moral allegorical interpretation pertaining to the virtue of Chastity explains what Arthur does, although some interpretations may explain what he does not do. Arthur's pursuit of Florimell appears to be significant on only one level, for no moral allegory is evident, and, although some scholars attempt to show historical allegory, it is to the characterization of Arthur that the episode contributes the most.

When Arthur pursues Florimell, he thinks that she may be Gloriana and that his quest may be nearly ended. Even though he is disappointed to learn that this lady is not Gloriana, he continues to search for her, because she needs help, and it is a knight's duty to aid the unfortunate.[128]

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[127] Tuve, op. cit., p. 136.

[128] Roche, op. cit., p. 205; Spens, op. cit., p. 84.

His pursuit is also of beauty, but it is not a manifestation of a disloyalty to Gloriana; it begins, rather, as an action of true love.[129] The fact remains, however, that, when Arthur, Timias, and Guyon go to Florimell's aid, they have left their " . . . proper sphere of spiritual endeavour, constancy to an unchanging truth, to pursue the fleeting charm of a mutable world."[130] The result of this action for Arthur is that he becomes subject to events and emotions beyond his control.[131] Arthur's apostrophe to the night demonstrates his state of mind. In it he curses Night as the " . . . foule mother of annoyaunce sad, / Sister to heavie Death, and nourse of Woe . . . ." (III.IV.lv) He is convinced that Night dwells in Hell. When morning comes, he is still distressed and restless, and he continues his search for Florimell " . . . with heavy looke and lumpish pace . . . ." (III.IV.lxi) In short, he is again becoming intemperate. He is impatient both with Night and with the slow progress of his quests for Florimell and Gloriana, which, insofar as he knows at this point, may be one and the same.

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[129]Alpers, op. cit., pp. 370, 395.

[130]Kathleen Williams, "'Eterne in Mutability': The Unified World of 'The Faerie Queene'," in That Soveraine Light: Essays in Honor of Edmund Spenser, p. 44.

[131]Loc. cit.

The historical allegory of this Florimell episode may be that Florimell represents Elizabeth, while Arthur and Guyon represent Leicester and Sussex, both candidates for the rescue.[132] Timias may represent Raleigh's pursuing the Irish Rebels, represented by the forester.[133] Herbert Cory, however, points out that Leicester died in 1588 and that, even before, his high asperations had been declining.[134] Thus, again, the contention that Spenser intended to represent Leicester through Arthur is questionable.

Arthur's role in Book III is primarily personal. His spiritual role in this book is minor, important only as it relates to him as a character. His historic role is, at best, questionable. But on the level of plot and character, his actions reveal much about his condition and, thus, some insight into Spenser's intentions for the overall structure of the poem. In Book IV, however, Arthur's role returns to the levels of significance it holds in Books I and II, for Arthur becomes again rescuer, reconciler, and unifier,

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[132]Buck, op. cit., p. 180.

[133]Loc. cit.

[134]Herbert Ellsworth Cory, Edmund Spenser: A Critical Study, pp. 146-147.

and his function as an individual knight on a quest of love is of only secondary importance.

According to Spenser's subtitle for the book, the virtue represented in Book IV is Friendship.[135] Here, the poet deals with Friendship between three combinations of people: equals of the same sex, Britomart and Amoret; equals of the opposite sex, Britomart and Arthur; and equals where the equality is created by love rather than nature, Arthur and Timias.[136] Arthur figures in the illustration of two of these three combinations when he becomes involved with characters who represent the antithesis of Friendship,[137] and when he battles Lust, Jealousy, and Slander, the enemies of Friendship.[138]

Arthur's first entrance into Book IV occurs when he, by chance, meets Timias, who has become a hermit because of his

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[135]Lewis, op. cit., p. 346; and Erskine, op. cit., p. 382, contend this point. Lewis says that reconciliation rather than friendship is the real theme and that reconciliation connects Arthur's actions with the main subject. Erskine believes that Arthur illustrates fair play or justice rather than friendship.

[136]Parker, op. cit., p. 848.

[137]Calvin Huckabay, "The Structure of Book IV of The Faerie Queene," Studia Neophilologica, XXVII (1955), 60.

[138]Erskine, op. cit., p. 848.

unrequited love for Belphoebe and who has apparently forgotten his loyalty to Arthur in his great love for his lady. Arthur, however, is not disturbed by Timias' attitude. He appears to feel that anyone who is devoted to Elizabeth (Belphoebe) is also devoted to him.[139] Although he has been searching for Timias since they were separated during the Florimell chase, he does not recognize him as a hermit; nevertheless, he feels compassion for this man who appears so sorrowful. Hence, because of his compassion and understanding, Arthur is the ideal friend in his relationship with Timias.[140]

If Belphoebe does represent Elizabeth (and Spenser claims in his letter to Raleigh that she does), who does Timias represent? One critic suggests that Timias, as well as Arthur, represents Leicester.[141] Cory thinks that, after Leicester had died, Spenser's " . . . fond memory impelled him to write tenderly and delicately of some aberration of Leicester's which had excited the queen's wrath . . . ," but that since he could not represent this idea with a quarrel

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[139] Parker, _op. cit._, p. 238.

[140] _Ibid._, p. 195.

[141] Cory, _op. cit._, p. 270.

between Gloriana and Arthur (they had not yet met), he used Timias and Belphoebe.[142] On the other hand, Arthur could represent, again, the spirit of England.[143] If he does, Spenser may have intended some comment about Leicester's relationship with his country, but in this incident, as in many others, that there is any historical allegory is questionable.

Unable to help Timias, Arthur rides on; but in Canto VIII, he performs in his familiar role as rescuer. As he rides, he comes upon Aemylia and Amoret, two ladies in distress. One is wounded, and the other nearly starved to death. He takes them to a cottage to find shelter for the night; however, it is the home of Slander, whose "nature is, all goodness to abuse . . . ." (IV.VIII.xxv) When they leave on the next day, Slander follows them, shouting insults, calling Arthur a thief, the ladies whores, and falsely accusing them of crimes. Soon, they see a squire and a dwarf pursued by a pagan man on a "dromedare." Here, Arthur leaves the ladies to aid the dwarf and squire. During the

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[142] Loc. cit.

[143] Parker, op. cit., p. 238.

battle which ensues, Arthur decapitates the pagan, but the head continues to shout blasphemously. Placidas, the squire, tells Arthur that the man is Corflambo, who holds Aemylia's lover, Amyas, imprisoned. Arthur, then, volunteers to rescue Amyas. Replacing Corflambo's head, they ride to the pagan's castle where Arthur rescues Amyas and reunites him with Placidas and Aemylia. He also promotes love between Placidas and Poena (Corflambo's daughter). His good deeds done, Arthur, with Amoret, rides off in pursuit of his own quest. During his aid to the ladies, his rescue of Amyas, and his restoration of Amyas to Aemylia, he acts as a friend and a restorer of Friendship. In his episode with Amoret, he also plays the role of a "leech,"[144] as he heals her physical wounds and rescues her from the forces of lust that have plagued her since Book III when she and Britomart were together.[145]

Since Amoret represents Chastity and true love, especially chaste married love and wifely devotion, Arthur's role involves the rescue of Chastity by some unidentified moral

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[144]Alan H. Gilbert, "Belphoebe's Misdeeming of Timias," PMLA, LXII (1947), 637.

[145]Roche, op. cit., pp. 207-208.

force. Padelford suggests that the force is, again, Divine Grace.[146] Arthur possesses the Grace necessary to heal the wounds given to Chastity by Lust. If, as Huckabay suggests, Spenser viewed Friendship as a Christian virtue,[147] it is natural that one assign to Arthur the role of supreme Christian knight, the possessor of all the virtues. Certainly, his actions toward Amoret and Aemylia are Christian as well as chivalrous. In his destruction of Corflambo and his rescue of Amyas, Arthur has acted in his familiar role of rescuer.[148] He is also the restorer of concord out of discord,[149] because he battles a pagan and reunites two friends, Amyas and Placadias, and their respective lovers. Cory observes that, in this episode, Arthur rises to something of his heroic stature of the earlier books, but that " . . . there is little to recall the prolonged and stirring climaxes of the first two books."[150]

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[146] F. M. Padelford, "The Women in Spenser's Allegory of Love," JEGP, XVI (1917), 75.

[147] Huckabay, op. cit., p. 54.

[148] Parker, op. cit., p. 196.

[149] Roche, op. cit., pp. 207-208.

[150] Cory, op. cit., p. 275.

Leaving the reconciled friends and lovers, Amoret and Arthur ride on alone. Soon, they see Britomart and Scudamour observing a battle among four knights, Druon, Claribell, Blandamour, and Paridell. The four are fighting over the false Florimell as Duessa and Ate encourage them. When they attack Britomart and Scudamour, Arthur intervenes, because it is an "unequal match." He becomes indignant at such unknightly behavior, stops the fighting, and scolds the four knights for their disgraceful actions, both in attacking two fellow knights and in fighting for the favors of ladies. He warns that they should, rather, shield the right of all women to choose freely whom they will love. The four, then, become " . . . well-spoken gallants rather than mere types of lawless passion."[151] In calming the quarrel, Arthur brings peace and dispels the evil influence of Ate (Strife) and Duessa (Falsehood).[152] He is, again, the restorer of concord out of discord, and he " . . . draws together and unifies all the incidents of the previous cantos . . . and gives the book . . . narrative unity . . . ."[153]

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[151]Davis, _op_. _cit_., p. 121.

[152]Huckabay, _op_. _cit_., p. 61.

[153]_Loc_. _cit_.

On the personal level, he acts as the truly chivalrous knight and true friend. He has rescued Britomart, who did not require rescue in Book III when she represented Chastity, but who in Book IV needs " . . . to be set free by the grace of heaven from the illusions by which Ate [Strife] destroyed concord."[154] Divine Grace, Erskine implies, is needed for Friendship to be harmonious.[155] Arthur, as Grace, reunites Amoret and Scudamour, who have been searching for one another since Book III. He manages to " . . . impose peace by force, and then to reconcile the parties by persuasion."[156] Huckabay comments that, overall,

> . . . Arthur not only performs more action than any other single protagonist in the book but literally becomes the champion of Concord, who makes Friendship possible. The titular heroes, Campbell and Triamond (Telemond), are not mentioned after Canto 5, but Arthur's action dominates the book. If Book IV has a hero, it is Prince Arthur.[157]

Having acted as a unifier, reconciler, and conveyer of Friendship in Book IV, Arthur drops out of sight, forgotten by both narrator and reader, until he reappears in Book V.

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[154]Erskine, _op_. _cit_., p. 849.

[155]_Loc_. _cit_.

[156]Parker, _op_. _cit_., p. 198.

[157]Huckabay, _op_. _cit_., p. 61.

Arthur and the incidents involving him in Book IV have no apparent historical significance, and the moral significance is really more in the realm of ethics than morals, for to the Elizabethan, Friendship was thought of as a practical, ethical virtue.[158] On the structural level, Arthur has functioned as a unifier; and as a character, he has shown himself to be a gallant knight, willing to give of himself to help defenseless ladies and fellow knights. Once again, he has been a magnanimous man; and for all the suggestions made by various critics about his role as Divine Grace, here, his role as Magnanimity seems really more obvious and more substantial.

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[158] Ibid., p. 54.

CHAPTER IV

ARTHUR'S ROLE IN BOOKS V AND VI

Although Arthur has no historical significance in Book IV worth mentioning, nearly all of his significance in Book V is historical. The fifth book, as a whole, discusses three important events in Elizabeth's reign prior to 1588, but deeper than these allusions to contemporary events " . . . lies the exposition of a theory of government . . . ."[159] In spite of Spenser's insistance that the subject of Book V is Justice, clearly, he treats private justice in the preceding books.[160] Here, he discusses public justice. Perhaps, he saw a need to instill in men " . . . a spirit that would prevent injustice and strife which inevitably results from the pride, jealousy, and greed of thos individuals who . . . determine its society's welfare by their actions."[161]

Book VI is reminiscent of the confusion of Books III and IV. Arthur's entrance and his actions are erratic, and

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[159] Greenlaw, Studies, pp. 139-140.

[160] Davis, op. cit., p. 122.

[161] James Lyndon Shanley, A Study of Spenser's Gentleman, p. 55.

much of his role involves aid to Timias. He does not aid the hero knight of Book VI but, rather, acts independently of him, although in a similar role. He does not have either an historical or a moral role which is significant in Book VI; instead, his significance, here, is as a fictional character.

Arthur enters the action of Book V in Canto VIII. In this canto, Artegall, the hero of the book, observes a lady pursued by two knights who are, in turn, pursued by a third. He goes to the aid of the lady, and defeats the first two knights; but when he begins to attack the third knight the lady stops him. Artegall and the knight, Arthur, suddenly recognize each other, and the lady, Samient, tells them her story, that she has been sent by Mercilla to obtain help. A "mighty man" is attacking Mercilla's castle, trying to "subvert her crown and dignity." (V.VIII.xviii) Arthur and Artegall accept this quest; but, first, they go to the castle of the Souldan, whose knights were pursuing Samient. As Arthur and the Souldan battle, the Souldan gets the upper-hand, and Arthur must, again, use his shield to defend himself. When he unveils the shield, its light frightens the Souldan's horses, who charge away, over-turning the chariot that they pull and killing him. The Souldan's wife, who encouraged his dishonorable actions, is exiled, and justice

is done. Samient, then, asks Arthur and Artegall to proceed to Mercilla's court to free the castle from the "mighty man," Malengin, and they agree to do so.

Arthur's adventure with the Souldan is especially significant on the historical level. Roger Sale interprets it as the battle with the Spanish Armada in 1588.[162] Accordingly, Allan Gilbert reports that some critics have linked the episode with the English plan to trap the Armada in the Thames; consequently, Arthur's shield would represent this secret plan, being revealed at the crucial moment and causing victory.[163] Jones suggests that the Souldan's equipment refers to the Armada, while Arthur's shield represents the English fireships sent against the Spanish galleons; and he says that Arthur's attack on the Souldan from behind indicates the English plan to attack the Spanish ships in the Thames.[164] Greenlaw adds that the defeat of the Souldan prophesies the end of Philip of Spain.[165]

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[162]Roger Sale, An Introduction to "The Faerie Queene," pp. 171-172.

[163]Gilbert, op. cit., p. 640.

[164]Jones, Handbook, pp. 262-263.

[165]Greenlaw, Studies, p. 144.

The familiar attempt to link Arthur with Leicester is, again, present in some interpretations of the Souldan episode. Jones says that Leicester was appointed by Elizabeth as commander-in-chief of her land forces when the Spanish threatened invasion, but that the victory was at sea, and Leicester was not involved in it; therefore, maintains Jones, Spenser simply ignored history by making Arthur (Leicester) the hero in Canto VIII anyway.[166] Here, as in most attempts to associate Leicester with Arthur, weaknesses in logic occur. For example, to hold this view, one must assume that Spenser cared more for sentiment and fantasy than he did for truth, and, therefore, twisted the story of history to suit himself. In general, it seems more practical to reason that he never really intended Arthur to represent Leicester in this episode, since the allegory breaks down if one attempts to apply it to Leicester.

The episode involves some structural techniques which suggest that Spenser was aware of his art and consciously trying to achieve a narrative unity in his poem. First, the episode occurs in the eighth canto as do the most important of Arthur's actions in Books I, II, and IV. And,

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[166]Jones, Handbook, p. 262.

although Book III fails to follow this pattern, the reader is not surprised when Arthur appears in Canto VIII of Book V, indeed, he expects him. A second technique is manifest in Spenser's use of the shield. The unveiling of the magic shield to defeat the Souldan is similar to the unveiling of the shield to defeat Orgoglio in Book I.[167] When Arthur is wounded and facing the possibility of defeat, his shield blazes forth and saves him. Spenser's repetition in Book V of this use of the shield so carefully discussed in Book I forms a structural link between the two books.

On the level of plot and character, the episode with the Souldan allows Arthur, once again, to become the chivalrous knight. Parker comments that Arthur acts, again, in his familiar roles of greatest knight in the world and great deliverer, the man " . . . in whom all good qualities are at the heroic level."[168] Arthur is the supreme example of chivalry and knightly action when he battles the evil knight who abuses womankind and illustrates, again, that he is the magnanimous man. In the Souldan episode, he fulfills, morally and ethically all the characteristics of Magnanimity.

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[167]Tillyard, op. cit., p. 286.

[168]Parker, op. cit., p. 217.

Having resolved his adventure with the Souldan, Arthur continues with Artegall their quest to free Mercilla from Malengin's molestation. Together, the two knights plan their strategy, deciding to use Samient as bait to lure Malengin from his cave. As Malengin emerges from the cave to sieze Samient, Arthur and Artegall block his retreat. Immediately, he drops Samient and runs away. Artegall chases him while Arthur continues to guard the cave; but Talus, Artegall's "iron man," the stern administer of justice, eventually catches Malengin, who is killed and left for beasts to feed upon. Then, Arthur, Artegall, and Samient proceed to Mercilla's castle, where Duessa is being tried. Although Duessa is found guilty of many crimes, Mercilla, true to her name, is merciful and does not condemn her to death. Both Arthur and Artegall praise Mercilla's mercy and remain for some time at her court, where Arthur eventually receives, from Mercilla, another quest: the rescue of Lady Belge.

Again, the episode at Mercilla's castle is important on an historical level. Duessa may represent Mary, Queen of Scots, and Mercilla, Elizabeth--in which case the entire episode would represent Elizabeth's merciful actions toward Mary from 1569 until 1587, when Elizabeth was finally

compelled to order Mary's execution for plotting treason.[169] Arthur may, quite reasonably, represent that English spirit which praised Elizabeth and her actions. He probably does not represent any particular individual.

The Mercilla-Duessa episode reveals Arthur as a just person, for, although, at first, he believes that Duessa should be executed for her actions, he comes to believe that Mercilla has acted rightly in granting mercy to Duessa. Arthur is able to overcome his personal hatred for Duessa and disgust over the sins and crimes she has committed and to view the situation objectively. In overcoming his passions, he recognizes that true justice must be tempered with mercy. He learns, or perhaps is reminded of, a concept of governing which would be useful to him as a governor himself.

Perhaps, more dramatic than either the Souldan or Duessa episodes is the Belge episode, in which Arthur alone figures. While Arthur and Artegall are at Mercilla's court, two young men come to Mercilla, seeking aid for their mother, Belge, whose land is being invaded. Belge had been " . . . a ladie of great worth and wealth . . . and a mother of a fruteful heritage . . . ." (V.X.vii) But after Belge's husband died,

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[169] Sale, _op. cit._, pp. 171-172.

the giant Geryoneo began to take advantage of her condition. He had offered to defend her, and she had relinquished her powers to him; but he fed her children to a monster, until only two remained. These, she sent to beg aid from Mercilla. Arthur, naturally volunteers to undertake her quest. Arriving at her land and offering comfort and protection to Belge, he takes her to Geryoneo's castle and, after a battle, captures it. Geryoneo, however, is not in the castle; but when he hears that it has fallen, he returns. After a bloody battle, Arthur kills him. Belge is so grateful to Arthur that she falls at his feet and asks him to tell her what reward she can give. He replies that he will not accept a reward, having merely done his duty. He, then, destroys the idol in Geryoneo's church and slays the monster who has devoured Belge's children. Belge is again grateful, and she and her people praise Arthur. Having completed this quest in Mercilla's name, Arthur continues his own search for Gloriana.

Historically, the Belge episode may represent the condition of the Netherlands and Leicester's expedition in 1586.[170] However, Spenser has, again, ignored the facts if he means to

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[170] Loc. cit.; Jones, Handbook, p. 266; Parker, op. cit., p. 319.

show that Leicester and England completely liberated the Netherlands (Belge) from Spain (Geryoneo), because England did not completely free the Netherlands.[171] Jones suggests that Spenser means to present a hopeful prophecy that England might on some future day defeat Spain " . . . on land as she had done on the sea; and in destroying Spanish rule in the Netherlands, might eradicate at the same time the Catholic power in that country."[172] Although Spenser may have meant to represent Leicester and his deeds in the Netherlands, his allegory does not parallel the facts; and one tends to agree with Bennett, who considers this incident to have been generalized.[173] Spenser is, as in other instances, true to art rather than history. As Parker notes, Spenser " . . . only needs literal facts when they illustrate moral and spiritual truth; when they cannot be interpreted as he wants, he abandons them,"[174] since he is not concerned about allegorizing every detail. Bennett further suggests that he assigned

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[171]Parker, _op_. _cit_., p. 223; Gilbert, _op_. _cit_., p. 640.

[172]Jones, _Handbook_, p. 267.

[173]Bennett, _op_. _cit_., p. 190.

[174]Parker, _op_. _cit_., p. 223.

the rescue of Belge to Arthur, because no real person could safely have been assigned to perform that task.[175] This observation has support in Spenser's own statement in the letter to Raleigh that he intended to use Arthur as his hero precisely because he was less open to suspicion and envy than would be a living person. And if one recalls the earlier supposition that Arthur represents the English spirit, he is less likely to think that the facts have been distorted, and Spenser's art becomes more clear. Hence, Arthur need not represent any particular person, nor the events of the Belge episode any particular expedition. This episode may simply imply Spenser's hope that England, in the name of mercy and Elizabeth, might rescue the Netherlands from what he believed to be opression and unjust treatment by Spain. Certainly, the Belge episode affords Arthur another opportunity to become the chivalrous knight and magnanimous man. He performs an unselfish act, and for it receives much glory and praise. He was not intemperate, because he thought himself capable of completing the quest when he volunteered (and he was). He deserved and graciously accepted the praise given him.

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[175]Bennett, _op_. _cit_., p. 98.

Morally, Spenser probably means to illustrate throughout Arthur's participation in Book V that the just man and the just sovereign must learn when to be merciful (as in the case of Duessa) and when to be harsh (as in the case of Geryoneo). One must bear in mind that Arthur is, at this point, still a private person, involved in private virtues, though he is steadily moving toward the end of his search for Gloriana, at which time he will presumably become a public figure, a king, very much involved with public virtues. Therefore, the total allegory in Book V may be best interpreted to mean that the ideal man is just, that he knows when to be mericful and when to be harsh, and that he recognizes the value of mercy in the decisions of rulers, such as Mercilla. And further, the ideal man is magnanimous to the point of placing himself in personal danger to insure justice for another, such as Belge.

Book VI has some points in common with the other five. For example, it contains some illustrations of Justice (the subject of Book V), and of Friendship (the subject of Book IV), although the announced subject of the book is <u>Courtesy</u>. Moreover, as in Book III, Arthur never aids the titular hero but alternates with the hero instead of duplicating his moral

actions.[176] Calidore, the titular hero, is active in the first and final thirds of the book, but Arthur replaces him in the middle third.[177] Although Arthur enters the book in Canto V, his major action occurs in Canto VIII, in accordance with the earlier pattern. However his action is not to aid Calidore, the hero, but rather " . . . only to vanquish for a futile moment a foe unworthy of his steel, Disdain, and to aid the victim maid, Mirabella, a sorry heroine . . . who is doing absurd penance for her absurd cruelty to her lover."[178] On the whole, Arthur's role is less splendid in Book VI than in some of the others, but his relationships with particular characters and his own development as a character are interesting.

As Arthur and Timias enter the scene in Canto V, Book VI, the narrator digresses to discuss an episode involving Arthur and Timias which has apparently occurred just before the two meet Serena and the Savage man in Book VI. The narrator reminds the reader that Timias had come back into Belphoebe's favor. However, three brothers, Despetto, Decetto, and

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[176] Ibid., pp. 206-207.

[177] Jones, Handbook, p. 279.

[178] Cory, op. cit., p. 315.

Defetto, set the Blatant Beast with his poisonous bite on him; and as the three enemies were about to overcome Timias, Arthur happened by. Timias has been slandered by the Beast and the brothers,[179] but Arthur rescues him and the two are reunited. Arthur is "exceeding glad" to see Timias again, and he and Timias " . . . forth together rode, a comely couplement." (VI.V.xxiv) In aiding Timias, Arthur has behaved not only as a brave knight but as a true friend as well. His joy in seeing Timias is genuine, and he is not at all angry that Timias has been away from him. Arthur's actions, indeed, show him to be a charitable individual, as well as a magnanimous one.

As Timias and Arthur ride together, they see a lovely lady with a savage man. They mistakenly think the man to be molesting the lady and, consequently, go to her aid. However, she interferes and explains that she is Serena and that the savage man is helping her. She reveals that her lover, Calepine, is lost in the forest and that she, like Timias, has been bitten by the Blatant Beast and is in much pain. Leaving Timias and Serena at a hermitage, Arthur and the savage man seek Calepine, as well as Sir Turpine and his

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[179]Arnold Williams, op. cit., p. 8.

lady, who, Serena has explained, were discourteous to her and Calepine. Arthur and the savage man arrive at Turpine's castle and, when they ask for hospitality, are treated discourteously. The savage man attacks the servants while Arthur enters to search for Turpine. Arthur discovers him, but Turpine runs away and hides behind his lady's skirts. Arthur is "dismayd" at Turpine's unmanly, unknightly, and thoroughly discourteous behavior. He lectures Turpine and makes him relinquish his knighthood and arms. Arthur and the savage man remain for the night at Turpine's castle, where they are entertained by the lady, Blandina, who pretends to be gracious. The next day, after Arthur and the savage man have departed, Turpine persuades two knights to attack Arthur. He kills one of them and then, with the help of the second, sets a trap for Turpine. Arthur subdues him easily, because Turpine is a coward, and hangs him by his heels in a tree as an example to others who might behave similarly.

In Book VI, Arthur, as the supreme example of knightly behavior, is, as earlier, incensed by the sight of unknightly behavior. He also assumes his familiar role as instructor as well as exemplar in lecturing Turpine. In Books I and II, for example, he participates in the educations of the Red Cross Knight and Guyon; however, his teaching is heeded by

those two knights, and it is not heeded by Turpine. Nevertheless, he has acted again as the punisher of unknightly behavior, here, specifically, discourtesy and cowardliness.

No historical or spiritual allegory is evident in the Turpine episode, but Arthur's character has, once again, been revealed. It is also interesting to note that the savage man assumes the role of squire to Arthur, Timias' accustomed role, and that the savage man and Arthur have some characteristics in common. For example, the savage man has always lived in the woods; he " . . . ne ever saw faire guize, ne learned good . . . ." (VI.V.ii) Nevertheless, he behaves courteously, and the narrator declares that " . . . certes he was borne of noble blood . . . ." (VI.V.ii) Arthur, too, is of noble blood, but, like the savage man, is unaware of his lineage. In the actions of these two and in his bringing the two together, Spenser implies that "blood will out." No matter in what environment one is reared, if he is of noble blood he will behave nobly and courteously. The savage man is far less refined than Arthur, because he has not had the benefit of instruction given Arthur by Merlin, but both are naturally courteously and of "gentle mynd." (VI.V.i)

While the savage man and Arthur are occupied with Turpine, Timias is recovering at the hermitage; and, having

recovered, he comes in search of Arthur. On the way, he encounters a lady, Mirabella, who is being abused by Disdain and Scorn. Timias tries to help her, but is captured and abused, too. Riding together, they meet Arthur and Sir Enias, the knight who helped Arthur trap Turpine; and Arthur and Enias try to rescue Timias and Mirabella. Arthur is on the verge of killing Disdain when Mirabella stops him and explains that she is being abused by these two as punishment by Cupid for mistreating her lovers. Arthur thinks that the punishment is just, but he offers to free her. She refuses his aid, however, because she feels, too, that she must suffer her punishment. Once again, Arthur and Timias are reunited. As Mirabella leaves, Arthur and the rest continue on their way. Arthur is about to return to his own quest " . . . in which did him betide / A great adventure, which did him from them divide." (VI.VIII.xxx)

Arthur's role in the Mirabella episode is certainly far removed from his heroic actions in Canto VIII of other books, but it provides an opportunity for him to consider the laws of love, with which he will have to deal when he finally meets his Faery Queene.

Generally, Arthur's role in Book VI is less complex and, perhaps, less interesting than in any other book. While he

undoubtedly does represent Courtesy, the special virtue of Book VI, he is as often the avenger of discourtesy, as Bennett points out.[180] It may be that Arthur represents Leicester in Book VI, and Calidore, Sidney, but one must not make too much of this possibility or he will be led " . . . farther away from the poem, not closer to its heart."[181]

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[180]Bennett, op. cit., p. 209.

[181]Hough, op. cit., p. 231. At some points in Book VI and other books, one finds himself as interested in Timias as in Arthur, and a study of Timias' role in the total poem would be interesting and could help to shed additional light on Arthur's role, since these two figures often work together and are significant simultaneously on various allegorical levels.

CHAPTER V

ARTHUR IN RETROSPECT

Although many scholars have debated Arthur's moral and historical significance in The Faerie Queene, and many have questioned his value as a unifying device, generally they have been willing and eager to dismiss Arthur as an insignificant addition to the poem, a figure with no real motivation or characterization. They have criticized Spenser's use of Arthur by claiming that he was only an after-thought and that Spenser made no attempt to provide any pattern for this character's actions. However, an examination of Arthur's roles, especially his role as a character, offers evidence that Spenser had more than a passing interest in Arthur--in fact, that the Arthur-Gloriana story may be the predecessor of The Faerie Queene rather than Spenser's after-thought.

Even though Spenser claims in his letter to Raleigh that Arthur represents the complete, ideal gentleman, it becomes clear in the poem that Arthur is a developing individual, e. g., one who experiences, learns, and grows, presumably to be worthy of Gloriana when he meets her. Except for the climax, which might likely have been projected for one of

the books that Spenser never completed, Arthur's story contains all of the necessary elements of good narrative, specifically, motivation, conflict, and character development. Obviously, Arthur's motivation is that of his love for Gloriana, and his quest for her that he pursues throughout the poem supplies the conflicts through which he learns. His character begins to emerge in Book I when he reveals this quest and begins his adventure as an untried virtue in need of experience and testing to become perfect and strong. In Book II he discovers that his quest is a search not only for a lover but also for fame and glory and that he must be patient and temperate if he is to reach his goal. However, in Book III he exhibits an intemperate behavior when he curses Night and complains of his own inability to complete his quest as quickly as he desires.

At this point, a problem arises: either Arthur has forgotten what he learned in Book II, or something is amiss in Spenser's arrangement of the episodes. The latter suggestion seems credible, since other incidents in the remaining three books also show signs of improper arrangement. Perhaps Arthur was first to reveal his quest (Book I), then, to become impatient and intemperate (Book III), and, finally, to acquire a knowledge of patience and moderation (Book II).

Once he had assumed the qualities of this patience, he would be ready to continue his adventure and gain additional experience in the virtues important to him as the husband of Gloriana, including Friendship and Justice-in-love. Furthermore, a second problem arises in Book VI wherein the narrator relates an episode involving Arthur and Timias. Although this passage clearly illustrates that a special friendship exists between these two, it is recounted in the book of Courtesy instead of Friendship. Here, again, one is aware that something is amiss. First, the episode seems to be out of place, and, second, it seems important enough to Arthur's character to be worthy of a greater dramatic treatment than the narration affords; it may, thus, have been condensed from a more fully developed sequence.

These mislocated or condensed episodes indicate the further possibility that, at one time, Spenser may have written, or at least have planned, a complete Arthur-Gloriana narrative, which he decided later to incorporate into _The Faerie Queene_. In so doing, he broke apart the Arthur-Gloriana story, selecting and rearranging only those episodes that fit into his developing narrative, and omitting those that did not. He may have condensed certain episodes (such as the Arthur-Timias episode in Book VI), because, although

they had been important to the Arthur story, they were not so important to the totality of the new poem as to warrant an extensive treatment. As he pieced the Arthur-Gloriana story into his developing poem, he subordinated and rearranged Arthur's story, with the result that it appears to contain no pattern of development--although it does have one that becomes evident once the story is isolated and reconstructed.

Evidence in the poem supports the theory of a separate Arthur-Gloriana narrative; but the vital evidence, a manuscript of the narrative, is not extant, nor is there any reference to such a manuscript by Spenser or any of his correspondents. As a consequence, this theory remains unconfirmed and is offered, here, only as a possibility worthy of consideration. Many aspects of the poem other than those with which this paper has been concerned, need to be analyzed if this theory is to be confirmed. Among these are the stylistic qualities of various portions of the text, including those in which Arthur participates. A study of them might reveal not only that the episodes involving Arthur were rearranged but that, indeed, entire books in the poem were composed in an order other than that in which they have been published. Also, a detailed study of the Britomart-Artegall story could be productive of evidence in support of the above

theory, since it occurs in that portion of the poem in which the narrative form becomes confused. One hopes that this present study of Arthur's roles may shed some light upon the total meaning of The Faerie Queene and that, considered in connection with other studies, it may prove useful in establishing conclusions about the composition of the poem.

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