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Romance Disguises in *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*

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Romance Disguises in *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*


By


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B.A., University of Tennessee, 2008


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Abstract

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By James Howard

This dissertation begins and ends with examples of disguises that are neglected in literary criticism.  The overall goal of this project is to approach romance disguises in relation to questions of performance and self-fashioning.  Disguise, as both a concealment of character and a form of characterization, positions characters within networks of social exchange and networks of meaning. As a case study of disguise, the project analyzes two English romances respectively from the fifteenth and sixteenth century, *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene.* The first chapter provides an overview of previous work on disguise, defines disguise as a form of allegorical and social concealment, and connects disguise to ongoing discussions of self-fashioning and identity.  The second chapter focuses on tournament disguises and the way they model circuits of relationships between characters.  The third chapter studies the Fair Unknown tradition in the characters of Gareth and Britomart as they fashion themselves into knights using disguise.  The fourth chapter examines what happens when characters cannot interpret disguises, either because they are invisible or because they leave no trace of their disguised status. Whereas disguise in *Le Morte Darthur* primarily influences how communities form and dissolve, *The Faerie Queene* focuses more intently on visual interpretation itself, and how meaning can emerge from fabricated representations.

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Introduction

"Facial recognition" has become a popular phrase since at least the 1960s, when scientists made the first forays in computer-assisted facial recognition. The technology relies on several conceits that have been possible for the last couple of centuries: photographs, which can accurately preserve how a face looked from a particular angle and in particular lighting; the database, which can store these photographs for immediate recall; the state, with an apparatus centralized and interested enough to gather images for the purpose of identification; the algorithm, which can digest images such that patterns can be observed and ranked. Friends and colleagues still recognize one another by their faces, but the organizational fascination with recognition makes the face a prerequisite for access to all kinds of institutions. The face matters. Along with a name it establishes identity and social access.

Faces were not always universally recorded or available for instant recall. When the only records of faces were in portraits and memories, when contact between two distant places meant someone physically traversing the entire distance, and when authority was diffused between many groups and spaces, the face was not the only or the primary means of recognition. Seals pressed in wax, arms on cloth or painted on shield, and introductions made on behalf of locally-known people were necessary for affirming the status and credibility of strangers. Even so, faces became important when two people who knew one another entered the same space. When they met, facial recognition was more often local and immediate. Community was close and personal. Customs of recognition and identity tended towards local spaces like the court.

Texts from the earlier part of English literary history frequently use courts and

similar arenas to probe the status of characters and the workings of recognition. For instance, a regular reader of medieval and early modern romances might ask this question: why are romance characters so terrible at reading other people's faces and signs? The beginning of the "Tale of Sir Gareth" in the late medieval romance *Le Morte Darthur* seems implausible at first. Gareth, the eponymous hero of the narrative, arrives at court in fine clothing. Gareth does not give his name or further details about who he is. His brother Gawain and his cousin Arthur fail to recognize him. This technique is also common in other texts like Robert Henryson's poem *The Testament of Cresseid*, where the Trojan knight Troilus meets his former lover Criseyde in a leper colony. He does not recognize her leprous visage, though he is reminded of her (498-504). [1] Troilus's nonrecognition represents how Troilus and Criseyde have grown estranged.

Arthur, Gawain and other knights are not judged for their inability to interpret what might be familiar. Instead, the narration focuses on Gareth's own use of his unknown name and position to establish a reputation at court. He is granted a new name, Beaumains, and forms a new chivalric identity under that name. His name literally means "fair hands," shifting the locus of recognition away from his unrecognized face. Arthur and Gawain's inability to recognize Gareth allows him to fashion new personae and new reputations in a fairly common romance mode. In other words, a disguised character like Gareth can change how he looks to others. In one way, Gareth shows how disguise is a form of aristocratic performance. Gareth becomes Beaumains, earns a tremendous reptuation for himself, and then becomes recognized again as Gareth, reuniting Beaumains's exceptional reputation with his high status as the son and cousin to kings.

Gareth's disguise is sanctioned by the conventions of the text and he receives a happy ending. At other moments in romance texts, interpretations of disguise pose problems of interpretation. Where the failure of recognition sometimes facilitates the fashioning of personages, it also allows characters to be misled. Una, the heroine of the first book of *The Faerie Queene*, is wandering distraught through the wilderness looking for her companion the Redcrosse Knight when she sees a knight on horseback in full armor. His shield bears a red cross, so she thinks she has found her companion. Instead Archimago, a sorcerer who manipulates images, uses the emblem with his magical disguise to impersonate the Redcrosse Knight. The true Redcrosse Knight, similarly misled by other disguises, has wandered into the company of Duessa, a duplicitous woman disguised as Fidessa. Disguises mislead both Una and the Redcrosse Knight. *The Faerie Queene* is drawing on a long romance tradition where a fair and true-seeming face may mean neither fairness nor truth, and where even attentive readers may fall prey to appearances that do not represent the character they conceal.

These and other episodes can be understood in two ways. First, disguises enter their wearers into social exchanges, where their affinities to communities and individual characters may be evaluated and adjusted by onlookers. Second, disguises affect how characters in both texts are able to construct meaning. They act like allegories, challenging others' abilities to make sense of multilayered presentations.

Each chapter will explore disguise as social exchange and disguise as allegory through a particular kind of disguise in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. This first chapter lays out the groundwork for the project's approach to disguise in romance, defining disguise as the exchange of a

conventional, recognizable identity for another persona. Such disguises extend to communities of onlookers and networks of meaning. The disguise may self-fashion, and it may form a kind of individuality; in either case this is a particular effect of introducing characters without their name or status being fully known. Disguise is a form of characterization that both instructs and delights.

The second chapter focuses on a particular genre of disguise in both texts, the tournament disguise. Both Malory and Spenser highlight key characters who use disguises in tournament: Tristram and Palomides; Britomart and Artegall. These disguises create a space in which their characters can act independently of their previous identities and allegiances. In that space the characters' disguise-induced alienation eventually yields to a resolution of renewed friendship and love.

The third chapter focuses on how Gareth from *Le Morte Darthur* and Britomart from *The Faerie Queene* use disguise to effectively invent themselves as knights. They use the disguise to lay claim to forms of status and honor that they never before had. From their first moments of being unknown, they invite the speculation and wonder of onlookers, who have trouble determining whether Gareth and Britomart are monstrous or noble, knight or interloper. Tensions in how the gender and status of a knight might be perceived appear at points where they are disguised. In the end, being fashioned into a successful knight requires the protagonist to disclose elements of his identity, effectively manipulating the curiosity and wonder of those who look on.

Finally, the fourth chapter shows how disguise is not merely a constructive, socially sanctioned form of identity-building. Supernatural disguises also probe the limited ability of characters in the text to interpret disguises. Invisibility in *Le Morte*

*Darthur* portends the possibility of a disguise that escapes all attempts to incorporate the disguised character into Arthurian communities. The invisible, murderous knight Garlonde escapes all methods of bringing justice to him until, caught out of his disguise, he is killed by Balin in a visually grotesque manner. Garlonde's control of sight limits the ability of chivalric communities to regulate his behavior. Meanwhile, Archimago shows the limits of interpreting what is visible but unrecognized as a disguise. His disguise as the Redcrosse Knight defies Una and Sansloy's attempts to interpret it; the disjuncture between representation and identity shows the fallability of visual modes of interpretation. For Spenser especially, the conventions of visual representation are vulnerable to manipulation. This is not just an example of disguise's misuse, but of a fundamental flaw at the heart of visual interpretation: how does one know what one sees?

Throughout all of these chapters, the prime difference between Malory's disguises and Spenser's disguises is the relative emphasis on community. Malory's disguised characters are almost always found within the communities that judge them, and these communities persist from episode to episode and from tale to tale. Interpretation makes sense of a character's status among their various communities. Spenser's characters seem less connected to any persistent, central community. Instead, Spenser's disguises focus more locally on whichever onlookers are present in a given episode, and in turn focus more on the visual and material elements that produce disguise. This allows disguise to explore more closely how interpretation makes sense of visual representation.

Chapter One

How to Fashion a Gentleman: Disguise and Identity

A disguise is a shift in appearance sufficient to differentiate a second persona from one's initial persona in any given social exchange. In this chapter I situate this definition in relation to scholarship on disguise, chivalric communities, and allegory. Then I examine disguises at the beginning of each text as well as in their accompanying material, to show that these texts rely on disguise in order to better define their characters and influence how they might be read.

Disguises find their way into the romances at the center of this project. Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte* Darthur is the first text to consider, a romance-chronicle by an author who identifies himself as "Syr Thomas Maleoré, knight" (698.4).[2] The text is an adaptation and rewriting of many Arthurian sources, including a collection of French materials known as the French Vulgate, the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, and the stanzaic *Morte Arthur*.[3] It remains the predominant source text for medievalist Arthuriana, and its subsequent publication history closely follows the popularity of treatments and adaptations of King Arthur.[4] The second focal text, *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596), is Edmund Spenser's epic romance, featuring the exploits of many knights and ladies on adventures ostensibly in the service of the eponymous queen Gloriana.[5] "Epic romance" is a phrase often used to describe the two main modes of *The Faerie Queene*. Like the "chronicle romance" of *Le Morte Darthur*, the phrase acts as a way to signal that the text uses many romance themes and conventions while also possessing qualities of other genres. The amalgamation connects Edmund Spenser to his Italian influences, including

Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* (1483, 1495), Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532), and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581).

Both texts feature concealment almost from the start: Arthur arrives at the tournament of the sword in the stone and anvil not yet recognized as a king; the Redcrosse Knight comes into the narrative identified only by the borrowed armor he wears and a few other narrative details. Both texts feature knights disguised by their armor or arms, and both texts feature disguises during tournaments and ritualized combat. In primarily relating *The Faerie Queene* and *Le Morte Darthur*, I am focusing more on the mode of English romance, and romance disguise in particular, to trace the latter points of an insular genealogy of disguise. Not much work has been done comparing *The Faerie Queene* to English romances.[6]

A definition of disguise needs to address how disguise functions in romances, and especially *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*. It needs to pertain to its most common participants, knights, while also applying to the ladies and enchanters who disguise themselves at the margins of these texts' courts. The distinguishing feature of disguise is obscurity by concealment. At the moment of disguise, someone's name, status, or identifying feature is not immediately evident to an onlooker. That status could be withheld intentionally, or it could be hidden by the armor and other garb common in romance. This disguise conceals a standard, public-facing identity. Another identity then replaces the one being concealed, and that identity is formed by the interpretations of what is presented to an onlooker. Formed by impressions of appearance, the second identity may be called a persona. That persona could be a fully-formed identity (a knight with his own name), an impersonation of someone else's identity, or the generalized

status of the stranger.  Furthermore, disguises do not last forever.  They usually involve

discovery: the knight's former identity is named, the concealment is dropped, and

onlookers come to relate a disguised character's persona to that character's new, revealed

status.  The manner of recognition alongside the quality of the persona and the disguised

identity determine how someone is received after a disguise is unveiled.  Sometimes

characters seem more prestigious for the worthy actions accomplished by their personas

under disguise.  Other times, they are judged as deceivers because their own identity does

not match the disguise.

To distill all of that into a sentence, a disguise begins when a character is

concealed, creating a second persona which, when revealed, changes the reception of that

character.  The disguise distinguishes one's previous state from one's current state, which

changes how one relates to one's onlookers and vice versa.  The previous state could be

referred to as an interior self, or it could be qualified primarily in terms of one's

previously known name and emblems.  In either case, the disguise marks the possible

discrepancy between what we perceive and what something is, the sense that identity can

lie beyond visual description.

As the term for changing one's appearance and adopting another persona, the

word *disguise* is medieval in origin and has been applied to these texts by critics from the

nineteenth century onward.  The term comes to Middle English from the Old French verb

*desguiser* (to put out one's guise) and commonly appears in English texts from the

fourteenth century onward.[7] One might expect that "disguise" means to put on a guise

like some hairy eyebrows and funny glasses, but *dis-* originates with the Latin prefix *de-,*

which undoes the action that a verb performs, hence *develare* (to unveil) and *dearmare*

(to disarm).[8] So the word does not originally mean putting an alternate guise on, but refers to removing the appearance that one had. Notably, the Middle English verb *disgisen* may refer to changing one's appearance whether that results in adopting another identity or not. For example, Gower uses disguise to describe vainglory covering itself in ostentatious dress: "He makth him evere freissh and gay, / And doth al his array desguise, / So that of him the newe guise / Of lusti folk alle othre take" (1.2704-7).[9] Guise here likely means *fashion, style,* or *manner*, so that by *desguise* Vainglory puts a new fashion on.[10] Vainglory is still concealed, as ornamentation is more important than identification. Many other uses involve concealing someone's identity, as when Alexandrine in *William of Palerne* plots an escape by disguising as a white bear: "rediliche no better red be resun i ne knowe, / than to swiche a bold beste best to be disgised, / for thei be alle maners arn man likkest" (1692-4).[11] The word has many examples in the Middle English corpus, and both *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene* use the word occasionally when characters are disguising themselves: the word appears 23 times in *Le Morte Darthur* and 34 times in *The Faerie Queene*.[12] That being said, disguises frequently appear without the term *disguise* being used.

**Social Exchanges and the Disguises of Medieval Romance**

Meanwhile, the application of the term "disguise" by literary critics is a modern attempt to account for what happens when characters switch appearances. The term has been used extensively in criticism of romances to study characters in social exchange with one another. First I will describe the most pertinent connections drawn between romance and disguise, before attending to the wider circles of criticism on literary

disguise and on identity in late medieval and early modern texts.  Scholarship on disguises in the 1990s mainly focused on using disguise to address issues of representation or visual culture.[13] For Dickson in "Verbal and Visual Disguise," the disguises of 13th and 14th century insular romance like *King Horn* test a character's identity. The outcast heir Horn conceals his status and goes on a number of adventures to demonstrate his kingly qualities to other people without the previous benefit of his external markers of allegiance.[14] She describes the disguise as a method for proving that self and goal align: "By proving, while in disguise, that the interior identity of the self adheres to the social identity that the knight would like to claim, once he has shed his disguise the knight is able to claim that identity unequivocally."[15]  Disguise adds a more definite demonstration of one's claim to position.  Through that disguise, a character like the itinerant King Horn is able to join what community he wishes, provided that he matches the requirements of the group.  The internal and external identities over the course of the story prove to be models of one another; performance expresses kingship and kingship explains performance.  For Dickson, the disguise fashions both by opening questions about status only to answer them in a way favorable to traditional notions of power.  Those worthy by blood deserve to be worthy in status.  Internal worth becomes social worth.

As a system that determines a character's worth, chivalry influences how people enter social relations with one another.  Chivalry is often not neatly defined by a romance, and as a system its rules vary across times and places.  Nor are knights' actions so ideally suited to demonstrating their belonging to a particular social sphere.  Knights misbehave.  They accidentally kill.  They uphold their oaths inconsistently.  They run the

risk of not fulfilling the particular expectations put upon them.  Dickson's concepts fit well a fairly controlled text like *King Horn,* but may not apply so well to texts where knights wander and err.  What happens when a knight steps outside of the bounds of his social role? In "Knights in Disguise: Identity and Incognito in Fourteenth-Century Chivalry," Susan Crane studies knights who use disguise as a form of self-presentation to garner status.[16]  According to Crane, the knight who adopts a fictive identity risks the alienation of his previous public identity in order to distinguish himself.  In a successful disguise, a knight is able to combine the qualities of the disguise with his concealed persona.  A knight who stands out through the risk of alienation may successfully prove that his worthiness does not stem from his hidden social status.  Crane uses the example of Ywain in *Ywain and Gawain,* the Middle English adaptation of Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain*. When Ywain forgets to return to his wife in the time she allowed him, she insists that his chivalric identity has been erased: "It es ful mekyl ogains the right / To cal so fals a man a knight ... Sertainly, so fals a fode / Was never cumen of kynges blode."[17] She casts him out, alienating him in such a way that he must adopt the disguise of the Knight of the Lion in order to rebuild his reputation. Whereas in Dickson's article the disguise affirms the knight's place, for Crane the disguise also adds particular traits and qualities tied to that persona: Ywain both earns his place at his wife's side and associates himself with the emblem of the lion.  The result is a kind of aggregated identity: part what a knight was before, and part the identifying signs of his disguise.

For both Dickson and Crane, disguise initiates a break from who one previously was, alienation from a prior public identity.  However, that does not put an individual in opposition to society.  As Crane herself notes, the disguised individual does not combat

society. Despite the risk of foregoing his status, a knight who undergoes disguise often allies his identity with social mores: "an individual identity can be founded in renown in this period when the individual had not yet become the questioning opponent of social precedent."[18] Dressing in the trappings of knighthood enables a knight to subvert some chivalric concepts by risking the failure to fulfill them. Such characters risk alienation because a knight puts himself in a position where his worth might not be recognized. If he should fail in any of his tests, the status of his hidden social identity would be proven a sham, which would make it difficult for the knight to reveal who he has been. Romances avoid realizing this risk. By and large, knights in romances succeed in proving their worth, but the vulnerability of a knight's status – and those signs that mark his status – still color depictions of disguise. Ywain might fail to win back his wife, for example. Knights in romance are both aligned with social precedent and not identical to it, cooperative with their peers but still possessing the potential of deviation. This space for examining forms of social worth is vital both to disguise and to the possible benefits of studying it.

In later work Crane addresses more directly how disguise also allows its users to create and critique forms of individuality. Crane's "not yet" in the quote from the last paragraph ("when the individual had *not yet* become the questioning opponent of social precedent") hints at a time when viewers and actors do oppose society and the subject. She sets the boundary limit at John Locke, the seventeenth-century political philosopher who sets up the paradigm that any expression of self happens in a compromise with a society which restricts what the self can do. Before Locke, the individual or self is often formed as a consequence of a subject affiliating with communities. Her book *The*

*Performance of Self* extends the argument to suggest that the late medieval individual is created from, and not restrained by, a court of onlookers. Knights may become individuals by undergoing disguise and becoming visible to those who will judge a knight's character: individuality derives from, and does not precede, public judgment.[19] Public judgment produces the difference that makes the knight visible in romances including *Yvain*, *Ipomadon*, *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*. These texts are replete with courts where characters present themselves to one another. Combat during quests begins with seeing another knight and evaluating what threat he might pose. The texts also invite readers to serve as a judge, evaluating and interpreting on the basis of what a text says and implies about its characters. Knights become individuals by using disguise to highlight their own features and distinguish themselves from their peers.

The status of the "yet" in the "not yet" could be developed further by studying the time between Crane's fifteenth-century examples and the onset of modern political theory. Crane's work looks back to the twelfth century, the origins of chivalric romance, in order to make claims about its many imitators in the fifteenth century. I seek to connect this work on disguise between the late fifteenth and late sixteenth centuries to Malory and Spenser, examining elements of disguise shared between these texts to see what changes between these two moments. What changes between the times of Thomas Malory and John Locke? Speaking strictly in terms of romances that engage with disguises and individuals, Edmund Spenser takes a place in between the two, indebted to romance and epic examples as well as the political and religious movements of the late Elizabethan period in the last two decades of the sixteenth century.

Other criticism uses disguise for other interpretive ends, addressing instances of

disguise in *Le Morte Darthur* or *The Faerie Queene* through the lens of a related topic.

Disguise highlights the shaping of identity, rather like a narrative manicule pointing to

concerns of gender and class. For instance, Molly Martin's book *Vision and Gender in*

*Malory's Morte Darthur* examines how the spectacle engenders its characters.[20] In her

introduction, she describes how men in *Le Morte Darthur* are both viewers and objects of

sight, both seeing and seen. Within this system of mutual gazing, knights address the

anxiety of always having to perform their masculinity by mastering its performance,

using techniques like disguise to manufacture "mervayles" or spectacles that highlight

their prowess.[21]

Critics of *The Faerie Queene* have long been sensitive to its tendency to use

images as moral exempla, but they tend to set aside disguise as a minor matter. For

Joseph Campana, Britomart, the female knight of Book III, takes on a masculine self

because she embraces armor, a masculine accoutrement. Wearers of armor gain some

degree of autonomy, but wearers risk sealing themselves off from social contact.

Britomart has trouble being being socially and physically open to other knights, a quality

that Campana refers to as vulnerability.[22] For Campana, studying her armor as disguise

may too easily set aside the most interesting parts of Britomart's performance, like the

psychological and queer implications of a woman wearing armor.[23] Judith Anderson's

article on gender and allegory in Britomart's armor focuses on the armor as both an

emblem and an artifact that enables Britomart's entry into the faerie world, a world where

"all figures are feigned and defined by what they do."[24] Anderson's Britomart is

disguised, but that fact is relegated to a footnote. She is interested in Britomart as a

figure for multiple forms of gender: Venus-Virgo as well as Venus-Mars. Figuration in

the article only happens to coincide with disguise.

Both of these arguments use Britomart's armor as a way to examine what happens when masculine-shaped armor is overlaid upon a female body. However, disguise in this project operates both as a textual ambiguity of character and as an aristocratic performance of status and worth. Britomart is a great example of how the text examines chivalric masculinity by impersonation. Britomart is not just playing a man. She is playing the martial aristocratic man contained in romance and still current as a figure in the late sixteenth century. Furthermore, even when she sets aside parts of her armor, she still appears to be both a woman and a knight. Disguise implies a complex form of selfhood that may persist in the traces of a character's different personae. When Britomart becomes Britomart the knight, Britomart the amazon, or Britomart the lady, what qualities persist as traces from her other personae? When she fashions herself into one of the best knights in *The Faerie Queene,* how does that correspond to Britomart? These questions will be addressed in the third chapter.

Crane finds forms of interiority in texts that features characters' actions more than their thoughts. Even so, more can be said about the critical tendency to read interiority into characters' positions at court. For instance, models of self-fashioning often relate characters to a seemingly stable autocratic source of authority. In this system of fashioning, interiority becomes visible through conflict with an authority, and is further developed through subsequent negotiations of what they say and do in front of witnesses. Success is determined through the preservation of the self, that is, whether the person lives and what status he possesses in relation to that authority.

Disguise, fashioning, and identity are all key terms that will recur many times in

this project.  So is "performance." Two meanings of the term are relevant to this study.

First, disguises are often accompanied by performances, moments that are spectacles that

operate according to certain social rules in front of an audience.  Knights entering courts

or tournaments in *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene* enter spaces that are

designed for viewing others according to formal expectations of conduct.  In this sense

disguise forms part of a knight's repertoire, one possible mode by which he may present

himself.  This mode is exceptional, since conventionally knights entering a new space

give their name as a sign of who they are.  As will be evident in Chapter 3, viewers of

knights like Gareth and Britomart still seek to figure out who they are.  The expectations

allow them to persist disguised in court or battle according to a progression where

recognition is teased in stages: Gareth discloses his true name to a few people, and

Britomart first reveals only her face and then finally her body without armor.

Secondly, performance implies the constant and continuous repetition of the self

through habitual responses to social norms.  Performativity, as Judith Butler calls it,

constitutes and reinforces identity through repetitions of discourse.  Even supposedly

minor speech acts have an iterative function that establishes who people are and how they

think of themselves.[25] Performativity wends its way into scholarship on medieval and

early modern literature.  Crane's book title *The Performance of Self* relies on the concept

of performativity as well as the fifteenth-century court performances that she studies.[26]  A

sustained disguise may rely on one's utterances and actions constituting a continual

performance, such that expressions of the newer persona overwrite those incidental

expressions that escape conscious control.  That said, it is difficult with literary examples

to distinguish overt performances from incidental, frequently reiterated ones. Romance

texts tend to focus more on courts and adventure than on mundane or ordinary tasks. Furthermore, while characters in both texts under study are certainly complex, they do not necessarily conform to the novelistic idea of a unitary subject whose narrative is concentrated on his or her development. As a consequence, understanding performativity in these texts means paying attention to small signs and markers of identity in often spectacular settings.

**Allegory and Disguise as Meaning-Making**

The previous section focused on disguise as a socially sanctioned act, one where its practitioners interact with and are interpreted by their peers. Transgression in this context implies violating some social rule or expectation. Social exchanges prompt people to undergo disguises. King Horn underwent a disguise in order to earn back his country, and Ywain did the same to repair the relationship with his wife. Gareth and Britomart both travel between communities and leave a trail of judgments in their wake.

Disguise also affects how texts arrive at meaning. A disguise affects not only the literal social realm within the text but the meaning-making associated with allegory. This section will connect disguise and allegory in the writing of sixteenth-century critic George Puttenham as well as the twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship of Lloyd Davis, Rosemond Tuve, and Claire Falck. Two ideas will be addressed: first, when allegory is defined as a kind of concealment of meaning, disguise operates as a form of allegory. Second, when allegory addresses more generally how one makes sense of the literal events of a text, disguise provides a focal point for interpreters to make sense of textual details. The disguised character invites further interpretation by concealing the

name that would make sense of him.

When George Puttenham wrote the voluminous book *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), he set aside about half of the book to a section he titled "Of Ornament."[27] In this section he describes how concealment and allegory are methods that, properly used, can make speech socially acceptable to people in power. Allegories require judgments beyond the text's ability to represent particular ideas in concrete detail. Thus Puttenham describes a form of ornamentation

> which resteth in the fashioning of our maker's language and style to such purpose as it may delight and allure as well the mind as the ear of the hearers with a certain novelty and strange manner of conveyance, disguising it no little from the ordinary and accustomed, nevertheless making it nothing the more unseemly or misbecoming, but rather decenter and more agreeable to any civil ear and understanding. (III.1, 221)

In this system of expression, some forms of ornamentation function as a "strange manner of conveyance," basically a form of expression that makes things sound strange, foreign, or not themselves, "disguising it" without making it unseemly or unbecoming. For Puttenham the art of disguising has the possibility of making an utterance better suited for a "civil ear and understanding," or an ear trained to the orderliness of a life of service to authorities. This is disguise as rhetoric. Rhetorical disguising creates novelty while still attending carefully to purpose and social context.

For Puttenham allegory is a rhetorical device that estranges utterance from meaning, "when we speak one thing and think another, and that our words and our meanings meet not" (III.18, 270). The first part of this statement addresses the intentions of a speaker who conceals his thoughts as he speaks. The corresponding effect – that words do not in themselves agree with the meaning – is caused by the initial dissemblement of a speaker. Hence Puttenham refers to allegory as "the Figure of False

Semblant or Dissimulation" and his examples tend to rely on how speakers dissemble, dissimulate, and otherwise obscure their language. Disguise remains in the background as one of the possible techniques of a courtier.

Lloyd Davis also connects disguise and Puttenham's allegory in his book *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance*. For Davis, allegory allows courtiers to move beyond one's prescribed social position rhetorically, saying what they would otherwise be forbidden to say.[28] Speech and expression are at stake as courtiers adjust their personae according to how they see others seeing them.[29] To successfully conceal undesirable forms of speech and actions, courtiers must keenly understand the expectations that go along with their obedience to figures of authority. Dissemblance and disguise are particular expressions of what courtiers may undergo effectively to present themselves.

Davis's work with allegory and disguise can be compared to the ideas about disguise and social exchange in the preceding section. Disguised knights and courtiers conceal their previous public role. Yet, rather than being strictly alienated from his former status, a person in disguise encourages onlookers to evaluate his newer, disguised persona and, over time, compare his disguised persona to the identity that was initially concealed. Allegory, according to Davis, encourages interpretation as well, though now its ability to conceal one's own thoughts is more important than what interpretation reveals: "*Allegoria* inscribes the courtier's attempts to work his subjection. The meanings of gestures, speech, and demeanour may be reaccentuated for purposes of 'selfness' while continuing to reproduce official models of identity."[30] One can distinguish oneself from one's present social status by manipulating established standards for recognition. In other

words, disguise as allegory implies that the disguiser conforms to some model of understanding while distinguishing oneself from it with the trappings of disguise.

Thinking of allegory as concealment does make some sense. However, it tends to produce a strict separation between words and meaning, or disguise and identity, which does not fully describe how allegory is experienced. When allegory and disguise are encountered, it is more productive to attend to the expressions and details that are represented than to attempt to distinguish an element of concealment and an element of identity. Concealment overlays appearance; it does not compete with or replace it entirely. The conventional knight in disguise wears armor over his features. His face may be hidden, but he does not become an empty suit of armor. Hence Rosemond Tuve in *Allegorical Imagery* pursues an open-ended approach to interpreting allegory. [31] Her professed mission is to discover allegory and not to impose it. Accordingly, she resists definitions of allegory that insist that characters are equivalent to their abstract ideas: that the Redcrosse Knight *is* Holiness, that Britomart *is* Chastity, or that characters can be deciphered once their abstract correspondence is understood.[32] While discussing *The Faerie Queene*, she alleges that Spenser's allegory is not a "puzzle-language" to be deciphered, but that meanings come through textual, literary details.[33] She supports this point partly through reference to the conventions of Malory's and Spenser's texts, which treat romance events as an everyday, commonplace part of their landscape: "Nights are spent and wounds cured in ordinary castles; giants and monsters combatted as often as the conventional lions and bears, but as a mere variation of the inhabitants, and usually vanquished by valor not magic."[34] Accounting for allegories means accounting first for the texts and contexts, examining them carefully and then seeing what strands of ideas

come out.

Tuve understands *The Faerie Queene* as a text unified by forms of interweaving, whether complex ideas are developed across stanzas, cantos, or books. At the same time, for Tuve it is difficult and not useful to distinguish between plot and allegory, as one cannot interpret complex writing and come out with simple answers of what it means. Instead, good reading should tackle complex characters by recognizing and preserving the complexity of the text.[35]

Allegory thus appears to be not a particular technique for concealment, but a general process for reading and interpretation. In this version of allegory, disguise functions as an appearance which invites interpretation precisely because it leaves ambiguous the question of who a character is. If allegory is a series of open-ended questions of how we understand a textual moment, a character's disguise invites a similar series of questions for understanding characters in these texts. Disguises usually offer the signs that begin the process of figuring out who someone is.

Finally, thinking about allegory and disguise together highlights a problem that disguises occasionally address: what happens if the visual elements of disguise are so obscure that they may as well be absent? What does one do with a disguise that cannot be visually interpreted? More will be written on this topic in the fourth chapter. One recent treatment of allegory, Claire Falck's article "'Heavenly Lineaments' and the Invisible Church in Foxe and Spenser," examines forms of representation that gesture beyond what is strictly visible. Falck traces how both John Foxe and Spenser use images and text to represent an invisible Protestant church that stands independent of the visible, ritualistic Catholic church.[36] For instance, Falck shows how *The Faerie Queene's* Una is frequently

described indirectly through comparisons and analogies rather than direct description.

She is introduced this way in the first canto:

> A louely Ladie rode him faire beside,
> Vpon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
> Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
> Vnder a vele, that wimpled was full low,
> And ouer all a blacke stole shee did throw,
> As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,
> And heauie sat vpon her palfrey slow;
> Seemed in heart some hidden care she had
> And by her in a line a milkewhite lambe she lad.  (1.1.4.1–9)

She is described through comparisons, concealment, and seeming. She is whiter than her donkey, which is in turn whiter than snow. She hides this under a veil that closely covers her features. She wears a black stole like someone who mourns. Beyond her coverings and her animals, the definite signifiers are nonvisual: she is sad and sits heavy, she seems to have a hidden care. As Claire McEachern notes, Una appears beautiful, but there is something visually indistinct about that beauty.[37] Visually concealed by a veil and textually concealed by comparisons and indistinct features, she cannot be clearly seen.

Being removed from visibility carries with it special risks, as onlookers often fail to discern the meaning of an image which conceals its visual details. For Falck, Una's invisibility represents the challenges of trying to understand an invisible church because only careful readers can successfully interpret the absence of visual detail. Through this particular motif Falck highlights one of the difficulties that interpreters of disguise and allegory will show again and again: for textual representation to succeed, it must be interpretable; for interpretation to succeed, the reader or viewer must be careful. Disguise is so important to *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene* precisely because it brings into question not only the identities of the characters using them but also the companions,

onlookers, and other characters compelled to judge these performances.

Chapter 4 will address most directly the examples of Malory's Garlonde and Spenser's Archimago, as both employ disguises that elude the interpretation of their viewers. Through literal invisibility or through completely concealing the seams of anonymity that otherwise accompany disguise, disguises highlight the fallability of forms of interpretation that rely on visual description.

**Disguise in Historiography: Early Modern and Medieval**

Broadly speaking, disguises enter into communities of social exchange as well as fields of textual interpretation. Crane, Dickson, and other writers on disguise have used disguises to debate the status of the individual in the medieval and early modern periods. In this section I will show how scholars studying the individual in the medieval and early modern period rely on general conceptions of disguise that can be further developed.

The discourse of disguise and social exchange in romance coincides with a similar discussion of individual identity and performance that has been ongoing since the early twentieth century. Scholarship on the individual in medieval and early modern studies can be described in four parts. In the first part, distinguished by Jacob Burckhardt, the self-conscious individual heralds the Renaissance, whose people compare favorably to the relatively static subjects of the medieval period. In the second, described by R. W. Southern, Charles Homer Haskins, and Robert Hanning, the medieval period from the eleventh century onward also has individuals, possessing a kind of interiority prior to the Italian Renaissance. In the third, raised by Stephen Greenblatt and many fellow early modern New Historicists, strategies for self-fashioning develop among authors during the

sixteenth century. These individuals are in a precarious state, the scant possibilities for self-determination restricted and formed by sources of authority. Finally, in the fourth, represented by Carolyn Dinshaw, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, and other medievalists, models for identity and self-development form throughout the medieval period that are every bit as vital and complex as those of the early modern individual. Disguise begins to enter the conversation with Robert Hanning and Greenblatt.

Prior to Stephen Greenblatt's work on self-fashioning in 1980, Robert Hanning traced the idea of the individual back to medieval romance.[38] Following the historian Charles Homer Haskins, he calls this moment in time the twelfth-century Renaissance.[39] His definition of the individual contrasts an internal with an external form of self-awareness, "the constant interplay between the chivalric hero's inner and outer (or private and public) worlds, each with its own standards and goals."[40] In this phrasing, inner and private are almost the same term, and Hanning uses *private* to denote anything that is inaccessible to forms of authority: kings, the church, peers, and their courts. For example, Hanning examines the narrative of the challenge, where knights and the king sit feasting at court until someone arrives to issue a challenge to a knight.[41] The knight who volunteers enters a quest shaped by the knight's own perceptions and disposition, a somewhat allegorical mode that reflects the importance of a character's subjective experience.[42] The knight is thence removed from court and allowed to develop a form of identity distinct from that of his king. Hanning chooses disguised characters like the eponymous hero of Chretién de Troyes's *Yvain* to analyze individual, subjective embodiment. Though Hanning is not explicitly interested in disguise, he uses examples of disguised characters to study the individual in twelfth-century romance.

The omission of disguise as an explicit concern seems curious, since Yvain uses his disguise as the Knight of the Lion in order to redeem himself in the esteem of his estranged wife. The disguise is a tool that allows him to transform from exiled knight to good husband and ruler. Disguise remains implicit in Hanning's argument because he is concerned with how knights like Yvain are physically separated from the court by the quest, whereas the disguise tends to rely on others' perceptions of separation from an initial identity, usually from a field of viewership that is most concentrated at court. Since romance involves an exchange between a communal social space and an exterior space which a knight must navigate as part of his adventure, the disguise allows a knight like Yvain to move back to the social world without instantly collapsing its wearer into his previous identity. Disguise maintains social distance even in close physical and narrative proximity. The knight transforms through the meeting of these two spaces: Yvain is no longer the knight who failed to return to his wife, nor is he precisely the Knight of the Lion. He is some amalgamation of both personae. To connect Hanning's thinking to the idea of a spectacle, disguised bodies can remain individual (according to Hanning) in a social space formed by the expectations of their on-lookers. Simultaneously, these characters, examined while in their disguises, maintain a form of withheld self-awareness that seems metaphorically "interior."

Stephen Greenblatt's book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* addresses the sixteenth-century individual.[43] He uses the key term self-fashioning to describe how writers craft their authorial personae in the faces of political authority. Self-fashioning is an art of comportment and distinction. These authors must internalize their submission to authority as they act it out. Nor are they able to ignore their own status as subjects.

Nonetheless, writing offers the possibility of subversion, of carving out a way to be subject to authority without fully giving away the self.

Sixteenth-century England is his focal point. For Greenblatt, self-consciousness concerning fashioning identity increases in England starting in the early sixteenth century with Thomas More. Greenblatt claims that the changes of this new "early modern" time are distinct from English cultures of the previous centuries.[44] His argument turns the sixteenth century towards the modern form of individualism rather than towards the medieval form written about by Hanning. His perspective, examining the early modern individual in terms of the individuals of today, bolsters the teleology in the term *early modern*, since he privileges those traits of agency like self-consciousness most conducive to the individual in the present.

However, Greenblatt passes over medieval examples where the self-conscious individual may emerge in somewhat familiar but distinct terms, like Hanning's twelfth-century individual or the relatively recent fifteenth. For Greenblatt, early sixteenth-century writers Thomas More, William Tyndale and Thomas Wyatt struggle with a metaphorical mask that denotes the incomplete integration of authorial resistance and subjection to authority:

> For More, the self is poised between an ironic, self-conscious performance, grounded upon hidden reserves of private judgment and silent faith, and an absorption into a corporate unity that has no need for pockets of privacy. In the former state, identity is a mask to be fashioned and manipulated; in the latter, it is a status firmly established by the corporate entity and comprehensible only as a projection of that entity.[45]

The mask conceals and disguises an interior self, but in Greenblatt's examples the external mask is always fabricated and inimical to the self who hides behind it. Self-fashioning exists in the inability of the self to exist externally under the same terms one

exists internally.  Identity is besieged; if one does not conform, one must perform fealty while concealing thoughts that must remain unspoken.  In that paradigm, it is no surprise that Greenblatt only cites negative examples of disguise from *The Faerie Queene*: "Acrasia as demonic artist and whore combines the attributes of those other masters of disguise, Archimago and Duessa.  Their evil depends upon the ability to mask and forge, to conceal their satanic artistry; their defeat depends upon the power to unmask, the strength to turn from magic to strenuous virtue."[46]  Concealment is sometimes used in *The Faerie Queene* and other romances as a sign of villainy, and knights are judged based on their usually insufficient capacity to comprehend concealed characters.  However, concealment, the art of *sprezzatura*, the practice of the tournament disguise – these are frequently sanctioned and accepted practices that involve direct connections between one's disguise and oneself.  At the very least, these forms of concealment function by making the external disguise appear cohesive to a previous public identity.  So disguise offers a mode of performance that is not automatically wrong or dismissible.  Indeed, romance characters like the Redcrosse Knight, Britomart, and Artegall are masters of their respective disguises, and their respective personae are crafted through them.

The knight-under-disguise can be better understood by examining knights in disguise in other texts.  Pre-sixteenth century examples still current in the late sixteenth century show characters who also perform and fashion their identities using disguises. Knights in *Le Morte Darthur* are born as knights and remain knights until they die.  Even so, within and between the courts and wilds of Arthurian Britain characters' reputations shift, their identities and reputations up for constant performance and reevaluation as they move from social space to social space.  If the art of self-fashioning for Greenblatt's

sixteenth-century authors rests in writing from precarious position to precarious position, the art of self-fashioning in romances across the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries rests in frequent performances of self from precarious context to precarious context.  The disguise offers a mode of personification that thrives in its own repetition.

Examining self-fashioning in romance implies extending Greenblatt's thesis, finding conflict between forms of authority and the self as well as complicity between the authorities judging appearance and their peers manipulating it.  Disguise is an acceptable art of performance, provided that one does it well.  In the Tale of Sir Lancelot in *Le Morte Darthur,* Lancelot dresses in disguise, fights Arthur's knights, and returns to court praised for his skill and worthy conduct. After Lancelot overcomes Sagramour, Ector, Uwayne, and Gawain with spears, the four recognize Lancelot at court and fall to laughing.  The tale ends when they describe Lancelot's exploits under disguise: "And so at that tyme Sir Launcelot had the grettyste name of ony knyght of the worlde, and moste he was honoured of hyghe and lowe" (176.47-177.2). The disguise further qualifies Lancelot as a renowned knight. Gareth, Tristram and other disguised knights repeat this pattern of development.

The art of presentation also perpetuates itself into later texts, where nameless figures can only be understood through a process of interpretation.  The list of disguisers in *The Faerie Queene* is longer than Archimago and Duessa. The Redcrosse Knight, Britomart, Artegall, and others are all under disguises. Their disguises may lack the supernatural or "satanic" trappings of Archimago's own, but they are nonetheless important to their moments in the text. Disguise, defined in both a fifteenth- and sixteenth-century context, offers ways to understand how a character may develop.

After Greenblatt, medievalists followed his and Hanning's example, finding the individual in the twelfth or thirteenth century. Typically, studies of the individual in the twelfth century have focused on major genres of writing. Peter Haidu approaches the troubadour tradition and its eventual development of romance in *The Subject Medieval/Modern*.[47] Both of these strains conceive of the individual or something like the individual emerging in the twelfth century, often as a development of conflicts between the powers of religion and politics. He describes the modern subject emerging from the formation of the medieval subject at the turn of the first millennium. Caught between varying systems of authority, his subjects are mobile within these systems, able to move and act despite the tendency towards imposed or constrained identities.[48] As the state and its theological and cultural justifications evolve, so do subjects form, so named because they subject themselves to a state. Only later do they find some form of agency, of subject formation not precisely aligned with early forms of the state.

Other scholars as varied as Sarah Spence and Suzanne Verderber show the development of the individual alongside the proliferation of new texts and genres.[49] Their approaches are similar to one another and Greenblatt's: the individual responds to a cultural conflict, and writers further explore and develop that conflict. For instance, Verderber elaborates on Haidu's concepts of subjected selfhood to claim that "the invention of [romance] in the West represented an effort to diagram an increasingly complex society in order to analyze the position of the individuated subject within it, and invent ways out from this subjection."[50] An individual is one subjected to authority but not identical to it, and romance is one way to model how individuals may work under authority.

In other words, disguise in romance highlights conflicted exchanges between society and the self, whether they are expressed in Hanning's terms of the interior and exterior self, in Greenblatt's terms of the mask and the author, or in the post-New Historicist turn towards examining the individual as a place of mediated conflict.  Some medievalists took the thinking on individuality a step further, focusing not just on the circumstances under which an individual identity was formed, but also on the processes that constituted identity.  Recent work has studied the mechanisms of identity formation in late medieval romance.  One impulse is to tie identity to social interaction: Dorsey Armstrong connects the ideals of service to women to masculine performances in *Le Morte Darthur*, whereas Kenneth Hodges places the identities of knights in close relation to each other and to the overall idea of an Arthurian court.  Their recent collaborative work *Mapping Malory* extends their theories on social interactions to boundaries of geography featured in late medieval writing.[51]

Still, disguise can do more to address the conception of identity itself, since implicit in any disguise is a separation between one's public role and one's identity. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen shows how alterations of the body also affect one's identity. In *Of Giants* and *Medieval Identity Machines* Cohen claims that medieval identities are not discrete and isolated terms for being.[52]  Nor are they merely a rung on a chain of being or a position in a hierarchy.  Medieval identities extend beyond a person's body to encompass the tools and implements they use, the clothes they wear, and other items. Many of these items are exchanged or hidden by disguises. Most important to Cohen is the notion of the prosthesis, material that marks and augments the body that possesses it. Prostheses include garments, armor, tools, animals, and texts.  They not only render a

person's status legible but also constitute that status.  In other words, they form identities:

the knight is the assemblage of pieces of armor, the horse, and the body that rides the

horse.  Each part may be used individually, but only together do they form an assemblage

of the knight, inhuman and human pieces that define the knight as knight once they are

combined.[53]  For Cohen, these parts are not only symbols for the knight or accessories

subordinated to their human master.  Each of these pieces is involved in a circuit of

relation to other parts.  The horse is more than a tool.  Relational exchanges exist between

identities – between knights – but also between the human and the horse, and even

between the human and the bridle or the sword.

  To use Cohen's terms, knights' disguises are assemblages that exchange some

parts for others.  A disguise made up of different armor, horses, or other parts not only

changes his appearance but changes the knight himself, since it changes how the human

part of that assemblage relates to those other parts, and how those parts brought together

relate to other people.  In a chivalric system that measures value by mastery, one might

expect a knight who switches to a less familiar horse to be more vulnerable, more fallible,

and thus more prone to losing honor.  One might also expect that mastering a horse

makes it somehow more integral and vital to the identity of the person using it.

Successfully taking a new horse or other tool as a part of one's disguise and using it well

is thus its own form of mastery and a proof of his self-fashioning, as a disguised knight

proves that he might succeed at a disadvantage.  This account certainly fits romances like

the thirteenth-century poem *King Horn*, where the relationship between hero and horse is

a recurring focus of the story.  Horn is knighted on a white horse and refuses to marry the

lady Rymenhild until he proves himself in battle.  Horn then arms and mounts a second,

black horse that begins to "spring" or buck (597), which he soon uses to slay many Saracens in battle.[54] Versatility with other implements makes a successful romance knight. At the tournament of Lonezep in *Le Morte Darthur* a short scene depicts Tristram and other knights scrambling for the horses of felled knights (434.16ff). The inconvenience of riding an unfamiliar horse is never mentioned, even though at other moments in romance less valued knights have trouble riding unfamiliar horses. In book II of *The Faerie Queene*, Braggadocchio has some trouble controlling Guyon's stolen horse Brigadore, which the narration suggests is due to his poor training: "So to his steed [Braggadocchio] gott, and gan to ride, / As one vnfitt therefore, that all might see / He had not trayned bene in cheualree. / Which well that valiaunt courser did discerne" (II.iii.46.3-6). The horse as an animal has its own will to recognize and respond to the skill of the one riding him. The horse relates to Guyon, and Braggadocchio fails to impersonate him: in front of witnesses Guyon addresses Brigadore by name and calms him after Braggadocchio fails to do so (V.iii.34-35). Knights may successfully switch implements and thereby create disguises, but the horse is no passive agent. A horse may reject the impersonation that a knight like Braggadocchio seeks to establish.

Cohen's description of chivalric identity is useful to this project because of his reminder that identity is not a closed, singular, individual essence that merely moves between private and public recognition. Its parts and even its form change with use and modification. Further, there may be moments when it is important to describe the relationship between these implements and the knight, since there are odd moments in romances where the implements of knighthood are described with inordinate detail. In general, connecting Cohen's work to the other claims about disguise suggests that an

apparatus necessarily changes its wearer through use, and thus disguise is marked by the changes which occur in one's appearance as well as the tell-tale similarities in one's appearance that may enable a later identification.

This project on disguise in *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene* positions itself somewhere between Greenblatt and Cohen. The language of self-fashioning is so deeply embedded in discussions of disguise that it must be used. At the same time, this project seeks to examine forms of self-fashioning into the fifteenth century, and then extend to the late sixteenth century a form of disguise that can address forms of social exchange within *The Faerie Queene*. Meanwhile, Cohen encourages examining all the signs and implements of the disguise for how they form and edify one's identity. Close, contextual reading is necessary to understand what a disguise does to a character and to the community around that character.

I have spent some time writing about the scholarly context for disguise, and the way disguise intersects with examinations of the individual and the performative subject. Disguise has been a companion to this thread of discourse, one way that scholars address questions of identity and character. Now I will describe how literary criticism has defined disguise as a medieval and early modern practice. Three key points will emerge from this overview of previous work: disguise is frequently defined in performative terms; disguise forms a basis for social interaction; interpreting disguise means interpreting a performance that is never finished and always open to new meanings and interpretations.

**Disguise in Early Modern Drama and Political Writing**

The cornerstone of subsequent work on early modern disguise is the 1915

monograph *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama: A Study in Stage Tradition* by Victor

Oscar Freeburg. This book is a comprehensive overview of disguises in early modern

drama.[55] Freeburg starts with a general definition of dramatic disguise: "a change of

personal appearance which leads to mistaken identity."[56] He designates change and the

resulting confusion of identity as the two elements required for a successful disguise.

This formal definition leads him to exclude a series of examples including confusion but

no change of appearance (the twins in William Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors*, who

appear as themselves with no alteration to appearance), and change of appearance

without confusion of identity (the eponymous character in Ben Jonson's *Volpone*

appearing close to death thanks to make-up, when sickness is not for Freeburg an element

of identity). Subsequently he puts disguises into a number of thematic categories like

"The Boy Bride." Freeburg's definitions and categories, and especially the focus on a

change of appearance as a sign of disguise, would persist for decades: M. C. Bradbrook

reconsidered the examples of disguise that did not rely on appearance by citing and then

refuting Freeburg's own definition.[57]

At a couple of points Freeburg alludes to romances as possible sources of

dramatic disguise. Freeburg explains that disguise was extensive in Elizabethan drama

due to three factors. Besides the Italian drama and earlier English stage traditions, he

lists the "similar influence from ballads and other literature of British origin."[58] He does

not develop the relation fully. Its broadness suggests any number of possible influences

from "other" texts, but the ballad form focuses on both a viable ballad tradition and the

ballad-like romance texts that were in print circulation throughout the sixteenth century. Short-line and rhyme-heavy romances featuring disguises do have a connection to early modern British drama, as Helen Cooper uncovers in *The English Romance in Time*.[59] Disguise also has a British poetic and prose tradition, a set of practices and tendencies that constitute it. Indirectly, Freeburg admits the possibility that romance disguises come to influence early modern drama. Whether such influences between romance and drama do exist or not, romances constitute an independent genre with disguises that should be considered in that genre's terms.

Lloyd Davis, as mentioned already in the previous section on allegory, provides a more recent sustained interpretation of disguise in the early modern period, one that does not restrict itself to drama.[60] For Davis, disguise describes a form of characterization that is commonly employed in the early modern period. As was the case for Hanning and Greenblatt, inward cognizance and outward influence conflict with one another. Unlike Hanning's and Greenblatt's individual, Davis's figure-in-conflict is explicitly engaged in a process of allegorization resembling disguise. In this model of disguise, the inward-oriented "ideals of ethopoetic origins and goals" conflict with the outward-oriented "theories of social and individual interaction."[61] Whereas Freeburg defined disguise in the narrow terms of visual change accompanied by a shift in identity, for Davis conflicts between self and the outside world are so common that "there may never be a 'disguise-less' character; instead, it is the degree or intent of deception and the control over the effects of disguise that vary."[62] He poses an intriguing possibility: that all characters are in disguise. That does not fit the definition of disguise as concealment in this project, but it does illustrate connections between disguise and characterization. Depictions of

character always involve a form of presentation and a tension between how a character appears and what that character is, between matter and essence. Thus what people conventionally call disguise is only one specific and overt classification of a process that undergirds characterization itself. The broad definition allows Davis to talk about moments where authors and characters play with disguise-like themes without actually undertaking a disguise. He connects disguise to the phenomenon of *sprezzatura,* a courtly quality that involves presenting one's exceptional skills and achievements as natural gifts.[63]

Davis uses his definition to tackle a broad array of disguises, working his way through rhetorical texts, romances, and drama alike. The introduction of his chapter on sovereign personae moves quickly from the multiple images of Elizabeth in *The Faerie Queene* to Claudius's modes of kingship in *Hamlet* and to the *Basilikon Doron*'s two-fold anatomy of the king, suggesting that all of them distinguish layers of presentation in the rulers they describe.[64] His examples balance romance with other popular early modern modes, but in the examples covered the romance fades away. Instead, Davis primarily focuses on the philosophical tradition of disguise and its expressions in plays like William Shakespeare's *Richard II* and John Marston's *The Malcontent.* Certainly, Davis's definition can apply to romance disguises in a general way: any character can be defined as the description and performance of a particular set of traits that may shift according to external pressures on the character. Disguise is an extreme form of a process of characterization that is ubiquitous in the period. The present study focuses more on how disguise functions in romance texts. This study seeks to understand both what these texts call disguise and, based on those insights, what to make of other moments where

appearance differs from form.

Other writing on disguise has followed this pattern: define disguise in terms of drama and focus primarily on dramatic examples to discuss early modern identity. Peter Hyland's 2011 book *Disguise on the Early Modern English Stage* fits this mold, his chapters moving from a general overview of disguise and how it was staged to the aesthetics of disguise and finally to the cultural implications of disguise.[65] Hyland's work asks not only about the relation of characters to other characters but also about the audience as a participant in identity-formation. His study is a response to Greenblatt's work on self-fashioning, noting that after Greenblatt's focus on autobiographical writing, hardly anyone has looked at how disguise registers the anxieties of the early modern self.[66] As regards the definitions of disguise by Freeburg, Davis, and others, Hyland sees himself reclaiming a definition of disguise that pertains primarily to drama, in contrast to the work by Davis which makes more overtures to other modes and genres. For Hyland, the mechanics of disguise lend themselves to analyzing recent questions about selfhood and performativity.

Summarily, critics who study disguise in terms of dramatic performance analyze the peculiar intersection of stage history, the mechanics of performance, the plays' texts, and their cultural contexts. In turn, these authors develop definitions suitable for drama and rhetoric, emphasizing appearances, the confusion of witnesses, and the sustaining of multiple roles by one character. However, these terms may not fit as well when we consider genres where the text only describes performances, where the main fields of spectacle are left to the imagination. There may be an audience of readers who read the text themselves or hear it read aloud. The main mode of disguise in romances is textual,

the disguises made clear by narratorial indication or by the way other characters respond to them.

For now, I will turn back to the concept of self-fashioning as critics use it to grasp what it means to refashion oneself through visible adjustments like those offered by disguise. To the extent that disguise operates as a kind of self-fashioning, it allows people to act outside a strict subject role. Scholars following Greenblatt have disagreed on what self-fashioning offers. Some argue like Susan Crane, emphasizing the opening of a space of interiority in which people can act. For instance, Sarah Spence describes self-fashioning in the twelfth century as a process that provides a "space of agency […] that will be fashioned further down the road," that is, in subsequent moment in an individual's writing.[67] Another thread focuses on the destructive potential latent in self-fashioning, the tendency for author-characters to fragment or break under mental duress as they shape their woe in writing. Cynthia Marshall calls this process self-shattering, the psychological undertow against the drive of self-fashioning.[68] Her strongest examples are poets writing in a Petrarchan tradition, where their repeated subjections to an absent and unreachable addressee are only poorly consoled by authorship. Writing makes speakers visible but most often they fail to obtain what they desire. These sonnet sequences result in vibrant individual personae, even though conventionally they work through denying the author in relation to an absent addressee. Thus Marshall adopts an alternative model for understanding what would otherwise only be known as failures of self-fashioning.

Between these threads, a common formula represents what self-fashioning does: a person does something that is both immediately beneficial and offers the possibility of distinguishing himself from authority. Such fashioning enjoys limited success despite the

flaws with the attempt at performance. This formula shows that most studies on self-fashioning hold an implicit model where a particular technique addresses a problem resulting from one's identity position; fashioning helps people confront those limits. For example, Patricia Pender's book *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty* makes rhetorical moves common to the study of self-fashioning: women authors write in a mode of modesty, proving that they pose no threat to other people while demonstrating rhetorical mastery and opening up a space for further writing.[69] The women enjoy some success as authors despite their literary subjections.

Disguise fits the same formula as self-fashioning, though it is not often studied on its own. Instead, scholarship on self-fashioning understates the role that disguise plays in forming identities. Kathryn Schwarz in her book *Tough Love* studies scenes of self-fashioning and their articulations of female masculinity.[70] Schwarz is keenly interested in forms of textual performance, and she sometimes includes disguises among her examples. Schwarz alludes to disguise as a spectacle, studying for instance how both as male and female Britomart seems disguised.[71] That said, disguises are not just superficial guises. These spectacles are all about substance. The scholarship on disguise has often focused on distinctions between the natural and unnatural, premised not on an individual who distinguishes himself but a subject who becomes more worthy as a subject. In a recent article Helen Fulton sums up the tendency to view medieval disguises as successes only when they make knights look better:

> The function of the motif of disguise in medieval literature is to affirm the naturalness of the social identity beneath the outward appearance. Whether dressed in his own armour or someone else's, Lancelot always fights like the noble knight he truly is. Though dressed in poor clothing, Enid's innate nobility is meant to shine forth regardless. But the motif of disguise is itself a site of ideological tension, because the disguise sometimes works: nobility is not always

self-evidently natural but is, after all, signified by outward appearance. Knights without their special uniform of armor or without a horse suffer an immediate and humiliating loss of status, like Lancelot as the Knight of the Cart, or Sir Launfal sacked from Arthur's payroll and scorned by the mayor. [...] Events like this reveal the ideological strain of assuming that status is a natural quality; if it were so, why should Lancelot and Launfal suffer a loss of status when the outward trappings of knighthood are removed, and why are Guillaume and his men, or Enid herself, not recognized at once as the nobles that they are?[72]

Note the contrasts in the explanation between truth and untruth: Lancelot fights as "he truly is," and Enid's nobility is "innate," but nonetheless nobility relies on its outward appearance, which sometimes fails when the guise of knightliness is absent. For Fulton, once something presumed to be innate enters the realm of signification, the sign need not agree with the person. Social judgment agrees with what is visible, but even in medieval narratives what one sees may differ from what is natural.

Certainly signifying naturalness is a key preoccupation of aristocracy. Still, Fulton does not say much about the social exchange that results from presenting oneself as another figure. The outward appearance and the natural form are not the only terms of discussion. There is also the knight himself, the assemblage of body, equipage, and public identity who is identical to neither the signs of his status nor the natural role he is held to occupy. Arthur being crowned king in *Le Morte Darthur* shows how implements of kinghood reveal who he is. Medieval social logic holds that Arthur is not king because he drew the sword from the stone, but Arthur drew the sword from the stone because he was king. In these terms, status (being the king) determines the sign of status (drawing the sword). The performance is demonstrative, not transformative. Still, there are three terms: the sword, the king, and Arthur. If we attend to the third figure in this adage, Arthur, we can also address a tension closer to the heart of being and social performance: the agency that emerges from the space between sign and act.

**Arthur Becomes King: Revelation and Performance**

This section will transition from considering interiority and social performance to considering a specific example of character-making through fashioning and disguise. When Arthur discovers that he is the true king, he drops a concealment that he did not intend. While not strictly a disguise, the revelation shows the need of repeated public performances to recognize who someone is. In *Le Morte Darthur*, Arthur did not intend to prove his kingship when he drew the sword from the stone. He intended only to fetch a sword for his foster brother Kay. Drawing the sword was an accident. When Arthur saw the sword he "saide to hymself, ' I will ryde to the chircheyard and take the swerd with me that stycketh in the stone, for my broder Sir Kay shal not be without a swerd this day' " (9.4-6).[73] The moment is a rare statement of intention. Characters' thoughts are only made visible in *Le Morte Darthur* by characters talking to themselves. Arthur's declaration shows that he is drawing the sword not because he is king, or because he thinks he is king, but because he wants his brother to have a sword.

Despite Arthur's lack of intention, drawing the sword from the stone still proves Arthur's kingship through a process of repeated performance. Initially, the space of agency opened up by the incompatibility between Arthur's status as foster son and his identity as king is also opened by the space between Arthur's stated understanding of drawing the sword and the result. Arthur is estranged from the status that he had previously known as a foster boy, a status that until that moment had been real for him. From the perspective of those who respect the ritual of the sword, Arthur is revealed, becoming the king that his lineage entitles him to be. Then Arthur is made to draw the

sword at Candlemas, Easter, and Pentecost.  Each performance is intended to counter a still-skeptical nobility who must come and witness the feat for themselves.  After the feast of Pentecost Arthur is crowned.

While the sword episode celebrates the assumption that nobility proves itself through action, it also illustrates how contingent such proofs can be.  Throughout the next book doubts about Arthur's legitimacy and authority remain.  Arthur's authority is measured by performances and statements that close off neither doubt nor dissent for some of his peers.  Merlin spells out the legitimacy of Arthur's status through reference to his conception and birth: he was conceived after the Duke of Tintagel died and born after Uther's marriage to Igraine.[74] Despite the explanation, Lot of Orkeney and several other kings rebel against Arthur's newly-minted authority, initiating a conflict that takes up the next book of narrative.  Arthur's test and Merlin's word have the power to hold only those already willing to accept the claims of aristocracy that are behind them.

To return to Fulton, the reception of Arthur drawing the sword from the stone proves her point that disguises strain the plausibility that nobility is readily visible.  A lot of work goes into making sure that Arthur's kingship is plausible to the nobility and to the readers.  The episode also demonstrates that the refashioning of the self may occur without any intent to create an alternative persona.  In romances, sometimes the audience's own misperception matters more to creating a new persona than someone's intent to do so.[75] When Lancelot boards the cart in Chrétien de Troyes's *The Knight in the Cart* he does not mean to be mistaken for a prisoner; when Arthur draws the sword in Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* he does not mean to be a king.  They disrupt preconceived notions of knight or king: we might not know him by seeing him.  Nor does

he necessarily know himself.  Furthermore, the character undergoing the act may be identical to neither his former nor his subsequent status.  Even though the glimpse into Arthur's own agency is momentary compared to all of the actions around him, that space of agency shows that Arthur makes his own decisions and others look on, interpret, and respond.  Both he and his interlocutors are engaged in the process of making a king out of various signs and implements.

**How the Redcrosse Knight Becomes a Knight in *The Faerie Queene***

  *Le Morte Darthur* begins by taking Arthur through a series of performances of drawing the sword, transforming the unknown boy into the king.  *The Faerie Queene's* first canto transforms an unknown figure into a knight through visual description and performance.  In this case, rather than becoming recognized by a series of onlookers, there is no immediate audience for the Redcrosse Knight except the reader.

  Analyses of disguise rely on the idea that something changes in between the initial crafting of another persona and the moment of revelation.  Crane calls this the risk of alienation from one's public role, Dickson the complete separation of the self from his position in society.  However it is conceived, the interpretive term *disguise* posits a form of character that can no longer be judged merely based on what it shows.  Disguise adds a second or third persona, a gap between the inner and outer as well as a gap between past and present comportment.  As an example, I turn to the first moments of the first book of *The Faerie Queene*.  The Redcrosse Knight with his borrowed armor shifts from whatever persona he had formerly possessed.  At the same time, his armor conceals a body that encloses a heart, suggesting the possibility of a self that is removed from being

exterior.  In this way, disguise allows romances to imply multiple layers of personae in both metaphorical and material form.

Furthermore, these layers of personae suggest several possible interpretations. Rather than acceding to the expectations of any one central audience, they feature material that appeals to several groups and courts, such that over time he can fashion himself in the understanding of characters like Archimago, Una, Duessa, the narrator, and others, as well as to the many situations that he encounters.  The cross on the armor signals both an immediate commitment to Christianity and the comparison to St.  George. However, the concealed persona beneath the armor raises the unanswerable question of how the Redcrosse Knight might read his own armor.  The disguise may contribute to the purpose that the narrator ascribes to him after his description, "And euer as he rode his hart did earne, / To proue his puissance in battell braue / Vpon his foe, and his new force to learne; / Vpon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne" (I.i.3.6-9).  Even if the Redcrosse Knight can learn "his new force" on another because he wears a disguise, the appearance in another's armor does not contribute to proving himself.  Nor does it seem to give a particular aid to learning.  The disguise is a beginning point and not self-contained proof of worth.

Nonetheless, the Redcrosse Knight and his disguise respond to the history of his genre.  Andrew King compares the episode to similar episodes of knights proving themselves in Middle English romances like *Sir Bevis of Hamtoun*, where initially being unknown by one's previous status gave knights a clean slate for proving their worth.[76] The previous privileges of powerful friends would not guarantee a knight's success, and meanwhile the disguise would demonstrate both his accomplishments and his claims of

nobility.  In other words, the disguise establishes the knight.  Similarly, Paul Rovang connects the episode to Sir Gareth in *Le Morte Darthur*.[77]  Both are young knights who use borrowed armor to shape how they are perceived as they learn how to be knights.

The Redcrosse Knight lacks the institutional connections that we might expect from other Arthurian narratives.  Gareth orbits and returns to the court of King Arthur.  However, the Redcrosse Knight has no visible home, and the court of Gloriana is never visited.  So his armor is accessible to the interpretations of many communities without being from any one community.  This sense of dispersed society and geography is common in *The Faerie Queene*.  Patricia Parker studies this feature through the narrative principle of pendant narrative, or a narrative that frequently ingresses and digresses, wandering forward while deferring endings.  For her, romances form a "dilated or suspended threshold" that allows Spenser to address difficulties of reading.[78]  For the purposes of this project, disguise often coincides with moments of narrative digression.  Such a plot requires either a sudden discovery of the disguise or a gradual recognition of the qualities of the knight wearing it.  Especially in *The Faerie Queene*, disguises are not made and then perfectly interpreted in any single moment.[79]  Instead, characters who use disguise like the Redcrosse Knight can be understood whenever the text digresses to them. Through much of Book 1 the narrative digresses back and forth between the Redcrosse Knight and Una. Each digression from the Redcrosse Knight provides an episode like that in canto iii, where the Redcrosse Knight appears as one of Archimago's disguises. Each return to the Redcrosse Knight offers another moment to study how his incognito character responds to a situation. Thus while *The Faerie Queene* has a more dispersed landscape, forms of chivalry and romance still structure the Redcrosse Knight's

key appearances.

When he first appears in *The Faerie Queene*, he brings the terms of characterization and disguise that will persist throughout the poem.  Unidentified and in borrowed armor, he is fashioned as a character who will gradually become better understood as the poem proceeds:

> A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
> Y cladd in mightie armes and siluer shielde,
> Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
> The cruell markes of many a bloudy fielde;
> Yet armes till that time did he neuer wield:
> His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
> As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
> Full iolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
> As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.  (I.i.1)[80]

The first stanza of the first canto of *The Faerie Queene* begins with an incognito knight. Who is he? Neither the proem nor the other preceding materials give him a name. Throughout the first stanza he is referred to as a gentle or fair knight.  The signs or emblems on his armor might be able to identify him: the next stanza describes the bloody crosses on his chest and shield.  However, these signs may not be reliable because the armor has already been used before.  It is unclear whose armor it was before.[81] The armor has old dints and cruel marks, but the knight has never wielded arms before.  He is new and unknown.  He does not have a name or he has yet to earn it.

For most of the books, this knight's name remains an epithet that recalls the borrowed armor.  He is first called the *Redcrosse Knight* in the second canto, perhaps to distinguish him from the other knights who begin to appear.  A knight with a red cross journeys to defeat a dragon; while this story recalls St. George, the epithet "St. George" is first used to refer to a simulacrum of the knight employed by Archimago, who sought to

deceive Una (I.2.11.9). It is used only once more, in canto x as part of a prophecy at the House of Holiness applied to the Redcrosse Knight (I.x.61.8-9). Even for the true St. George, the knight is primarily known through his appearance. The knight borrows the armor, and Archimago borrows the appearance; in both cases the person of St. George is mostly put on, adopted, and otherwise assumed.

Why does the narrative do so much to distinguish between the gentle knight, his appearance as the Redcrosse Knight, and the figure of St. George? While the excerpt above is from the first canto of the first book, the proem preceding the canto also uses epithets and garb to define the creative framework of the long poem. The first two lines start, "Lo I the man, whose Muse whylome did maske, / As time her taught, in lowly Shephards weeds, / Am now enforst a farre vnfitter taske, / For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds" (I.proem.1.1-4). The moment emulates the *rota Virgilii*, or the shape of Virgil's career as a poet who moves from Georgics and pastoral ("Lowly Shephards weeds; "mine Oaten reeds") to war and epic ("farre vnfitter taske; "trumpets sterne").[82] It transforms the genres of poetry into the garment and prop that "mask" the poet. The rest of the proem masks the material in a new form, as the next lines echo both the more-quoted beginning of Virgil (*arma virumque cano*) and Ludovico Ariosto's own emulation of those lines in the early sixteenth century Italian romance *Orlando Furioso*: "Le donne, i cavallier, l'arme, gli amori, / Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto" [Of women, of knights, of arms, of loves, of courtesy, of daring deeds I sing] (1.1.1-2); "and sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds" (1.proem.5).[83] Through the alteration of dress and sign, through the *blazon* and its artful potential, and through the allusions to epic and romance, the proem describes *The Faerie Queene* as fabric and instrument employed by

the poet for the purpose of self-creation. The poem disguises itself into being.

The other displacements of names behind allusions and other relations should not be surprising. Personae are made through descriptions layered with common allusory language. The second stanza addresses the "holy virgin chiefe of nine," a reference to one of the Muses, though it is unclear whether it refers to Clio the muse of history, Calliope the muse of epic poetry, or a wilful conflation of the two. The third stanza begins by invoking "thou most dreaded impe of highest *Iove*, / Faire *Venus* sonne," a phrase that at first invokes either Vulcan or Cupid before limiting the scope to Cupid through reference to "thy cruell dart" that kindles fire in knights' hearts. The fourth stanza refers to "O Goddesse heauenly bright, / Mirrour of grace and Maiestie diuine, / Great Ladie of the greatest Isle," gesturing towards Elizabeth through epithet and common motifs: the divine, bright, heavenly, great lady who rules the isle of central concern to this poem. Even Arthur is referred to as a "most noble Briton Prince," a reference that could refer to several people besides Arthur, especially since Arthur would have most often been depicted as king and not prince. These several maskings of inspiration, patronage, and subject matter provide cues for the allusive disguises and indirect confirmation of identity. The proem invites a form of interpretation that focuses on the rhetorical and descriptive trappings of its personae. This is not a poem of rote allegory which one unlocks by understanding what Holiness or Chastity does. It requires and develops an eye for disguise, and the poem thrives in the possibilities it invites and forecloses.

Spenser overtly invokes a form of interpretation that has been latent in English literature for at least a couple of centuries. Understanding personae, characters, the status

of narrative voice – these are conventional questions invited in earlier English literature. "*What man artow*?" Chaucer's host asks the narrator in *The Canterbury Tales*, a question that carefully measures the identity and qualifications of its addressee. *"Who is this?"* is a habitual question for readers seeking to connect characters with a larger understanding of the narrative. Conventionally, answering this question requires acknowledging the metaleptic possibilities of a text, writing, and *poeisis*. This metaleptic move acts through making what seems familiar unfamiliar, questioning the stability of narration that had previously been assumed. Similarly, disguises in romance remove a character from previously known contexts, making a previously known character into an unknown one. They proliferate the possibilities that form through interpretation, developing ambiguous signs that invite inquiry.

In doubting previously understood forms of description, disguises also invite reexamining how interpretation works, or how one arrives at answers about a given persona. Who is the knight who rides with borrowed armor? Does one understand the wearing of old arms as support for or disavowal of the cross that it bears? Is wearing bloody armor a reclamation or a conquering of the cross? Is the anger of his horse a sign of the knight's restrained robustness or an inexperience which lets the horse disdain the knight's tool for controlling it? These questions can only be answered by interpreting and reading onward, and even then the answers may be incomplete. By not identifying who this knight is, the first stanzas examine chivalry and interpretation without settling comfortably into an ideal or a name. Even when he is identified as St. George in cantos iii and x, he continues to be referred to as the Redcrosse Knight in succeeding appearances. The narrative continues as if the name does not answer who he is in a final,

narrative-ending sense.

Unindentified characters like the Redcrosse Knight are fairly common in romances. Romances do not necessarily identify their character with one persona and name that recurs throughout the narrative. Knights can go thousands of lines under a pseudonym before being identified, as Lancelot goes unnamed in Chrétien de Troyes's *Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart* (c. 1177) for over three thousand lines.[84] Even when characters are named immediately and frequently, there is no explicit need to establish continuity of action as backed by a psychologically comprehensive understanding of the character. Kay can be Arthur's competent steward who fights well in battle against Rome, only to be a rude blunderer in "The Tale of Sir Gareth."[85] Gawain can be at points wise and sagacious only to behead a lady who interposed between him and a knight he was about to kill.[86] Nor does a recurring or interwoven thread need any introduction: Guyon, the hero of book II of *The Faerie Queene*, can return after an absence of over two books to demand his horse from Braggadocchio in book V canto iii.

These disjunctions are a part of how romance works. For critics, *entrelacement* or interlacing connects moments through analogy or allusion rather than common plot and themes. It establishes connections in the absence of strict narrative consistency. These disguises, made by obscuring one's name and emphasizing descriptions and possible signs of identity, encourage one to connect moments while resisting any final, unitary answer. In this way, disguise is a necessary form for characterization in many romances, expressing forms of identity and entering them into possible debates.

**Disguise and Behaving Well: Ethics and Readership**

Disguise is a largely visual form of presentation and comportment. With Arthur and the Redcrosse Knight, while their actions are by no means perfect, their performances offer reflection on ethical behavior. In addition to allowing one to reflect on how a character is created and on how knighthood and kinghood are constituted, disguise also allows one to understand how a text can instruct without collapsing fiction to instruction. Summarily, the disguise allows images to be understood without equating their content to those wearing them. This makes disguises both exculpatory, excusing some excesses in visual description, and potentially problematic, challenging naïve models of instruction where someone is assumed to be equivalent to one's outer appearance.

Spenser connects the interpretation of visual images with ethical behavior. For instance, in *Image Ethics in Shakespeare and Spenser*, James A. Knapp focuses on images that prove particularly difficult to distill into moral precepts.[87] Rather than conveying tidy moral lessons, complex images require of characters what Spenser calls "vertuous and gentle discipline," which Knapp recasts as "ethical comportment," a term that emphasizes both an individual's inclination and how he presents himself.[88] Generally, Spenser shows an ethics-in-action that Jonathan Goldberg in *The Seeds of Things* defines as Spenserian *askesis,* which can be literally translated as "exercise" or "training."[89] Goldberg analyzes the targets of instruction identified in Spenser's letter: when the intent of the book is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person," it may fashion both the character being written and the reader. This mirroring is shown with the verb *fashion,* as it can denote either the poetic creation of characters or the fashioning a reader

might undergo by reading these characters.  The gentlemen could be characters or readers.  Good ethical practice then requires good reading to ensure that one can understand what is being mirrored.  Complete understanding is a quixotic task, but the effort is still worthwhile.

The "Letter to Ralegh" is a letter appended towards the end of the 1590 Ponsonby edition of the *Faerie Queene*, the version that ends after three books.[90] After the end of book III and prior to the edition's commendatory verses, the letter interprets the purpose and meaning of the poem in its three quarto-sized leaves, marked in the edition as 591 through 595.  The top of page 591 gives a centered title describing its purpose: "A Letter of the Authors expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke: which for that it giueth great light to the Reader, for the better understanding is hereunto annexed." The address to Ralegh follows in gilded epistolary form: "To the Right noble, and Valorous, Sir Walter Raleigh knight, Lo.  Wardein of the Stanneryes, and her Maiesties liefetenaunt of the County of Cornewayll." One woodcut initial and five pages of virtually solid text follow.  As a guide to the reader and as a commendation to Ralegh, it ornaments the work and fashions the text that precedes it.

Indeed, Spenser's "Letter to Ralegh" urges an approach to ethics that can cloud and show truth in examples, rather than resorting to more direct forms of instruction.  He first contrasts plain instruction with cloudy allegory: "To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather haue good discipline deliuered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they vse, then thus clowdily enwrapped in Allegorical deuises" (16).  In repeating how his approach will seem to his critics, Spenser covers it up in its own disguise, wrapping his material in an ephemeral veil that remains difficult to

penetrate. A poem is no list of precepts. He proceeds to emphasize practical shows and examples over defining what is best in a set of rules:

> But such [critics], me seeme, should be satisfide with the vse of these dayes seeing all things *accounted by their showes*, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune sence. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one in the exquisite depth of his iudgement, *formed* a Commune welth such as it should be, but the other in the person of Cyrus and the Persians *fashioned* a gouernement such as might best be: So much more profitable and gratious is *doctrine by ensample*, then by rule. (16, emphasis mine).

For Spenser, it is not that Xenophon makes things up and that Plato tells the truth without recourse to appearance. Both Xenophon and Plato create and make things up, but they do it in significantly different ways, as evident in the similar verb choices *formed* and *fashioned* and in the distinct phrases *should be* and *might best be*. Because Xenophon forms governments that might possibly exist, that appearance is more worthy than Plato's, which are appearances that would never fit in the world. If everyone writing about ethics fashions or forms their examples, then the mere recourse to fashioning a poem does not make Spenser radical.[91] Spenser differs because he defends his practice explicitly as a series of *showes*, visual spectacles or performances that lead by example and not rule.

Furthermore, disguise accesses the distinction between character and person. In discussing how *Le Morte Darthur* or *The Faerie Queene* are interpreted, it is easy to miss the phenomenon of the characters themselves. It is too much to presume that they function like contemporary historical individuals or like characters in novels. They are not anti-novel but *a-novel*, less concerned with developing psychological complexity. Still, disguise opens up a space of alienation and interiority that cannot be easily dismissed. The space offers resistance to authorities – a knight who because of his

disguise can choose for himself which lord to follow – but it also cannot easily be filled by a critic's presumptions.  Romance characters resist reading and are not easily folded into a model of reading that would presume to label the character's disposition in a system either moral or social.  With disguise, we can examine how readers may begin to bridge that gap.

To compare *The Faerie Queene's* paratextual frame to *Le Morte Darthur's*, Caxton's preface to his 1485 edition of *Le Morte Darthur* also directs itself primarily at instructing the gentlemen of the time.  In Caxton's version, readers should find instruction in knights' virtuous deeds:

> And I accordyng to my copye haue doon sette it in enprynte / to the entente that noble men may see and lerne the noble actes of chyualrye / the jentyl and vertuous dedes that somme knyghtes vsed in tho dayes / by whyche they came to honour / and how they that were vycious were punysshed and ofte put to shame and rebuke.[92] (3v)

For Caxton, reading *Le Morte Darthur* allows a noble audience to learn what distinguishes acts in the eyes of a judging court.  Good deeds allowed knights to *come to honor*, so that they attained worship (*worth-ship*) in the court through self-defining conduct.  Caxton already used the phrase in the prologue to a translation of Cato a year before, writing: "And to thende that many myght *come to honoure and worshyppe* / I entende to translate this sayd book of cathon" (2r).[93] Caxton claims that reading good materials results in people becoming morally and socially acceptable. Good material can include Cato or Arthur.

The court becomes a pervasive and diffuse entity in Caxton's writing, an assessor of honor or dishonor which is described in the passive voice ("were punished and […] put to shame").  It is unnecessary to specify who punishes the vicious and who is put to

shame. Caxton's answer is the very audience that he has been addressing, the gentlemen who requested that a book about the deeds of Arthur and his knights be printed in the first place. These gentlemen may be the new men who have ascended the social ladder in the last century, or they may be well-established aristocrats. In transitioning from the "many noble and diverse gentlemen" who argue for the book's printing to the "noble lords and ladies" who will be instructed by its example, Caxton blends the appraisers of Arthur with those instructed by him. Patrons become readers. In seeing and learning, the audience may both learn how to judge and learn how to act under that judgment.

Spenser is overt and deliberate about the function of the mirror in his letter to Ralegh. On the other hand, he does not distinguish between the systems of judgment that his readers may exercise. There is no calculus for weighing the judgment of the court (which is ever-present in Spenser's life) alongside all of the concerns such judgment may entail. His virtues oscillate between a variety of influences. The variety and breadth of Spenser's influences suggests that he is writing about forms of emulation and reading that go beyond the late sixteenth-century Elizabethan court. For Caxton repositioning Malory, if he attempts like Spenser to appeal to a form of chivalry beyond the English nobles he is addressing, the list of qualities that he produces moves between general and specific and between kinds of acts: "For herein may be seen noble chyualrye / Curtosye / Humanyte frendlynesse / hardynesse / loue / frendshyp / Cowardyse / Mur|dre / hate / vertue / and synne" (3v) [For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanly friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin.] Eleven entries coexist without a clear sense of balance. Compared to Spenser's claimed numerical balance of twelve private virtues and twelve public ones, this reads more like

*The Faerie Queene* we actually get: two of its books focus on courtesy (book VI) and friendship (book IV), and examples of other elements like chivalry and love appear throughout. Caxton does not seem to be attempting a systematic definition of private virtues, but rather like light through a prism, he captures many of the elements that will come through Malory's as well as Spenser's writing.

Again like Spenser after him, Caxton already reinforces the way that his romance will lead to the proper exercise of virtue, by which good reading leads to good ethical practice. Towards the end of his preface, Caxton urges:

> Doo after the good and leue the euyl / and it shal brynge you to good fame and renom|mee / And for to passe the tyme thys boook shal be plesaunte to rede in / but for to gyue fayth and byleue that al is trewe that is conteyned herin / ye be at your lyberte / but al is wry|ton for our doctryne / and for to beware that we falle not to vyce no synne / but texcersyse and folowe vertu / by whyche we may come and atteyne to good fame and renomme in thys lyf (4r).
> [Do after the good and leave the evil and it shall bring you to good fame and renown. And to pass the time this book shall be pleasant to read in. Thus to give faith and believe that all is true that is contained herein, you are at your liberty, but all is written for our doctrine and to beware that we do not fall to vice or sin, but to exercise and follow virtue, by which we may come and attain good fame and renown in this life.]

Modeled here is a form of allegorical reading practice much older than Malory. "Al is wryton for our doctryne" paraphrases Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were *written for our learning*, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."[94] Geoffrey Chaucer also quotes Romans 15:4 in "The Nun's Priest's Tale," clarifying that the animal fable should be understood by its moral: "For Seint Paul seith that all that writen is, / To our doctrine it is ywrite, ywis; / Takyth the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille" (VII.3441-3443).[95] Similarly, his "Retraction" in the tenth fragment of *The Canterbury Tales* also cites the lines to appeal to the moral intent of his writing: "For oure book seith, 'Al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine,' and that is

myn entente" (X.1082). Both of Chaucer's statements balance the folly and ribaldry of the tales with an appeal to biblical morality.

For Caxton the stakes are more direct. A reader should undertstand the parts that are "plesaunte to rede" as a guide to the truth. Caxton repeatedly pairs two modes of practice, subordinating the risks of romance to the goals of practicing virtue: while readers are "at your lyberte," even so "al is wryton for our doctrine"; they should seek not to fall "to vyce no synne" but instead "texcersyse and folowe vertu." The goal of proper behavior is stated doubly at the beginning and the end of this list of paired approaches: "good fame and renomme," or reputation and a name. Good and evil, pleasure and truth, liberty and doctrine, falling to sin and exercising virtue: the first and last pair function as absolutes, whereas the second and the third pair seem to be complements. According to the passage, one can experience pleasure through the act of reading while simultaneously finding truth. Caxton's letter does not explicitly invite disguise as a mode of instruction, but it implicitly sets the terms of exercise and performance that allow disguise to function as a mode.

Insofar as both *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene* are described as showing a moral version of hypothetical gentlemanly behavior, both accommodate disguise as a mode capable of producing that effect. Caxton situates this modeling through the community, appealing to forms of fame and renown. Spenser also situates his writing more specifically in what poetry can do, fashioning noble gentlemen through disguises that show both what chivalry can be and how its interpretation may fail. In the next chapter I will show how tournaments provide an opportunity for characters to disguise themselves and attain renown.

Chapter Two

The Tournament Disguise in *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*

The last chapter established disguise as a technique for fashioning personae that distinguishes characters from their prior identity. The technique emerges in romances from the twelfth to the sixteenth century as a mode of characterization that distinguishes characters from their ordinary subject roles. Because these disguises rely on representing the class and gender of the knight, they both establish and examine ideas of the chivalric. Interpreters, whether readers or onlookers, regarded these performances with the kind of double-sight associated with sophisticated allegories. Malory and Spenser anticipate the slippages of interpretation and tie them to central problems with late medieval chivalry and allegory, such as how to tell friend from foe and how to evaluate one's perceptions. As shown at the end of the last chapter, textual companions – Caxton's Preface to *Le Morte Darthur* and the "Letter to Ralegh" appended to the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene* – suggest that these texts fashion readers while entertaining them, just as disguises early in the texts set out the terms by which their initiating characters (Arthur, the Redcrosse Knight) may be understood.

In this chapter, I approach one of romance's predominant sites of disguise: the tournament. The tournament is a site for testing the worth of knights against one another in combat. Throughout the medieval period, it provides opportunities for knights to distinguish themselves through ostentatious disguises, forming for others' eyes the qualities of chivalry most important to onlookers. First, I provide a general explanation of tournaments. Then I will analyze tournament disguises in both works, focusing first on

the tournament at Lonezep in *Le Morte Darthur's* "Tale of Sir Tristram" and next on the tournament for Florimell's girdle in book IV of *The Faerie Queene.* Overall, I claim that tournament disguises have the potential to fashion both individual characters and the affinities between key knights. Disguise fosters a nascent interiority by withholding motives from those looking on. Then it produces doubles, or pairs of people who strongly resemble one another: Tristram and Palomides as well as Britomart and Artegall. As we shall see, the less successful partners (Palomides, Artegall) fight to distinguish themselves around the tournament space.

Especially in *Le Morte Darthur,* characters use tournament disguises to interact with the communities around them. In this chapter, a chivalric community refers to knights who gather under common allegiance or purpose. These communities can be large and political, like the Arthurian community composed of those knights who serve Arthur. They can also pertain to groups centered on people like King Mark of Cornwall or King Marhalt of Ireland. More loosely, a knight with his friends can also be called a community when he and his friends serve a purpose that is not determined exclusively by their larger community. The changeable scale of these communities means that they may overlap: Tristram is a knight to King Mark and a knight of the Round Table, and in individual episodes he works closely with smaller communities of friends. Disguise provides one way for knights to move between several different communities. They can earn renown and build friendships without being alienated from any one community.

This chapter focuses in particular on the friendships and bonds developed by dsguises. Despite the fact that disguises appear in over twenty-five tournaments through *Le Morte Darthur*, most treatments of tournaments only give cursory attention to

disguise. Tornament disguise is analyzed in the readings of the Gareth episode in Dorsey Armstrong's *Gender and the Chivalric Community in Malory's* Morte d'Arthur as one of several elements that establish Gareth's chivalric qualities and allow him to fight knights he would otherwise be unable to. For Armstrong community refers mainly to the larger Arthurian community; smaller groups are less important. Disguise is also mentioned in Kenneth Hodges's *Forging Chivalric Community in Malory's* Le Morte Darthur, but not at length; disguise tends to offer escape from the court (i.e. 139, where Lancelot leaves Guinevere and enters disguise in service of Elaine and Bernard of Ascolat).[96] For Hodges, community is roughly as I have defined it: a group of knights who serve a common purpose. For these scholars, disguise is a distancing mechanism that allows knights to act independently of a single binding allegiance.[97] In this chapter I suggest that disguises allow characters to cross the boundaries between communities, so that characters form new bonds while remaining a part of the larger Arthurian community.

Even less has been said about tournament disguises in *The Faerie Queene*, perhaps because there is only one major tournament where disguise plays a role, the tournament for Florimell's girdle in the middle of Book IV. Rather than having distinct larger communities, that tournament primarily uses disguise to unite and distinguish pairs of characters. Triamond and Cambell double themselves so well because they are friends who look out for one another. Wearing one another's armor, they put their affinity for one another above the conventional rewards of the tournament. Meanwhile, Britomart and Artegall each appear as close doubles; as stranger knights and outsiders who disrupt the last day of the tournament, Britomart and Arthegall where disguises that bring them into close conflict. Undoing their disguises brings them closer together.

If a knight is able to develop some form of self-determination or even interiority by withdrawing from the public sphere, and if the disguise both creates and redistributes affinities and conflicts between knights, then the tournament disguise fashions a form of intimacy that shapes not just the individual but relationships between characters. In the example of Britomart and Artegall, disguises intensify the bonds between them.

**A Tournament History of Disguise**

The tournament first developed as a tool for mustering and training a martial aristocracy, which over time shifted into a space for displaying worth to those in power. These moments of display are transformed in practice and in romance into opportunities for disguise.  Most generally, the tournament is a form of chivalric sport where participants use arms on horseback against other participants.[98]

It develops in Western Europe in the eleventh and twelfth century as a military exercise wherein groups of knights seek to overcome one another in combat.  Most often the engagements simulate confrontations at war, with rules and equipment designed for the event.  Early romances preserve the military applications of the tournament.  For instance, Marie de France's twelfth-century romance *Guigemar* features a lord, Meriaduc, who calls a tournament in terms that closely resemble mustering an army:

> *Issi remist bien lungement*
> *De ci que a un turneieme*
> *Que meriadus afia*
> *Cuntre celui que il guerreia.*
> *Chevalers manda e retient;*
> *Bien seit que guigemar i vient.*  (743-748)
>
> [This persisted for a long time
> Until there was a tournament
> Which Meriaduc affirmed

> In preparation for those with whom he waged war.
> Knights kept his command;
> He well knew that Guigemar would come.][99]

The tournament is not defined as a spectacle in itself, but as a field *cuntre celui que il guerreia,* against those with whom he wages war. Meriaduc calls the tournament not in order to wage war but to gather all of his vassals together. Meriaduc suspects that one of his vassals may be the lover of his intended lady, as she wears a girdle that he cannot untie. He is right; Guigemar meets the muster with a retinue of a hundred armed soldiers. A tournament prior to war serves as Meriaduc's excuse for trying to recognize his lady's love. When Guigemar appears with a knotted shirt that can be untied only by his lady love, Meriaduc makes the connection between her girdle and Guigemar's shirt. The tournament becomes a space where love can be tested and revealed through visual tokens.

Other early romances make the knight's public identity into a secret that is then revealed in the tournament field. Chretien de Troyes's romances often feature a tournament and a knight whose public identity is unknown to those around him. Why use the tournament? It may be because, in court literature, tournaments were an ordinary and familiar practice to their aristocratic audiences. As Larry Benson notes, the tournaments are among the most realistic parts of early romances since they demonstrate the expected practices of noble life, including mustering and courtly performance (6).[100] They were widely attended by the same audiences reading or hearing these romances. As a result, it would be easy to develop characters' reputations using the imagined tournament space as a center of knightly life.

Sometimes, the tournament competes directly the castle for a knight's attention. In *Yvain*, the tournament offers the possibility for social enhancement as well as the

possibility of alienating oneself from wife and home.  Yvain leaves home with Gawain to

go to all the best tournaments, promising his wife that he will return after a year.  At first,

the tournament is an opportunity for demonstrating Yvain's honor to his fellow knights.

When he forgets to return to his wife within a year, she casts him out. Yvain recuperates

his status by becoming the Knight of the Lion, a disguise that he uses in both tournament

and quest.  Yvain's disguise makes up for his previous transgression against his wife not

by avoiding tournament entirely, but by engaging in tournaments strategically to build up

a reputation that brings him to the notice of his wife again.  Even though the tournament

necessitates separation from marriage and the manor, it is also indispensable for Yvain's

return to social prominence.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw heavy regulations placed on the

traditional tournament. The performance of war in the early tournament looked a lot like

the musterings that posed a military or civil threat in Wales, Toulouse, and elsewhere.[101]

In contrast, the individual jousts and duels gave more opportunities for knights to gain

reputations through the tournament.  As individual fights look less like gatherings of

rebellious lords, monarchs increasingly sponsored, supported, and participated in

tournaments.  Prohibitions gave way to patronage and celebration.  Richard I lifted a ban

on tournaments in England in 1192, and tournaments grew in popularity under Henry III

and Edward I.  In turn, these sponsorships regulated both the presentation of arms and the

activities of the tournament.  For instance, organizers promoted the *pas d'armes,* the

passage and display of chivalric arms and heraldry.  The *pas d'armes* was like a parade,

allowing knights to show themselves off outside the rigors of competition.  With this

practice came elaborate pageantries that surrounded events of single combat.[102] By the

time of Edward III in the mid-fourteenth century the grand field combats of the tournament proper had disappeared.  Individual combat sponsored by the monarch replaced simulated war.

Pageantry is a key point for performance and fashioning in romance. A pageantry involves elaborately orchestrated allegories that accustomed spectators to seeing knights as both their public persona and as their present semblance or disguise.  Knights in the thirteenth and fourteenth century would dress in a number of elaborate guises playing the roles of institutions, geographic outsiders, qualities of mind, virtues, vices, and romance heroes.  The historian Sidney Anglo lists accounts of knights dressed as nuns at the Round Table at Acre in 1286, knights masked as Tartars and led by ladies with golden chains in a procession through London in 1331, and knights disguised as the Seven Deadly Sins fighting those who would dare oppose them in 1362.[103] In these events, disguises created elaborate allegories allowing for the triumph of an imagined Arthurian court, the taming of a culturally puissant East, and the victory of virtue against various sins.  As romances had adopted the tournament as a key space for character performance, tournaments adopted romance motifs to demonstrate political points.[104]

Later tournaments through the sixteenth century thus incline more towards ostentatious display than military feats, and towards disguises as political and moral allegories.  In tournaments rulers more often set themselves as the center of spectacle, using the tournament as a field on which they can fashion themselves.  L. O.  Aranye Fradenburg analyzes James IV of Scotland's tournaments in 1507 and 1508 as a social and political performance where he disguises himself as a wild knight.[105] James IV's performance subordinates the wild knight's savage ferocity of arms to the authority and

virtue of the king.[106]  The disguise, in demonstrating wildness and then showing the performance of chivalric worth, distances James IV from his previous rebellion against his father and his moments of restlessness. It also invigorates James IV's public image through acts of chivalric prowess.  He both is king and earns his kingship.

As Sydney Anglo's study of the tournament rolls of Westminster demonstrate, Henry VIII engaged in several tournaments in the early years of his reign that set his kingship alongside alternative personas that are incorporated into him.  For instance, for the tournament at Westminster in February 1511, Henry VIII was depicted as a knight dressed in the silver armor of a Challenger called *Ceure loyall* (Loyal Heart) from the land of *Ceure noble* (Noble Heart), entering a forest display and demanding entry to the tournament.[107]  "Loyal Heart" from "Noble Heart" – the *ceure* also an echo of the word *courage* – ties Henry to the longstanding chivalric values of loyalty and nobility as he asks entry to a tournament presumed to exemplify both qualities.  He marks himself as a savvy outsider, even while he is recognized as a legitimate ruler and center of the pageant.  Henry proves that he belongs as a king by portraying himself as an ideal image of a romance knight.

Although not a participant in combat herself, Elizabeth held the Accession Day jousts.[108] These continue the tradition of elaborate pageants, including those performed by Sir Philip Sidney.[109] Ivan L. Schultz describes these pageants as a lively continuance of chivalric practice, and he ties their practices to the marriage of the Thames and the Medway in *The Faerie Queene.*  Pageant techniques and stakes are tied more to civil advancement than military conquest.  Spenser would have been familiar with tournaments and pageantry alike.  Contrary to what Schultz alleges, Spenser's forms of

performativity also relate to tournaments in romance. Spenser's tournament reproduces the older forms of tournaments evident in romance, centered on two groups while narratively privileging combat between two knights at a time. The tournament format supports knights who perform to show how they interact with one another. Thus it persists as a motif in romance, blending both its earlier mode of military conquest and its status as a performance space.

Two forms of competition govern the tournament: the melee and the joust. Early tournaments through the thirteenth century were predominantly melees.[110] In a melee, knights attack each other in groups held together by allegiance to each other or a governing lord. There is no formal order to the confrontations. The tumult of the field makes emblems identifying ally and foe particularly necessary. Heralds observe the action on the field for announcing feats to spectators. As for knights, they must rely on what they see. Emblems are most often placed on the most visible point of a knight's arms: his shield. Individual combat including the joust is also common, where two opponents face off on either side of a list.[111] The encounters are usually judged on the basis of points emphasizing unhorsing knights and targeting optimal points of armor with the lance. The joust is predominant in the later tournaments of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and is the form most recognizable today.[112] Nonetheless, most tournament historians favor focusing on the melee. For instance, David Crouch distinguishes jousts as a practice separate from the tourament proper and focuses his attention on the melee.[113] Other historians distinguish the melee from the rarer and later joust: Richard Barber describes the joust as a later and more expensive event that only came into popularity in the fifteenth century.[114]

Similarly, though the joust is the most practiced tournament activity in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene* feature melees. Multiple knights are free to enter the field, attack each other, and ride off without any prescribed order. Prior to Arthur drawing the sword from the stone and anvil in *Le Morte Darthur*, the narration draws a distinction between the joust and the "torney" or melee: "So upon New Yeres Day, whan the servyce was done, the barons rode unto the feld, some to juste and som to torney" (8.32-3). Here, the field represents both events. At every other moment in *Le Morte Darthur*, the field represents the melee alone, the combat where Sir Lancelot and other knights can thrust in and out of "the thyckest of the pres" (158.41). Spenser also depicts his largest tournament as a melee. Canto iv of book iv describes a field where the Knights of Maidenhead led by Satyrane ride together to oppose Cambell, Triamond, and others, and where single knights (first Artegall, then Britomart) fell multiple knights on the same field (IV.iv). In both romances, knights confront each other freely, bound by personal and communal allegiances.

Why do these romances focus on the melee? It could be that the romance tends to be a conservative form that preserves the chivalric functions of earlier centuries. Knights who stand out from a melee of many participants may appear more renowned than a knight who happens to defeat another knight in the lists. The melee also allows knights to come and go freely from the tournament, allowing knights to leave the field, disguise themselves, and appear again. By the fifteenth century, actual tournaments focused increasingly on individual combat. The shift to one-on-one combat accommodated the desire for knowing who competes. As Richard Barber explains, the practices of tournament were shifting in response to the popular image of romance, which tends to

focus on the outstanding success of individual protagonists: "Through the influence of the romances, the quest for individual prowess had become the overriding theme of chivalric ambitions by the fifteenth century."[115]  Even though romances focused on the group-oriented melee and distinguished individuals through narrative, organizers and participants of later tournaments saw the joust as the best way to highlight the worth of individual knights. It was easier to read melee than to watch it.

In the pageant, disguise flourished as a historical practice for fashioning the qualities of the incognito participant.  Disguise is often assumed to modify an otherwise static individual, but Fradenburg uses the life of James IV of Scotland to demonstrate how disguise is one of many arts of power and performance.  "To disguise oneself, then, at a tournament, either as a *chevalier mesconnu* or as Arthur, is to act out the acting-out inherent in the life of honor."[116]  In a chivalric court system, acts of honor require witnesses in order to mean something.  Honor is confirmed through public demonstration. Disguise functioned as one of the "arts of rule," distinguishing the kings in the view of the spectators or distinguishing a liege's service to the king.  It helps fashion an individual in a system where individuals already transform themselves according to how they earn honor.

The following sections will focus on tournament disguises in Spenser and Malory to show three points.  First, tournament disguises in romance tend to be exceptional spectacles in both texts.  By their very performance, they set an individual apart from their community, drawing the attention of both spectators and combatants.  Tournament disguises thus heighten the value of whatever judgments spectators make.  Second, setting the individual knight apart also isolates him, producing a form of alienation. From

alienation, he can change his allies. He may be incorporated into other groups, or he may create new bonds with other characters.  Each subsequent social performance, whether under disguise or not, may be subject to the same interpretive lens, setting into constant discussion how a knight fits into a network of relationships.  Because one's status is dependent on visible signs of affiliation, one's status as a member of a community cannot be reliably gauged while someone is disguised. Third, tournament disguises in romance also trouble relationships between two knights.  They initiate conflicts that would be improbable without disguise.  Tristram and Palomydes in *Le Morte Darthur* and Artegall and Britomart in *The Faerie Queene* each come into conflict through the use of disguise in tournament.  Initially employed in gaining merit, the tournament disguise sets up both pairs' subsequent revelations of motives.  Tristram and Palomydes fall out, as the disguises reveal Palomides's wish to be with Isode, to be Tristram himself.  Artegall and Britomart fight out of an intense rivalry between one another, while their appearances show how alike they are.  Because the consequences of disguise never rest only with the individual fashioned, disguise requires understanding both how a disguise affects the perception of oneself and how it mediates relationships with individuals and groups.

Next I will consider in detail the tournaments in *Le Morte Darthur*. A general survey of tournaments in the text will be followed by a case study of the tournament of Lonezep.

**Tournaments in *Le Morte Darthur:* The Name Exchange**

*Le Morte Darthur* depicts many tournaments, starting with the tournament on New Year's Day when Arthur draws the sword from the stone, and ending with the

tournament during Candlemas shortly before Lancelot and Guinevere are discovered together.[117] Tournaments occur most often in the parts of *Le Morte Darthur* more focused on individual questing than on war: the Tales of Lancelot, Gareth, and Tristram. Of the twenty-two tournaments in *Le Morte Darthur*,[118] ten involve a disguise. (See Table 1 on the next page.) Tournaments with disguise tend to be more thoroughly described; several tournaments without disguises are only described briefly through a summary of who won. The major tournaments involving Gareth, Tristram, Palomides, and Lancelot all feature knights using disguise. This section will describe how disguise works in Malory's tournaments, laying the groundwork for a closer study of disguise between Tristram and Palomides at Lonezep.

Tournament disguises in *Le Morte Darthur* are only undertaken and tested by noble men. Ladies and servants cannot test a disguised knight in battle, but they still offer a form of spectatorship that highlights the judgment of both themselves and the court at large. A few critics have focused on ladies as spectators, arguing that the position of onlooker gave female characters a certain empowerment. Molly Martin describes being seen and judged by other knights as a form of vulnerability, as with each judgment knights risk wounding their own status. For Martin, such "vulnerability" compels knights to achieve mastery through controlling their images, attaining agency not just through looking and describing others but also by fashioning themselves.[119] Kenneth Hodges focuses on the active roles of women like Guinevere and Percival's sister in *Le Morte Darthur*, while also tracing hints within *Le Morte Darthur* of a juridical tradition of women in combat.[120] Women onlookers shape the performances of knights on the field, but in *Le Morte Darthur* they never fight in tournaments or undergo tournament

disguises.

**Table 1. Tournaments in *Le Morte Darthur* by textual location and use of disguise**

| Tournament | Book in Winchester MS (1-8) | Page Number | Disguise? |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Sword in the Stone | 1 | 8 | |
| Uwayne's tournament | 1 | 109 | |
| Lancelot's tournament with Badgemagus | 3 | 158 | Y |
| Gareth's tournament for Lyonesse | 4 | 214 | Y |
| Tournament at the Castle Maidens | 5 | 316 | Y |
| Tournament at the Castle of the Hard Rock | 5 | 336 | Y |
| Tournament at Iagent | 5 | 348 | |
| Tournament where Tristram is wounded | 5 | 373 | |
| Tournament at Surluse | 5 | 389 | Y |
| Tournament at Cornwall | 5 | 400 | Y |
| Tournament at Winchester | 5 | 404 | Y |
| Tournament at Lonezep | 5 | 435 | Y |
| Galahad's tournament | 6 | 502 | |
| Lancelot's tournament | 6 | 536 | |
| Bors's tournament | 6 | 552 | |
| Tournament where Gawain is wounded by Galahad | 6 | 557 | |
| Tournament on the Day of the Assumption | 7 | 601 | Y |
| Tournament on All Hallowmas | 7 | 611 | |
| Lavayne's tournament | 7 | 620 | Y |
| Tournament in Spain | 7 | 639 | |

As for these knight-participants, disguises and other actions are often the closest

the text ever comes to describing characters as individuals. As Miriam Edlich-Muth has

explained, the rhetorical style of *Le Morte Darthur* is matter-of-fact in establishing

actions and dialogue, such that character motivations are left understated.[121] Disguise

functions similarly, often being used by characters without explicit explanation for their

purpose or motivation. Instead, disguises provide an opportunity to glean implicit

understandings of how a knight fits into his larger social context.

For instance, in the section "Sir Launcelot du Lake," Lancelot agrees to serve

King Badgemagus at tournament in return for being freed by Badgemagus's daughter.

Upon learning that a few knights of the Round Table will be on the opposing side,

Lancelot gives an additional condition that Lancelot have an escort of disguised knights:

"But, sir, ye shal sende unto me three knyghtes of youres suche as ye truste – and loke

that the three knyghtes have all-whyght sheldis and no picture on their shyldis, and ye

shall sende me another of the same sewte […] And thus shall I not be knowyn what

maner a knyght I am" (158.18-24). Lancelot wishes to remain concealed. He does not

want the knights of the Round Table to know he is opposing them. Is he avoiding

political strife? Would other knights never risk fighting Lancelot if he were known?

Whatever the reasons, the precise motive is either unimportant to the narrator or

implicitly understood by an earlier audience.

The disguise makes Lancelot into a stranger and a subject of interpretation open to

reading. Mador de la Port emphasizes these points when he appraises Lancelot well after

his first few attacks: "Yondir is a shrewde geste" (159.1). Lancelot's *geste* or deed of

disguise is called clever.[122] He also poses a threat: *shrewde* here can mean both tricky

and wicked.[123] There is something both clever and potentially dangerous about Lancelot

in disguise. These qualities are not further developed at this point in the text. The

tournament soon ends, and the only further mention of Lancelot's actions comes at the

end of the tale in a list of deeds made known, naming "all the grete armys that Sir Launcelot dud betwyxte the two kynges […] all the trouth Sir Gahalantyne dud telle, and Sir Mador de la Porte, and Sir Mordred, for they were at the same turnement" (176.38-43).  In this latter summary only Lancelot's renown is mentioned. Witnesses confirm what Lancelot has done without any need to refer to the disguise, or the method of how that renown came about.

As the Lancelot narrative shows, when tournaments are mentioned in brief, disguise is a convenient way to gain more attention from other knights, distinguishing disguised characters without having a particularly remarkable effect on the outcome.  On the one hand, its function is implied by context; Lancelot is kept hidden from his companions.  On the other hand, that function is not made explicit; Mador de la Porte is never shown realizing that the knight in disguise is Lancelot.  As a result, in instances where disguise comes up briefly, disguise's effects on the larger community are rather simple. Knights in disguise earn renown by beating erstwhile allies they would otherwise not fight.

In a couple of cases, another character anticipates the motif and uses it to manipulate the disguised knight.  For instance, King Mark uses the general understanding that Lancelot appears in disguise in tournament in order to put his vassal Tristram under duress at tournament.[124] By having Tristram disguise himself at a tournament where Galahalt the Haute Prince and others seek vengeance against Lancelot, Mark hopes the disguised Tristram would be mistaken for Lancelot: "Than Kynge Marke unbethought hym that he wolde have Sir Trystram unto the turnemente disgysed, that no man sholde knowe hym, to that entente that the Haute Prynce sholde wene that Sir Trystram were Sir

Launcelot" (400.33-36). Mark's gambit works. While Tristram wins the tournament, he is also sorely wounded by knights who thought he was Lancelot. In this instance, Tristram has no reason to refuse Mark's request that he fight in disguise, but in that context others mistake the disguised figure for someone else. In isolation, Tristram's disguise would have spared some knights the immediate knowledge of whom they are fighting, allowing him to prove himself against knights who might otherwise not fight him. Yet the disguise initiates a conflict between Tristram and the other knights that results from mistaken identification. Anonymity also produces the risk of misrecognition and conflict of a kind that Tristram was not ready for. As well, the disguise shows the larger conflict between Mark and Tristram. Mark hates Tristram, but keeps his hatred hidden from Tristram. The knowledge Mark hides from Tristram allows him to use the disguise's tendency towards mistaken identity to his advantage. Thus these brief mentions of disguise act as an index to chivalric performance in the tournament, providing an opportunity to perform great deeds while also representing the risks of mistaken identity and estrangement.

When tournaments receive more narrative attention, disguise takes a central place in the systems of spectatorship that establish name and worship. In almost every case where a spectator offers praise of deeds done on the field, that praise is couched in the larger question of who that knight is. Disguise is the precondition for special attention. Note the similar phrasing between several tournaments, where spectators *mervayle* and ask who a disguised character is:

> And Sir Gareth ded such dedys of armys that all men *mervayled* what knyght he was with the gryne shylde […] and, as the Freynshe booke sayth, Sir Launcelot *mervayled*, whan he behylde Sir Gareth do such dedis, what knyght he might be. (622.28-32)

> Whan Kynge Anguyshauns of Irelonde sawe Sir Gareth fare so, he *mervayled* what knyght he was... (216.37-38)
>
> So at the day of justys there cam Sir Palomydes with a blacke shylde, and he ovirthrew many knyghtes, that all people had *mervayle*. (238.44-239.1)
>
> Whan Sir Tristram behylde them and sye them do such dedis of armys, he *mervayled* what they were. (316.23-4)
>
> And Kynge Arthur than, and the kyngis uppon bothe partyes, *mervayled* what knyght that was with the blacke shylde. (316.45-7)[125]

*Mervayle* or wonder towards disguised knights is a key part of the formula of spectatorship at tournaments.[126] When the spectators ask what knight he is, the question is directed both at quality (what kind of knight) and identity (what knight; who); *what* also functions as *who*. Coupled with a narrator who frequently focuses on the feats of knights in disguise, the depictions combine their accomplishments and their possible identities to fashion knights. Disguises make the best qualities of knights something to marvel at, directing the attention of spectators and narrative to themselves.

These moments also demonstrate how spectatorship participates in the tournament. Attention is not unidirectional, moving only from a court to a knight. Rather, marvelling moves fluidly between members of the chivalric community, such that spectators and agents frequently switch roles with one another. For instance, in the last two excerpts above, which take place at the tournament of the Castle Maidens, Tristram is already in disguise with a black shield when he marvels at the performance of Bleoberis and Gaheris, whom he does not recognize. When Tristram manages to smite Bleoberis off of his horse twice, the court then marvels at the former spectator. Even the head of court, usually Arthur, moves freely between judging the field from a scaffold and participating himself. After marveling at Tristram's doughty preformance on the first and

second days of the tournament, Arthur laments that the unknown Tristram has ridden

away without being discovered.  In response, Arthur promises to fight on the third day:

> 'Alas,' seyde Kynge Arthure, 'where is that knyght becom? Hit ys shame to all tho
> in the fylde so to lette hym ascape away from you; but with jantylnes and curtesye
> ye myght have brought hym unto me, to thys Castell of Maydens.' Than Kynge
> Arthur wente to hys knyghtes and comforted them and seyde, 'My fayre felowis,
> be nat dismayde thoughe ye have loste the fylde thys day.' And many were hurte
> and sore wounded, and many were hole.  'My felowys,' seyde Kyng Arthur, 'loke
> that ye be of good chere, for tomorn I woll be in the fylde with you and revenge
> you of youre enemyes.' (319.1-9)

Arthur chastises his own men for letting Tristram escape.  The following clause attaches

the shame not to loss in battle, but loss in gentleness and courtesy, as the knights failed to

extend an invitation to Tristram to disarm and eat at Arthur's tent.  Such disarming after a

day of battle is routine in romance; at a later tournament Arthur identifies the disguised

Lancelot, Gareth, and Lavayne through an invitation to supper (623.33-37).[127] Arthur

began the sequence passing judgment on Tristram, but Tristram in response also passed

judgment on Arthur's company.

Tristram's company being denied, Arthur switches from being a spectator to a

participant of the tournament, promising to revenge the knights.  In these moments,

Arthur can be judged on the same standards of bravery as the unknown Tristram,

allowing Arthur to measure Tristram through his capacity to fight.  The next day, Tristram

unhorses Arthur at their first encounter, and Arthur unhorses Tristram in turn with a great

spear.  Soon they encounter with swords, Arthur and Tristram fighting hard before other

knights interpose.  Their fights are riddled with language praising Arthur: "Than Kynge

Arthur, with a grete egir harte, he gate a grete speare in hys honde" (320.44); "and than

Kynge Arthure boldely abode hym" (321.22-3).  These remarks establish a force of

courage that Tristram can then prove himself against by matching him blow for blow:

"And so Sir Trystram drew hys swerde, and aythir of them assayled othir passyng harde"

(321.26-7). In the French Vulgate, and at points of *Le Morte Darthur*, Arthur is not

nearly as active a king. Presented with a disguised knight, Arthur responds to the

challenge that the disguised knight poses: the failure of judgment by sight demands

judgment by combat. Disguised knight and king may fight, though that conflict would be

inexcusible if Tristram were known as a knight of the Round Table. This corroborates

previous statements about disguise as a kind of alibi or mitigating factor for fighting

one's allies. Disguise provides both a legal and a social justification for fighting someone

whom it would otherwise be inappropriate to fight. Discovery after the fact does not

usually result in negative consequences.[128]

Though knights like Arthur and Lancelot transition from spectator to participant,

at a few points Lancelot shows respect to a disguised character by refusing to encounter

with him in battle. In reply to one of Arthur's requests to fight the disguised Sir Gareth,

Lancelot explains that he refuses in order to preserve the worship of the disguised knight:

> "Sir," seyde Sir Launcelot, "I may well fynde in myne herte for to forbere hym as
> at this tyme, for he hath had travayle inowe this day – and whan a good knyght
> doth so well uppon som day, hit is no good knyghtes parte to lette hym of his
> worshyp, and namely whan he seyth a good knyghte hath done so grete labur. For
> peradventure," seyde Sir Launcelot, "his quarell is here this day, and peraventure
> he is beste beloved with this lady of all that bene here; for I se well he paynyth
> hym and enforsyth hym to do grete dedys. And therefore," seyde Sir Launcelot,
> "as for me, this day he shall have the honour; thoughe hit lay in my power to put
> hym frome hit, yet wolde I nat." (217.18-31)

Lancelot's first motive attends primarily to worship. Practically speaking, it alludes to

fresh knights not fighting other knights when they are tired from doing so much. Implied

is a measure for comparison similar to the one Arthur employs against Tristram: with

"travayle inowe" (travail enough), Lancelot sees the knight's worth sufficiently

established.  The last sentence then provides a metanarrative judgment.  Lancelot is the

best knight, so nothing would be proven by Lancelot fighting except what everyone

already knows: Lancelot is better.  Lancelot's restraint of his own power preserves the

worship of the disguised knight.

Lancelot also acknowledges implicitly that the disguised knight may be braving

dangers for a particular purpose *peraventure* ("perhaps," but also "by chance," invoking

adventure).  The disguise provides for Lancelot an additional opportunity to speculate

about possible affections between a disguised knight and the objects of the tournament:

worship and the love of the lady.  Lancelot's description of suffering through battle

(*payneth* and *enforseth ... to do grete dedys*) does not specify what the *grete dedys* are.

Gareth is establishing his place in Arthur's court.  Yet the language of suffering echoes the

language of love-longing, where knights pain and exert themselves to serve friends and

lovers.[129] More immediately, he is winning the hand of his love Lyonesse at tournament.

These possibilities allow violence to be interpreted as a sign of affection, for the

connection between exertion and being beloved may be understood without a name or a

public understanding of Gareth to elaborate it.  The tournament knight's possible motives

remain yet to be disclosed, held in tension with whether he actually succeeds at the

tournament.

Lancelot and Arthur's acts of judgment place disguise into the context of both an

overall Arthurian court and their own personal networks of friendships.  Hyonjim Kim

calls these clusters of friendships between major characters "affinities," a term which

reflects those ties based on family (the sons of Queen Morgause) and those based on

friendships (Lancelot, Gareth, Tristram; Lancelot and Gawain).[130] Kenneth Hodges

prefers the term "community," focusing on overlapping systems of chivalry rather than overlapping affinities between knights.[131] Lancelot thinks that Gareth is avoiding his family connections in order to accomplish an unstated *aventure* that cannot be accomplished if he is known. In the disguise he puts on for Badgemagus, Lancelot fulfills his agreement with one king while avoiding antagonizing knights whom he would otherwise help defend. Disguise allows one community to be temporarily set aside, with subsequent revelation aimed at successfully reintegrating the knight into the community that did not know him. Lancelot does not fashion himself with his disguise directly. His disguise prompts Badgemagus and members of other communities to revise their assessment of him. He self-fashions his disguise so that others fashion him.

Thus disguises at tournament extend Susan Crane's idea that disguise makes a knight into an individual because it risks his alienation from a community.[132] Crane's examples are usually restricted to single knights in relation to single communities, terms well-suited for popular romances in Middle English. In *Le Morte Darthur,* tournament disguises may potentially be involved in several communities at the same time. Malory's knights are not usually alienating themselves from every community when they enter disguise. Instead, they are choosing what groups recognize them and when they are recognized. The moments of fashioning are not only established through distance and reincorporation, but also by forming new bonds: Gareth's loves for Lyonesse and Lancelot, Lancelot's service to Badgemagus and his daughter, Tristram's fealty to a king who hates him. In business terms, they gain references that would otherwise be inaccessible to their professional lives. Tournament disguise then is less about forming the individual as an entity which did not exist prior to the disguise, and more about

changing the perspective others have of that character. Whether he was an individual or not before, the temptation to call a character more distinct after employing disguise demonstrates that a character's relationships with groups and individuals have further developed.

Disguises in tournaments in *Le Morte Darthur* perform several purposes. They turn knights into strangers who can attract attention for doing very well. Knights under disguise may fight one another even when it would be socially inappropriate to do so. Most importantly, at tournaments disguises manipulate the networks of relations that define how characters act, privileging spectators and participants who know what is going on. For other onlookers, the disguise implies an unknown set of affinities and affections, a series of motives and inclinations that distinguish a knight from any singular subject role or social exchange. In the next section, the tournament of Lonezep will further illustrate these points in the relationships of Tristram and Palomides.

**The Tournament of Lonezep and Political Allegiance**

Out of several long tournament scenes, the tournament of Lonezep in the long "Tale of Sir Tristram" provides a good case study for disguise. Typical for tournaments in *Le Morte Darthur*, Lonezep features knights who disguise themselves in order to attain more worship. At the same time, scenes between Tristram, King Arthur, and King Marhalt develop further concealed motivations that gives knights greater independence to distinguish themselves from a group. Through metaphors of interiority like the heart, Tristram preserves the value of choosing his own adventure.[133]

This tournament occurs over halfway through *Le Morte Darthur*, and yet it

features the most explicit explanation of the necessity of chivalric emblems during battle.

These tokens allow knights to recognize their group allegiance in battle. In preparation

for the tournament, King Marhalt of Ireland explains to the kings and knights in his

retinue the need for a clear system of recognition to distinguish ally and lord from foe.

He calls for emblems: "Therefore, be my rede, lat every kynge have a standarde and a

cognyssaunce by hymselff, that every knyght may draw to his naturall lorde; and than

may every kynge and captayne helpe his knyght yf he have nede" (430.9.12).  In other

words, the several kings in Marhalt's retinue should each be able to see who is of their

retinue, and in turn each knight should be able to see his lord, ensuring group allegiance.

These emblems perform a role which Fradenburg ascribes to James IV's court

performances: they reconstitute the king's identity for the benefit of his followers.[134]

*Cognyssaunce* or cognizance stands for both a knight's understanding of others' status and

the device used to signal that status.  By understanding the emblem, the knights orient

themselves towards their natural lord, who reciprocates the gesture with his own help.

For Marhalt, social allegiance is a natural relation made visible through emblems.

Appearance confirms qualities of lordship and chivalric worth that are believed to be

already present in each knight and lord.  These rules of inclination and sight arbitrate

behavior during battle, bringing rules of sight to bear in a field governed by risk.  Marhalt

must address contingency through a hypothetical statement ("yf he have nede").

Meanwhile his jussive statement ("lat every kynge") and verbs of purpose ("that every

knyght *may draw* to his naturall lorde; and than *may* every kynge and captayne *helpe* his

knyght") show his response to not be a mere appeal to the natural, but to a

representational system chosen by members of the group.  Marhalt may presume the king

to be a natural role, while the explicit statement of command also shows the performance of allegiance to be determined by the display of fabricated images.

Marhalt's suggestion at this moment is strange, since it defines a standard that Malory has already used for several tournaments and battles without any need to be spoken. Knights have been wearing emblems and aiding each other for several hundred pages. Kings have long been the visual center of power, determining the standards of the knights around them. In turn, several knights have already been switching shields, mistaking their friends for foes, and suffering for the error.[135] The system has already been in practice; it has already been prone to rule-breaking. Marhalt's statement does not prescribe a system of behavior that should subsequently be followed, but makes explicit the expectations that have already been in place. It sets out a system of representation that characters can then manipulate by changing their emblems and concealing their allegiance to a lord. In other words, when Marhalt stages the rules for the performance, he leaves an opening for enterprising knights to break them.

The narration gives no reason for thinking that breaking the rules is a bad thing. Rather than eliciting outrage, Tristram's concealment is met with curiosity by Arthur and other onlookers. Tristram's disguise helps him resist being defined by any one center of power, reserving his own volition in the space between his public persona (Tristram, the knight of Arthur) and his disguise (a knight with unknown allegiance). Through an evasive set of answers to Arthur's questions, Tristram resists defining himself by a system of natural lordship.[136] After Arthur hears about how Tristram's knights had defeated Arthur's knights Gawain and Galyhodyn, he asks the unknown knight in green what his name is:

> "Well?" seyde Kynge Arthure, and than he called Sir Trystram to hym and asked what was his name.
> "As for that," seyde Sir Trystram, "ye shall holde me excused; as at this tyme ye shall nat know my name." And there Sir Trystram returned and rode his way. (438.20-4)

Tristram refuses to tell his name "at this tyme." Deferring the answer to Arthur's question until a later time, Tristram builds up anticipation for finding out who he is. His refusal is polite, using "shall" and the formal "ye" to refuse their request. Then Tristram departs. While Tristram is free to leave, his departure shifts the obeisance from Arthur to Tristram, since Arthur's speech is indirect and his next act will be requesting that Tristram return.

Grifflet fetches Tristram through a promise that Arthur will not ask for his name again. Arthur wants to know why the knight withholds his name and whether he will be loyal to Arthur during the tournament. Tristram's answers allow him to demonstrate his ability to determine his own motives and allegiance independent of Arthur's authority for the duration of the disguise. To the question of why he withholds his name, Tristram only intimates that he has a reason for withholding his name: "Sir […] withoute a cause I wolde nat hyde my name" (430.34-5). Because Tristram has withheld his name, the statement says that he has a cause or motive for doing so. Its being in the negative may act as a kind of assurance that Tristram has not idly undergone his disguise. By refusing both name and an explicitly named motive, Tristram is encouraging Arthur to interpret his actions while trusting in the revelation of a credible identity in the future.

Tristram then allows his choice of party to be defined by an immediate decision of the heart rather than a predisposed inclination, allowing him the space to not know whom to serve and then choose his party:

> "Well, uppon what party woll ye holde?" seyde Kynge Arthure. "Truly, my lorde," seyde Sir Trystram, "I wote nat yet on what party I woll be on untyll I com

> to the fylde – and there as my harte gyvyth me, there woll I holde me – but
> tomorow ye shall se and preve on what party I shall com" (430.36-40).

Tristram's reply is more direct, as he admits that he does not know himself what side he will choose. Instead of declaring himself for Arthur or Marhalt, or refusing to answer, he sets his choice where his heart inclines. His heart is both internal to him, hidden under skin and armor, and in the future, not yet giving an answer. Tristram's second answer encourages Arthur to judge him tomorrow, insisting that his party may be seen and proven in action. In this way, the game of the tournament disguise involves determining one's motives and inclinations by actions. Visual and rhetorical concealment are met by the belief that actions will tell what the disguised figure will not.

Beyond the belief that the court will understand Tristram by his actions, the disguise allows a certain degree of independence for Tristram to withhold answers from Arthur. Why? First, as established previously in the chapter, the tournament serves as a simulacrum of battle and a performance of chivalric community. Arthur and Marhalt are not actually at war, but are rather engaging in a socially symbolic conflict between Arthur's central court and Marhalt's gathering of the peripheries of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. Tristram and other disguised knights are thus allowed more leeway with what allegiances they pick, since they are only picking between sides in a friendly rivalry.

Though Tristram's disguise is an acceptable strategy for entering this tournament, it nonetheless raises questions about the representation of central authority in the tournament. Tristram as a subject distinguishes himself by drawing considerable attention away from the group conflict. The spectators will not be commenting on whether a group does well or poorly, or even how individual knights in either group earn worship, but over both how Tristram does and what it says about who he is. As a result,

Tristram wins himself worship by distinguishing himself from either side. He can garner

appeal beyond Arthur or Marhalt's communities without being called selfish by either

party.

As Tristram participates in the tournament, it becomes evident that his relations to

Arthur and Marhalt, while important, are not the only relations at play. In the next

section, I will analyze how the tournament disguise fosters several affiliations: Tristram

with his other disguised friends, Tristram and Lancelot, and Tristram and Palomides.

Whereas Tristram earns worth by distinguishing himself from larger communities, his

disguise also tends to unsettle his relationships with friends.

**Tristram and Affiliation**

The tournament of Lonezep occurs over three days, allowing for plenty of

opportunities for Tristram and his friends to perform under disguise. Tristram chooses to

fight on the side of King Marhalt against Arthur's knights. As the question of Tristram's

identity and motivation remains pressing for his onlookers, more is at stake than his

allegiance with Arthur. Tristram's relationship to Lancelot, to his fellow disguised

knights, to Isode, and to Palomides are all affected by his disguises. He is also engaging

in a series of more local relationships, building up his reputation while inspiring desire,

ire, respect, and animosity.

Tristram's disguise in the tournament is caught between several obligations of

service, friendship, and love, entanglements that following Hyonjin Kim I call

affinities.[137] For Kim, these affinities involve a formal or informal leader and his

followers. Because forms of leadership need not be formally recognized, even

friendships qualify as affinities when they create the expectation that knights will try to serve and rescue one another.  Most knights have several affinities that manage to coexist as long as the heads of any two affinities do not come into conflict.  Because these bonds are flexible and usually do not contradict one another, the Round Table is able to retain knights from disparate geographic and familial peripheries: Marhalt from Ireland, Tristram from Cornwall, Lancelot from France, and Gawain from Orkeney.[138]

Despite the uneasy coexistence of various groups of knights, tensions nonetheless emerge between these local groups when some of these characters use disguise.  Tristram is close to both of the kings fighting at the tournament of Lonezep.  He can only serve one of them.  A disguise avoids slighting either one of them by refusing a definitive choice of affinity.  He is also close to a few different circles of Round Table knights, like Lancelot and his kin as well as his own group of knights: Gareth, Dinadan, and Palomides.  Tristram's disguises distinguish him from his prior status as a minor, provincial knight serving King Mark, even as they risk conflict with these smaller groups.

Tristram's disguise on the first day of the tournament of Lonezep leads onlookers to connect him to the Round Table.  His appearance with Gareth, Dinadan, and Palomides, who are also disguised causes Arthur and Lancelot to speculate who they are, connecting Tristram's actions to the Round Table's own ideas of chivalric valor even as Tristram knocks down Round Table knights.  When Tristram, Palomydes, Gareth, Dinadan, Isode, and her three ladies dress all in green, Arthur asks Lancelot who these knights and ladies are.  Lancelot is unsure, but admits that "yf Sir Trystram be in this contrey, or Sir Palomydes [...] wyte you well hit be they, and there is Quene La Beall Isode" (432.1-4).[139] Kay is then sent to check who is missing from the Round Table,

narrowing the list down to a set of knights currently absent.  A moment later, after

Palomydes smites down Edward of Orkney and Sadok, Arthur again asks after who they

are, focusing on Tristram: "What knyght ys that arayed so, all in grene? For he justyth

myghtyly" (432.29-30).  Gawain answers that he is a good knight, and then recalls the

unknown knight (Tristram) who had earlier smitten down Sir Galyhodyn's twenty knights

before the tournament.  Almost immediately Tristram smites down four of Gawain's kin.

Again Arthur speculates: "Yondir knyght uppon the blacke horse dothe myghtyly and

mervaylously" (432.42-3).

Arthur is not engaging in idle chit-chat.  He pursues a series of inquests and

exclamations that frame these performances as chivalric spectacles.  As with the other

tournament scenes earlier in this chapter, here too Arthur marvels at Tristram's

performance through descriptions of mighty jousting.  His commentary also assuages the

threat to the eminent reputation of the Round Table by assuming the knight must be one

of Arthur's own.  Throughout these exchanges, Arthur, Lancelot, and Gawain all cast their

suspicion upon knights within their own court.  Having Kay look at the Round Table to

confirm who is absent assumes that any knight able to perform such feats of arms must be

part of the most renowned circle of knights.  Then Arthur repeatedly refers to how

Tristram fights "mightily."  Arthur assumes a connection between individual excellence

and the excellence of his court: the best knights are members of his court, so therefore the

membership of his court must extend to anyone who beats his knights.  The disguise

confirms the relationship between skill and affinity for Arthur's knights even as Tristram

acts independent of any immediate obligation to serve the Round Table.

Lancelot tends to pair the disguised Tristram and Palomides in his early

judgments, saying in response to Arthur, "Wyte you well that there ar two passynge good knyghtes" (433.24-6). The pairing of Tristram and Palomides is a useful hermeneutic device for Lancelot to interpret a pair of knights doing well on the field. However, the disguise leads to a potential conflict in this case. Because neither Tristram nor Palomides is known by most of the onlookers, it is easy for knights to mistake Tristram for Palomides or Palomides for Tristram. Lancelot commits this error when he is commanded by Arthur to ride against one of the disguised knights. He knocks Tristram off of his horse but rides *utter* or completely away, since Lancelot thinks he knocked *Palomides* down: "But Sir Launcelot wente that hit had be Sir Palomydes, and so he passed utter" (433.45-6). Lancelot does not have a strong affinity with Palomides at this moment, so there is no obligation to remain and aid the knight.[140] When Lancelot observes Tristram riding off the field, he realizes his error and leaves the field to *repose* or rest himself.

Their doubling is not just an effect of Lancelot's speculation. Tristram and Palomides are frequently paired with one another. When Tristram disguises himself in a disguise his friends do not share, he is distinguishing himself from that pairing. However, as Palomides responds to Tristram's disguise with one of his own, they cannot help but to come into conflict. The two characters become doubles who together cannot share the attention of the larger tournament space. The disguise is a strategy that brings them closer and simultaneously threatens to tear them apart.

**The Doubling of Tristram and Palomides**

This section will examine disguise as a technique for developing the deep-seated

tensions in the relationship of Tristram and Palomides. Tristram and Palomides are one

of the most paired characters in *Le Morte Darthur*. They are also one of the most

troubling pairs for criticism, since they are at various points competitors, rivals, close

friends, and bedmates. They fight across much of "The Tale of Sir Tristram," from when

they first meet to Palomides's last battle before his baptism. Ralph Norris refers to these

frequent conflicts as a "long-standing feud" between "well-established adversaries."[141]

Helen Cooper acknowledges the scenes of friendship in the phrase "love-hate

relationship."[142] Olga Burakov Mongan turns to the scenes where Tristram and Palomides

profess their affection for one another through their rivalry for Isode to explain that their

love forms a male-male bond stronger than each of their loves for Isode.[143]

They love and hate each other. More importantly, they seem to do so because

they appear as doubles of one another at several points in the narrative. For Dhira

Mahoney, the doubling is primarily thematic; she sees Palomides as "a kind of cracked

mirror to Tristram, reflecting the latter's chivalry, but always with some flaw that mars the

line."[144] The idea of doubling or mirroring is particularly attractive because Tristram and

Palomides dress up like one another, love the same lady, and are frequently mistaken for

one another. Disguises and redisguisings produce key similarities between the two

characters at the tournament of Lonezep. They also provide the necessary cover for

Palomides to distinguish himself from Tristram, feigning ignorance when he attacks a

disguised Tristram. Finally, Palomides's refusal to break his oath with King Marhalt

leads him to leave Tristram.

Several elements of their doubling have already been mentioned. Lancelot

mistakes Tristram for Palomides and soon regrets the error. The two are named together

as possible identities for the disguised knights.  Elements of doubling have happened previous to the tournament of Lonezep in "The Tale of Sir Tristram," most notably during the earlier tournament of the Castle Maidens when Palomides establishes himself as the knight with the black shield, only to be beaten by Sir Tristram and have Tristram adopt the shield as his own.[145]

They also both perform very well for the sake of Isode.  When Tristram leaves his friends and their green disguises to dress in red armor, he leaves Palomides on foot without help.  Without knowing that Tristram is on the field, Palomides sees Isode laughing and believes she laughs for him.  Palomides then seeks to serve her through beating other knights, especially Tristram: "And in his harte, as the booke saythe, Sir Palomydes wysshed that wyth his worshyp he myght have ado wyth Sir Trystram before all men, bycause of La Beall Isode" (435.17-19).  Tristram marvels at Palomides's performance to Dinadan, not knowing why he does so well.  Lancelot is at first prompted to take down Palomides, but after Palomides begs Lancelot to spare him, they forge an affinity parallel to Tristram's own affinity with Lancelot, where they help one another in battle and refuse to fight.  Subsequently, Tristram and Palomides are inseparable in battle; when one is mentioned, the other is in the same sentence.[146] The first day ends when Palomides wins the honors and Tristram reveals himself to have been the red knight, which pleases everyone.  The disguise provided a way for Palomides to take Isode's affection and apply it to himself.  On the first day, Palomides has a good day by acting almost exactly like Tristram.

On the second day, Tristram disguises himself separately.  After Tristram and Gareth take the field together and endure against an entire field of knights, Tristram

withdraws from the field of battle.  Only Isode and Palomides see him leave.[147] At first,

Tristram merely wakes up Dinadan to ask the sleeping knight to join him.  As they banter,

Tristram disguises himself in black armor: "So than Sir Trystram was arayed all in blacke

harneys.  'A, Jesu!' seyde Sir Dynadan, 'what ayleth you thys day? Mesemyth that ye be

more wyldar than ye were yestirday.' Than smyled Sir Trystram ..." (443.4-6).  Tristram's

motives are rather obscure here.  Dinadan remarks that Tristram seems "more wyldar."

The phrase may refer to Tristram's more eager temperament compared to the first day,

when Tristram relaxed as Palomides won the honors.  Yet there seems to be a connection

between the black armor and Tristram's demeanor as a wild knight.

Besides hinting at obscure elements of Tristram's mood, the disguise also

associates him with Palomides. Spectators certainly confuse Tristram and Palomides.

Arthur makes the interpretive mistake when he misidentifies Tristram: "Than seyde

Kynge Arthure, 'Ys that Sir Palomydes that enduryth so well?'" (442.18-19).  Lancelot

corrects Arthur, but these errors are all too common, especially at Lonezep. The first day

of the tournament began with Lancelot identifying the two knights as the key possible

knights that met Arthur: "'Sir,' seyde Sir Launcelot, 'I can nat tell you for no sertayne; but

yf Sir Trystram be in this contrey, or Sir Palomydes – Sir, wit you well hit be they, and

there is Quene La Beall Isode'" (432.1-4).  Tristram and Palomides are the two members

of the group that most stick out.  They are both tied to the service of Isode, who is

recognizable and present. Their shared devotion to Isode makes them indistinguishable as

friends, which Lancelot notices.[148]  Shortly before Arthur asks whether another of

Tristram's disguises is Palomides, he expresses surprise, "for I sawe never a bettir knyght

– for he passyth farre Sir Palomydes" (441.41-3).  In this case, Arthur knows who the

knight is not, but fails to perceive that the knight is Tristram. While disguise in this tournament makes the seemingly familiar knight unfamiliar to onlookers, that unfamiliarity allows likenesses between knights to form. As a consequence, Palomides appears more a double to Tristram than ever, doing as well as he does in battle and loving Isode just as much.

Their competition brings them to blows. As Tristram is recognized for the effectiveness of his own disguise, Palomides uses a disguise to hide himself from Tristram and fight him. On the second day, after Palomides witnesses Tristram entering combat in a new disguise, he exchanges armor with a wounded knight. Palomides only needs to explain that his current arms are too well known to convince the other knight to agree:

> "Syr knyght," seyde Sir Palomydes, "I pray you to lende me youre armour and youre shylde, for myne ys overwell knowyn in thys fylde, and that hath done me grete damayge; and ye shall have myne armour and my shylde that ys as sure as youres." "I woll well," seyde the knyght, "that ye have myne armoure and also my shylde. Yf they may do you ony avayle, I am well pleased."
> So Sir Palomydes armed hym hastely in that knyghtes armour and hys shylde, that shone lyke ony crystall or sylver. And so he cam rydynge into the fylde; and than there was nothir Sir Trystram nothir none of hys party, nothir of Kynge Arthurs, that knew Sir Palomydes. (443.16-25)

Their conversation seems ordinary. Palomides anticipates one possible concern with his plan by assuring the knight that their armor is of the same quality. He only gives a brief and general explanation for why switching the armor would be helpful: "that hath done me grete damayge." The other knight cooperates fully and wishes him well. Palomides dresses in silver armor. The text then names the various characters and groups that do not recognize Palomides: Tristram, Tristram's party, and Arthur's knights. Thus far, Palomides's own disguise has been successful.

Palomides first uses his disguise to initiate a fight with Tristram himself, testing both of them in battle. When they begin to fight, Tristram is taken aback by this new disguised figure, falling into the same *mervayle* or wonder that other knights have thus far given to Tristram: "Than Sir Trystram had mervayle what knyght he was that ded batayle so myghtyly wyth hym" (443.31-2). As Tristram's near-equal, Palomides proves a difficult opponent, and soon other knights are watching their combat with similar wonder: "So they laysshed togydyrs and gaff many sad strokys togydyrs; and many knyghtys mervayled what knyght he was that so encountred wyth the blak knyght, Sir Trystram" (443.36-8). For almost everyone else, their combat is a shared space of speculation. To them, this fight appears outside of any established affiliations.

Gradually, the two are distinguished by their ability in combat. Palomides is weaker. As the two are fighting, Lancelot rides into the scene, finds that "yondyr knyght in the blak harneyes" (Tristram) has almost beaten the knight "wyth the sylver shield" (Palomydes) (444.1-3). Not recognizing either knight, Lancelot offers his assistance to the weaker knight, Palomides. Palomides accedes "for well wyste he that Sir Launcelot knew nat Sir Trystram, and therefore he hoped that Sir Launcelot sholde beate other shame Sir Trystram; and thereof Sir Palomydes was full fayne" (443.13-14). Palomides uses Tristram's disguise against him by letting Lancelot think he is fighting some anonymous knight and not his friend Tristram.

Whereas Palomides thinks that he is thwarting Tristram by making him fight a superior knight, the disguised Tristram gains even more merit by the end of the day. After a long and exhausting fight, Dinadan, a member of Tristram's group, finally says Tristram's name within earshot of Lancelot. Lancelot disavows any intention of ever

hurting Tristram: "A, my lorde Sir Trystram, why were ye now disgysed? Ye have put

youreselff this day in grete perell! But I pray you to pardon me, for and I had knowyn

you, we had nat done this batayle" (445.7-10). While Lancelot reacts with surprise at

Tristram's disguise and asks forgiveness, Tristram responds with gratitude: "'Sir,' seyde

Sir Trystrams, 'this is nat the fyrste kyndenes and goodnes that ye have shewed unto me'"

(445.11-12). Tristram wins the gré or the reward for the day. Perhaps he recognizes that

fighting with Lancelot was an opportunity to prove he can stand toe to toe with Arthur's

best knight. Whereas Palomides urged the combat on in order to risk harm to Tristram,

Tristram instead takes advantage of his disguise to measure himself against Lancelot in

battle. When that disguise is selectively revealed to Lancelot, Tristram makes his affinity

with Lancelot a little bit stronger.

　　　Thus in the third day of the tournament, the crucial difference between Tristram

and Palomides comes forth: Tristram fights for the sake of proving himself greater in the

eyes of communities that temporarily cannot recognize him, whereas Palomides focuses

single-mindedly on thwarting or overmatching Tristram.  Whenever Tristram's disguise is

revealed, his communities by and large give him more worship, whereas Palomides risks

alienating himself further by revealing who he is. During the day, the group has again

been fighting in disguise on behalf of King Marhalt. When Tristram and his followers

propose switching sides and begin fighting for Arthur, Palomides insists on serving

Marhalt until the end of the tournament and differentiating himself from service with

Tristram: "'Sir [Tristram], do your beste,' seyde Sir Palomydes, 'for I woll nat chaunge

my party that I cam in wythall.' 'That is for envy of me,' seyde Sir Trystram, 'but God

spede you well in your journey!'" (449.43-6).  Palomides may not be changing his

allegiance to an overall party (Marhalt), but he is changing his allegiance to his local

group, effectively distinguishing himself from them. Tristram calls Palomides envious in

his retort.

Palomides disguises himself and then chooses allegiances without pursuing the

valor that the tournament space implicitly supports.  Rather than paying careful attention

to switching sides and revealing his disguise while he serves King Arthur, he continues to

serve Marhalt and uses that service as an opportunity to attack Tristram. He is loyal to

one king but not his friend. Consequently, Palomides loses when king loses to Arthur's

knights. As Marhalt and his allies are unhorsed, so Palomides is unhorsed by Arthur:

> And than the Kynge Arthure ran unto Sir Palomydes and smote hym quyte frome
> his horse. And than Sir Trystram bare downe all that ever he mette wythall; and
> Sir Gareth and Sir Dynadan ded there as noble knyghtes. And anone all the todir
> party began to fle.
> 'Alas,' seyde Sir Palomydes, 'that ever I sholde se this day! For now I have loste
> all the worshyp that I wan.' And than Sir Palomydes wente hys way, waylynge,
> and so wythdrewe hym tylle he cam to a welle; and there he put his horse from
> hym and ded of his armoure, and wayled and wepte lyke as he had bene a wood
> man. (450.2-12)

In refusing to change parties, Palomides has brought himself into opposition to both

Arthur and Tristram. As Arthur's party triumphs, Palomides laments losing the worship

that he had won in the first two days. His disguise has not been successful in

distinguishing him as an individual. He has only distinguished himself from Tristram by

being beaten by him. He exits the tournament space effectively cut off from both his

close affinities and his larger community.

Where Tristram succeeds in winning esteem, Palomides is unable to fashion

himself into a more worthy knight with Tristram's status. He fails to quite become

Tristram's double once his disguise is revealed. Instead, Palomides attacks Tristram for

using his disguise to switch sides, choosing loyalty to Arthur after having fought for

Marhalt: "Fye on the, traytoure!" (450.42). This claim is not shared by others. When

Guenevere asks two knights (Bleoberys and Ector) how the tournament went, they regard

Palomides as the one who turned against his party: "And wyte you well Sir Palomydes

ded passyngly well and myghtyly, but he turned ayenste the party that he cam in wythall,

and that caused hym to loose a grete parte of his worshyp – for hit semed that Sir

Palomydes ys passynge envyous" (451.31-37). According to this account, Palomides

failed to stick to the party that should have mattered the most to him: Tristram and his

friends. Disguises in general allow combatants to switch who they fight for, but they must

suffer the consequences of those choices after the tournament. Palomides's and Tristram's

places in the tournament depend on how their disguises are interpreted. Rather than there

being an absolute rule against turning on one's party, the worth of an action comes down

to how well knights can fashion a persona, given the guises they put on and the actions

they perform. Palomides attempts to stand out from being Tristram's double, but he fails

to realize that his disguise is most successful when it maintains its obligations with his

comrades and with the personal relationship he had with Tristram.

Palomides wins worship less well than Tristram, at least in Bleoberys and Ector's

eyes. He cannot anticipate shifting to the winning side when his attention is on deceiving

one knight rather than on the whole field of knights and spectators. As a consolation

prize, Palomides gains regard from the very group that Tristram abandoned, the Kings of

Ireland and Scotland. Despite Guinevere's words that he will never gain worship, the

kings give him "a courser" and "grete gyfftes" to encourage him to stay in their party

(451.46-452.2). Palomides's disguise wins him favor with one community, even as he

remains isolated from Tristram and Isode and marginalized at Arthur's court. The gifts are a cold consolation. The tournament disguises break Palomides and Tristram from one another in a way that will take the remainder of "The Tale of Sir Tristram" to resolve.

Overall, the tournament disguises at Lonezep perform two functions. First, they allow characters to distinguish themselves from their larger community in order to fight characters from that community while preserving the possibility of rejoining it with greater worship. Tristram can enter disguise, fight his fellow knights of the Round Table, and rejoin them by the end of the tournament to win the prize. In repeated scenes of judgment, the disguised Tristram is treated with curiosity and respect by Arthur and others, who ask who he is but do not challenge his decision to take up a disguise.

Second, tournament disguises also provide an opportunity to more closely examine closely-held affinities between characters. To outside audiences, Palomides and Tristram appear as virtual doubles while in disguise, signalling the possibly close affinity they have with one another. These disguises provide the cover for Palomides to attempt to distinguish himself from his friend. Yet tournament disguises are not designed to hide one's conflicts indefinitely. Palomides shows his envy over time, finally splitting himself from Tristram and the communities he most values. Furthermore, Palomides obsesses over his affinity to Tristram, neglecting the broader social implications of choosing Marhalt over Arthur. Palomides thus fails to fulfill the first function of tournament disguise and instead reveals his envy for Tristram.

Understanding tournament disguise allows critics to analyze Palomides's envy throughout "The Tale of Sir Tristram" as a failure to be as adept as Tristram at court performance. Sue Ellen Holbrook points to the significance of tournament scenes, as

twice tournaments with disguises precede scenes where at a well Palomides laments the loss of reputation to Tristram.[149] The well is the space where Palomides can take off his disguise, where his healing can begin. Whereas sometimes disguise is described as a motif that fragments identity, Lonezep demonstrates that disguise negotiates between a character and various communities and affinities.[150] At best, as with Tristram, one emerges in better standing with most of these groups. At worst, as with Palomides, disguise exacerbates and reveals his envy. Once that social poison is brought into the open, Palomides's healing can begin.

**Britomart and Artegall in Disguise: Doubles of Each Other**

In this final section, I will draw attention to Artegall and Britomart's tournament disguises in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene* to highlight first how Artegall and Britomart's disguises make them also look like doubles of one another, and then to show that revealing the disguise resolves the conflict between them, as they each move from their disguised personae to the characters that those guises have concealed. Both doubling and reconciliation occur without the precise negotiations between character and community that follow tournament disguise in *Le Morte Darthur*. Instead, Artegall and Britomart themselves are the primary subjects of attention.

Britomart is often called a stranger knight, and Artegall is referred to as the savage knight. Both of these epithets come up when they initially appear on the tournament field to fight. Artegall is introduced as "a straunger knight, from whence no man could reed, / In quyent disguise, full hard to be describe"; after he fells seven knights with a spear and more with his sword, spectators speculate about who he is (IV.iv.39.2-3). When they fail

to come up with a name, they give him an epithet: "But when they could not learne [his name] by no wize, / Most answerable to his wyld disguize / It seemed, him to term the saluage knight" (IV.iv.42.4-6). His origin cannot be interpreted and he is hard to describe. Literally he is inscrutable, as people cannot figure out his name, and they settle on the term "saluage knight" in reference to his shield, which declaims "Saluagesse sans finesse" (IV.iv.39.9). He wins and earns an epithet quite close to his original status as a stranger knight. Artegall's transformation from stranger knight to savage knight occurs right before a second stranger knight enters the press. As the sun begins to set, Britomart comes forward: "Then rushed forth out of the thickest rout / A stranger knight, that did his glorie shend: / So nought may be esteemed happie till the end" (43.7-9). She knocks Artegall off of his horse. To reiterate in terms of their disguises, one stranger knight becomes a savage knight only to be knocked off his horse by a second stranger knight. Britomart repeats Artegall's success.

What is the difference between a stranger knight and a savage knight? The difference is small: the two tend to double one another. The savage or wild knight is outside human society. He dwells in the woods, eschewing the courts and cities. In some cases, the interference of a knight outside the conventional bounds of the court both challenges and instructs the court: Sir Gromer Somer Joure in the fifteenth-century poem *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell* threatens an unarmed Arthur while he is on the hunt.[151] Arthur must answer the question of what women really want, a question whose answer lies outside of the bounds of the court. In the poem Gromer temporarily becomes the master over Arthur's life, and his sensitivity to the place of women indicates his instructional role, teaching from the outside. At times the wild knight is associated

with excessive force: Marie de France's eponymous Bisclavret enters the woods and becomes a werewolf. These scenes also involve a form of madness where a knight loses his place or status: Malory's Lancelot goes mad after losing the love of Guinevere and retreats to the wild; the eponymous knight of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* becomes *furioso* or mad and retreats into the woods for several cantos. Sometimes mad, sometimes wise, and always on the outside, the wild knight in romances redefines whatever courts he approaches.

The wild knight was also a disguise used by kings and knights at historical tournaments. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, James IV of Scotland's disguise as a wild knight evokes both his claims to the Scottish Highlands and the naturalness of his own state, above the contrivances of court and town. Of course, royal disguises in the early siteenth century are modes of contrivance or artifice. The disguise demonstrates James IV's own aptitude at political messaging, his own ability to control his comportment during chivalric engagements. That fact does not challenge the earlier content of the wild knight, but rather augments it. Though fiction, the guise can express truth through feigning, a fact that George Puttenham, like other sixteenth-century rhetoricians, acknowledged through the praise of ornamentation:

> As no doubt the good proportion of anything doth greatly adorn and comment it, and right so our late-remembered proportions do to our vulgar poesy, so is there yet requisite to the perfection of this art another manner of exornation, which resteth in the fashioning of our maker's language and style to such purpose as it may delight and allure as well the mind as the ear of the hearers with a certain novelty and strange manner of conveyance, disguising it no little from the ordinary and accustomed, nevertheless making it nothing the more unseemly or misbecoming, but rather decenter and more agreeable to any civil ear and understanding. (III.1, 221)[152]

*Exornation*, or fashioning language to delight and allure, is a disguising process that

nonetheless makes an utterance more agreeable. Whereas at points dissembling risks crossing a threshold of appropriateness, on the whole exornation functions as a "strange manner of conveyance," basically a form of expression that makes things sound strange, foreign, or not themselves. Pleasure tempered with the rhetorical purpose justifies the performance. In other words, the art of disguising has the potential to make an utterance more acceptable to a "civil ear and understanding," or an ear trained to the orderliness of a life of service. Disguise as ornament creates novelty while still attending carefully to fitting a particular purpose or context.

In this sense, then, Artegall comes in a long tradition of knights who adopt the motif of wildness. He conceals himself in wildness, which marks him as an outsider to the events in the tournament in two ways: his name is already unknown because he is a stranger knight; he has associated himself with roughness and wildness that seems "quyent" or strange to other tournament-goers. The epithet "savage knight" formalizes that outsider status, giving his puissance a more conventional and specific signifier.

Similar to the wild knight, the stranger knight is outside whatever community he is entering. He is a stranger to those who view him, though whether he originates from a similarly structured community or the isolation of wilderness remains unknown. The stranger knight is a motif realized throughout both *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*, a phrase that acknowledges the new knight's unfamiliarity to previous witnesses. While both the wild knight and the stranger knight are outsiders, the stranger knight usually does not exist in a state of madness or judgment. Instead, stranger knights represent the known in the unknown, matching a particular figure with the status of a knight while not confirming his name, origins, fealty, or gender. The stranger knight, as a

disguise, is perhaps the closest to plain vanilla that can be found.

Artegall is a stranger knight turned savage knight, and Britomart a stranger knight. The doubling suggests that each echoes the other's appearance, that Britomart appears in order to mirror Artegall's own performance. This is not the first time she has appeared as his double in the poem. In canto ii of book III, Britomart looks in a mirror and sees Artegall reflected back at her (III.ii.22-27). Kathryn Schwarz has noted how the mirror scene, where Britomart sees Artegall reflected in the mirror, foreshadows Britomart becoming a knight like Artegall.[153] The Lacanian mirror stage is one apparatus for coming to that conclusion: the "not-I" of the mirror overlaps conceptually with "I." Though Britomart is not actually the figure in the mirror, she identifies with the image of Artegall and tries to become it. That identification begins when she enters her father's closet and looks on his magic mirror. At first she sees herself, but soon thinks of other matters:

> Where when she had espyde that mirrhour fayre,
> Her selfe a while therein she vewd in vaine;
> Tho her auizing of the vertues rare,
> Which thereof spoken were, she gan againe
> Her to bethinke of, that mote to her selfe pertaine. (III.ii.22.5-9)

Her first purpose, looking only at herself, is *in vaine*, a phrase that signals either the futility of her own vision or its vanity and pride. She then thinks of "the vertues rare," conventionally taken to refer to the mirror's virtue in stanza 19. Two distinct powers are identified: the mirror shows what in the world "appertaynd" to the looker (19.1-4); the mirror is a secret-teller of "what euer foe had wrought, or frend had faynd" (19.5). Then she begins to think of the qualities of the mirror "that mote to her selfe pertaine." Based on the dual properties of the mirror, what she sees could either have to do with some

relationship (friend or foe) or with whatever is relevant to her. It offers the possibility of viewing both another and someone closely related to herself.  Thus the image she comes to see represents both what she desires and what she becomes.

Britomart is even mistaken for Artegall in Book V. In canto vi Britomart rides out to rescue Artegall from Radegund, who has taken him and dressed him in women's clothes. When she encounters Dolon and his wicked sons, they judge her to be Artegall "by many tokens plaine" (V.vi.34.2). Her companion Talus, who accompanied Artegall earlier in book V, is one of the most obvious tokens that misleads the viewers. However, the many tokens refer to chivalric signs. They are unspecified; rather than being described directly, the tokens merely allude to a similarity in appearance. Britomart can be mistaken for Artegall generally. While Dolon may have not been a reliable interpreter to begin with, their error indicates that Artegall and Britomart look similar enough for a mistake to be made.

Thus Britomart has habitually been a double for Artegall. At the tournament, Britomart first encounters with Artegall and wins in canto iv. Then they fight in individual combat in canto vi. This initiates a conflict: with them so evenly matched, who will triumph? They differentiate themselves through combat. Critics have focused on the way that the conflict results in revealing Britomart's and Artegall's sexual differences, thereby resolving their doubling through the major difference of gender. For Kathryn Schwarz, the combat resolves the homoerotic tension between the two into heterosexual marriage: Britomart, armed as a man, emerges from the combat as a lady, both lover and loved. Her encounter shows "the transition from homoerotic violence to heterosexual marriage."[154] Judith Anderson takes a more descriptive approach, giving a detailed

account of Britomart and Artegall's combat as it follows the pattern of an erotic dance.[155] Rather than focusing on how Britomart's armor produces a male figure that is then discovered to Artegall, Anderson asserts that Britomart's armor becomes hermaphroditic during the combat and her unveiling. Armored Britomart is multivalent; her armor reinforces a sense of masculinity in her exertions of martial chivalry, while it also has connections to women. The armor was previously used by a queen, Angela, and its status as a "habergeon" (little hauberk) avoids the more typical associations with "mayle" and its puns with maleness (90). Both Schwarz and Anderson focus on a transition from one state to another, one form of relation to another, or one form of gender to another. I argue that disguises produce a conflict and that their removal of disguise changes how they relate to themselves and each other. Britomart and Artegall find one another.

These actions are an extension of the tournament. The tournament, as a form of ritualistic combat, requires one winner who establishes himself as the best knight in the field, with "best" pertaining both to physical success and honorable behavior. They do not just fight and reveal themselves. Britomart and Artegall's conflict occurs before witnesses who are already expecting the tournament disguise to fashion how Britomart and Artegall are appraised. Artegall and Britomart's initial encounter within the tournament space interrupts the motif of Artegall's triumphant intervention with a doubled intervention, that of Britomart. Then their second encounter sets them up as combatants who strongly resemble one another and provides a careful but incomplete difference between the two, one that does not merely amount to being a man and a woman. To study that difference, I turn now to when Britomart is unhelmed by Artegall in book IV canto vi at the conclusion of their combat.

Many readers of the unhelming in IV.vi might assume that Britomart's gender is known as soon as she is unhelmed. However, an unhelming alone does not identify Britomart's gender.[156] Britomart in armor without her mask may only be identified as a knight with a beautiful face and long blond hair. The extra tokens mark her chivalric identity in the most generic terms possible – yet another fair, flaxen knight – while also providing an important interaction with the gender that also attends to those features. The textual details allow for this possibility; it is Artegall's reaction that spurs the impression that Britomart is not what she seems. Note first the details that describe Britomart, beginning with her "angels face":

> With that her angels face, vnseene afore,
> Like to the ruddie morne appeard in sight,
> Deawed with siluer drops, through sweating sore,
> But somewhat redder, then beseem'd aright,
> Through toylesome heate and labour of her weary fight.
>
> And round about the same, her yellow heare
> Hauing through stirring loosd their wonted band,
> Like to a golden border did appeare,
> Framed in goldsmithes forge with cunning hand:
> Yet goldsmithes cunning could not vnderstand
> To frame such subtile wire, so shinie cleare.
> For it did glister like the golden sand,
> The which Pactolus with his waters shere,
> Throwes forth vpon the riuage round about him nere. (IV.vi.19.5-20.9)

The forms of description in this scene can be used to describe men or women. An "angels face" today might be associated with a woman, but many angels of the period were described as either androgynous or male.[157] While "angels face" is used to refer to Bradamant, Britomart's counterpart in John Harington's translation of *Orlando Furioso*, the phrase can also be applied to men.[158] For instance, an elegy on the Jesuit priest Edmund Campion describes him as having a "shining angels face."[159]

Other registers also seem rather ambiguous. She appears sweaty, though the text construes this as a kind of silver glow to her reddened, exerted face. Then an entire stanza is devoted to describing her golden hair. Using hair and dew to draw a comparison between beauty and morning is also used in book I canto v, though there the details pertain to the masculine Phoebus: "Phoebus fresh, as bridegroom to his mate, / Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie haire" (I.v.2.3-4). Britomart's own face is dewed with silver drops and her own hair is shaken loose. The comparison to the masculine river Pactolus also indicates how these standards of beauty may pertain to both men and women. Summarily, while the details of this description are read as feminine because readers presume Britomart's underlying gender, even as her face is revealed it maintains tokens that could be applied to men. The narrator does not say that she would clearly be a woman or a man.

When Artegall looks at her face then, he responds to her possibly masculine and possibly feminine mien by hesitating. He does not know what to make of her, and so views her as a spectacle: "And he himselfe long gazing thereupon / […] of his wonder made religion, / Weening some heauenly goddesse he did see, / Or else vnweeting, what it else might bee" (IV.vi.22-1-5). His gaze turns to wonder. Artegall presumes that he is seeing a goddess but he is not sure, and the third person pronoun confirms the ambiguity he feels: he does not know what else *it* might be. Artegall is disarmed and his "manly hart" and his limbs shrink from attacking her because of how awe-inspiring she appears, but not necessarily because he understands her appearance (9). Her unhelming discloses her beauty without confirming her gender.

Once Glauce, Britomart's companion and nurse, asks them both to show their

faces, Britomart reacts to Artegall's face in a similar manner. As she beholds "the louely face of Artegall, / Tempred with sternesse and stout maiestie," she remembers first seeing that face in the mirror (26.2-3). Just as her appearance makes him unable to move or attack, so does seeing his face make her unable to act or speak. Their reactions still mirror one another until Scudamore first reveals Artegall's name and then Glauce reveals Britomart's status as a lady and their mutual love for one another.

Glauce differentiates between Artegall and Britomart in her three addresses: to the knights in the audience she identifies Britomart as a lady who will not woo away their "loves" because "there [she] wants theretoo," that is, she lacks the parts or the ability to do so (30.9); to Artegall she tells him to accept being conquered by love and "womans hand" (31.2); to Britomart she encourages her to set aside her wrath and forgive him.[160] Everyone now sees Britomart as a lady, and the doubling of Artegall and Britomart ceases once they both react: "Thereat full inly blushed Britomart; / But Artegall close smyling ioy'd in secret hart" (32.8-9). Both of their reactions are internal, but the respective blush and smile and the conjunction "but" confirm that this particular revelation normalizes how they relate to one another. They are no longer rivals competing for similar forms of textual attention. From now through the last time Artegall and Britomart appear, they love one another and remain readily distinguishable in forms of visual description.

As elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene*, Glauce's revelation of their differences from one another feels a little unreliable, a little incomplete.[161] Her statements feel like a verbal suture on a scene that is contextually more complex. Britomart and Artegall undisguised do not merely return to becoming knight and lady. Britomart retains her status as a knight, confirmed by the reactions of both Artegall and Scudamore.

Scudamore laments the absence of Amoret and asks Britomart to fulfill her promise to help him. He continues to use the title "Sir" to address Britomart, confirming that she still retains her status as a knight (34.5). Artegall similarly is affected by this news to feel affection for her, though it is ameliorated by two signifiers that seem once again to be ambiguous in gender: "Besides her modest countenance he saw / So goodly graue, and full of princely aw, / That it his ranging fancie did refraine, / And looser thoughts to lawfull bounds withdraw" (33.4-7). She is both princely and grave, retaining some of the elements of nobility and severity that had accompanied her disguise, as well as those traits that redound upon Artegall, who is himself a prince.[162] Britomart and Artegall may be coupled and distinguishable, but they retain some of their vital similarities.  In this instance, interpreting what were at first tournament disguises unsettles the assumption that the scene ends with Britomart and Artegall coming together into a conventional heterosexual marriage as woman and man. Britomart is still wearing armor at the end of the scene, so it is not as if she has suddenly divested herself of her hard, masculine shell. Though it appears that at this moment Britomart is differentiated from Artegall and they each settle into complementary gender roles as eventual wife and husband, I argue that their disguises preserve many similarities between them even after they reveal themselves.

Furthermore, as they unmask themselves for one another, their tournament disguises do not necessarily matter any longer to those spectators. When Spenser adapts tournament disguise, he seems less concerned with networks of communities than he is with the conflict and reconciliation that tournament disguises enable. Broadly speaking, Spenser replaces the communities with Britomart and Artegall themselves, creating a

more restricted stage for interpreting those two characters together. Allegory, or something like it, is set above the social exchanges that are dominant in Malory's text, as the disguises layer appearances and focus attention on those layers.

Thus the difference between tournament disguise in Malory and Spenser amounts to a difference in reading. Disguise fashions characters in both texts. When reading tournament disguises in Malory, one is reading the reactions of various members of chivalric communities. In Spenser Britomart and Artegall's reactions to each other's appearances are not as connected to particular communities. They pertain more to the group of people gathered together: Britomart, Artegall, Glauce, and Scudamore. The greater amount of visual detail encourages greater reflection on how Britomart and Artegall appear as doubles and how they differentiate themselves. Even as the visual registers maintain their ambiguity, Glauce and Scudamore frame Britomart and Aregall's encounter as an instance of love. Their reading – or misreading – the scene distinguishes Britomart and Artegall as doubles that do not neatly conform to the conventions of marriage.

Chapter Three

Perceptions of Chivalry and Establishments of Worth in the Fair Unknown: Gareth and Britomart


When Tristram wears the armor of another knight, or Artegall adopts the persona of the *saluage knight*, they produce both marvel and anxiety in spectators and participants. Their disguises instill identity in an appearance and test viewers' abilities to distinguish between appearance and identity. In the case of Gareth and Britomart, disguise develops at least two conceptions of nobility: *sanguis* or inherited nobility and *virtus* or nobility through action. Disguising oneself as an outsider is a viable strategy in tournament and court spaces because it gives value without the privileges tied to one's local renown. The disguised knight improves himself while also perhaps raising expectations surrounding other disguised knights. At the same time, a disguise can only prove a knight's nobility through his risking his own alienation, for appearing as an outsider means being judged as an outsider. By extension, by attempting to prove himself noble through an appearance of commonness, he risks destabilizing the class he attempts to attain. Nobility, even if inherent, might be unmoored from the signs that one trusts to both recognize and reinforce it.

These tensions are not confined to the tournament space. Medieval and early modern romances often show knights proving themselves through behaviors suited to both quest and court. In particular, disguised characters often take advantage of methods of naming, description, and narration by which a court comprehends their performance. In seeking comprehension, witnesses evaluate the status of whatever they judge. In *Le*

*Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*, knights are frequently depicted in states of becoming where their initial appearance does not align with their established worth, where what seems to be differs from what is.  Disguise presents a difference between appearance and status to a character's social circle, and leaves them to connect the dots. This chapter undertakes the study of these strategies through two key figures: Gareth and Britomart.

Gareth and Britomart both assume disguises that fashion them into knights.  Both characters are nominally noble but not knights at the time that they adopt their disguises, and disguise begins a process by which they become knights.  Gareth is the son of King Lot, younger brother to Gawain and nephew to King Arthur.  Sent to Arthur's court in order to become a knight, he appears in the fourth book of eight in *Le Morte Darthur*, "The Tale of Sir Gareth," as a fair unknown, eschewing his name and status. Gareth enters the court as a kitchen knave. When a maiden, Lyonet, seeks a knight for her quest to rescue her sister Lyonesse from the Red Knight of the Red Lands, Gareth volunteers to help her. He then proves himself over the course of the quest, defeating several knights and treating the people he encounters with courtesy. Gareth's narrative is linear, beginning when he enters court and ending with his undisguising and his marriage to Lyonesse.

First appearing in the third book of *The Faerie Queene*, Britomart is a lady living in her father's castle who disguises herself in a knight's arms and armor as part of a plan to pursue her foretold love, the knight Artegall.  The title of the book identifies her as the Knight of "Chastity."[163] She first appears in canto i of book III of *The Faerie Queene* disguised in full armor, knocking Guyon (the hero of book II) from his horse. Whereas

Gareth pursues a linear narrative, Britomart appears *in medias res*, and the three episodes this chapter deals with are distinct episodes from cantos of book III in *The Faerie Queene*: her entrance to Malecasta's castle in canto i, her entrance to Malbecco's castle in canto ix, and her initial arming in canto iii.

This chapter will focus on how their personae are crafted and what their performances imply about status and society. The sections will follow three practices that occur with both characters. First, their descriptions are marked by signs of focused on class and gender. But other signs suggest behaviors that exceed conventional boundaries of knighthood: Gareth could be a giant or a kitchen boy; Britomart could provoke knights into desire for their fellow knight. For Gareth, incorrect interpretation puts him at risk, as onlookers could deem him unsuitable for the court. In contrast, interpretation puts Britomart's onlookers at risk, as Spenser focuses more on how interpretation leads both Malecasta and her knights into excessive desire for her armored, fair-faced form.

Second, disguise opens up a space to create new personae through a process of erasing old signs and establishing new ones. The disguised persona's status as an outsider is maintained alongside selective disclosures of one's family and origins. Gareth conceals his name and receives a new one from his court: Beaumains. Subsequently, Gareth carefully manages who knows his name, selectively disclosing his true lineage to earn advantages from other characters. Britomart in book III canto ix appears as a stranger knight who gradually uncovers herself to onlookers at Malbecco's castle. She shows herself to be a knight through images. At the same time she discloses her own Trojan roots, even though the oral mode of disclosure and her interlocutor Paridell's dubiousness sow doubt about the credibility of her claims.

Third, knights augment their public personae by means of their disguises, adding new elements to how they are otherwise recognized. Gareth gives his true name to several characters outside Arthur's court as he attempts to engineer his own revelation. When these characters come to Arthur to report the exploits of Beaumains, they invite the court to speculate about Beaumains's identity. Rather than appealing to a community, Britomart acquires knightly qualities through the process of donning and wearing armor. In canto iii of book III she becomes a knight through carefully selected pieces of armor that have rich histories connecting to the Matter of Britain. As well, her muscular body shows itself to be particularly well-suited for mastering knighthood. Even the act of emulating a knight is enough for Britomart to become a knight. Gareth and Britomart's disguises allow their acts as knights to determine their worth rather than having chivalric worth be derived from their status.[164] Disguise allows for imagining a form of knighthood that may exist outside of status, even when it proves to be tied to that status.

**Disguise Embodied: Physical Detail as Sign**

When disguises are described in both *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*, the registers of physical appearance mix with markers of status and gender, suggesting that the nobility and martiality of Gareth and Britomart are found in tangible details.[165] In this section, terms describing Gareth and Britomart project nobility directly upon the body, employing markers of fairness like their large and fair hands. These terms bespeak a form of social spectatorship, which implicates both figures in fields of social judgment, including the court, the battlefield, and the position of the reader. In such circles, the various ambiguities of these signs develop alternative possibilities of monstrosity and

marvelous excess.

"The Tale of Sir Gareth," the fourth major book of *Le Morte Darthur* in the

Winchester MS, begins with an unknown figure arriving at Arthur's court. His arrival

invites characters at the court to comment on his appearance and speculate about who he

is. When the unnamed Gareth arrives during the feast of Pentecost, he is described as a

spectacular figure.[166] The text raises the expectation of hearing or seeing a "grete

mervayle" and "strange adventures," terms which signal that Gareth invites wonder from

his onlookers (177.24-5). From appearing taller than his companions when first sighted

at a distance to the extensive description when he arrives in Arthur's hall, superlative

terms constitute Gareth as a wonder while leaving open possible ways to interpret him. Is

he an interloper of the likes of the Green Knght? A noble courtier? A monster?

> Ryght so com into the halle two men well besayne and rycheley, and uppon their
> sholdyrs there lened the goodlyest yonge man and the fayreste that ever they all
> sawe. And he was large and longe and brode in the shuldyrs, well-vysaged, and
> the largyste and the fayreste handis that ever man sye. But he fared as he myght
> nat go nothir bere hymself but if he lened uppon their shuldyrs. […] Than this
> yonge muche man pullyd hym abak and easyly streighte upryght. (178.4-8)

The description is odd for several reasons. First, this section frequently uses the

superlative to imply that Gareth is the best. Gareth is compared to his merely well and

richly dressed companions and everyone else with a series of adjectives: *goodlyest* and

*fayreste*, with the *largyste* and *fayreste* hands. The superlatives combined with Gawain's

earlier impression that Gareth was taller than his companions by "a foote and an half,"

establish Gareth as a man who surpasses those around him. His bodily proportions

emphasize the size of his shoulders and hands. The *fayreste* hands variously imply

beauty, lightness, courtesy, and even the absence of manual labor.[167] His leaning on two

other men suggests some kind of weakness, though the phrasing shows that this may be

mere appearance: "*but* he fared *as* he myght" be unable to walk without them. "But" signals a contrast with the other visual signs, and "as" brings the following claim into the language of seeing. Then, moments later, he pulls himself "easyly streighte upryght." By standing, he transforms a sign of seeming weakness or indolence into strength.

 *Le bel inconnu* or Fair Unknown narratives commonly emphasize the stranger's nobility and strength.  Gareth's tale is no exception.[168] However, some of these descriptions are ambiguous regarding the quality of strength Gareth shows.  Gareth is also described in the quote above as a "yonge muche man*,*" foregrounding the ties between physicality and class.  *Muche* implies status and size at once.  Whereas uses of *muche* in *Le Morte Darthur* often refer to the body directly, in this case it is unclear whether his body is immense, whether he is a particularly outstanding man, or whether both are true.[169]  Since might is an ideal of knighthood as well as a quality found in its monstrous opponents, the combination of the two qualities here is both fitting and ominous.  Knights need strength and therefore size; in the previous tale in *Le Morte Darthur,* Kay's armor appears too small when worn by Lancelot, implying Kay's relative weakness.[170] At the same time, monsters also possess mass or *mucheness*, including the giant that Arthur fights on Mont St.  Michel.[171] The ambiguity in this phrase and in similar signifiers of nobility reflects the tenuous position Gareth's spectators are in as they struggle to determine whether the marvel appearing before them poses a threat or an opportunity, whether he is a noble man or a monster.

 Gareth's massiveness has two precedents that occur in the first two books of *Le Morte Darthur*: the Fair Unknown as represented by Sir Torre, and the giant of Mont St. Michel.[172]  Torre appears in the first book just after Arthur has married Guinevere. As

they hold court, a farmer named Aryes brings Torre forward and explains that he does not labor like his thirteen other sons. Torre is "well vysaged," "well made of his years," and "muche more" than any of his brothers. (64.26-31). Again, massiveness or being *muche more* is taken by Arthur as a sign of his worth. Arthur, reading these details as signs of nobility, decides to knight Torre. Only afterward does Merlin identify why Torre has these qualities: he is the bastard son of King Pellinore. In this case, massiveness is a sign of nobility that is soon proven true.

In the second book, descriptions of the Giant of St. Michel's immensity signal not his worth as a noble knight but his threat to knights and ladies alike. Monsters who sit on the periphery of knighthood often have descriptions that resemble in their excesses what chivalric orders seek to regulate: might and sexuality.[173] The allegorical metonymy between monster and knight appears in Arthur's dream just before his encounter with the giant. Arthur sees a dragon from the west who in fierce battle rends apart a bear from the Orient, which represents both human and monster. An interpreter identifies Arthur as the dragon and variously labels the bear as "som tyraunte" and "some geaunte," referring to either the Emperor Lucius or the giant (121.8-10).[174] The relation between man and monster recurs when Arthur fights the giant. He fights a being who measures "fro the hede to the foote fyve fadom longe and large" (123.42). The potency in limbs that large is contrasted with the meal the giant was eating just prior. The "lymme of a large man" appears small compared to the giant's own, while the giant "beekys his brode lendys by the bryght fyre," the *brode lendys* referring to either warming himself or cooking parts of a castrated knight (123.19-20).[175] The giant's parts are difficult to distinguish from those of the knight he is eating. Thus the emphasis of Gareth's size and his nobility occur in a

context where the other interpretive possibility is a kind of monstrous animality.[176] His disguise draws attention to itself because, effaced of a noble name, Gareth's visage invokes possibilities of both monstrosity and nobility that successive interpretations by onlookers try to resolve.

So Gareth's initial appearance introduces him to a court of onlookers, demonstrating both nobility and masculinity while also teasing out associations with either the deficit or excess of chivalric qualities.  His initial appearance sets the stage for a number of extended exchanges between spectators and the disguise, as they seek to balance the positive suggestions of that appearance against more apprehensive ambiguities. They must determine whether they are dealing with someone in disguise, someone who truly does not know his own lineage, or something further beyond the ken of the court.

In the earliest description of Britomart's body in the first canto of Book III, the mere revelation of her face provokes a series of interpretations in her onlookers that feature her knightly qualities while also generating desires in those who look upon the stranger knight.  After she and the Redcrosse Knight meet one another, they approach the court of Malecasta, where they successfully fight six knights who attempt to waylay them. They are then invited inside, where most of the knights disarm. Britomart alone keeps her armor on, only lifting the front part of her helmet to reveal part of her face.

The six knights see her as a knight and subsequently exhibit and restrain their desire for that fellow knight. When Britomart first lifts up her *umbriere* [visor] in canto i, her face is undescribed except as a "goodly visage" (III.i.42.8).  Rather than proceeding with a blazon or a list of noble qualities, the description then focuses on her brightness as

compared to the moon in a cloudy evening:

> But the braue Mayd would not disarmed bee,
> But onely vented vp her vmbriere,
> And so did let her goodly visage to appere.
>
> As when faire Cynthia, in darkesome night,
> Is in a noyous cloud enueloped,
> Where she may find the substaunce thin and light,
> Breakes forth her siluer beames, and her bright hed
> Discouers to the world discomfited;
> Of the poore traueller, that went astray,
> With thousand blessings she is heried;
> Such was the beautie and the shining ray,
> With which faire Britomart gaue light vnto the day. (III.i.42.7-43.9)

The literal action of lifting up the visor on her helmet gives way to an effusive description of her as Cynthia shining beams of light through the clouds.  Her illumination shines through the trappings which shroud her. Rather than revealing the moon itself, Cynthia breaks her beams forth to illuminate the path of an unnamed traveler. By the last two lines, Britomart still has only been described as bright, *faire*, and *beautie*.  Her beauty does not reveal her gender.

While illumination would be appropriate to describe a woman as well as a man, no one recognizes her as a woman.[177]  The same terms prove also appropriate for a knight, as *faire* occasionally describes knights: Arthur in book I canto vii is first described as "a goodly knight, faire marching" (I.vii.29.2).  Even beauty can be masculine in *The Faerie Queene*: the walls of Malecasta's castle are decorated with the story of Venus and Adonis, wherein Venus is stricken by Adonis's beauty: "when first her tender hart was with his beautie smit" (III.i.34.9). In effect, though uncovered, Britomart's visage combined with her armor and the understanding of those around her preserves her social status as a beautiful knight presumed male.  Though her gender may be considered

concealed, she still shines a light on others. She grants her onlookers illumination, an image which converts the potential vulnerability to their sight into her strength in helping them to see. She, as the moon, both guides and commands their sight.

Subsequently, the text focuses on how her onlookers make sense of her indistinct visage. The six knights she has just fought inspect Britomart, trying to make sense of what they see. The next two stanzas describe the six knights who fought against Britomart and the Redcrosse Knight: Gardante, Parlante, Iocante, Basciante, Bacchante, and Noctante. The names, derived from Latin and French roots, describe their function: viewing, talking, playing, kissing, reveling, and nighting.[178] They seem "courteous and gent," and they are named after qualities of courtly civility as well as qualities of lechery.[179] They offer two perspectives on courtliness; they emphasize courtly viewing as a way of being seen as well as a way of pursuing lust, two courtly tendencies which remain indistinguishable in the stanza. The emphasis on vision and seeming follows in their descriptions: Gardante presents a "comely vew," Basciante "did him selfe most courteous shew," and Bacchante "seemd too fell and keene" (III.i.45). Based on his name, Gardante ("Viewing") ostensibly sees, but in description that quality manifests as a form of being seen. Similarly, Basciante ostensibly kisses, but description focuses on his courtliness. Their implied actions, both courtly and lecherous, are thus dependent on forms of presentation. Their presentations are soon surpassed by Britomart, who surpasses them all in both knightly potential and fair-seeming: "But to faire Britomart they all but shadowes beene" (III.i.45.9). Britomart receives the visual interest briefly directed towards the other knights because she surpasses them. Her disguise, consisting of her armored body and her revealed face, draws their attention.

Thus the six knights are rendered as judges and onlookers who are compelled to both desire and fear her, such that they are compelled to restrain their desire for the unknown but presumably male knight:

> For shee was full of amiable grace,
> And manly terror mixed therwithall,
> That as the one stird vp affections bace,
> So th'other did mens rash desires apall,
> And hold them backe, that would in error fall;
> As hee, that hath espide a vermeill Rose,
> To which sharpe thornes and breres the way forstall,
> Dare not for dread his hardy hand expose,
> But wishing it far off, his ydle wish doth lose.  (III.i.46)

Britomart is full of two qualities, grace and terror, which then produce the reactions of the knights around her.  One interpretation is to relate these two qualities to Britomart's respective personae as maid and knight: the grace is maidenly while the manly terror is knightly.[180] This reading is not satisfying.  Britomart's face is uncovered at this moment, whereas her other features remain encased in armor. One cannot read her face as feminine and her armor as masculine, as the text does not signal that grace or terror correspond to genders.  Furthermore, other knights do not recognize her as a woman at this point. She visually presents herself as a knight, such that Britomart is as much a knight when she lifts her umbriere as she is when her umbriere is down.[181] Both amiable grace and manly terror are knightly qualities, as Gardante's comely features have just shown.  Also, the description of other knights, like that of Artegall in the next canto, repeats the emphasis on grace in a knightly body: Artegall possesses "heroicke grace" (III.ii.24.9).  So the bifurcation of amiable grace and manly terror does not imply that Britomart is undisguised, or that her knightly and maidenly qualities are distinguishable in the terms of a gender binary.  Instead, they emphasize the mixed subject role of knighthood as

realized through her, of grace and terror in the knight.

As with Gareth, concerns of gender influence how Britomart is perceived and treated as a knight.  She enters a homosocial relation with the knights which is affected by the knights' implacable but suppressed desire for their fellow knight.[182] Britomart possesses *manly* terror, which has the effect of deterring her onlookers' desire from the error of lust alluded to as "affections base" and "mens rash desires."[183] Grace, at times a positive quality encouraging friendship between knights, threatens to disrupt those relations by giving way to excessively desirous socializing.  The stanza thus separates convivial or courtly desire from lecherous desire.  In order to maintain a balance between sociability and excess lust, manly terror must deter the knights from showing excess affection for their fellow man.  The thorned-rose imagery in the next lines converts the conventional relation of a rose's thorns as a maiden's defenses into her fierce appearance.[184] Not only does manly terror regulate the behavior of the six knights towards another knight, but it intercedes at the very point where a courtly quality reaches excess, forestalling what is subsequently described as "his ydle wish" (46.9).  Desire is decoupled from an active pursuit into fancy, allowing the six knights to look upon her face safely.  Britomart's disguise converts her into a representation of chivalric chastity, whereby the threat of force converts the potential desire between masculine subjects into courtly grace.

Throughout this passage I have referred to Britomart as a masculine subject when it comes to the other knights' judgements even while calling her "she." The usage is deliberate.  The text continues to refer to her with feminine pronouns irrespective of how she appears to other knights. This may be because Britomart's underlying status as a

maiden provides a substantial amount of the humor in this segment, and much of the humor results from the reader knowing what the knights cannot.  Because of this irony, readers may think that the men desire what they do not identify but may nonetheless intuitively know: her femininity.  However, Britomart is dressed as a knight and seen as a man through this passage, so the knights' desire for her is a desire between men, notwithstanding the irony understandable to readers.

This stanza enacts the transformation of anxious desire into a principle allowing the knights to coexist.  The conflict between Britomart's disguise and her underlying status as a lady makes this passage a source of unsettling humor.  In the absence of a definite recognition of her sex, her face combined with her armored body are only recognized as a man.  Britomart's disguise thus shows the desire between men that accompanies their visual representation in armor. Like Gareth's initial appearance at court, her initial disguised appearance in Malecasta's court in III.i conceals her exact status, providing instead an unrecognized visage whose qualities inspire others to appraise her worth in a positive (though ambiguous) light.  Meanwhile, that performance provides a study of the libidinous but self-regulated relations between knights.

Once the knights' desire is described and then minimized, the remainder of the canto provides Malecasta as a substitute for resolving the erotic desire directed towards Britomart.  Her inordinate yearning shifts Britomart's chastity from a relation between knights, where homoerotic desire is experienced and suppressed, to a relation between a knight and a lady, where desire must be negotiated externally through good conduct.[185] Malecasta, who sees "a fresh and lusty knight" (III.i.47.3), desires Britomart with passion that is humorous in its excess.

The humor of the subsequent dinner scene as well as of the scene where Malecasta enters Britomart's bed rests on her inappropriate displays of excessive desire. The next stanza begins by describing how she loses control of her own desire: "Eftsoones she grew to great impatience / And into termes of open outrage burst, / That plaine discouered her incontinence" (III.i.48.1-3). Malecasta is not dissuaded by Britomart's armor or her potential for violence, perhaps because the armor primarily regulates potential combat between men. The threat of violence that armor might pose towards women instead appears eroticized in such a way that chaste women experience both knights and monsters as potential threats to their chastity. At other moments in the poem, Florimell flees her many pursuers, whereas Amoret fears Busirane, Britomart, Timias, and the giant.[186] In contrast, Malecasta, depicted as unchaste, does not apprehend the threats imparted by Britomart's manly terror, at least where "a fresh and lusty knight" is concerned. Malecasta does not notice or does not care what gender Britomart is.

Britomart's disguised gender thus provides a visual and affective performance that determines how her onlookers relate to her. She is interpreted as noble and gendered as masculine while her face is revealed; the face proves capable of attesting chivalric masculinity, which is further defined in her onlookers as desire regulated according to their subject role. Gareth and Britomart's appearances create ambiguities of interpretation through alternate meanings. Gareth's features can also signify an anomalous commonness or a latent monstrousness. Other knights experience and subdue lecherous desires when they see Britomart as a knight. Both fit into a courtly system only when audiences see these ambiguous signs and declare that they are noble. Accordingly, both texts stretch the boundaries of courtly community through characters' interactions with other groups.

Audiences reincorporate the otherwise spectacular qualities of Britomart and Gareth. The disguise sets forth a form of masculinity that is regulated by the process of seeing them.

One major difference between the two is the manner in which the two first appear; Britomart presents herself as a knight already, whereas Gareth presents himself as an unknown non-knight at court. Gareth may or may not be noble to his spectators. This ambiguity poses a challenge to how knighthood and its qualities are assessed. Arthur struggles primarily with how he should accept Gareth into his court. Gareth's disguise fashions how he might fit into the chivalric community, providing a series of ambiguities that Arthur's court can then resolve, effectively accepting him into the fold.

In Britomart's case, the disguise presents no recognizable ambiguity in class status for the other characters to debate. The question is not whether Britomart is a knight or whether she wants to join Malecasta's community. The text instead focuses on how Malecasta and her other knights relate to her armored form. For Spenser, becoming a knight is not the end of recognition in a disguise scene, but rather the point at which other interpreters begin to determine how they shall relate to a character who is only provisionally known as a beautiful knight. Her onlookers' desire is on textual display, manifest in both how they feel and how they act around her. Thus the focus is on how others interpret her, and especially the close relationship between perception and desire experienced by Malecasta and her knights.

To sum up this difference in another way, Gareth's disguise engages with how his onlookers perceive nobility, offering a form of alienation through ambiguity whereby Gareth can become an outsider and eventually be recognized as noble again. Britomart's disguise also engages with how onlookers perceive nobility, and she looks the part.

However, others' perceptions of Britomart set her apart as they respond to her as if she were an attractive male knight. This is not the start of a process of fashioning, but confirmation that she has become a knight combined with reflections on the desirability of her chivalric status.

The next section will look at how Gareth and Britomart restrict who hears their true names. For both of them, the names "Gareth of Orkeney" and "Britomart" incorporate their identity within the field of spectatorship, providing a signifier that defines subsequent relations. When other people do not know their names, others try to supply names or histories that might represent who they are. A similar distinction will unfold in this section: Gareth's name is hidden and he selectively reveals it to fashion himself for other characters and their communities; Britomart's history is hidden and selectively revealed to focus attention on how Paridell and others understand it.

**Names and Negotiation: Cleaving Lineage from Merit**

Gareth's concealment of his name helps him earn favor at court, allowing him to befriend Lancelot and others on the basis of his skill and conduct. Yet narrative anonymity is insufficient for becoming a knight, since Gareth is working within a chivalric culture that demands some form of nominal or emblematic identification. Thus in Gareth's initial exchanges with Arthur and Kay, he creates a legitimate persona who can accrue status and befriend others, one that Kay names Beaumains. The alternate recognition allows Beaumains to collect a list of accomplishments that are tied to his name. It also allows Gareth's actual name to enter circulation at critical moments of social exchange, when his persona Beaumains requires forms of access which would

elude someone whose class status was unknown.  Finally, it accomplishes both of these social tasks by risking appearance as a man without the qualities necessary to possess a chivalric identiy. Each time Beaumains falls under suspicion, he meets a conservatism of status common in the late fifteenth century, a conservatism that reacted to the rise of new noble families by upholding the connection between birth, status, and signification. At moments of intense suspicion, Beaumains must demonstrate his noble birth in order to proceed.

Gareth's name signifies a personal identification, a geographical tie, and a familial link: Gareth of Orkeney.  Orkeney is an island to the far north of Britain, ruled in the first books by King Lot of Orkeney. Arthur is nephew to Lot's wife Queen Morgause, and Morgause's offspring are Arthur's cousins: Gawain, Gaheris, Aggravaine, Mordred, and Gareth.  Arthur's close ties to Morgause's children also shows that the peripheral regions of Britain have been incorporated under one vision of knighthood and kingship, a larger community that tenuously holds together its many circles of influence.[187]  While the alliance of families perseveres, Gareth can claim a privileged place at court because of the family connections latent in his name.[188]

Even more than most romances, *Le Morte Darthur* is built on the circulation of names.  The text gives the circulation of names a privileged place in lists that appear to reproduce tournament rolls.  Proper names are rubricated in the Winchester MS, indicating that the names had particular textual significance.[189] In most cases, the names of significant people and items (the Sankgreall) appear in red ink.  While such distinctions do not recur in William Caxton's edition in 1485, capital letters distinguish each name and each proper noun.[190] Then the texts repeat names at a pace disorienting

for a modern reader, as when the narration lists a large number of participants in a tournament by name.[191] These rolls are excessive in their account of names; the roll of Gareth's tournament takes up over a page of the Winchester MS, and it is one of the more succinct ones (213.35-214.38). An artifact of a tournament culture and a way to circulate names textually, these rolls reveal an obsession with name, placement, and status which to modern readers is sometimes trivial (who would remember that Sir Grummor Grummorson was a "noble knyghte of Scotlond"?) and sometimes important: citing Tristram's name and status situates the Gareth narrative within Tristram's upcoming one while hinting at more to come ("nat at that tyme knyght of the Rounde Table; but he was at that tyme one of the beste knyghtes of the worlde") (214.1, 5-8). Gareth enters these pathways of circulation as Beaumains.

Before Arthur asks Gareth's name, he has already responded favorably to Gareth, suspecting that he has come "of men of worshyp" (178.32). After receiving Gareth's courtly praises and granting his curious request for a year's food and drink, Arthur asks his name:

> "But what is thy name, I wolde wete?"
> "Sir, I can nat tell you."
> "That is mervayle," seyde the Kynge, "That thou knowyste nat thy name, and thou arte one of the goodlyest yonge men that ever I saw." (178.39-43)

Like Tristram at the tournament of Lonezep in Chapter 2, Gareth phrases his unwillingness to share his name as the inability to do so, while also implying a polite refusal. Arthur takes Gareth's response as an admission of ignorance or amnesia: he must not know his own name. Since it is impossible that Arthur took *can* to mean "know" and misheard the syntax of the sentence, Arthur might see no reason for Gareth to politely withhold his name; why be noble but unannounced? Why be so kind and so great in

comportment and yet refuse a king's request? The lack of name gives no proof to the ability and nobility otherwise perceived by Arthur, but neither does it disprove what has already been demonstrated. That becomes a *mervayle*, a term Arthur uses to express wonderment at the contradiction between other noble signs and the lack of a producible name. Gareth appears worthy but refuses to divulge his name, while Arthur supplies the explanation that Gareth is marvelously unknown, noble but without a name known by him, maintaining the fiction that his name and status exist but are inaccessible.[192]

Because Gareth's name is made unknown, and Arthur does not expect him to give his name, Gareth can be readily renamed. Thus Gareth's disguise becomes nameable, such that others can give him his new name, Beaumains. While teasing the new arrival, Kay gives the lack of a name as reason enough for naming Beaumains: "And sythen he hath no name, I shall gyff hym a name whyche shall be called Beawmaynes – that is to say 'Fayre Handys' " (179.7-8). The name is given, an act that is a mocking transaction; Kay does not believe that Beaumains is "fair" or noble, and assigns him and his hands to the kitchens where he toils for a year. At the same time the verb *gyff* makes the new name sound like a courtly appointment.[193] Kay does not merely name him or call him Beaumains: he gives or bestows that name. Gareth's challenge is to earn that name, turning Beaumains into a worthy knight. Gareth's mother Morgause recognizes this potential for transforming Beaumains's name into a positive emblem of quality later in the tale, stating after she comes to court looking for her son, "But I mervayle … that Sir Kay dud mok and scorne hym, and gaff hym to name Bewmaynes; yet Sir Kay … named hym more righteuously than he wende, for I dare sey he is as fayre an handid man and wel disposed, and he be on lyve, as ony lyvynge" (211.31-5). In this instance, Gareth's

hands distinguish his skill, *fayre* modifying the entire phrase *an handid man*. The usage

imprecisely translates his body part into the idiom proven under the name, the *fair*

*handed* being one who possesses great prowess in combat.[194] The phrase distinguishes

the hands as a part of him, both as a physical feature and as a sign of skill. One of the

key signs that causes Arthur to favor Gareth is converted into a name, and that name in

turn is transformed into a part of Gareth in the process of Lancelot's witnessing and

reporting. It is a part of Beaumains that merits particular attention as others describe him,

at once disguising Gareth and signifying the worth of the one disguised.

While the pseudonymic Beaumains accrues reputation through a series of

chivalric combats, Gareth's own name must occasionally overwrite the pseudonym in

order to access privileges that would be denied an upstart knight. No matter the potential

of his nickname to circulate and represent his own worth, family connections are still a

test for knighthood. After a year as a kitchen knave, Beaumains has Arthur grant him

permission to serve Lyonet on her quest to rescue her sister. In his first combat,

Beaumains defeats Kay and asks Lancelot to knight him. Lancelot demands his name as

a condition of knighthood, and receives it on Gareth's condition that "ye woll nat

dyscover me" (182.21). The commitment to keep Gareth's name private satisfies

Lancelot and Gareth. Lancelot is glad because he has suspected that Gareth should be "of

grete bloode" (182.27). He then uses this knowledge to further advocate for Gareth as

Beaumains, rebuking Kay when he returns to court: "For full lytyll knowe ye of what

byrth he is com of, and for what cause he com to the courte" (182.35-37). While Kay

does not know, Lancelot does. This exchange signals that Beaumains as a disguise offers

the possibility of revising Gareth's relation to the court; underlying his performances of

chivalric masculinity are the spectators' interests in those qualities of status rendered seemingly immutable by his true name: birth and allegiance.  Thus, the renown of Beaumains only temporarily substitutes for Gareth's status as an Orkeney.

Yet Beaumains is no simple substitution for Gareth; it is a persona that helps construct the underlying public reputation of Gareth.  One persona (Beaumains) helps to establish another (Gareth of Orkeney).  Gareth establishes himself through Beaumains, just as knightly names are the result of a recognition of value that gains meaning in repeated gossip and interpretation. While accompanying Lyonet, Beaumains defeats several knights in successive scenes: the Black Knight, the Green Knight, the Red Knight, and Sir Persaunte of Inde.  After defeating Persaunte of Inde, Gareth chooses to reveal his name to Lyonet and Persaunte. He maintains secrecy while disclosing his name to a select group of people: "And so that ye woll kepe hit in cloce and this damesell, I woll tell you of what kynne I am com of" (195.3-5).

It is not clear why Gareth chooses to reveal his name at this moment. Lyonet has just asked Persaunte of Inde to knight Beaumains. Persaunte agrees, but Beaumains reminds him that Lancelot has already knighted him: "'Sir,' seyde Bewmaynes, 'I thanke you for I am bettir spedde, for sertaynly the noble knyghte Sir Launcelot made me knyght'" (194.31-3).  At first, Beaumains does not reveal his lineage. He only reveals that Lancelot knighted him. Persaunte praises the choice, listing worthy knights like Lancelot and closing by suggesting that Beaumains could become one of the four greatest knights of the world: "For and ye may macche that Rede Knyght, ye shall be called the fourth of the worlde" (194.46-7). The stakes for Beaumains are clear: defeat the Red Knight of the Red Lands and become almost as great as Lancelot.

Gareth does not need to reveal his name to receive that appraisal. Instead, he chooses the moment just the stakes for his disguise are set to confirm for his restricted audience his extended familial connections:

> "Sir," seyde Bewmaynes, "I wolde fayne be of good fame and of knyghthode: "And I latte you wete, I am com of good men, for I dare say my fadir was a nobleman. And so that ye woll kepe hit in cloce, and this damesell, I woll tell you of what kynne I am com of."
> "We woll nat discover you," seyde they bothe, "tylle ye commaunde us, by the fayth we owe to Jesu."
> "Truly," than sayde he, "my name is Sir Gareth of Orkenay, and Kynge Lott was my fadir, and my modir is Kyng Arthurs sistir – hir name is Dame Morgawse; and Sir Gawayne ys my brothir, and Sir Aggravayne and Sir Gaherys; and I am yongeste of hem all – and yette wote nat Kynge Arthure nother Sir Gawayne what I am." (195.1-12).

His first statement confirms that, yes, he approves of Persaunte's assessment of how Beaumains will gain worth. In his subsequent speech, it feels like Beaumains is supplying an answer that others might expect but no one has asked explicitly: does he also have the lineage suited to such a great knight? Gareth is "com of good men," a statement that follows upon "be[ing] of good fame and of knyghthode." Chivalric practice is complemented by lineage, just as *virtus* might be complemented by *sanguis*. Both are origins that one *comes of*. His father is a nobleman. Then he asks their discretion to disclose his kin: "of what kynne I am com of." He is "com of" three elements then: his fame as garnered through actions, his nobility as inherited by his father, and his family as the community that holds these elements together.

Gareth answers who he is comprehensively, listing his father, his mother, her relation to Arthur, his brothers, and his status as the youngest brother. The family history covers every familial connection that would be prominent at the Round Table at the time, especially Arthur and Gawain. These two are specified in particular as not knowing that

Beaumains is Gareth. They do not know "what [he] is," a statement that applies to Gareth's disguise as well as his worth. Thus far they can only guess at Beaumains's accomplishments, and they have no idea of his close familial ties to them. His disguise establishes a narrative of the Fair Unknown turned Kay's kitchen knave turned knight by Lancelot. As Gareth reveals his name to other people, he restrains the radical inferrence that a newly-ascendant knight might possess merit without the advantages of noble lineage or familial connection. Appearing as an outsider, Beaumains assures Lancelot and others that he is an insider whenever he discloses his name.

When Gareth, disguised as Beaumains, reveals his identity to Lancelot and Lyonet, he shifts their previous evaluations of him into admiration. The admission confirms the suspicions that Lancelot already had. For Lyonet, his admission brings relief; she had suspected that Gareth was an imposter, a kitchen knave undeserving of the status of a knight. Wearing a disguise and really being noble is more plausible to her than actually being a kitchen boy who became a knight. When Lancelot and Lyonet learn that Beaumains is Gareth of Orkeney, his disguised persona is understood as an intelligible narrative of social worth: Beaumains's accomplishments originate in his nobility, not his knavery. Gareth gains the freedom to step into and then out of that unlikely narrative through disguise. Beaumains's possible statuses augment Gareth's worth, and he develops new social relationships, especially between him and Lancelot.[195]

After this disclosure, others begin to learn about who Gareth is. Lyonet's sister Lyones, imprisoned by the Red Knight of the Red Lands, learns from Lyonet's dwarf that he is "kynges son of Orkeney" (195.21).[196] Gareth's full name is not mentioned, but these details pique her interest, leading the dwarf to relate Beaumains's accomplishments

against the many-colored knights he has been fighting. The dwarf repeats many of the same details twice in order to highlight those events proving Beaumains's worth; Beaumains's knighthood by Lancelot is the first fact mentioned after his lineage as well as the last mentioned in the dwarf's second summary of his accomplishments. First, when Lyones asks who Beaumains and his kin are, the dwarf answers: "He was kynges son of Orkeney, but his name I woll nat tell you as at this tyme – but wete you well, of Sir Launcelot was he made knyght, for of none other wolde he be made knyght. And Sir Kay named him Bewmaynes" (195.21-24). Then, in an extended description of Beamain's accomplishments, the dwarf ends by returning to the beginning: "And yet he dud more tofore: he overthrew Sir Kay and leffte hym nye dede uppon the grounde: Also he dud a grete batayle with Sir Launcelot, and there they departed on evyn hondis. And than Sir Launcelot made hym knyght" (195.39-42). As the goal of Beaumains's quest and as someone who has an interest in understanding her rescuer better, Lyones understands Beaumains in terms of his lineage, but that understanding is in turn inflected by the doubled repetition that Beaumains has earned respect and status from Lancelot, who offers an origin tied to his merit and his place in his community rather than his blood. The question of kin turns towards a question of worth, which turns to another question of who Gareth is *of,* or who made Beaumains knight. Thus by exchanging his lineage, even without a name, Beaumains attributes the worth of that persona to a second, lineal system of worth.

Subsequent escapades, including the kidnapping of Gareth's dwarf by Lyonet and Lyones's brother Gryngamour and Morgause's intervention at Arthur's court, continue to connect these two personae for the wider community. When these deeds are finally

connected to Gareth's name at Arthur's court, Beaumains is no longer an outsider at risk of alienation. Others recognize him as an extension of Gareth.[197] At Arthur's court witnesses to Beaumains's accomplishments focus on the origins of Beaumains's merit. The Green Knight, the Red Knight, and the Blue Knight (Persaunte of Inde) in consecutive order arrive at court and describe Beaumains's achievements to Arthur.

Their accounts produce a reminder of the *mervayle* or wonder earlier evoked by Gareth's appearance, in turn urging a reconciliation of Beaumains with some understood identity. When they first mention Beaumains by name, Arthur exclaims, "I mervayle what knyght he is and of what lynage he is com" (336.22-3). The narrator claims that the "worshyp" done by these knights was "mervayle to hyre" (338.4-6). Finally, Arthur experiences wonder or marvel at the absence of the Black Knight, prompting the explanation that he was slain "in a recountir with [Beaumains'] spere" (338.17). The earlier *mervayle*, which was directed towards the ambiguous possibilities of Gareth's appearance, is redirected towards his deeds, and the interrogation turns specifically towards his lineage. Even the last expression, which seems directed towards the absence of the Black Knight, refers back to a potentially noble Beaumains by describing the death as the result of a *recountir*, a term for knightly battle.[198] Description and marvel together confirm the worth of Beaumains's knightly accomplishments.

They wonder at Beaumains. Accordingly, the court believes that Beaumains can be better understood if they understand his origin. This knowledge may supply information necessary for more fully understanding what allegiances the disguise has obscured, which would in turn shape how to understand his accomplishments. Is he a knight without a noble past or a noble parading as an outsider? They are struggling to

make sense of Beaumains the persona, as the name of a knight who has developed a sense of distinction without the proof of nobility augmenting the signs of his knightly worth, of merit that rises in the possible absence of its attendant inborn status.  The joining of these two personae accomplishes the unification of two representations of identity set forth by Susan Crane: continuity of blood and the accomplishment of deeds.[199] The unified identity represents an ideal image of aristocratic power in knighthood, where the proof for worth by birth is action.  On the other hand, Beaumains demonstrates that these performances may also represent a degree of choice. Characters strive to figure out who Beaumains/Gareth is by repeating narratives and attempting to connect them to an already-established and already-noble name, whether or not that connection ultimately exists. Put another way, in recognizing Gareth as Beaumains, onlookers cover but do not erase the radical potential that Beaumains might prove himself to be a great knight who is not a part of an established noble community.  As a distinct persona, Beamains shows the formation of the knightly subject as a process of continually stating and interpreting a living narrative.

Britomart does not systematically conceal her name behind a second name, but nonetheless her name and status remain concealed at key moments in the narrative. As the stranger knight, Britomart is interpreted independent of a name that identifies both social and allegorical status: she may appear in a narrative without immediately being known as Britomart ("Briton of Mars") or the knight of Chastity. This performance of anonymity, an armored body without name, incorporates Britomart into circles of allegorical representation while insisting on the identification of Britomart as knight.  The disguise reproduces ideas of knighthood in anonymity and then provides opportunities for

Britomart to show parts of herself through the disguise. As Gareth presents the possibility that a man of dubious status can attain worship, so Britomart presents the possibility that a woman of unknown status can practice knighthood.  Once revealed as Britomart the maiden, the stranger knight estranges the previous understandings of her actions, a person irreducible to these categories.

Britomart's namelessness allows her to slip into scenes unexpectedly, her namelessness creating a space for others to interpret her. Subsequently, her name and history prompt reevaluation of the stranger knight's roles and actions in relation to Britomart.  In book III canto ix, Britomart encounters the inhospitality of Malbecco as well as two other knights already spurned by him.  After Paridell and Satyrane are denied access to Malbecco's castle during a storm, another knight arrives to ask Malbecco for entry: "It fortuned … / Another knight, whom tempest thether brought, / Came to that castle, and with earnest mone, / Like as the rest, late entrance deare besought; / But like so as the rest he prayd for nought …" (III.ix.12.1-5).  "Another" and "like [so] as the rest" reproduce a sense of anonymity by making the knight like the rest in cause and effect: the knight requests help in vain.  She is described as yet another stranger knight, a sense that the masculine pronouns reinforce. Furthermore, the four-line argument preceding this canto conflates Paridell, Satyrane, and Britomart under the same descriptor: "Malbecco will no straunge knights host, / For peeuish gealosie: / Paridell giusts with Britomart: / Both shew their auncestrie" (III.ix.arg). He hosts no strange knights. This newcomer is as unfortunate as the rest.

This stranger knight is not named as Britomart for fifteen more stanzas. Nor does she take off her armor for eight more stanzas. Instead the unknown knight, described in

masculine pronouns, distinguishes himself through his fierce contention for space in the swine shed. The three knights (Britomart, Paridell, and Satyrane) confront each other in terms which seek to establish their chivalric worth despite the rain and inadequate shelter. The terms of Britomart's defiance repeat the terms between guest and host in a diminished place: the shed is "full of guests" such that she is not "let to enter there"; she seeks to "lodge with them yfere, / Or them dislodg," and she seeks lodging whether they are "liefe or loth" (III.ix.13.4-8). The knights are guests and she seeks the place of host in lodging or dislodging them. *Liefe or loth* invokes a common Middle English idiom, roughly meaning "keen or averse," and the next stanza separates the terms into individual affective responses.[200] Their reactions are reported in parallel structure:

> Both were full loth to leaue that needfull tent,
> And both full loth in darkenesse to debate;
> Yet both full liefe him lodging to haue lent,
> And both full liefe his boasting to abate;
> (III.ix.14.1-4)

Both are *full loth* to leave the tent and to fight or debate in darkness, while they are *full liefe* to lend lodging and abate his boasting.[201] Reproducing the idiom as a series of affects concentrates attention on two kinds of response: they may respond out of the love for or aversion to a particular course of action; they may pursue either discussion or battle. They thus invoke the dual interests of knightly battle and courtly debate as methods of resolving amity and enmity, rendering the stranger knight into one of two dueling relations.

Paridell also demonstrates that their conduct depends on their being treated like peer knights instead of like base inferiors. Britomart's fierce words strike Paridell particularly hard because he resents her demeaning comments:

>But chiefly *Paridell* his hart did grate,
>To heare him [Britomart] threaten so despightfully,
>As if he did a dogge in kenell rate,
>That durst not barke; and rather had he dy,
>Then when he was defyde, in coward corner ly.  (III.ix.14.5-9)

Britomart's wrath is so full of contempt that Paridell feels like a dog in a kennel.  Much of the offense derives from the impression that Britomart treats him like a cowardly dog, as if he cannot even bark in response.  Paridell would rather die, a statement that signals his confrontation with Britomart.  Vulnerability to death – combat – becomes the one way to refute Britomart's discourtesy.

Throughout Britomart's encounters with the other knight, she plays the role of an outsider who must be confronted.  Martial confrontation proves them both to be knights, the ability to deal and take lance blows demonstrating the stranger knight's similarity to Paridell as well as Paridell's similarity to the other knight. Perhaps because they are already so similar in circumstance, they do not fight long. Instead, within two stanzas they agree to assault Malbecco's castle and then agree to enter peacefully when he allows them inside (III.ix.17-19).  Their expeditious reconciliation with each other and with Malbecco confirms the terms of similarity first set forward in their similar receptions at the castle the first time.  The anonymity of disguise has integrated Britomart into the scene with the other knights on the same terms.

After they enter the court, they must divest themselves of armor. This time Britomart takes off her armor, helmet and all. Outside of her steel shell, she strikes her viewers with wonder, distinguishing her knightly worth in contradistinction to her perceived gender status.  She appears as a celestial object coming out from a cloud; rather than the moonbeams of canto I her hair acts as "sunny beams" whose light had stayed for

a long time in clouds (III.ix.20.6).  Instead of appearing to be a man, however, the next

stanza makes clear that her armor is also taken off, revealing beneath the "fair feature of

her limbs," the cumulative impression of which is her status as a fair woman: "Then of

them all she plainly was espyde, / To be a woman wight, vnwist to bee, / The fairest

woman wight, that euer eye did see" (III.ix.21.7-9).

Descriptions and visual metaphors come together to describe Britomart against

her disguise. First, Britomart appears as a woman in armor, as a stanza compares

Britomart to Minerva coming back from slaughtering the giants. Britomart is compared to

Minerva takng off her helmet: "Like as Minerua […] hath loosd her helmet from her lofty

hed" (III.ix.22.1, 7). Second, the following stanza begins with Paridell and Satyrane

beholding something that remains rather ambiguous. The stanza operates in halves that

depict surprise and then recognition:

> Which whenas they beheld, they smitten were
> With great amazement of so wondrous sight,
> And each on other, and they all on her
> Stood gazing, as if suddein great affright
> Had them surprised. At last auizing right,
> Her goodly personage and glorious hew,
> Which they so much mistooke, they tooke delight
> In their first errour, and yet still anew
> With wonder of her beauty fed their hungry vew. (III.ix.23)

The entire stanza is so focused on Paridell and Satyrane's sight and reactions that it never

directly explains what they are looking at and what *their first errour* is. The error could

be their impression that Britomart was a man, which would have remained until they

viewed "right, / Her goodly personage and glorious hew": her body and appearance. In

this reading, *which* refers to Britomart's entire appearance. At the same time, they seem

astonished by the item described in the last two lines of the previous stanza: "And her

Gorgonian shield gins to vntye / From her left arme, to rest in glorious victorye. / Which

whenas they beheld, they smitten were" (III.ix.22.8-9, 23.1). Even though the comparison

to Minerva was a metaphor, Paridell and Satyrane appear to react to the Gorgonian shield,

which in Roman myth would have stunned opponents who looked at it.[202] Their initial

cause for fear, their *first errour*, would then be taking Britomart as Minerva seriously and

being stunned by the intermediate perception of Britomart as a woman in armor.

Thus shaped into a martial maid in their sight, Paridell and Satyrane still look on

her beauty, but they also shift their terms for looking. Rather than just marveling at her

appearance, they marvel the most at who she might be: "But most they meruaild at her

cheualree, / And noble prowesse, which they had approued, / That much they faynd to

know, who she mote bee" (III.ix.24.4-7). The visual part of the disguise has successfully

confirmed Britomart is a knight in their eyes, but they still do not know what her name or

story are. Whereas in Malecasta's castle inquiries about Britomart's identity stopped at

sight, at Malbecco's castle Britomart and Paridell will trade stories about their Trojan

origins.

Malbecco invites the knights to dine with him and his wife Hellenore. Once she

and Paridell begin to show each other nonverbal signs of affection, Hellenore asks the

group to tell her their stories: "Purpose was moued by that gentle Dame, / Vnto those

knights aduenturous, to tell / Of deeds of arms, which vnto them became, / And euery one

his kindred, and his name" (32.2-5).  Though Paridell takes the opportunity to impress

Hellenore with his own lineage, Hellenore's question of deeds and family is directed at

all of the knights.  She probes who they were in the past as well as who they are now.

The verb "became" implies development from the past as well as the deeds befitting the

knights in the present. It also implies that the event befalls them, implying the more passive temporality of both the *casus* tradition and the adventures of romance.[203] These different temporalities influence the relations of name, which becomes both a product of present exchange and the result of various pasts: past deeds, past kindred, and past falls. As the stranger knight relates her history, it is both a history of the person and a history of ancestry, the two being difficult to distinguish. *Virtus* and *sanguis* intermingle again.

Paridell's own version of the Trojan war history elicits Britomart's own response. Some critics focus on the historicity of Paridell's answer and how it relates to his debate with Britomart. Elizabeth Bellamy reads Paridell's description of Troy as a rhetorical manipulation of medieval sources on Troy that seeks to destabilize Britomart's obvious nostalgia for her Trojan roots. [204] Paridell carefully omits mention of Helen and Dido to avoid connections being drawn between them and his seduction of Hellenore. In response to Britomart's own elaborations, he also describes Aeneas and Brutus as wanderers, challenging Britomart's own efforts to honor and glorify them.[205] Similarly, Rebeca Helfer studies Britomart's own attempts at history-making. [206] In Helfer's account, Britomart's history is not only the epic foil of Paridell's burlesque account of Troy. Instead, both historical accounts strive to create competing versions of their Trojan, Roman, and British lineage. For both Bellamy and Helfer, Paridell is a competitor to Britomart, drawing her into conversation and then challenging her versions of Troy and Troynovant.

Britomart functions as more than Paridell's interlocutor concerning post-Trojan empire-building. She is also performing and narrating her own lineage, effectively fashioning herself and her history for Paridell, Satyrane, Hellenore, and Malbecco.

Britomart experiences Paridell's initial description of Troy's destruction as an allusion to

her own lineage:

> She was empassiond at that piteous act,
> With zelous enuy of Greekes cruell fact,
> Against that nation, from whose race of old
> She heard, that she was lineally extract:
> For noble *Britons* sprong from *Troians* bold,
> And *Troynouant* was built of old *Troyes* ashes cold.  (III.ix.38.4-9)

Britomart connects British history to Trojan history in a model already recounted once in

the poem: according to the narrative reported in canto x of the second book, Brutus came

from a group of Trojans who had settled in Rome after Aeneas had come there (II.ix.9).[207]

More importantly, she also connects that history to her own lineage, implying that

between her and her ancestors Britomart feels not just sympathy but *zelous enuy.*  She

allies herself with Troy, such that Trojans give way to Britons and Troy gives way to

"Troynovant," otherwise known as London.

Britomart reacts so passionately even though she knows her lineage only

indirectly.  "She heard" emphasizes the oral source of her history. Orality should not be

taken to mean she is necessarily mistaken; the idea that the first people in Britain were

descended from Troy is widespread, such that any native could claim to be descended

from Brutus.[208] At the same time, the mention of hearing attaches particular importance

to the ability of oral history to affirm one's lineage, and hence one's allegiances in the past

and the present. Her history has been spoken into being. In *Le Morte Darthur*, when

Gareth presented his name and origin to Lyonet and Persaunte, there was no sense that

Gareth did not know by experience who his family was. His family actively participated

in Arthur's court. Others begin speaking his name once he reveals it, but the origin of that

knowledge is direct. Gareth knows who his parents are.  By specifying that Britomart

heard the story of her lineage, the poem connects Britomart's identification with the past to the practice of telling it.  Both the mode of address and the circulation of her family name emphasize her tie to the Britons.

Britomart and Paridell proceed not just to narrate the history of Troy's connection to Britain, but also their own positions in that narrative.  Consuming the next thirteen stanzas, their expanded discussion juxtaposes the narration of proto-nationhood with personal relations between knights who desire stories of their ancestors to edify their present status.  Britomart ties her reactions to Paridell's narration to their common allegiance to Troy: "Behold, Sir, how your pitifull complaint / Hath fownd another partner of your payne: / For nothing may impresse so deare constraint, / As countries cause, and commune foes disdayne" (III.ix.40.1-4).  Her statement connects her lamentation and her previous passion, that *constraint* or distress, to the disdain of an ancient common foe (Greece) and the cause of an ancient country (Troy).  These strong relations of complaint and constraint occur even though Britomart has only heard it.

The rest of the canto allows Britomart to show desire through the retelling of one's ancestry, as Britomart "would to hear desyre, / What to Aeneas fell" (40.7-8).  Paridell gives a disappointing retelling of the *Aeneid*, describing the epic actions of the first six books as aimless wandering: "[Aeneas] through fatall errour long was led / Full many yeares, and weetlesse wandered / From shore to shore, emongst the Lybicke sands, / Ere rest he found" (41.4-7).  Paridell refers to having heard these stories himself from Mnemon (Memory), calling his initial omission of Brutus a "heedlesse ouersight" since Mnemon actually told him about it (47.2).  Britomart demonstrates and accesses her lineage through secondhand repetition. Whether her information is correct or not, Paridell

demonstrates the flaws of this form of repetition: the strands of memory can be forgotten or selectively adapted to suit one's purposes.

As Paridell rhetorically handles his version of the myth, Britomart may appear to also manage her narrative carefully. This moment is remarkable because it shows that the revelation of Britomart's lineage proceeds by repeating the oral narration which constituted that lineage: they heard, and now they tell in order to hear again. Her persona as descendant flourishes through repetition and exchange. For Gareth, the repetition of his name and lineage had a definite transactional value, giving him access to the perks of nobility while maintaining his relation to Arthur and Gawain. In repeating the names of Beaumains and Gareth, Gareth constituted them both as personae. For Britomart the repetition of lineage constitutes her lineage in greater detail. By being able to tell the story of Brutus, she confirms them as her progenitors as well as the progenitors of a British nation. Because both Paridell and Britomart can share the story, they briefly come together as partners of pain in a narrative where their motives otherwise conflict. The processes of disguise and rediscovery insinuate themselves into the development of both a personal and national history.

In the longer term, this conversation does not relate Britomart to Paridell. In the next canto they split from one another as Paridell carries Malbecco's wife Hellenore away. Still, as a mode of character development, Britomart shares her lineage as an oral history that relies on others hearing it and then remembering it. Just as her revealing herself emphasizes how Paridell and Satyrane perceive her, her own story emphasizes how she has heard it and how Paridell both hears and misremembers elements of the story.

In this sense, when Britomart reveals parts of herself, new details are added to her persona. In addition to showing these details through visual descriptions and analogy, Spenser shows interpreters responding to what they see and hear. Britomart's narrative engagement with the Trojan story helps to form her identity. The resemblance between Britomart and her possible namesakes is both more central to the matter of Britain and less central to the narrative. The disguise raises questions of narrative truth while ultimately setting them aside, allowing Britomart to identify herself with the Matter of Britain whether or not that connection is accurate.

**Stories of the self and notions of nobility**

The lineages that disguised characters reveal may also raise questions about how reliable such disclosures are. Neither Gareth nor Britomart is explicitly doubted when they reveal their lineage. For Gareth doubts about lineage create the opportunity for him to selectively reveal his given name and lineage. Spectators look for and receive a satisfactory answer, and the risk that Beaumains might be a kitchen boy remains unfulfilled. With Britomart, unreliability is a greater risk. Her address and Paridell's responses signal the potential unreliability of her narrative. Nonetheless, she entwines her status as knight and her connection to a *Britannica Bruti*. Her status is affirmed on the relatively weak ground that no one in the poem challenges her identification.

Disguise also has a role in critiquing the origins of knighthood. In the late 1400s, wealthy merchants were able to obtain knighthood in return for lending their support to aristocrats. Meanwhile, many texts still maintained that chivalry was only an inheritable quality.[209] Malory situated his knights in a system of attaining worship or worth-ship

wherein each display in battle and at court still connected to family blood. By 1590, knighthood was more dissociated from martial service. Spenser's knights pursued worship and maintained less visible but nonetheless pervasive connections to noble families. No obvious central court distinguishes Britomart or other characters as noble. Only the distant and mostly paratextual court of Gloriana or small courts like Malbecco's and Malecasta's connect the chivalric qualities evident in *The Faerie Queene* to a court. Nonetheless, the repetition of these focal points between episodes of wandering manifests a similar tension between chivalric performance and the myth of nobility-by-birth. Disguise provides a potential way to resolve the contradictions in how to appraise knightly appearance, allowing for characters to participate in knighthood while making lineal worth appear to be less important.

Thus far I have considered how Gareth has produced a disguise through the combination of concealing his name and displaying his body. These elements of disguise – name, body, behavior – play on ambiguities of class, gender, and worth. Any of these signs is contestable without further proof; onlookers might have reason to be anxious about whether Beaumains is worthy to be a knight. In trying to answer that question, they establish Beaumains's reputation. Beaumains appears to become a knight through a combination of Arthur's favor, Beaumains's courtesy at court, and his effectiveness in combat. Considered in the light of Gareth's identity, Beaumains is becoming the knight Gareth already is; the most capable man proves to actually be worthy of knighthood through a prior claim to status. Performed and inherit worth correspond.

In order to associate Beaumains's gains with himself, Gareth selectively reveals his noble name. This is a large transformation that requires Gareth to risk his own

alienation. As Beaumains, Gareth has been allowed to move so far below his default social position, working as a kitchen boy and then undertaking a quest. His disguise allows not for unlimited freedom but relative freedom from one role, the ability to fashion himself not into another person but into a different kind of knight, explicitly relying on his skills as a knight and implicitly relying on his inborn worth.

Britomart participates in a similar process with her disguise. Her actions and her behavior distinguish her as an exemplary knight. While her disguise obscures her lineage, in III.ix she reveals it to Paridell and others, a move that focuses attention on the process of hearing and narrating history. Meanwhile, in addition to obscuring her name and lineage, her armor also obscures and supplements her lack of martial training. The disguise enables Britomart's participation in chivalric circles, fashioning herself as the martial agent she claims to have always been. The other actors of the first canto of book III (The Redcrosse Knight, Guyon, Malecasta, the knights of Malecasta's court) all take her status as knight for granted while admiring her might and conduct as a knight. Simultaneously, the disguise preserves her status as a maiden, as she possesses the subject-position of a lady who becomes a knight in order to pursue her lover. These two positions, mingled in the disguise of the Maid Martial, show that knighthood can be reconfigured to match Britomart. She is an aristocratic daughter, and her gender is no impediment. Disguise allows Britomart to be a knight and allows one to question the terms of status that create the knightly persona.

Gareth and Britomart exchange their names after a period of namelessness, allowing them to first present an anonymous facade and then inform others of their underlying status. The threat that spectators would fear, an ascendant and aggressive

outsider, is mitigated once they know name and lineage.  The efforts to name and recognize Gareth and Britomart are motivated by a need to resolve confusing recognitions, to resolve a spectacle which itself originates in the withholding of a name.

In the final section of this chapter, I shift from considering the exchange of names and lineages to considering the self-attestations Gareth gives to Lancelot and Lyonet, as well as those Britomart and Glauce make for themselves.  The previous section recounted Gareth's confessions to Lancelot and Lyonet.  Unlike those confessions, in subsequent episodes Gareth has no direct control over revelations of his lineage. Instead, the court repeats the narrative of Beaumains until they are able to fit Gareth's name to that narrative. The court is relieved, but Gawain is troubled that he did not recognize his own brother.  Even in the tentative success of discovering who Beaumains is, there is still considerable anxiety surrounding misrecognition.

The uncovering of Gareth's identity at court, like the uncovering of his identity among his peers, occurs in a series of scenes.  First, when the knights conquered by Beaumains arrive at court, they each narrate how Beaumains defeated them.  When Gareth's mother Morgause arrives at court, Arthur, Gawain, Lancelot, Kay, and other court members connect Beaumains to Gareth's prior status as the son to a king, the nephew of another king, and the brother of worthy knights.

Just as Gareth arrived at Arthur's court during the feast of Pentecost, another mystery arrives at Arthur's court in time for the feast of Pentecost: the knights Beaumains defeated arrive to pledge themselves to King Arthur.  Like the scenes before it, the arrival of the defeated knights provides an opportunity to reinterpret Beaumains: as the unknown supplicant, as a subject willing to take up arms and pursue the lady's quest, and as a

knight having forced his foes to yield to Arthur and himself. During the final triumph, Morgause arrives and supplies the missing piece: Gareth was the unknown supplicant.

The setting that uncovers Gareth is important for a few reasons. First, Beaumains's status is not just formed in the words he tells about himself, or in a series of verbal exchanges, but in a court structure itself, which is devoted to the reception and interpretation of spectacles. Arthur and the others sit and wait at the table for a marvel to arrive. They sit in a great hall, the center of power.[210] Malory only needs to mention that Arthur sits "at the nexte feste of Pentecoste" in order to convey a sense of continuity in placement, a feast hall once more centered on Arthur and again awaiting a spectacle for the court to digest with their meal (208.37).

Second, and related to the first point, Gareth and Beaumains are discussed in a carefully crafted space. How people position themselves discloses their status to each other. These movements are all the more important in an uncovering scene because in addition to moving around the bodies of those who are present, the entering knights and ladies are focused on someone physically absent. The text first draws attention to Beaumains's absence after the Green, Red, and Blue Knight yield themselves and their hundreds of knights to Arthur and report their having been overcome. Arthur remarks on Gareth: "I mervayle what knyght he is and of what lynage he is com. Here he was with me a twelve-monthe and poorely and shamefully he was fostred. And sir Kay i[n] scorne named hym Bewmaynes" (209.4-7). The mention of the name Beaumains makes Arthur speculate about his status or identity as a knight (what knight he is) and his lineage. "Here he was" shifts attention to his former status at court and his naming, reporting in summary an exchange similar to the one the knights at present have gone through: they

have yielded themselves to Arthur and given their names as Partholype, Perymones, and

Persaunte of Inde.  Arthur attempts to place the unknown man by connecting the knight

of the others' stories to the knight at court.

When the Red Knight of the Red Lands, Sir Ironside, arrives at court and tells his

story, he and Arthur have a short discussion which treats Beaumains's body as an absent

presence, placed back at the court in order to be understood.  Arthur states, "I am muche

beholdynge unto that knyght that hath so put his body in devoure to worshyp me and my

courte" (209.26-7).  The acts of worship refer to Beaumains risking himself to defeat

other knights and send them to Arthur.  The sentence connects Beaumains risking his

body to his service to the court; though he is absent, he does worship to people who are

present in the hall, Arthur and the court.  Having put is body *in devoure* implies carrying

out a duty or endeavor. First the knights of color and then Arthur redirect the

accomplishments of Beaumains towards the court.

To this point, the court performance has bolstered Beaumains's reputation while

maintaining the persona.  The knights also concern themselves with narrating his

confrontations with absent knights. For instance, the Green Knight describes Beaumains's

involvement in the death of the Black Knight and the deaths of "two dedly knyghtes" and

brethren:

> At a passage of the watir of Mortrayse there encountird Sir Bewmaynes with too
> bretherne that ever for the moste party kepte that passage, and they were two
> dedly knyghtes. And there he slew the eldyst brother in the watir, and smote hym
> uppon the hede suche a buffette that he felle downe in the watir and there was he
> drowned: and his anme was Sir Garrarde le Brewse. And aftir he slew the other
> brother upon the londe: hys name was Sir Arnolde le Brewse. (210.21-28)

Curiously, even though he was not present and even though these two knights have not

been named before, the Green Knight is able to name both of them (Garrarde and

Arnolde) and the waterway they died at (Mortrayse).  While the Green Knight's

knowledge has no immediate explanation, the emphasis on names puts Beaumains in a

relational system where knights can be named and judged by their names.  The

specification of both place and person of this event presents not only the importance of

Beaumains's status, but also the importance of placing his status in relation to others

named.  Combined with the extra details given like the two knights' brotherhood, the

Green Knight's retelling emphasizes the way in which stories enter the court with a desire

for identifying name, kindred, and status.  Beaumains is appraised and measured by court

members who possess something like an invisible scoreboard. These deeds being

reported, the court returns to the important task of tucking in, setting up in the next two

sentences the arrival of the queen who will name Beaumains: "So than the Kynge [and

they] went to mete and were served in the beste maner. And as they sate at the mete, there

com in the Quene of Orkenay with ladyes and knyghtes a grete numbir" (210.28-31).

Mentioning the knights' names leads to a final scene of naming, where someone

hitherto outside of the scope of Beaumains's events enters the court and names someone

whom no one else could name.  Morgause, Arthur's sister and the mother of both Gareth

and Gawain, arrives named only by her family lineage. She appeals to her own familial

community: Gawain, Aggravain, and Gaheris all get on their knees to greet her.  Though

her other sons gather around her, she focuses her attention on her brother Arthur and her

absent son: "Where have ye done my yonge son, sir Gareth? For he was here amongyst

you a twelve-monthe, and ye made a kychyn knave of hym, the whyche is shame to you

all.  Alas! Where have ye done my nowne deare son that was my joy and blysse?" (339.6-

10).  At once, Gawain and Arthur admit that they did not know him. Arthur even vows to

"nevir be glad tyll that I may fynde [hym]" (339.14-5). As with the Green Knight, it is

unclear how Morgause knows about her son being treated as a kitchen knave. She does

not seem to know more, hence her asking twice "where have ye done...?" (210.36, 39).

Where has Gareth been commanded or placed?[211] The repetition is a complaint full of

anxiety about the status of her son fed "lyke an hogge" (339.18). Yet it represents no

knowledge that Gareth disguised himself. Instead, in outing her son, she presents the

story as if he were recognized as Gareth of Orkeney and still treated as a kitchen knave,

and not as if Gareth created a second persona that was treated this way. From her

perspective on events, Gareth has been done away with, treated in a way unbecoming to

his state. She seeks to recover Gareth, not knowing that he has already made his recovery

possible through the stories that the other knights told about him. Her error, not

recognizing that a disguise had taken place, allows for Gareth to be identified by the

name he had concealed to most of the court. The disguise revealed fashions Gareth into a

knight, as Beaumains's deeds are then imputed to Gareth.

Having learned about who Gareth is, Arthur clarifies their own reception of

Gareth, pointing out that the court did not know who he was: he was never identified by

messenger, he hid his own bodily strength, he asked three gifts, and he concealed the

riches Morgause sent with him.

> For whan he com to this courte, he cam lenynge uppon too mennys sholdyrs as
> though he myght nat have gone. And then he asked me three gyfftys; and one he
> asked that same day, and that was that I wolde gyff hym mete inowghe that
> twelvemonthe. And the other two gyfftys he asked that day twelvemonthe, and
> that was that he myght have the adventure of the damesel Lyonett; and the thirde,
> that Sir Launcelot sholde make hym knyght whan he desyred hym. And so I
> grauntved hym all his desyre. And many in this courte mervayled that he desyred
> his sustynaunce for a twelvemonthe – and thereby we demed, many of us, that he
> was nat com oute of a noble house. (211.5-17)

Arthur's words are partly a defense of his own conduct, emphasizing that he did not

knowingly slight someone who deserved greater honors than being a kitchen boy. As

Arthur explains, given what they saw, how could they have judged Gareth otherwise?

Morgause and Arthur are worried that hidden status may not make itself known or

preserve the continuity of status within the same family.  Both Morgause and Arthur seek

to give honor to those who deserve it, while preserving the system of recognition that

gives honor to a set of known names with established histories.  Disguise undermines

such a system, while at the same time allowing the one wearing it to exhibit worth

through that disguised persona. Being revealed, Gareth overcomes a hurdle of his own

making and appears more impressive for it.

In Stephen Hodges's terms, this tale demonstrates the forging of chivalric

community between family alliances already beginning to fragment. Gareth appears

distanced from his mother and brothers and instead comes closer through his disguise to

Lancelot.[212] Dorsey Armstrong would add that this moment of recognition consolidates

Beaumains's many actions into service of the Pentecostal Oath, at a moment after which

the Pentecostal Oath will become less and less possible to satisfy.[213] Both of these critics,

and many others, interpret "The Tale of Sir Gareth" as an optimistic but fraught moment

before a long descent, its central figure and robust court not yet demonstrating the

fragmentation of the court, the fall of Arthur, and the twilight of knighthood.

Perhaps my reading also demonstrates such a rise and fall narrative. The relative

stability of chivalric mores at this point in the work allows for greater focus on the status

of Gareth as a subject.  Gareth, while very much shaped by the discourses and ideals of

his community, is also a subject aspiring with his disguise to become an altered version of

himself, someone who can develop new friendships and worth. In describing his body, words, and actions, the text offers the possibility that all of these elements are guided more personally, that Gareth/Beaumains is not just someone who changes roles but an agent who controls what role he plays. While Gareth perhaps does not fit the expectations of an individual who is clearly distinguishable from the systems that he dwells within, his alienation as Beaumains offers more than the image of a negative outsider. While Gareth's disguise does not radically challenge the courtly system, disguise in function offers the chance, however tentative, of rewriting oneself, of having one's body and actions fit within another discursive structure. The disguise creates the possibility for difference from both roles, a becoming that aligns with neither group or that aligns with every group. The disguise establishes a kind of independence from an authority or influence which, while never independent, offers the opportunity to be fashioned or made.

As for Britomart in the third canto of book three, the construction of her disguise does not come from a central court that pieces together names and events, but in the exchange of disguising materials between a lady and her nurse. Her story of origin in the second and third canto of book three relates her appearance as a knight to her underlying goals to find Artegall and practice virtue. Yet the armored persona she adopts is not a mere tool to resolving her lovesickness. It allows her to develop an image of herself that is bound to no one source or exemplar.[214] The process of becoming is one that she has greater control over, even to the point of shaping her body to fit the pursuit of arms. When Britomart and Glauce, her nurse, figure out how Britomart can pursue her desire for Artegall, disguise in arms shifts from a practical form of concealment into a form of

emulation through practice.  In other words, Britomart in armor becomes Britomart the

knight with only a little learning.  While one role is still being exchanged for another,

lady for knight for her eventual return to lady, *The Faerie Queene* also represents the

possibility of fitting into neither this nor that role, of a character caught in a process of

becoming and fashioning.  As we shall see, canto iii makes it possible to think of

Britomart as developing and learning, rather than just switching forms.

The switch between dress and fashioning is visible in the span of a few stanzas, as

Glauce transitions from urging Britomart to adopt a disguise to making Britomart into a

"mayd Martiall" (III.iii.53).  At first, both Britomart and Glauce suggest several plots "to

maske in strange disguise," with the preceding verbs *deuise* and *frame* placing special

emphasis on visual production, especially that of a knight representing his commitments

in image (III.iii.51.9).[215] Plot further entangles itself with the mental process of

imagination as the nurse "in her foolhardy wit / Conceiud'd a bold deuise" (52.2).  The

combination of *devise*, here a noun that implies both a plot and a visual design, with

*conceive*, which implies both thought generally and representative thought specifically,

aligns physical representation with a mental mode of generation or artistic production.[216]

In effect, their plans involve fashioning their own disguises, which turn to forms of

representation that are most ripe for that production: device as emblem.

Once Glauce announces her own plan, the questions of image turn to questions of

how Britomart and she might fit the guise of a knight.  She answers that the armor will

physically fit her and that she will learn how to fight:

> That therefore nought our passage may empeach,
> Let vs in feigned armes our selues disguize,
> And our weake hands (whom need new strength shall teach)
> The dreadfull speare and shield to exercize:

> Ne certes daughter that same warlike wize
> I weene, would you misseeme; for ye bene tall,
> And large of limbe, t'atchieue an hard emprize,
> Ne ought ye want, but skill, which practize small
> Will bring, and shortly make you a mayd Martiall.  (III.iii.53)

Glauce's ostensible purpose is to avoid having other knights "empeach" or hinder their passage. The first two lines imply that the purpose may be to avoid combat entirely. However, the third and fourth lines imply learning skills that would aid against any knight who did hinder them. So they may not be merely avoiding combat by masquerading as knights; they may be meeting combat by becoming knights.[217] Glauce first makes the connection between the image of a coat of arms and the physical armor. Both a feigned coat of arms and a feigned suit of arms could constitute the materials of a disguise.  Then the stanza turns to the use of such arms and Britomart's adaptation to their use.  The rhyme of *disguize*, *exercize*, and *warlike wize* makes appearance and practice echo one another.  Exercise implies both the action of wearing arms and the training gained through their application.

Learning how to practice with arms is a necessary part of the disguise, as Glauce suggests that weak hands will be taught new strength by the necessary use of these implements.  The 1590 edition emphasizes learning to fight through the repeated use of armor: "Whom need new strength will teach" in the 1596 edition becomes "Need makes good schollers teach," a statement which posits a difficult-to-determine scholar at the head of training.[218] Does need initiate a learning process that must possess a "scholler"? Does the 1590 edition's "teach" mean guidance or demonstration rather than instruction?[219] In either case, the parenthetical statement emphasizes the form of emulation that she will shortly employ.  She acquires skill either in the example of Angela

or in the action of following her, either by taking inspiration from someone else or in performing her until she is taught "new strength." As external influence or as personal impetus, Britomart transforms into a *maid Martiall* through *practize small*, indicating a kind of exertion which minimizes the details of acquiring skill. It will not take much for Britomart to fit the role of a knight, even if adopting the armor is initially a form of disguise.

In effect, such an irresolute explanation establishes that Britomart can become a knight without the long education alluded to in her explanation to the Redcrosse Knight in III.ii. Glauce is trying to convince Britomart to wear armor, and she does so by making the wearing of armor plausible: Britomart can learn through practice. To further make her point, the nurse indicates Britomart's proportions, in a manner similar to the descriptive proportions of Gareth when he arrived at court: Britomart already possesses a warlike guise because she is *tall* and *large of limbe.* These are qualities of size that establish both the nobility and the martial prowess of their owners. The form of description, emphasizing her physicality, augments prior descriptions of her body. Glauce emphasizes the size of Britomart's limbs, as it befits a martial appearance. In Malecasta's castle, her unhelming reveals a visage that is lighter and fairer than any single feature, which is most striking for the terror and attraction it instills in its viewers (III.i.43-6).[220] In that scene, Britomart's revealed visage reinforces the knighthood implied by her armor. Similarly, Glauce describes bodily proportion in such a way that it indicates both the qualities of nobility and Britomart's predisposition for the exercise of arms. Divided into parts, the parts appear worthy of being integrated under a knightly shell. Glauce embodies knighthood in Britomart, producing a body which can then be

enarmored irrespective of its training.

Small practice, combined with a body capable of that practice, makes Britomart capable of becoming a knight. In this exchange, Glauce is appealing to a notion of fit, implying both plausibility and appropriateness. In Gareth's case, Beaumains's ability to become a knight was a confirmation of his own appropriate status as a knight measured against two anxieties: that he lacked the requisite class status and that he lacked the class-bound skills necessary to prevent mortal failure in battle.[221] For Britomart, the class dynamic is no longer subject to doubt, as spectators never doubt her lineage and Glauce here is not speaking against it. However, gender and class combine to raise a similar anxiety of performance, one which in these early cantos Britomart manifests and then answers in acts of self and social definition. Even if Britomart is of noble blood, what enables her to not only be disguised as a knight but also manifest the qualities of that disguise in herself? A number of answers are possible, including the enchanted spear of Bladud, her story of being raised to arms, and Glauce's own descriptive and hortative fashioning of Britomart. None is complete, but each answer uses the background of the indeterminable and ambiguous materials in order to develop the martial maid.

The physical registers of knighthood establish Britomart's suitability as a knight, but these explanations have also accounted for her desire of knighthood, which here gets translated through the desire of armor. As Kathryn Schwarz has shown, when Britomart sees herself and then Artegall in the mirror, her response is to become what or whom she desires.[222] The heteroerotic desire of the last two cantos finds redefinition in an armor built into the image of the man she pursues. This desire for fashioning, or fashioning towards desire, finds expression in the queries and thoughts which surround her

inspection of the mirror. At first Britomart admires herself and views her own features in the mirror. Once she has viewed those qualities, "Her selfe a while therein she vewd in vaine; / Tho her auizing of the vertues rare, / Which therein spoken were, she gan againe / Her to bethinke of, that mote to her selfe pertain" (III.ii.22.8-9). *Pertain* corresponds with *that,* a word which can refer to objects or people as well as the virtues of the previous line. What Britomart sees is thus linked to herself but no longer identical to her self. It is part of her and also a matter with which she is concerned, with the *selfe* being the common link of what she sees and her interrogation. When her question turns to who her husband will be, the mirror's response cannot be held firmly separate from that first vision of herself. Hence the arms of her first appearance in III.i depict the emblem of Brutus, the legendary progenitor of British kings: "And on his arme addresse his goodly shield / That bore a Lion passant in a golden field" (III.i.4.8-9). Such a depiction alludes to her own name (Britomart) and to the lineage that will continue itself through Britomart and Artegall, the lost heir to Cornwall.

The second motive of Britomart's desire to disguise is emulative, measured in Glauce's descriptions of valorous women. At first her reports are conveyed through the words of bards, but then Glauce turns to a more personal, specular register, reporting directly that "... I saw a *Saxon* Virgin" (III.iii.55.5). The shift in tone is intended as a persuasive act, as emphasized in the subclause, highlighting how the "late dayes ensample, which these eyes beheld" is what "more then all the rest may sway" (55.2; 1). Vision and example combine to establish the especial relevance of Angela the martial maid, similar to how discussions of historiography in the introductions to canto 2 and canto 4 give way to specific praises of Britomart and the Queen's virtues.[223] The specific

naming of Angela helps answer the question of valorous women by providing an example close enough for contemporary comparison and emulation. This fits with the subsequent exhortations, which draw a genealogical tie between Angela and the *Angles* while emphasizing both her fairness and her terribleness. Glauce's description ends by urging Britomart to take her example, implying both following her as an image and imitating her in courage: "Therefore faire Infant her ensample make / Vnto thyself, and equall courage to thee take" (56.8-9).

This conventional account establishes the thread of emulation in the nurse's urgings. Glauce has the rhetorical purpose of urging Britomart to action, and she succeeds through the language of both visual and bodily imitation. What about Britomart's role in establishing and desiring the example? Britomart originally asked Glauce for Angela's name, initiating the sharing of renown that she would shortly participate in. Unlike Gareth, who withheld his name and was thus granted a name that highlighted his noble features, Britomart asks for a name in order to organize the actions of her exemplar under a sign. Keeping her own name, she nonetheless enters into a process of exchanging names and stories, while desiring to be like what she hears. While superficially like moral *exempla*, seen and followed, the stories that shape Britomart's fashioning work themselves into her physical body.

The fluidity of Britomart's transformation into a knight resembles the transformation of cloth garment into metal armor. When she feels the desire for wielding arms, she decides to pursue knighthood using metaphors of dress: "That she resolu'd, vnweeting to her Sire, / Aduent'rous knighthood on her selfe to don, / And counseld with her Nourse, her Maides attire / To turne into a massy habergeon, / And bad her all things

put in readinesse anon" (57.5-9).  She wishes to *don* knighthood on herself while

counseling her nurse to *turn* her maiden attire into a *massy habergeon*, a heavy coat of

mail.  Both verbs emphasize how a choice of dress or fashion extends from one's choice

of clothing to emphasize a new subject role in her dress.  The productive ambiguity lies in

the verb *to turn*, which implies either an exchange of her attire for armor or an alteration

of her attire into armor.  The latter sense turns the nurse's actions into an act of magical

tailoring and armoring, a transmutation from cloth to metal which resembles Britomart's

own conversion from maiden to knight: the material is easily converted or exchanged.

Dress fashions Britomart while also representing the ease of her own disguising.

The next stanzas refer to the armor that the nurse finds for Britomart, which comes from

Saxon goods seized by a band of Britons.  Specifically, Glauce takes Angela's armor hung

in the main church of Britomart's father and dresses Britomart in it:

> Th'old woman nought, that needed, did omit;
> But all things did conueniently puruay:
> It fortuned (so time their turne did fit)
> A band of Britons ryding on forray
> Few days before, had gotten a great pray
> Of Saxon goods, emongst the which was seene
> A goodly Armour, and full rich aray,
> Which long'd to Angela, the Saxon Queene,
> All fretted round with gold, and goodly well beseene.
>
> The same, with all of the other ornaments,
> King Ryence caused to be hanged hy
> In his chiefe Church, for endlesse moniments
> Of his successe and gladfull victory:
> Of which her selfe auising readily,
> In th'euening late old Glauce thither led
> Faire Britomart, and that same Armory
> Downe taking, her therein appareled,
> Well as she might, and with braue bauldrick garnished.
>
> Beside those armes there stood a mighty speare,
> Which Bladud made by Magick art of yore,

And vsd the same in battell aye to beare;
Sith which it had bin here preseru'd in store,
For his great vertues proued long afore:
For neuer wight so fast in sell could sit,
But him perforce vnto the ground it bore:
Both speare she tooke, and shield, which hong by it:
Both speare & shield of great powre, for her purpose fit.

Thus when she had the virgin all arayd,
Another harnesse, which did hange thereby,
About her selfe she dight, that the young Mayd
She might in equal armes accompany,
And as her Squire attend her carefully:
Tho to their ready Steeds they clombe full light,
And through back wayes, that none might them espy,
Couered with secret cloud of silent night,
Themselues they forth conuayd, & passed forward right. (III.iii.58-61)

The associations with England are evident here, as they are with the shield described in her first appearances: Angela for the *Angles* being worn by a Saxon maiden, who also equips Bladud's spear and a shield that possibly holds Brutus's arms.[224] To the legendary intent of these allusions is added the same references to dress that make this event appear to be happenstance: the Britons *fortuned* upon the armor; the armor is *goodly* and *goodly well beseene*, indicating how much its quality matters; it is one of several *ornaments*, a word signifying both the adornment of the church and embellishment; Britomart *appareled, garnished,* and was otherwise *arayd* in the armor; the shield and spear are *for her purpose fit*; Glauce's armor is an afterthought but nonetheless qualifies as *equall armes* (III.iii.58-61). Legendary arms and armor are often either inheritances, gained in conquest, or are otherwise associated with some sense of divine destiny, but the circumstances here emphasize the contingency and the good fortune of these arms, which primarily serve to complete Britomart's arming. The fortunate acquisition of the armor, as well as Britomart's claiming it from her father, emphasize a process of fashioning more

than inheritance.  Her inheritance is due to an eclectic principle of appropriation rather than something with a long history of use by the family.  She converts herself into the example demonstrated in dress, thanks to a desire first sparked for warlike arms.[225]

This notion of conversion and dress combines with the previous notion of bodily fit and practice to create the riddle of fashioning for Britomart, who both is capable of being a knight and must still become it.  Because Book III has started *in medias res* with Britomart already effectively wielding her arms, Britomart stands as already proven and continually proving herself anew.  These moments establish that the work of becoming continues without her having to prove the basis by which she continues to act, that for proof of her prowess Britomart only needs the opportunity for encounters.  In this already-become state, Britomart's origins as a maiden turned knight are indistinguishable from the origins she posed to the Redcrosse Knight in III.ii, establishing herself as amazon.  The logic of these encounters is similar to those of Gareth, who proves himself to Lyonet, his opponents, and his readers with a series of gradually more difficult encounters.  The two mainly differ in narrative structure, with *The Faerie Queene* less devoted to depicting Britomart's development through encounters alongside the gradually warming praise of an outside commentator: Glauce is no Lyonet, and Britomart is already in action.  It is as if Britomart must first be shown as powerful before her desire for another knight can affect that performance, as if the fantasy of the amazon woman must be built up before the narrative shows Britomart as a maiden building a disguise for herself to pursue Artegall.  The last part of III.iii depicts this disguising as a construction of self that nonetheless allows for Britomart to desire arms on her own terms, rather than seeking the static *exempla* of either Artegall or Angela.  Her more independent status is

important in establishing her role as a true knight rather than a mere imitator. The mechanisms of disguise recognize that status and gender are fabricated, while still allowing the appearance of both the authentic subject and the individual to persist.[226]

These early moments of fashioning are thus integral to Britomart's status as a knight. She is not simply the androgynous knight, caught between the competing impulses of two gender imperatives; nor is she primarily defined by her desires for Artegall or for the expression of arms. Instead, the "martial maid" remains a phrase which describes but does not delimit the person Britomart becomes. The disguise entails fashioning, which enables Britomart to transform herself into an agent of virtue while maintaining that agency as a form of emulation and enarmoring. She is a knight because she dresses like a knight, and she can dress like a knight because she already shares or can easily gain those qualities: nobility, robustness, and skill.

This chapter has followed relatively similar workings of disguise in Britomart and Gareth. It ends with the end of Beaumains but with the beginning of Britomart. Both create new identities that raise questions about status and impersonation. Their disguises emphasize the effect that others' narration has on the perception of a chivalric identity. The statuses acquired by both Gareth and Britomart turn out to be an effect of narrative, at once an artificial invention and something that, once fitting, seems appropriate. As this chapter has demonstrated, the result does not fit well in a binary of authentic and fabricated personae. The shifting personas enter their characters into social circles around them, as these social circles permit recognition to take place and attempt to resolve the contradiction between an appearance and the status assumed to follow it. Both represent their accomplishments as originating from their inherent worth in order to

supplement their disguised performances with a feasible explanation.  In both cases, these representations undermine the processes that contribute to a sense of self-fashioning, such that their actions build a persona only to circumscribe their earlier performances within an established public identity that struggles to contain them.  The disguises differ not in operation but rather in effect. Malory seems more interested in explaining valuable accomplishments through concealed nobility, with Gareth's nobility serving as an answer for who he is.  Spenser allows Britomart to shape herself into a knight using her disguise, her very body transformed by martial practice.

Gareth distinguishes himself through visual and textual descriptions that consistently return to Arthur's court. No part of his verbal or visual performance remains in doubt for long, as he is bolstered by his capability in battle and by the readiness of onlookers to take him at his word. He does not remain in an alienated position. In contrast, scenes with Britomart focus more on two elements. First, onlookers must deal with disguises that remain visually and textually ambiguous. The bases for who Britomart is, whether she appears as a man and whether she hails from Trojan blood, are all somewhat unsettled. In exchange, Britomart's armor feels more like a fashioning implement, transforming her into a knight who can hold together otherwise contradictory-seeming perceptions of class and gender. Thus disguise for Spenser initiates a transformation of status that creates Britomart as she appears in full armor.

That potential for more radical transformations of status differentiates *The Faerie Queene* from *Le Morte Darthur*. As the next chapter will show, disguises also give cautionary lessons on the limited means interpreters have to recognize when a visual transformation does not accompany a transformation of self.

Chapter Four

Invisible Knights, Enchanted Disguises, and the Limits of Social Recognition


This chapter proceeds in three major sections. The first section focuses on the

invisible knight Garlonde in "The Tale of Balin" in *Le Morte Darthur*. His

nonappearance defies the forms of recognition that more conventional disguises rely on.

As a consequence, his disguise avoids the performative, self-fashioning potential of other

disguises, and he becomes instead an ethical problem. Balin must figure out how to

perceive and do justice to someone who defies conventional modes of interpretation. The

second focuses on Archimago, a character who appears early in *The Faerie Queene*

whose disguise conceals every trace of its being a disguise, such that he impersonates the

Redcrosse Knight. Una and Sansloy both misinterpret someone who seems visually

recognizable. Finally, the chapter will conclude by considering what it means to have

such extreme and morally disapproved disguises occurring early in both texts: they set

the mood for how disguise will later be interpreted. Overall, I suggest that Garlonde and

Archimago both function to highlight the failure of interpretation; for *Le Morte Darthur*

interpretation fails when sight itself fails, whereas for *The Faerie Queene* sight leads to

failures of interpretation, as disguise raises the possibility that appearance does not

correspond to identity.


**Balin and Misinterpretation**

"The Tale of Balin" occurs in the first part of *Le Morte Darthur* and is the first

extended episode not focused on Arthur or Uther. It follows Balin as he wanders through

a series of situations where he acts honorably and experiences misfortune. At the start of the story, he is freed from imprisonment for killing a cousin to King Arthur. From a damsel he receives a sword that can only be drawn by "a passynge good man of hys hondys and of hys dedis, and withoute velony other trechory, and withoute treson" (40.38-9). Balin fulfills the requirements only to learn that by keeping the sword he is also destined to kill his brother and destroy himself.

In several situations Balin makes a decision that is justifiable according to one system of values, only to learn that he has jeopardized himself in other ways. The Lady of the Lake comes to Arthur's court and demands either his head or the damsel's head; Balin cuts the Lady of the Lake's head off instead to protect himself, and Arthur banishes him from court for killing his ally. Balin accidentally kills Lanceor in a joust, whose lady soon finds Lanceor and takes his sword; Balin cannot take the sword without risking injury to the lady, and consequently she runs herself through on her own sword. After a short interlude where Balin helps Arthur settle the conflict with King Lot and other kings in revolt, Balin volunteers to escort a knight fearful of attack; Balin promises safe passage on his body, only to have the invisible knight Garlonde run the unnamed knight through. Garlonde then strikes another knight in similar manner, after which Balin enters a castle and sees Garlonde while visible; Garlonde challenges Balin for looking at him too long. Balin kills him, defends himself against the other people in the castle, and accidentally deals the Dolorous Stroke, which kills most of the people in the castle and wounds King Pellam, who will only be healed by the Grail. Balin encounters the knight Garnish looking for his lady; Balin finds her in the arms of another knight and tells Garnish, who kills them both and immediately regrets it. Finally, Balin follows the customs of a castle

and sets aside his shield; he then fights another knight, they mortally wound one another, and they learn that they are brothers: Balin and Balan.

In all of these events, Balin engages in a romance narrative laced with tragedy, as the knight without treason or villainy cannot recognize or prevent the consequences of his actions. Critics typically approach Balin in terms of the tragic or the unfortunate: K. S. Whetter describes Balin's story as a tragedy where no actions can be truly laudable, where the series of disappointments ending in Balin's death rehearse the overall trajectory of *Le Morte Darthur*, which ends in Arthur's death.[227] Elizabeth Edwards describes the narrative as perverse, "seeming to be both urgently important and inexplicable."[228] Balin invites interpretation, but the series of calamities is difficult to understand for Balin and for the reader, as explanations that would have been in prior versions of the story (in the French *Suite de Merlin*) have been omitted by Malory.[229] Other critics try to make sense of these events by appeals to prophecy or prediction: for Rachel Kapelle, prophecies by Merlin and others lend the causation that often feels obscure in this narrative. By submitting to *aventure*, Balin can neither heed nor understand the predictions of Merlin or others; Balin's judgments are insufficient to fill the *lacunae* or gaps of explanation opened up by prophecy.[230] For Jennifer Boulanger, Merlin's inscriptions on the tombs of Balin's victims not only predict the future but revise the immediate past; they reproduce forms of interpretation that Balin and the reader also engage in.[231]

In these and other studies, the encounter with Garlonde receives little attention compared to Balin's other events. In "The Tale of Balin" many events are perplexing, and the invisible knight makes disguise one of the modes of confusion: how does one understand a knight who cannot be seen? How can he be found? How can he be judged?

Most disguises require some court or witnesses to see their acts and determine who uses the disguise, leading to a moment where a public persona is judged alongside the previously-alienated disguise to create a newly-appraised subject. Garlonde defies sight while invisible; the disguise cannot be judged visually. His visible, undisguised appearance at his brother Pellam's court is a surprise to no one but Balin. Only social exchanges can help interpret what cannot be seen and thus cannot be judged. Understanding Garlonde as a disguised knight allows one to see Garlonde not just as another incident of conflicting ethical systems but as an example of the need of visual feedback for a system of justice to work.

Partly Garlonde receives less attention because critics are typically interested in situations that show the limits of Balin's agency. Direct examinations of Garlonde fall by the wayside. Thus one recent examination of the Garlonde episode by Amanda D. Taylor focuses on Balin's failed promises of protection and the legal precedent of swearing on his body.[232] Garlonde indexes Balin's failure to protect knights under protection.[233] Similarly, for Kenneth Hodges Garlonde is yet another example of Balin's failure to recognize relationships between others.[234] Certainly these critics, and especially Hodges, show the way the story troubles interpretation and recognition. When we put Garlonde at the center of interpretation despite the difficulty of interpreting him, what happens? We see that speculators fall back on trading names and details when they cannot judge appearances. Subsequently, once Garlonde does appear in Balin's sight, Balin makes Garlonde's body into an effigy of Garlonde's victims in order to produce justice.

**The Invisible Knight Garlonde at the Boundaries of Social Exchanges**

> 'Woll ye be my warraunte,' seyde the knyght, 'and I go with you?'
> 'Yee,' seyde Balyne, 'othir ellis, by the fayth of my body, I woll dye therefore.'
> […]
> And as they were evyn before Arthurs pavilion, *there com one invisible, and smote the knight that wente with Balyn thorought the body with a spere.*
> 'Alas!' seyde the knight, 'I am slayne undir your *conduyte with a knyght called Garlonde.* Therefore take my horse, that is bettir than yours, and ryde to the damesell and folow the quest that I was in as she woll lede you – and revenge my deth when ye may.' 'That shall I do,' seyde Balyn, 'and that I make avow to God and knyghthode.' (*Le Morte Darthur* 53.9-21; emphasis mine)

Garlonde is first seen indirectly through the act of murder. Balin has just assured a knight that he would be able to protect him long enough to proceed to Arthur's pavilion. Just outside that pavilion, "one invisible" mortally wounds this unnamed knight. The attacker, also unnamed and undefined, is identified by the knight as "a knight called Garlonde." Then when the unnamed knight dies, the tomb Arthur erects names both murderer and victim: "Here was slayne Berbeus […] of the knyght Garlonde" (53.25, 29).

Garlonde is named. Unlike with most disguises, this naming lacks the visual features and speculation that ordinarily accompany a disguise. He is concealed without showing anything of himself. Garlonde neither offers nor receives the sort of attention that might precede a naming. In the absence of more conventional patterns of visual recognition, Garlonde only becomes known through repetitions that name Garlonde with ever-increasing description each time he strikes. After the first attack, another unnamed knight asks Balin why he is disappointed. When Balin eventually shares the story of the first attack, this knight (Peryne) makes an unfortunately-phrased request: "Here I ensure you by the feyth of my body never to departe frome you while my lyff lastith" (53.40-1). Balin broke his promise, but Peryne keeps his: "And as they com by an ermytage evyn by a chyrcheyerde, there com Garlonde invisible and smote this knyght, Peryne de Mounte

Belyarde, thoroute the body with a glayve" (53.43-5). This time the text names Garlonde, and both knights confirm his identity with a short dialogue – Peryne laments being slain by "thys traytoure knyght that rydith invisible," and Balyn responds that this is not the "firste despite" that he has done (54.1-3). They can only name Garlonde's invisibility and count the "despites."

Finally, in a third description of an encounter with Garlonde, a knight describes his son having been wounded by someone who rides invisible who is "brothir unto Kynge Pellam" (54.40). The wound is so grievous that he needs Garlonde's blood to heal it. Balin attaches to this mysterious event the name of the knight he has been pursuing: "'A!' seyde Balyne, 'I know that knyghtes name, which ys Garlonde, and he hath slayne two knyghtes of myne in the same maner – therefore, I had levir mete with that knyght than all the golde in thys realme for the dspyte he hath done me'" (54.44-48). Once more, Balin and the other knight identify him by repeating identifications that have no connection to visual sight. Through counting incidents and applying names, they accumulate more details for finding him. It is only through these social exchanges that Garlonde can be known and followed. Otherwise, he evades conventional systems of recognition.

Balin learns one other piece of information regarding Garlonde: he will be at attendance in his brother King Pellam's court in the next twenty days, at an event where every knight entering requires a lady in attendance. Balin and the damsel accompanying him enter.[235] Balin is disarmed by attendants but insists on keeping his sword. Once he enters the main hall, Balin asks around for Garlonde. The first response identifies Garlonde visually: "Yes, sir, yondir [Garlonde] goth, the knyght with the black face – for

he ys the mervaylyste knyght that ys now lyvyng; and he destroyeth many good

knyghtes, for he goth invisible" (55.22-5). Balin replies, "Well […] ys that he?" (55.26).

What was before shared only through interactions with other characters, a series

of details without any visual identification attached to it, now becomes visual. He is the

"mervaylyste" knight, the term *mervayle* or *marvel* which has been conventionally

connected to disguises and visual wonders now being applied to the visible invisible

knight. It is unclear whether this wonder attaches to his reputation or to his black face.

Garlonde's black face is also unique in a text that otherwise restricts black color to armor,

harness, or shield.[236] The black skin may align Garlonde with an allegory of dishonor or

corruption, though this too is not further supported by textual details. It is not clear

whether the skin corresponds to some form of geographic origin or religious affiliation;

Garlonde is never identified as a Saracen. Instead, it seems like the skin itself is part of

the spectacle, a quality that maintains the conspicuousness of the invisible knight when

he is visible.[237]

Balin has found the knight at his most visible. Once more he has to determine

what an ethical response will be. Balin looks at Garlonde for a long time and ponders the

risks of attacking him in a public place. However, Garlonde responds first to Balin

watching him. "And therewith thys Garlonde aspyed that Balyn vysaged hym, so he com

and slapped hym on the face with the backe of hys honde, and seyde, 'Knyght, why

beholdist thou me so? For shame, ete thy mete and do that thou com for'" (55.30-33).

Garlonde responds with a back-handed challenge to Balin's staring. Looking for too long

is disrespectful. Garlonde resists being Balin's spectacle though the text continually tries

to make him into one: *this* in "thys Garlonde" is a pairing of the demonstrative pronoun

and a name that is unusual in *Le Morte Darthur*, treating Garlonde not just as one of the characters but as a special example.[238] Garlonde seems to not realize the situation he has been put in, and his phrasing sets up the irony that Balin uses in his reply. Balin will indeed soon "do that [he] com for" in beheading Garlonde with his sword.[239]

Killing the newly-visible knight is insufficient for Balin. Balin also renders Garlonde into a visual metonym of his earlier victim Berbeus, making a visual example of the knight who could not be seen:

> "Now geff me youre troncheon," seyde Balyn, "that he slew youre knyght with." And anone [the damsel] gaff hit hym, for allwey she bare the truncheoune with hir; and therewith Balyn smote hym thorow the body, and seyde opynly, "Wyth that troncheon thou slewyste a good knyght, and now hit stykith in thy body." Than Balyn called unto hys oste and seyde, "Now may ye fecche blood inowghe to hele youre son withall." (55.37.43)

The damsel had been bearing this truncheon or spear shaft with her since the attack on Berbeus. It was the weapon Garlonde used to attack him. As an object, the truncheon narratively and visually connects Garlonde's mutilated body to Berbeus's, going from the factual verb *slewyste* to the more visual *stykith*. One can see a truncheon sticking in his body. Furthermore, Balin speaks "opynly" in the hearing of the court around him though he addresses Garlonde directly in a form of accusation. *Thou* transitions to *thy body*, subject turning to prepositional object, identity turning to penetrated flesh, which in turn yields the blood that another man needs to heal his son.

Garlonde visually and physically pays for the crimes he has done. Throughout these events, Balin and Garlonde are caught among three distinct social spaces whose members each understand Garlonde's status differently. Arthur's pavilion marks one social space wherein Arthur had demanded Berbeus's presence. When Berbeus is murdered, Arthur's request for his presence is thwarted, and Balin – compelled by his

promises to Arthur and Berbeus – seeks to honorably bring Garlonde to justice. The second social space is Pellam's court, wherein Pellam and other attendants view Pellam's brother Garlonde as one of their own. They do not do anything to Garlonde, though they know that he is a knight who kills people while being invisible. Whereas the disguise is a remarkable evasion of justice for Balin and Arthur's court, Pellam's court does not condemn Garlonde for his actions. Garlonde does not need invisibility here because Pellam's court protects their own member; when Balin kills Garlonde, they seek on Pellam's orders to kill Balin. Finally, each of Garlonde's victims is slain in a looser third social space between Arthur's and Pellam's courts. The victims, represented by the *oste* or host, demand blood. The host needs Garlonde's blood to heal the wounds inflicted on his son. Garlonde, the invisible knight, takes advantage of the contradictions between these spaces, as Balin fails to maintain his sense of justice outside of Arthur's court. Balin may find it momentarily edifying to pierce Garlonde's dead body with a truncheon, but it only further incites the knights who attack him. The demonstration of Garlonde's guilt is necessary for Balin to resolve Garlonde's difficult disguise, but it addresses neither the social conflicts between these three social spaces nor the initial difficulty of recognizing Garlonde.

J. Allen Mitchell tries to make sense of "The Tale of Sir Balin" by explaining that "'the moral of the story' just is the story," that plot does the best job of demonstrating how fortune and happenstance impinge on Balin's or readers' moral judgments.[240] Balin repeatedly does actions in the hope that his intentions may produce good outcomes. Certainly, sometimes heroes in romance successfully match intention with outcome: Lancelot and Gareth can quest virtually guaranteed that their intentions will be met with

good outcomes. Balin's narrative does not work like this; his intentions repeatedly go awry. Garlonde's disguise as the invisible knight perplexes because there is so little there beyond the immediate events of the story to make sense of who he is or how he should be judged. The inability to recognize Garlonde may cause trouble, but the relentless attempts by Balin to bring Garlonde to justice also go too far. Balin does not or cannot resolve his situation well. At these limits of romance and disguise, flaws appear in the fabric of recognition and visual moralizing upon which other moments of *Le Morte Darthur* depend. Whereas flaws in recognition were manageable in other instances of disguise, the invisible knight challenges the pretext that justice exists beyond the determinations of a social order.  Social exchanges form these rules, and it is the health of the community that determines how they are followed.

**Archimago and Misinterpretation**

This section will describe Archimago's disguises as a form not of invisibility but as a disguise without the traces of disguise that invite further interpretation. This opaqueness effectively cuts him off from the systems of social exchange that have been addressed in previous chapters. He is not concealing himself in order to reveal himself or fashion himself to the approval of his onlookers. He is instead borrowing appearances, applying others' identities on himself and his servants. The primary issue with Archimago's disguise is that he intends to deceive other characters. At the same time, his disguise shows that the people who see him cannot assess the morality of his actions through sight alone. They would have to be able to recognize Archimago for who he is. Characters interpreting these images, including both the Redcrosse Knight and Una, fail

to see that he is in disguise.

The passages I will use involving Archimago and Duessa are predominantly in the first three cantos of the first book of *The Faerie Queene*. Archimago enters the narrative in the first canto as a man in black dress who offers the Redcrosse Knight and the damsel Una a place to stay for the night. He employs dreams and disguises his sprites to disturb the Redcrosse Knight. At the beginning of the second canto, the sprites appear as Una and a Squire in bed, leading the Redcrosse Knight to abandon Una. When Una leaves in search of the Redcrosse Knight, Archimago disguises himself as him, and in the third canto finds Una, fails to defend her against the attacking knight Sansloy, and is himself unhelmed and left for dead.

In summary, these events have the conventional hallmarks of previously discussed disguises: a character undergoes a disguise as a knight and is only revealed once his helmet is removed. As shown in chapter 2, Artegall and Britomart only recognize one another when their helmets are off and their hair is visible. However, Archimago's sequence is different because no one is necessarily looking for Archimago. Furthermore, his disguise does not appear to be a disguise to other people. He is not the Savage Knight, the stranger knight, or an unknown knight. His red cross marks him as someone already recognizable in the narrative. Archimago is an imposter.

Previous criticism about Archimago often acknowledges the control he exerts over his own representations. Archimago's name can be broken down as Archi-Mago (arch-magician) or Arch-Imago (arch-image). When he first appears he is almost completely described in a visual register.[241] Yet Archimago also perpetuates a form of disguise that, because it has a definite name and association, does not look like a disguise to others. In

this case the possibility of unseen disguises draws attention to the inability to understand people through the visual realm alone. When disguise fails to make itself known to interpreters, it shows the limits of allegory, which cannot reliably be found in places that do not signal their own allegorical status.

Archimago first disguises himself once Una and the Redcrosse Knight have been separated. Two stanzas are devoted to his intent and the success of his visual recreation:

> He then deuisde himselfe how to disguise;
> For by his mightie science he could take
> As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,
> As euer *Proteus* to himselfe could make:
> Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake,
> Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell,
> That of himselfe he oft for feare would quake,
> And oft would flie away. O who can tell
> The hidden power of herbes, and might of Magicke spell?
>
> But now seemde best, the person to put on
> Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest:
> In mighty armes he was yclad anon:
> And siluer shield, vpon his coward brest
> A bloudy crosse, and on his crauen crest
> A bounch of haires discolourd diuersly;
> Full iolly knight he seemde, and well addrest,
> And when he sate vpon his courser free,
> *Saint George* himself ye would haue deemed him to be. (I.ii.10-11)

Archimago's ability is Protean.[242] Archimago does not merely don suitable armor; he changes his form or shape. The verb *disguise* is used to describe this process. For the first stanza all of the examples of transformation involve animals: bird, fish, fox, dragon. The variety itself signals the might of his magic. So does its own effect on Archimago: he is so stricken by his own disguise as a dragon that he would quake in fear and fly away from his own image. Archimago disappears in his transformation, hiding his visage and features under armor.

"The person to put on" then suggests that he is not merely putting on the clothes of the person, but that he is adopting the outer visual form of the Redcrosse Knight, impersonating him in his own arms and armor.[243] *Person* suggests both a human role and the appearance that comes along with it; it implies substance as well as appearance.[244] The role itself is being donned, and the following lines apply visual echoes of the Redcrosse Knight onto the "coward" and "crauen" features of Archimago. The text repeats his "siluer shielde" (I.i.1.2) and "bloudie Crosse" (I.i.2.1) from his first visual description. By overlaying these elements on Archimago's visual features, Archimago is effectively clad, encased in armor that will not reveal him.

Yet in putting on the Redcrosse Knight Archimago becomes more than the knight that has been represented thus far in the text. The discolored hairs on his crest, a kind of plume, echo no previous description of the Redcrosse Knight. The name associated with this collective guise, "Saint George," has not been uttered before. While a character's description need not describe every detail of a character, Archimago's disguise has still presented new details concerning how the Redcrosse Knight looks and who he is. Through successful impersonation, descriptions of Archimago's disguise double as descriptions of the Redcrosse Knight.

Archimago's disguise is so well done that it evokes the Redcrosse Knight's own identity as Saint George. The speaker momentarily shifts to address the audience in second person: "Saint George himself ye would haue deemed him to be" (I.ii.11.9). The line describes the judgment of readers while maintaining that their judgment must be wrong. Archimago is not Saint George. Even though "ye" would be wrong about who Archimago is, the next stanza begins by confirming that readers would not be wrong

about the appearance: "But he the knight, whose semblaunt he did beare, / The true Saint George was wandred far away, / Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare" (I.ii.12.1-3). Now Archimago bears the *semblaunt,* the likeness or appearance of Saint George, whereas the Redcrosse Knight is "the true Saint George." Archimago resembles the Redcrosse Knight but is not the Redcrosse Knight.

Readers would be unable to parse the difference between resemblance and identity. For Archimago disguise transforms him into the Redcrosse Knight so completely that one can learn more about the Redcrosse Knight through his disguise. Visual judgment alone is insufficient to discover the old magician beneath his armor, just as visual judgment more generally is insufficient to resolve moral matters. His status – the traces of disguise – are absent, since the usual signifying markers of identity are all present, visible, and recognizable. He bears the blood-red cross. He has the silver shield. His plume is red. Perfectly fabricated visual details are as misleading and as difficult to interpret truly as invisibility itself. In the next canto Archimago finds Una while he is in his disguise, and he tests the ability of his onlookers to comprehend what is going on.

When Una reappears in canto iii, she is searching the deserts for some sign of the Redcrosse Knight. In a short episode, she befriends a lion and seeks shelter in the house of two women, Abessa and Corceca, who host her out of fear of her lion. The lion slays Abessa's lover Kirkrapine, Una and the lion leave, and the two women have just finished praying against Una when they see a knight riding up: "A knight her met in mighty armes embost, / Yet knight was not for all his bragging bost, / But subtill Archimag, that Vna sought / By traynes into new troubles to haue tost" (I.iii.24.4-7). Archimago is pursuing Una, and the text differentiates between the arms that emboss or adorn him and the name

he is. At this moment, the women do not recognize him as the Redcrosse Knight. This makes sense, for they have never met before. Instead, they judge him according to the most specific identity they have available: a knight. The women misrecognize his status on the basis of his mighty arms. The misrecognition is a minor episode that sets up Archimago's finding Una. Through his appearance as a knight and specifically as the Redcrosse Knight, he seeks to cause trouble through tricks or *traynes*. It is up to Una to successfully interpret what remains *subtill*, finely woven into Archimago's images and performances.

Una fails. First at a distance and then up close, she judges Archimago to be the Redcrosse Knight. Archimago has turned aside at a distance to avoid her lion, but she sees him on a hill: "From whence when she him spyde, / By his like seeming shield, her knight by name / She weend it was, and towards him gan ryde: / Approching nigh, she wist it was the same, / And with faire fearefull humblesse towards him shee came" (I.iii.26.5-9). As with so many other moments of inspecting disguises, her seeing him is important: she *spyde* Archimago and his shield was "like seeming." Her understanding of his name and status accompany these visual elements: *weend* and *wist* progress in confidence from being less certain to being more certain. She thinks and then she knows as she approaches him.

Her failure is important partly because of the importance Una herself puts on visual perception. She addresses him, beginning, "Ah my long lacked Lord, / Where haue ye bene thus long out of my sight?" (I.iii.27.1-2). The Redcrosse Knight has long been absent – out of sight – just as Una presumes that he is now in sight: "For since mine eye your ioyous sight did mis, / My chearefull day is turnd to cheareless night, / And eke my

night of death the shadow is; / But welcome now my light, and shining lampe of blis" (I.iii.27.6-9). Throughout these lines sight is associated with how she feels, most explicitly in the concluding phrase "shining lampe of blis," which connects illumination and bliss. Absence of sight is described as night or the shadow of death. Una derives particular solace and joy from Archimago because she primarily attends to his convincing appearance. She does mistakes the appearance of the Redcrosse Knight and cannot perceive the person underneath the armor.

In the interaction that follows they talk, but even here references to visual appearance persist as reminders of disguise. Archimago as the Redcrosse Knight gives an excuse to Una that she accepts: he was off fighting a "felon strong" who will "neuer more deface" other knights (I.iii.29.3-5). To *deface* means to destroy.[245] It also means to disfigure, to mar, to ruin the *face* or appearance of something.  She accepts his explanation and forgets her past sorrows seeking him, partly because present sight is more compelling than looking back: "She speakes no more / Of past: true is, that true loue hath no powre / To looken backe; his eyes be fixt before. / Before her stands her knight, for whom she toyld so sore" (I.iii.30.6-9). Love is not given to looking back on memories of the past. Instead Una privileges the immediacy of sight and presence, as love's eyes are fixed to the front. The closing line of the stanza puts his present proximity ("before her stands") ahead of her past work finding him ("she toyld so sore"). Even mistaken sight is a comfort.

Una's sight is not mistaken because she sees badly or wrongly. Her eyes are not misleading her: every feature of Archimago's current appearance shows him to be the Redcrosse Knight. The error does not involve wrongly evaluating these visual features.

Instead, the presumption she brings to appearances is in error: that he is the Redcrosse

Knight because all of the visual evidence points to that being the case. Visual

interpretation reaches its limit, and it is difficult to imagine how recognition would work

without this basic presumption. Her reliance on sight fails her. This deviates from what

was seen regarding Garlonde in *Le Morte Darthur*, where sight itself fails to apprehend

the murderous knight. For Balin, making Garlonde into a visual spectacle restores some

sense of recognition that invisibility takes away. In *The Faerie Queene* sight is the

problem. Sight is useful but fallible, as the Redcrosse Knight shows how the connection

between appearance and identity breaks down.

The following engagement with Sansloy forces Archimago to reveal himself.

Sansloy sees the red cross on Archimago's armor and thinks that Archimago is the

Redcrosse Knight who killed Sansfoy in the previous canto. Archimago is compelled by

Una to meet Sansloy with his spear, but Archimago is pierced by the spear in their first

encounter. Sansloy accuses Archimago of killing Sansfoy, Una cries for mercy in vain,

and Sansloy undoes Archimago's helmet to slay him:

> Her piteous words might not abate his rage,
> But rudely rending vp his helmet, would
> Haue slaine him straight: but when he sees his age,
> And hoarie head of *Archimago* old,
> His hastie hand he doth amazed hold,
> And halfe ashamed, wondred at the sight:
> For that old man well knew he, though vntold,
> In charmes and magicke to haue wondrous might,
> Ne euer wont in field, ne in round lists to fight. (I.iii.38)

As with the previous excerpts, sight informs how Sansloy responds to Archimago. He

*sees* Archimago's age and his grayed head. His hand is held *amazed*, a participle that

describes his being mentally perplexed. His thoughts are then connected to sight in the

next line as he "wondred at the sight." For Sansloy, seeing Archimago beneath the armor makes little sense. As the last two lines describe, Archimago is not known for fighting in tournament lists or on the field. Sansloy does not necessarily know who the Redcrosse Knight is. He only knows who he looks like. Thus he begins speaking by asking what he sees: "Why Archimago, lucklesse syre, / What doe I see?" (I.iii.39.1-2). He receives no answer from Archimago, whose "guilefull dazed eyes" show his temporary inability to see or function (39.6).

Archimago is not transformed by this disguise. Both Una and Sansloy misjudge him as the Redcrosse Knight, so that Una goes with him and Sansloy hurts him. This episode resolves itself not with clear judgment that precedes some definite combat where the true knight triumphs. Failure begets failure. So Una has no time to change her appraisal of Archimago. She does not consider in any depth the failure of her own sight. Instead, in terms similar to those used by Sansloy, she "amased stands" just as his hand is "amazed": "[Sansloy] to the virgin comes, who all this while / Amased stands, her selfe so mockt to see / By him, who has the guerdon of his guile, / For so misfeigning her true knight to bee" (I.iii.40.1-4). She has been mocked or deceived, and Archimago is recognized for his ability to put on the person of her Redcrosse Knight.

**Visual Interpretation and Disguise: Suspecting Sight**

These two sequences appear near the beginning of their respective texts: the tale of Balin appears within the first book of eight in the Winchester MS and the second book of twenty-one in Caxton's edition of *Le Morte Darthur*; Archimago appears in the first three cantos of the first book of *The Faerie Queene*. These are earlier than most of the

examples of disguise that have been considered in the other chapters: Tristram, Palomides, and Gareth appear disguised in the middle books of *Le Morte Darthur*, whereas Britomart and Artegall primarily appear disguised in books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene*. Lexically, the first use of the word *disguise* is associated with Archimago. Garlonde is the first knight who fights while disguised.

Since Garlonde and Archimago are near the beginning of their texts, they present ways to understand disguises when they appear subsequently in the narrative. In the concluding section of this chapter, I explore the changes such disguise-focused reading brings to these texts. For *Le Morte Darthur* social exchanges rely on visual codes of representation. The episode with Garlonde suggests that visibility may not itself be sufficient to keep the peace between various communities, but it is nonetheless the best method of identification that these characters have. Thus subsequent moments of disguise throughout *Le Morte Darthur* are always accompanied by visual and rhetorical registers, to which characters tend to respond by entering into dialogue and interpretation with the disguised figure. Members of communities appraise someone who reveals his disguise, usually accepting them into the community again: Arthur accepts Tristram, Palomides, and Gareth to the Round Table. In *The Faerie Queene* the suspicion of visual interpretation is heightened. Disguise tests not the lack of visuality but the failure of appearances to disclose unseen meanings. Archimago looks like a knight but is definitely not. When disguises subsequently appear, they pose a special challenge to their interpreters. Britomart and Artegall's disguises are not impersonations, so characters do not have to judge whether they are who they say they are. However, the potential risk that someone may use his disguise to impersonate remains.

Criticism of *Le Morte Darthur* can do more to address how visibility is necessary for the interactions between characters and communities within the text. Provided that their disguises are visible, disguise allows characters to manipulate visual and other modes of meaning to fashion themselves. Molly Martin's book *Vision and Gender in Malory's Morte Darthur* uses forms of sight to discuss how knights habitually see others while subjecting themselves to being seen.[246] Communities drive the desire that men perform their prowess in sight of the court: "The central images of courtly, chivalric knights both instruct viewers' sightlines and respond to the society's demand for visible gender performance" (21). The phrase "viewers' sightlines," Martin's own coinage, allows her to discuss how audience members are influenced by what enters their line of sight. The performances of knights project onto their onlookers ideas of what it means to be a man enarmored. Similarly, disguises influence interpreters to make sense of the character before them; who he is and what he is worth are questions that address his status as a man, as a knight, and as a participant in the communities of the text.

Martin describes disguises as bringing about a form of invisibility, since they hide the identity of its wearer and render that identity invisible. Garlonde is not only invisible but the "most invisible knight" (51). For Martin, Tristram's disguises also make his identity and gender invisible (55). Yet I would maintain that disguise is also a form of visibility. As seen in chapter 2, Tristram's disguise relies on making him visible but unidentifiable. He only attracts attention when he is seen. Similarly, as seen in chapter 3 Gareth's gender is on full display as he appears at Arthur's court at the start of his tale. Precisely who he is may be ambiguous or difficult to determine, but that ambiguity is an effect of his conspicuous visibility and not an effect of his being invisible. Disguise

creates more attention for what is seen and heard in the text; a disguise may be inscrutable and the previous identity of its wearer may be difficult to discover, but invisibility is not involved.

To explain that a different way, disguises in *Le Morte Darthur* are supposed to be difficult to interpret. In changing how visible features are understood, they push communities to make decisions about what performances, marvels, and spectacles are acceptable. In turn, characters can use these decisions to reinvent themselves for their communities. Recent work in characterization in Malory can benefit from understanding how disguise fashions its characters. Paul R. Rovang's book, *Malory's Anatomy of Chivalry: Characterization in the Morte Darthur*, examines how sixteen characters in Malory's text develop against the backdrops of Arthurian history and contemporary English history (xv).[247] For Rovang characters like Arthur, Gareth, Tristram, and Palomides provide "*exempla* of chivalry and nobility, both sound and unsound, for the deep consideration of [Malory's] aristocratic audience" (xiii).

Rovang typically analyzes how characters teach other characters lessons that they are not necessarily ready to hear. For Gareth, that lesson is questioning more what makes a successful knight in Arthurian society. Rovang implies that Gareth's character is questionable because he uses a disguise. "All along, therefore, Gareth, 'the starveling,' has been hiding a cache of weapons, horse and treasure. For a full year he has kept not only all ostensible markings of his nobility covered, but also his strength in arms. Has his doing so been guileful duplicity or the height of integrity?" (82). An assumption underlies this question: that Arthur and other characters do not permit being deceived, that disguise necessarily involves being duplicitous. As was described in chapter 3, Arthur was

perfectly willing to entertain Gareth even though he refused to tell his name. At no point in "The Tale of Sir Gareth" does anyone say that Gareth is wrong to use his disguise.

Recognizing how Arthurian society is already receptive to Gareth's disguise gives Rovang's analysis more substance. Gareth surprises Arthur, Kay, Lancelot, and others by presenting the qualities of knighthood from an unexpected subject position, as he comes from outside the court and outside of any clearly recognizable nobility. His disguise is radical not because it misleads his viewers, but because it opens up a possible critique of merit and blood from within a form that the court finds acceptable. Gareth has his cake and eats it too, successfully fashioning himself into a knight of the Round Table. The question that haunts Gareth's section is not whether he is deceptive in using disguise, but whether the idea that a kitchen knave could become a knight has currency beyond its textual moment. Disguises' temporary impressions unsettle the ever-present chivalric communities of the text.

*The Faerie Queene*'s disguises feel more connected to characterization itself. That may be because, in comparison with *Le Morte Darthur*, Spenser's disguises less often involve overlapping chivalric communities. In canto iii of book I, Archimago is not unhelmed in the eyes of a larger court like that of King Pellam's. Sansloy and Una alone are perplexed, two individuals with connections to other characters who are not present in that moment. Even when a larger field of spectatorship is present, as when Artegall and Britomart fight in canto vi of book iv, though presumably other spectators have been present only individual characters react: Artegall, Britomart, Scudamore, and Glauce. Relationships, networks of meaning, and allegories are present at sites of disguise, but the poem does not show consistent interest in the communities around disguise.

Disguise seems like a potentially positive model for the construction of character in *The Faerie Queene*. Characters undergo their disguises voluntarily. Disguised characters are not transfixed, but onlookers are pierced by what they see, amazed at the spectacle that has just unfolded before their eyes. Revealed guises jostle viewers into amazement, which prompts them to make sense of what they have just seen.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this project I stated a definition of disguise that would be used to approach several examples in *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*. "A disguise begins when a character is concealed, creating a second persona which changes the reception of that character." To approach disguises in *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*, they must be understood as occurring at sites of social exchange and addressing modes of interpretation. The disguise is an apparatus that shapes how characters and relationships may be understood. It crafts both the wearer's persona and models how others might respond to it.

Disguise is more than a mere plot of concealment. It creates characters. Previous concepts of disguise often involve characters concealing themselves and then revealing themselves. Through the 1990s, this was often described in terms of individuality and interiority: disguise establishes the internal selfhood of the concealed subject. In contrast, Susan Crane explained how the disguised character exists outside of his prescribed social role, potentially alienated from it. Similarly, I have shown that within these texts traces of interiority emerge as a result of social interaction, as spectators differentiate between the disguised persona and the person wearing it.

Disguise can help readers understand how their texts develop characters in relation to communities of characters in the text. Disguises allow characters to change how particular communities see them. Especially in *Le Morte Darthur*, characters often mediate between multiple communities or social relationships at once. For instance, Tristram's disguises shift how he relates to a number of communities large and small: King Arthur and his knights, King Marhalt and his knights, his immediate companions,

Lancelot, and Palomides. Disguise highlights Tristram's close affinity and conflict with Palomides while also situating Tristram within a social community of onlookers. Even when the Arthurian community fails to restrain the excesses of the murderous Garlonde, the community is still the central unit by which that disguise is judged. Balin fails to convince Pellam's court of Garlonde's injustice because his audience only recognizes Balin's grotesque murder of Garlonde; they do not view him as a knight-killer. Thus disguise for Malory fashions not just the character wearing the disguise but also the relationships and communities surrounding the disguise.

Spenser's characters also participate in communities, but central allegiance is less important than local communities formed from moment to moment. Artegall or Britomart do not fashion themselves directly in the perception of a central court like Gloriana's. Instead, they move through episodes, interacting with groups of characters like Malecasta and her knights, Paridell and Satyrane, and each other. These episodes can be understood on their own, or the disguised character can be followed from moment to moment as each episode fashions them further in a new context.

Spenserian critics do not often study social interaction on its own. Kenneth Hodges, whose own work on communities in Sir Thomas Malory influenced this project, does not find similar communities in his work with *The Faerie Queene*. Perhaps because of the relative lack of strong community structures, he and others turn instead to forms of allegory.[248] For instance, in the article "Reformed Dragons: *Bevis of Hampton*, Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," Hodges compares the adaptation and use of dragons among the three texts to see how they work in book I of *The Faerie Queene*. He notes that the repetition of serpentine motifs in the serpent Error,

the dragon Duessa rides, and the dragon fought by the Redcrosse Knight show allegory to coexist with and develop through chivalric action: "The romance elements are not simply vehicles for the allegory, but necessary components connecting the more abstract properties of holiness to earthly action" (112). This "earthly action" refers to the literal elements of riding around as a knight. While at one remove from discussing community directly, Hodges is still figuring out how the mode of chivalric romance creates allegorical meaning in Spenser. Allegory, framed by a community of possible readers, is the chief element for examination.

Even at one remove from community, disguises still connect possible allegorical meanings to visual and material details present in a character, as well as to the interpretations that accompany their appearance. Disguise presents both an appearance and an underlying figure. In many cases the layers can be interpreted together to form the composite character Artegall. Sometimes those layers do not coincide, and the challenge is successfully discriminating the failure of a visual performance to represent something of its wearer. The challenge of interpreting disguise, like reading allegory, is to understand what is presented without reducing it entirely to superficial description or underlying signification.

The disguises in both texts are situated in moments that require close textual attention to understand. Consequently, disguises pose challenges to readers and characters who try to understand them. With *Le Morte Darthur*, visual indistinctness is most threatening. The invisible knight Garlonde in chapter 4 cannot be recognized or otherwise described while he rides about murdering knights. Such evasions of sight break the conventional social systems that make disguise work: the disguised persona no longer

belongs to an ethically just community, and actions can no longer be measured against someone's subject role and allegiances. For Malory, disguise is ultimately fine as long as it is *comprehensible* and *assimilable* by the communities it travels between. The episode puts special weight on being able to see it, and on how Balin responds once the invisible becomes visible.

*The Faerie Queene* focuses not on literal invisibility but rather on disguises that fail to disclose their own status as disguise, where the disguised persona does not resemble or otherwise fashion the one wearing it. Spenser's early example of Archimago acknowledges that misrecognitions are going to occur even in the face of visual and material description. His disguise as the Redcrosse Knight is threatening because it gives no trace of how viewers might understand his appearance as either disguise or as a representation of him. He even misleads Una. There is no interaction between his two personas, no evident transformation of who Archimago is. His disguise presents in full the threatening possibility that merely occurs in hints and flashes with other disguises: that the performance may be entirely image, that it may not be designed to disclose itself to onlookers, and that the visual may change what we see but not meaningfully shape our understanding of it.

Spenserian disguise thus challenges the connection between representation and meaning, and disguise can further extend present work being done on representation in *The Faerie Queene*. For instance, Kenneth Borris's article "Allegory, Emblem, and Symbol" focuses primarily on Spenser's differences from an Italian tradition of allegorical romance, finding moments in *The Faerie Queene* with "more personified or 'demonsterative' abstractions, beginning with errour," as well as "avatars of ideals, such

as Una, Belphoebe, and Alma."[249] Disguise cuts across these categories, as it resists

making its subjects into either monsters or "avatars of ideals." Instead, social pragmatism

and interpretation intermingle, producing characters who become more interesting

precisely through the challenges that accompany interpretation. Britomart is no avatar of

an ideal, no perfect chastity. She is a complex figure who transforms from context to

context, subject to the dual interpretive forces of onlookers and readers.

These points of comparison also liven up the usual comparisons between *The*

*Faerie Queene* and medieval English romances. Paul Rovang and Andrew King's

scholarship both focus on elements of the Fair Unknown narrative in Book I of *The*

*Faerie Queene,* connecting Malory's Gareth to *Bevis of Hamtoun* or Spenser's Redcrosse

Knight.[250] By comparing Gareth and Britomart's methods of disguise instead, one can

begin to answer why two narratives of developing into a knight differ in their approaches

to community and interpretability. Spenser is not just adapting a form that allows young

noble men to become knights. He is exploring the transformative potential of disguise as

characterization.

Both Britomart and Gareth become knights in disguise. Gareth's narrative is

formative – he becomes a knight under disguise, gradually reveals himself, and becomes

known at court as both Gareth and Beaumains. For Gareth the crucial task is being seen

as himself after being in disguise for so long. He must both establish his disguise and

make himself famous as the one with that disguise. He has to get his viewers interested.

Britomart is much less interested in being seen in this manner. While her disguise is

ostensibly made to fashion her as a knight to others, episodes in the text show the

potential dangers of being seen. Where Malory is relatively silent on the merits or lack of

merit of disguise, Spenser shows how disguise builds itself up through text and image, and how viewers may experience such a subject. For Britomart, how to be known as a knight is a smaller problem than the effects being a knight has on others: becoming like Artegall, inspiring desire between knights, creating and repeating oral histories that fashion who she is for the knights before her, and taking off her helm to invite visual comparisons to figures like Cynthia. Malory's disguises help one learn what it means to be a knight in a flawed community of knights; Spenser's disguises help one learn about what it means to be a knight among people who cannot discern or necessarily trust what they see and hear.

Both texts use disguise to address questions of uncertainty. For Malory social orders seek to address uncertainty, regulate it, and bring it into comportment. The elaborate practices around disguises do not just harness uncertainty to elevate a knight's status. They regulate that uncertainty, such that one must be noble and disclose one's nobility in tacit ways for disguise to work. For Spenser even noticing uncertainty is a problem. Time and again, characters do not experience uncertainty when looking at other characters. They only experience wonder once a disguise has been removed, and they must confront the conflict between two forms of expectation: who the disguised knight was and who the disguised knight is. Disguise as a mode sets up how others will respond to an appearance in a particular situation, and how they might resolve two conflicting assumptions of who someone is. For a text fraught with uncertainty, fashioning occurs when other characters set aside their uncertainty and regard a disguised, unknown persona as a known figure.

As a result, this project extends the scholarship on community in *Le Morte Darthur* and connects it to scholarship on allegory and interpretation in *The Faerie Queene*. Future work can also extend a genealogy of disguise that goes beyond either *Le Morte Darthur* or *The Faerie Queene*. Helen Cooper's *The English Romance in Time*, though twelve years old, provides one model for tracing the development of romance motifs between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries.[251] Jamie McKinstry's recent book *Middle English Romance and the Craft of Memory* provides a more recent precedent, focusing on the treatment of memory between anonymous Middle English romances, Chaucer's romances, *Le Morte Darthur*, *The Faerie Queene*, and other texts.[252] A similar book on disguise would expand knowledge of how disguise acts as a form of social exchange and allegory into other textual moments.

Notes

[1]    Henryson, Robert. "The Testament of Cresseid." *Robert Henryson: The Complete Works*. Ed. David John Parkinson. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010. Print.

[2]    There are a few candidates for who may be Sir Thomas Malory.  The current consensus is that Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel, Warwickshire (c. 1415-1471) is the author. For more information, see P. J. C. Field, *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory*. Cambridge: Brewer, 1993. Print; Christina Hardyment, *Malory: The Knight Who Became King Arthur's Chronicler.*  New York: Harper Collins, 2007.  Print.

[3]    Scholarship generally agrees that *Le Morte Darthur* is a romance, even as it employs the modes of genres like the chronicle: P. J. C. Field connects Malory's style to chronicles as well as romances, and other critics like Laura D. Barefield and Richard James Moll have also examined textual connection to chronicles.  See Field, P.  J.  C.  *Romance and Chronicle: A Study of Malory's Prose Style*.  London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1971.  Print; Barefield, Laura D.  *Gender and History in Medieval English Romance and Chronicle*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003.  Print; Moll, Richard James.  *Before Malory: Reading Arthur in Later Medieval England*.  Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2003.  Print.

[4]    *Le Morte Darthur* was printed first by William Caxton (1485) and was reprinted in the sixteenth century by Wynkyn de Worde (1498, 1529), William Copland (1557), and Thomas East (1585).  William Stansby's 1634 edition of *Le Morte Darthur* would be the last published until the three editions published in 1816 and 1817 and edited respectively by Alexander Chalmers, Joseph Haslewood, and William Upcott.  Since then, *Le Morte Darthur* has been widely available with many editions suiting the needs of the casual reader, the student, and the scholar.

[5]    The text only gestures to and never returns to the court of the fairy queen Gloriana, and many details of the narrative frame represented in the "Letter to Ralegh" are not fully represented in the full text.

[6]    The short list includes only two books that have undertaken direct comparisons of *Le Morte Darthur* and *The Faerie Queene*.  See Rovang, Paul R.  *Refashioning "Knights and Ladies Gentle Deeds": The Intertextuality of Spenser's Faerie Queene and Malory's Morte Darthur*.  Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1996.  Print; King, Andrew.  *The Faerie Queene and Middle English Romance : The Matter of Just Memory*.  Oxford: Clarendon, 2000.  Print.  Other scholars like C.S.  Lewis allude to *Le Morte Darthur* while discussing *The Faerie Queene*.  Lewis is less interested in directly comparing features of the two texts, comparing *The Faerie Queene* more to Italian romances.  See Lewis, C.  S.  *The Allegory of Love; a Study in Medieval Tradition*.  Oxford: Clarendon, 1936.  Print.

[7]    "Disguise, v." *Oxford English Dictionary*.  Web.  5 Mar.  2016.  See also "disgisen

(v.)." *Middle English Dictionary*.  Web.  5 Mar.  2016.

8    "de-, prefix, 1f." *Oxford English Dictionary.* Web. 25 March 2016.

9    [He makes himself ever fresh and dressed up and disguises all of his dress so that people of pleasure take from him the latest fashion.] Gower, John.  *Confessio Amantis*. Ed.  Russell A. Peck. Vol. 1. Kalamazoo: TEAMS, 2006.  Print.

10   "gise (n.)." *Middle English Dictionary*. Web. 25 March 2016.

11   [Certainly by reason I know no better advice than to be best disguised as such a bold beast [as a white bear], for they are like man in every manner.] Skeat, Walter William. *The Romance of William of Palerne*.  London: Early English Text Society, 1867.  Print.

12   In both texts the usages of the word *disguise* tend to cluster around particular sections.  In Malory, 16 out of the 23 uses are in the long "Tale of Sir Tristram," though disguise is frequently used throughout the text.  See Kato, Tomomi.  *A Concordance to the Works of Sir Thomas Malory*.  U of Tokyo P, 1974.  Print.

In Spenser, 21 out of the 34 instances of disguise occur in books III and IV, and the word is only used once in book I (at I.ii.10.1) even though characters like the Redcrosse Knight, Duessa, and Archimago all use disguises. See Osgood, Charles Grosvenor. *A Concordance to the Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1915. Print.

13   For instance, see *Masques et Déguisements Dans La Littérature Médiévale: Études*. Paris: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1988.  Print.  Disguise appears as a touchstone beyond the medieval period, and a few works address it directly. See Craft-Fairchild, Catherine.  *Masquerade and Gender : Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth-Century Fictions by Women*.  University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1993.  Print; Hager, Alan.  *Dazzling Images : The Masks of Sir Philip Sidney*.  Newark: U of Delaware P, London, 1991.  Print.

14   Dickson, Morgan.  "Verbal and Visual Disguise: Society and Identity in Some Twelfth-Century Texts." *Medieval Insular Romance Translation and Innovation*.  Ed. Judith Elizabeth Weiss, Jennifer Fellows, and Morgan Dickson.  Rochester: D.S.  Brewer, 2000.  41-54.  Print.

15   Dickson 53.

16   Crane, Susan.  "Knights in Disguise: Identity and Incognito in Fourteenth-Century Chivalry." *The Stranger in Medieval Society*.  Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.  63–79.  Print.

17   Crane, "Knights in Disguise" 68-70.

[18]   Crane, "Knights in Disguise" 65.

[19]   Crane, *Performance* 128.

[20]   Martin, Molly. *Vision and Gender in Malory's Morte Darthur*. Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010. Print.

[21]   Martin 14.

[22]   Campana, Joseph. *The Pain of Reformation : Spenser, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Masculinity*. New York: Fordham UP, 2012. Print. See esp. 186ff.

[23]   Campana 190.

[24]   Anderson, Judith H. "Britomart's Armor in Spenser's Faerie Queene': Reopening Cultural Matters of Gender and Figuration." *English Literary Renaissance* 39.1 (2009): 74–96. Print. 77.

[25]   Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.

[26]   Crane, Susan. *The Performance of Self : Ritual, Clothing, and Identity during the Hundred Years War*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2002. Print.

[27]   Puttenham, George. *The Art of English Poesy*. Ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2007. Print.

[28]   Davis, Lloyd. *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance*. U of Toronto P, 1993. Print. 108.

[29]   Davis 103.

[30]   Davis 109.

[31]   Tuve, Rosemond. *Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1966. Print.

[32]   Tuve 28.

[33]   Tuve 398.

[34]   Tuve 338.

[35]   Tuve 370.

[36]   The church being invisible allows Protestant reformers to challenge the Catholic church's appearance as an arbiter of grace. True believers' connections to God are

invisible and unmediated. Falck, Claire. "'Heavenly Lineaments' and the Invisible Church in Foxe and Spenser." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 53.1 (2013): 1–28. Print.

[37] McEachern, Claire. *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612*. Cambridge UP, 1996. Print. 42.

[38] Hanning, Robert W. *The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1977. Print.

[39] Haskins' thesis is that there were historical movements before the Italian Renaissance that were similar revivals, if less widespread in scope. For Haskins, the twelfth century involved the evolution of both government and learning: "The epoch of the Crusades, of the rise of towns, and of the earliest bureaucratic states of the West, it saw the culmination of Romanesque art and the beginnings of Gothic; the emergence of the vernacular literatures; the revival of the Latin classics and of Latin poetry and Roman law; the recovery of Greek science, with its Arabic additions, and of much of Greek philosophy; and the origin of the first European universities" (vi). His examples focus more on Latin writing than on the individual. See Haskins, Charles Homer. *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1927. Print.

[40] Hanning 1.

[41] Hanning 165.

[42] Hanning 166.

[43] Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980. Print.

[44] Greenblatt 1.

[45] Greenblatt 157.

[46] Greenblatt 189-90.

[47] Haidu, Peter. *The Subject Medieval/Modern: Text and Governance in the Middle Ages*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2004. Print.

[48] Haidu 347.

[49] Spence, Sarah. *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print; Verderber, Suzanne. *The Medieval Fold: Power, Repression, and the Emergence of the Individual*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.

[50] Verderber 18. She uses the term "proto-novel" to refer to romance; I correct it here for

the sake of consistency.

[51]   Armstrong, Dorsey.  *Gender and the Chivalric Community in Malory's Morte d'Arthur*.  Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2003.  Print; Hodges, Kenneth L.  *Forging Chivalric Communities in Malory's Le Morte Darthur*.  New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.  Print.  Their respective approaches also inform their recent collaborative work, which turns to geography as an important factor in determining chivalric communities: Armstrong, Dorsey and Kenneth L.  Hodges.  *Mapping Malory: Regional Identities and National Geographies in Le Morte Darthur*.  New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.  Print.

[52]   Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. *Of Giants : Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999. Print; Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. *Medieval Identity Machines*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003. Print.

[53]   "In medieval culture, the horse, its rider, the bridle and saddle and armor form a Deleuzian 'circuit' or 'assemblage,' a dispersive network of identity that admixes the inanimate and the inhuman.  Manuals of chivalry, *chansons de geste*, and romances were fascinated by the commingling of man and horse, describing at length the bonds of desire that pulled one body toward the other to find in their union new possibilities of being." See Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* xxiv-xv.

[54]   See esp.  lines 499-628 of "King Horn." *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*.  Ed.  Graham Drake, Eve Salisbury, Ronald B.  Herzman.  Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997.  Print.

[55]   Despite focusing on "Elizabethan drama," Freeburg ends his discussions in the year 1616, over a decade after Elizabeth's death in 1603, presumably to span William Shakespeare's lifetime.  Freeburg, Victor Oscar.  *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama: A Study in Stage Tradition*.  New York: Columbia UP, 1915.  Print.

[56]   Freeburg 2.

[57]   Bradbrook, M.  C.  "Shakespeare and the Use of Disguise in Elizabethan Drama." *Essays in Criticism* 2.2 (1952): 159–168.  Print

[58]   Freeburg 201.

[59]   Cooper, Helen.  *The English Romance in Time : Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare*.  Oxford; New York: UP, 2004.  Print.

[60]   Davis, Lloyd.  *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance*.  U of Toronto P, 1993.  Print.

[61]   Davis 16.

[62]   Davis 4.

[63]   Davis 91.

[64]   Davis 54-5.

[65]   Hyland, Peter.  *Disguise on the Early Modern English Stage*.  Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011.  Print.

[66]   Hyland 4.

[67]   Spence, Sarah.  *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century*.  New York: Cambridge UP, 1996.  11.  Print.

[68]   Marshall, Cynthia.  *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts*.  Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002.  Print.

[69]   Pender, Patricia.  *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.  Print.

[70]   Schwarz, Kathryn.  *Tough Love : Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2000.  Print.

[71]   Schwarz 161.

[72]   Fulton, Helen.  "Gender and Jealousy in Gereint Uab Erbin and Le Roman de Silence." *Arthuriana* 24.2 (2014): 43–70.  Print. 58.

[73]   Unless otherwise noted, all citations for *Le Morte Darthur* are from Stephen H. A. Shepherd's edition of Malory. These are given parenthetically by page number.  Both his and Eugene Vinaver's editions focus primarily on the Winchester MS. Shepherd's edition incorporates more features from the manuscript, including marginalia and manicules. Commentators including Bonnie Wheeler agree: "For more advanced students and even scholars, Stephen Shepherd's Norton Malory set a new standard not only in rich textual annotations but in appropriate corrections to Vinaver/Field" (101).  Malory, Sir Thomas. *Le Morte Darthur*. Ed. Stephen H. A. Shepherd. New York: Norton, 2004. Print. For Wheeler's comments, see Cooper, Helen and Bonnie Wheeler. "'Inowghe Is as Good as a Feste': Which Malorys for Teaching and Reading?." *Arthuriana* 20.1 (2010): 99–101. Print.

[74]   See Malory 12n1.  Uther and Igraine conceive Arthur out of wedlock hours after the death of her husband the Duke of Tintagel, and before Arthur's birth Uther marries Igraine.  As a result, Merlin claims that Arthur is not a bastard but a legitimate claimant.

[75]   Talking about disguise without a shift in appearance is in direct contrast to Freeburg's own definition of disguise held previously in this chapter, but in romances in particular

there is something to these uncoverings that relies on audience reaction.  For my purposes, the transition from one kind of recognition to another is more central to disguise than any particular tool for that transition.

[76]     King, Andrew.  *The Faerie Queene and Middle English Romance: The Matter of Just Memory*.  Oxford: Clarendon, 2000.  Print.

[77]     Rovang, Paul R.  *Refashioning "Knights and Ladies Gentle Deeds" : The Intertextuality of Spenser's Faerie Queene and Malory's Morte Darthur*.

[78]     Parker, Patricia A.  *Inescapable Romance : Studies in the Poetics of a Mode*.  Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979.  Print. 6.

[79]     The "moment" is a variable quantity. It could describe units as long as a canto or as short as a stanza. For more on the moment as a unit of text, see Teskey, Gordon. "Notes on Reading in The Faerie Queene: From Moment to Moment." *Spenser in the Moment*. Ed. Paul J. Hecht and J. B. Lethbridge. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2015. 217-234. Print.

[80]     Unless otherwise noted, all citations from *The Faerie Queene* are from Thomas P. Roche, Jr.'s edition.  All references will be parenthetical in order of book, canto, stanza, and line. Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. New York: Penguin, 1987. Print.

[81]     The "Letter to Ralegh" identifies the armor as "the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul v. Ephes.," given to him by Una (17). This does not answer the question that the poem's details raise, as the details seem to pertain to some literal chain of ownership as well. See also III.iii..58, where the armor of another knight, Britomart, receives a more extensive lineage than the Redcrosse Knight's.

[82]     The *rota Virgilii* is found in four lines of Latin verse, lines often appended to early modern editions of the *Aeneid* though their provenance is unknown: "Ille ego, qui quondam gracili modulatus avena / carmen, et egressus silvis vicina coegi  ut quamvis avido parerent arva colono, / gratum opus agricolis; at nunc horrentia Martis." [I am he who once tuned my song on a slender reed, then, leaving the woodland, constrained the neighbouring fields to serve the husbandman, however grasping -- a work welcome to farmers.  But now of Mars' bristling].  See Virgil. *Aeneid*. Trans.  H.  Rushton Fairclough.  Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1934.  Print.  240-1.

Spenser, Milton, and other early modern authors examined Virgil as a model of a poetic career. See  l. 55 ff.  of "October" in the *Shepheardes Calender* on the "Romish *Tityrus*" and EK's note identifying the Aeglogues, Georgics, and Aeneid as the "three seuerall workes of Virgile intended" (n55).  Spenser, Edmund. *The Shorter Poems*. Ed. Richard McCabe. New York: Penguin, 1999. Print.

[83]     Ariosto, Ludovico.  *Orlando Furioso*.  Ed.  Cesare Segre.  Milan: Arnoldo

Mondadori, 1976.  Print.

84    Lancelot is first named at line 3666 by the Queen, who watches him do battle with her captor Meliagant.  Chrétien de Troyes.  *Le Chevalier de la Charrette*.  Ed.  Catherine Croizy-Naquet.  Paris: Champion, 2006.  Print.

85    For early examples of prowess, see esp. when Kay kills the King of Ethiopia, is wounded by another king, kills his assailant, and is then healed by Arthur and some doctors (136).  In later moments Kay is rude, as when he ridicules the disguised Gareth (179).

86    Gawain inadvertently kills the lady in Malory 68.

87    Knapp, James A.  *Image Ethics in Shakespeare and Spenser*.  New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.  Print. 24.

88    Knapp 28.

89    Goldberg, Jonathan.  *The Seeds of Things: Theorizing Sexuality and Materiality in Renaissance Representations*.  New York: Fordham UP, 2009.  Print.

90    The 1590 edition contained only the first three books.  The 1596 edition was the first edition to contain six books, but it omitted most of the commendatory verses as well as the letter.  The first edition has various inconsistencies based on edition; for reference I am using the copy from the Huntington Library as it appears in Early English Books Online: Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene Disposed into Twelue Books, Fashioning XII. Morall Vertues*.  London: William Ponsonbie, 1590. *Early English Books Online*. Web.

91    David Weil Baker draws a stronger contrast between Spenser and Plato.  One of Spenser's rhetorical strategies is to mark a difference with Plato while maintaining some similarities in what they do as example-crafters: "All things are accounted by their shows in Spenser's letter just as in [Erasmus's] *The Praise of Folly* it is better to remain in Plato's cave than discover the truth of things" (145).  For Spenser, Plato is also engaged in a form of fashioning, but it is a form weakened by idealization.  See Baker, David Weil. *Divulging Utopia: Radical Humanism in Sixteenth-Century England*.  U of Massachusetts P, 1999.  Print.

92    Malory, Thomas.  *Le Morte Darthur*.  Westminster: Caxton, 1485. *Early English Books Online.* Web.

93    Cato, Marcus Porcius.  *Here Begynneth the Prologue or Prohemye of the Book Callid Caton* [...]. Trans.  Benet Burgh.  Westminster: William Caxton, 1484. *Early English Books Online.* Web.

94    *The English Bible: King James Version*. Ed. Herbert Marks, Gerald Hammond, and

Austin Busch. New York: Norton, 2012. Print.

[95]    Chaucer, Geoffrey. "The Canterbury Tales." *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

[96]    Armstrong, Dorsey. *Gender and the Chivalric Community in Malory's Morte d'Arthur*; Hodges, Kenneth L. *Forging Chivalric Communities in Malory's Le Morte Darthur*.

[97]    For a more detailed account, Andrew Lynch goes into further detail about one motive of the tournament disguise. Narratively, it allows two knights who have forsworn fighting each other to engage, while providing the excuse of plausible deniability (86). See Lynch, Andrew. *Malory's Book of Arms: The Narrative of Combat in Le Morte Darthur*. Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 1997. Print.

[98]    For a comprehensive study, see Barber, Richard W. and Juliet Barker. *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry, and Pageants in the Middle Ages*. Rochester: Boydell Press, 2000. Print. David Crouch produces an early history through the 13th century: Crouch, David. *Tournament*. New York: Hambledon, 2005. Print. Maurice Keen's work is generally valuable, especially the chapters on tournament: Keen, Maurice. *Nobles, Knights, and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages*. London : Hambledon Press, 1996. Print.

[99]    Nathalie Koble, and Mireille Séguy. *Lais bretons, XIIe-XIIIe siècles : Marie de France et ses contemporains*. Paris: H. Champion, 2011. Print. Translation my own.

[100]    Benson, Larry D. "The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes & L'Histoire de Guillaume Le Maréchal." *Chivalric Literature: Essays on Relations between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages*. Ed. Larry D. Benson and John Leyerle. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1980. 1-24. Print.

[101]    Keen 84-9.

[102]    The use of pageants is not addressed here, but the language is echoed in later romances when characters perform. In *Le Morte Darthur* Lancelot uses the phrase "play his pageant" at least twice to refer to exemplary knightly performances by Tristram (441.38, 448.41-2). The *Middle English Dictionary* glosses the phrase as "to act a part, fulfill a role," and it also has connections to fifteenth century cycle plays. See "pagent (n.)" *Middle English Dictionary*. Web. 17 May 2016.

[103]    Anglo, Sydney. *The Great Tournament Roll of Westminster; a Collotype Reproduction of the Manuscript*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968. 25-6. Print.

[104]    Geraldine Heng draws parallels between the advent of romance and the crusades. The history of tournament pageants after the twelfth century corroborates her point that romance frequently struggles with the spectacular military failures in campaigns in Spain, Egypt, and the Levant. See Heng, Geraldine. *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and*

*the Politics of Cultural Fantasy*.  Columbia UP, 2003.  Print.

[105]  Fradenburg, L.  O.  Aranye.  *City, Marriage, Tournament : Arts of Rule in Late Medieval Scotland.*  Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1991.  Print.

[106]  Fradenburg 237-243.

[107]  Anglo, *The Great Tournament Roll* 50ff.

[108]  Ivan L.  Schulze uses several of these tournaments to tie Spenser's descriptions of tournaments to court pageantry.  He accounts for these performances as "not mere romance convention resurrected from Malory" by tying them to practices contemporary with Spenser (284), but the account leaves unaddressed how the pageantries could in turn be influenced by romance convention.  See Schulze, Ivan L.  "Reflections of Elizabethan Tournaments in the Faerie Queene, 4.4 and 5.3." *ELH* 5.4 (1938): 278–284.  Print.

[109]  At the Accession Day tournament in 1581, Philip Sidney appeared before the queen as a knight in despair, bearing a shield with the word *speravi* (I hoped) crossed out: S-P-E-R-A-V-I.  The hope was of a recently lost inheritance as well as Queen Elizabeth's lost favor, and the anecdote is one of a genre of those where public figures make witty appeals to people in power.

[110]  Middle English authors including Malory referred to the mêlée as the "tourneye" to distinguish it from the joust, as when the barons proclaim a tournament around the sword in the stone: "And upon Newe Yeers Day the barons lete maake a justes and a tournement, that alle knyghtes that wold juste or tourneye there myght playe. And all this was ordeyned for to kepe the lordes togyders and the comyns …" (8.28-31). For the sake of simplicity, the use of "melee" in this section conforms to the terms used by Richard Barber, David Crouch, and other tournament historians.

[111]  In tournaments of the fifteenth and sixteenth century in Germany and Italy, there were also individual events for fighting on foot, often with a wall dividing the two contestants. These events are less common in England, and receive little or no attention in insular romances, hence their being subordinate to the joust here.

[112]  The practice has seen periodic revival since, as in Eglinton in 1839.  In a form modified for safety, the joust has seen revival since the 1970s, as enthusiasts in historical European martial arts have taken up the practice.  They have built a tournament circuit around Renaissance fairs and other events.  Joust also remains the most visible form of tournament, popularized by visual media like *A Knight's Tale* (2001) and *Game of Thrones* (2011).

[113]  Crouch, *Tournament* 1-2.

[114]  Barber, Richard W.  *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry, and Pageants in the Middle Ages*. Rochester: Boydell Press, 2000. Print. 107.

[115]  Barber 110.

[116]  Fradenburg 207.

[117]  See 8ff. and 619ff.  The final tournament happens prior to Melliagaunce's abduction of Guinevere, and is often treated in discussions of decline in Arthur's chivalric community. Kenneth Hodges claims that Lancelot's slow-healing wound through later tournaments shows his inability to decide between two communities imperfectly: his adultery with Guinevere in Arthur's court and his inability to return affection at Elaine's court (28).  The tournament tests Lancelot, one of a series of tests that he – and Arthur's court – eventually fail.  See Hodges, Kenneth.  "Wounded Masculinity: Injury and Gender in Sir Thomas Malory's 'Le Morte Darthur.'" *Studies in Philology* 106.1 (2009): 14–31.  Print.

[118]  At least 22 tournaments are depicted or mentioned in *Le Morte Darthur* at the following points: The Sword in the Stone (8); the tournament of Uwayne (109); Lancelot's tournament with Badgemagus (158); Gareth's tournament for Lyonesse (214); the tournament in Ireland (238); the tournament of the castle maidens (316); the tournament at the castle of the hard rock (333); the tournament at Iagent (348); a tournament where Tristram is wounded (373); the tournament of Surluse (389); a joust at Cornwall (400); a tournament at Winchester (404); the tournament at Lonezep (435); Galahad's tournament at court (502); Lancelot's tournament on the Grail quest (536); tournament  found by Bors (552); tournament where Gawain is wounded by Galahad (557); tournament on the day of the assumption (601); an All Hallowmas tournament (611); Lavayne's tournament (620); tournament in Spain (639).  Of these, ten receive more than a brief reference or description.

[119]  See esp. Martin 10-12.

[120]  "Women were not [exempt from trials by combat], and as a result, women sometimes fought.  Thus, in Caxton, when Lancelot, defying Morgan le Fay to defend Guinevere, says 'I wolde preue hit on you or on yours that she is the truest lady vnto her lord lyvyng,' he is seriously challenging Morgan herself, although fully expecting that she (like many male defendants) would try to find a champion" (Hodges, *Forging Chivalric Community* 38).  While *Le Morte Darthur* lacks a clear warrior woman like Belphoebe, Britomart, or Radegund from *The Faerie Queene*, the text does feature women intending to fight who take up swords.

[121]      P.J.C.  Field's most frequent descriptor for Malory's prose style is "simple": "Malory's simpler narrative line is one of the concomitants of his simpler, more paratactic prose" (43).  See Field, *Romance and Chronicle: A Study of Malory's Prose Style*.  Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1971.  For Miriam Edlich-Muth, *Le Morte Darthur's* plain-spoken and restricted form of narration contrasts the more ornate and open writing of continental romance works like Ulrich Fuetrer's German *Buch der Abenteuer* (Book of Adventures) and the Italian *Tavola Ritonda* (Round Table).  See Edlich-Muth, Miriam.

*Malory and His European Contemporaries: Adapting Late Medieval Arthurian Romance Collections*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 2014. Print. 52ff.

[122] "gest(e) (n(1))." *Middle English Dictionary*. Web. 8 March 2016.

[123] "shreued (adj)." *Middle English Dictionary*. Web. 8 March 2016.

[124] At this point, Mark knows that Tristram loves his wife Isode. Mark's motive for doing harm to Tristram is left unstated here but can be assumed from this knowledge.

[125] As Molly Martin establishes, chivalric masculinity is formed through scenes of *mervayle*s or displays of prowess (14). *Mervayling* also regards knights as strange or bewildering, a point that is established in Chapter 3 with disguises at court.

[126] The word usually means wonderment or astonishment. Citations are common from the 14th century onward. "merveille (n)." *Middle English Dictionary*. Web.

[127] "And so he founde hym amonge the foure Kyngis and the deuke, and there the Kynge prayde hem all unto suppere, and they seyde they wolde with good wyll; and whan they were unarmed, Kynge Arthure knew Sir Launcelot, Sir Gareth, and Sir Lavayne" (623.33-37). Edmund Spenser uses the same motif several times in the *Faerie Queene*, as when Britomart is discovered after disarming herself at the castle of Malbecco (III.ix.20-24).

[128] See Armstrong, *Gender and the Chivalric Community* 34; Lynch, *Malory's Book of Arms* 86.

[129] For instance, Palomides says to Epinogris after he has lost Tristram and Isode's friendship: "And I have many times enforsed myselff to do many dedis of armys for her sake, and ever she was the causer of my worship-wynnynge" (453.5-7).

[130] Kim, Hyonjin. *The Knight without the Sword: A Social Landscape of Malorian Chivalry*. Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2000. Print.

[131] Hodges, *Forging Chivalric Communities*, passim.

[132] Crane, Susan. "Knights in Disguise: Identity and Incognito in Fourteenth-Century Chivalry." *The Stranger in Medieval Society*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997. 63–79. Print.

[133] The phrase "choose my adventure" refers far more commonly to quests spreading outward from the court to the realms of adventure, chance, and fate. Critics vary on what degree of choice is permitted to knights – J. Allen Mitchell claims that quests highlight contingency to provide the possibility of ethical development that cannot occur at court

alone (113ff) whereas Rachel Kapelle sees the choice of adventure more as a submission to chance, where the knights are limited in their ability to interpret or respond to events (61). In this case, Tristram's choice of endeavor allows him to journey inward towards the inner circles of kings, knights, and ladies. Mitchell, J. Allen. *Ethics and Eventfulness in Middle English Literature.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print; Kapelle, Rachel. "Merlin's Prophecies, Malory's Lacunae." *Arthuriana* 19.2 (2009): 58–81. Print.

[134] Fradenburg 241.

[135] Arthur and Accolon as well as the brothers Balin and Balan and Gareth and Gawain fight in cases of mistaken identity. Each instance occurs because of the lack of a recognized emblem, and in each case the deception decenters the logic of Marhalt's statement in some way. In the first case, Arthur is unknown, and thus Accolon cannot assist him. In the second and third case, the knights should be drawn to each other by both brotherhood and service to Arthur, but because Balin and Balan had traded shields and because Gareth was wearing a disguise, they initially misrecognized each other as threats.

[136] This resistance results in Tristram, Dinadan, Gareth, and Palomides becoming a distinct smaller network of affiliation that can move between serving Marhalt and Arthur, unbalancing the assumption that allegiance securely directs itself to any one natural center. In this way, Tristram's disguise allows greater autonomy for knights while also beginning to destabilize the central authority of Arthur's court, a trend that continues through and after the Grail quest.

[137] Kim, passim. Elizabeth Archibald uses fellowship to similar effect. See Archibald, Elizabeth. "Malory's Ideal of Fellowship." *The Review of English Studies* 43.171 (1992): 311–328. Print.

[138] Kenneth Hodges uses Kim to demonstrate that there are various chivalric communities which are a part of various affinities in *Forging Chivalric Communities,* 8-9. A recent thread of Malorean criticism takes these geographic bonds as specific and mappable entities rather than as a vague periphery. See esp. Armstrong, Dorsey and Kenneth Hodges. *Mapping Malory: Regional Identities and National Geographies in Le Morte Darthur*.

[139] The expansion on Isode's name is usual in this narrative, in order to distinguish Isode (King Mark's wife; from Ireland; Tristram's firt love) with the other Queen Isode (Tristram's wife.)

[140] They do, however, share a stronger affinity by the time that Lancelot takes Guinevere to his castle Dolorous Garde. Palomides follows Lancelot away and becomes an adviser in the following conflict with Arthur.

[141]  Norris, Ralph C.  *Malory's Library: The Sources of the Morte Darthur*.  D.S.  Brewer, 2008.  Print.  111. This is a line of thought that was especially prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s.  For Robert Merrill, Palomides is a loser in a system which needs knights to lose against the more eminent knights.  Bonnie Wheeler describes Palomides as a "runner-up" who must fall short because he is not the foremost knight and because he is the center of several networks of knights.  See Merrill, Robert.  *Sir Thomas Malory and the Cultural Crisis of the Late Middle Ages*.  New York: Peter Lang, 1987. Print. 12; Wheeler, Bonnie.  "Grief in Avalon: Sir Palomydes' Psychic Pain." *Grief and Gender, 700-1700*.  Ed.  Jennifer C. Vaught and Lynne Dickson Bruckner.  New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.  65-80.  Print.

[142]  Cooper, Helen.  "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones." *A Companion to Malory*.  Ed.  Elizabeth Archibald and A. S. G Edwards.  Rochester: D.S.  Brewer, 2000.  183-201.  Print. 189.  Kevin Grimm produces a similar reading, pairing "love and envy" in order to read Palomides as a microcosm of the central conflicts in the Arthurian court.  See Grimm, Kevin T.  "The Love and Envy of Sir Palomides." *Arthuriana* 11.2 (2001): 65–74.  Print.

[143]  Mongan, Olga Burakov.  "Between Knights: Triangular Desire and Sir Palomides in Sir Thomas Malory's 'The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones.'" *Arthuriana* 12.4 (2002): 74–89.  Print.

[144]  Mahoney, Dhira.  " 'Ar ye a knyght and ar no lovear?': The Chivalry Topos in Malory's *Book of Sir Tristram.*" *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honour of Douglas Kelly*.  Ed.  Keith Busby and Norris J.  Lacy (Amsterdam: Rodopi), 1994.  311-324.  Print. 321.

[145]  Holbrook in "To the Well" summarizes this scene, which occurs during the tournament of the Castle of Maidens: "In sum, Palomides had entered the story as a 'best' knight and bearing a black shield (or one covered in black leather), but in Malory's telling, that identity has shifted to Tristram in two ways: the text shows Tristram choosing a black shield when the tournament proper begins, and the text eliminates Palomides [from mention]." See Holbrook, Sue Ellen.  "To the Well: Malory's Sir Palomides on Ideals of Chivalric Reputation, Male Friendship, Romantic Love, Religious Conversion—and Loyalty." *Arthuriana* 23.4 (2013): 72–97.  Print. 75.

[146]  See 436.9-10, 436.12, 436.45, and 437.6.

[147]  The details of this scene, like several others, show that spectatorship is not uniform.  Only lines earlier, "all men had wondir that ever ony knyght endured so many grete strokys," and Lancelot and King Arthur speculated about Tristram's identity (442.15-16).  Everyone sees him.  At the same time, Isode and Palomides seem particularly perceptive, perhaps because of their close relations to Tristram and their knowledge of who he really is.

148 While not all-knowing, Lancelot is typically a more canny perceiver of knights in battle than Arthur at Lonezep.  It is not clear why; perhaps his wider experience in battle allows him to recognize knights by their effectiveness on the battlefield.

149 Holbrook 75-79.

150 See esp. 74 in Wheeler, Bonnie.  "Grief in Avalon: Sir Palomydes' Psychic Pain." *Grief and Gender, 700-1700*.  Ed.  Jennifer C.  Vaught and Lynne Dickson Bruckner. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.  65-80.  Print.

151 Hahn, Thomas. *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995. Print.

152 Puttenham, George. *The Art of English Poesy*. Ed. Frank Whigham, and Wayne A. Rebhorn. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007. Print.

153 Schwarz 145ff.

154 Schwarz 163.

155 Anderson, Judith H. "Britomart's Armor in Spenser's Faerie Queene': Reopening Cultural Matters of Gender and Figuration." *English Literary Renaissance* 39.1 (2009): 74–96. Print.

156 Anderson suggests as much in her careful reading, which specifies that only Britomart's face is visible: "This partial breach of her armor is an unmasking rather than a total divesting, however. The difference is vital for a poem in which masking, with its Busiranic potential for abuse, has been thematically recurrent and specifically vital for the figure of Britomart, whose armor is integral to her quest and whose outfolded figural *integrity* is armored." Crucially, her armor remains otherwise intact. See Anderson, 89.

157 Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham collect many textual examples of angels described in masculine and feminine terms. Marshall, Peter, and Alexandra Walsham. *Angels in the Early Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Print.

158 "Her breasts [Bradamant] beat, her golden locks she tore, / Nor while these gripes of griefe her hart embrace / Doth she forbeare her eyes or Angels face" (32.17.6-8). Ariosto, Ludovico. *Orlando Furioso*. Ed. Robert McNulty. Trans. John Harington. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972. Print.

159 Alfield, Thomas. *A True Reporte of the Death & Martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite and Preiste*. Ed. Henry Walpole. London: R. Rowlands or Verstegan, 1582. *Early English Books Online.* Print. 23r.

[160] "Loves" could refer to their ladies. It could also refer to their own desires, as seen in III.i. See chapter 3 for an extended discussion of the moment when Britomart risks attracting men to her through her appearance as a male knight.

[161] Glauce is sometimes called an unreliable advisor. Harry Berger, Jr compares her, Cymoent, and Chrysogone to say that they are all "vversions of the nurse or mother which are all, in varying degrees, defective" (139). Berger, Harry. *Revisionary Play : Studies in Spenserian Dynamics*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988. Print.

[162] In 19 uses of the word in *The Faerie Queene*, the term "princely" refers to both men and women. For examples see I.iii.7 (Una's lion) and I.iv.9 (Pride).

[163] The full title of preceding the proem to book III juxtaposes Britomart and chastity: "The Third Booke / of the / Faerie Queene / Contayning, / the Legend of Britomartis / or / of Chastitie." The 1590 and 1596 editions feature the same wording with minor typographic variations.

[164] In another sense spectators are forced to confront the possibility that a knave or a woman is capable of fighting and practicing good conduct. This conclusion circulated in medieval discussions of nobility and chivalry, though as Maurice Keen describes, the emphasis on acts was intended to propel the aristocracy to practice better political and martial behavior, and not to argue for a meritocratic social system (194). Neither romance seems committed to showing meritocracy irrespective of noble status. Keen, Maurice. *Nobles, Knights, and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages*. London: Hambledon, 1996. Print.

[165] Molly Martin studies the relation between one's visibility and their gender in *Vision and Gender in Malory's* Morte Darthur. She defines masculinity through displays of prowess, and focuses on how "knights both instruct viewers' sightlines and respond to the society's demand for visible gender performance" (14).

[166] During the feast of Pentecost, it is customary for Arthur to sit at table and wait for "a grete mervayle" to appear before they eat (293.10). *Le Morte Darthur* employs the motif on occasion, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* starts with a similar waiting period before a feast during the days of Christmas.

[167] See "faire, adj." *Middle English Dictionary*. Web. 20 April 2016. Fairness in the romance (and in medieval literature generally) has also attracted a lot of attention for its wide and often indistinct applicability to social and physical appeal, brightness, skin tone, and even-handedness. Geraldine Heng was one of the first to discuss the connection of fairness to a proto-racial discourse on "Saracens" in the romances following the Third Crusade, and Edith Snook extends the comparisons with masculinity and class performance in Philip Sidney and Mary Wroth; see Heng, *Empire of Magic,* n75; Snook, Edith. *Women, Beauty and Power in Early Modern England.* New York: Palgrave

Macmillian, 2011. Print. 130-133.

[168] The Fair Unknown motif notably occurs in Chretien de Troyes's *Percival*.  The closest analogue to the Tale of Sir Gareth is *Li Beaus Descouneus*, which features similar arrivals at court and a similar initial quest structure, as described by P.  J.  C.  Field in *Malory: Texts and Sources*. Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 1998. Print. 291.

[169] See "much, adj." II.2.c.  *Oxford English Dictionary.* Web. 20 April 2016. For a parallel, note the idiomatic nature of "stature," as it and related words like "height" can refer to both physical and social distinctions.

[170] One knight remarks to Lancelot riding about in Kay's armor, " 'Yondir knyght is nat sir Kay, for he is far bygger than he' " (275.31).

[171] One might think also of the strength of the Red Knight of the Red Lands, which increases sevenfold as the sun approaches noon, or of the Green Knight in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.  While both are courteous, their strength is supernatural, both posing threats on their first appearance and presenting both knowledge of courtesy and a threatening kind of wildness.

[172] According to header divisions in the Winchester MS, the first book focuses on King Arthur and the second focuses on the Roman Civil War episode. "The Tale of Sir Gareth" is the fourth book.

[173] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen advanced the theory that monsters represent an abjected part of a conventional social order, first in *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages*, and again in *Monster Theory*.  Geraldine Heng comes to a similar conclusion about the literary response to stories of crusaders eating the cooked remains of Muslim bodies in the First Crusade: subsequent depictions of cannibalism, especially through Arthurian materials, sought to replay and gain control of the trauma of having their Christian values inverted in the process of cultural contact (22ff). Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999. Print; Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996. Print; Heng, Geraldine. *Empire of Magic*.

[174] In the philosopher's interpretation of the dream, the interpretation of the bear is twofold: either "som tyruante" or "som gyaunte" (121.8, 10).  The indiscriminate union of the Emperor Lucius and the giant signals again at the connection of human and political excess to monstrosity.  Meanwhile, Arthur's own comparison with a dragon is more complicated, since he has been associated with a dragon but, as Kenneth Hodges indicates, other examples of dragons in dreams in *Le Morte Darthur* relate them to the threat of civil war after Mordred's conception and the replacement of the old faith by the new during the Grail quest, usages adapted by Spenser for the figures of Error in I.i and the dragon Duessa rides in I.vii (11).  As Alex Mueller claims with a parallel scene in the

alliterative *Morte Arthur*, he heraldic use of the dragon to refer to Arthur (through Uther Pendragon) or to Rome allows the dragon to signify Arthur's short-term success over Rome while invoking his vulnerability to Mordred (299ff).  This conclusion is more stark in the alliterative *Morte Arthur,* where the Roman conquest directly precedes Mordred's betrayal rather than occurring shortly after Arthur secures his throne. Hodges, Kenneth. "Reformed Dragons: Bevis of Hampton, Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 54.1 (2012): 110–131. Print; Mueller, Alex. "The Historiography of the Dragon: Heraldic Violence in the Alliterative Morte Arthure." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 32 (2010): 295–324. Print.

[175]  The ambiguity of whose "brode lendys" are being baked or warmed in the same passage alludes either to the giant's grotesque desire, which led the giant to kill a duchess and ravage an old woman, or to the castration and consumption of the knight.  In either case, they pose a monstrous threat to a social order founded on the protection of women by knights sworn and able to protect them (20).

[176]  The category of the animal is often used to make distinctions between moral and immoral human behavior.  As recent animal studies have shown, the categories of human and animal are more continuous in medieval society than previously thought, and need not always imply negative behavior.  See especially Cary Wolfe's introduction to the 2011 *postmedieval* issue entitled "Moving forward, kicking back: The animal turn." Another human-animal relation is the tie between knighthood and kinds of knighthood embodied in the horse; this initiates an uncanny contact between knight and animal, as Susan Crane claims: "The knight's self-definition through chivalric practice involves technique and specialized training, but also a venturing into enigma, a reaching out beyond the human into interspecies relationship" (84).  Wolfe, Cary. "Moving Forward, Kicking Back: The Animal Turn." *postmedieval* 2.1 (2011): 1–12. Web. 25 Mar. 2016; Crane, Susan. "Chivalry and the Pre/Postmodern." *postmedieval*  2.1 (2011): 69–87. Web. 25 Mar. 2016.

[177]  Even though Linda Gregerson's reading of the scene focuses on Britomart's relationship to Malecasta as a female-female exchange, she admits in a footnote that Britomart appears "still armed and thus cross-dressed" when she lifts her umbriere, and goes on to discuss the male-male desire that I will discuss. See Gregerson, Linda. *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant Epic*. Cambridge University Press, 1995. Print. 31n28.

[178]  Note the gerund form *-ante*, which ties these words to repetitive actions in a court context.  "Noctante" is the only form lacking an exact verb cognate, though the general sense of night is clear from the form and its closeness to *noctanter,* by night.

[179]  For the connection between the six knights and a "ladder of lechery," see Fowler, Alistair. "Six Knights at Castle Joyous." *Studies in Philology* 56 (1959): 583-99. Print.

[180] The associations with different facets of Britomart's personality vary. For example, John C. Bean construes Britomart's terror as masculine, but then also construes the "amiable grace" as feminine (75). In contrast to the separation of gender markers, Kathryn Schwarz claims in her work on amazons in the Renaissance that women could practice masculine pursuits because it could find root in women: "Masculinity was never male to begin with" (152). More recently, for Joseph Campana Britomart embodies a form of vulnerable masculinity which allows her to confront and triumph over her own weaknesses to love and suffering (163ff). See Bean, John C. "Cosmic Order in *The Faerie Queene*: From Temperance to Chastity." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 17.1 (1977): 67–79. Print; Schwarz, Kathryn. *Tough Love*; Campana, Joseph. *The Pain of Reformation.*

[181] In chapter 1 this quality of disguise is established; the anxiety about disguise and impersonation comes from this potential to gain not only unearned prestige but to become another person through the effacement of a former identity.

[182] Lloyd Davis in *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance* claims that the category of the androgynous in the Renaissance functions as an interrogation of gender categories, which are questioned through the careful presentation of ambiguous or equivocal terms. This statement broadly describes other work on Britomart, like Lauren Silberman's interpretation of Britomart as a hermaphroditic separation of the essential masculine body from masculine experience. In turn, Elizabeth Bellamy claims that androgyny proves to be the "central vehicle for chastity and the social construction of gender." See Davis, Lloyd. *Guise and Disguise* 135; Silberman, Lauren. *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of the Faerie Queene*. U of California P, 1995. Print. 50-51; Bellamy, Elizabeth Jane. *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History*. Cornell UP, 1992. Print. 201.

[183] Given the possible blend of sin and wandering invoked by "error" elsewhere, it is possible that this passage associates the quest-mode with a kind of vulnerability to sin when quests are pursued with too much rash desire. Hence the knights' desires would reflect back upon Guyon and Arthur's pursuit of Florimell earlier in the canto, where their rash desire to rescue her was unchecked by a form of grace.

[184] The convention follows from *Le Roman de la Rose*, where the graceful advances of Fair Welcome contrast with the militarized defenses of the castle holding the rose.

[185] In important ways, romance tells the story of restricting masculine impulses by redefining them around service to ideals like courtly love. The adoration and development of this love has long informed interest in how the literature of the later medieval period developed, from C.S. Lewis's classic study of its literary origins among troubadours and Andreas Capellanus in *Allegory of Love* to Peter Haidu's materialistic account of how the structures of power defined its subjects through the use of love in *The*

*Subject Medieval/Modern: Text and Governance in the Middle Ages*. James Schultz's study *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* approaches German romance to criticize the idea that desire in the medieval period is an orientation borne from the individual; instead, as he describes it, concupiscence and related explanations of courtly love place desire outside of the body and into objects, circumstances, and external compulsions See Schultz, James A. *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Print. 63-78.

[186] Also note the coincidence of the narration of loss with the desire to hear another's story and seek recognition within it, perhaps as a method of coping with loss or identifying oneself with it. See Goldberg, Jonathan. *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981. Print. 56.

[187] Dorsey Armstrong and Kenneth Hodges outline the many families and political groups that come under and eventually spin out from Arthur's control. See Armstrong, Dorsey and Kenneth Hodges, *Mapping Malory*.

[188] In *Forging Chivalric Communities in Malory's Le Morte Darthur*, Kenneth Hodges puts the Gareth and Trystram tales in a medial position between national service and disintegration as he interprets *Le Morte Darthur* as a narrative of chivalric community: Gareth and Tristram attempt "to carve out political niches for themselves ... chivalry focuses more on social advancement and the creation of beneficial local alliances; individual deeds, not national service, become the high priority" (9).

[189] N.R. Ker's facsimile of the Winchester MS describes rubrication in the manuscript. In this case, evidence suggests that the scribes wrote in red ink by manually switching their pen as they wrote. Thus the rubricated names have a sense of casual deliberateness to them, less planned than writing the names in black and leaving space for a later scribe to write the names in a different hand. See Malory, Sir Thomas. *The Winchester Malory: A Facsimile*. Ed. Neil Ripley Ker. New York: Early English Text Society, 1976. Print.

[190] Sometimes Caxton is more selective about who receives a capital letter, indicating some difference between descriptive signs and names. Hence "the grene knight" remains uncapitalized in the 1485 edition, while "Beaumayns" appears with a capital B (112v).

[191] For an example in "The Tale of Sir Gareth," see 213.43ff.

[192] In contrast, when Lyonet withholds her own name and the sister for which she requests succor, Arthur refuses to grant other knights the opportunity to give her aid. The refusal of name is the only reason given for Arthur's refusal to supply aid, and it is difficult to tell why the refusal of name is held important in one case but not the other. See 180.27-31 for the refusal.

<sup>193</sup> Also note the symmetry between Kay proclaiming that Gareth will never "make man" and his effort to "gyff hym a name" (179.5, 7). Kay is here determining how this unknown figure will be established at court, and he enacts a mocking appointment in order to preclude a true gift of status. The irony is that Kay does not know how fitting his words are, since the fair hands actually represent a proof of Beaumains's nobility, though he rightly recognizes that any sign of nobility can be aberrant.

<sup>194</sup> See "honden (v.)." *Middle English Dictionary*. Web. The entry cites this example.

<sup>195</sup> Not "him and Lyonesse," the lady he marries, nor "him and Lyonet," the lady who accompanied him. While those relationships are important in the immediate narrative, much narrative energy is spent contrasting his relationship with Lancelot with Gareth's relationship with Gawain, preceding the moment late in *Le Morte Darthur* when Lancelot accidentally slays an unarmed Gareth while rescuing Lancelot. In this case, typical for romances like this, the romantic relationship between him and Lyonesse is never mentioned outside the bounds of the immediate narrative; the larger patterns of relation are homosocial.

<sup>196</sup> Lyonet and Lyones are sisters. Lyonet is Beaumains's guide on the quest to rescue Lyones.

<sup>197</sup> This alienation can be thought of in at least two ways. First, it is a result of being cast out of a socially stable position: Beaumains is alienated first by presenting signs that rest uneasily between the states of kitchen knave and knight, and risks alienation by appearing singular, unique, or outside of established systems. Second, it is a result of being unfixed from any single persona: until others recognize Gareth as one person, the possibility opens that Gareth and Beaumains are two different knights, which challenges the presumed unity of the subject.

<sup>198</sup> See "recountre (n.)." *Middle English Dictionary*. Web. The term contrasts with other available descriptions of a knight's death in an encounter, terms which imply ineptitude or wrongdoing; while abusing Beaumains, Lyonet claims that the Black Knight was slain "by myssehappe," a detail omitted in later retellings (304.28).

<sup>199</sup> Crane, *The Performance of Self* 107ff.

<sup>200</sup> See *Beowulf*, 510-12: "ne inc aenig mon / ne leof ne lað     belean mihte /sorhfullne sið …" Here it means roughly "friend or foe," as Unferth describes how Beowulf went undeterred to swim on the sea. *Beowulf: Revised Edition*. Ed. Michael Swanton. Manchester UP, 1997. Print.

<sup>201</sup> The note in the Hamilton edition claim that "Yet both full liefe him lodging to haue lent" must be understood as "full loth" after Paridell grows angry in line 5 of the stanza. The decision is made on grounds of consistency, such that all four of their reactions

oppose the unknown knight.  Such a revision loses the initial positivity of line 3, which allows for the possibility that *debate* implies a verbal discussion.

[202]  For instance, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. Vol. 1. Ed. William Scovil Anderson. University of Oklahoma Press, 1972. Print. 4.790-803.

[203]  The *casus* tradition refers to an earlier genre which would focus on the inevitable fall (hence the Latin *casus*) of great figures.  The idea is partly Christian and partly Boethian, related to the concept of the Wheel of Fortune: terrible events befall those who temporarily achieve worldly greatness.  *The Monk's Tale* in Chaucer is a prime example, and its influence can be felt in the appeal of early dramatic tragedies like the second part of Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine,* where the triumphant conqueror falls sick after his successes.

[204]  See Bellamy, Elizabeth.  "Slanderous Troys: Between Fame and Rumor." *Fantasies of Troy: Classical Tales and the Social Imaginary in Medieval and Early Modern Europe.* Ed.  Alan Shepard and Stephen D.  Powell.  Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2004.  215-35.  Print.

[205]  Bellamy takes as inspiration Harry Berger's comments on Paridell: that he is a "cultural dead end" compared to Britomart, and that he seeks to "destroy whatever resistances protect the feminine psyche." See Berger, *Revisionary Play* 156, 162.

[206]  Helfer, Rebeca.  *Spenser's Ruins and the Art of Recollection*.  University of Toronto Press, 2006.  Print.  175ff.

[207]  The mythic founding of Britain by a Trojan called Brutus was a popular idea that first appeared in the 9th century *Historia Britonum*, was propagated by Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* in the 12th century, was perpetuated in Layamon's Middle English poem *Brut*, and was preserved in *Holinshed's Chronicles* (1577, 1587).

[208]  Spenser presents this version of history in Eumnestes's history in canto x of book II: mariners arrived at a deserted island, found giants, and defeated them (5-10).

[209]  The social ascendance of families like the Woodvilles, as well as family documents like the Paston letters, attest to the shifting relevance of traditional knighthood to social and political life.

[210]  Critics writing on the organization of *Le Morte Darthur* often remark on the position of Arthur's court in the narrative.  Here, the court is still the center, to be partly displaced in the section on Tristram to more regional courts like those of King Mark and the King of Ireland.

[211] For the sense, see definition 4d of *"dōn* (v.(1))." *Middle English Dictionary*. Web. 24 April 2016.

[212] Hodges, *Forging Chivalric Community in Malory's* Le Morte Darthur 9. Hodges describes the shift from affinities to lordship to social advancement and more local alliances.

[213] Interpretation of knighthood according to the Pentecostal Oath is central to Armstrong, *Gender and the Chivalric Community in Malory's* Morte d'Arthur.

[214] The two proximate sources for Britomart's disguise are Artegall as depicted in her father's magic mirror and Angela the Saxon warrior as described by Glauce. There is also a multiplicity of other reflections of figures similar to Britomart, including the Queen (III.iv.3) and Belphoebe, as well as Bradamant from *Orlando Furioso*. While this chapter is more interested in the process of making Britomart than the source of her persona, one of the assumptions enclosed here is that the act of disguise can also be an act of creation. Her reshaping herself to be a knight uses imitation as one means of fashioning herself.

[215] The emblematic visual sense of *devise* is evident in other uses by Spenser, including when the Palmer praises the Redcrosse Knight in part for "that dear crosse vpon your shield deuised / Wherewith above all knights ye goodly seeme aguized" (II.i.31.8-9).

[216] Conception mixes the origins of pregnancy and artistic production. It is a typical trope of the time, as evident in the first sonnet of Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*: "Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes" (12). Much more recently, Gordon Teskey relies on the notion that in the Renaissance the *author* takes on the role of a creator rather than an authority, and at points connects discussions of bodily material with "let[ting] the poem think for itself about making" See Teskey, Gordon. *Delirious Milton: The Fate of the Poet in Modernity*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 2009. Print. 23.

[217] See Campana, *The Pain of Reformation: Spenser, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Masculinity,* where knights define themselves through facing physical and social vulnerability: they risk wounds and the losses of worship and affection. He points out that Britomart does not face her vulnerability until she confides in Amoret in IV.i, but moments like this indicate that Britomart has had opportunity to think about vulnerability even in the moment of disguising (188).

[218] Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene Disposed into Twelue Books, Fashioning XII. Morall Vertues*. London: William Ponsonbie, 1590. *Early English Books Online*. Web.

[219] A usage common in medieval romances available in the sixteenth century, c.f. Sir Degrevant asking a maiden for guidance on where to go: ""Damesel, for Godus grace, / Teche me to that ylke place!" *(Sir Degrevant* 929-30). See *Sentimental and Humorous Romances: Floris and Blancheflour, Sir Degrevant, The Squire of Low Degree, The*

*Tournament of Tottenham, and The Feast of Tottenham*. Ed. Erik Kooper. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006. Print.

[220] This is a scene which is at once impressionistic and opposed to imagery, where qualities are perceived instead of features.

[221] I have discussed the former at some length, but only alluded to the latter. Kay mentions the expectation that Gareth must fall, while Lyonet repeats several times that she does not want to see Gareth fail, most notably before the fight with the Knight of Inde, when their relationship ceases to be antagonistic, showing that her concern has transformed from one of worth and skill to one of knightly risk and vulnerability.

[222] Schwarz draws a comparison between Britomart's engagement with her father's mirror and the narrative of the Lacanian mirror stage. To be very brief, both the mirror stage and Britomart's own sight in the mirror start a process of a full, cohesive identity through the misperception that the image in the mirror is herself. That misperception leads her to, quoting Lacan, 'the assumption of the armor of an alienating identity,' encompassing the idea that she works through not-herself in order to seek what she desires, both for herself and others. See Schwarz 138ff.

[223] The start of canto 2 is especially concerned with the lack of examples in contemporary writing compared to the abundance of examples in older writing, but fails to cite any clear example prior to Britomart herself supplying it in her story to the Redcrosse Knight: amazon. Then in canto 4, after a short list of particular examples from the *Iliad* and the Bible, Britomart is compared to Elizabeth I.

[224] "And on his arme addresse his goodly shield / That bore a Lion passant in a golden field" (III.i.4.7-8). Compare to the shield she takes in III.iii.60, which hung by Bladud's spear. While Malory shows Gareth frequently switching armor and shields, he is not precise about what happens to Kay's shield; similarly, while Spenser does not show any switching of shield, it is odd that a shield associated with Bladud should appear elsewhere under Brutus's arms, unless Bladud is presumed to have the same arms by descent. Perhaps with Spenser, as with Malory, signification at the moment matters more than explicitly establishing consistency.

[225] "Her harty words so deepe into the mynd / Of the young Damzell sunke, that great desire / Of warlike armes in her forthwith they tynd …" (57.1-3).

[226] "Knight of Chastity" is often taken for granted as a formulation, describing what Britomart either represents or emulates. "Of" can also imply an origin or something prior in a causal chain, not just in terms of representation but of generation as well. In either case, disguise helps to resist the possibility of "not of," in distinguishing a sincere performance of knighthood that goes beyond the mummery of knighthood that someone like Braggadochio enacts.

[227]  Whetter, K.S. "On Misunderstanding Malory's Balyn." In *Re-Viewing Le Morte Darthur: Texts and Contexts, Characters and Themes*. Ed. K.S. Whetter and Raluca Radulescu. Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 2005. Print. 149-162.

[228]  Edwards, Elizabeth. *The Genesis of Narrative in Malory's Morte Darthur*. Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 2001. Print. 24.

[229]  For the textual argument see Mann, Jill. " 'Taking the Adventure': Malory and the *Suite de Merlin.*" *Aspects of Malory*. Ed. Derek Brewer and T. Takamiya. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981.Print. 71-91. The questions of consistency go back into old arguments about whether *Le Morte Darthur* should be read as a single work or as eight disparate works. Because "The Tale of Balin" features events that influence the Grail quest, critics prior to 1980 used the tale to defend reading the text as one whole romance. See as examples Rumble, Thomas C. "Malory's Balin and the Question of Unity in the Morte Darthur." *Speculum* 41.1 (1966): 68–85. Print; Kelly, Robert L. "Malory's 'Tale of Balin' Reconsidered." *Speculum* 54.1 (1979): 85–99. Print.

[230]  Kapelle, Rachel. "Merlin's Prophecies, Malory's Lacunae." Other critics would disagree that Merlin causes actions, and would instead describe him as the ultimate commentator or overseer: "Merlin oversees – rather than controls – Balin and Balan's romance landscape, and his social function seems more important than the assertion of his power" (63). See Batt, Catherine. *Malory's Morte Darthur: Remaking Arthurian Tradition*. New York: Palgrave, 2002. Print. In either case, Merlin-as-agent or Merlin-as-overseer, how one interprets Balin and his events is at stake.

[231]  Boulanger, Jennifer. "Righting History: Redemptive Potential and the Written Word in Malory." *Arthuriana* 19.2 (2009): 27–41. Print.

[232]  Taylor, Amanda D. "The Body of Law: Embodied Justice in Sir Thomas Malory's Morte Darthur." *Arthuriana* 25.3 (2015): 66–97. Print.

[233]  Taylor 76-7.

[234]  Hodges, Kenneth L. *Forging Chivalric Communities in Malory's Le Morte Darthur*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Print. 46-7.

[235]  Balin has been accompanied by the damsel of Berbeus, the first knight slain by Garlonde. Narration draws attention to her following him after each event, and I omitted a short episode connected to the later Grail narrative where the damsel has her blood drained to heal a lady. Little to no work has been done to compare this damsel accompanying Balin to damsels like Gareth's Lyonet. At the very least, this damsel does not serve the same role as guide and interpreter.

[236]  Of 70 instances of the word "blak" or "black(e)," only one identifies a black face or

body. Saracen knights like Palomides and Saphir do not receive this descriptor.

[237] Blackness as a spectacle would become more common in the 16th and 17th century, especially in dramatic traditions that include Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* (1605). For more on the later dramatic context, see Stevens, Andrea. *Inventions of the Skin: The Painted Body in Early English Drama*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2013. Print. There remains some difficulty in determining how medieval, geographical notions of black skin evolved into proto-racial early modern systems, though general allusions to blackness as evil were common in religious literature.

A special issue of Arthuriana in 2006 attempted to address issues of race and religion in Arthurian literature. Maghan Keita indicates connections between Saracens, Africans, and blackness in *Le Morte Darthur* and other texts, including Malory's descriptions of Palomides as a knight with black trappings. Meg Roland traces connections to Turkish identities in Malory. Neither discuss Garlonde, perhaps because Garlonde's blackness is only significant through symmetry to examples in other texts. See Roland, Meg. "Arthur and the Turks." *Arthuriana* 16.4 (2006): 29–42. Print; Keita, Maghan. "Saracens and Black Knights." *Arthuriana* 16.4 (2006): 65–77. Print.

[238] See "This, pron. and adj., II.5.a." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Web. 22 April 2016.

[239] Indeed, Balin's next words play on the irony: "Thou seyst soth […] thys ys nat the firste spite that thou haste done me – and therefore I woll do that I come fore" (55.34-6).

[240] Mitchell, J. Allan. *Ethics and Eventfulness in Middle English Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print. 127.

[241] See for example Bonomi, Bianca Brigitte. "'How Might I See/The Thing, That Might Not Be, and Yet Was Donne?' (I.vi.39): Seeing, Believing, and Anti-Catholicism in Book One of Spenser's Faerie Queene." *Reformation & Renaissance Review: Journal of the Society for Reformation Studies* 7.2-3 (2005): 163–187. Print. 175.

[242] Proteus demonstrates a similar ability to transform himself for Florimell in book III; see III.viii.40-1.

[243] For instance, Judith H. Anderson says that Archimago "impersonates" the Redcrosse Knight by putting his person on (94). See Anderson, Judith H. "Narrative Reflections: Re-envisaging the Poet in *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Faerie Queene*." Krier, Theresa M. *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance*. University Press of Florida, 1998. Print. 86-105.

[244] "Person, n." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Web. 22 April 2016.

[245] "Deface, v." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Web. 22 April 2016.

[246] Martin, *Vision and Gender.*

[247] Rovang, Paul R. *Malory's Anatomy of Chivalry: Characterization in the Morte Darthur.* Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2015. Print.

[248] Two articles fit this model: Hodges, Kenneth. "Making Arthur Protestant: Translating Malory's Grail Quest into Spenser's Book of Holiness." *The Review of English Studies* 62.254 (2011): 193–211. Web. 17 Apr. 2016; Hodges, Kenneth. "Reformed Dragons: Bevis of Hampton, Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte Darthur, and Spenser's Faerie Queene." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 54.1 (2012): 110–131. Print.

[249] The coinage "demonsterative" is Borris's own. See Borris, Kenneth. "Allegory, Emblem, and Symbol." *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*. Ed. Richard A. McCabe. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. 437-461. Print. 456.

[250] See Rovang, *Refashioning "Knights and Ladies Gentle Deeds* 27ff and King, *The Faerie Queene and Middle English Romance* 113ff.

[251] Cooper, *The English Romance in Time.*

[252] McKinstry, Jamie. *Middle English Romance and the Craft of Memory*. Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2015. Print.

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